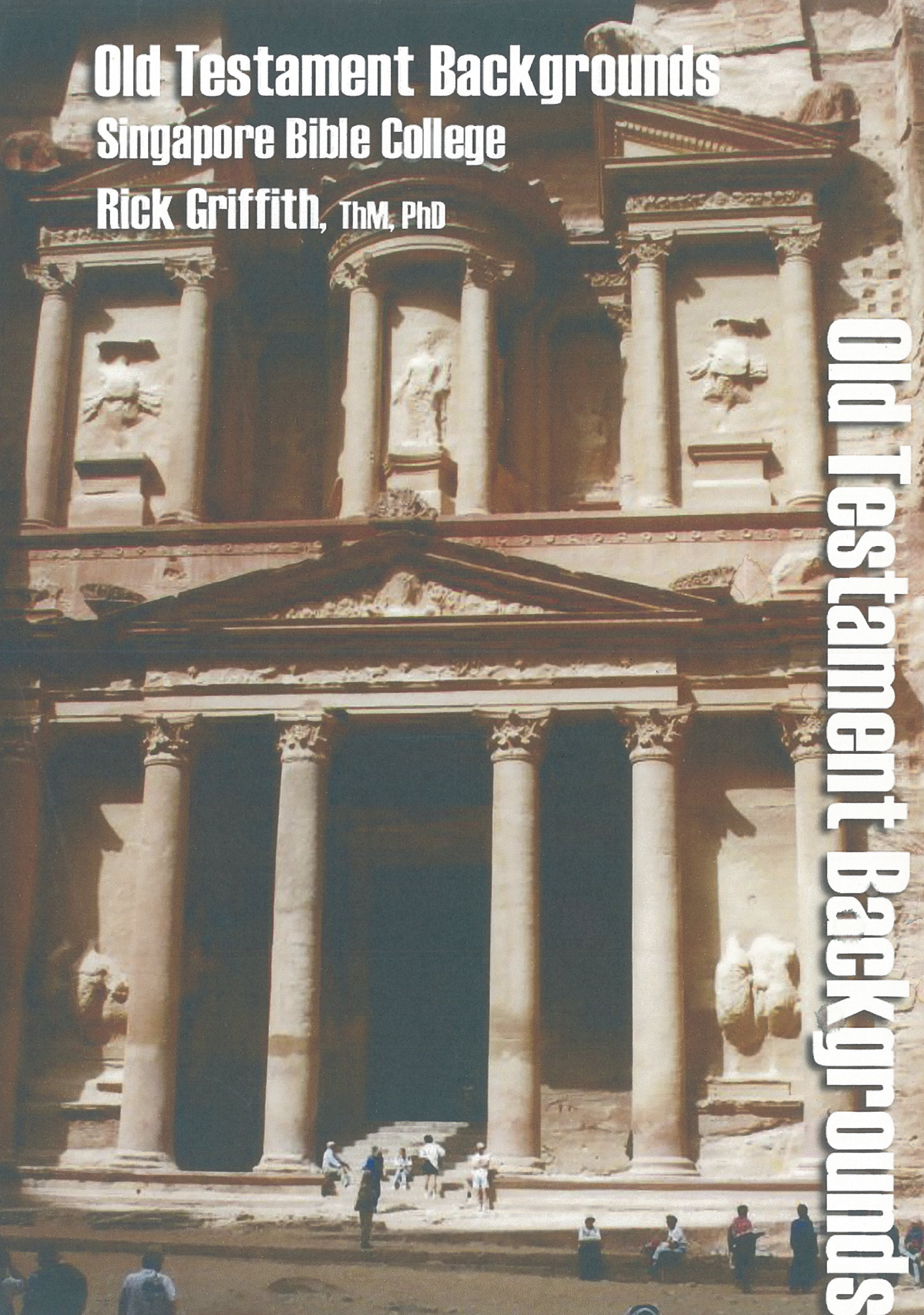
Old Testament Backgrounds

Singapore Bible College

Rick Griffith, ThM, PhD



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Ninth Edition

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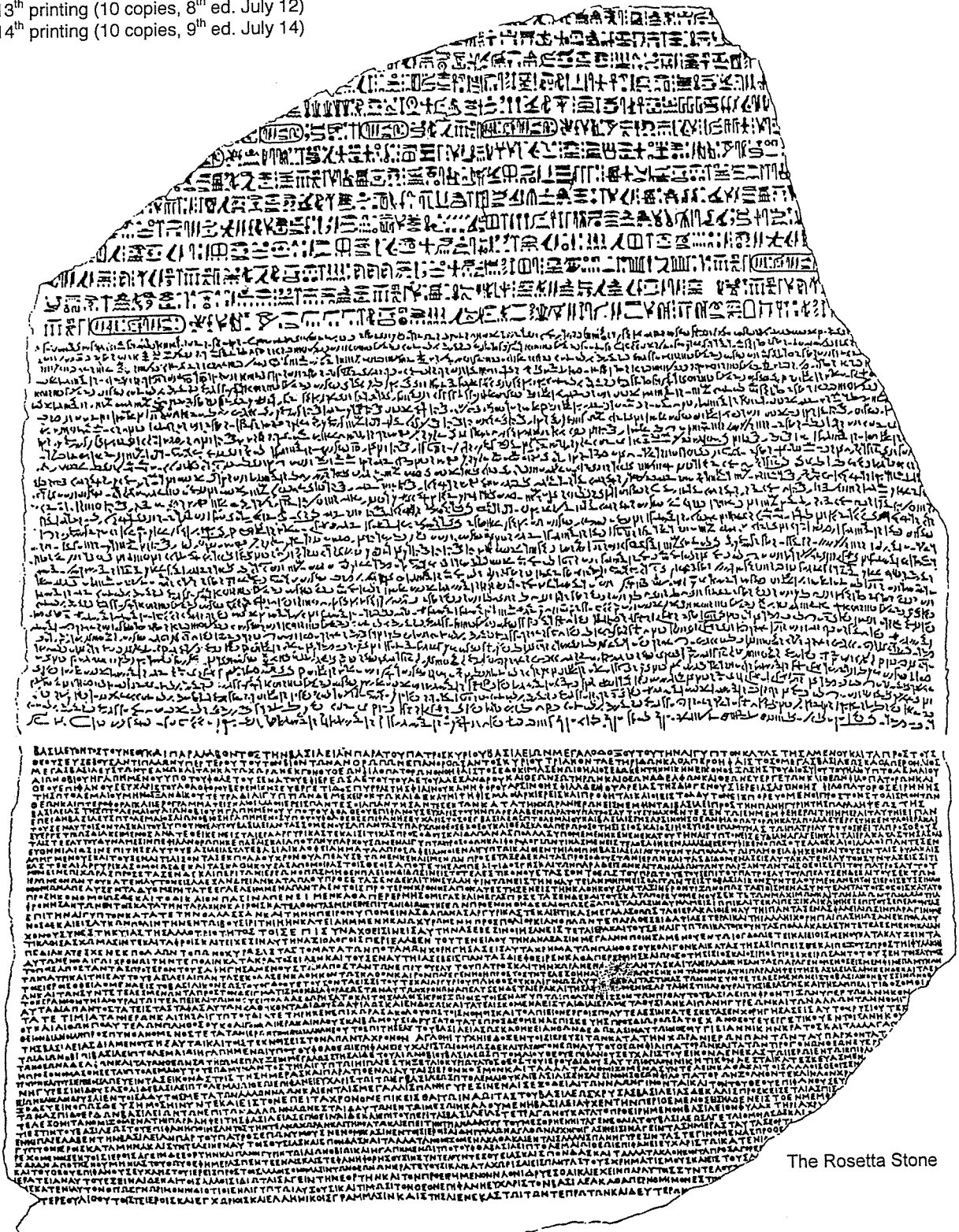

The Rosetta Stone

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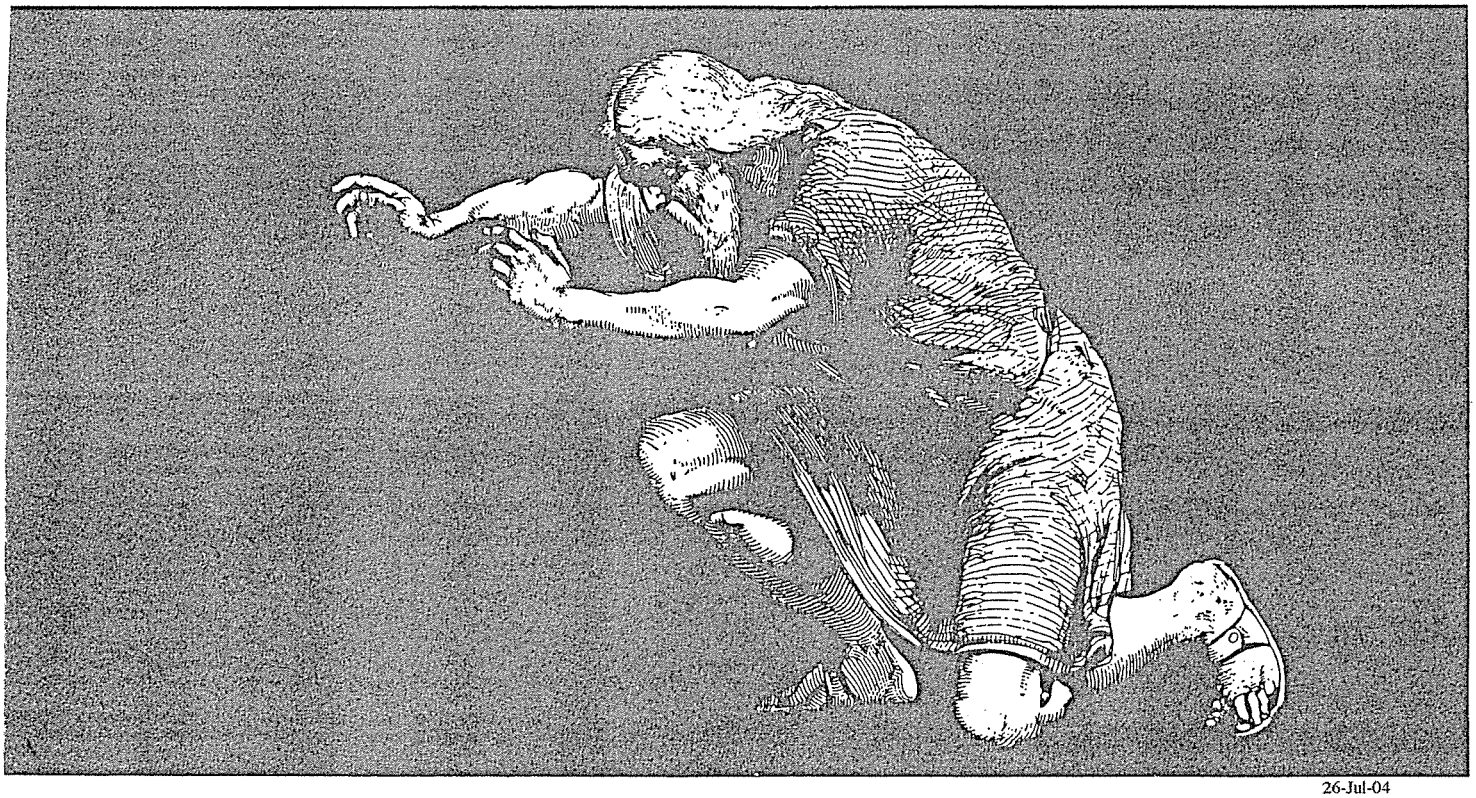


I. Syllabus

A. Catalogue Course Description

This course enhances the understanding of the Old Testament by exploring background issues outside of Scripture. Areas covered include geography, history, customs, religions, people groups, archaeology, chronology and writings that shed light on what the Bible says. PowerPoint and small group discussions illustrate passages and apply them to today (3 hours).

Note that the previous 2-hour version was called "Old Testament Backgrounds" and this title remains on printed documents for the course. However, the SOTE office and website only uses the WOT name to distinguish it from the previous OTB course.

B. Course Objectives

By the end of this course the student should be able to…

1. Show how the geography of Israel and the Ancient Near East provides a better comprehension of the OT and the mission of both Israel and the modern church.

2. Survey the biblical theology of the Old Testament, including the various biblical covenants.

3. Place the OT writings in their historical, political, socio-economic, religious, and linguistic world and compare these to present societies.

4. Show how cultural values and practices in Sumerian, Canaanite, Egyptian, Philistine, Phoenician, Ammonite, Moabite, Edomite, Arab, Aramean, Assyrian, Babylonian, Persian and Jewish societies illuminate the OT and find parallels in the church and society today.

5. Show how OT archaeology confirms and shapes our understanding of the Bible.

6. Articulate the general chronology of Israel's history with corresponding key dates (creation, Exodus, fall of Samaria and Jerusalem, archaeological periods, etc.).

C. Course Requirements

1. Readings (15%) will be assigned for most class periods. The Schedule in this syllabus serves as a Reading Report to be reported on each quiz. Many readings are from Arnold and Beyer's *Readings from the Ancient Near East* (Baker), so each student should buy a copy. Others are copied in the back of the notes.

2. Quizzes (15%) over the current reading assignments will be given via the SBC moodle website (https://www.sbc.edu.sg/moodle/login/index.php). To take the quiz, please go to https://www.sbc.edu.sg/moodle/login/index.php. Please login with your normal SBC username and password, click on the World of the Old Testament course and then click on Quiz #1 on the right hand "Upcoming Events" link. You will have 20 minutes to take it. Of course, please do not discuss it with other students after you take it as they may not have already taken it. Prepare for each class session by making sure you have a general understanding of the readings. Please address all tech questions such as login and access to Joshua Tew (joshua@sbc.edu.sg ext. 1509) in the SBC IT department on the first level of Block 1 at the main office.

3. A Research Paper (10%) of 5-8 pages (no 9+ page papers will receive an "A"), double-spaced, including footnotes (not end notes) on ***one*** of the three topics below must include a table of contents, footnotes and bibliography (incl. maximum three websites and minimum 5-8 books). Follow the guidelines of the Research Paper Grade Sheet (p. 9) and Research Paper Checklist at the end of this syllabus (pp. 10-11). Here are the topics:

   a) Prophecy: Show what OT prophecy was and how it shared common ground and yet also differed from ancient pagan prophecy. What was the basis for evaluating the message of each type of prophecy (pagan and Jewish)? Make sure you include key texts (e.g., Deut. 18; 1 Chron. 25:1-5). Cite primary (ancient) sources and give specific examples of how understanding this helps us discern God's Word to us today.

   b) Creation: What views of the origin of the universe existed in Mesopotamia, Canaan, Egypt, and other ancient societies? How can we as believers explain how these stories originated? When were they written? What do these views reveal about these peoples? Do you think Moses would have known about these when he wrote Genesis 1–2? If so, how would that have influenced his account of creation?

   c) Women: Compare and contrast the OT (Jewish) view of women with pagan perspectives. Which treated them better and how? How were women viewed and treated in the family, civic and social order? Draw parallels for believers today (e.g., are women on the same par in OT Israel and the NT or modern church?) Cite primary (ancient) sources.

4. The Project (30%) can be done in one of three ways:

   a) Translate 1-2 PPT presentations of this course or the Creation course into your native tongue. After I edit your presentation, I will then upload it under its language tab at my website at http://www.biblestudydownloads.com for others in your language group to download. There is teaching in 37 languages on this site—including all the PPT for this and my other courses. You will be graded with page 13b.

   b) Translate one "The Bible... Basically" presentation or script. This 10-hour seminar by Dr. John Fryman brings listeners through the entire Bible six times by using nearly 1000 PPT slides. We need help in Burmese, Dutch, French, German, Hindi, Japanese, Khmer, Kiswahili, Malayalam, Mao, Mizo, Nepalese, Sinhala, Tagalog, Tamil, Tangkhul, Tenyidie, Thai, and Vietnamese. Presentations already translated are also at http://www.biblestudydownloads.com. You will be graded with page 13b as in above (or page 13c if you translate a script).

   c) Teach at least four WOT or Creation class presentations in four sessions to a group of four or more people via the pulpit, home Bible study, cell group, or Sunday school class. Download them at http://www.biblestudydownloads.com and have your students each fill out the Course Evaluation. Hand these in with a 1-2 page overview of those you taught, presentations covered, lessons learned by you, etc. You will have your students rate you with page 13 and then you add a 1-2 page summary. An alternate is to share four presentations separately with four unbelievers. Your grade sheet is page 13a.

5. The Online Final Exam (30%) will cover class lectures, PowerPoint presentations, and class notes for the entire course. The readings will have already been examined on the quizzes so they are not tested on the final exam.

N.B. Each of the preceding requirements has 3% grade penalty per class day late. Also, points may be deducted for not including your full name and box number on assignments, exceeding the page limit, and improper grammar and spelling.

As students take this course at 4 different levels, the grading requirements vary accordingly:

	BCM	MPrep/MDiv/MA/MCM	Certificate (Eve. Sch.)	Audit (Eve. Sch.)
Readings	20%	15%	50%	–
Quizzes	20%	15%	50%	–
Research Paper	-	10%	–	–
Project	30%	30%	–	–
Final Exam	30%	30%	–	–
Total	100%	100%	100%	No grade or credit
Attendance	90+%	90+%	70+%	No Minimum

D. Course Bibliography and Abbreviations

† Books with a cross indicate required readings on reserve in the library.
Underlined words indicate abbreviations used in these notes

Alexander, T. Desmond. *From Paradise to Promised Land: An Introduction to the Main Themes of the Pentateuch*. Carlisle, UK: Paternoster; 1995. 227 pp.
Covers major themes in the Pentateuch in a simplified manner without getting bogged down addressing hypothetical source theories; readable, helpful maps and diagrams; unfortunately sees no reason for Israel to possess Canaan in the future (p. 30).

Arnold, Bill T. and Baker, David W. *The Face of Old Testament Studies: A Survey of Contemporary Approaches*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1999. 221.609045 BAK
A nice primer for quick views of recent OT literature on various topics from theology to archaeology. Arnold teaches at Asbury Seminary.

Arnold, Bill T. and Beyer, Bryan E. *Encountering the Old Testament: A Christian Survey*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1999. S$64.00 hb. (with SBC discount) + CD-ROM. 512 pp.
A first year Bible college OT survey in an attractive format of simple text, graphics, backgrounds, colour photographs, and an interactive CD with video clips, photos, maps, and review questions. The authors teach at Asbury and Columbia, respectively.

†_____. *Readings from the Ancient Near East: Primary Sources for Old Testament Study*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002. 240 pp. Pb. $21.99.
Master's level texts (e.g., from Mesopotamia) in canonical order to supplement the OT.

†Backhouse, Robert. *The Student Bible Guide to the Temple*. Tim Dowley, ed. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1996. 32 pp. Formerly *The Kregel Pictorial Guide to the Temple*.
Stunning, full-colour. close-up pictures of Herod's temple from a beautiful model built by Alec Garrard of England. Research is based on the Bible, Talmud, Mishna and latest archaeological discoveries. Includes many photos and helpful drawings as well.

†Beitzel, Barry J. *The New Moody Atlas of Bible Lands*. 2d ed. Chicago: Moody, 2009. xii+304 pp. SBC Book Centre for S$71.65 (with student discount).
This major revision of *The Moody Atlas of Bible Lands* (1986) retains the strengths of being evangelical, excellent in both physical geography and historical geography with maps superior to the *NIV Atlas* below, and maps nicely tied in with the text. The revised edition still retains two weaknesses of the first edition: it lacks regional maps and often lacks Scripture references on the maps (though cited in supporting material). However, it improves on it with many color photographs, 23 new maps, 48 pages of added commentary, plus Scripture and General Indexes. These maps appear in the NLT, ESV, and NIV Study Bibles. Beitzel teaches OT at Trinity International Univ. (TEDS) in Deerfield, IL.

BKC: *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*. 2 vols. Eds. John F. Walvoord and Roy B. Zuck. Wheaton: SP Pub., Victor Books, 1983 (NT, 991 pp.), 1985 (OT, 1589 pp.).

The best single buy in a Bible commentary, based on NIV, great book outlines, maps, charts, cross references, book introductions, evangelical, gives special attention to difficult texts (while many single volume commentaries skim or skip controversial texts), theologically consistent (whereas most single volume commentaries are by authors of various theological persuasions and thus have inconsistent data, all BKC authors are present or former faculty of Dallas Theological Seminary).

Bright, John. *A History of Israel*. 4th ed. Intro and appendix by William P. Brown. Philadelphia: Westminster, 2000. US$34.95 hb.
A standard critical OT text that says that Israel's faith shaped the people's stories (e.g., the exodus account was invented to increase the Jews' faith).

Coleman, William L. *Today's Handbook of Bible Times and Customs*. Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House, 1984. 303 pp.
Many cultural insights on both OT and NT. Content is similar to Wight's book. Many photographs but no drawings. Three of his chapters are in these notes.

Cooper, Bill. *After the Flood*. Chichester, England: New Wine Press, 1995.
Verifies both the accuracy of the Table of Nations (Gen. 10-11) and the early date of creation (5200-4000 BC) from ancient European and Middle Eastern texts.

Gospel Light Publishers. *The Bible Visual Resource Book: For Do-it-Yourself Scholars*. Ventura, CA: Gospel Light, 1989.
Another subtitle reads "Reproducible Maps, Charts, Timelines, and Graphics for Groups or Individual Study." Written by Keith Kaynor (?—his name is not mentioned).

Gower, Ralph. *The New Manners and Customs of Bible Times*. Chicago: Moody, 1987. 408 pp.
Updates and expands upon Fred Wight's similar book published in 1953 (see entry below). Part 1 addresses "The Individual in Family Life" (e.g., family, education, work) and Part 2 concerns "National Institutions and Customs" (e.g., hospitality, travel, leisure, social/political groupings). Excellent colour photographs.

†Hoerth, Alfred J.; Mattingly, Gerald L.; and Yamauchi, Edwin M., eds. *Peoples of the Old Testament World*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1994. 400 pp. 221.95 HOE
Conservative articles on 14 OT peoples (20-30 pages each, with many pictures, diagrams, bibliographies, and extensive subject index) from Mesopotamia (Sumerians, Babylonians, Assyrians, Persians), Anatolia, Syria-Palestine and Egypt (Hittites, Canaanites and Amorites, Phoenicians, Arameans, Philistines, Egyptians), and Transjordan (Ammonites, Moabites, and Edomites). Hoerth is Director of Archaeology at Wheaton College.

de Lange, Nicholas. *Atlas of the Jewish World*. New York & Oxford: Fact on File [distributed by Thomas Nelson], 1984. 240 pp.
Impressive maps, texts, drawings, and photographs of worldwide Jewish migration in history. Includes historical and cultural background and the Jewish world today.

Marshall, I. Howard; Millard, A. R.; Packer, J. I.; and Wiseman, D. J., eds. *New Bible Dictionary*. 3d ed. Leicester, England: IVP and Wheaton, IL: Tyndale, 1962, 1982; Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1996. 1326 pp. US$40 hb.
Many helpful articles for NT backgrounds. A highly acclaimed Bible dictionary

McCarter, P. Kyle, Jr. *Ancient Inscriptions: Voices from the Biblical World*. Washington, DC: Biblical Archaeology Society, 1996. 180 pp. US$30 for book alone and US$140 for book and slides. SBC Library 411 (R) McC.
Contains the story of how writing came into being, starting from Mesopotamian cuneiform and ending in the Roman period at the time of Christ by tracing the evolution of the alphabet from pictographs to symbols which each represent a single sound. Includes 97 drawings cross-referenced to 140 separately available slides. McCarter teaches at John Hopkins Univ.

Merrill, Eugene H. *Kingdom of Priests: A History of Old Testament Israel*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1987. 546 pp. S$40.00 at SBC Book Centre. SBC library 221.95 MER
An up-to-date and well-written treatment of OT history with particular emphasis on Israel's responsibility to be a light to the nations. Dr. Merrill teaches OT at Dallas Seminary (dispensational premillennial). Supplemented with several helpful indexes.

Pritchard, James B., ed. *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament*. 3rd ed., Princeton: Univ. Press, 1950, 1955, 1969. Abbreviated *ANET*. hb. approx. $100.
The classic translation of Sumerian creation myths (e.g., Enuma Elish), Babylonian flood stories (e.g., Gilgamesh Epic), and other non-biblical texts that give backdrop to the OT.

_____, ed. *The Ancient Near East*. 2 vols. Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1958. 380 pp. and 251 pp. + 110 illustrations, respectively. pb.
Abridged material from *ANET* in a highly condensed and more affordable form.

_____ *The Harper Atlas of the Bible*. New York: Harper & Row, 1987. 254 pp. CBD for $34.95.
Most of the 134 maps are two pages and complemented by smaller maps, charts, diagrams, photographs, drawings and text; comprehensive (covers from 10,000 BC to AD 600, though only one map addresses Genesis 1–11); maps and detailed full-colour paintings of terrain have a three dimensional look, appearing as if viewed from the ground or on larger maps taking into account the curvature of the earth's surface; probably the best atlas for backgrounds (other ancient peoples, pagan temples, writing, commerce, archaeology, practices of everyday life, etc.); indexes include summaries of events in the lives of significant biblical characters and a map index which includes variant, Arabic, Palestinian Grid Reference numbers, and Modern Hebrew names for cities. However, some maps are difficult to read due to lack of compass directions and excess supplementary material; mostly conservative, but the 50 contributors from varied perspectives (Christian, Jewish, liberal, etc.) tend to be moderately critical in the narrative and hold to late date for the Exodus. The book is also difficult to fit upright on most bookshelves due to its enormous size (nearly 11" x 14 1/2" or 27.5 cm. x 37 cm.).

Rasmussen, Carl G. *The Zondervan NIV Atlas of the Bible*. Regency Reference Library. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1989 and Jerusalem: Carta, 1989. 256 pp. CBD for $30.00?
Similar in features to Beitzel with a comprehensive geographical section (57 pp.) and historical section (131 pp.), so purchasing both Beitzel and Rasmussen will have much overlapping. However, they are not the same. This is better than Beitzel in its topological overview of Palestine, extra graphs and diagrams, and its inclusion of excellent regional maps but worse in that the maps throughout are poorly colored and not tied into the text with coordinates as is true of Beitzel; too few color photographs (Beitzel's weakness too but strengths in Rogerson and Pritchard).

_____. *Essential Atlas of the Bible*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2013. 159 pp. US$16.99 pb.
A compact guide in a handy and more affordable style that covers geography and historical maps; many timelines and photos.

Rogerson, John. *Atlas of the Bible*. New York: Facts on File [distributed by Thomas Nelson], 1986. 237 pp. CBD for US$32.50.
Visually stunning, regional maps and many color photographs (Beitzel's weaknesses), but weak in physical geography and too-brief summaries of events (Beitzel's strengths).

Schultz, Samuel J. *The Old Testament Speaks*. 4th ed. New York: Harper & Row, 1960, 1970, 1980, 1990. 436 pp.
Conservative archaeological and historical OT survey with good attention to backgrounds. Holds to undated creation (p. 13), local Flood (p. 16), and early date for the Exodus (p. 49). Schultz taught Bible and theology at Wheaton College for many years. He often presents alternate views but holds his own with reserve.

Thompson, J. A. *Handbook of Life in Bible Times*. Downers Grove: IVP, 1986. 384 pp.

A comprehensive guide to the people of the OT, home life, food and drink, industry and commerce, culture and health, warfare, and religion during the OT times.

Walton, John H. *Chronological and Background Charts of the Old Testament*. Rev. & expanded. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978, 1994. 124 pp.
Provides over 100 OT charts, many of which are used in this course.

Wight, Fred H. *Manners and Customs of Bible Lands*. Chicago: Moody, 1953. 336 pp.
Older than Coleman's work but very readable and interesting with short chapters on subjects such as marriage customs, dress, education, music, etc. Helpful line drawings but no photographs.

Wilson, Clifford and Wilson, Barbara. *The Stones Still Shout! Sensational Highlights of the Bible and Archaeology*. Springfield, MO: Pacific International University and Victoria, Australia: Pacific Christian Ministries, 1999. 224 pp.
A collection of photographs by this husband-wife team from Australia provides many images and briefs descriptions of how archaeology has confirmed the OT and NT.

Youngblood, Ronald. *The Heart of the Old Testament*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1971. 108 pp. 221.13 YOU

The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible. 5 vols. Ed. Merrill C. Tenney. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1975, 1976. Abbreviated ZPEB.
This may be the best multi-volume evangelical Bible encyclopedia available today. Clearly written, comprehensive articles.

Zuck, Roy B., ed. *A Biblical Theology of the Old Testament*. Chicago: Moody, 1991. S$37.80 in SBC Book Centre (with student discount).
A concise and well-written treatment of how theological ideas within each OT book support a kingdom theme in which God's purpose is to re-establish His rule on earth through mankind which was lost at the Fall. Faculty members of Dallas Theological Seminary write each chapter. It is insightful but heavy reading. Required reading is copied in these notes, 318-28.

E. Other Matters

1. Contacting Me: You can contact me at SBC by box L19 or by phone (6559-1513). Also, my home is at 2-302 on the SBC campus, mobile is 9113-7090, and email griffith@sbc.edu.sg. My office hours when I can talk are from 11:00-1:00 on Tuesday and Friday and afternoons on Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday. Let's have lunch too!

2. Copying Class Notes: Allowed when you give credit where credit is due (until it makes you rich). You can also tape class sessions and copy all course PPT and translate them into other languages. You need not ask permission to do this, but if you translate them, please send me a copy so I can upload it to www.biblestudydownloads.com for others to teach it too.

F. Course Load

Readings (407 pp. x 4 min./page)	28 hours
Quiz Study & Taking of Six Quizzes (2 hours each)	12 hours
Paper	12 hours
Project	12 hours
Final Exam	8 hours
Total (45 sessions x 1.6 hours/each)	**72 hours**

G. Schedule (Reading Report)

Name_____ Box _____ Sem. Grade _____

Please tick the box column if completed in full on time. Note if completed late and/or partially. Also, complete each online quiz by midnight the night before class. Each quiz covers everything above it up to the previous quiz.

#	Date	Subject	Assignment	√	Pp
1	16 Jul (W)	Intro & Syllabus	No assignments		
2	18 Jul (F1)	**Geography** Ancient Near East	No assignments		
3	18 Jul (F2)	Israel Topography	Beitzel, *New Moody Atlas of Bible Lands*, 220-231 in notes, 306-317	☐	12
4	23 Jul (W)	Jerusalem Topography	Pipes, "If I Forget Thee: Does Jerusalem Really Matter to Islam?" in notes, 228-32	☐	4
5	25 Jul (F1)	**Literature** Pagan	Arnold/Beyer, 13-50, 66-70 (Creation/Flood)	☐	*41*
6	25 Jul (F2)	Old Testament Canon	Hall, "How We Got Our OT," *Moody* (Jan '87): 32-34 in notes, 195d-f	☐	*3*
			Hubbard, "The Quest for the Original Bible," *Moody* (Sept '86): 13-17 in notes, 195g-k	☐	*6*
	30 July (W)	**Arthurs Seminar**	**Class Cancelled (no assignments)**		
7	1 Aug (F1)	**Biblical Theology** Covenants	Beyer, B. E., "The Practice of Covenant Making" in *Biblical Illustrator* (Fall '93): 36-39 in notes, 233-36	☐	4
			Arnold/Beyer, 96-103 (Covenants & Treaties)	☐	8
8	1 Aug (F2)	Kingdom Theology	Merrill, "Theology of Pentateuch" in Zuck, *Bib. Theol. of OT*, ix-16 in notes, 318-28	☐	15
			Quiz #1 by midnight the night before class		
9	6 Aug (W)	**Prophecy**	**Assignment #1: Prophecy** Arnold/Beyer, 207-26 (Prophecies, Visions, Apocalyptic, Divination, Incantations, Lamentations)	☐	19
10	8 Aug (F1)	**Archaeology** History & Methods	Randall Price, "Archaeology and the Bible" in notes, 329-36	☐	*8*
11	8 Aug (F2)	Significant Finds Dead Sea Scrolls	Coogan, Michael D. "10 Great Finds," *Biblical Archaeology Review* 21 (May/June 1995): 36-47 in notes, 216-27	☐	*12*
12	13 Aug (W)	**Creation**	**Assignment #2: Creation**		
13	15 Aug (F1)	Theistic Evolution	No assignments		
14	15 Aug (F2)	Movie	"The Six Days of Creation" (no assignments)		
15	20 Aug (W)	**Chronology** • Genesis	Merrill, *Kingdom of Priests (KOP)*, 66-78 in notes, 337-343	☐	14
16	22 Aug (F1)	• Judges & Kings	Arnold/Beyer, 171-72 (Hebrew Inscriptions)	☐	2
17	22 Aug (F2)	**Peoples** Introduction & Sumerians	Merrill, *KOP*, 25-34 in notes, 344-49	☐	*10*
			10 pages from Hoerth, 19-41 (Sumerians) in notes, 350-61	☐	*10*
			Arnold/Beyer, 71-73 (Tower of Babel), 104-117 (Laws), 150-59 (Lists/Chronicles)	☐	*27*
			Quiz #2 by midnight the night before class		
18	27 Aug (W)	Phoenicians	10 pages from Hoerth, *Peoples of the OT World*, 183-206 (Phoenicians)	☐	10
19	29 Aug (F1)	Philistines	Turnham, T., "Philistia vs. Israel" in *Biblical Illustrator* (Fall '94): 3-9 in notes, 245-49	☐	7
20	29 Aug (F2)	Canaanites & Amorites	10 pages from Hoerth, 157-81 (Canaanites/Amorites)	☐	10

#	Date	Subject	Assignment	√	Pp
21	3 Sep (W)	Moabites	10 pages from Hoerth, 317-33 (Moabites)	☐	10
22	5 Sep (F1)	Ammonites	Arnold/Beyer, 50-62 (Baal Cycle) or 10 pp. from Hoerth, 293-315 (Ammonites)	☐	*10*
23	5 Sep (F2)	Edomites	10 pages from Hoerth, 335-47 (Edomites)	☐	*10*
	10 & 12 Sep	**Mid-Sem. Break**	**No class or assignments**		
24	17 Sep (W)	Assyrians	Arnold/Beyer, 137-47 (Royal Records)	☐	*10*
			Hunt, H. "Sixth Century Siege Warfare" in *Biblical Illustrator* (Fall '96): 43-45 in notes, 254-56	☐	3
25	19 Sep (F1)	Egyptians	Arnold/Beyer, 62-66 (Creation), 160-62 (Stela), 192-96 (Love Songs)	☐	*12*
			Quiz #3 by midnight the night before class		
26	19 Sep (F2)	Arameans	10 pages from Hoerth, 207-229	☐	*10*
			Smith, M.E., "Syria & Israel in the Ninth Century BC" in *Biblical Illustrator* (Fall '98): 54-57 in notes, 250-53	☐	4
27	24 Sep (W)	Babylonians	Arnold/Beyer, 155-59 (Chronicles), 168-70 (Ostraca), 197-204 (Hymns/Prayers)	☐	*16*
28	26 Sep (F1)	Persians	Arnold/Beyer, 147-49 (Cyrus Cylinder)	☐	*3*
			Hoerth, 107-123 (Persians) in notes, 362-70	☐	*17*
			Quiz #4 by midnight the night before class		
29	26 Sep (F2)	**Socio-Economic** • Slavery	Gower, Ralph, *The New Manners & Customs of Bible Times*, 186-201 in notes, 381-388 (Towns & Villages)	☐	*8*
30	1 Oct (W)	• Family Life	**Assignment #3: Women**		
			Gower, Ralph, *The New Manners & Customs of Bible Times*, 57-74 in notes, 371-80	☐	*17*
31	3 Oct (F1)	• Rural Life	Gower, 234-49 in notes, 389-397 (Journeys & Travel, Hospitality)	☐	*9*
			Gower, 76-85 in notes, 398-402	☐	*10*
32	3 Oct (F2)	• Education	**Project Due**		
	8 Oct (W)	**Day of Prayer**	**No class or assignments**		
33	10 Oct (F1)	**Religions** **Sacrifices**	Matthews, V. H., *Manners and Customs in the Bible*, 75-84 in notes, 297-302	☐	*10*
34	10 Oct (F2)	**Pagan Worship**	Gower, 331-37 in notes, 257-60	☐	*7*
			Arnold/Beyer, 118-33 (Cultic Texts), 175-91 (Wisdom Lit.)	☐	*32*
36	15 Oct (W)	**Judaism:** • Monotheism	Youngblood, *The Heart of the OT*, 7-15 in notes, 281-85	☐	*8*
			Quiz #5 by midnight the night before class		
37	17 Oct (F1)	• Salvation	John S. Feinberg, "Salvation in the OT," in *Tradition & Testament*, eds. John & Paul Feinberg (Chicago: Moody, 1981): 39-77 in notes, 427-46	☐	*38*
38	17 Oct (F2)	• Feasts Part 1	Gower, 354-73 in notes, 403-12	☐	*20*
	22 Oct (W)	**Deepavali**	**No class or assignments**		
39	24 Oct (F1)	• Feasts Part 2	Thompson, J. A. *Handbook of Life in Bible Times*, 125-45 in notes, 286-96	☐	*21*
40	24 Oct (F2)	• Priests & Temple (reading *not* in notes)	Backhouse, Robert. *The Student Bible Guide to the Temple*, 1-32 (on reserve in the SBC library)	☐	*32*
			Quiz #6 by midnight the night before class		
	29 & 31 Oct	**Study Week**	**No class or assignments**		
–	3-6 Nov M-Th at midnight	Online Final Exam	Study the pages on the Final Exam Study Guide (p. 447), pray, then take the final online		

H. Grading

1. Research Paper Grade Sheet

Student _____ Topic _____ Box _____

The first four sections below cover the paper's *content* (70% of the grade). The Form grade (the other 30%) is based on Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, 8th ed. (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 2013). Follow also the *SBC Writing Standards 2014-ed. 12* and the checklist on the next two pages.

	1 Poor	2 Minimal	3 Average	4 Good	5 Excellent
Introduction					
Purpose (the paper addresses what issue?)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Scope of the issue defined/narrowed down	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Procedure for addressing the issue introduced	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Body					
Wide research (other views, good sources)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Individual work (no more than 20% quotations)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Key passages addressed adequately	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Development (proves points, not just lists verses)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Interpretation of passages accurate (exegesis)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Conclusion					
Solution given to issue raised in introduction	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Main points reviewed and/or restated	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Length (1/2 to 1 page, w/o unnecessary info.)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Miscellaneous					
(These can be addressed anywhere in the paper)					
Application (shows why the topic is important)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Depth (leaves any questions unanswered?)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Internet not used for more than 20% of sources	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Form					
Format (typed, title page, length, pages numbered)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Spelling and typographical errors, punctuation	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Grammar (agreement of subject/verb and tenses)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Footnoting (better than endnoting; biblio. incl.)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Arranged logically (not a collection of thoughts)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Sections clearly stated without orphan headings	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Summary					
Number of ticks per column	____	____	____	____	____
Multiplied by point values of the column	**x 1**	**x 2**	**x 3**	**x 4**	**x 5**
Equals the total point value for each column	____	____	____	____	____

Net points _____ minus 3 points per day late (____ points) equals % grade of ____%

Comments:

14th edition (10 July 2014)

2. Research Paper Checklist

* Asterisks show the most common mistakes SBC students make on research papers. Give special attention to these areas!

13th edition (8 July 2014)

1. General Format

1.1 The most complete and widely used format guide is Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, 8th ed. rev. by John Grossman and Alice Bennett (Chicago & London: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1937, 1955, 1967, 1973, 1987, 1996, 2007, 2013). 466 pp.

1.2 Areas not answered by Turabian are addressed in the SBC Writing Standards (2014 edition).

1.3 Other issues are found in *The Chicago Manual of Style*, 16th ed. (Chicago: Editorial Benei Noaj, 2010) and *The SBL Handbook of Style: For Ancient Near Eastern, Biblical, and Early Christian Studies*, ed. Patrick H. Alexander *et al.* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1999).

2. Preliminaries

2.1 The title page should follow the typical format in Turabian.
- 2.1.1 Only the title and the author should be in **bold** with the rest in regular text. Do *not* have all CAPS.
- 2.1.2 Please include your mail box number after your name.
- 2.1.3 The same size 12-point Times New Roman font should be used throughout the paper.

2.2 The margins should not change (e.g., should not be in outline form) but should be 2.5 cm on all sides.

2.3* Include a Table of Contents.
- 2.3.1 The Contents page should include only the first page number of each section.
- 2.3.2 Subtitles within the Contents page should be indented.
- 2.3.3 Note this is called a "Table of Contents" and not a "Table of Content."
- 2.3.4 "Table of Contents" should not be an entry on the Table of Contents.

2.4 Page numbers should be at the top right in the preliminaries (except no number on Title Page and Table of Contents) and at the bottom centre from the first page to the end.

3. Body & Style

3.1* Provide an introduction that summarizes the problem(s) your paper aims to answer.

3.2* Check your grammar for confusion of tense, plural, verb/noun, etc. (cf. section 9)

3.3 Use a spell checker if you have one on your computer to avoid careless spelling mistakes.

3.4 Double-space the paper throughout in prose form (not outline form).

3.5* Write in the third person rather than the first person ("This author..." and not "I" or "we" or "us").

3.6 Follow these guidelines for headings within the text:
- 3.6.1 Headings should match your Contents page. None of your levels should appear in all capitals.
- 3.6.2 Headings should not have periods (full stops or colons) after them.
- 3.6.3* Headings should not be in outline form (no "I," "II," "A," "1," "a," "-," etc.).
- 3.6.4 Avoid widow headings (at the bottom of a page without the first sentence of a paragraph).
- 3.6.5 Don't repeat a heading on the next page even if it covers the same section of the paper.
- 3.6.6 Each research paper should have at least 2-3 headings or divisions.
- 3.6.7 In short papers (6-8 pages) without chapters, make (1) main headings **bold** centred, (2) subheadings regular text centred, (3) ***bold italicised*** left column, (4) regular text left column, and (5) **bold** text that begins an indented paragraph. If only two levels are needed then (2) above may be skipped.

3.7* Do not clutter your paper with unnecessary details that do not contribute to your purpose.

3.8* Make every statement a full sentence within the text (the exception is headings).

3.9 Critically evaluate your sources; do not believe a heresy just because it's in print!

3.10 Make sure your reasoning is solid and logical.

3.11* Provide a conclusion which solves/summarizes the problem addressed in the introduction

4. Abbreviations

4.1* Do not use abbreviations or contractions in the text or footnotes (except inside parentheses).

4.2 Cite from 1-3 verses inside parentheses in the text but 4 or more verses in the footnotes.

4.3* Use proper biblical book abbreviations with a colon between chapter and verse.

4.4 Do not start sentences with an Arabic number. Write "First Kings 3:16..." (not "1 Kings 3:16...").

4.5 Write out numbers under ten in the text (e.g., "three"); abbreviate those over ten (e.g., "45").

4.6 "For example" (e.g.) and "that is to say" (i.e.) are abbreviated only within parentheses and each has two periods.

5. Quotations

5.1* When quoting word-for-word, use quotation marks and footnote the source. Do not plagiarize!

5.2 Use proper quotation formats with single quotation marks within double ones.

5.3 Indent block quotes (no quote marks) with 10-point, single-space text of five or more lines (cf. Turabian, 349).

5.4* Avoid citing long texts of Scriptures or other sources so the paper mostly reflects your own thinking.

5.5 Provide biblical support for your position rather than simply citing your opinion.

5.6 If your source quotes a more original source, then quote the original in this manner: R. N. Soulen, *Handbook*, 18 (cited by Rick Griffith, *New Testament Backgrounds*, 7th ed. [SBC, 1999], 165).

Research Paper Checklist (2 of 2)

6. Punctuation

6.1 Periods & commas go *before* quote marks and footnote numbers (e.g., "Marriage," not "Marriage",)
6.2 Periods & commas go *outside* parentheses (unless a complete sentence is within the parentheses). For example: "Jesus wept" (John 11:35). but never "Jesus wept." (John 11:35)
6.3 A space should not precede a period, comma, final parenthesis, semicolon, apostrophe, or colon.
6.4 A space should not follow a beginning parenthesis or beginning quotation mark.
6.7 A space should always follow a comma and 1-2 spaces always follow a period.

7. Footnotes

7.1* The first reference to a book includes (in this order) the author's *given* name first then family name, title (in *italics* but not in quotes), publication data in parentheses (place, colon, publisher, comma, then year), volume (if more than one), and page number (no "p." or "pp."). For example: Ralph Gower, *The New Manners and Customs of Bible Times* (Chicago: Moody, 1987), 233. In footnotes, use a period only *once* at the end of the citation. Indent the first line of each footnote entry.
7.2* Cite later references to the same book but a different page number with only the author's family name (not given name) and new page number. For example: Gower, 166.
7.3 If the next citation has the same book and same page number, then type "Ibid." (This is the Latin abbreviation for "in the same place.") However, if a different page number is referred to, then "Ibid." should be followed by a period and comma. For example: Ibid., 64.
7.4 If the next citation is by the same author but a different work, type "Idem" (Latin abbreviation for "by the same author") and a comma before the new book. For example: Idem, *Marriage and Family*, 221.
7.5* Encyclopedia, Bible dictionary, or other book entries with multiple authors under an editor should first cite the article's author, then article title within quotes, book, editor, publication data in parentheses, volume, and page. For example: P. Trutza, "Marriage," *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*, 5 vols., ed. Merrill C. Tenney (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1975, 1976), 4:92-102. (If needed, look up the author's name after the Contents page by tracing the initials at the end of the article.)
7.6 Footnote numbers are raised with no parentheses and go *after* a quotation's punctuation (e.g., period).
7.7 Always cite your footnote numbers in sequence rather than using a former number again.
7.8 Use only numbers as footnote references (don't use letters or *#@^%, etc.).
7.9 Cite translations in parentheses within the text rather than the footnotes—for example, "trust" (NIV).
7.10 Cite book, chapter, and paragraphs of primary (ancient) sources with Arabic numerals and full stops (e.g., "Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities* 18.1.3," not "Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities*, Book XVIII, Chapter 1, Section 3").
7.11 Page numbers may be added to primary sources in parentheses. For example: *War* 2.1 (Whiston, 44).

8. Bibliography

8.1 Alphabetize all sources by family name without numbering the sources.
8.2 Make entries single-spaced with the second line indented and with a double space between entries.
8.3 Do not cite an author's title in a footnote or the bibliography (no "Dr.," "Rev." etc.).
8.4 Cite book references differently than in the footnotes by including the author's *family* name first (not given name), title (in *italics* but not in quotes), publication data *without* parentheses (place, colon, publisher, comma, then year), and volume (if more than one). For example: Gower, Ralph. *The New Manners and Customs of Bible Times*. Chicago: Moody, 1987. Use full stops (not commas) after each given name, title, and date; don't use parentheses (but do use them in footnotes). Indent each line after the first line in an entry.
8.5* Encyclopedia, Bible dictionary, or other book entries with multiple authors under an editor should first cite the article's author, then article title within quotes, book, editor, publication data, volume, and page. For example: Trutza, P., "Marriage," *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*. Ed. Merrill C. Tenney. 5 vols. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1975, 1976. 4:92-102. (You may need to find the author's name after the Contents page by tracing the initials at the end of the article.)
8.6 Put the bibliography on a separate page rather than tagging it on the conclusion.
8.7 Consult as many sources as you have pages in your paper (e.g., 8 sources for an 8-page paper).
8.8* Include the bibliography even if the professor has assigned the sources.
8.9 Primary sources should be listed under the ancient author's name, followed by the translator's name. For example: Josephus. *The Works of Josephus*. Translated by William Whiston...
8.10 Primary sources with several or unknown authors should be listed by editor and/or translator's name. For example: Danby, Herbert, trans. *The Mishnah*. Oxford: University, 1933.

9. Common Grammatical and Spelling Mistakes

9.1 "Respond" (verb) is used for "response" (noun). "The respond" should be "The response."
9.2* Events in biblical times should be noted in the past tense; keep your tense consistent in the same paragraph.
9.3 Write "BC" dates *before* "BC" but "AD" dates *after* "AD" ("AD 70" and "70 BC" but never "70 AD" or "BC 70").
9.4 Always capitalize the words "Christian," "Bible," "Christ," "Word of God," and "Scripture(s)."
9.5 The current trend is to *avoid* capitalization, especially in the adjectives "biblical," "scriptural," etc.
9.6 Avoid words in all CAPITALS in the text (except acronyms) and *avoid* all CAPS in titles.

3. Course Evaluation Form for Your Class to Evaluate You on Your Last Day of Teaching

SINGAPORE BIBLE COLLEGE

COURSE EVALUATION OF STUDENT TEACHER

NAME OF COURSE: ...World of the OT... NAME (Optional):.....

TEACHER: ..... DATE:.....

Please summarize how you feel about each question and give this to your teacher.

KEY: SD = Strongly Disagree; D = Disagree; U = Uncertain; A = Agree; SA – Strongly Agree.

	SD	D	U	A	SA
The course objectives were clearly explained.					
The course objectives were achieved.					
The teacher was well prepared for each class.					
The course material was effectively presented.					
The methods of assessment were appropriate.					
The teacher responded well to students' questions.					
The teacher encouraged students to think for themselves & express their ideas.					
The teacher was accessible to students outside classes.					
TOTAL					

GENERAL COMMENTS:

1. **In what ways did you find this course helpful for your personal spiritual growth?**

2. **In what ways did you consider this course to be helpful for your ministry?**

3. **In what ways did you think this course could be improved for future students?**

4. **Further comments**

4. Teaching Report Grade Sheet

Student _____ Mailbox _____ Date _____

Presentation Taught _____ Language _____

For students teaching either the NT Survey or "The Bible...Basically" seminar, this page assesses mostly the *content* of your report (70% of the grade). The Format grade (the other 30%) addresses English grammar, clarity of writing and presentation, etc.

	1 Poor	2 Minimal	3 Average	4 Good	5 Excellent
Introduction					
Class (whom did you teach and in what language?)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Scope (what did you teach in each session?)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Procedure (how did you conduct the sessions?)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Body					
Specifics given rather than general observations	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Challenges faced in teaching addressed adequately	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Improvements suggested in content	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Application					
Action Points given to improve next time teaching	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Personal and transparent (self critical is good)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Conclusion					
Main points or lessons reviewed and/or restated	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Length (2-4 single-spaced pp., w/o unnecessary info.)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Miscellaneous					
Handouts (student's own material included)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Creativity (pictures of class, video clips, quizzes)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Course Evaluations included & responses totaled	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Form					
Format (typed, title page, length, pages numbered)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Submitted in printed form (not emailed to professor)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Spelling and typos fixed, punctuation good, 12 pt. font	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Grammar (agreement of subject/verb and tenses)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Footnotes (not endnotes, if used; biblio. of resources)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Arranged logically (not a collection of thoughts)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Summary					
Number of ticks per column	____	____	____	____	____
Multiplied by point values of the column	**x 1**	**x 2**	**x 3**	**x 4**	**x 5**
Equals the total point value for each column	____	____	____	____	____

Net points _____ minus 3 points per day late (____ points) for Teaching Report grade: _____%

Comments:

Revised 3 July 2012

5. PowerPoint Translation Grade Sheet

Student _____ Mailbox _____ Date _____

Bible Book or Presentation Translated _____ Language _____

	1 Poor	2 Minimal	3 Average	4 Good	5 Excellent
Translation					
Overall content translated accurately	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
No English on any slide (design new memory aids) --For example, replace "A Judge Must Judge" or "ARC" with a mnemonic in your language	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Fonts					
Notes page # in Arial bold 24 point upper right screen	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Generic fonts or popular language fonts (e.g, unicode)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Sans-serif fonts used that lack "feet" (e.g., Arial)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Text					
Text **does not overlap** other text, image, or page edge	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Text **shadow** not seen prior to animation appears	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Text **did not need to be enlarged** (should fill the slide)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Text has **good contrast** with background	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Text **fits text boxes** correctly with extra space on sides	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Text box **colors match** surroundings w/o perimeter lines	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Images					
Images **do not overlap** text or edge of page	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Embedded text in **English covered** with translation	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Miscellaneous					
Format of fonts & background colors same as English	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Animations don't need correction; in PPT, not Keynote	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Slide order remains the same as the English version	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Done right the first time (no email trail with me!)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
File name *translated* with dash & number of slides at end	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Easy transfer by CD or Memory Key or Email	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Sent as one PowerPoint file (not separate ones or a pdf)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Summary					
Number of ticks per column	____	____	____	____	____
Multiplied by point values of the column	**x 1**	**x 2**	**x 3**	**x 4**	**x 5**
Equals the total point value for each column	____	____	____	____	____

Net points _____ minus 3 points per day late (____ points) equals % grade of _____%

Comments:

Revised 5 May 2014

6. "The Bible…Basically" Script Translation Grade Sheet

Student _____ Mailbox _____ Date _____
Presentation Translated _____ Language _____

	1 Poor	2 Minimal	3 Average	4 Good	5 Excellent
Translation					
Overall content translated accurately	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
No English on any slide (design new memory aids)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
--For example, replace "A Judge Must Judge" or "ARC" with a mnemonic in your language					
Fonts & Formatting					
Slide Advance Hashes retained	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Consistent Fonts (e.g., Unicode or generic/popular)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Format of headings and margins same as English	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Widow headings avoided (slide number atop new page)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Misc					
Done right the first time (no email trail with me!)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
File name remains same with dash & language at end	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Easy transfer by CD or Memory Key or Email	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Sent as intact file (don't break a file into separate ones)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Summary					
Number of ticks per column	____	____	____	____	____
Multiplied by point values of the column	**x 2**	**x 4**	**x 6**	**x 8**	**x 10**
Equals the total point value for each column	____	____	____	____	____

Net points _____ minus 3 points per day late (____ points) equals % grade of _____%

Comments:

Revised 3 July 2012

7. PowerPoint Presentation Grade Sheet

Student _____ Topic _____ Presentation Grade _____ Box _____

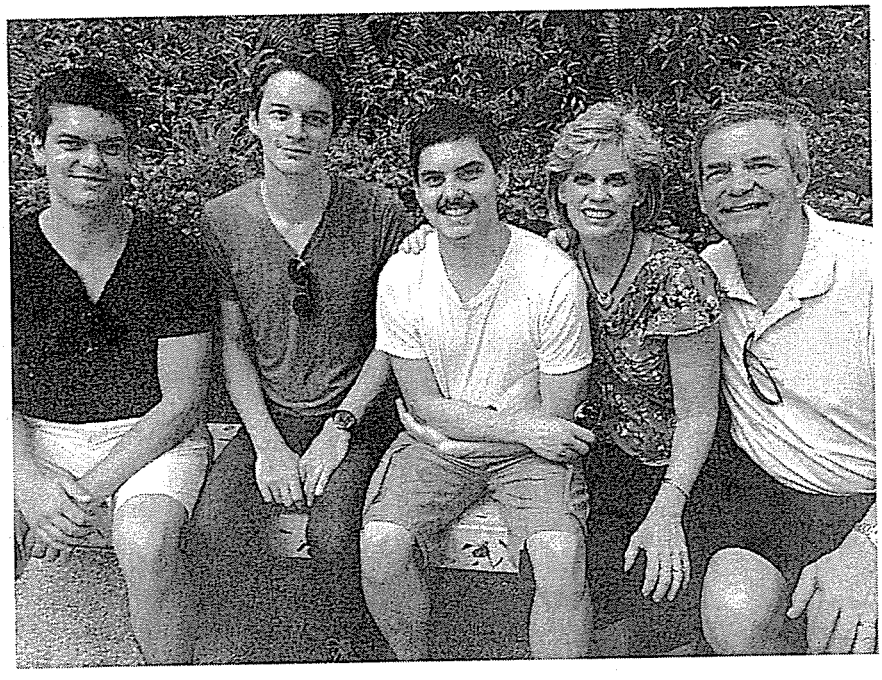
The Introduction, Body, Conclusion, and Miscellaneous concern the presentation *content* (70% of the grade). The *form* grade (the other 30%) concerns how you present your material.

	1 Poor	2 Minimal	3 Average	4 Good	5 Excellent
Introduction					
Attention (focuses listener's need on the theme)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Procedure for addressing the book introduced	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Body					
Look (charts, other helpful info.)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Individual work (not excessive quotations)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Key passages shown with insightful comments	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Problem Texts (fair to views, own view supported)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Interpretation of passages accurate (exegesis)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Conclusion					
Solution given to issue raised in introduction	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Main points reviewed and/or restated	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Application (exhorts life change)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Miscellaneous					
(These can be addressed anywhere in the presentation)					
Depth (leaves any questions unanswered?)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Interesting in voice, illustrations, presence	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Theological content	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Handouts given with attractive layout/script	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Form					
Format (slides attractive, clear, readable font size)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Spelling and typographical errors, punctuation	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Grammar (agreement of subject/verb and tenses)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Arranged logically (not a collection of slides)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Length (30-40 minutes w/o unnecessary info.)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
CD & MS Word File Submitted	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Summary					
Number of ticks per column	____	____	____	____	____
Multiplied by point values of the column	**x 1**	**x 2**	**x 3**	**x 4**	**x 5**
Equals the total point value for each column	____	____	____	____	____

Net points _____ minus 3 points per day late (____ points) equals % grade of ____%

Comments:

My Biographical Sketch



Rick & Susan Griffith

Stephen (24), Kurt (27) & John (21)

Background

"Never say 'never.'" Rick and Susan Griffith both learned this age-old tip the hard way.

Rick recalls sitting in his elementary school classes thinking, "If there's one thing I'll *never* become it's a *teacher*. Imagine saying the same stuff over and over, year after year!"

Yet after trusting Christ at age 13 and beginning to teach God's Word, Rick's attitude began to change. After his business degree at California State University, Hayward, and Master of Theology degree (Pastoral Ministries) and the Doctor of Philosophy degree (Bible Exposition) from Dallas Theological Seminary in Texas, Dr. Griffith soon found himself on the other end of the classroom—and loving it!

Susan, from Yucaipa, California, also learned not to say "never." As she earned her Bachelor of Arts degree in piano at Biola University, several friends married and worked to put their husbands through three more years of seminary training. "I'll never do that!" she exclaimed. Soon afterwards she invested three years (1981-1983) singing together with her future husband in the Crossroads, Campus Crusade's traveling music team in Asia. This nine member Philippines-based group shared Christ in the Philippines, China, Hong Kong, Korea, Japan, Macau, Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, and Singapore.

In December 1983 Susan's "never" became a reality. She and Rick were married and like Jacob and Rachel of old, Susan also worked for her mate. During these seven seminary years Rick served as a pastor, corporate chaplain, and International Students church consultant. Susan taught women's Bible studies and often ministered by singing. Their primary church in Texas is Christ Chapel Bible Church in Fort Worth.

The Griffith family now includes three sons: Kurt (27 yrs.), Stephen (24 yrs.), and John (21 yrs.). During home assignment they minister mainly from the First Baptist Church of Yucaipa, California.

Ministry

However, since 1991 the Griffiths' home has been Singapore where Dr. Rick serves as Doctor of Ministry Director with 30 other full-time faculty at Singapore Bible College. SBC has about 500 full-time students from 23 countries and 25 denominations, as well as many professionals in the certificate-level Centre for Continuing Theological Education (CCTE). During his first term he taught a variety of courses: Old Testament Survey, New Testament Survey, New Testament Backgrounds, Eschatology (the study of future things), Evangelism, Pastoral Epistles, Psalms, Homiletics (preaching), Hebrew Exegesis, and four Old

Testament exposition courses. For many years he also taught Pentateuch, Gospels, Eschatology (theology of the future), Ecclesiology (theology of the church), and Pneumatology (theology of the Holy Spirit). Now he teaches mostly Bible Exposition classes, including Homiletics, World of the OT & NT, and OT & NT Survey. He has also written three Advanced Studies in the Old and New Testament courses at the Internet Biblical Seminary (www.internetseminary.org).

Dr. Rick loves the variety and strategic nature of his teaching. He invests his life into Anglicans from Sri Lanka, Lutherans from Singapore, Presbyterians from Korea, Conservative Baptists from the Philippines, and missionaries from Campus Crusade, OMF, and Operation Mobilisation—sometimes all in one class! One class had 17 of the 20 students training for ministry outside of Singapore. Nearly all SBC graduates enter pastoral or missionary ministries due to Asia's shortage of trained leaders.

Ministry opportunities abound. Rick and Susan have conducted premarital counseling for students and their home has an open door to students and guests traveling through Singapore. They have sung in evangelistic thrusts and in 1992 also participated in founding International Community School, an expatriate Christian primary and secondary school in Singapore now with 430 students. The Griffiths are missionaries with WorldVenture and Rick serves as the Singapore field leader.

Dr. Rick also enjoys several other partnerships. He also serves as Asia Translation Coordinator for "The Bible... Basically International" seminars; web author & editor, Internet Biblical Seminary; and itinerate professor for 52 trips throughout Asia in places such as Lanka Bible College (Sri Lanka), Myanmar Evangelical Graduate School of Theology, Union Bible Training Center (Mongolia), Jordan Evangelical Theological Seminary, and Biblical Education by Extension training in three restricted access countries.

In 2006 the Griffiths also helped begin Crossroads International Church, Singapore. Here "Dr. Rick" is "Pastor Rick" in his role as pastor-teacher and elder. The church meets at 4 PM on Sundays at the Upper Room of the Metropolitan YMCA at 60 Stevens Road. See cicfamily.com for details.

In 2009 Dr. Rick began the biblestudydownloads.com website that offers his courses for free download. This includes 5000 pages of course notes in Word and pdf formats, about 400 PowerPoint presentations in English, and hundreds of translations of these by his students into 37 languages. Current languages include Ao, Arabic, Bangla, Bisaya, Burmese, Chin, Chinese, Dutch, English, French, Hindi, Indonesian, Japanese, Kachin, Khmer, Kiswahili, Korean, Lotha, Malay, Malayalam, Mao, Mizo, Mongolian, Nepali, Nias, Paite, Russian, Sinhala, Spanish, Sumi, Tagalog, Tamil, Tangkhul, Tenyidie, Thai, Vaiphei, and Vietnamese.

Field

Singapore Bible College is strategically located at the "ministry hub" of Southeast Asia, the Republic of Singapore. A small island of only 14 by 26 miles, Singapore is a city-nation at the tip of the Malayan Peninsula. The population of is 75 percent Chinese, 15 percent Malay and 8 percent Indian. Other groups include Filipinos, Thais, Japanese, Americans, and Europeans. This beautiful island nation, with dynamic growth in churches and missionary force, has been called the "Antioch of Asia." The Singaporean cross-cultural missionary force is increasingly contributing to God's work in overseas ministries.

Passion

Rick's passion is for God's leaders to preach and live the Word of God. The servant of God's role is clearly given in the following verses:

- Teaching obedience to Christ's teaching is key to our commission to make disciples (Matt. 28:20)
- The priority of the apostles was teaching and prayer (Acts 6:1-16)
- Paul's legacy to Timothy focused on exposition: "Preach the Word" (2 Tim. 4:2-3)

However, recent trends include the following:

- Church people are biblically illiterate—Amos lamented that his day of prosperity had a "famine for hearing the words of the Lord" (Amos 8:11)
- Pastors are doing too many things so they have too little time to feed the flock
- Preachers give empty and simplistic sermons
- Attempting to be "relevant," pastors preach what people want to hear—not what they need

II. Geographical Backgrounds to the Old Testament

A. Ancient Near East

1. Bodies of Water (cf. p. 15)

   a) Seas

      (1) Persian Gulf: Not noted in Scripture but received the two key rivers

      (2) Great Sea: ancient name for the Mediterranean Sea

      (3) Sea of Kinnereth (Num. 34:1; Josh. 12:3; 13:27): Sea of Galilee = "harp"

      (4) Salt Sea (Sea of the Arabah): Called Dead Sea by Crusaders (AD 1100)

      (5) Red Sea: two forks which make up the Sinai Peninsula

   b) Rivers

      (1) Tigris: northern river of Mesopotamia upon which Nineveh sat

      (2) Euphrates: southern river of Mesopotamia that flowed though Babylon

      (3) Jordan: steep, winding connection from Sea of Kinnereth and Salt Sea

      (4) Wadi of Egypt: lower limit of the land promised to Abraham (Gen. 15:18)

      (5) Nile: longest river in the world and "lifeblood" of Egypt

2. Land (cf. p. 15)

   a) Fertile Crescent: arc-shaped agricultural land from Mesopotamia to Egypt

   b) Mesopotamia (lit. "between rivers") refers to the "Cradle of Civilization" between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers.

   c) Arabian Desert: little-traveled land from Mesopotamia to Egypt

3. Peoples (cf. p. 17) are listed in Genesis 11 with Semitic people descended from Shem and Genesis 5 & 10 giving genealogical accounts of patriarch life spans

B. The Land of Israel

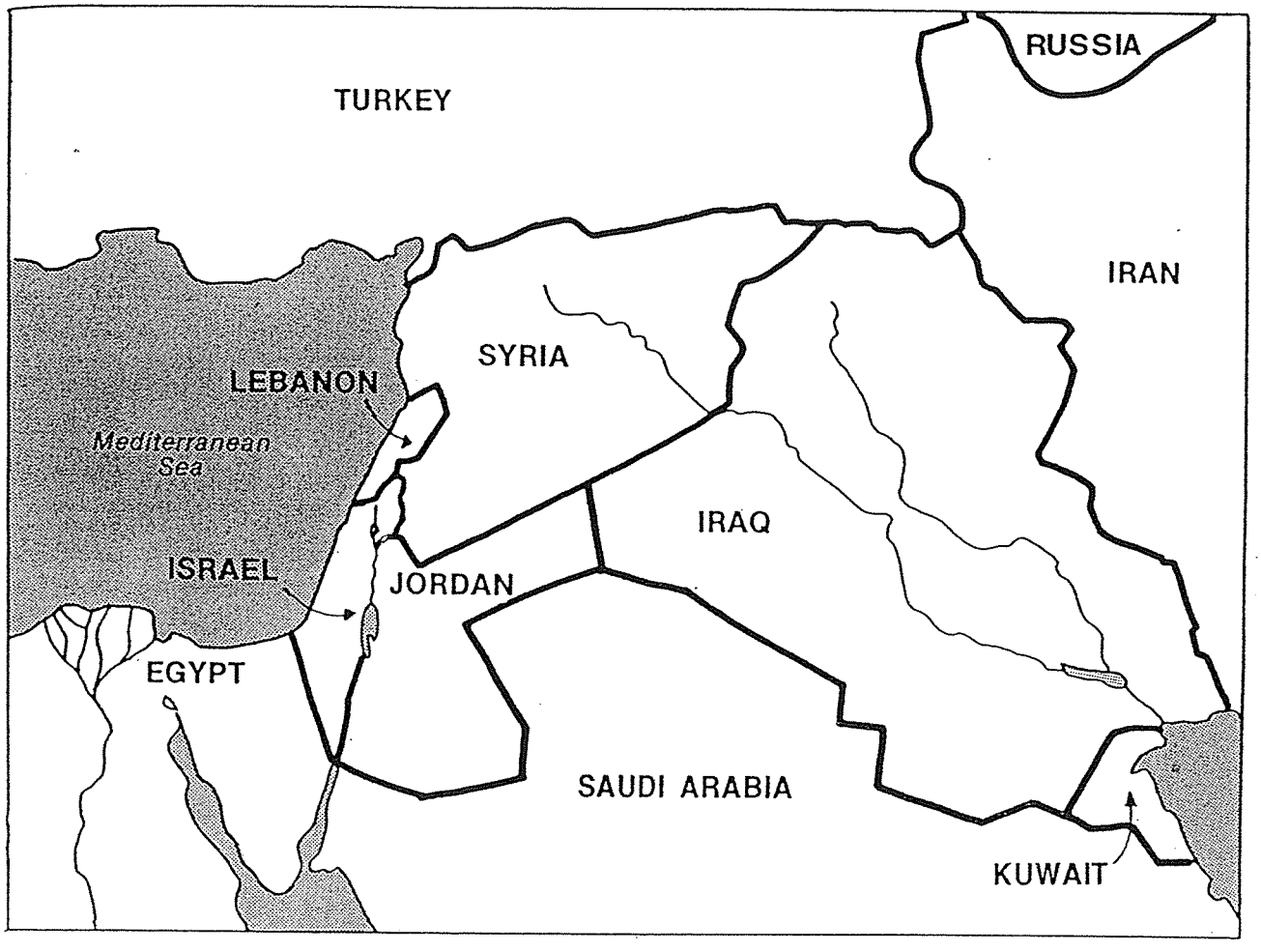
1. Five Major Longitudinal Regions (cf. p. 18)

2. Mountains (cf. p. 20)

3. Left Stage vs. Right Stage (cf. p. 15): regions of differing lifestyles

Maps of the OT and Modern Mid-East (complete)

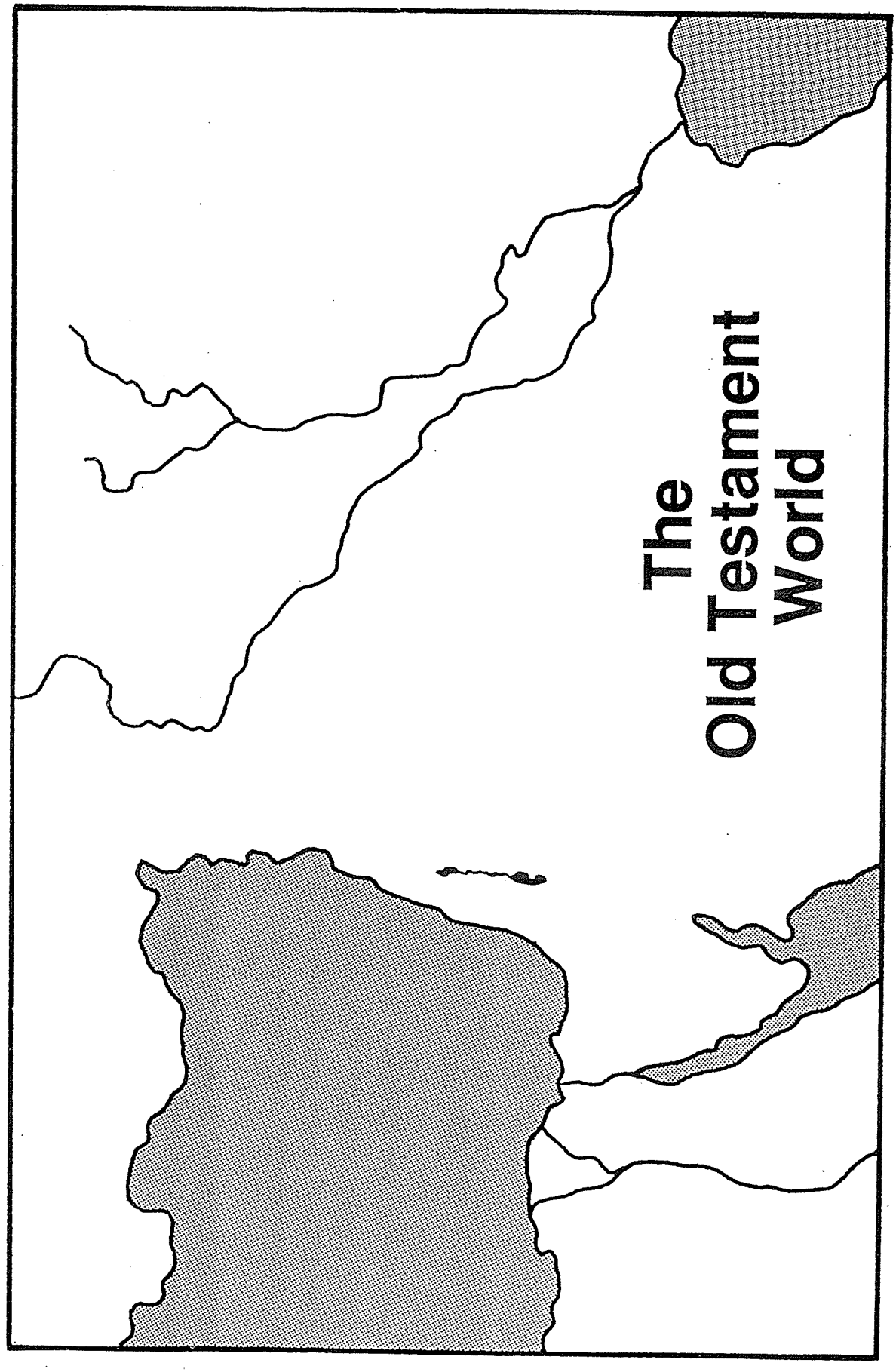
Terry Hall, *Bible Panorama*, 49, adapted (top) and Alfred Hoerth *et. al.*, *People of the Old Testament World*, 16, adapted (bottom)

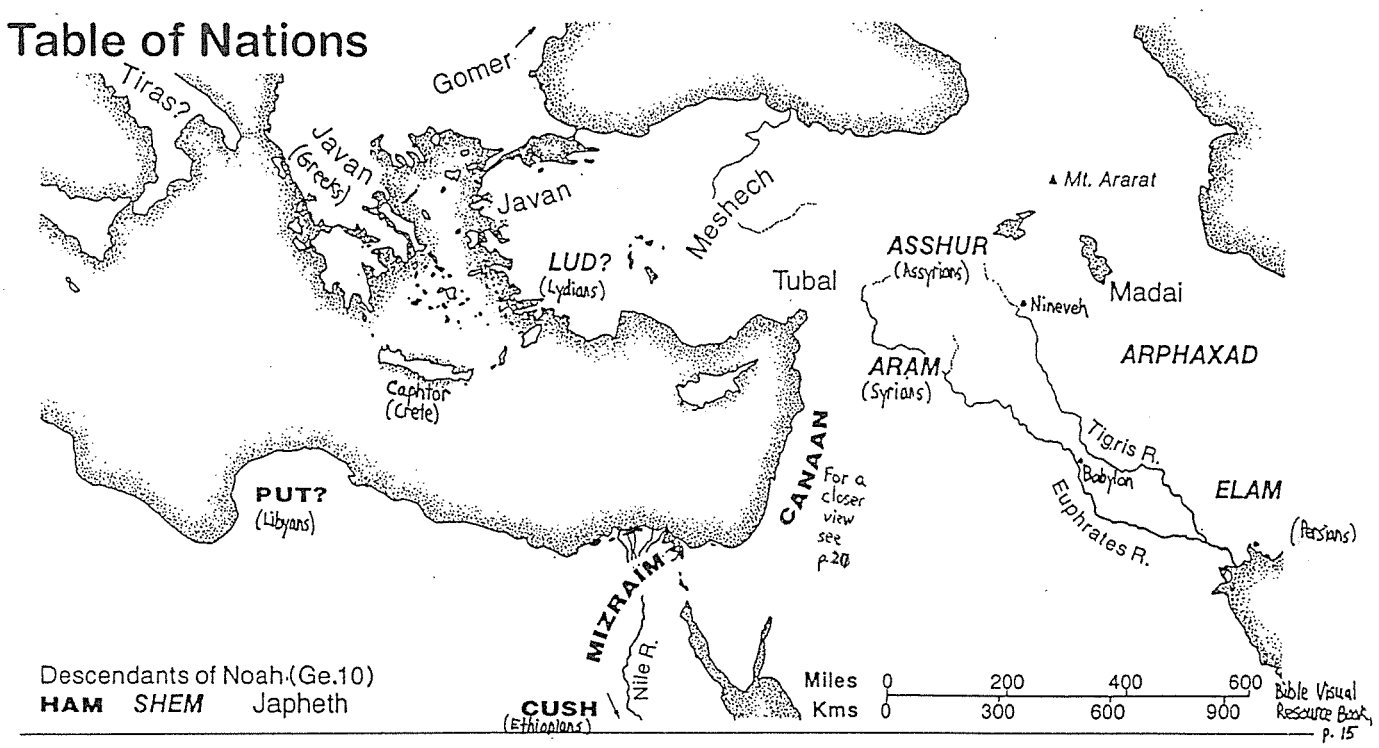




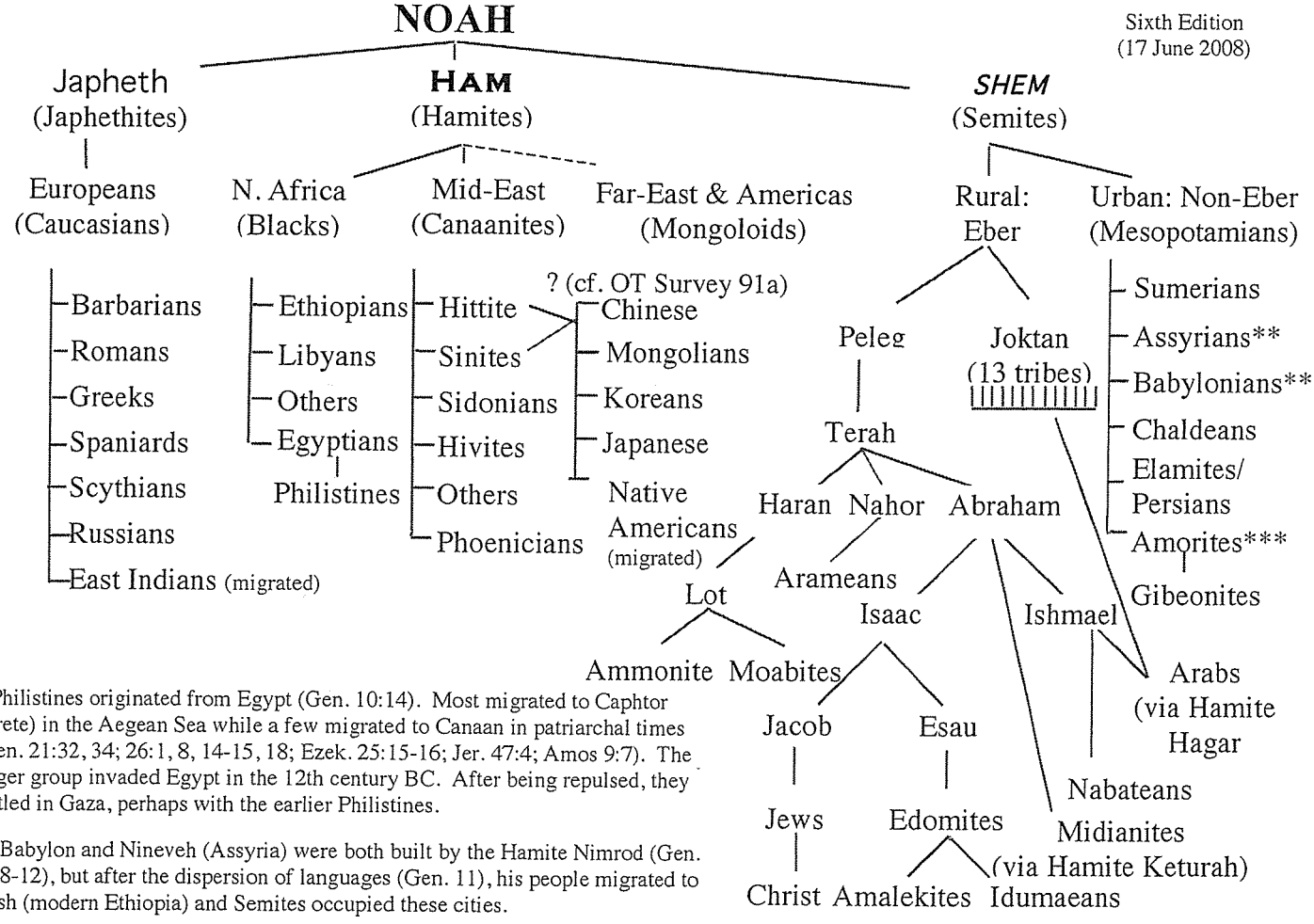
Map of the OT Mid-East (incomplete)

Terry Hall, *Bible Panorama*, 181





All people on earth trace their lineage from Noah, so there is really only one race–the *human* race! After a southward descent from Mt. Ararat, people tried to build a tower at Babel and were dispersed.



* Philistines originated from Egypt (Gen. 10:14). Most migrated to Caphtor (Crete) in the Aegean Sea while a few migrated to Canaan in patriarchal times (Gen. 21:32, 34; 26:1, 8, 14-15, 18; Ezek. 25:15-16; Jer. 47:4; Amos 9:7). The larger group invaded Egypt in the 12th century BC. After being repulsed, they settled in Gaza, perhaps with the earlier Philistines.

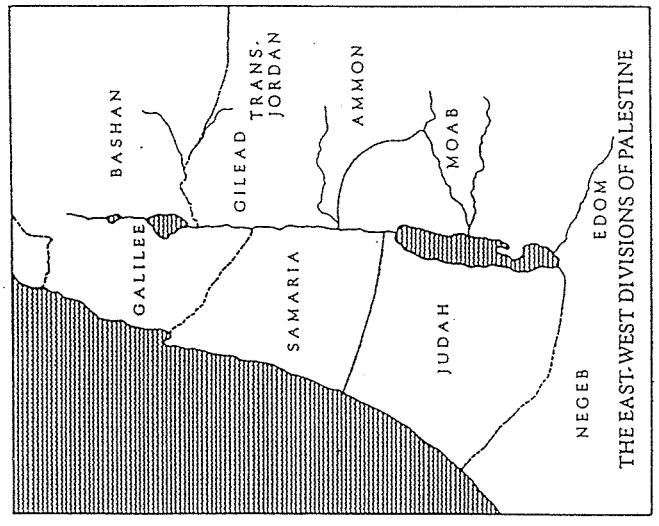
** Babylon and Nineveh (Assyria) were both built by the Hamite Nimrod (Gen. 10:8-12), but after the dispersion of languages (Gen. 11), his people migrated to Cush (modern Ethiopia) and Semites occupied these cities.

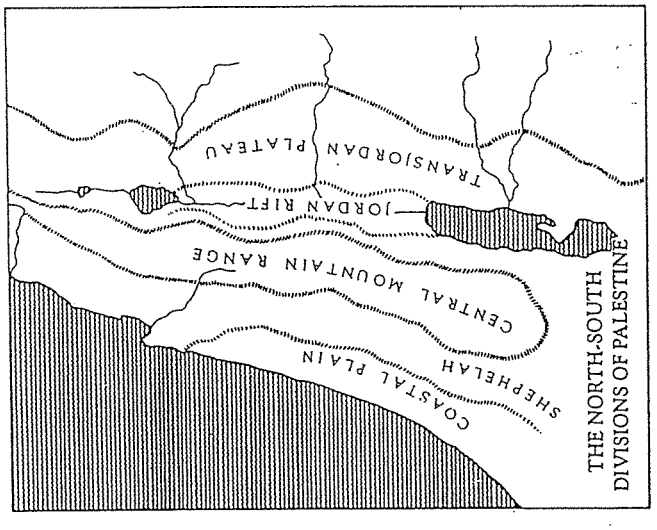
*** Amorites (Arameans) in Syria migrated SW (to Canaan) and SE (to Mesopotamia); cf. H. A. Hoeffner, "Amorites," *ZPEB*, 1:141.

Sources: Gen. 5; 10; 25:1-4; 36; 1 Chron. 1:19-23; Paul Benware, *Survey of the OT*, 264-74; Barry Beitzel, *The Moody Atlas of Bible Lands*, 76-79; Louis Hamada, *Understanding the Arab World*, 42, 51, 56; R. Laird Harris, "Genealogy," *ZPEB*, 2:673; Eugene Merrill, *Kingdom of Priests*, 25-32; Henry Morris, *The Genesis Record* (http://www.csinfo.org); *NIV Study Bible*, 21; John Whitcomb, *Chronological & Background Charts of the OT*, 2d ed., 71, 73 (OTS, 143-44); John Whitcomb & Henry Morris, *The Genesis Flood*, 45-54.

Regions and Elevations of Israel

LaSor, *Old Testament Survey*, 44, 47, and Hill & Walton, *A Survey of the Old Testament*, 51





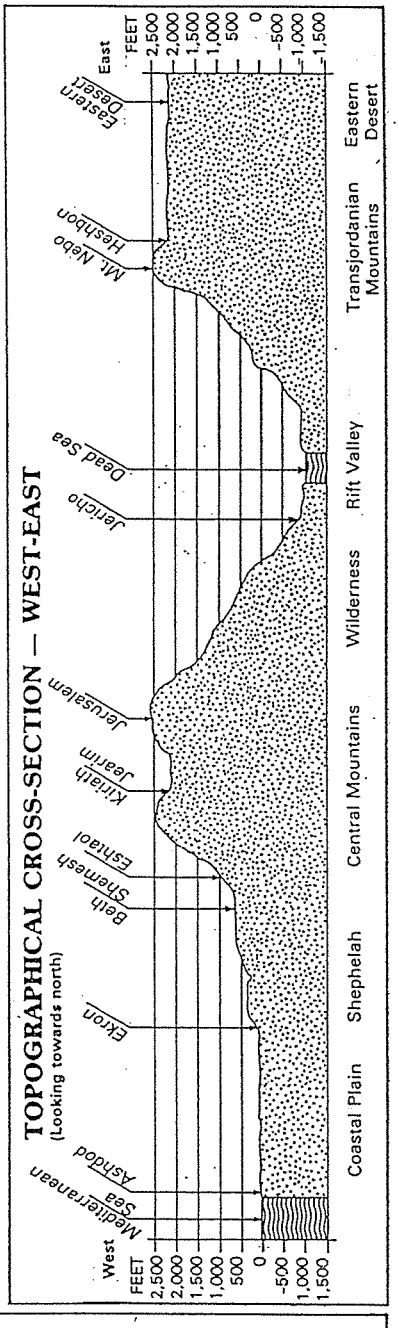
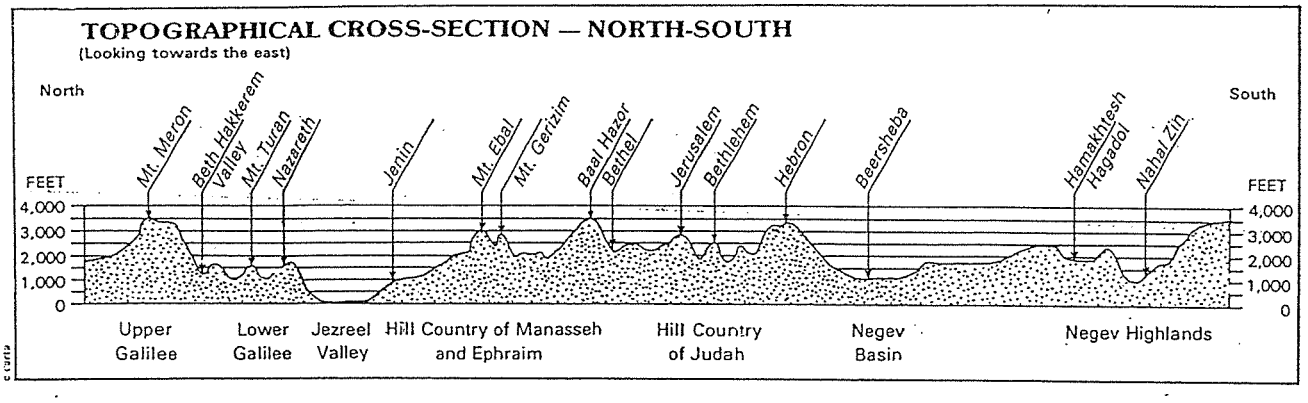


Figure 4.1. Geological Features of Palestine



Cross-Sectional Map of Israel

Barry Beitzel, *Moody Atlas of Bible Lands*, 28-29

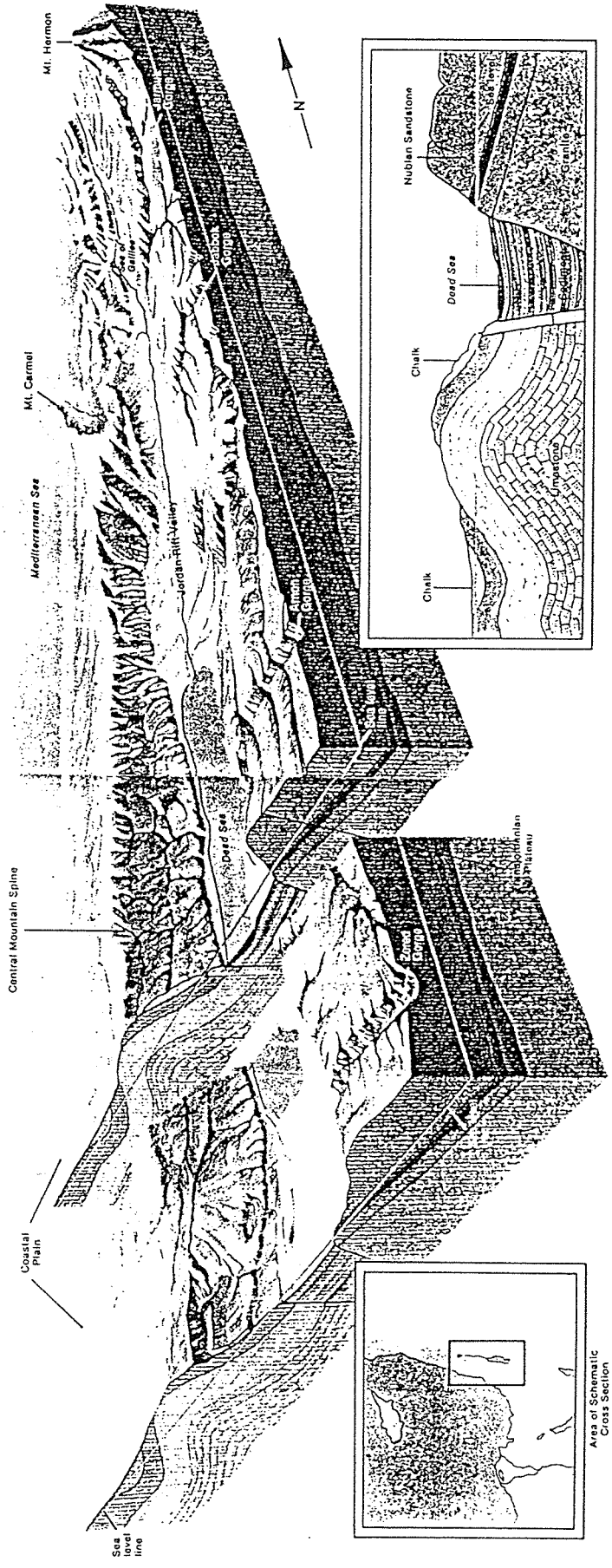


Figure 2 Cross-Sectional Schematic of Palestine.

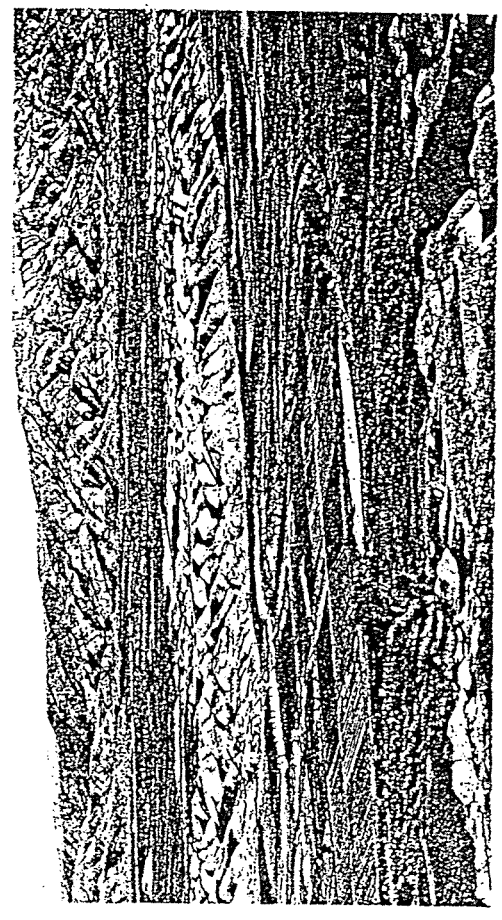


Figure 4 Jordan Rift Valley with the mountains of the Transjordanian Plateau towering in the background.



Figure 3 Mountains of Galilee plunge to the Sea of Galilee at Tarichaea, Magdala, and Tiberias.

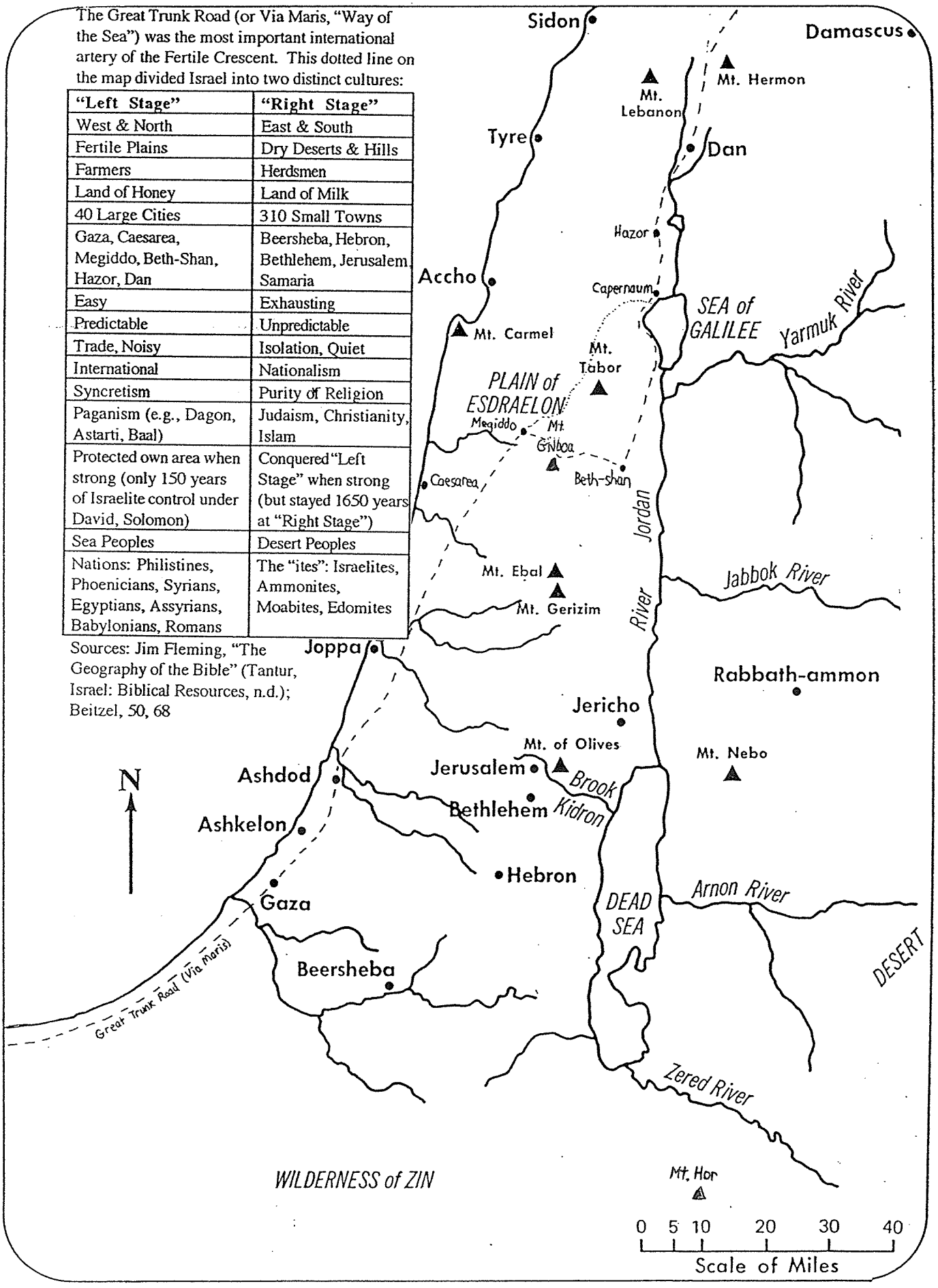
Travel in Ancient Israel

Marjie Mehlis, *Maps of the Holy Land for Overhead Projection* (Elgin, IL: David C. Cook Pub. Co., 1973)

The Great Trunk Road (or Via Maris, "Way of the Sea") was the most important international artery of the Fertile Crescent. This dotted line on the map divided Israel into two distinct cultures:

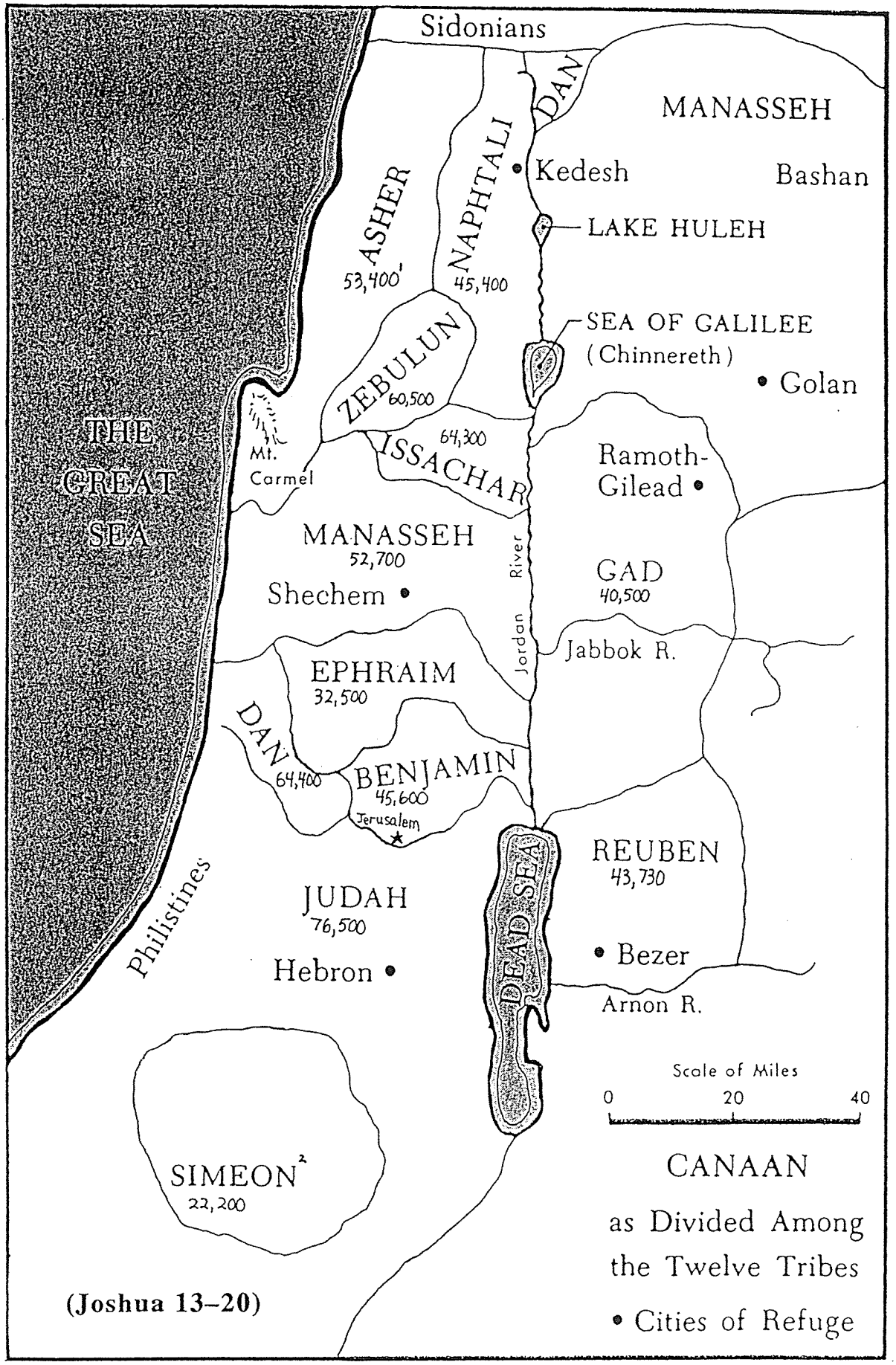
"Left Stage"	"Right Stage"
West & North	East & South
Fertile Plains	Dry Deserts & Hills
Farmers	Herdsmen
Land of Honey	Land of Milk
40 Large Cities	310 Small Towns
Gaza, Caesarea, Megiddo, Beth-Shan, Hazor, Dan	Beersheba, Hebron, Bethlehem, Jerusalem, Samaria
Easy	Exhausting
Predictable	Unpredictable
Trade, Noisy	Isolation, Quiet
International	Nationalism
Syncretism	Purity of Religion
Paganism (e.g., Dagon, Astarti, Baal)	Judaism, Christianity, Islam
Protected own area when strong (only 150 years of Israelite control under David, Solomon)	Conquered "Left Stage" when strong (but stayed 1650 years at "Right Stage")
Sea Peoples	Desert Peoples
Nations: Philistines, Phoenicians, Syrians, Egyptians, Assyrians, Babylonians, Romans	The "ites": Israelites, Ammonites, Moabites, Edomites

Sources: Jim Fleming, "The Geography of the Bible" (Tantur, Israel: Biblical Resources, n.d.); Beitzel, 50, 68



Division of Canaan

Irving L. Jensen, *Jensen's Survey of the OT*, 140 (adapted based on Barry Beitzel, *Moody Atlas of Bible Lands*, 100)

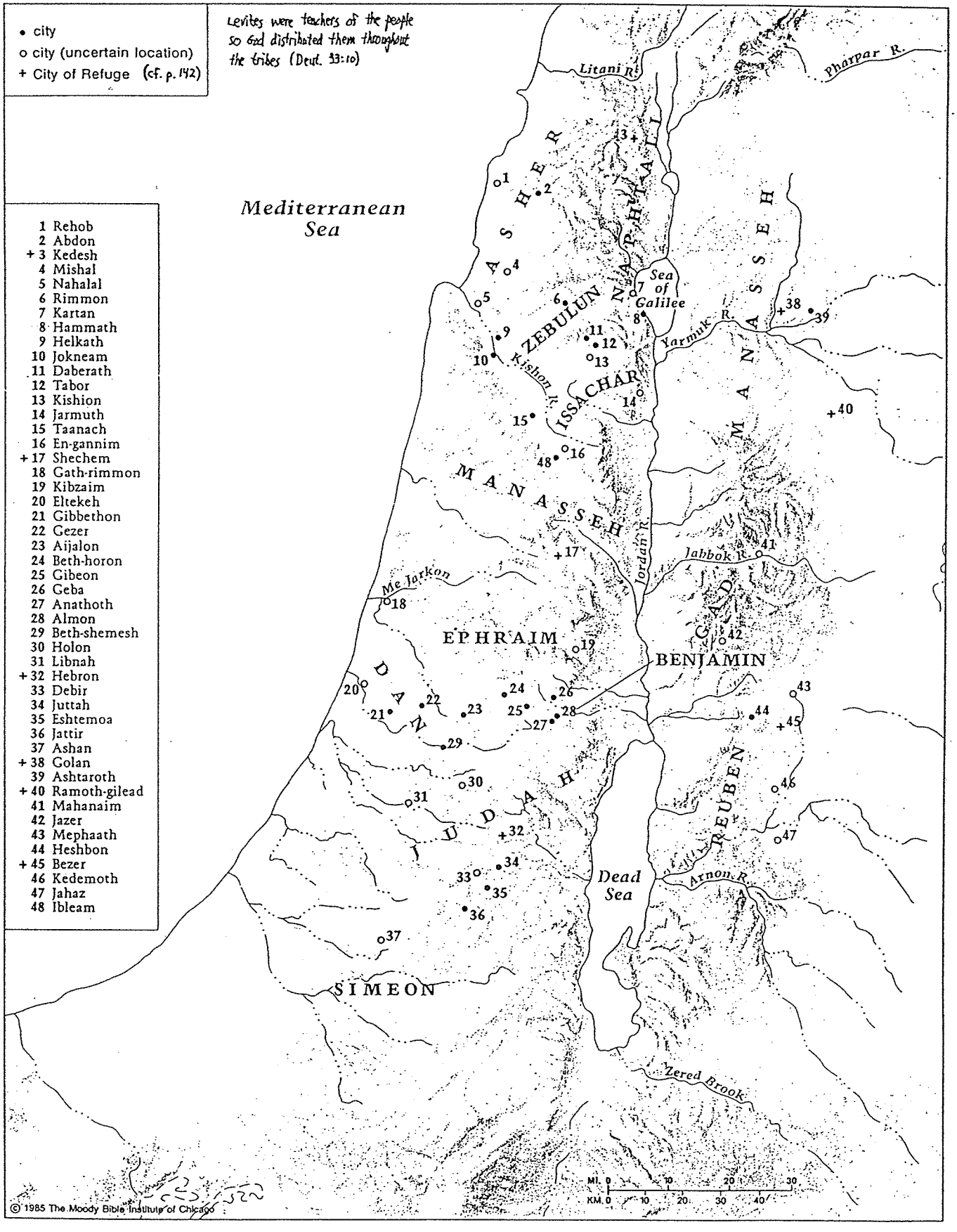


[1] Numbers for each tribe indicate the population of soldiers just before the conquest of Canaan (Num. 26).

[2] Simeon's inheritance lay within the land of Judah (Josh. 19:1-9) due to his violence at Shechem (Gen. 34:25-31). Levi also received no inheritance except cities within other tribes (cf. p. 171a) due to the same sin (Gen. 49:5-7).

Levitic Cities and Cities of Refuge

Barry Beitzel, *Moody Atlas of Bible Lands*, 101



C. Jerusalem: Geography and Significance

1. Topography

   a) Jerusalem's obscure location would seem to make it an unlikely capital city:

      (1) Off International trade route

      (2) Off regional (hill country) trade route

      (3) No river flows through it or even near it

   b) However, it also had advantages that made it an excellent capital:

      (1) Location in a country of cross-roads (Ezek. 5:5; cf. p. 26)

      (2) Between Judah and Benjamin tribes but still close to the northern kingdom at the centre of the land (Ezek. 38:11-12)

      (3) Protective Hills

         (a) Difficult to attack on east, west, and south

         (b) Threshing Floor of Araunah the Jebusite in the north (2 Sam. 24:16-25)

      (4) Water Source: Gihon Spring

      (5) Walls: These changed much over the years (cf. p. 27)

      (6) Gates: These many doors into the city connected to roads

      (7) Holy significance (see below)

2. Stages of Jerusalem's History: It grew in every direction except south (cf. p. 27)

3. Significance of Jerusalem

   a) Jewish

      (1) Rabbinic tradition on Gen. 1:9 is that dry land first appeared on Mt. Moriah in Jerusalem.

      (2) Abraham & Isaac (Gen. 22:2; 2 Chron. 3:1)

      (3) David conquered it from the Jebusites (2 Sam. 5:6-9)

      (4) Solomon (First Temple Period: 966-586 BC)

(5) A second eastern wall built by Hezekiah (2 Chron. 32:5) and rebuilt by his son Manasseh (2 Chron. 33:14) was discovered in 1999 (see pages 33-34)

(6) Zerubbabel (Second Temple Period (516 BC-AD 70)

(7) Nehemiah's rebuilding embellished by Herod the Great

(8) Present State of Israel

(9) Third Temple Period

(10) Messiah (Isa. 2:1-2)

b) Christian

(1) Christ's death

(2) Ascension on Mt. Olives (Acts 1:9-12)

(3) First church (Acts 2)

(4) Return (Zech 14:4)

(5) Reign (Isa. 2:2)

c) Muslim

(1) "If I Forget Thee: Does Jerusalem Really Matter to Islam?" (OTB, 228-231) argues that the city has only had *political* significance in Muslim periods to deter Jews and Christians.

(2) Present Temple Mount

(a) Dome of the Rock built in AD 690s

(b) Al Aksa Mosque

(c) Potential Palestinian nation

d) All Nations

(1) Future Worldwide prominence (Isa. 2:1-3)

(2) Destruction and replacement with the New Jerusalem (Rev. 21)

History of Jerusalem

The history of Jerusalem is a long and complicated one. Since the city has been one of the most destroyed and rebuilt cities in the world, deciphering the various layers of civilizations has proven a challenge for even the best archaeologists.

Jerusalem is divided into two general sections: the New City (developed largely since 1967) and the Old City (surrounded by a wall built by the Muslim Turks in AD 1530). The eastern part of Jerusalem includes the Mount of Olives and Kidron Valley and has a large Arab population whereas western Jerusalem is entirely Jewish. This Arab population has grown significantly since 1967:

> In 1967, 68,600 Arabs lived in Jerusalem, whereas in 1995, that number had grown to 174,400, a rise of 154 per cent. By contrast, the Jewish population rose by 111 per cent, from 197,700 in 1967 to 417,000 in 1995. The number of Arabs in Jerusalem had risen faster than the number of Jews in the city.
>
> In 1967, the city's population consisted of 74,2 per cent Jews and 25,8 per cent Arabs. Currently, Jews comprised 70,5 per cent of the population, a drop of 3,7 percent, the statement said (ICEJ News, 19 March 1997).

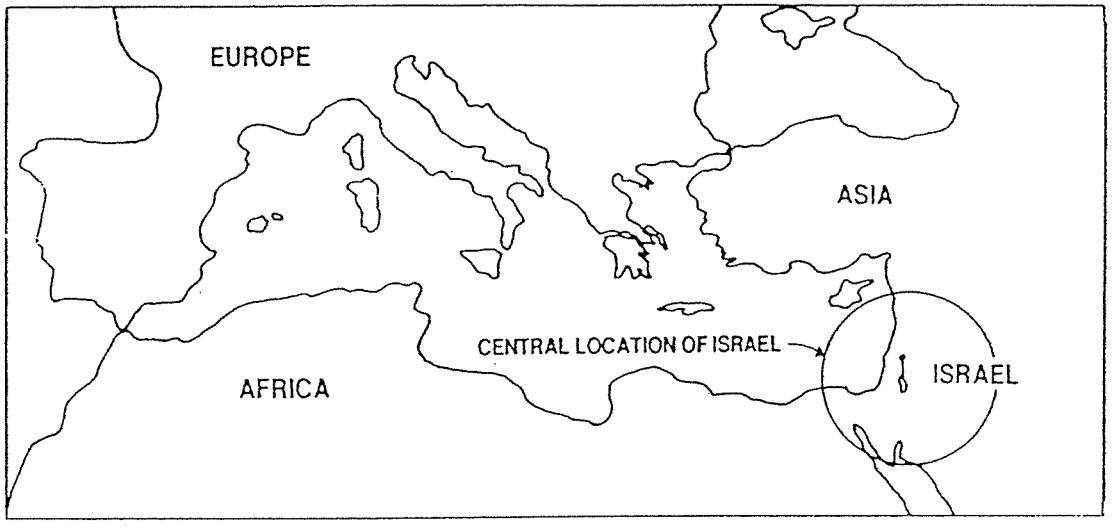
Jerusalem means "City of (the god) Salim," for it originally was a Canaanite city. This Egyptian, West Semitic, and Akkadian "Salim" in Hebrew sounds much like "Shalom," or "peace." Thus it has been called the "City of Peace," but perhaps no other city has been fought over more! The Bible also calls this city Salem, Jebus, Zion, Ariel, and the City. Other names include Aelia Capitolina (Roman name after the AD 132 Jewish revolt to fourth century) and El-Quds (Muslim).

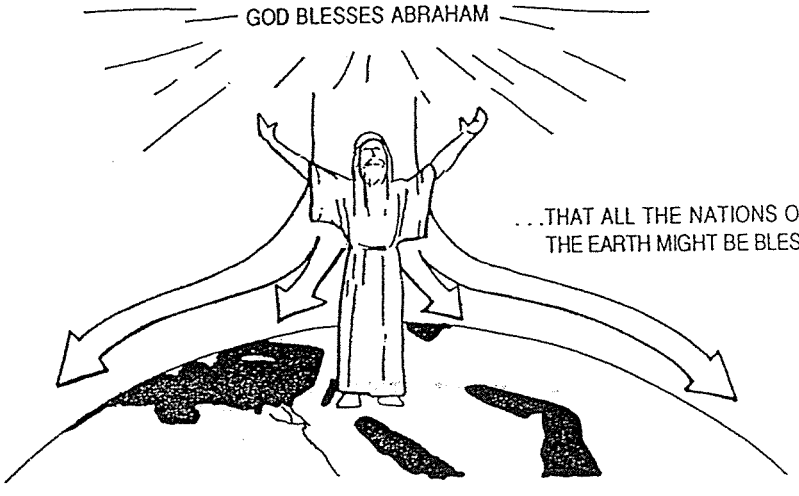
Jerusalem remains the largest populated city in Israel (600,000). Tel Aviv is larger when the outside metropolitan areas are included and most nations consider Tel Aviv the capital. However, Israel regards Jerusalem the "real" capital.

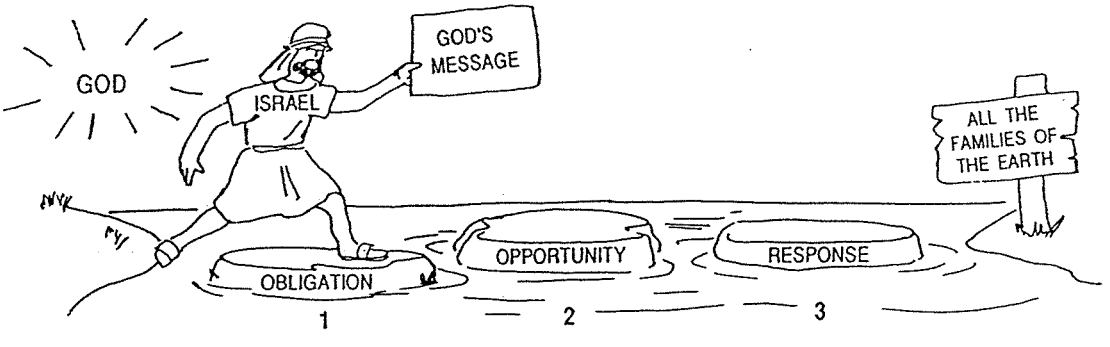
Every foot of Israel walks with a sense of history. Just look at the history of the 14 periods of control over this incredible city:

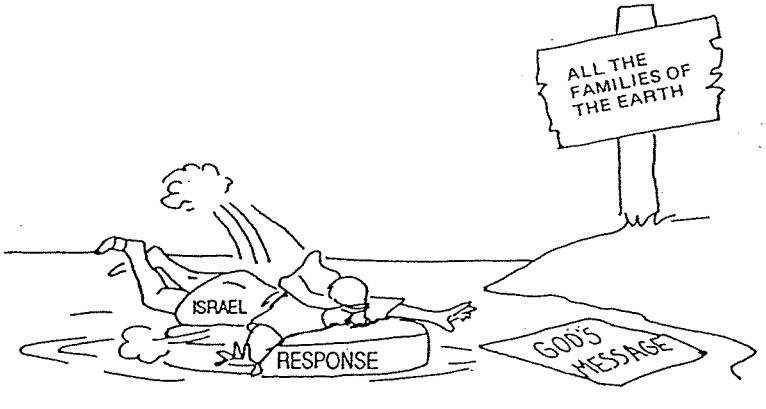
Dates	Period
3150-1006 BC	Canaanite/Jebusite (not conquered by Joshua)
1006-586 BC	Israelite (David until Nebuchadnezzar's destruction)
586-538 BC	Babylonian (Judah's exile)
538-331 BC	Persian (Judah's return)
331-143 BC	*Hellenistic (Greek)*
143-63 BC	Hasmonean (limited Jewish self-rule under Greeks)
63 BC-AD 324	Roman (time of Christ and early church)
AD 324-638	Byzantine ("Christian" Roman Empire—i.e., Eastern Orthodox control)
AD 638-1099	Early Moslem (Dome of Rock built)
AD 1099-1187	Crusader ("Christian")
AD 1187-1517	Mamluk (Moslem)
AD 1517-1917	Ottoman (Turkish Moslem, built present walls)
AD 1917-1948	British Rule (under League of Nations mandate)
AD 1948-1967	State of Israel (but Jordan controlled East Jerusalem)
AD 1967-1993	East Jerusalem, West Bank, Gaza Strip, Golan controlled by Israel
AD 1993-now	Gaza Strip, Jericho, Bethlehem conceded to Palestinian self-rule

Israel's Strategic Location







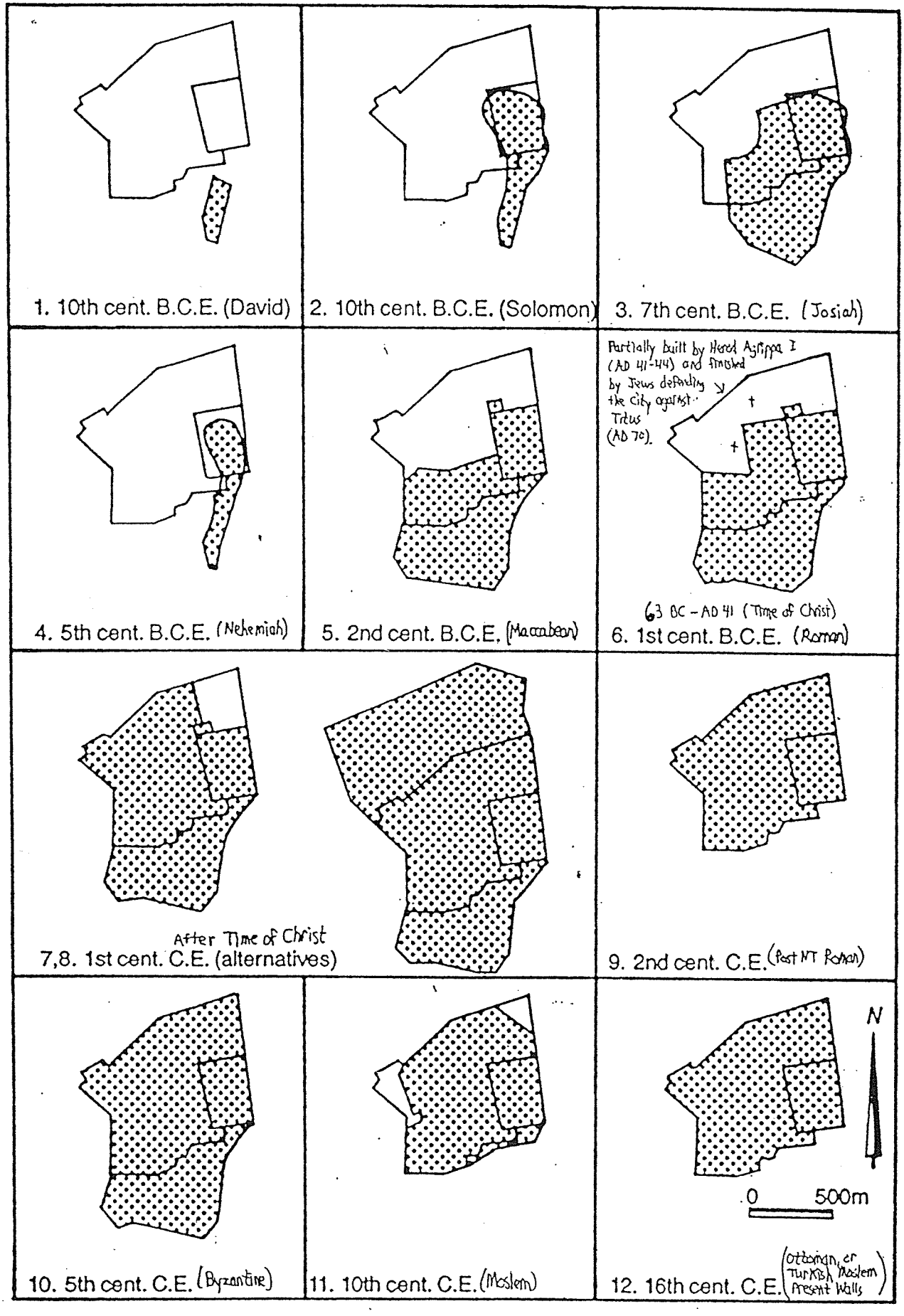


From: Jonathan Lewis, ed.
World Mission: Part One
(Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1987)

Jerusalem in Various Periods

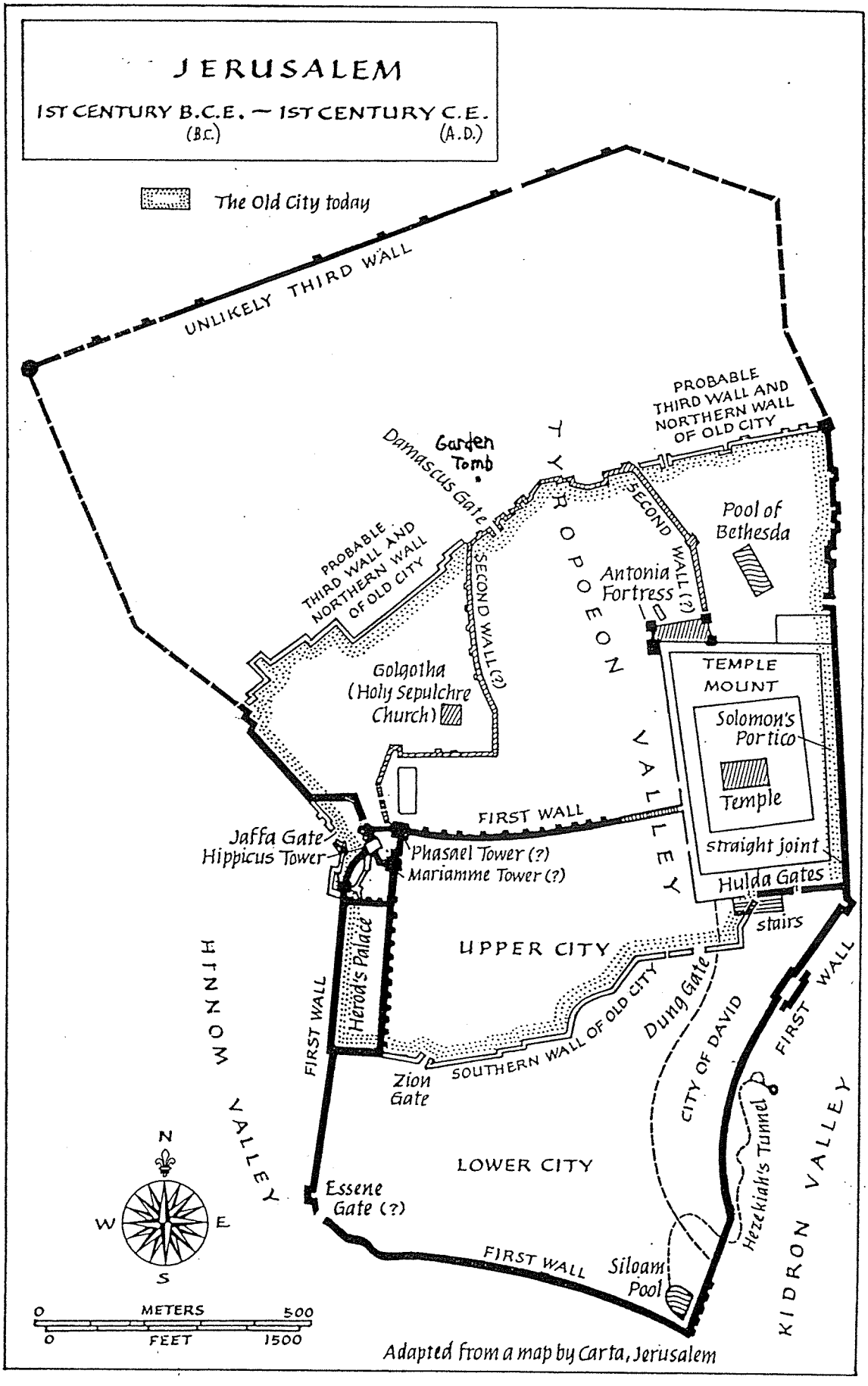
Charlesworth, *Jesus Within Judaism,* 113

Note that "BCE." below means "Before Common Era" which most of us generally refer to as BC ("Before Christ"). It follows, then, that "CE" means "Common Era" or AD ("Anno Domini—the Year of Our Lord"). Many scholars use these alternate abbreviations to show sensitivity to Jewish scholars who take offense at dating based on Jesus' life.

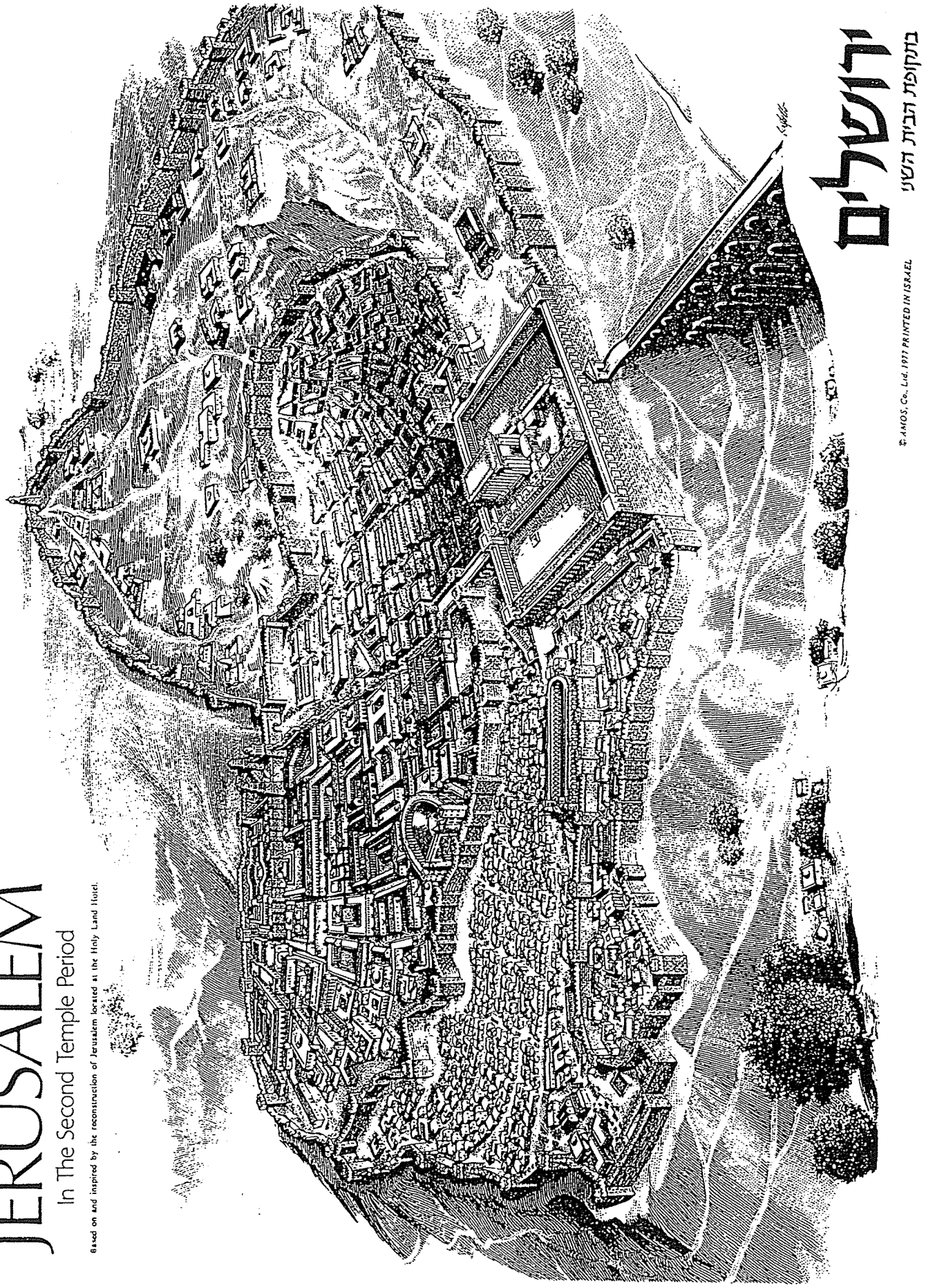


Jerusalem in the Time of Christ

Charlesworth, *Jesus Within Judaism,* 114



Jerusalem at AD 66



Jerusalem's Water System

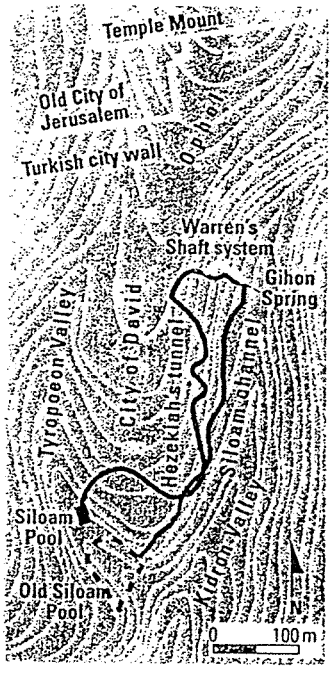
BAR (July/August 1994): 23-24 (1 of 3)

why did they follow such a circuitous route when it would have been easier—and shorter—to tunnel in a straight line? From the Gihon Spring to the Pool of Siloam in a straight line is only 1,050 feet; the actual length of the tunnel, however, is 1,748 feet, more than 66 percent longer than necessary.

Ever since these subterranean waterworks were discovered, the majority of scholars have regarded them as man-made and have tried to explain the puzzles about them in terms of human intent or error. Thus, for example, to explain why Hezekiah's tunnel follows such a circuitous route, some scholars have argued that the southern bend in the tunnel was necessary to avoid the desecration of passing underneath what may be royal tombs above.[1] The northern bend of the tunnel was supposedly planned to meet a well within the city[2]—but no well was encountered anywhere along the tunnel. Another scholar has suggested that the frequent meandering near the meeting point was due to "false echoes" from the axes, which misled the workmen, and to their "nervous haste" to achieve the imminent meeting.[3]

Or take the semicircular course of the horizontal and stepped tunnels at the top of Warren's Shaft: The straight-line distance between the semicircle's ends is only 82 feet; the length of the tunnels, however, is 136 feet, an unnecessary 66 percent of additional tunneling. This curved route has been explained on the basis of the need to moderate the slope.[4] If this was so, how can we explain the fact that the slope of the stepped tunnel is so steep, averaging about 33 degrees? There is a scarp nearly 9 feet high at the bottom of the stepped tunnel, which obviously would require a ladder to traverse; even then, the climb would be very inconvenient, especially when carrying buckets of water. This scarp between the stepped tunnel and the horizontal tunnel has been explained as a defense measure. An exit from the horizontal tunnel emerges on the eastern slope at a point outside the city wall. This tunnel (see the plan on p. 24) was supposedly made for the disposal of excavation waste.[5] However, since it required substantial extra labor and, in addition, compromised the security of the city, this explanation is rather weak.

Or look at the dead-end shaft on the plan. This

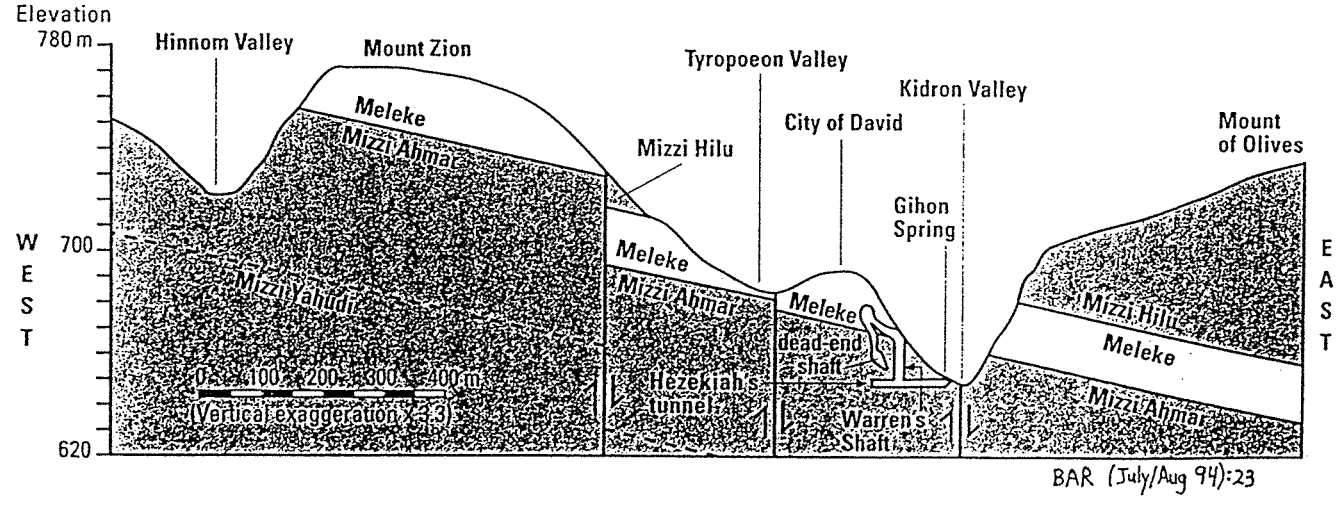


THREE WATER SYSTEMS have sprung from the Gihon Spring at various times in Jerusalem's history (right). The oldest, shown in yellow, is known as Warren's Shaft after it modern discoverer, Captain Charles Warren. Probably dating to at least the eleventh century B.C.E., it gave the city protected access to the water of the spring, which lay outside the city wall. Because the Gihon Spring lies low on the slope, the Jebusites (and the Israelites later) could not include it within their city wall. Had the walls been built low on the slope, the city would have been exposed to attack from the high slope across the Kidron Valley.

The Siloam channel, shown in red, was built next. This aqueduct irrigated adjacent fields through openings in the channel wall. The channel's position outside the city wall indicates that it served during times of peace. Archaeologists suggest that the Siloam channel may date to Solomon's time (965-928 B.C.E.).

The third water system, Hezekiah's tunnel, appears in brown. Threatened with siege by the Assyrian forces of Sennacherib in 701 B.C.E., the Judahite king Hezekiah ordered the construction of the tunnel to divert water from the Gihon Spring, outside his city walls, to the Siloam Pool, safely within the walls. Hezekiah's idea succeeded (2 Kings 20:20 and 2 Chronicles 32:30), and Sennacherib failed to capture Jerusalem.

The geological profile below presents a view to the north, as if looking at a vertical slice from east to west through the side of the hills. It shows the Warren's Shaft system and Hezekiah's tunnel in relation to prominent features and the underlying rock types. The vertical lines mark geological faults, cracks in the ground that have caused vertical displacement of the layers. Here we can see that while the uppermost portion of the Warren's Shaft system lies in the porous Meleke layer, the rest of the system, all of Hezekiah's tunnel and the Gihon Spring itself lie in the hard Mizzi Ahmar dolomite layer.



BAR (July/Aug 94):23

Jerusalem's Water System

BAR (July/August 1994): 23-24 (2 of 3)

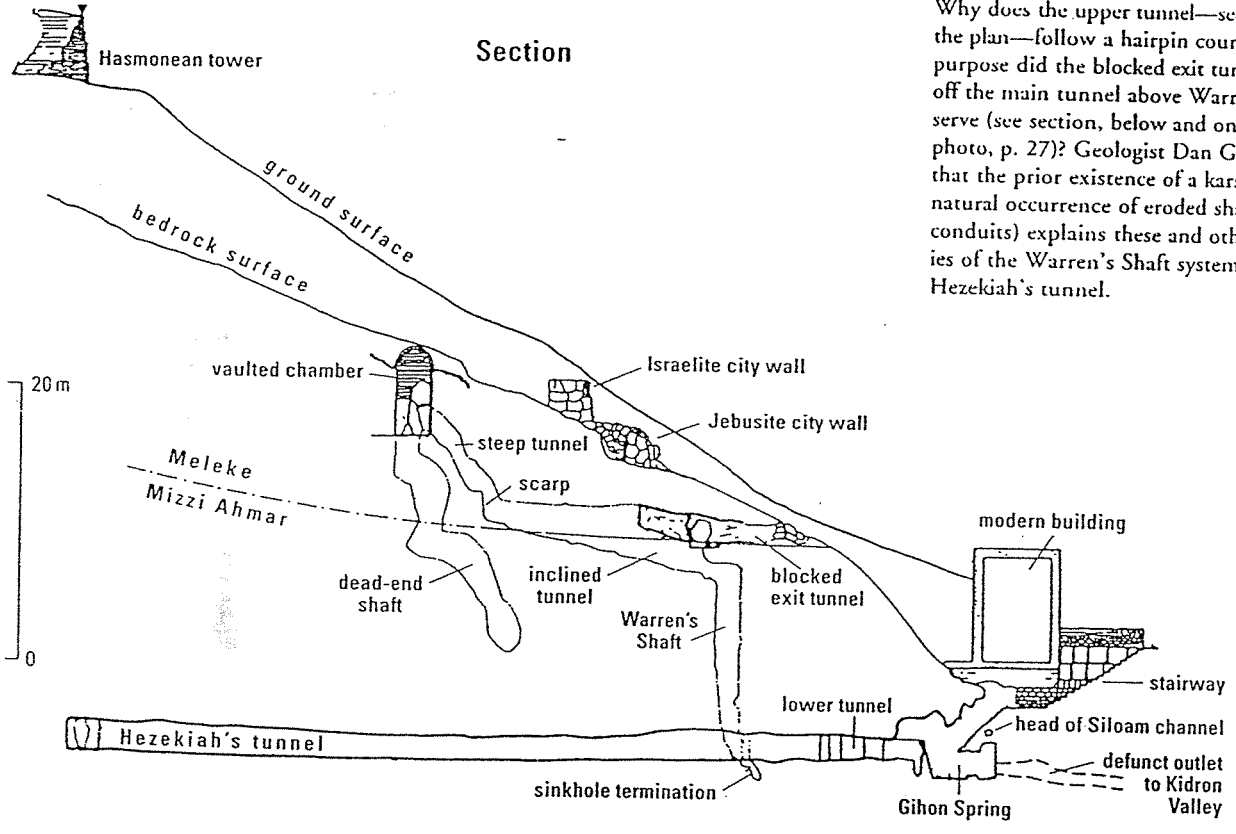
ORIENTATION

Mysteries of the Warren's Shaft System

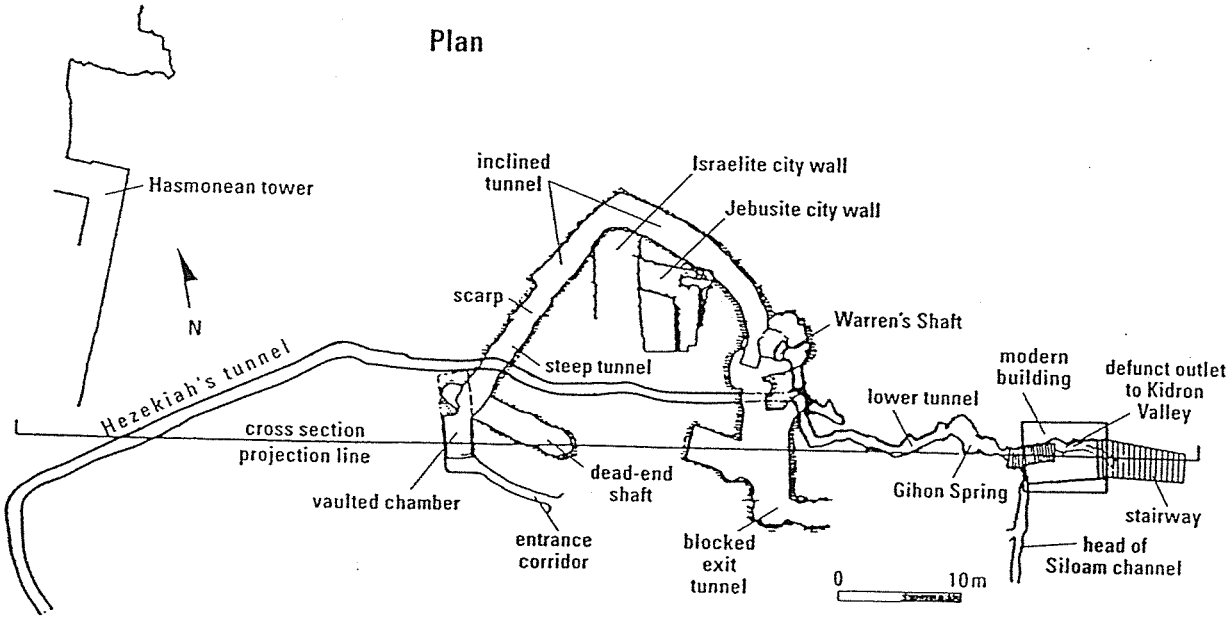
These drawings show the Warren's Shaft system as viewed in section, as though we could look at a vertical cutaway of the hill, and in plan, as if seen from above. The construction of the system required blockage of the outlet to the Kidron Valley (originally a natural drain for the Gihon Spring) and the engineering of the lower tunnel to bring the water into the "water chamber" at the foot of Warren's Shaft. This allowed Warren's Shaft to function as a well. Even during a siege, people within the city (note the position of the Jebusite and Israelite city walls) could walk down the steep upper tunnel, then through the more moderately sloped tunnel to the top of Warren's Shaft, from which they could lower a bucket to raise water from the water chamber, 37 feet below.

Anomalies in the system have long mystified scholars, however. What is the dead-end shaft? Why does Warren's Shaft extend below the level of the lower tunnel (see section, below, and photo, p. 26)? Why does the upper tunnel—seen clearly in the plan—follow a hairpin course? What purpose did the blocked exit tunnel, jutting off the main tunnel above Warren's Shaft, serve (see section, below and on p. 26, and photo, p. 27)? Geologist Dan Gill proposes that the prior existence of a karst system (a natural occurrence of eroded shafts and conduits) explains these and other mysteries of the Warren's Shaft system and Hezekiah's tunnel.

Section



Plan



Jerusalem's Water System

BAR (July/August 1994): 23-24 (3 of 3)

Hershel Shanks is now convinced that Warren's Shaft could not have been used as a water shaft for several reasons. Here are his reasons with my responses.

- Access: It is difficult to get to without a platform over the top (but why couldn't there have been an ancient wood platform built over it? And must we assume that since it was difficult for the 69-year-old Shanks to climb with a rope ladder that Joab *couldn't* have done it? After all, they admit that others in the 20th century have climbed it even without a rope.)

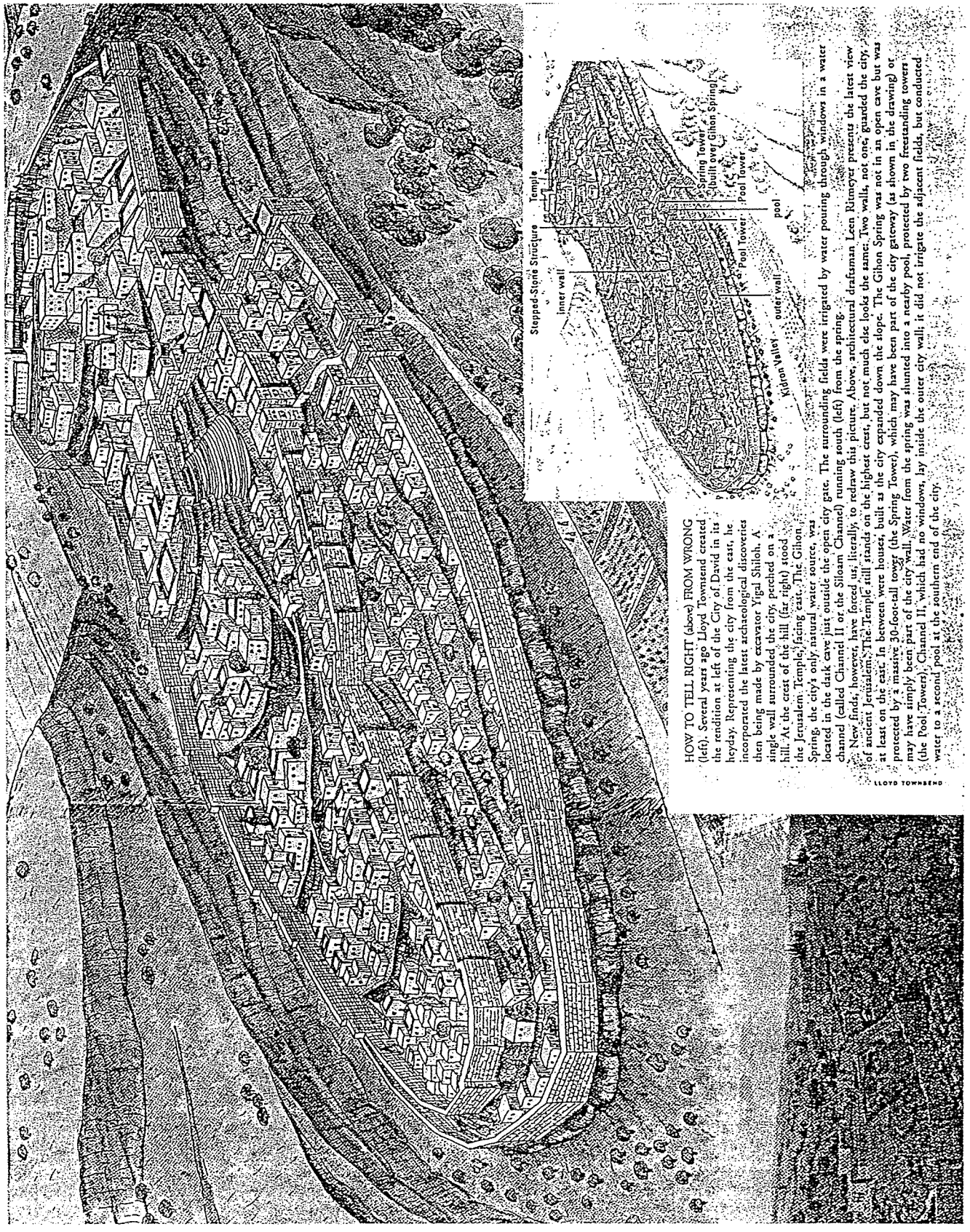
- Protrusions: The sides down the shaft are uneven (but this presumes that the ancients would have smoothed them out whereas they may have not wanted to take the risk; in fact, these footholds would be just what Joab would have needed to climb it).

- Lack of Rope Marks: Other wells have marks on the sides where the bucket rope marred the surface of the rock yet this one does not (but why assume that the rope must have touched the wall? Their picture [*BAR* Nov/Dec 99, p. 33] shows the rope does not need to touch the wall and the caption even says they could "easily lower a rope down Warren's Shaft." Besides, they offer no alternate suggestion for the location of the *tsinnor* ["water shaft," 2 Sam. 5:8]).

- Water Marks at the Bottom Indicate Only One Foot of Water: Shanks says this is too shallow to lower a bucket and ancients would have dug out the bottom for a greater depth (but these water marks only indicate a one foot level most of the time—the level could have been much higher at other times).

A Revised Jerusalem Wall

Hershel Shanks, *Biblical Archaeology Review* (Nov-Dec. 1999): 22-23 (1 of 2)



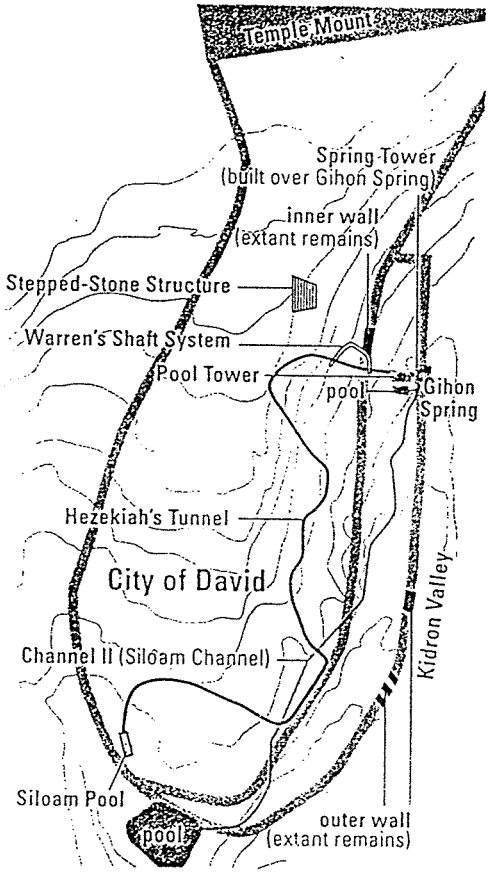
HOW TO TELL RIGHT (above) FROM WRONG (left). Several years ago Lloyd Townsend created the rendition at left of the City of David in its heyday. Representing the city from the east, he incorporated the latest archaeological discoveries then being made by excavator Yigal Shiloh. A single wall surrounded the city, perched on a hill. At the crest of the hill (far right) stood the Jerusalem Temple, facing east. The Gihon Spring, the city's only natural water source, was located in the dark cave just outside the open city gate. The surrounding fields were irrigated by water pouring through windows in a water channel (called Channel II or the Siloam Channel) running south (left) from the spring.

New finds, however, have forced us, literally, to redraw this picture. Above, architectural draftsman Leen Ritmeyer presents the latest view of ancient Jerusalem. The Temple still stands on the highest crest, but not much else looks the same. Two walls, not one, guarded the city, at least on the east. In between were houses, built as the city expanded down the slope. The Gihon Spring was not in an open cave but was protected by a massive 30-foot-tall tower (the Spring Tower), which may have been part of the city gateway (as shown in the drawing) or may have simply been part of the city wall. Water from the spring was shunted into a nearby pool, protected by two freestanding towers (the Pool Towers). Channel II, which had no windows, lay inside the outer city wall; it did not irrigate the adjacent fields, but conducted water to a second pool at the southern end of the city.

Jerusalem's Kidron Wall & Gate

Biblical Archaeology Review (Nov-Dec. 1999): 24, 27 (2 of 2)

BUILT BY HEZEKIAH? The Book of Chronicles details King Hezekiah's preparations for Sennacherib's attack: "Hezekiah set to work resolutely and built up the entire wall that was broken down ... and outside he built another wall" (2 Chronicles 32:5). Are these courses of stones—16 feet tall in places—the remains of Hezekiah's outer wall? (The wall appears in the foreground of the photo at left, which looks up the eastern slope of the City of David. The photo below shows the wall straight on.) Discovered this past spring by archaeologists Ronny Reich and Eli Shukron, the wall runs along the eastern flank of the City of David, about 120 feet below the earlier, eighth-century city wall discovered by Kathleen Kenyon and Yigal Shiloh (see plan). Also dating to the eighth century, the newly discovered wall enclosed the Gihon Spring.



AN UNDYING THIRST for a safe water supply inspired the construction of ancient Jerusalem's water system beside the Gihon Spring, the city's only natural water source, located low on the eastern slope of the City of David. Three years ago archaeologists Ronny Reich and Eli Shukron discovered the remains of a massive complex of towers, built in the Middle Bronze Age II (18th to 17th century B.C.), that protected the spring and its waters. The system, as shown in the plan below, included the Spring Tower, located directly above the Gihon Spring (excavated remains from the Middle Bronze Age appear in deep red; reconstructed remains are in pink). Channel II (upper left photo) shunted water south from the spring. The top of the channel was sealed with huge boulders, dropped from above and trapped by the channel's slightly convex walls. A subsidiary tunnel (Tunnel III) deflected the water into a 22- by 10-foot pool, which was protected by at least one tower. In the bottom photo, a man stands before the cyclopean stones (measuring up to 6 feet tall) that formed the 30-foot-tall northern Pool Tower; the edge of the pool can be seen in the shadowy shaft at left. Reich and Shukron speculate that a matching tower stood on the southern side of the pool and that water was drawn by standing on a platform suspended between the two towers. A series of tunnels (outlined in red) led from inside the city wall to the pool. (This tunnel, according to Reich and Shukron, has long been misidentified as part of Warren's Shaft System; see plan, p. 35, and the following article.)

One thousand years later, in the eighth century B.C., King Hezekiah of Judah constructed a tunnel (upper right photo) that diverted the waters from the spring to a pool on the western side of the city—probably to safeguard the water supply in the event of an Assyrian siege. The beginning of his 1,750-foot tunnel appears in blue in the plan, below. Around the same time, a second city wall was built outside the spring, in line with the Spring Tower.

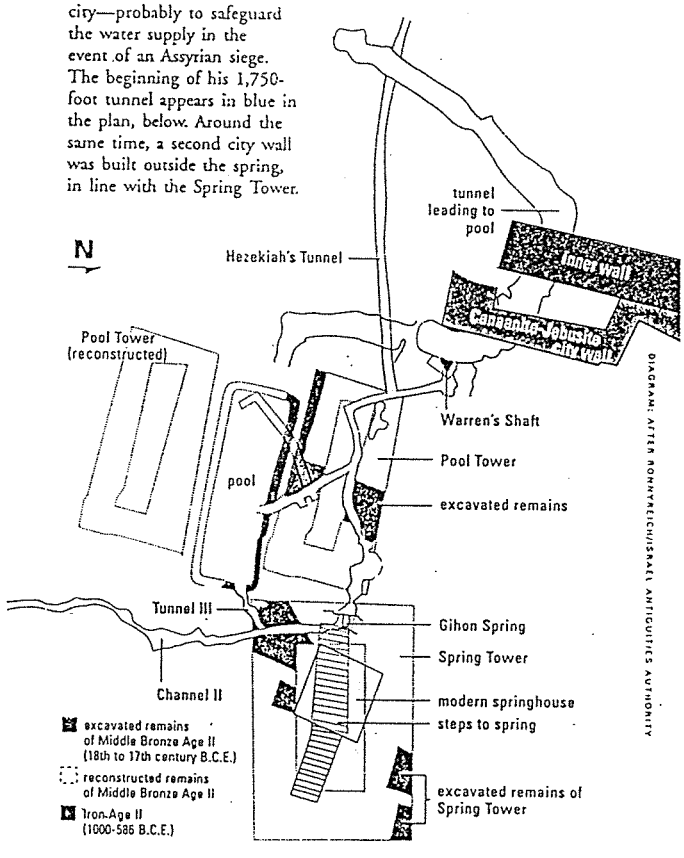
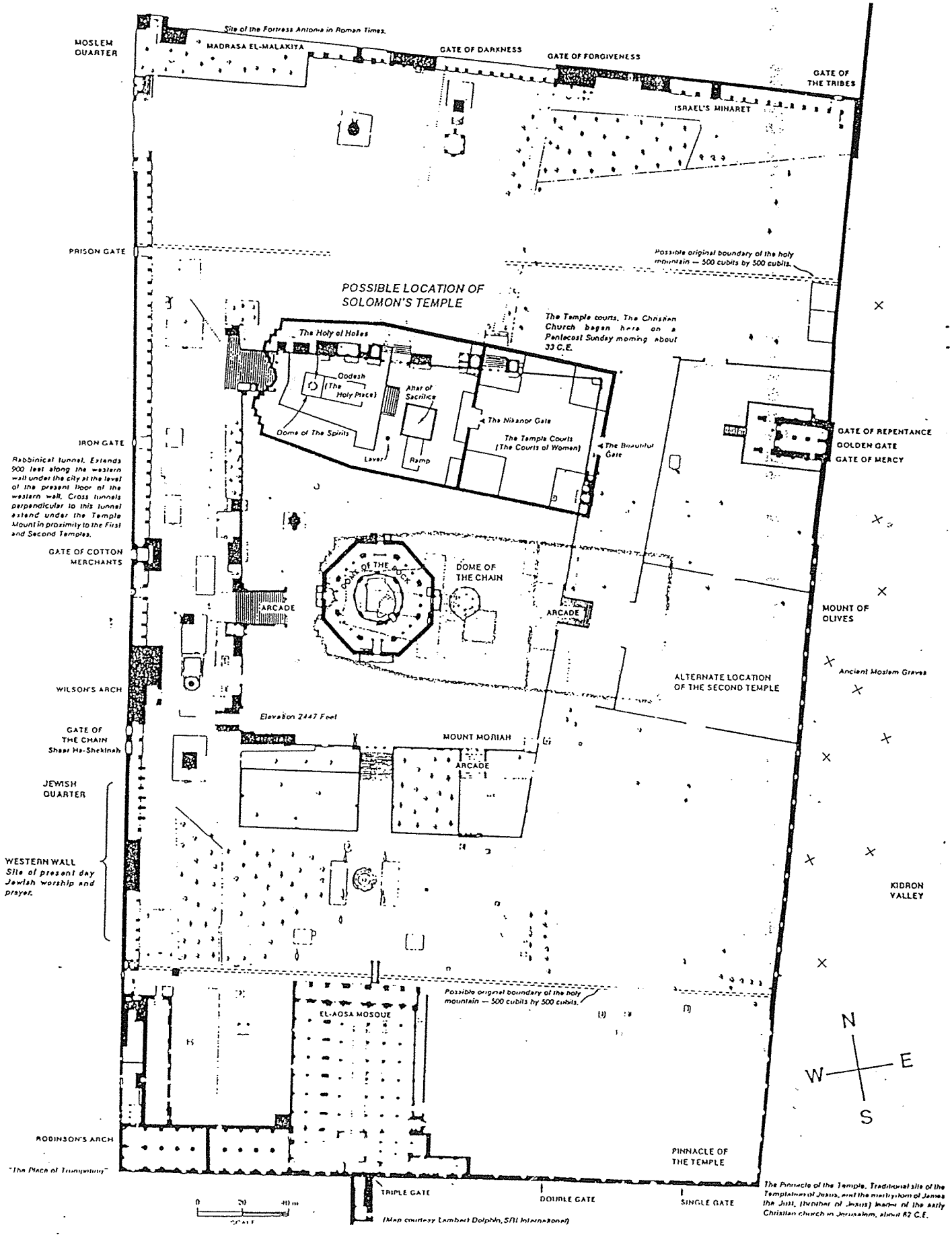


DIAGRAM: AFTER RONNY REICH/ISRAEL ANTIQUITIES AUTHORITY

Temple Mount



Modern Jerusalem

Carl G. Rasmussen, *Zondervan NTV Atlas of the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1989), inside cover



III. A Biblical Theology of the Old Testament

A. Ancient Covenants that Parallel Biblical Covenants

1. Definitions

a) "The Hebrew word translated 'covenant' (*berith*) [be-REETH] has many shades of meaning in the Old Testament. It may refer to a treaty between nations (1 Kings 5:12), an alliance of friendship (1 Sam. 18:3), or an agreement between a king and his subjects (2 Sam. 5:3). The word may also denote a covenant between God and His people. In the covenant, God bound Himself to fulfill certain commitments on behalf of His people. The covenant also called God's people to live in faithful, loving obedience to God and His Word."[1]

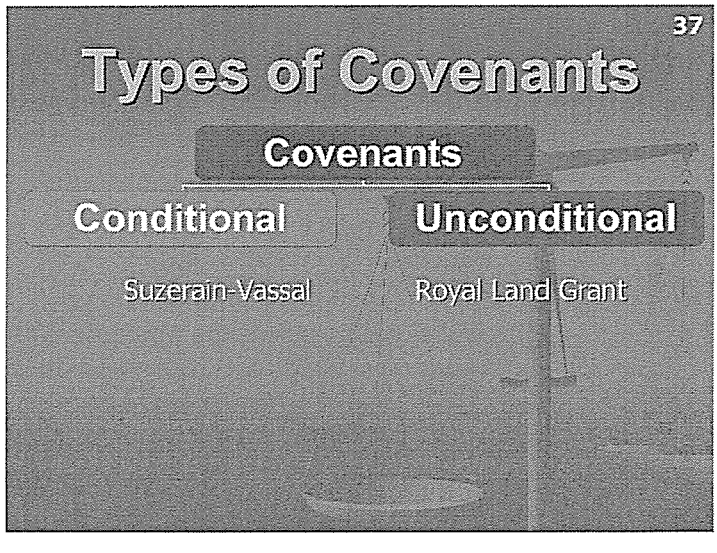
b) One definition of a covenant is "a solemn promise made binding by an oath which may be either a verbal formula or a symbolic action."[2]

(1) Thus it is not simply an expression of intent but a serious commitment, whether written or oral or symbolic.[3]

(2) Marriage is called a covenant in Malachi 2:14 because it is the most serious commitment one person can make to another.

c) The term "testament" actually means "covenant," meaning an agreement or legal witness.[4] Thus the Old Testament refers to the agreement that God made with Israel, grounded in the grace of His redemptive purpose for humanity and not simply the obedience or blessing of Israel.[5]

2. Two Basic Types of Covenants



[1] Bryan Beyer, "The Practice of Covenant Making" *Biblical Illustrator* [Fall 1993]: 36.

[2] William Dyrness, *Themes in Old Testament Theology* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1979), 113.

[3] Helpful articles on ancient parallels to biblical covenants include D. J. McCarthy, "Covenant in the Old Testament," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 27 (1965): 237-38; G. M. Tucker, "Covenant Forms and Contract Forms," *Vetus Testamentum* 15 (1965): 487.

[4] David Roper, *New Covenant in the Old Testament* (Waco, TX: Word, 1976), 10-12.

[5] Christopher Wright, *Knowing Jesus through the Old Testament* (London: Marshall Pickering, 1992), 77-80.

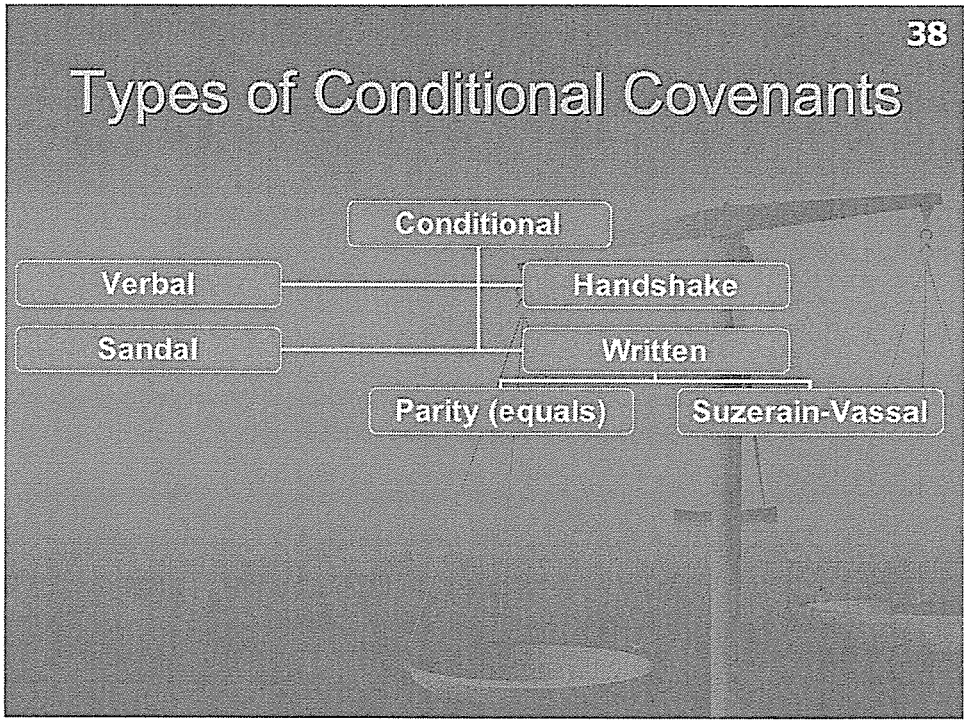
a) Conditional Covenants

(1) Swearing of an oath was deemed a serious covenant even though no paper was used to record it.

(2) Shaking of hands also indicated a covenant relationship.

(3) Removal of the sandal is seen in Ruth 4:7-8 where Boaz commits to a marriage covenant with Ruth.

(4) Written treaties were common in the ancient world in two basic types.



(a) Parity: This agreement between equals swore mutual allegiance between the parties for each other's benefit.

(i) A Mesopotamian example of a parity treaty occurred between Naram-Sin, king of Agade, who covenanted with the Elamites. This treaty enabled mutual protection if one was attacked, as well as economic benefits.

(ii) A biblical example is the agreement between David and Hiram, king of Lebanon (1 Kings 5:1). Cities within Israel were exchanged for timber.

(b) Suzerain-vassal: This constituted an agreement between a superior king (suzerain, referred to as "father") and the state subject to him (vassal, referred to as "son").

(i) An early extra-biblical Suzerain-vassal treaty occurred around 2500-2300 BC when the Sumerian king Eannatum required the conquered Enakalle (king of Umma) to fulfill certain conditions.[6] In like manner, Israel imposed upon the subdued Gibeonites that the latter must be woodcutters and water carriers (Josh. 9:27).

[6] Beyer, 36.

(ii) Hittite treaties follow the suzerain-vassal format with these elements:[7]

(a) Introduction of the speaker

(b) Historical introduction

(c) Terms of the treaty

(d) Statement concerning the document

(e) Naming of divine witnesses

(f) Curses and blessings

(iii) As the chart on the next page shows, Exodus 19–24 follows this six-part structure, but the Book of Deuteronomy is the best biblical example of this type of treaty where God as the ruling king writes out his expectations of Israel as his subject people. The structure of Deuteronomy is unique in Scripture as it follows a similar, though not identical, pattern of the fifteenth-century international vassal treaty. When a king (the suzerain) made a treaty with a subject country (vassal) the treaty generally included the following six elements, many of which find parallel in Deuteronomy.[8]

(iv) Why is this significant?

(a) The covenant nature reveals the Mosaic Covenant as a conditional agreement patterned after the suzerain-vassal relationship. God did not design this covenant with all people, but only with Israel and only until the death of Christ, which began the new covenant for all who trust in Christ as Messiah (Jew and Gentile alike).

(b) It also upholds Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch:

(i) The argument against Moses as author of the Pentateuch by critical scholars of the 1800s went like this: The language and structure of Deuteronomy is too advanced for Moses to have written it in the 15th century BC, so it must have been written much later by others in the 8th century BC under King Josiah.

(ii) In response, Acts 7:22 notes that "Moses was taught all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and he was powerful in both speech and action." This is proven right in his use of the suzerain-vassal literary format of his day. Since he used 15th century BC writing style, it makes sense that he wrote in the 15th century!

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[7] Beyer, 38.

[8] One of the first modern scholars to see the suzerain parallels to Deuteronomy was G. E. Mendenhall, "Covenant Forms in Israelite Tradition," *Biblical Archaeologist* 17 (1956): 50-76. See also Jack Deere, "Deuteronomy" in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, eds. John F. Walvoord and Roy B. Zuck, 1:260; William Sanford LaSor, David Allen Hubbard, and Frederic William Bush, *Old Testament Survey: The Message, Form, and Background of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 144-146, 176. For a recent study showing how Nahum convinced Josiah to rebel against the Assyrian king Esarhaddon's suzerain-vassal treaty with Judah, see Gordon H. Johnston, "Nahum's Rhetorical Allusions to Neo-Assyrian Treaty Curses," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 158 (October-December 2001): 415-36.

	Element	Explanation	Parallel in Deuteronomy	Parallel in Exodus 19–24
1.	Preamble	Introduction to the treaty	Introduction: Historical Setting/Moses as Covenant Mediator (1:1-4)	Identification of the Suzerain: "I am the Lord..." (20:1-2a)
2.	Historical Prologue	History of the king's dealings with the vassal	Sermon #1: Historical Prologue (1:5–4:43)	Deliverance from Egypt established the relationship (20:2b)
3.	General Stipulation	Call for wholehearted allegiance to the king	Sermon #2: Covenant Obligations (4:44–11:32)	Israel promised to obey the stipulations (19:8), esp. noted in the ten commandments (20:3-17)
4.	Specific Stipulations	Detailed laws required of vassal to show allegiance	Sermon #2 cont'd: Specific Laws (Chs. 12–26)	Other specific laws are noted in the Book of the Covenant (20:22–24:18) and Ceremonial regulations (25–31)
5.	Divine Witnesses	Deities called to witness the treaty	Heaven and earth witness since no deities exist (4:26; 30:19; 31:28; 32:1)	(No deities are called upon to witness since the Lord is above them all)
6.	Blessings and Curses	Results for obeying or disobeying the treaty	Sermon #3: Blessings and Curses (Chs. 27–28) Sermon #4: Covenant Summary (Chs. 29–30) Narrative/Sermons: Transition of the Covenant Mediator from Moses to Joshua (Chs. 31–34)	

Although chapters 29—34 do not follow the suzerain-vassal format, nevertheless certain parallels exist even in this section (Deere, *BKC*, 1:316): depositing of the treaty document in a sacred place (31:24-26),[9] provision for dynastic succession (31:7-8), and provision for the future reading of the covenant and other covenant ceremonies (31:9-13).

[9] Moses told the Levites, "Take this Book of the Law and place it beside the Ark of the Covenant of the LORD your God. There it will remain as a witness against you" (Deut. 31:24; cf. Exod. 25:16). Others see an earlier "depositing of treaty" in that the Law was recorded on two tablets, similar to the Hittite custom of making two copies of the treaty so that each party could have a copy. See Ronald Youngblood, *The Heart of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1971), 50.

b) Unconditional Covenants

(1) A Promissory Covenant (or Royal Grant) included no obligations (stipulations) of the weaker party. As such it bound only the greater party in an unconditional manner.

(a) It is based upon the Babylonian *kudurru* documents. Rather than the curse being placed on the vassal, the curse is instead placed upon others who violate the *rights* of the vassal.

(b) Thus the Royal Land Grant covenant protects the *servant* while the suzerain treaty protects the rights of the *master*.[10]

(c) Micah 7:20 notes in this regard, "You will be true to Jacob, and show mercy to Abraham, as you pledged on oath to our fathers in days long ago." Thus the grantee (Israel) can rightfully possess the land once the master has granted title to the land.[11]

(2) Abrahamic Covenant: God's promise to Abraham committed the Lord to provide him land, descendants (seed in the form of a nation), and the privilege of blessing the entire world. Several arguments show its unilateral (unconditional) nature:

(a) God made the covenant to Abraham strictly from His own good will as seen in the repeated "I will..." formula (12:1-3). This is in contrast to the Mosaic Covenant "If you... then I will..." pattern (Lev. 26; Deut. 28).

(b) The covenant was not a reward for any action on Abraham's part. Abraham was an idolater (Josh. 24:2) who even slept with his handmaiden Hagar. He also was declared righteous even before he was circumcised (Gen. 15:6 vs. Gen. 17), so the covenant came not through any of his works.

(c) No conditions are attached except for leaving his homeland/relatives (e.g., Terah and Lot, 13:14-17) and going to the Promised Land (Gen. 12:2-3)

(d) It is promised despite disobedience on Abraham's part (Gen. 12:10-20)

(e) This covenant is eternal (Gen. 13:15; 17:7, 13, 19; 1 Chron. 16:16-17; Ps. 105:9-10; Jer. 31:35-36).

(f) It is also unchangeable (Heb. 6:13-18; cf. Gen. 15:8-21; Jer. 34:18-20).

(g) Israel herself is eternal (Jer. 31:36; Isa. 55:10)

(h) Perhaps the clearest example of the unilateral nature of this covenant is how God enacted it with Abraham in Genesis 15. Here the Mesopotamian covenant ritual from the ancient city of Mari serves as the backdrop to understanding Genesis 15. This ritual was followed by Hittite, Sefire, Assyrian (during the reign of Esarhaddon), and Aramean peoples.

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[10] M. Weinfeld, "The Covenant of Grant in the Old Testament and in the Ancient Near East," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 90.2 (1970): 184-203.

[11] A. E. Hill, "The Ebal Ceremony as Hebrew Land Grant," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 31 (1988): 402.

(i) This covenant required sacrifice of an animal (sheep, bull, or especially the foal of a donkey). Both parties would touch their throats, likely at the same time as the animal's throat was cut. This indicated that, should either party fail to keep his part of the covenant, the gods would take his life. The sacrificed animal was then cut in half and separated enough to walk between. Then the two parties walked between the pieces. This signified the commitment to death each had towards fulfilling their part of the covenant. God referred to this practice in Jeremiah 34:18, "The men who have violated my covenant and have not fulfilled the terms of the covenant they made before me, I will treat like the calf they cut in two and then walked between its pieces."

(ii) However, in Genesis 15 God adapted the typical Suzerain-vassal style of the Mesopotamian covenant ritual.

(a) Normally only the foal of a donkey was killed. Yet in the case of Abraham, the covenant was so serious that a single animal would not do. God required five animals for sacrifice.

(b) Normally the parties walked through the pieces of the dead animal together. However, even though God was the ruling king over Abram, He alone walked through the pieces in the form of a blazing firepot as Abram slept.

(c) Normally only the vassal would pledge loyalty to the suzerain. But in this case God alone spoke an oath. This signified that "Abram's duty is not to swear an oath, but simply to trust in the goodness of His Lord. The change introduced in the covenant procedure pointed to His grace and love toward Abram" (Beyer, 39).

(d) Normally the oath was sworn by calling the gods as witness. This element was missing in Abraham's case, however, since God cannot swear by anyone higher! Since no one is greater, He swore by Himself (Heb. 6:13).

(e) Finally, when vassal states became strong enough they often rebelled against the sovereign. However, in the case of those under the Abrahamic Covenant, becoming stronger than God is impossible. This is why God deems this an unchangeable covenant (Heb. 6:17).

(i) The modification of the normal treaty pointed to even more than this. It signified that God alone was making a treaty, thus making it an unconditional one. The only conditional part was Abram's faith and the faith of His descendants to claim God's promise of the land. In other words, God guarantees to uphold the covenant, but it will only come into fulfillment with a believing nation that comes from Abraham.

(j) A more recent development is an article arguing for both conditional and unconditional elements in the Abrahamic Covenant. [12]Various arguments have convinced some that the covenant with Abraham is actually a conditional treaty:

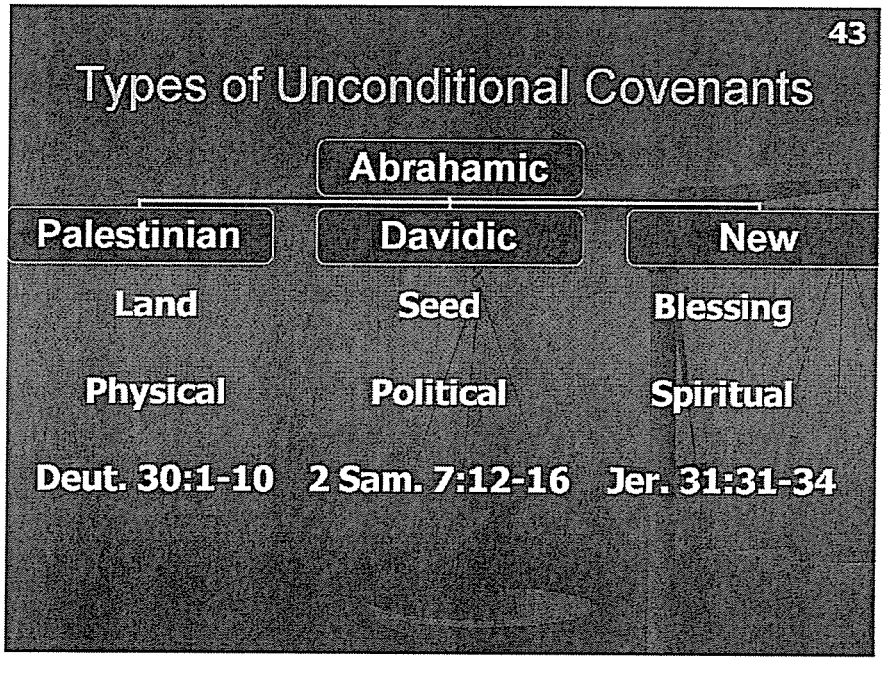
(i) Waltke says that God's oaths here presume an existing spiritual relationship and apply only towards obedient Israelites (especially those circumcised; cf. Gen. 17:9-14; 18:19). After all, God told Abraham, "Walk before me and be blameless" (Gen.

[12] See Bruce K. Waltke, "The Phenomenon of Conditionality within Unconditional Covenants," in *Israel's Apostasy and Restoration*, ed. Avraham Gileadi (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1988), 123-39; cf. Ronald Youngblood, ed., *The Living and Active Word of God*.

17:1), which seems to indicate conditions. Response: This is not actually a condition, for if it was then the covenant would not have continued. The narrative shows how Abraham was not blameless in that he lied about his wife Sarah and he laid with his handmaiden Hagar. It is true that while God gave the promise to Abraham and through him to the *whole* nation, only those who are obedient will participate in its blessings. But God never says that His faithfulness to the *nation* depends on an *individual's* obedience to the sign of the covenant (i.e., circumcision). Any Jew without faith will not participate in its fulfillment, for "not all who are descended from Israel are Israel" (Rom. 9:6). Blessings in an unconditional covenant are still conditioned by obedience.[13]

(ii) Genesis 22:16-18 seems to indicate that Abraham's willingness to offer Isaac resulted in God's promise to fulfill the covenant. Response: God had already previously promised Abraham the land as an eternal possession (Gen. 17:8) and He had said already that the covenant would pass via Isaac (Gen. 17:21). Rather, what we see in chapter 22 is a reconfirmation of previous promises.

(iii) The promise to Isaac seemed to be contingent on his father Abraham's obedience. God told Isaac, "I will make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and will give them all these lands, and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed, because Abraham obeyed me and kept my requirements, my commands, my decrees and my laws" (Gen. 26:4-5).



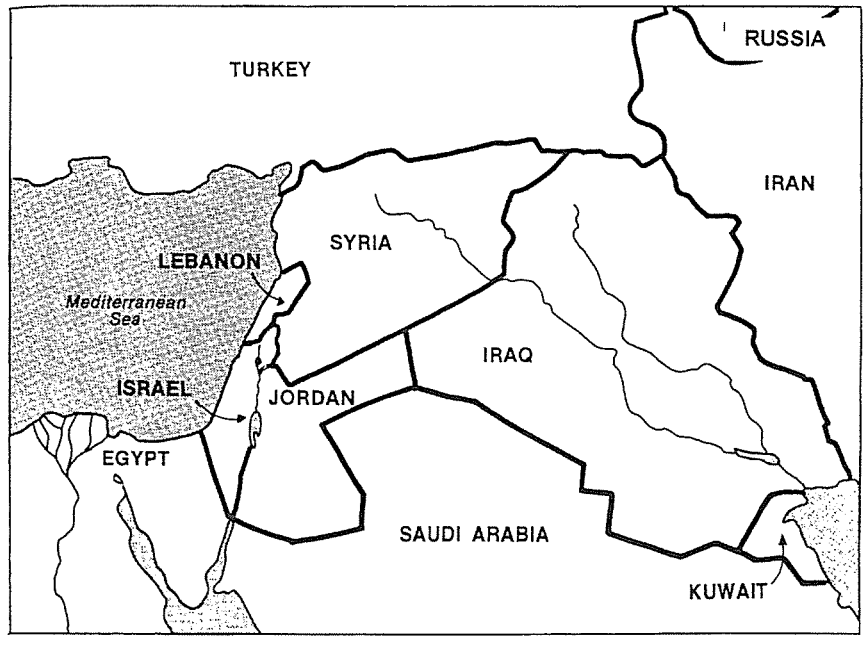
[13] J. Dwight Pentecost, *Thy Kingdom Come* (Wheaton: SP Pub., 1990), 52-54, 59-62.

(3) The Land Covenant

(a) Definition: God's unconditional amplification of the *land* promise in the Abrahamic Covenant in which Israel will forever possess the *physical* land from the Euphrates River to the Wadi of Egypt (W. el 'Arish) after disobedience and restoration.

(i) Note: Some amillennialists believe this wadi (stream) is the Nile River (e.g., Leupold, *Genesis*, 1:490). However, Genesis 15:18 makes a deliberate contrast between a small river and a great one (Euphrates), so a reference to the great Nile would not fit such a contrast. The Wadi of Egypt was the extent of Solomon's empire later (1 Kings 8:65), a border that did not extend to Egypt (Beitzel, 121; cf. notes, 146-47; cf. Ezek. 47:19).

(ii) Map



Terry Hall, *Bible Panorama*, 49 (adapted)

(b) Key Passage: Deut. 30:1-10

(i) "When... (vv. 1-2)

(a) all these blessings and curses come upon you

(b) and you take them to heart wherever the Lord God disperses you...

(c) and when you and your children return to the Lord...

(ii) "Then... (vv. 3-10)

(a) the LORD your God will restore your fortunes...

(b) and gather you again...

(c) and circumcise your hearts..."

(c) Provisions:

(i) National: the land is Israel's forever (Gen. 13:15; 17:8; Ezek. 16:60)

(ii) Universal: possession of the land to benefit all nations (Isa. 14:1-2)

(d) Unconditional Nature

(i) Eternal (Ezek. 16:60) as God will do it for His holy name (Ezek. 36:21-24, 32; cf. 2 Chron. 20:7; Isa. 43:25; Ezek. 20:9, 14, 17, 22, 33-44).

(ii) Amplification of the Abrahamic Covenant, which is unconditional

(iii) Possession of the land based on obedience ("if..." Deut. 30:10) so the only conditional element is the time (Deut. 30:1-3, "When...then...")

(e) Time of Fulfillment: follows national repentance (Deut. 30:2, 6, 8, 10; Jer. 17:24-27; 18:7-10) to take place *after* the return from Babylon (Zech. 10:9-10). This will not occur until the Second Coming of Christ (Rom. 11:26-27).

(4) The Davidic Covenant

(a) Definition: God's unconditional amplification of the *seed* promise in the Abrahamic Covenant in which David was promised that his lineage would never be broken as the royal line in a literal, *political* kingdom.

(b) Key Passage: 2 Sam. 7:12-16 (cf. Ps. 89)

(c) Provisions:

(i) House: perpetual lineage (physical descendants never wiped out)

(ii) Kingdom: would never pass away permanently (cf. Ps. 89:4, 36)[14]

(iii) Throne: permanent right to rule in a *literal* kingdom is seen in...

(a) Ordinary language used

(b) Prophets interpreted it literally

(c) Nation of Israel interpreted it literally

(d) The kingdom overthrown is the same nature as the kingdom restored

(e) Associated with Israel only

(f) Portions were literally fulfilled: partial but not permanent fulfillment by Solomon and only a portion of the land was occupied (not owned)

(g) David understood the promise as applying to a literal throne

[14] Paul Benware, *Understanding End Times Prophecy*, 2d ed. (Chicago: Moody, 1995, 2006), 59.

(h) NT Usage: "Of the 59 references to David in the New Testament, there is not one connecting the Davidic throne with the present session of Christ" (John F. Walvoord, *Israel in Prophecy*, 96).

(i) John, Jesus, the 12, and the 70 all offered Israel a literal kingdom

(j) Jerusalem Council decision to not require Gentile obedience to the Law (Acts 15:14-17) is based upon Gentiles living as Gentiles (not Jews) in the future kingdom (Amos 9:9-10)

(k) The present mystery form of the kingdom (Matt. 13) does not cancel out the promise for a future, literal kingdom

(d) Unconditional Nature

(i) Eternal (2 Sam. 7:13, 16; 23:5; Isa. 55:3; Ezek. 37:25)

(ii) Amplification of the Abrahamic Covenant, which is unconditional

(iii) Reaffirmed even after repeated disobedience by the nation (e.g., Christ came and offered this kingdom after generations of apostasy)

(e) Fulfillment: This will follow Israel's preservation as a nation, restoration to her land, return of her King, and establishment of her earthly kingdom.

(i) Amillennialists claim that the Davidic Covenant is being fulfilled now in the spiritual (not political) kingdom of the Church, which has replaced Israel and fulfilled promises made to her. Christ presently sitting at the right hand of God is equated with His sitting on the throne of David.

(ii) Dispensationalists have typically argued against this view, noting that the throne of God and the throne of David are not the same. However, dispensationalists more recently have claimed that the Davidic Covenant is being fulfilled in the present age. This began in the mid-1980s when Darrell Bock, Craig Blaising, and Robert Saucy postulated a progressive fulfillment of this covenant. They coined the term "Progressive Dispensationalists" for their view, and, despite the displeasure of older dispensationalists, the term has stuck. Part of the support for this view is the NT teaching that the Church is a spiritual temple (Eph. 2:19-22) in partial fulfillment of the literal temple that God promised David would be built (2 Sam. 7:13).

(5) The New Covenant

(a) Definition: God's unconditional amplification of the *blessing* promise in the Abrahamic Covenant in which Israel and Judah will experience national and spiritual redemption.

(b) Key Passage: Jer. 31:31-34

(c) Provisions:

(i) Indwelling of the Holy Spirit (Jer. 31:33 with Ezek. 36:27)

(ii) New nature, heart, and mind (Jer. 31:33; Isa. 59:21)

(iii) No need for evangelism (Jer. 31:34a)

(iv) Forgiveness of sins (Jer. 31:34b)

(d) Unconditional Nature

(i) Eternal (Jer. 31:36, 40; 32:40; 50:5; Isa. 61:2, 8-9; 24:5; Ezek. 37:26)

(ii) Amplification of the Abrahamic Covenant, which is unconditional

(iii) Unqualified "I will" statements of God (Jer. 31:31-34; Ezek. 16:60-62)

(e) Time of Fulfillment (cf. chart on next page)

(i) Partial fulfillment in the present church age: Three premillennial views have been given on how to correlate Jeremiah 31:31ff. with the NT passages (Luke 22:20; 1 Cor. 11:25; 2 Cor. 3:6; Heb. 8:8; 9:15).

(a) Only one New Covenant for Israel (Darby)

(b) Two New Covenants: one for Israel and one for the church (Chafer)

(c) One New Covenant with a two-fold application: to the church now and to Israel in the future (Scofield and others)

(ii) Complete fulfillment after return of Christ

(iii) Note that the time of fulfillment began as soon as the old covenant (Mosaic) was no longer in force. On the night before Christ's death, He instituted the new covenant in his blood, knowing full well that the next day the old covenant would be abolished (cf. Rom. 7).

(a) In fact, only the Mosaic Covenant is called the "old covenant" in Scripture. Grudem emphasizes this point (p. 521, emphases his):

> What then is the "old covenant" in contrast with the "new covenant" in Christ? *It is not the whole of the Old Testament*, because the covenants with Abraham and David are never called "old" in the New Testament. Rather, *only the covenant under Moses*, the covenant made at Mount Sinai (Ex. 19-24) is called the "old covenant" (2 Cor. 3:14; cf. Heb. 8:6, 13), to be replaced by the "new covenant" in Christ (Luke 22:20; 1 Cor. 11:25; 2 Cor. 3:6; Heb. 8:8, 13; 9:15; 12:24).

(b) No Scripture refers to the Abrahamic, Land, or Davidic Covenants as "the old covenant" as they are still in effect. God has not finished fulfilling promises made to His people Israel.

Views on the New Covenant

Issue: How can the OT and NT data on the New Covenant be reconciled? Jeremiah 31 declares it is for Israel and Judah but the NT (Luke 22:20; 1 Cor. 11:25; 2 Cor. 3:6; Heb. 8:8; 9:15) apply it to the church. Is there actually *no* New Covenant, is it only for *Israel* or only for the *church*, or are there *two* New Covenants, or does the *church participate* in some of its aspects while awaiting the final fulfillment of the covenant? This study takes the last view, as do most modern premillennialists.

View	Explanation	School/Scholars	Problems
Restated Mosaic	No New Covenant	Critical -Couturier -Duhm -Schmidt -Potter Spirit (parallel passages)	1. OC/NC distinctions in text ignored 2. OC=conditional, NC=unconditional 3. OC=temporal, NC=eternal 4. OC=external, NC=internal 5. OC=no enabling, NC=enabling 6. NC=peace, prosperity, sanctuary,
Church Alone	No Israel Participation	Amillennial/ Postmillennial -Allis -Cox -Smick -Boettner	1. Ignores OT data by equating Israel and the Church 2. NC introduced ≠ fulfilled to Israel 3. Present need to know YHWH (need for Great Commission) 4. AD 70 Jerusalem vs. Jer. 31:40
Israel Alone	No Church Participation	Misc/Classical Dispensational -Darby -Thompson -von Rad	1. Ignores NT data -Christ's Last Supper words -Paul's statements -Hebrews application to Church 2. Ignores present work of Spirit
Two New Covenants	NC for Israel NC for Church	Early 1900s Dispensational -Chafer -Walvoord (old) -Ryrie (old)	1. Same terminology for OT & NT NCs 2. Israel/Church distinction too sharp 3. Basis of forgiveness the same 4. If 2 NCs then no OC for Church 5. Church doesn't possess Israel's promises
Church Partici-pation	Primarily for Israel Secondarily for Church	Misc/Present Dispensational -Keil -Lemke -Bright -Scofield -Walvoord (DTS) -Ryrie (DTS) -Archer (TEDS) -Kaiser (TEDS) -Feinberg (Talbot) -Thiessen (Talbot)	Support: 1. Primary fulfillment future—Rom 11 2. Deals with both OT & NT data 3. Forgiveness/Spirit=blessings now 4. NC has new law 5. Rebuttals to above views

Covenant Conditions

Adapted from John F. Walvoord, "The New Covenant," in *Integrity of Heart, Skillfulness of Hands*, eds. Dyer & Zuck (Baker, 1994), 186-200

Covenant	God's Part	Man's Part
Edenic Gen. 1:26-31; 2:16-17	♦ Gave man rule over all creatures ♦ Commanded man to be fruitful ♦ Permitted man to eat green plants	♦ Adam and Eve could not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil
Adamic Gen. 3:14-19	♦ Judged Satan (3:14-15) ♦ Judged Adam & Eve (3:16-19) ♦ Cursed ground (3:17-19) ♦ Promised Redeemer (3:15)	♦ **RESULTS (not conditions)** ♦ Difficult to find food (3:17-19) ♦ Sorrow & death (3:19)
Noahic Gen. 6:18; 9:9-16	♦ Instructions on ark ♦ Promised no more worldwide floods ♦ Invented rainbow (9:13)	♦ **RESULTS (not conditions)** ♦ Noah got drunk but covenant still unconditional (9:20-23) ♦ Assumed that Noah would build ark
Abrahamic Gen. 12:1-3	♦ Made Abram great (12:2b) ♦ Made Israel great from Abram (12:2a) ♦ Blesses all [believing] peoples through him (12:3b) ♦ Will give land eternally (Gen. 12:7; 17:8; Jer. 23:5-8; 31:4-11; 35-37; Ezek. 20:33-38; 47–48)	♦ Abram left Ur (a condition?) ♦ Man must bless Israel as persecutors are always judged (12:3a) ♦ Circumcision is the sign (Gen. 17) ♦ Land possession conditioned on obedience (Deut. 28; 30:1-10) but the covenant is unconditional as its ultimate fulfillment is certain
Mosaic Exod. 20; Lev. 26; Deut. 28	♦ Imposed this works covenant on Israel (not on any other nation) ♦ Warned of blessings & cursings ♦ Set standards for temporal blessing (not eternal salvation)	♦ "Be holy, because I, the LORD your God, am holy" (Lev. 19:2) ♦ Obey covenant stipulations such as Ten Commandments (Exod. 20)
Land Gen. 15:18; 17:7-8; Deut. 30:1-10	♦ Provide Abraham's descendents the land from the Wadi of Egypt (south) to the Euphrates River (Gen. 15:18) ♦ Land an eternal, unconditional possession for the nation (17:7-8)	♦ Possession based on conditions of repentance and a changed heart towards Christ as Messiah (Deut. 30:2, 6, 8, 19)
Davidic 2 Sam. 7:12-17; 1 Chron. 17:10b-14; Ps. 89	♦ Promised far beyond what David deserved (thus unconditional) ♦ Descendent will rule Israel forever (7:13, 16) ♦ Never will rescind the covenant (7:15-16) ♦ Will fulfill at Israel's regathering (Ps. 72; Jer. 23:5-8; Ezek. 39:25-29; Jer. 30:5-9)	♦ Accept divine discipline for sin (7:14), which would interrupt the line of kings by disobeying the Mosaic covenant (Ps. 132:11-12) ♦ The covenant applies only to David's descendants and thus is limited in scope (not for all people not even for all Israel directly, though indirectly all will be blessed in Christ's reign)
New Jer. 31:31-37; Isa. 61:8-9; Jer. 32:27-41; Ezek. 16:60-62; Ezek. 36:26-27; Ezek. 37:1-22	♦ Will make it with Israel and Judah (31:31) ♦ Will make it unlike Mosaic law ♦ Write His laws on hearts (31:33) ♦ Promises that all on earth will know Him (31:34a) ♦ Will forgive and forget Israel's sins (31:34b) ♦ Unconditional promise for Israel to be a nation forever (31:35-37; 33:25-26)	♦ The new covenant is by grace through faith in Christ (Rom. 3:21-24) and not works (Eph. 2:8-10) to bring redemption (Eph. 2:4-7) so no conditions are given beyond faith ♦ The sign of this covenant is the cup of the Lord's Supper (Luke 22:20), which believers are commanded to take (1 Cor. 11:24-25)

Kingdom & Covenants Timeline

22 & 337

Kingdom Teaching...

Adam rules with God (Gen. 1:26, 28; 2:19) | Satan rules as god of this world (Gen. 3:15; 2 Cor. 4:4) | Fall of Man (Gen. 3)

God covenants with Abraham to reestablish man's rule via Israel as a "kingdom of priests" (Gen. 12:1-3; Exod. 19:6)

Israel's failure to witness to nations as a kingdom of priests is judged via exile under foreign rule

Israel rejects Messiah's offer of kingdom (Matt. 12:41-42; 23:37-39)

Jesus extends His kingdom in mystery form to the Church (Matt. 13)

Christ subdues Israel's enemies and nation believes (Rom. 11:26-27)

Christ rules over everything with saints (Eph. 1:9-10; Rev. 20:1-6; 22:5b)

Noahic Covenant

Genesis 6:18; 9:8-17

Abrahamic Covenant

Genesis 12:1-3

	ISRAEL (National Focus)	CHURCH The "New Man" (Eph. 2:15)	MESSIANIC Millennial	KINGDOM Eternal
Land Covenant (land)	Genesis 15:18 (cf. Deut. 30:1-10) promises: •Land from Wadi of Egypt to Euphrates River (Isa. 27:12) •Eternal possession of land (Gen. 17:8) after exile/restoration •Whole world blessed via the land (Isa. 14:1-2)	Israel judged for rejecting Messiah by dispersion away from land for 19 centuries (AD 70–AD 1948) but now partially restored (Ezek. 37:1-7)	Full restoration (Ezek. 37:8-28) Jerusalem world capital (Isa. 2:1-5)	New Jerusalem (Rev. 21–22)
Davidic Covenant (seed)	2 Samuel 7:12-16 promises perpetual: •Sons ("house" never wiped out) •Kingdom (political dynasty) •Throne (right to rule by descendants) •Temple (son to build it)	Christ is Head over His Church, which is a spiritual temple (Eph. 2:19-22; 2 Cor. 6:16)	Christ reigns over the world (Isa. 11) with saints (Rev. 5:10; 20:4-6)	Christ hands kingdom over to Father (1 Cor. 15:24)
New Covenant (blessing)	Jeremiah 31:31-34 promises: •Forgiveness •Indwelling Spirit •New heart, nature, mind •Reunification of Israel and Judah •No need for evangelism	Mosaic Law replaced with first three elements of the New Covenant (Luke 22:20; 2 Cor. 3:6)	All 5 elements fulfilled in national restoration (Zech. 8)	All things made new! (Rev. 21:5)

Mosaic Covenant

Temporary (Gal. 3:19) and conditional (Deut. 28) to reveal sin (Rom. 7:7) and regulate Israel (Gal. 3:23-25)

Law abolished, fulfilled, and replaced at the cross (Rom. 7:1-6;1 Cor. 9:19-21; Heb. 8:13)

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Scripture has a dual kingdom-covenant emphasis. Israel's role from Abraham to Christ expands to include the Church (continuity) yet the Church never replaces the nation as the "new Israel" (discontinuity). Israel will again enjoy world prominence after trusting in Christ at His second coming.

Contrasting the Abrahamic & Mosaic Covenants

Distinguishing these covenants gives a foundation to interpret the OT and NT, especially the prophets as they look back on covenants with both Abraham (e.g., Ezek. 36–37, p. 508) and Moses (e.g., Lam. 1:3, p. 496). Knowing the conditional and temporal nature of the Law prevents misapplying obsolete commands to the Church today (e.g., Sabbath, charging interest to believers, tithing). Also, God's faithfulness to sinners becomes clear due to Abraham.

	Abrahamic Covenant	Mosaic Covenant
Recipient (Date & Place)	Abraham as mediator for all nations 2060 BC, Ur of the Chaldees	Moses as mediator for Israel 1445 BC, Mount Sinai
Scripture	Genesis 12:1-3 (but formalized into a covenant in Genesis 15)	Exodus 20—31 is the heart of the covenant
Between God &	A person (for a future nation)	A nation
Scope	Universal ("all peoples will be blessed through you")	Only Israel received the Law (Deut. 4:8; Ps. 147:20)
Character & Significance	Grace (promises) —primary (what God will do)	Works (laws) —secondary (how God will do it)
Promises	Land, seed, and blessing (without indication of time of fulfillment)	Blessing for obedience and cursing for disobedience (Lev. 26; Deut. 28)
Conditions	Unconditional: "I will..."	Conditional: "If you will...then I will..."
Participation	Abraham asleep (Gen. 15:17)	Israel agreed to obey (Exod. 19:8)
Analogy	Father to son (royal grant)	Suzerain (superior king) to vassal (servant nation)
Purpose	Clarified Israel's blessings in general terms to motivate the nation towards righteousness by faith in God's provision of a wonderful future (Gen. 12:1; 15:1, 6)	Clarified how Israel could be blessed in the Abrahamic Covenant as soon and full as possible; didn't restate or expand the Abrahamic Covenant but revealed sin (Rom. 5:20; Gal. 3:19, 24)
Form	Oral (no written stipulations)	Written on tablets of stone & Pentateuch
Emphasis	Blessing over discipline/judgment (five "blessings" in Gen. 12:1-3)	Judgment/discipline over blessing (contrast Deut. 28:1-14 & vv. 15-68)
Christology	Ultimate seed (Gen. 12:3)	Typified in tabernacle (Heb. 8-10)
Sign	Circumcision (Gen. 17:11)	Sabbath (Exod. 31:13, 17)
End	Never ended (Gal. 3:15-18) as an eternal covenant (Gen. 17:8)	Ended at Christ's death (Rom. 7:6; 10:4; 2 Cor. 3:7-11; Gal. 5:1; Heb. 7:11-12)

While most of the above is original, some is based on Thomas L. Constable, "A Theology of Joshua, Judges, and Ruth," in *A Theology of the Old Testament*, ed. Roy B. Zuck (Chicago: Moody, 1991), 100-101. For more on the relevance of the OT law to the Christian, see *Five Views on Law and Gospel* (Zondervan), including modified Lutheran (Douglas J. Moo), Dispensational (Wayne G. Strickland), "weightier issues" apply (Walter C. Kaiser), Non-theonomic Reformed (Willem VanGemeren), and Theonomic Reformed (Greg Bahnsen).

Covenant Contrasts

There are only four key eschatological covenants in Scripture. They share these traits in common:

1. Unconditional
2. Eternal
3. Partially & spiritually fulfilled at present
4. Fully & literally fulfilled in the future
5. Universal in scope

Yet they can be contrasted in many ways as well (see also Eschatology pages 21-22, 55a, 59-61, 116):

	Abrahamic	Palestinian	Davidic	New
Definition: God's promise to give Israel...	land, rule, and blessing to benefit the world	*physical* land from the Wadi of Egypt to the Euphrates River (Gen. 15:18)	*political* rule of a descendant of David forever from Zion	*spiritual* blessings of national cleansing and restoration
Relationship	Umbrella	Land	Seed	Blessing
Key Text	Gen. 12:1-3	Deut. 30:1-10	2 Sam. 7:12-16	Jer. 31:31-34
Recipient	Abraham	Moses	David	Jeremiah
Date	2060 BC	1445 BC	1004 BC	595 BC
Place	Ur of Chaldees	Mt. Sinai	Jerusalem	Jerusalem
Personal Blessings to First Recipient	Possessions & name blessed, son, opposers disciplined	Privilege of seeing Canaan from afar	Sons ("house") never wiped out (Matt. 1:1-17)	—
National Blessings	A great nation would come from Abraham	Reproof (exile) Regathering Reunited (Isa. 11:11-16) Repentance Restored land prosperity	Temple (via son) Righteous king to rule (a Davidic descendant) over a kingdom where Israel prominent (Isa. 11:1-5)	Reuniting of Israel and Judah Forgiveness Indwelling Spirit New heart 100% Christian (Ezek. 36:25-38)
Universal Blessings	All nations blessed through Christ	World blessed via visiting Jerusalem (Zech. 14:16-19)	Kingdom (political rule over entire world)	All the world evangelised
Present (Partial) Fulfillment	Church as spiritual seed of Abraham (Gal. 3:5)	Regathering & rebirth of modern Israel (Ezek. 37:7-8)	Church as spiritual temple (Eph. 2:19-22) & Christ as the King awaiting rule	Law abolished, forgiveness, new nature and Spirit indwelling
Future (Full) Fulfillment	All four covenants fulfilled in the millennial kingdom	Israel given full borders (Ezek. 37:8-28; 47–48)	Christ rules world (Isa. 2, 11) with saints (Rev. 5:10)	World 100% Christian and Israel/Judah reunited

Signs of the Covenants

God has made several covenants with man throughout the ages. With each of them he has attached a sign or memorial on an ongoing basis. These function as reminders of his and/or our responsibilities to keep these covenants.

Covenant	*Definition*	*Promise*	*Fulfillment*	*Sign*
Noahic	Unconditional promise not to flood the earth again	Gen. 9:12-17	No more sea (Rev. 21:1)	Rainbow (Gen. 9:12-17)
Abrahamic	Promise to provide Israel a land, rule, and spiritual blessing	Gen. 12:1-3; 15:13-18	Continues at present (Gal. 3:17) but Israel still has a future (see Rom. 11:25-27)	Circumcision (Gen. 17:11)
Mosaic	Conditional stipulations for blessing on Israel	Exod. 19—31; Deut. 28	Death of Christ (Rom. 7:4-6)	Sabbath (Exod. 31:13)
Palestinian	Promise of physical land from the Wadi of Egypt to the River Euphrates	Deut. 30:1-10	Land blessed (Amos 9:13-15)	Israel's partial restoration to the land in unbelief (Ezek. 37:8, 21)
Davidic	Promise of eternal, political rule of a descendant of David	2 Sam. 7:12-17	Rule renewed (Amos 9:11-12)	Christ seated at the right hand of the Father (Acts 2:34-36)
New	Promise of spiritual indwelling of the Spirit ("law written on hearts"), forgiveness, and total evangelization of Israel	Jer. 31:31-34	Paul & the Apostles (2 Cor. 3–4) All Israel saved (Rom. 11:26-27)	Cup of the Lord's Supper (Luke 21:20; 1 Cor. 11:25)

B. Comparative Views on the Theme of the OT[15]

1. The Problem

a) It's helpful to know various facts about the Old Testament such as when the people lived, what they did, lessons we can learn from them, etc.

b) However, often we can "get lost looking at the trees without ever seeing the forest." So before we discuss this issue as a class let's first get your opinion.

c) In the next 5 minutes write out what you consider to be the *theme* of the Old Testament in the space below. In other words, what is the OT all about? What is it trying to prove? By all means use your Bible to look up key passages. Try to avoid reading the New Testament into your statement so that it sounds like a NT theme. Make this an OT theme, O.K.?

(1) My View

(2) Other Views in the Class

d) What criteria should be used to determine the theme of the Old Testament?

(1)

(2)

(3)

(4)

[15] cf. OTS, 31-33.

2. **Solutions** (cf. also Gerhard Hasel, *Old Testament Theology*, 3d ed. [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982], 117-43)

a) Redemption of Man (Salvation History or Soteriological Purpose)

(1) Proponents: J. Barton Payne, *The Theology of the Older Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1962), 3; Graeme Goldsworthy, *According to Plan* (Leicester, England: IVP, and Homebush West, Australia: Lancer, 1991), 8; Hasel, 141 (but see him under the "God" and "No Center" views below). This is popular at SBC as well.

(2) Statement: The Bible has at its focus the salvation of mankind (as many as will believe) through Jesus Christ. Similar to this theme is viewing the centre of biblical revelation as missiological (e.g., "I do all things for the sake of the gospel," 1 Cor. 9:23; cf. John 4:34).

(3) Critique: Redemption is prominent in the NT but seeing this as the primary theme has a few problems:

(a) This is an external structure imposed on the OT from systematic theology.

(b) It focuses too much on man rather than God.

(c) While Christ is the central person of the Bible, the OT emphasizes Him as King more than as Saviour (the OT rarely notes the salvation of individuals.)

(d) This view also does not include God's program for angels, those not redeemed, and creation as a whole, so it is too restrictive.

(e) The view is not traced in the wisdom books (not supported in Eccles., Prov., etc.).

(f) Finally, it neglects the physical (land) aspects prominent in the OT.

b) Glory of God (Doxological Purpose)

(1) Proponents: Calvinistic (predestination) scholars (cf. Westminster Confession); The holiness of God is a similar theme advocated by E. Sellin, *Theologie des Alte Testamente* (2d ed., Zeipzig, 1936), 19 and J. Hänel, *Die Religion der Heiligkeit* (Glütersloh, 1931), iii; Paul Lee Tan, *A Pictorial Guide to Bible Prophecy*, 56 (Eschatology notes, 30).

(2) Statement: The Bible has as its focus the glory and worship of God (by as many as God has foreordained). The Westminster Shorter Catechism (1647) states, "Man's chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy him forever" (cf. Rev. 1:6; 4:11; 5:12-13).

(3) Critique: This view is certainly true in that it states the end to which all things point but it is incomplete in that it does not state *how* God seeks to glorify Himself.

c) Sovereignty of God

(1) Proponents: Ludwig Köhler, *OT Theology*, trans. A. S. Todd (Philadelphia, 1957), 30

(2) Statement: God is the controller of all events and persons throughout history.

(3) Critique: While God does control all things, this view fails to show the end to which God is working in the world.

d) God

(1) Proponents: The later von Rad, *ThLZ* 88 (1963), 406; Hasel, 140 (but see him under the "Redemption" view above and "No Center" view below).

(2) Statement: "The OT is in its essence *theo*centric just as the NT is *christo*centric. In short, God is the dynamic center of the OT" (Hasel, 140).

(3) Critique: This view is correct in identifying God as the key subject of the Scripture, but it fails in identifying what God seeks to do in the world. Thus it is too general a theme.

e) Creation Faith

(1) Proponents: H. H. Schmidt, 1973 (cited by Hasel, 139)

(2) Statement: God is working in the world to create faith in His creatures (?).

(3) Critique: More study needs to be done here to determine what Schmidt really means, but at first glance the idea of creation seems too narrow to encompass the whole OT.

f) Deuteronomistic Theology of History

(1) Proponents: S. Hermann (cited by Hasel, 135)

(2) Statement: The OT is history written not simply to record facts but to present the theology of the school of scholars who wrote the book of Deuteronomy.

(3) Critique: While it is true that OT history is theological in nature, this perspective denies that Moses wrote Deuteronomy and it fails to show how this book alone is broad enough to encompass the whole OT.

g) Worship

(1) Proponents: *Let the Nations Be Glad* (John Piper)

(2) Statement: God's purpose is to provide worshippers from every nation (Rev. 5:9; 7:9). This view combines the glory of God and the redemption perspectives.

(3) Critique: Revelation 5:9; 7:9 teaches that God will save people from every nation to worship him. However, while this takes place in heaven, these texts are in a Tribulation context. More accurate is Revelation 22:5 because it takes place in the eternal state.

h) Promise Theme (Blessing or Covenant)

(1) Proponents: Walter C. Kaiser, *Toward an Old Testament Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978), 33 and *Toward an Exegetical Theology: Biblical Exegesis for Preaching and Teaching* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1981), 139; Walther Eichrodt, *Theology of the Old Testament*, 2 vols., trans. J. A. Baker (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1961); Paul N. Benware, *Survey of the OT* (rev. ed., Chicago: Moody, 1993), 14, 18, 35).

(2) Statement: "Such a textually derived center, what the NT eventually was to call the "promise" (*epangelia*), was known in the OT under a constellation of terms. The earliest such expression was 'blessing.' It was God's first gift to the fish, fowl (Gen. 1:22), and then to mankind (v. 28). For men, it involved more than the divine gift of proliferation and 'dominion-having.' The same word also marked the immediacy whereby all the nations of the earth could prosper spiritually through the mediatorship of Abraham and his seed... But there were other terms. McCurley counted over thirty examples where the verb *dibber* (usually translated 'to speak') meant 'to promise'" (Kaiser, 33).

(3) Texts: Gen. 12:1-3 (Abraham); 2 Sam. 7:11-16 (David); cf. Gen. 3:15; 9:25-27

(4) Critique: This is good but it does not take into account Genesis 1—11. For support, Kaiser cites Genesis 1:22, 28 but these verses give commands rather than a promise. The promise theme is, however, very prominent throughout the OT in the progressive establishment of various unconditional covenants by God.

i) No Overall Theme or Center

(1) Proponents: The earlier Gerhard von Rad, *Old Testament Theology* (German ed.), 2:376; Gerhard Wright, *Interpreter's One Volume Commentary on the Bible*, 983; Hasel, 123 (but see "Redemption" and "God" views above).

(2) Statement: There are many themes in Scripture but no single theme can be said to be the dominant one. "One needs to be on guard that one does not yield to the temptation to make a single concept or a certain formula into an abstract divining-rod with which all OT expressions and testimonies are combined into a unified system" (Hasel, 123). Von Rad notes, "On the basis of the Old Testament itself, it is truly difficult to answer the question of the unity of that Testament, for it has no focal point as is found in the New Testament" (*Die Mitte des AT*, 49).

(3) Critique: This theory assumes that because we don't see an overall purpose in the OT, it must not be there. It faults the text rather than our inability to understand. Instead, we should assume that God knows what He is saying but we need to dig deeper to discern it.

j) Kingdom Theme (Rule of God)

(1) Proponents: Kenneth L. Barker, "The Scope and Center of Old and New Testament Theology and Hope," in *Dispensationalism, Israel and the Church*, eds. Craig A. Blaising and Darrell L. Bock, 305; Eugene H. Merrill, *Kingdom of Priests: A History of Old Testament Israel* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1987); J. Dwight Pentecost, *Thy Kingdom Come* (Wheaton: SP Pub., 1990), 9; Roy B. Zuck, ed., *A Biblical Theology of the Old Testament* (Chicago: Moody, 1991), ix; Klein, *EvTh* 30 (1970): 642-70; H. Schultz, *OT Theology* (Edinburgh, 1892), 1:56.

(2) Others advocate a modified kingdom theme. Seebass (1965) says the theme is the rule of God; Georg Fohrer, *ThZ* 24 (1965), 161 advocates "the rule of God and the communion between God and man"; and R. Schnackenburg, *NT Theology Today* (New York, 1965) says the key biblical theme is a dual kingdom-covenant idea. I agree with Schnackenburg in this dual kingdom-covenant theme as the central focus of the OT.

(3) Statement: "I am in essential agreement with the authors' stated center of biblical theology—basically the kingdom principle of Genesis 1:26-28. Most statements of a theological center are too limited (e.g., promise or covenant), too broad (God), or too man-centered (e.g., redemption or salvation-history). It seems clear that, although there are several great theological themes in Scripture, the central focus of biblical theology is the rule of God, the kingdom of God, or the interlocking concepts of kingdom and covenant (but not covenant alone). This theocratic kingdom is realized and consummated primarily through the mediatorial work of God's (and David's) messianic Son. Significantly, Ephesians 1:9-10 appears to indicate that God's ultimate purpose in creation was to establish His Son—the 'Christ'—as the supreme Ruler of the universe" (Kenneth L. Barker in Zuck, ed., ix).

(4) This is similar to the sovereignty view [see "(c)" above], yet more complete in that it shows that God delegates limited sovereignty/rule to man in the various ages until ultimate sovereignty is given to His Son (Ps. 2). The end that God will bring is to glorify Himself by restoring the original order He set up in Eden. This is why Revelation 21–22 has so many parallels to Genesis 1–2.

(5) My View of the OT's Theme

The Old Testament narrates

God's restoring man to participate in His kingdom rule for His own glory

mandated in Eden but lost in the Fall

and accomplished by redeeming man

through Israel's role as a kingdom of priests

and ultimately through the Messiah,

who will reign as Saviour and King

in fulfillment of the Abrahamic Covenant

(6) Key Texts: Gen. 1:26-28; 12:1-3; Exod. 19:5-6; Eph. 1:9-10

	Gen. 1:26-28	Gen. 12:1-3	Exod. 19:5-6	Eph. 1:9-10
Event	Creation Mandate	Abrahamic Covenant	Mosaic Covenant	Messianic Kingdom Rule
Mediator or Co-Ruler with God	Man (Adam)	Abraham	Israel	Jesus Christ
Subordinates (what is ruled over)	All creation except people (animals & all nature)	All peoples	All peoples	All creation (people, animals & all nature)
Passage	"Then God said, 'Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish ... birds ... livestock ... all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground...' God blessed them and said to them, 'Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground.'"	"...I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you."	"Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine, you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation."	"And he made known to us the mystery according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, to be put into effect when the times will have reached their fulfillment —to bring *all things* in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ." Note that "all things" includes both animals (cf. Isa. 11:6-9) and nature (cf. Matt. 17:27; Mark 4:36-41; 6:45-51; 11:2)

IV. Chronological Backgrounds to the Old Testament

A. Chronology of the Patriarchs

Contrary to popular opinion, the dates on the next six pages are based upon a strict chronology in the genealogies of Genesis 5 and 11. There are several reasons for adhering to a genealogy without gaps:

1. These genealogies *state lengths of time* in contrast to other genealogies (as in Matt. 1:1-17), which are not strict genealogies but only show bloodlines. Genesis 5 and 11 give the age of each father when a son is born, which is useless data apart from a strict chronology. Also, Methuselah's death at the Flood fits perfectly.
2. The Genesis genealogies *deal with shorter lengths of time* (only from creation to Abraham) whereas later ones go from Abraham to Jesus (Matt. 1) or even Adam to Jesus (Luke 3).
3. A no-gaps sequence is the *most natural*, straightforward, objective method of interpretation.
4. The Genesis genealogies seem to *indicate a direct father-son relationship*. This is the natural usage of the term "begot" or "was the father of" (ילד), especially when the Hebrew Hiphil (causative) tense is used as it is here. When a father-son relationship is *not* meant, either the Hebrew Qal tense (Gen. 36:10-12; 46:18, 25; Exod. 6:20) or the Hebrew Niphal tense is used (Deut. 23:8). Also, no one questions that Adam had a son named Seth who had Enosh (Gen. 4:25-26), or that Noah had Shem, or that Terah had Abraham.
5. Jude 14 says that Enoch was the 7th generation from Adam so there can be no gaps between these two men. Since the subsequent names have the same structure it is likely that they too lack gaps.
6. Ancient extra-biblical records support a strict chronology. The earliest European and Middle Eastern records verify the accuracy of the Table of Nations (Gen. 10-11) and the early date of creation (5200-4000 BC).[1]

Dates are first determined by starting at the zero year AH (Latin *anno Homo sapiens*) for "in the year of man's beginning." AH dates are then reckoned up to the substantiated date of 1845 BC and then BC dates are counted backwards to creation.

Event	Reference	AH	BC
World created	"By the seventh day God had finished the work He had been doing..." (2:2a)	-6 days	4143
Adam created	"When God created man [*Adam*], he made him in the likeness of God" (5:1b)	0	4143
Seth born to Adam	"When Adam had lived 130 years, he had a son in his own likeness...and he named him Seth" (5:3)	130	4013
Enosh born to Seth	"When Seth had lived 105 years, he became the father of Enosh" (5:6)	235	3908
Kenan born to Enosh	"When Enosh had lived 90 years, he became the father of Kenan" (5:9)	325	3818
Mahalel born to Kenan	"When Kenan had lived 70 years, he became the father of Mahalel" (5:12)	395	3748
Jared born to Mahalel	"When Mahalel had lived 65 years, he became the father of Jared" (5:15)	460	3683
Enoch born to Jared	"When Jared had lived 162 years, he became the father of Enoch" (5:18)	622	3521

[1] Bill Cooper, *After the Flood* (Chichester, England: New Wine Press, 1995), 36-39, 121-29.

Event	Reference	AH	BC
Methuselah born to Enoch	"When Enoch had lived 65 years, he became the father of Methuselah" (5:21)	687	3456
Lamech born to Methuselah	"When Methuselah had lived 187 years, he became the father of Lamech" (5:25)	874	3269
Adam died	"Altogether, Adam lived 930 years..." (5:5a)	930	3213
God took Enoch away	"Altogether, Enoch lived 365 years..." (5:23-24)	987	3156
Seth died	"Altogether, Seth lived 912 years..." (5:8a)	1042	3101
Noah born to Lamech	"When Lamech had lived 182 years, he became the father of Noah" (5:28-29)	1056	3087
Enosh died	"Altogether, Enosh lived 905 years..." (5:11a)	1140	3003
Kenan died	"Altogether, Kenan lived 910 years..." (5:14a)	1235	2908
Mahalel died	"Altogether, Mahalel lived 895 years..." (5:17a)	1355	2788
Jared died	"Altogether, Jared lived 962 years..." (5:20a)	1422	2721
Shem, Ham, and Japheth all born to Noah	"After Noah was 500 years old, he became the father of Shem, Ham and Japheth" (5:32)	1558+[2]	2585
Lamech died	"Altogether, Lamech lived 777 years..." (5:31a)	1651	2492
Methusaleh died	"Altogether, Methusaleh lived 969 years..." (5:27a)	1656	2487
The Flood	"Two years after the flood... Shem was 100 yrs. old" (11:10b)	1656	2487
Arphaxad born to Shem	"Two years after the flood, when Shem was 100 yrs. old, he became the father of Arphaxad " (11:10)	1658	2485
Shelah born to Arphaxad	"When Arphaxad had lived 35 years, he became the father of Shelah" (11:12)	1693	2450
Eber born to Shelah	"When Shelah had lived 30 years, he became the father of Eber" (11:14)	1723	2420
Peleg born to Eber	"When Eber had lived 34 years, he became the father of Peleg" (11:16)	1757	2386
Reu born to Peleg	"When Peleg had lived 30 years, he became the father of Reu" (11:18)	1787	2356

[2]The plus (+) means 5:32 says Noah's three sons were born *after* he was 500 years old but does not specify the time of Ham and Japheth's births. Since Methuselah was born in 687 AH (see 5:21 above) and lived 969 years (5:27), the 687 + 969 = 1656 AH (Scripture does not record Methuselah as having survived the Flood, so he must have died in the Flood or earlier). Since Shem was 98 years old at the Flood (Gen. 11:10), this Flood date of 1656 AH minus 98 years gives 1558 AH as the probable date of Shem's birth as the oldest son. However, it must be admitted that this chronology assumes that Shem was the oldest brother, whereas Genesis 10:21 may indicate either Shem *or Japheth* as the eldest.

Event	Reference	AH	BC
Serug born to Reu	"When Reu had lived 32 years, he became the father of Serug" (11:20)	1819	2324
Haran born to Terah	"After Terah had lived 70 years, he became the father of Abram, Nahor [II], and Haran[3]" (11:26)	1948	2195
Nahor II[4] born to Terah	"After Terah had lived 70 years, he became the father of Abram, Nahor [II], and Haran" (11:26)	1949-200	2194-21
Peleg died	"After he became the father of Reu, Peleg lived 209 years..." (11:17a)	1996	2147
Nahor I died	"After he became the father of Terah [1878 AH], Nahor [I] lived 119 years..." (11:25a)	1997	2146
Noah died	"Altogether, Noah lived 950 years..." (9:29)	2006	2137
Abram[6] born to Terah	"After Terah had lived 70 years, he became the father of Abram, Nahor [II], and Haran" (11:26)	2008	2135
Sarai born	Sarai was 10 years younger than Abram since he was 100 when she was 90 (17:1, 17)	2018	2125
Reu died	"And after he became the father of Serug, Reu lived 207 years..." (11:21a)	2026	2117
Serug died	"And after he became the father of Nahor [I], Serug lived 200 years..." (11:23a)	2049	2094
Shem died	"And after he became the father of Arphaxad, Shem lived 500 years..." (11:11a)	2058	2085
Terah died	"Terah lived 205 years, and he died in Haran" (11:32)	2083	2060
Abram left Haran	Abram went to Canaan at age 75 just after the Abrahamic Covenant was given in Haran (12:4-5)	2083	2060
Abram went to Egypt	"Now there was a famine in the land, and Abram went down to Egypt..." (12:10)	2085?	2058?
Abrahamic Covenant ratified	"Lift up your eyes... All the land you see I will give to you and your offspring forever" (13:14-15)	2089?	2054?
Ishmael born	"Abram was 86 years old when Hagar bore him Ishmael" (16:16)	2094	2049

[3]The text does not tell the time of the births of Abram, Nahor and Haran. However, Haran had a son (Lot) even before Abram and Nahor were married (11:27-28), so he was the oldest son and was born when Terah was 70 years old.

[4]Obviously, this Nahor is a different Nahor than his grandfather by the same name.

[5]Since Nahor was the middle son he must have been born between Haran (1948 AH) and Abram (2008 AH).

[6]Abram was 75 years old when he set out from Haran (2083 AH or 2060 BC; 12:4), which was immediately after Terah's death (Gen. 11:32; Acts 7:4), probably in the same year. Therefore, his birth 75 years earlier would have been 2008 AH or 2135 BC (2083 - 75 = 2008, or 2060 + 75 = 2135).

Event	Reference	AH	BC
Arphaxad died	"And after he became the father of Shelah, Arphaxad lived 403 years..." (11:13a)	2096	2047
Abrahamic Covenant reconfirmed	Abraham was circumcised at age 99 and Ishmael at age 13; "Sarah will bear [Isaac] to you by this time next year" (17:21, 24-25)	2107	2036
Destruction of Sodom	Cities of the Plain destroyed between Abraham's circumcision and Isaac's birth	2107	2036
Isaac born	"Abraham was 100 years old when his son Isaac was born to him" (21:5; cf. 17:17)	2108	2035
Isaac taken to Mt. Moriah	"Some time later... Do not lay a hand on the boy" (22:1, 12)—estimates Isaac to be 17 years old	2125?	2018?
Shelah died	"And after he became the father of Eber, Shelah lived 403 years..." (11:17a)	2126	2017
Sarah died	"Sarah was 127 years old" (23:1)	2144	1991
Isaac marries	"Isaac was 40 years old when he married Rebekah" (25:20)	2148	1995
Shem died	"After he became the father of Arphaxad, Shen lived 500 years..." (11:11) and died at 600 years (11:10)	2158	1985
Jacob and Esau born	"Isaac was 60 years old when Rebekah gave birth to them" (25:26)	2168	1975
Abraham died	"Altogether, Abraham lived 175 years" (25:7)	2183	1960
Eber died	"And after he became the father of Peleg, Eber lived 430 years..." (11:17a) for a total of 464 years	2187	1956
Esau marries	"When Esau was 40 years old, he married Judith... and also Basemath..." (26:34)	2208	1935
Ishmael died	"Altogether, Esau lived 137 years" (25:17)	2231	1912
Jacob fled to Laban	Jacob was 77 years old[7]	2245	1898
Jacob married both Leah and Rachel	So Jacob... loved Rachel more than Leah, and served Laban for another seven years (29:30)	2252	1891
Joseph born	Jacob was 91 at Joseph's birth (see footnote below)	2259	1884

[7] The logic for Jacob's age of 77 when he fled to Laban at Paddam Aram is such: "Joseph stood before Pharaoh, aged 30 (41:46). At the end of 7 years' of plenty Joseph was 37 (41:29-30). At the end of 2 years' famine, when Jacob came down into Egypt, Joseph was 39 (45:6). At the end of 2 years' famine, when Jacob came down into Egypt, Jacob was 130 (47:9). Therefore Jacob was 130 when Joseph was 39. Therefore Jacob was 91 when Joseph was born. Jacob had served Laban 14 years when Joseph was born (29:30; 30:25-26). Therefore Jacob was 91 - 14 = 77 when he left home for Paddan Aram" (Martin Anstey, *The Romance of Bible Chronology: An Exposition of the Meaning, and a Demonstration of the Truth, of Every Chronological Statement Contained in the Hebrew Text of the Old Testament*, 2 vols. [London, Edinburgh, and New York: Marshall Bros., 1913], 1:115); cited by Hoehner, 2).

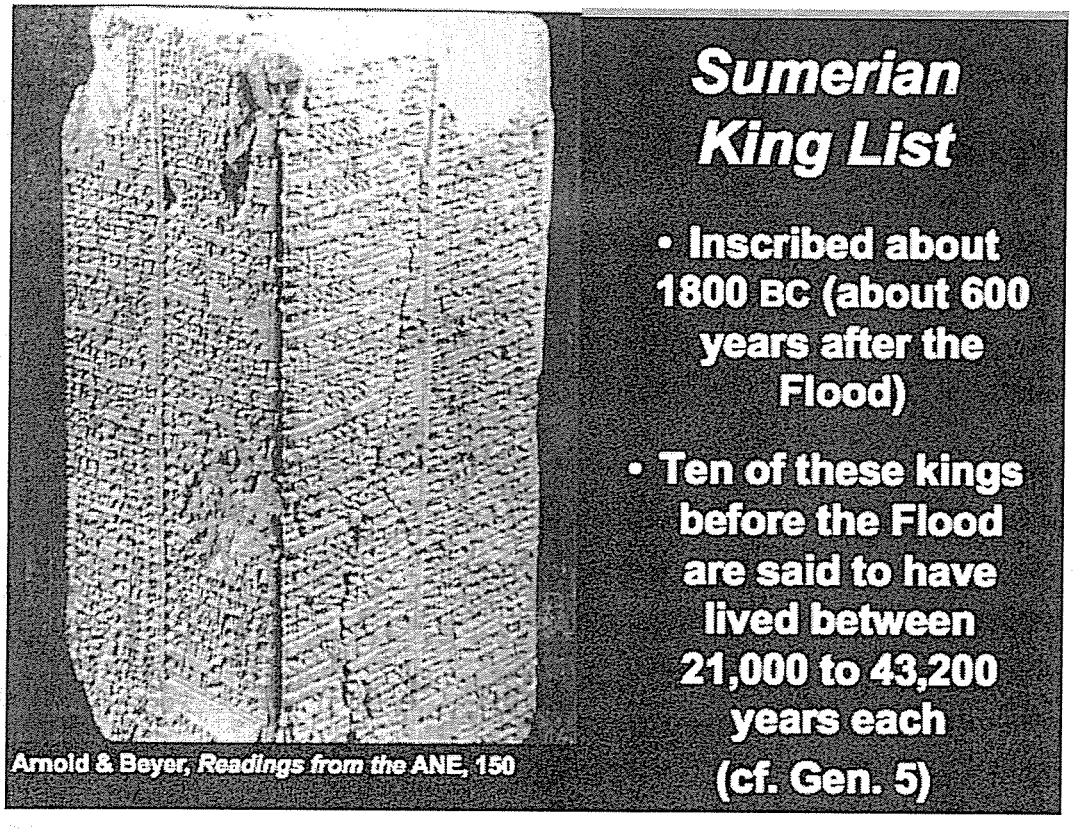
Event	Reference	AH	BC
Jacob returned to Canaan	At age 97, Jacob returned to Canaan after 20 years and was restored with his brother Esau (31:38, 41)	2265	1878
Abrahamic Covenant confirmed to Jacob at Bethel	At age 100, God confirmed his covenant to Jacob one final time and changed his name to Israel (35:9-15); This is the beginning of the 430 years in Canaan and Egypt (Exod. 12:40).[8]	2268	1875
Joseph sold	"Joseph, a young man of 17, was tending his flocks..." (37:2, 28)	2276	1867
Joseph interpreted dreams of baker and cupbearer	"When 2 full years had passed, Pharaoh had a dream" (41:1); Since Joseph was 30 upon entering Pharaoh's service (41:46), his dream interpretations for the baker and cupbearer were at age 28.	2287	1856
Isaac died	"Isaac lived 180 years" (35:28); Jacob was 120 at Isaac's death since Isaac was 60 at Jacob's birth (25:26)	2288	1855
Joseph interpreted Pharaoh's dream	"Joseph was 30 years old when he entered the service of Pharaoh" (41:46)	2289	1854
Seven years of Abundance	Joseph was immediately appointed by Pharaoh to administer the food of Egypt (41:41, 46)	2289-2296	1854-1847
Seven years of Famine	These immediately followed the 7 years of abundance	2296-3003	1847-1840
Jacob and family go to Egypt	Jacob was 130 (47:9) while entering Egypt during the second year of the famine (45:6); this occurred 400 years before the Exodus in 1445 BC. Joseph was 39.	2298	1845[9]
Jacob died	Jacob died at 147 after living in Egypt 17 years (47:28), so Joseph was 56 years old.	2315	1828
Joseph died	Joseph died at 110 (50:26), so he lived another 71 years in Egypt after his family arrived there.	2369	1774

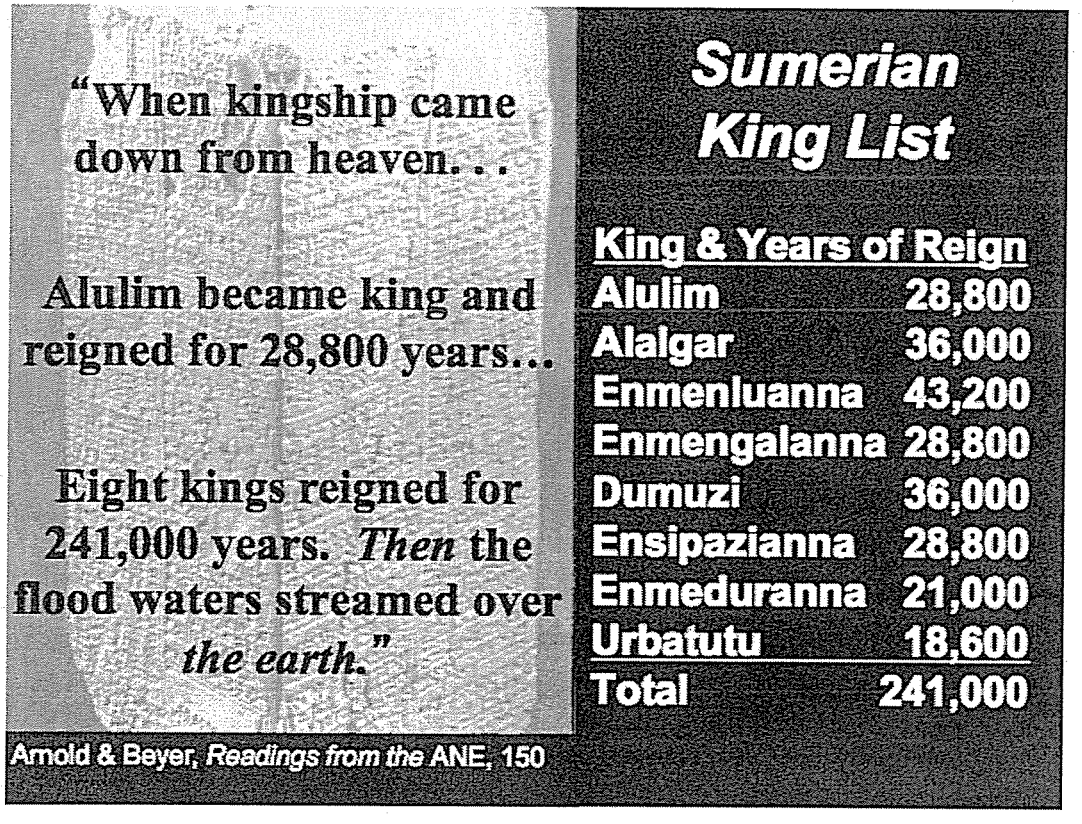
[8] Harold W. Hoehner, "The Duration of the Egyptian Bondage," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 126 (October-December 1969): 306-16). Note that many evangelical OT scholars believe that Jacob's family entered Egypt in 1875 BC (see these notes, 96, 108) since this is 430 years before the Exodus in 1445. In contrast, Hoehner's chronology followed here follows the LXX and Samaritan Pentateuch reading of Exodus 12:40 which cites the 430 years as applying to the time the Israelites lived in "Egypt *and Canaan.*" This is preferred since they were not called Israelites until Jacob's name was changed to Israel in 1875. "The commencement of their sojourning would have been the last confirmation of the Abrahamic covenant as given in Genesis 35:9-15, if one notices that from Genesis 35 onwards the children of Israel never remained in one place in Canaan but were always traveling (cf. Gen 35:16,21,27; in 37:1 they dwelt in the land of Canaan with no specific location mentioned)... Therefore, it seems that if one will take the 430 years as the period from the last recorded confirmation of the Abrahamic covenant to Israel (Jacob) before going into Egypt (Gen 35:9-15) until the time of the Exodus, the 400 years would be that period of time when the nation Israel was in Egypt, that is, from the time when Jacob and his family entered Egypt (Gen 46) until the Exodus. The phrase 'about 450 years' (Acts 13:19-20) would consist of the 400 years of bondage plus the 40 years of wilderness wanderings plus the 7 years for conquering the land of Palestine which makes a total of 447 years or 'about 450 years'" (ibid., 315, 316).

[9]This 1845 BC date is actually the starting point of the BC dates on these pages. The year 1845 BC has been determined as the year Jacob entered Egypt (400 years before the early date for the Exodus in 1445 BC). The dates between Abram's birth and 1845 BC are adapted from Harold W. Hoehner, "From the Birth of Abram to the Death of Joseph" (class handout in Th.D. course "Bible Chronology," Dallas Theological Seminary, June 1988, 3 pp.).

Sumerian King Lists

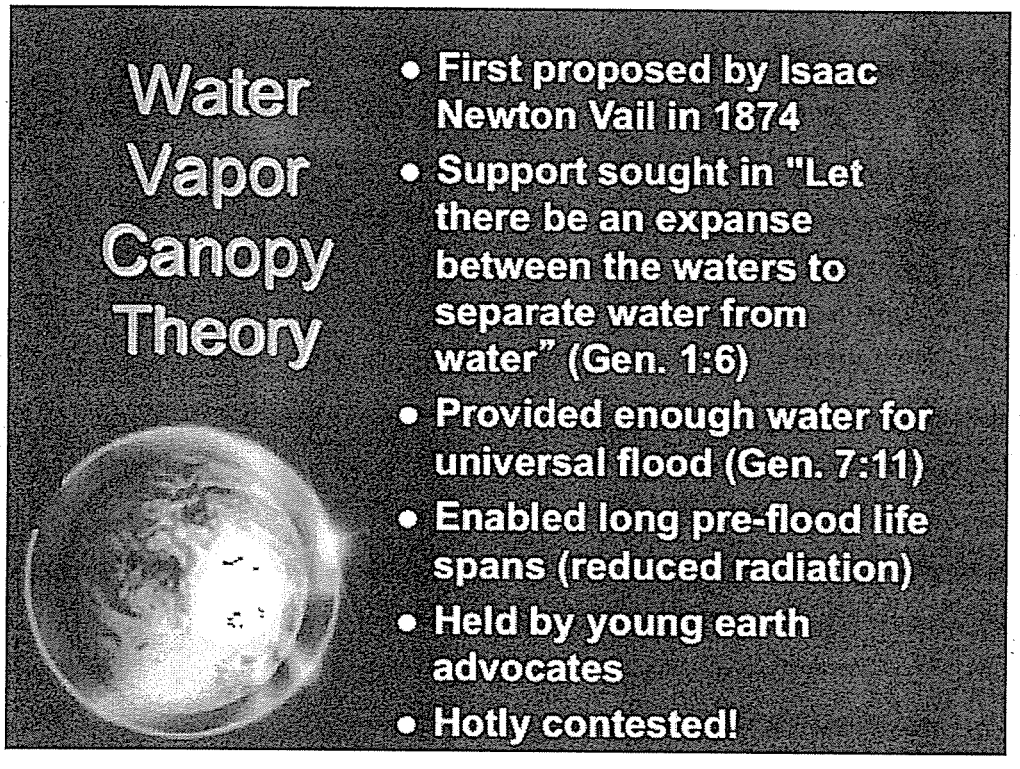
Thee lists are obviously exaggerated reigns of the kings. However, they do point out an early belief in the longevity of life consistent with Genesis 5.

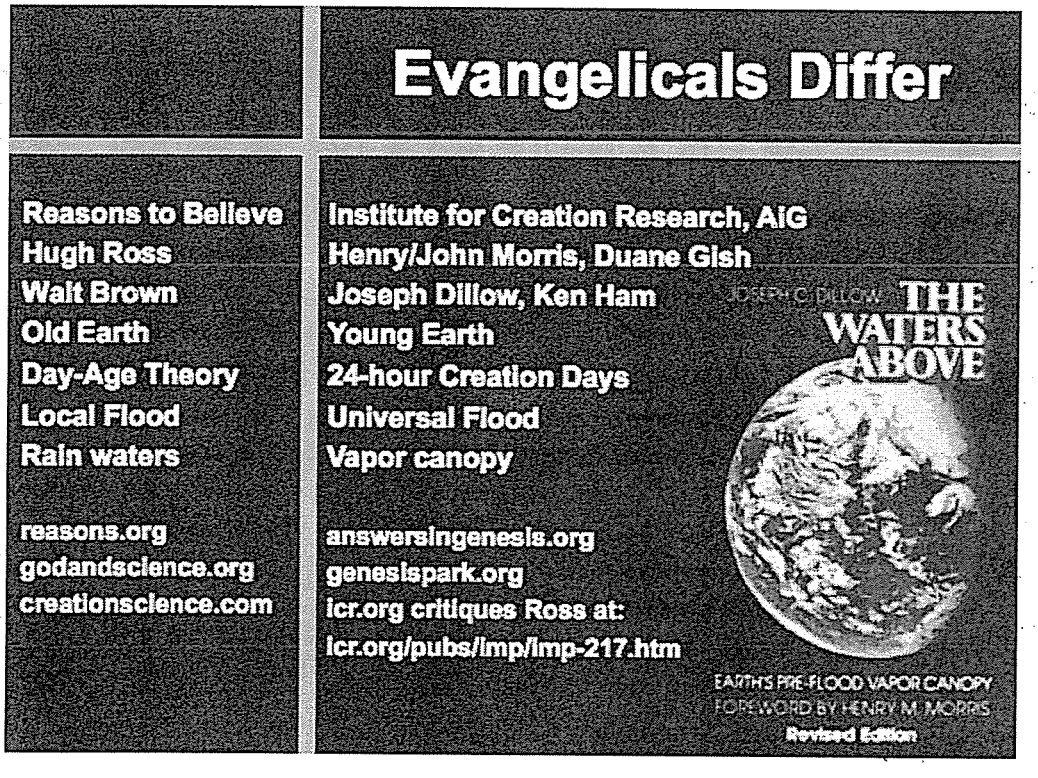


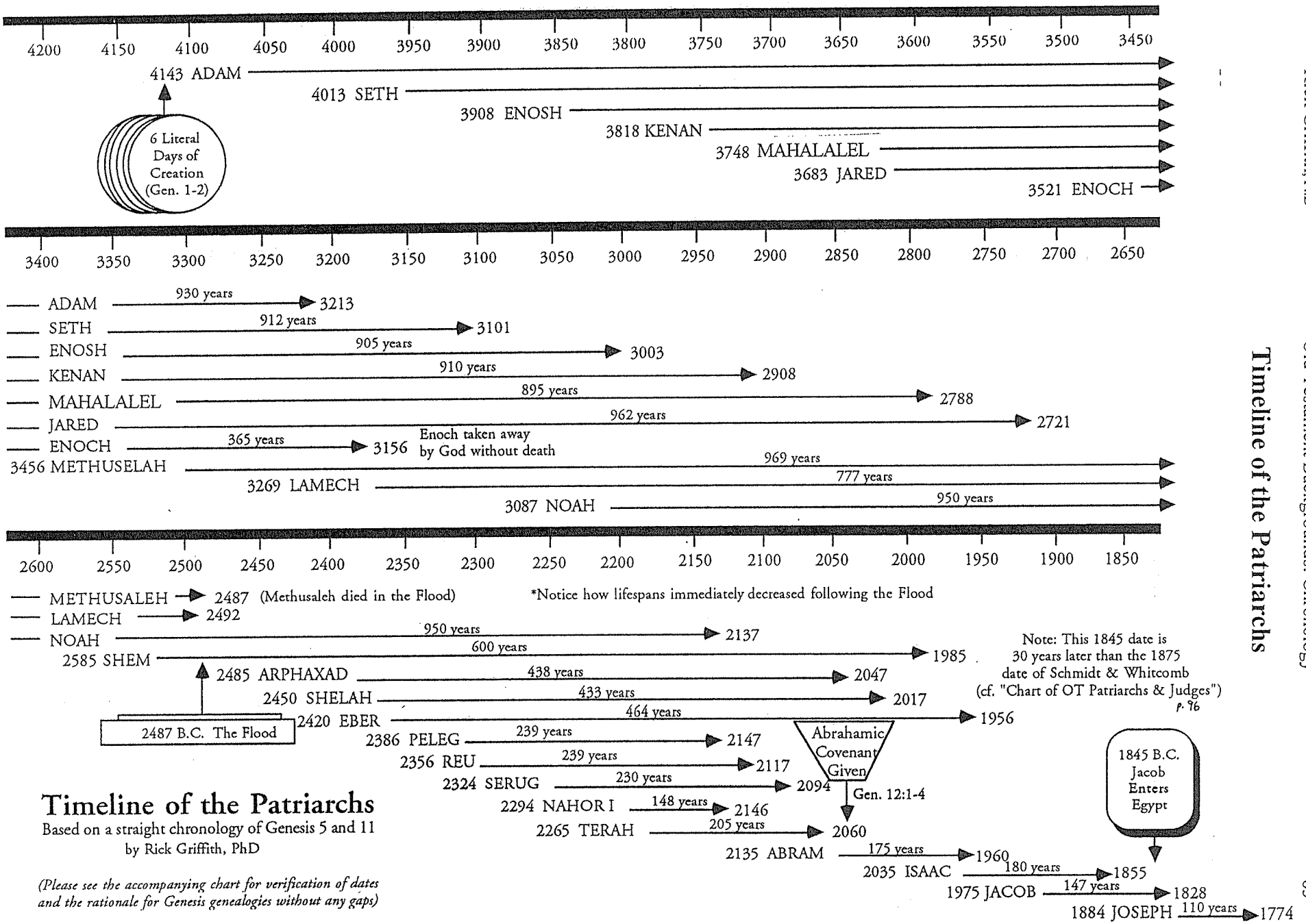


Evangelicals & the Age of the Earth

Evangelical scholars hold two basic views on the age of the earth. Most accept the old age dating of the modern scientific community and then seek to fit Genesis 1 into this framework. This typically results in a type of theistic evolution. However, others see Genesis 1 in a straightforward manner, resulting in the Young Earth Creation model.







Timeline of the Patriarchs

Based on a straight chronology of Genesis 5 and 11
by Rick Griffith, PhD

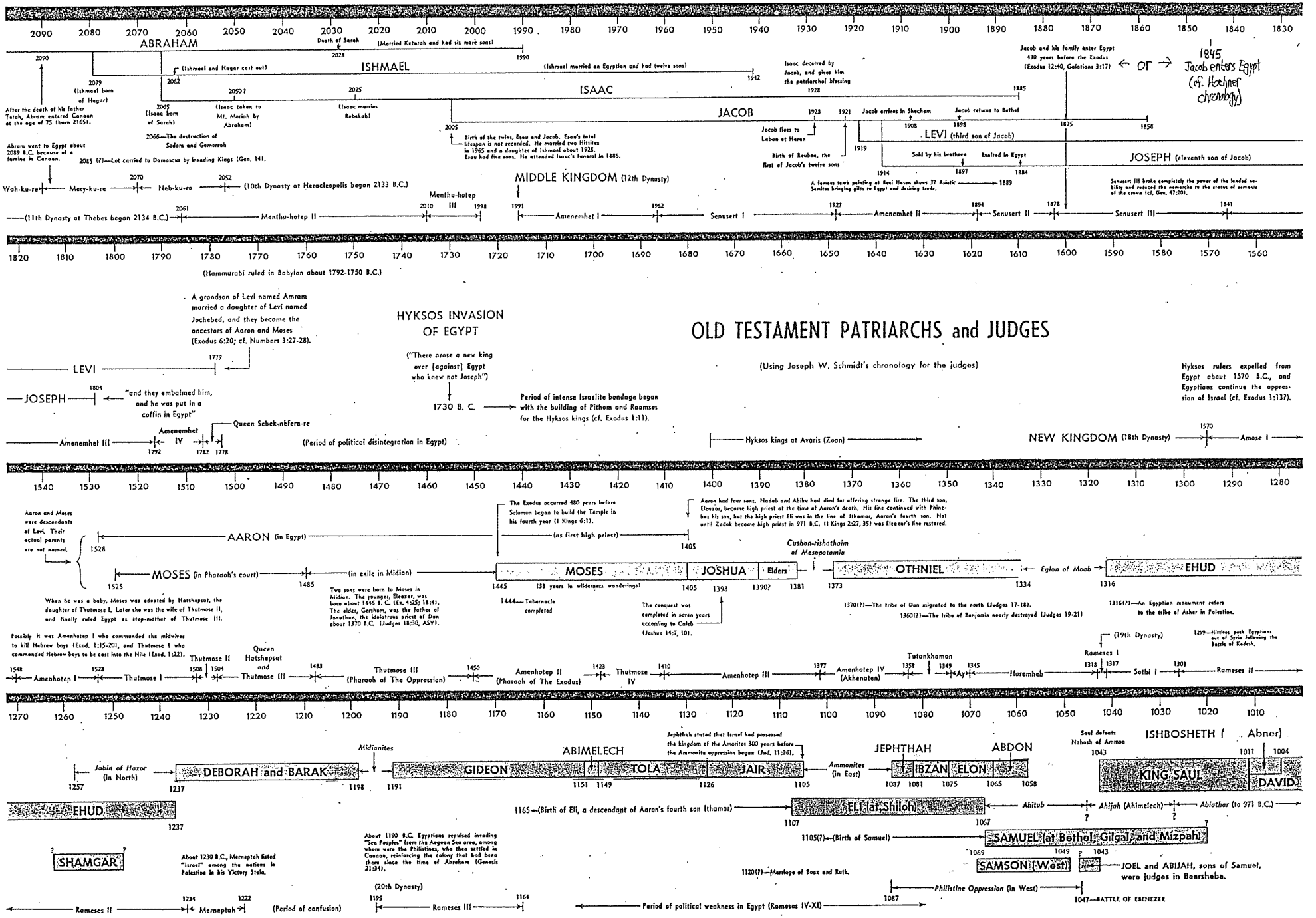
(Please see the accompanying chart for verification of dates and the rationale for Genesis genealogies without any gaps)

Rick Griffith, PhD

Chart of Old Testament Patriarchs & Judges

Old Testament Backgrounds: Chronology

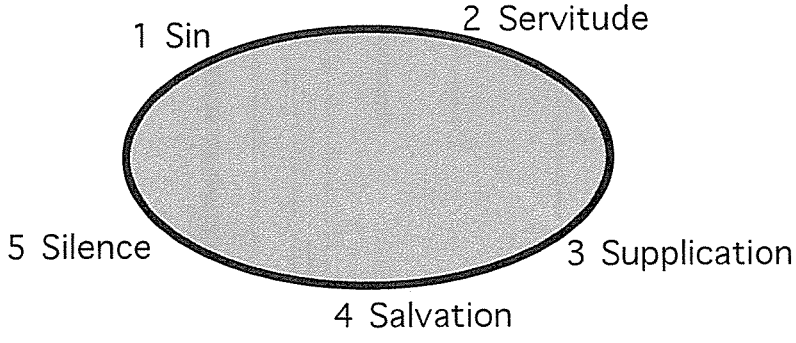
John C. Whitcomb



Chronological Problems with Cycles in Judges

Judges is similar to Numbers in that it also contrasts the faithful, patient love of God with the faithless, impatient ingratitude of Israel in cycles.

1. Pattern: This sin of Israel follows a cyclical pattern which occurs in a five stage progression from sin to servitude to supplication to salvation to silence, then back to sin again as the cycles repeat themselves seven times (see below).



2. The Seven Cycles of the Book of Judges (see chronology on previous page):

Cycle	Oppressor	Location in Israel	Years of Oppression	Deliverer	Years of Peace
1 (3:7-11)	Mesopotamians	South	8	Othniel	40
2 (3:12-30)	Moabites	Southeast	18	Ehud	80
Parenthesis (3:31)	Philistines	Southwest	–	Shamgar	–
3 (chs. 4–5)	Canaanites	North	20	Deborah & Barak	40
4 (6:1–8:32)	Midianites	Northcentral (Ophrah)	7	Gideon	40
5 (8:33–9:57)	Abimelech	Central	3	Unnamed Woman	–
Parenthesis (10:1-2)	–	Central (Shamir)	–	Tola	23
Parenthesis (10:3-5)	–	East (Komon,Gilead)	–	Jair	22
6 (10:6–12:7)	Ammonites	East (Zaphon, Gilead)	18	Jephthah	6
Parenthesis (12:8-10)	–	Southeast (Bethlehem)	–	Ibzan	7
Parenthesis (12:11-12)	–	Northwest	–	Elon	10
Parenthesis (12:13-15)	–	Central (Pirathon)	–	Abdon	8
7 (chs. 13–16)	Philistines	Southwest (Zorah)	40	Samson	20
Totals			114		296

Chart of Old Testament Kings and Prophets

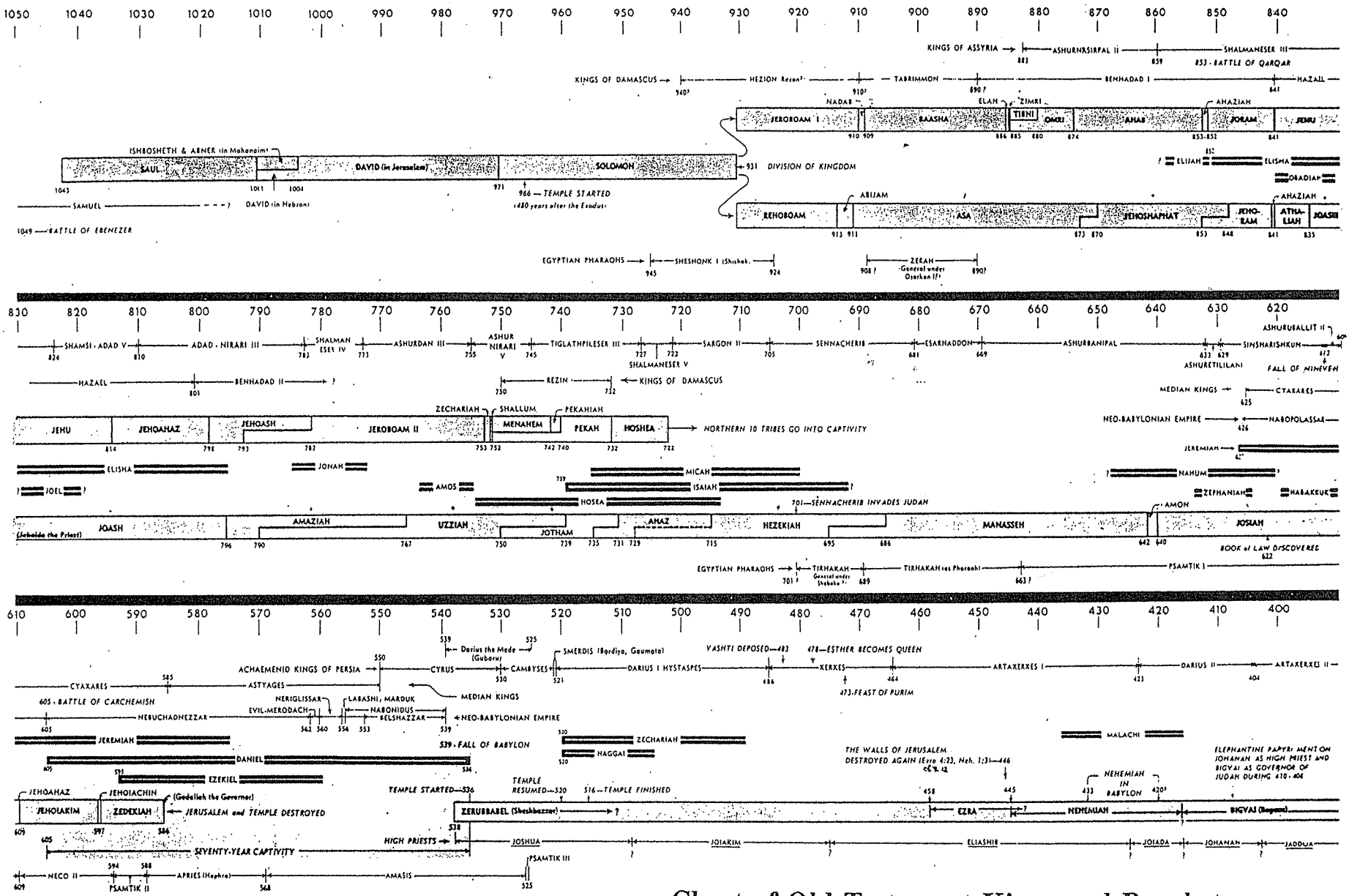
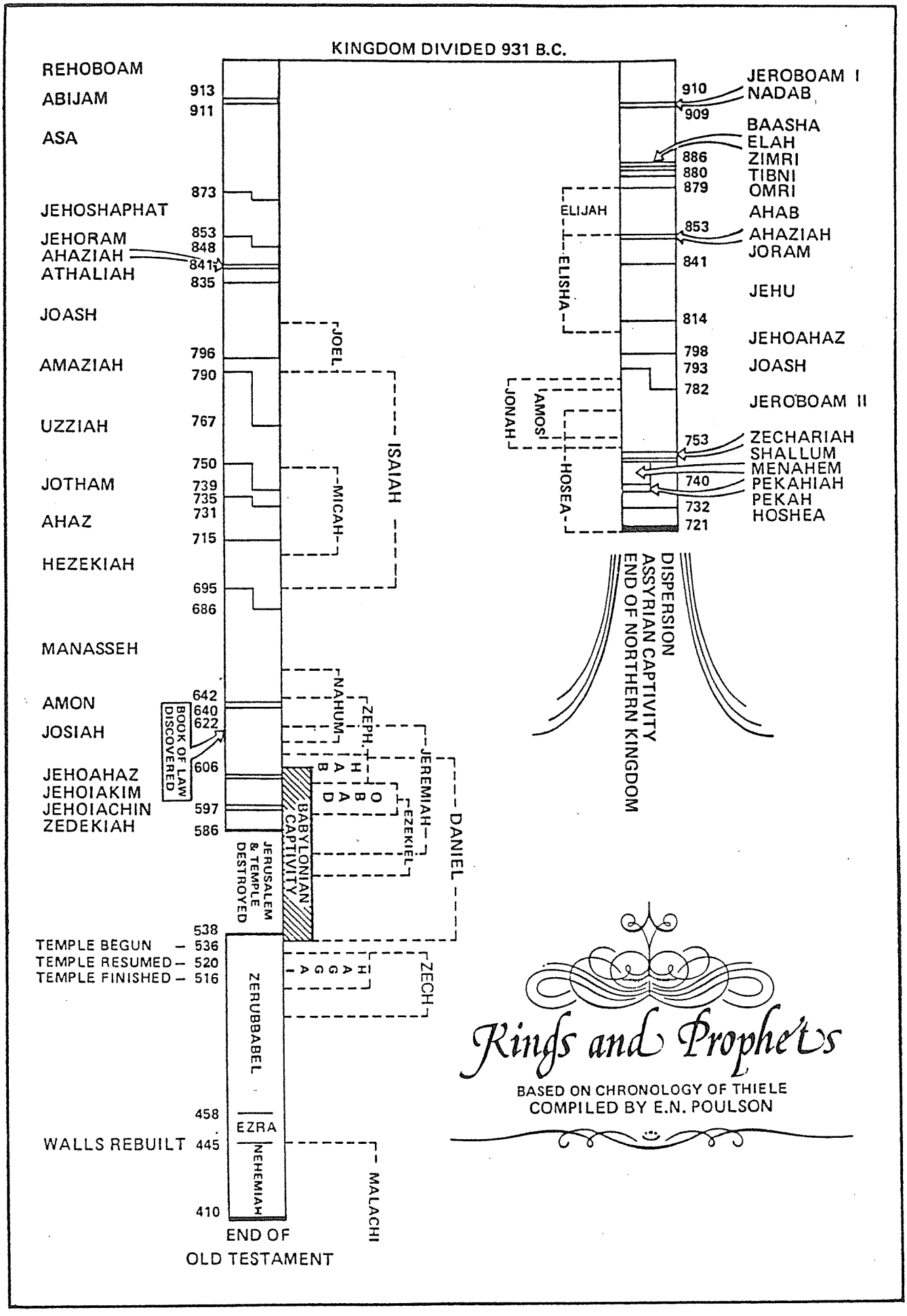


Chart of Old Testament Kings and Prophets

(John C. Whitcomb, 4th rev. ed., Winona Lake, IN: BMH Books, 1962, 1968, p. 2)

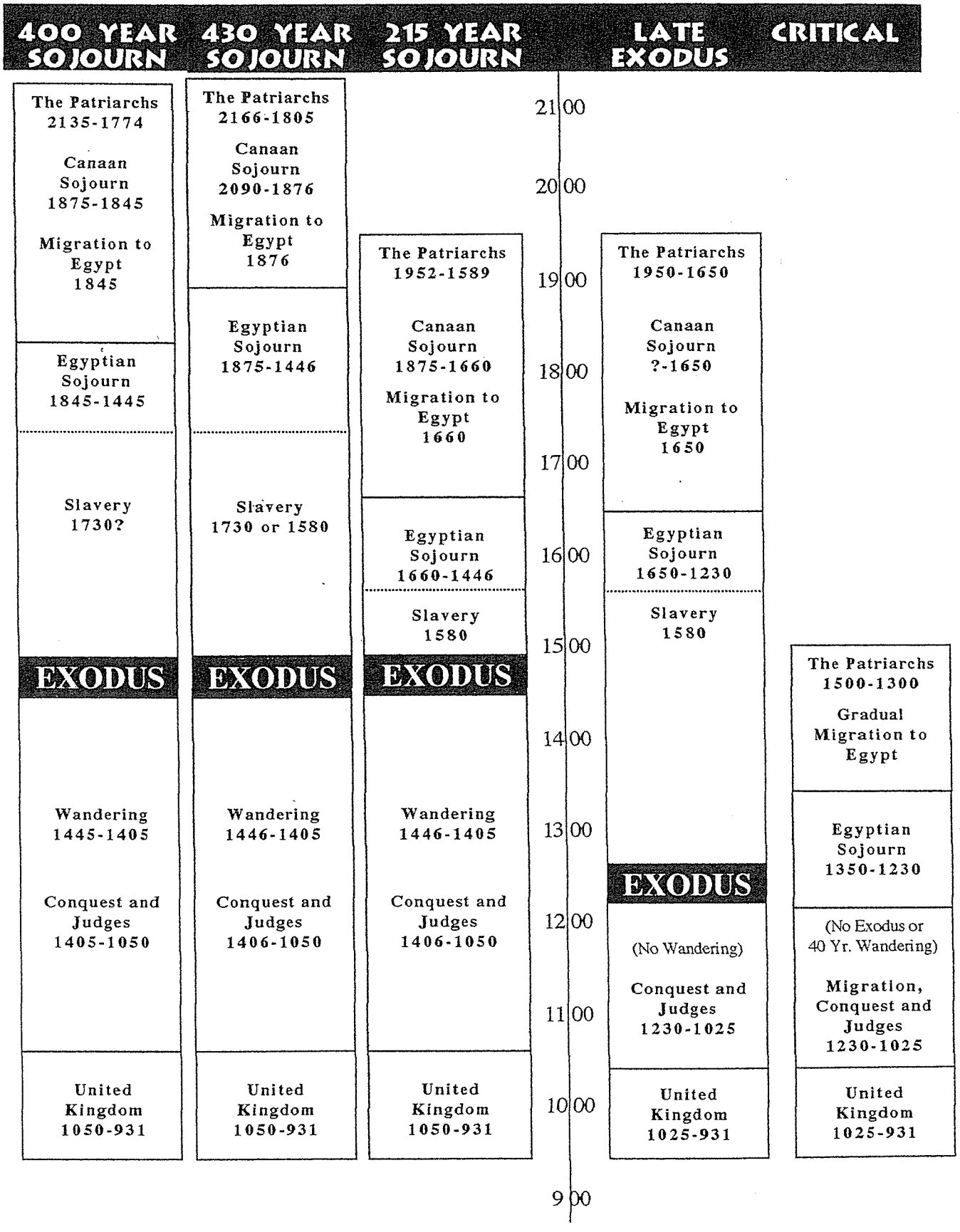
Chronology of Kings and Prophets

Dr. Ernie Poulson, Grace Baptist Church, Singapore (used with permission)



Egyptian Sojourn Chronologies Contrasted

Adapted (column 1 added) from John H. Walton, *Chronological and Background Charts of the OT*, 2d ed., 99 (cf. OTS, 108a-b)



Egyptian Sojourn Chronologies Evaluated

Correlate with my adaptation of John H. Walton, *Chronological and Background Charts of the OT*, 2d ed., 99 (cf. OTS, 108)

The following views are listed in order from the best to the worst perspective, in my opinion.

VIEW	400 YEAR SOJOURN	430 YEAR SOJOURN	215 YEAR SOJOURN	LATE EXODUS	CRITICAL
Exodus	Early	Early	Early	Late	Gradual Migration
Egyptian Sojourn	400	430	215	420	120
Years of Freedom	Unspecified	295 or 145	80	70	120
Years of Slavery	<400	135 or 285	135	350	none (a myth)
Exod. 12:40 Text	LXX & Samaritan Pentateuch	MT	LXX & Samaritan Pentateuch	MT	Unimportant
Popularity	Few	Most common	Common	Few Evangelicals Many Liberals	Many Liberals
Support:	• Gen. 15:13 (sojourn 400 yrs) • Acts 13:19-20 "about 450 years" = 400 + 40 + 7 = 447 yrs. • Exod. 12:40 "children of Israel" points to Gen. 35:10 (1875 BC) to begin 430 years since this is when nation called "Israel"	• Follows MT of Exod. 12:40 • Scripture sometimes uses round numbers (See the next few pages for more early date arguments)	• Follows MT of Exod. 12:40 • The new king of Exod. 1 was a native Egyptian who followed the Hyksos • Their later date for Abr. Cov. (1875 BC) to Jacob entering Egypt (1660 BC) is 215 yrs.	• Archaeology supports the destruction of some Canaanite cities in the 13th century (See the next few pages for more late date arguments)	• The city of Rameses (Exod. 1:11) must have been built after Rameses II (1300 BC) since it was named after him

VIEW	400 YEAR SOJOURN	430 YEAR SOJOURN	215 YEAR SOJOURN	LATE EXODUS	CRITICAL
Problems:	• Gal. 3:17 notes Abr. Cov. as "established" (not "confirmed") • Follows LXX of Exod. 12:40 (not normal practice to hold LXX over MT)	• 400 is not 430 rounded • 430 seen as yrs. of slavery, but Gal. 3:17 begins at Abr. Cov. • Acts 13:19-20 "about 450 yrs" = 430 + 40 + 7 = 477 yrs. (not close enough)	• A 215 year slavery conflicts with Gen. 15:13 • Hyksos rulers are not found in Exod. 1 • The Abr. Cov. was established in 2060 BC — not 1875 BC (cf. OTS, 87)	• 1 Kings 6:1 says the temple completion was 480 years after the Exodus • Only Jericho, Ai, and Hazor were destroyed in the 15th century • Archaeology better supports a 15th century destruction	• Moses wasn't even born before Exod. 1:11 and yet was 80 years old at the Exodus • The view denies that the Exodus ever occurred • It ignores the numbers of Jud. 11:26; 1 Kings 6:1
Advocates:	Hoehner[1] Rea[2] Griffith[3]	Benware[4] Whitcomb[5] Archer[6] Unger[7] Merrill[8]	Beitzel[9] Thiele[10] Anstey[11] English[12] Ozanne[13]	Albright[14] Kitchen[15]	Rowley[16] Bright[17]

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[1] Harold W. Hoehner, "The Duration of the Egyptian Bondage," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 126 (October-December, 1969): 314.

[2] John Rea, "The Time of the Oppression and the Exodus," *Grace Journal* (Winter, 1961): 5, 80. He also notes that the oppression began just after 1730 BC (p. 8).

[3] See the study entitled "Chronology of the Patriarchs" on pages 85-89 of these notes (timeline on p. 90).

[4] Paul N. Benware, *Survey of the Old Testament,* rev. ed. (Chicago: Moody, 1993), 44.

[5] John C. Whitcomb, "Chart of Old Testament Patriarchs and Judges" 4th ed. Winona Lake, IN: BMH Books, 1968. (pp. 95-96 of these notes).

[6] Gleason L. Archer, Jr., *A Survey of Old Testament Introduction* (Chicago: Moody, 1974), 205, 211-12.

[7] Merrill F. Unger, *Archaeology and the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1954), 106, 150.

[8] Eugene H. Merrill, *Kingdom of Priests* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1987), 76.

[9] Barry J. Beitzel, *The Moody Bible Atlas of Bible Lands* (Chicago: Moody, 1985), 85.

[10] Edwin R. Thiele, *The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings* (Chicago, 1951); S.v. "Chronology," *Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*, 1:166-67.

[11] Martin Anstey, *The Romance of Bible Chronology*, 2 vols. (New York: Marshall Brothers, 1913), 1:162.

[12] English, *New Scofield Reference Bible*, 86, n. 2.

[13] Ozanne, *The First 7000 Years*, 221-25.

[14] William Foxwell Albright, *From Stone Age to Christianity* (2d ed. with a new introduction; Doubleday Anchor Books; Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Co., 1957), 13, 223, 255-56.

[15] Kitchen ignores the explicit statement of the text by declaring that enough information about the chronology does not exist to verify the accuracy of 1 Kings 6:1 (Kitchen, *Ancient Orient and Old Testament* (Downers Grove: IVP, 1966), 72-75, 53-56). His assumption, of course, is that a biblical text without extra-biblical support is unreliable. See also s.v. "Chronology of the Old Testament" by K. A. Kitchen and T. C. Mitchell, 214-16, ed. J. D. Douglas, *The New Bible Dictionary*, Original © by Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship, 1962; Reprint, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975.

[16] This kind of biblical inaccuracy is demonstrated by Rowley, who cites a seventy year bondage (c. 1300-1230 BC), followed by a two year wilderness wandering before entering Canaan. See Harold H. Rowley, *From Joseph to Joshua* (London: Published for the British Academy by the Oxford University Press, 1950), 164.

[17] John Bright, *A History of Israel* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1959), 112-13.

The Duration of The Egyptian Bondage = 400 years (1845 - 1445 B.C.)

Harold W. Hoehner

When one looks at the various passages of Scripture concerning the length of Israel's bondage in Egypt one immediately discovers that there are apparent disagreements in the biblical record. Various scholars have attempted to resolve the apparent discrepancies. The purpose of this article is to discuss and evaluate the various views and then attempt to present a solution to the problem.

I. *THE SCRIPTURES INVOLVED*

Before discussing the various theories, a review of the Scripture passages concerning the duration of the bondage is in order. The passages are the author's own translation.

PASSAGES MENTIONING 400 YEARS

Genesis 15:13. And he said to Abram: "Know with certainty that your descendents shall be strangers (sojourners) in a land that is not theirs and they shall serve them[1] and they shall oppress them for 400 years."

Genesis 15:16. And in the fourth generation they shall come back here again. . . .

Acts 7:6. And God spoke in this manner; that his [Abraham's] descendents shall be strangers in a land that is not theirs, and that they shall enslave them and maltreat (them) for 400 years.

PASSAGES MENTIONING 430 YEARS

Exodus 12:40-41. Now the sojourning of the children of Israel,[2] who dwelt in Egypt,[3] was 430 years and it came to pass at the end of the 430 years, on that very day it came to

[1] The LXX adds here "and shall maltreat them." When this verse is quoted in Acts 7:6 this phrase is retained.

pass, all the hosts of the Lord went out from the land of Egypt.

Galatians 3:17. Now this I say: "The law which came 430 years afterward does not make void a covenant previously ratified by God[4] so as to invalidate the promise.

PASSAGE MENTIONING 450 YEARS

Acts 13:17-20. The God of this people Israel chose our fathers, and exalted the people when they sojourned in Egypt and with a high arm he led them out of it, and for approximately forty years as a nursing father he bore[5] them in the wilderness. And when he destroyed seven nations in the land of Canaan he gave (them[6]) their land as an inheritance for approximately 450 years. And after that[7] he gave them judges until Samuel the prophet.

II. *THE PROBLEM STATED*

One sees immediately that there are three figures for the length of Israel's sojourn in Egypt. Was it 400, 430, or 450 years? Can these differences be resolved in a way which will satisfy the given data in all these passages?

[1] The Samaritan Pentateuch (hereafter designated as SP) as well as the Alexandrinus and Lagardiana codices of the LXX add "and their fathers." Since there is no other MS evidence for this additional reading, the Masoretic text (hereafter designated MT) should stand as is.

[2] The SP has: "in the land of Canaan and in the land of Egypt." The LXX has the same words but in inverted order. Again because of weak support, the MT should stand as is.

[3] Some MSS add the words "in Christ." Although the weightiest MSS omit the words, their inclusion or exclusion is of no significance for this study.

[4] The textual variant "cared for" has about equal weight as the reading used in the above translation. The same two variants are found in the LXX of Deut. 1:31, the passage to which Paul is alluding, but the MT has simply נָשָׂא which means "to bear."

[5] This word is inserted for clarity in English and is included in some MSS.

[6] The Textus Receptus which the AV follows has the phrase "and after that" preceding the words "approximately 450 years." This would mean that there was an approximate 450-year span between Joshua's conquering of the land and Samuel the prophet. Thus the period of the judges was about 450 years. The reading of the Nestle text is better because: (1) it is favored by the more weighty MSS (p7+ ℵ A B C 33 81 181 it-ar c vg arm geo), and (2) it fits better with I Kings 6:1 where there is a 480-year period from the Exodus to the fourth year of Solomon—otherwise if one accepts the Textus Receptus reading, one would have to squeeze into the 480-year period the 450 years of the judges period, the reigns of Joshua, Saul, David, and the first three or four years of Solomon's reign, and forty years of wilderness wanderings. Accepting the reading of the Nestle text, viz., the placing of the approximate 450 years from the commencement of the Egyptian bondage until Joshua's conquest of the land, will be discussed in the text below.

The Egyptian Bondage Chronology Problem
Harold W. Hoehner, "The Duration of the Egyptian Bondage," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 126 (October-December 1969): 306-16

whereas the AV translates it *who* which refers back to "the children of Israel." Since אשר is indeclinable and its antecedent may be singular or plural and may be of either gender, it allows for great latitude in translation. However, here it seems best to have "the children of Israel" as its antecedent rather than the word "time." The reasons are twofold. Firstly, the phrase "the children of Israel" would be closer in position to אשר. Secondly the noun מושב which comes from ישב has the primary meaning *to sit, rest, dwell* and hence the noun is translated *dwelling-place, dwelling, dwellers, assembly,* or *seat.*[14] The ASV and RSV translation *time* is a derived and secondary meaning. In fact מושב which occurs forty-four times in the Old Testament is never so rendered by the ASV and RSV translators in any other place except in Exodus 12:40. Even in Exodus 12:20 they translate it *habitations* and *dwellings* respectively. Thus the AV translation *sojourning* is an acceptable rendering. This would mean that the clause ("who dwelt in Egypt") would be nonrestrictive and only gives additional information concerning the sojourners.[15] The commencement of their sojourning would have been the last confirmation of the Abrahamic covenant as given in Genesis 35:9-15, if one notices that from Genesis 35 onwards the children of Israel never remained in one place in Canaan but were always travelling (cf. Gen. 35:16, 21, 27; in 37:1 they dwelt in the land of Canaan with no specific location mentioned).

Thirdly, it is interesting to notice that whereas in Exodus 12:40 the MT has "now the sojourning of the children of Israel, who dwelt in Egypt, was 430 years. . . ." the SP and LXX has "now the sojourning of the children of Israel, who dwelt in the land of Canaan and in the land of Egypt (the LXX has it in inverted order), was 430 years. . . ." This indicates that the sojourning would include Canaan and Egypt. Although the present writer does not put much stock in the SP and the LXX as far as chronological matters, this inclusion may point back to some early tradition in the text. It is somewhat difficult to explain its inclusion except that there was some sort of early tradition for this reading.

Samaritan Pentateuch

Septuagint (Greek trans. of the Hebrew OT in 250 B.C.)

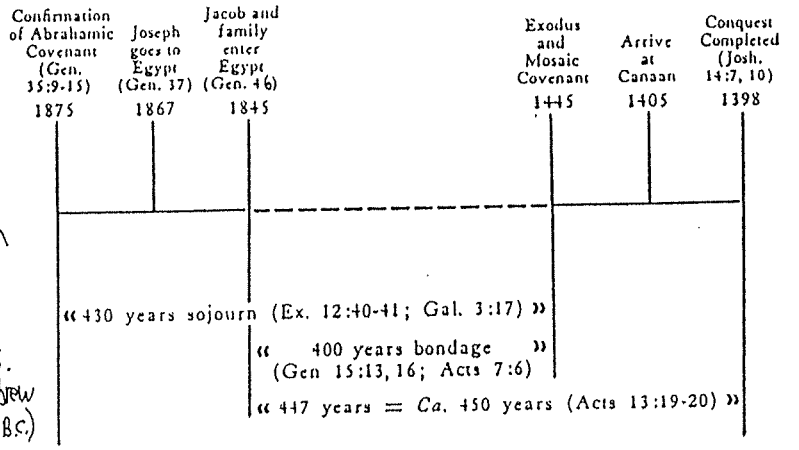
[14] Francis Brown, S. R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs, *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament,* p. 444.

[15] Cf. Cooper, *op. cit.,* pp. 129-30. Notice in the first part of this article when translating Exodus 12:40-41, the clause "who dwelt in Egypt" is set off by commas. For clarity it could be rendered: "Now the sojourning of the children of Israel (who dwelt in Egypt) was 430 years. . . ."

Therefore, it seems that if one will take the 430 years as the period from the last recorded confirmation of the Abrahamic covenant to Israel (Jacob) before going into Egypt (Gen. 35:9-15) until the time of the Exodus, the 400 years would be that period of time when the nation Israel was in Egypt, that is, from the time when Jacob and his family entered Egypt (Gen. 46) until the Exodus. The phrase "about 450 years" (Acts 13:19-20) would consist of the 400 years of bondage plus the 40 years of wilderness wanderings plus the 7 years for conquering the land of Palestine which makes a total of 447 years or "about 450 years."

IV. *THE CONCLUSION AND SUMMARY*

After considering the two more well-known theories in the attempt to resolve the apparent discrepancies concerning the length of the Egyptian bondage, a third view was presented which takes into account and better explains all the biblical data. Assuming the 1445 B.C. date for the Exodus, it could be charted as follows:



Rick Griffith, PhD

Support for a 400-Year Egyptian Bondage

Harold W. Hoehner, "The Duration of the Egyptian Bondage," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 126 (October-December 1969): 315-16
This view is the one advocated on pages 60-65 of these notes.

Date of the Exodus

John H. Walton, *Chronological and Background Charts of the OT*, 2d ed., 102-3 (1 of 2)

very weak arguments!

15th-CENTURY EVIDENCE	13th-CENTURY REBUTTAL
I Kings 6:1 designates 480 years from the Exodus to Solomon's dedication of the temple. The dedication was 966. That makes the Exodus 1446.	The 480 years is most likely 12 generations (12x40=480). In actuality, a generation was about 25 years, making the actual figure about 300.
The "Dream Stela" of Thutmose IV on the sphinx gives evidence that Thutmose was not legal heir to the throne. Would be logical that eldest son was killed in the 10th plague.	Only one of many other possibilities. No proof that the biblical plague was involved in the death of the rightful heir.
In Judges 11:26, Jephthah assigns 300 years between his day (c. 1100) and the Conquest. This would seem to indicate a 15th-century Exodus.	This was a generalization or a rough and slightly inaccurate guess by Jephthah who would have had no access to historical records.
To support the biblical chronology of Moses, Pharaoh must have reigned in excess of 40 years. Moses stayed in the wilderness until Pharaoh died. Only possibilities: Thutmose III, Rameses II.	Moses' 40 years with the Midianites is not really a chronological reference.
The Last Level at Hazor, wiped out by Barak and Deborah, contains Mycenaean IIIB Pottery; this requires, at the latest, a date in the late 13th century. This pushes Exodus much earlier.	The judges overlapped enough to accommodate this.
The Merneptah Stela (C. 1220) mentions Israel by name. They must have been there for a long time for the Egyptians to accept them as a nation.	Fifty years would have been sufficient time.
The Amarna Tablets (1400) tell of the upheaval caused by the "Habiru." This could have been the Hebrews, possibly classified under a general category.	The "Habiru" can in no way be identified with the Israelites.
The length of time assigned to the judges period in Scripture, even with overlapping, cannot be squeezed into the century and a half allowed by a 13th-century Exodus.	With overlaps and understanding of the symbolic nature of time spans, it can be fitted in.

Date of the Exodus

John H. Walton, *Chronological and Background Charts of the OT*, 2d ed., 102-3 (2 of 2)

very weak arguments!

13th-CENTURY EVIDENCE	15th-CENTURY REBUTTAL
The civilizations of Edom, Moab, and Ammon were not in existence in the 15th century. Since Israel had contact with them, the Exodus must be later.	Finds at the Timna temple indicate sedentary civilizations in Negev at least in early 14th century. Tribes were wandering earlier than that.
The destruction of Lachish, Debir, and Bethel were in the 13th century, as indicated by the layer of ash.	Lachish, Debir, and Bethel are not said to have been burned at the time of the Conquest. The layer of ash could be due to Egypt's conquests.
In Exodus 1:11, Israelites were said to have been building the city of Rameses. This must be in honor of Rameses II of 13th century.	(1) Name "Rameses" used much earlier than 13th century. (2) City was being built before birth of Moses; thus, before Rameses II, even with late Exodus. (3) This was a store city, not a capital.
The 430 years of Exodus 12:40 cannot fit in with the Hyksos period.	The Hebrews need not be related to the Hyksos. There is much evidence that Jacob went to Egypt almost 150 years before the Hyksos period began.
Thutmose III was not known as a great builder and therefore does not fit into the historical picture.	Though not known as a great builder, Thutmose III is known to have had some building projects in the delta region.
Scripture does not mention the Palestinian invasions of Seti I or Rameses II. Therefore, Exodus must have been in 13th century and Israel was not yet in Palestine.	It is very likely that the periods of "rest" during the Judges were the periods of tighter Egyptian control. The Egyptian invasions were against the Canaanites.
Pushing the Exodus back means pushing the patriarchs back, and the Patriarchs cannot go back any farther.	There is just as much evidence for putting the patriarchs in Middle Bronze I as there is for putting them in Middle Bronze II.

GOd iS With US!
Have a nice day!!

CHONG YEW

LAURA



YU MING

WILLIAM



" I will make you into a great nation,
and I will bless you,
I will make your name great,
and you will be a blessing.
I will bless those who bless you,
and whoever curses you I will curse;
and all peoples on earth
will be blessed through you."

(Gen. 12: 2-3)

UNLOCKING THE MYSTERIES OF OLD TESTATMENT CHRONOLOGY

UNLOCKING THE MYSTERIES OF OLD TESTATMENT CHRONOLOGY

"Chronology is the backbone of history." - Edwin Thiele 

Our Questions 

- How do all the dates and genealogies in the Bible relate to us today?
- Are all those numbers and genealogies we find in the Bible historically reliable?
- Could mistakes have been made when the numbers were transmitted?
- Can we reasonably say that the Bible is God's inerrant word with respect to chronology?

Our Method of Investigation

1. Research key chronological problems of the genealogies, the patriarchs, the exodus, the judges and kings of Israel
2. Examine the issues, arguments and various solutions proposed
3. Come to our own conclusions based on biblical tenets and logical reasoning
4. Consider how our findings and conclusions apply to our lives



What is OT Chronology?

The determining of the correct dates and sequences of events and persons in the OT, including their correlation with secular history

Why is Chronology important?

CONTEXT (Time and Sequence)

- It indicates the social, political and economic contexts in which events took place
- It tells us where events stand in a nation's history and how they relate to one another
- It presents these events in relation to what was happening in neighbouring countries

➢ It therefore helps us to understand and interpret events in the light of history



Why is the Chronology of the OT important?

- It describes the building of the nation of Israel, a country with timeless significance
- It fits OT events into the extra biblical records of the Near Eastern world
- It helps give confidence in the historicity and reliability of the Bible
- ➢ It builds faith in God and His message

How do historians determine the Chronology of the OT?

Sources

1. The Bible (genealogies, ages, lengths of reigns, time spans, synchronisms with events of other countries)
2. Literary historical records of the ancient Near East (ANE)
3. Astronomical data
4. Material remains and archaeological findings
5. Records of contemporary historians

Methods

1. General: Examine the milieu of the time and compare with other known records to find compatibilities
2. Establish sequence and time according to Bible
3. Compare synchronic events in Bible and another reliable source
4. Verify with other sources
5. Work from established dates



The Mystery of the Genesis 5 & 11 Genealogies

a. Genesis 5 carries the genealogy that stretches from Adam to the Flood. Genesis 11 carries the genealogy from Shem (son of Noah) to Terah (father of Abram)

b. Can information found in the genealogies of Genesis 5 and 11 be used to determine the dates of certain events in history?

Two Views

1. Straight chronology
   - The Bible contains the necessary information to fully map out the historical time line of the OT
2. Genealogical gaps
   - There are gaps that are not mentioned in the Bible
   - Genealogical information should not be used as the only source for dating events

Genealogical Gaps

- It is not unprecedented for Scripture to pass over very long periods of time with little or no remark
- Omission of unimportant names is the rule rather than the exception
- In the ancient world "begat" simply indicated "became the ancestor of", however far removed that ancestor was
- Lack of harmony between chronologies of OT and neighboring states

Straight Chronology

- The Bible is filled with chronological information though scattered in many places
- When this chronological information is fully systematized, straight chronology may be proven



Conclusions from findings

- We need to consider the purposes of the genealogies
  - Historical: to trace the basic outline of their history and establish their descent
  - Religious and theological: to show that God had protected this line as promised, and to show the connection with past godly people
- The genealogies should not be read with modern meanings and inferences attached to the words

The Mystery of the Patriarchs



- Who were they?
  - The ancestors of the people of Israel, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob & Joseph
- Did they really exist?
  - Many OT scholars rejected the OT account of the patriarchs and their historical backgrounds, considering them fictional ancestors
  - New scholars believe they are historical as modern archaeologists and historians have corroborated many features of the patriarchal records in Gen. 12-50



- How can they be dated?
  1. External events in their time
  2. Evidence of period/social conditions in which they lived
  3. Statements of time elapsed between their days

Conclusions from findings

- Archeological discoveries have shown that the patriarchs were historical figures and that the biblical record is accurate
- Israel's existence today as nation is a result of
  - God keeping His covenant with Abraham
  - The patriarchs' faith and obedience
- As Christians, we have the patriarchs as fathers of faith and we are partakers of that same everlasting covenant

The Mystery of the Exodus

- When did it happen? 1446 or 1266?
- Why does it matter?
  - It is the most important historical event in Israel's past, when it truly began to be a nation
  - It stands at the centre of Israel's faith
  - Many dates before and after depend on this date
  - The choice of date reflects our belief (or lack thereof) in the historicity and accuracy of the Bible and thus has impact on our faith

EVIDENCE FOR AN EARLY EXODUS (1446)	
FOR	AGAINST
According to *I Kings 6:1*, there were 480 years between the Exodus and Solomon's building of Temple (966)	a) The text is corrupt b) The historian had inaccurate facts c) 480 means 12 generations (12x40). The actual number of years is 12x25= 300, putting the Exodus c.1226
Judges 11:26 Jepthah assigns 300 years between his day (c.1100) and the Conquest of Canaan	This was a generalisation or an inaccurate guess as he had no access to historical records
The length of time assigned to the judges in the Bible cannot be squeezed into the 150 years required by a late Exodus, even with overlaps	With a symbolic understanding of time spans, it can be fitted in
Thutmose IV (Pharoah after 1446 Exodus) was not the eldest son. The eldest son might have been killed in the 10th plague	There are many other possible explanations for this
The Merneptah Stela claims that Merneptah conquered Israel c.1231. If Israel had left in 1266 (late exodus), they would still have been wandering in the wilderness at that time	a) This is not the same Israel of the Exodus b) Israel might have left in 1300. In that case, they would have been a settled nation for about 20 years

EVIDENCE FOR AN LATE EXODUS (1266-1299)	
FOR	AGAINST
Ex 1:11 The Israelites built the city of Rameses. It must have been in honour of Rameses II (c.1290)	a. The name 'Rameses' was used much earlier than 13th century. b. The city was being built before Moses' birth (before Rameses II)
Thutmose III was not known as a great builder and therefore does not fit into the historical picture	He is known to have had some building projects in the delta region
Nelson Glueck argued that there is no archeological evidence that sedentary civilizations such as Edom and Moab existed before 1300. Since Israel had contact with them (Num 20:14) the Exodus must be later	a. Later excavations showed that many areas were settled throughout 1500 to 1300 b. There were semi/nomadic tribes in existence in the 15th century
a. There is no evidence of widespread destruction in the early 14th century b. Archeological evidence shows that Bethel, Lachish and Debir in Palestine fell as a result of a violent attack between 1250 and 1200. It must have been the Israelite conquest	a. The Israelites did not cause material destruction during the Conquest, with the exceptions of Jericho, Ai and Hazor (Josh 24:13) b. The destruction might have been caused by Egyptian conquests (Merneptah)

What do we think?

We support the early exodus theory

Conclusions from findings

- Accept the biblical dates and references at face value unless there is real internal reason to reject them
- The Bible's historical and chronological information is accurate and reliable

The Mystery of the Judges

- We define the era of the Judges as starting with the leadership of Moses and finishing with the crowning of Saul
    - 480 (between Exodus and Solomon's temple 1 Kings 16:1) - 40 (Saul's rule Acts 13:11) - 40 (David's rule 1Kg 2:11) = 400 years
- When the number of years that the Judges and Israel's enemies rule are added up, it significantly exceeds the expected value of 400 years: 510+ yrs

Possible Solutions

a. Include the counts for the oppression brought by Israel's enemies within the periods of leadership of the Judges
b. Overlap the leaderships of the Judges

What do we think?

- It is clear from the Bible that the period of the Judges spans 400 yrs
- Closer study reveals that there are some overlaps. *E.g. the judges Jephthah to Samson obviously overlapped with the 40 years of Philistine oppression and the years of priestly service of Eli and Samuel*

Conclusions from findings



- There is not enough biblical information to determine the exact number of years of each Judge
- The years that Israel fell under enemy rule are not mentioned
- Nevertheless, the Bible is accurate in its historical information

The Mystery of the Kings

1. The total number of years of reigns of the two kingdoms in a fixed time span were not the same
2. If chronology is worked according to lengths of reign, synchronisms won't fit (and vice versa)
3. Seeming lack of harmony between OT chronology and that of ANE
4. Why does it matter?
    - It concerns the historicity and reliability of the Bible and the accuracy of its transmission

Proposed Reasons for Discrepancies

1. Inaccurate systems used by biblical historians
2. Accidental errors of transmission
3. Largely schematic and artificial chronology
4. Intentional mutilation of text to cover up various facts

Proposed Solutions

1. Editorial changes to the chronological data (3rd century B.C. Septuagint)
2. Include periods of political chaos in which no king sat on the throne
3. Disregard the data in the Masoretic Text and determine dates with synchronisms with ANE history
4. [illegible]

Thiele's Solution

1. Different Dating Systems used by Judah and Israel
2. Some coregencies in Israel and Judah
3. Two instances of rival reigns in Israel
4. Certain synchronisms in 2 Kings 17 and 18 inserted by a late hand out of harmony with original pattern of reigns

What do we think?

We tentatively accept Thiele's solution

- Sound premise: Acceptance of biblical data as historical and accurate
- Sound method: Began without any dates and subsequently checked worked-out dates with ANE records
- Reliable results: Arrangement of reigns in harmony with biblical data and ANE history

Conclusions from findings 

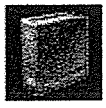
- High regard for historical and chronological accuracy in recording events on the part of the scribes
- Highly accurate transmission of the Bible
- ➢ We have a reasonable and accurate basis for our faith

OUR CONCLUSIONS 

- Our God is a God who acts in history and deals with us from generation to generation
- We have a rich heritage as we are part of the spiritual lineage of all who have walked in faith with God
- The Bible is historically reliable
- The Bible has a high degree of accuracy in transmission
- Our faith has a reasonable and firm foundation in the inerrancy of God's Word

HOW CAN WE APPLY THIS? 

- ➢ We should always begin with the assumption that historical information in the Bible is factual and accurate unless internal evidence points otherwise
- ➢ We can chart our personal spiritual timelines
    - o As we look back at the dates and sequence of events in our lives, let us reflect on how they relate to one another so that we recognise and begin to understand and appreciate the purposes and plans of God in our own histories

Bibliography 

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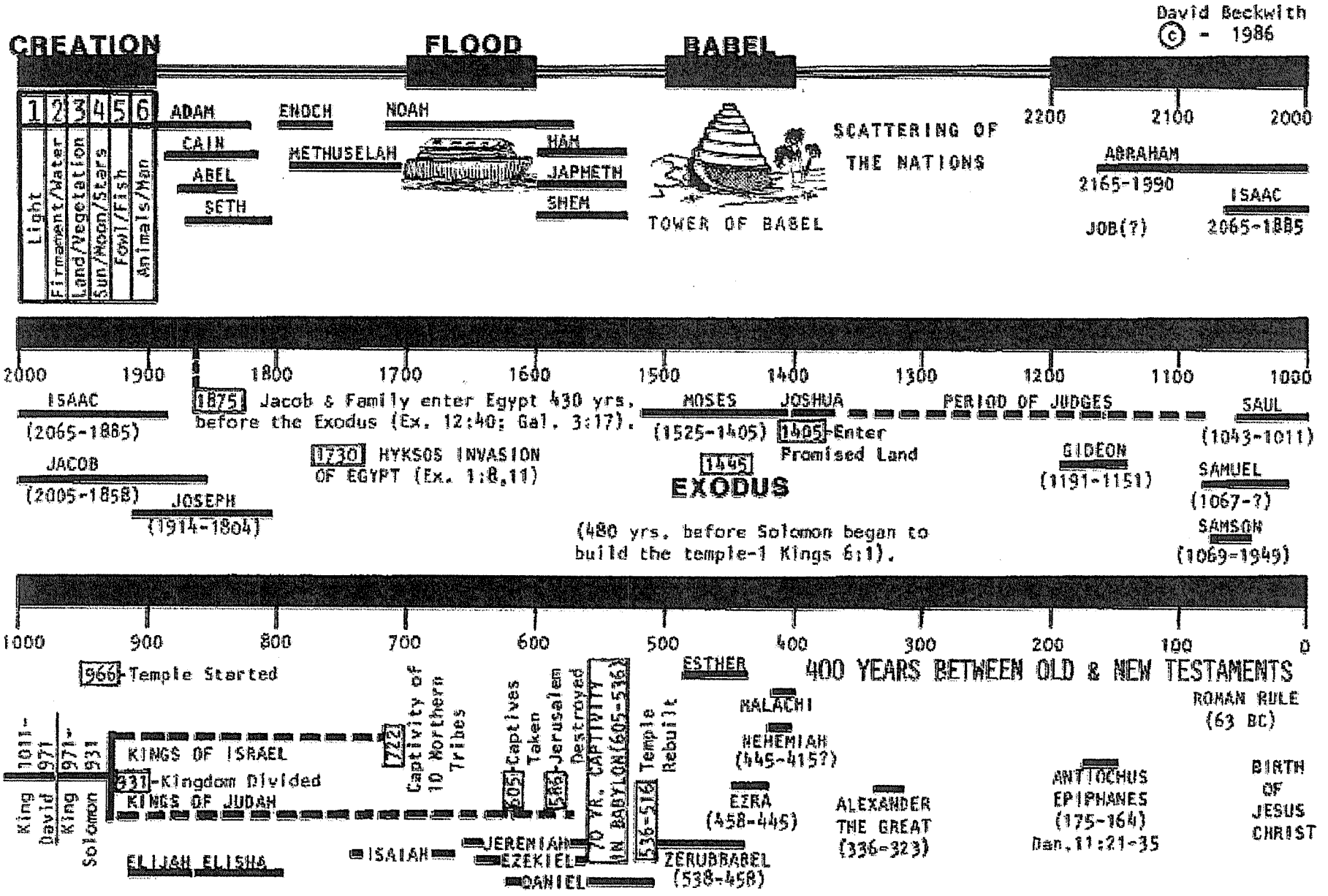
Some Useful Websites 

- http://www.biblicalhorizons.com/biblicalhorizons/ch/ *Interesting evangelical articles on Chronology*
- http://www.bibarch.com
  Excellent top-rated evangelical Biblical Archeology site
- http://www.biblicalstudies.org.uk/chronology.html *Many links to reputable and reliable sources*

Chronology of the Patriarchs

Event	Age	Date	Genesis Reference	Age	Date	Genesis Reference
ABRAHAM 2166 - 1991						
Entrance into Canaan	75	2091	12:4			
Isaac born	100	2066	21:5	ISAAC 2066-1886		
Sacrifice on Mt. Moriah	115	2051	22	15	2051	22
Isaac marries Rebekeh	140	2026	25:20	40	2026	25:20
JACOB 2006-1859				60	2006	25:26
Abraham dies	15	1991	25:7	75	1991	25:7
Jacob marries Leah and Rachel	84	1922	29:21-30 30:1, 22-26	144	1922	29:21-30 30:1, 22-26
Joseph born	91	1915	30:25 31:38-41	JOSEPH 1915-1805		
Joseph sold into slavery	108	1898	37:2-36	17	1898	37:2-36
Jacob and family move to Egypt	130	1876	45:6 47:9	39	1876	45:6 47:9
Joseph dies	-	-	-	110	1805	50:26

OLD TESTAMENT TIME LINE



Theistic Evolution

Despite the huge differences between creation and evolution (see previous chart), some believe in *both* creation and evolution. These *theistic evolutionists* (from Greek *theos* for "God") teach that God created the world by an evolutionary process.[9] What can be said to theistic evolution claims?

1. Inefficient: "Evolution is the most wasteful, inefficient, cruel method that could be devised to create living things. Even evolutionists admit that almost all mutations are bad–causing cripples, sickness, disfigurements, and deaths.... God is all powerful and wise. Why would He use such a wasteful, inefficient, cruel method to create man, taking three billion years to do it, when He is able to create instantaneously?"[10]

2. Unscientific: "There is not one fact of science which proves that God used evolution to create anything."[11] If God guided evolution, He has not allowed a single intermediate form of life to survive as evidence. Surely He would not allow all scientific facts to counter His creative process. All fossils represent fully formed creatures, just as one would expect from the Genesis account. But what of all the ape-like creatures that have been portrayed as transitional links between apes and man? "When all of the evidence is carefully and thoroughly studied by the best scientific methods, however, it turns out that these fossils were either from monkeys, apes, or people, and not from something that was part ape and part human."[12]

   a. *Piltdown Man*, found in Piltdown England (1912), came from jaw and skull fragments. About 500 books and pamphlets were written about him until 1950, when someone discovered that it actually was the chemically treated skull of a modern human to make it *look* old and ape teeth *filed down* to look human! This fraud fooled the world's "experts" for almost 40 years.

   b. *Nebraska Man* (1922) was based solely on a single tooth found in Nebraska. Additional bones of the creature later revealed it to be a pig!

   c. *Neanderthal Man* (1860), found in the Neanderthal Valley in Germany, later had more fossils, such as a hunched-over full skeleton in France (1908). They used tools and had similar brain sizes to modern humans, but their skulls were flatter than ours and appeared primitive in some ways. However, Dr. Rudolph Virchow later revealed the hunched-over skeleton as a Frenchman who had arthritis! Other skeletons have been found which are fully erect, and x-rays of the fossil bones and teeth now confirm that all of the Neanderthals were actually humans with rickets (caused by lack of vitamin D).

   d. Other "ape-men" are also discredited. *Ramapithecus* was an orangutan and *Orce Man* was actually a six-month-old donkey. *Australopithecus* (1924) was believed even by many evolutionists to have been an ape, and included a female version, *Australopithecus afarensis* (1973, nicknamed "Lucy"). However, when a knee joint was needed to prove that Lucy walked upright, they used one found more than 60 meters lower in the strata and more than three kilometers away![13] Also, Java Man's discoverer (Dr. Eugene Dubois) later identified him as a giant gibbon, Peking Man is an ape, and Cro-Magnon Man a modern European. Now some evolutionists even say that apes evolved from man!

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[9]Modern theistic evolutionists include Francis S. Collins, *The Language of God: A Scientist Presents Evidence for Belief* (Free Press: 2006); Vernon Blackmore and Andrew Page, *Evolution: The Great Debate* (Oxford: Lion, 1989); R. J. Berry, *God and Evolution: Creation, Evolution and the Bible* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1988; idem, *Adam and the Ape: A Christian Approach to the Theory of Evolution* (London: Falcon, 1975). John Morton, *Redeeming Creation* (Auckland: Zealandia, 1984), 11 even calls evolution the Christian's "cornerstone"!

[10]Duane T. Gish, *The Amazing Story of Creation* (El Cajon, CA: Institute for Creation Research, 1990), 44. This excellent, illustrated, 112 page full-colour book critiques evolution in simple language (SBC library # 213 GIS). See also his earlier books, *Dinosaurs: Those Terrible Lizards* and *Evolution: The Challenge of the Fossil Record*

[11]Gish, 44.

[12]Gish, 78-79. The following examples are summarized from pages 78-83.

[13]Dr. Solly Zuckerman (head of the Department of Anatomy, Univ. of Birmingham, England) and Dr. Charles Oxnard (Prof. of Anatomy and Director of Graduate Studies at the Univ. of Southern California Medical School) both confirm that *Australopithecus* did *not* walk upright like humans and were not man's ancestors. Zuckerman's conclusions are published in his book, *Beyond the Ivory Tower* (1970). See Gish, 84.

3. Theological Problems: Theistic evolution is incompatible with scriptural theology in many ways:[14]

   a. *The Creation Account:* The Bible gives no hint of evolution. The most natural reading of the Genesis account of creation is that He made the world in but six literal days. The "day-age" theory where each "day" of creation represents a long period of time (even millions of years) has marshaled many advocates. However, Genesis 1 clearly says there was "evening and morning" each day. This excludes any evolutionary processes.

   b. *The Fall and the Origin of Moral Evil*: Theistic evolutionists deny that Genesis 1–11 records real history, but call these chapters "great myths," even denying that man ever fell into sin in the Garden.[15] Yet the historicity of Adam is the basis upon which the NT compares Christ as the last Adam (Rom. 5:12-14; 1 Cor. 15:22, 45-49). Paul even particularly related the historicity of Adam to the historicity of Christ's resurrection (1 Cor. 15:12-23). The origin of evil cannot be credited simply to "the heart of mankind"[16] because it originally stemmed from Satan, an external force (Gen. 3:1-5; Eph. 6:12).

   c. *The Origin of Man:* Scripture states life came when Adam was created from dust directly from God at a point in time (Gen. 2:7; cf. Matt. 19:4). Yet theistic evolutionists claim man received God's image at a specific point in time along the evolutionary chain; therefore, God's image came after reproductive processes over millions of years of Adam and Eve's "Neolithic progenitors."[17] Genesis 1:26-27 says that God created man in the image of God–not in the image of apes. It is also claimed that the Bible is concerned only with man's relationship with God, not ordinary human life.[18] Such a dichotomy is contrary to the Genesis explanations that deal with far more than spiritual life. Berry denies that Adam and Eve were ancestors to all mankind,[19] yet Eve is said to be "the mother of all the living" (Gen. 3:20; cf. Acts 17:26) and all mankind sinned through one man (Rom. 5:12). Theistic evolution downplays or denies the extent to which sin marred God's image. This image became so perverted that God chose to destroy all humans except for one righteous man and his family (Gen. 6:5-7).[20]

   d. *Natural Selection, Death, and Suffering:* Theistic evolutionists make God the author of suffering and death.[13] This gives even atheists opportunity to criticize Christians for belief in such a cruel God. While Berry insists that death existed before Adam (and that his sin in the Garden only brought spiritual, not physical death),[14] the Bible is clear that no sin and death existed before the Fall (Gen. 2:17; Rom. 5:12-15) so that all suffering resulted from man's mistake, not God's (Gen. 3:15-19; Rom. 8:19-22). God created everything "very good."

   e. *Distinction Between Man and Animals:* Berry notes that man's capacity for obedience is the only area of difference between man and animals.[15] But what about man's ability to discern truth, communicate in spoken word, relate to others, and his creative abilities? Theistic evolution is a false teaching which vigorously opposes creation science and the Bible.

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[6]David H. Lane (a biologist in Wellington, New Zealand) has published a two-part series entitled "A Critique of Theistic Evolution." Part one is "Special Creation or Evolution: No Middle Ground," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 150 (January-March 1994): 12-16. Part two is "Theological Problems with Theistic Evolution," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 150 (April-June 1994): 155-74, which forms the basis for the comments in points "b" to "e' in this section.

[7]Alan I. Richardson, *Preface to Bible Study*, rev. ed. (London: SCM, 1972), 75; cf. Blackmore and Page, 171; Martin Bott, "Down to Earth," in *Real Science, Real Faith*, ed. R. J. Berry (Eastbourne: Monarch, 1991), 28-29.

[8]Blackmore and Page, 171.

[9]Michael R. Johnson, *Genesis, Geology and Catastrophism: A Critique of Creationist Science and Biblical Literalism* (Exeter: Paternoster, 1988), 87; E. K. V. Pearce, *Who Was Adam?* (Exeter: Paternoster, 1969). Those who lived before Adam died not as a penalty for sin since they were "sinless" in that they had no fully evolved morality.

[10]Douglas C. Spanner, *Biblical Creation and the Theology of Evolution* (Exeter: Paternoster, 1987), 57-59.

[11]Berry, *God and Evolution*, 70.

[12]Lane, "Theological Problems with Theistic Evolution," 171.

[13]Ibid, 90.

[14]Ibid, 70; idem, *Adam and the Ape*, 51.

V. Peoples of the Old Testament World

A. Why Study Ancient Peoples?

1. Knowing the differences between various ANE (Ancient Near East) peoples can help us better grasp certain OT passages.

2. A study of other cultures can help us grasp our own cultural values as well.

   a) What cultural values do you observe in Singapore?

   b) How do Singaporean values differ from the values of your own culture or from yours as an individual?

Value Differences Between East and West

We really enjoy living in Singapore. It's modern so we certainly don't feel like it's primitive, but it's *so* different than the USA! The Chinese people just think so differently from us! Let me give you some contrasts to show you what I mean:

Singapore	America
Group oriented	Individualistic
Low risk, high fear of failure	High risk, lower fear of failure
Structured, controlled	Unstructured, looser
Hierarchical, authoritarian	Egalitarian, consultative
Relationally narrow	Relationally wide
Extended family	Nuclear family
Oral orientation	Written orientation
Oversave to a fault	Overspend to a fault
Hoard money	Give away too much money
Rewards obedience to established patterns	Rewards innovation and creativity
Lower self image	Higher self image
Ideas accepted because of relationship	Ideas accepted because they're good
Subjective: based on situation	Objective: based on principle
Academic skills developed first	Social skills developed first
Ask "how" questions	Ask "why" questions
Paternalistic	Facilitory
Pragmatic	Aesthetic
Motivation by fear	Motivation by reward
Criticizing leadership taboo	Criticizing leadership accepted
Non-confrontational (harmony)	Confrontational
Indirect (non-verbal)	Direct (verbal)
Ambiguity	Closure
Low divorce rate	High divorce rate
Low crime rate (gun control)	High crime rate (no gun control)
Greater need for security	Lower need for security
Private—don't discuss family	Public—discuss family, transparent
Parental inadequacy higher	Parental adequacy higher
Values taught by institutions	Values taught at home
More maids teaching values	Less maids teaching values
Fatalism—accepting one's lot	Fairness—improving one's lot
Early streaming of education	Later streaming of education
Discretion, refinement	Indiscretion, coarseness
Conformity	Independence
High censorship, restricted speech	Low censorship, freedom of speech
High government involvment	Lower government involvement
Residential racial zoning enforced	Residential racial zoning prohibited
Authority unchallenged	Authority often challenged
Kids learn to listen (lecture method)	Kids learn to speak (other methods)

B. Chart of Ancient Near Eastern History[1]

ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN HISTORY (AN OVERVIEW)

	EGYPT	SYRIA-PALESTINE	MESOPOTAMIA
4th Mill.		Early Bronze 3300-2100 E.B.I 3300-2900	Proto-Literate 3200-2850
3rd Millennium	Proto-Dynastic 3100-2686 (Dyn. 1-2)	E.B.II 2900-2700	Early Dynastic 2850-2360
	Old Kingdom 2686-2181 (Dyn. 3-6)	E.B.III 2700-2100	Akkad 2360-2180
	First Intermediate 2175-1991 (Dyn. 7-11)		Guti 2180-2082
		Middle Bronze 2100-1500 M.B.I 2100-1850	Ur III 2070-1960
	Middle Kingdom 1991-1786 (Dyn. 12)		Isin-Larsa 1960-1700
2nd Millennium	Second Intermediate 1786-1558 (Dyn. 13-17)	M.B.II 1850-1500 A 1850-1750 B 1750-1650 C 1650-1500	Old Babylonian 1830-1531 Old Assyrian Hurrian Invasions 1700-1500 Kassite 1600-1150 Mitanni 1500-1380
	New Kingdom 1558-1085 (Dyn. 18-20)	Late Bronze 1500-1200 L.B.I 1500-1400 L.B.II 1400-1200 A 1400-1300 B 1300-1200	Middle Assyrian 1356-1078
		Iron 1200-300 Iron I 1200-900	
1st Mill.	Late Dynastic 1098-333 (Dyn. 21-31)	Iron II 900-600 Iron III 600-300	Aramean and Chaldean 1078-935 Neo-Assyrian 935-612 Neo-Babylonian 626-539 Persian 539-332
	Alexander 332-	Alexander 332-	Alexander 332-

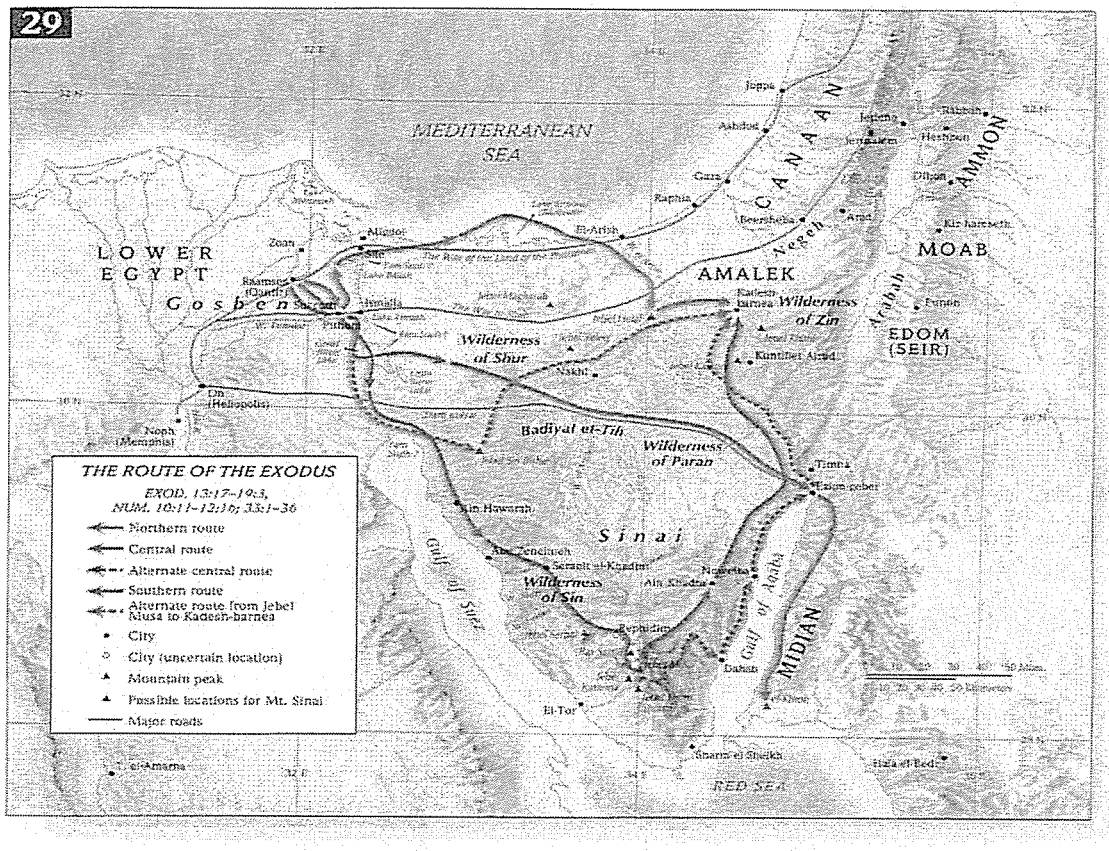
[1] Walter Bodine, class handout in the course "Old Testament Introduction," Dallas Seminary, 1986.

C. Geography of Western Ancient Near East Peoples

Israel's Exodus from Egypt shows the triumph of a Semitic people (Israel) over a Canaanite people (Egypt), or more accurately, the God Yahweh of the Israelites over the gods of Egypt. Though Egypt was considered a superpower of its day, God chose an obscure, migrant people whose God was Lord over all—even Egypt. Israel originated from another superpower (Mesopotamia), but God also chose to place Israel in a land between these two superpowers as his witness to all the nations!

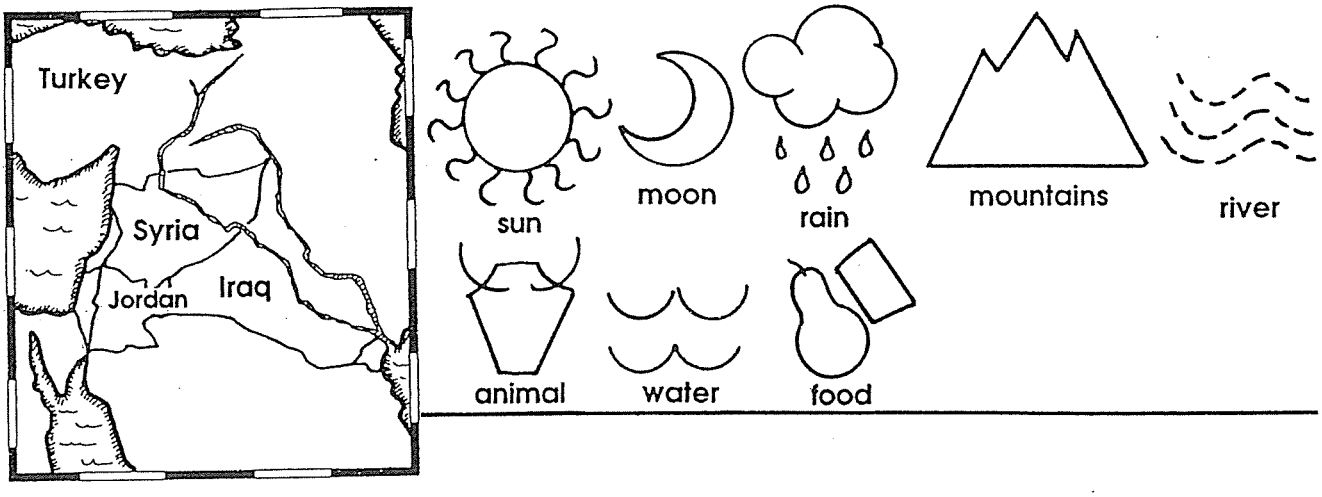
Alternate Routes of the Exodus

Bible Atlas Online



ANCIENT CIVILIZATIONS

The First Civilization



The first civilization developed in southern Mesopotamia in an area that became known as Sumer. The world's first cities were established here around 3500 B.C. This civilization flourished until about 2000 B.C.

D. Sumerians (later Akkadians)

1. Identity:

   a) Who Sumerians Were:

      (1) The Sumerians were perhaps the most significant ancient people who are not noted in the Bible, yet their very existence was discovered only at the end of the 19th century.

      (2) Due to the merging of Sumer and the Old Babylonian or Akkadian peoples, in later years they are virtually synonymous.

   b) When Sumerians Lived:

      (1) During the Protoliterate ("before writing") Period (ca. 3400-2900) they had reached their height culturally—even before writing began! By 2500 BC they had deeply affected the Syrians as the Ebla tablets in Syria show much Sumerian influence.

      (2) In the Early Dynastic Period (2900-2335 BC) the kings of Sumer and Akkad may have been united.

(3) The Semites (Old Babylonians) then conquered Sumer but absorbed the entire culture into their own. The Kingdom of Akkad was founded by Sargon the Great (2334-2279), a Semite who founded the new capital of Akkad and respected Sumerian culture and religion. This dynasty ended when foreign Gutians conquered Akkadian civilization and ruled for a while.

(4) The rise of the city-state of Ur (2112-2004) followed during the time of Abraham. It is known for advanced administration, education, building programs, the arts and literature.

(5) Isin-Larsa Period was the final period that ended when Amorites took control.

2. Geography: Where Sumerians Lived (cf. pp. 15, 17)

   a) Southern Mesopotamia (between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers) was the main centre of Sumerian civilization.

   b) Key cities included Ur and Nippur.

3. Sumerian Deities: An or Anu (high but rather inactive god), Enlil (powerful ruler and judge), Enki (god of wisdom and cunning), Inanna (goddess of storehouse, thunderstorms, early morning and evening stars) was identified with Akkadian Ishtar, who became the most important goddess of western Asia.

4. Akkadian and Sumerian Literature (cf. see more texts on pp. 188-188a)

   a) Enuma Elish is an Akkadian account of creation written in about 1100 BC (cf. p. 188d).

   b) The Gilgamesh Epic is the most significant as it contains the story of a flood similar to Genesis 6–9 (cf. pp. 188e-f).



Fragment of the Gilgamesh Epic from Megiddo

c) The Code of Hammurapi (Hammurabi) from the time of Ur's dominance prescribes financial penalties for crimes of varying degrees and social class. This is similar to Deuteronomy, though the Bible makes the penalties the same irrespective of social standing. This discovery of a complicated law code dating 500 years before Moses has refuted the liberal claim that Deuteronomy is a code "too detailed for its time"!

5. Significance: Why Sumerians Were Important



a) They were the first civilization to develop culturally in an advanced manner.

b) Thus the Sumerians deeply influenced the other civilizations of the ancient Near East in many ways, including Greece and Rome (and thus all western civilizations). Inventions included:[2]

(1) Writing: The Sumerian language is linguistically unrelated to the Semitic languages, although it does illuminate Akkadian. "The earliest texts are still largely unintelligible, as are some features of the language throughout its history."[3] However, some of this literature parallels the Bible (see above).

(2) The city-state as the earliest form of government comprised an assembly of free adult citizens

(3) The accumulation of capital (saving money)

(4) The wheel

(5) The potter's wheel

(6) The sexagesimal numbering system (use of the number 60 as a base is still seen our measurement of time, circles and angles)

(7) Written legal documents

(8) Schools in which children can all learn to read and write

(9) Cylinder seal (for writing)

(10) Architecture that included monuments (esp. dome, arch, and vault): The ziggurats (temple towers) were especially significant and reached 21 meters high. The first was built in the late 3000s BC.

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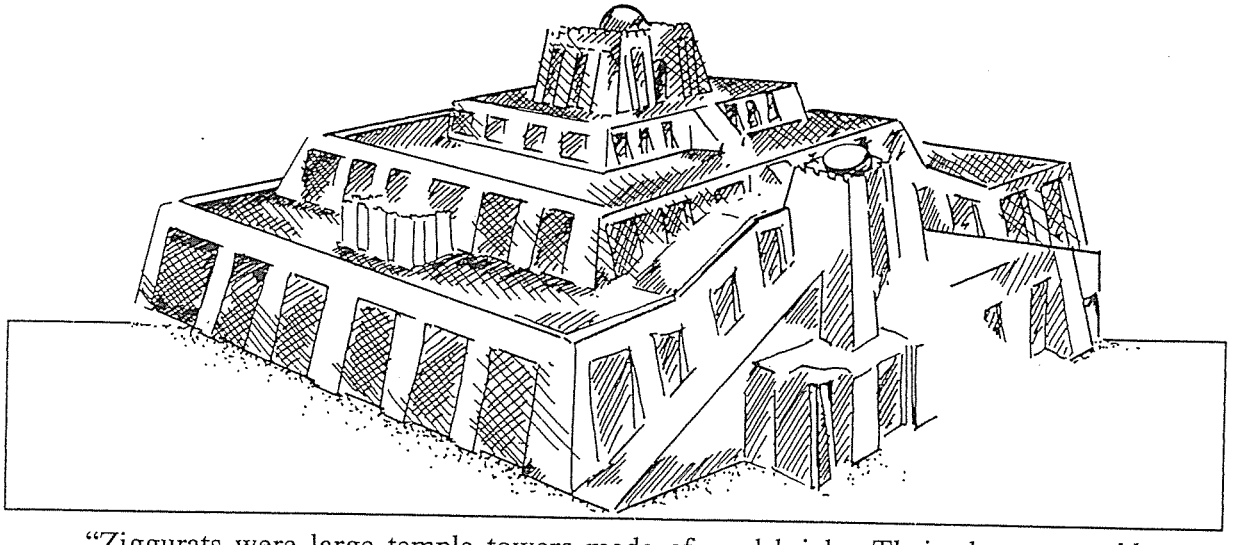
[2] See the popular book by Samuel N. Kramer, *History Begins at Sumer: Thirty-Nine Firsts in Man's Recorded History*, 3rd ed. (Philadelphia: Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, 1981).

[3] Walter R. Bodine, "Sumerians" in *Peoples of the Old Testament World*, eds. Alfred J. Hoerth, Gerald L. Mattingly, and Edwin M. Yamauchi (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1994), 20. Most of the information in this section is from Dr. Bodine's article.



"Ziggurats were large temple towers made of mud bricks. Their shape resembles a pyramid with tall platforms built on top of one another. The temple was at the top" (source unknown).

6. Summary: How Sumerians Affected Israel

a) Abraham came from Ur, a Sumerian city. Thus he carried the culture of his home area to Canaan and undoubtedly affected his descendants with a high level of culture. We can assume that Abraham was literate, given this heritage.

b) The highly organized bureaucracy administered the temple cult from the temple at the centre of the city. Israel (and the other nations) also saw themselves as sacred states wherein the people viewed themselves as servants of the deity.

c) Cuneiform (wedge-shaped) writing developed by the Sumerians was not linguistically related to the Hebrew of the Jews. However, the heritage of communicating in this permanent manner forever changed the Middle East and later enabled Jews to communicate God's Word in written form. See the cuneiform system of writing on the next page.

Sumerian Cuneiform

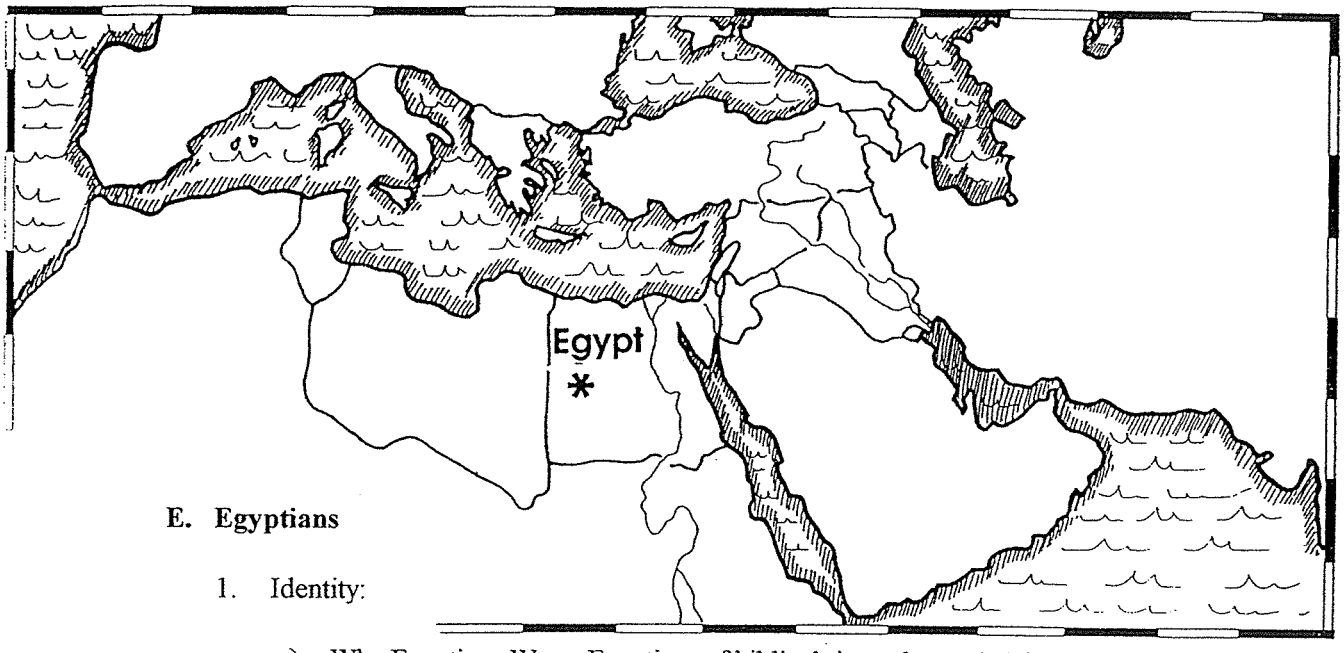
S. N. Kramer, *Sumerian Mythology*, p. 17



FIG. 1. THE ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE SUMERIAN SYSTEM OF WRITING

(For description, see opposite page and note 18.)

7. Lessons to Learn from Sumerians



E. Egyptians

1. Identity:

   a) Who Egyptians Were: Egyptians of biblical times descended from Hamites after the dispersion at the tower of Babel (Gen. 11:1-9).

   b) When Egyptians Lived: Although not as old as Sumer, Egypt still exists today and thus is one of the world's oldest civilizations. Some believe its "prehistory" (before writing began around 3100 BC) stems back to 250,000 BC.[4] However, no one can accurately date artifacts before the introduction of writing as there exists no outside source of verification to test the accuracy of Carbon-14 or other dating method. Incredibly, Egyptian rulers are traced 3000 years through 31 separate dynasties in seven separate periods.[5]

2. Geography: Where Egyptians Lived (cf. pp. 15, 17)

   a) The presence of deserts on both the east and west of Egypt in northeast Africa could have made it somewhat cut off from the rest of the world. Yet Egypt, being a super power to Israel's southwest, paralleled the countries of Mesopotamia to the northeast, where the other biblical super powers originated. The link between these two major centers traveled directly through the land of Israel, meaning that Egypt's influence over Israel continued throughout the OT era to varying degrees.

   b) Egypt is one of the few Ancient Near East countries that occupies roughly the same geographical area today. This land still divides into Upper (southern) and Lower (northern) Egypt, taking their names from the northward flow of the Nile River.

   c) The Nile was said to be the country's bloodstream in this 6000 kilometer oasis within the African desert. Each year the Nile overflowed it banks, depositing rich silt (soil) along it banks. Along this narrow strip the Egyptians cultivated wheat and barley to make bread and beer, and flax for linen to make most of their clothes. To protect this attractive land (Gen. 13:10) the Egyptians continually fought invaders from Libya to the west, Nubia (Ethiopia) to the south, and Semitic-speaking peoples of Syria-Palestine. See the map on the next page for details of the Nile.

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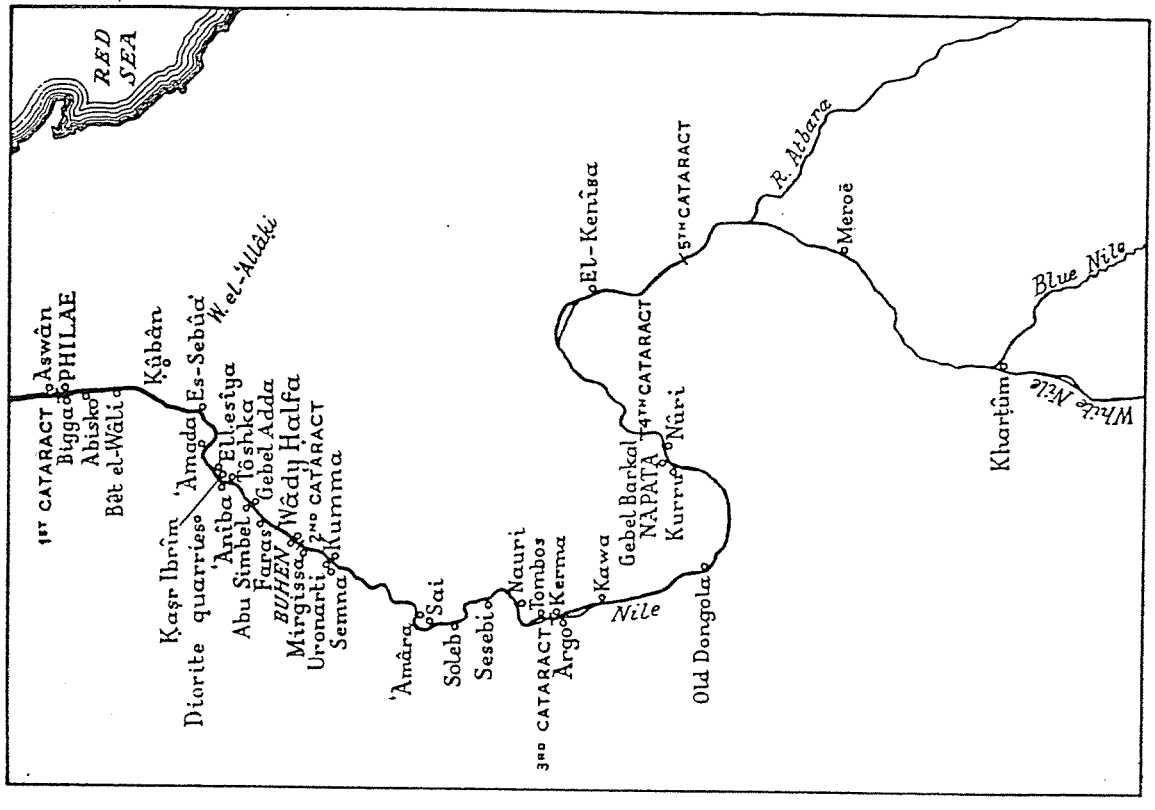
[4] James K. Hoffmeier, "Egyptians" in *Peoples of the Old Testament World*, 253.

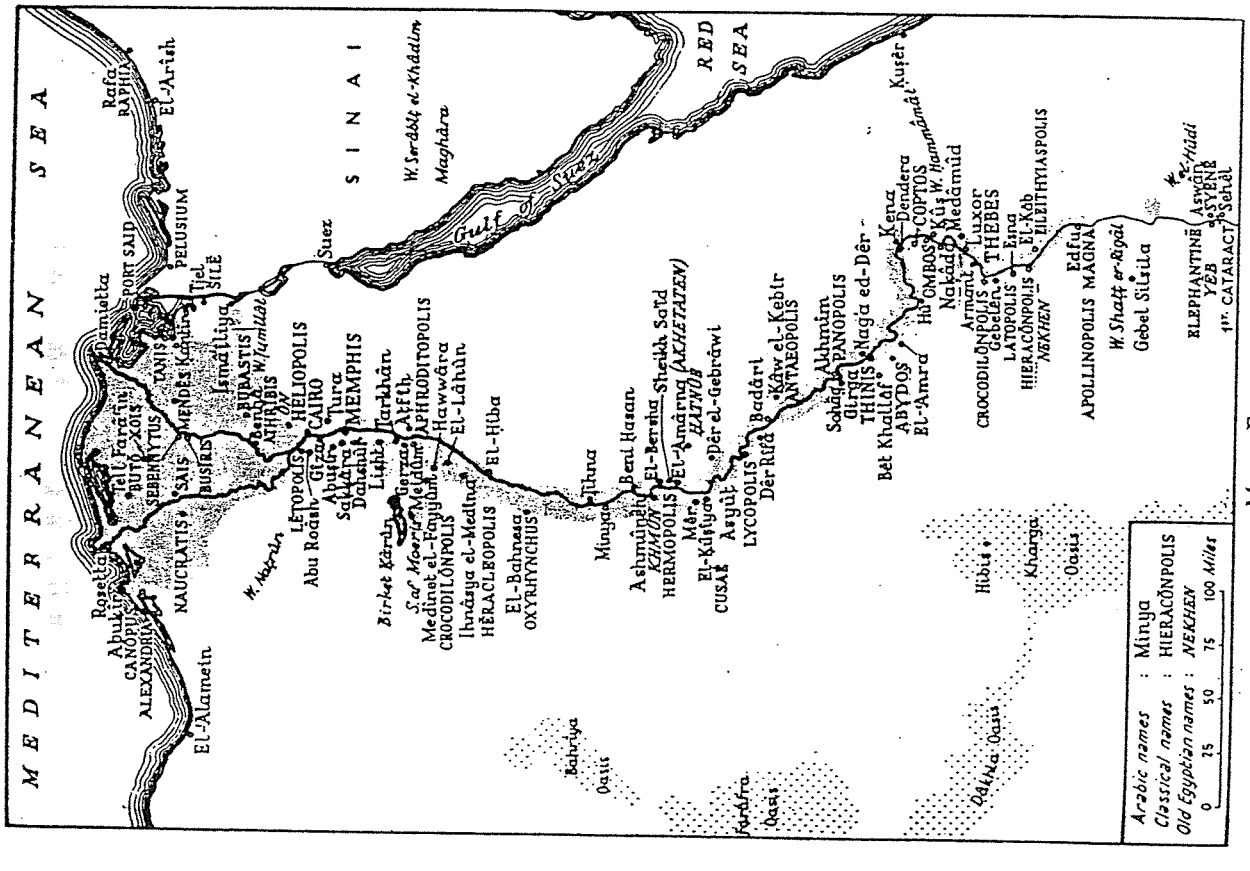
[5] See "Chart of Ancient Near Eastern History," OTB notes,73.

Map of the Nile

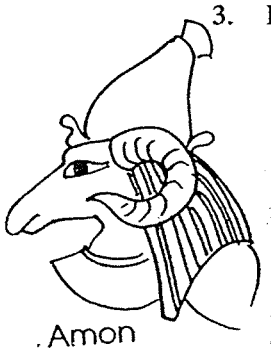
Source Unknown



MAP II. Nubia and the Sûdân.



MAP I. Egypt.


Amon

3. Egyptian Religion

a) Deities: Egyptians were polytheistic, believing the pharaoh (king) to be a god. Prominent deities included Amon (king of gods), Re (sun god), Horus, Isis, Osiris (god of crops, fertility, and the afterlife), and Hapi (god of the Nile).

b) Embalming: They also were obsessed with the afterlife, which brought about a highly sophisticated custom of embalming the dead (even dead animals such as dogs and cats!).

4. Egyptian Literature

a) Hieroglyphics ("sacred pictures") was the Egyptians' advanced form of picture-writing. It contrasts with the Sumerian cuneiform (3200 BC) with its wedge-shaped pictures engraved into clay tablets. Originally written on stone, hieroglyphics were written on papyrus from 2600 BC. The Chinese and Indus Valley glyphs of modern-day Pakistan also developed early forms of writing. All four types of writing were based on pictures that were later simplified.[6] The difference with Hieroglyphics is that each picture represented not a word but a letter, deciphered interestingly by a 21-year-old French scholar who studied the Rosetta Stone discovered during Napoleon's occupation of Egypt in 1799 (cf. pp. 87c-d).

b) Literature Samples (cf. pp. 188-188a)

(1) Memphite Theology notes creation by a spoken word (Gen. 1).

(2) Hymn to the Aten has parallels to Psalm 104.

(3) Instruction of Amenemope reminds readers of Proverbs 22:17–24:22 in its practical wisdom and maxims (sayings). See portions on page 188b.

(4) Egyptian Love Songs are similar in content and style to the Song of Solomon.

(5) Noticeably absent are epic poems (no heroes) and law codes (since the word of the pharaoh was considered divine and unquestioned).

5. Significance: Why Egyptians Were Important

a) Egyptians provided the world with many "firsts," such as papyrus (paper).

b) The Pyramids of Giza from the Old Kingdom era (2700-2200 BC) remain one of the seven wonders of the world (cf. OTS, 105a).

6. Summary: How Egyptians Affected Israel

a) God used Egypt to enslave his people for 400 years and thus be his means of motivating the Israelites to trust the Lord for their own promised land.

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[6] Charlotte Evans, gen. ed., *Illustrated History of the World* (New York, NY: Kingfisher, 1993), 29.

b) Egypt served as the most pointed example of the Lord's superiority of any other so-called god. The ten plagues of Moses' time each in effect attacked a specific god in the Egyptian pantheon (cf. p. 87b of these notes).

7. Egypt, Hieroglyphics and the Bible on the Web (Supplement)

Subject: Egypt, Hieroglyphics and the Bible
Date: Wed, 20 Jun 2001 10:46:57 +0100
From: Dr David Instone-Brewer <Technical@Tyndale.cam.ac.uk>
To: "Tyndale Readers & Staff"; "Tyndale Scholars"

T.T_____T.T_____T.T_____T.T_____T.T_____T.T_____T.T_____T.T_____T.T
Tyndale Technical - from David Instone-Brewer at Tyndale House, Cambridge.
These notes are free, so there is no guarantee that they are useful or accurate.
If you want to go on receiving them, do nothing. If you don't want them, tell me.
T.T_____T.T_____T.T_____T.T_____T.T_____T.T_____T.T_____T.T_____T.T

==========

Egypt, Hieroglyphics and the Bible on the Web

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My daughter recently bought an artifact from a suspicious looking Egyptian in a London street. It is a small Anubis (the god who weighs one's heart before allowing entry into the afterlife) with hieroglyphics round the base, about two thirds of which are readable. We have enjoyed learning to read these and deciphering a little. In the process, I discovered that the Web is a surprising treasure house of Egyptian studies, from tourist introductions to the highly academic information.

1) GENERAL BACKGROUND - LIFESTYLE ETC.
2) EGYPTIAN HISTORY AND RELIGION
3) BIBLE PARALLELS AND CHRONOLOGY
4) READING HIEROGLYPHICS - TUTORS AND SIGN LISTS
5) WRITING HIEROGLYPHICS - TRANSLATORS AND FONTS

Even if Egypt isn't your 'thing', do try out the last link on this page.
It will print out your name in Hieroglyphics in large high-quality signs
- good enough to hang on the wall.

==========

1) GENERAL BACKGROUND - LIFESTYLE ETC.

Egyptian Antiquities
- interesting info put in an interesting way.
http://touregypt.net/antiq.htm

Ancient Egypt Links
- links from academic archaeology to tourism.
http://personalwebs.myriad.net/steveb/egypt.html

Teachernet links for Egypt
- very organized, serious, though somewhat 'popular'
http://member.aol.com/TeacherNet/AncientEgypt.html

Who's Who of Egypt
- huge number of people, though very brief notes on each.
http://touregypt.net/who/

2) EGYPTIAN HISTORY AND RELIGION

Ptolemaic Egypt
- links to academic sites for Egypt from 3rd C BCE to Byzantine times
http://www.houseofptolemy.org/

Index of Egyptian History
- all 32 Dynasties. Good overview linked to detailed essays
http://www.friesian.com/notes/oldking.htm

Genealogy of the Egyptian Kings
- a superb example of genealogies on the web, with academic references.
http://www.geocities.com/christopherjbennett/

Egyptian Book of the Dead
- translation of the Papyrus of Ani
http://www.lysator.liu.se/~drokk/BoD/

Religion and Philosophy of Egypt
- academic treatise suggests Egypt was the source of Greek thought
http://www.friesian.com/greek.htm

3) BIBLE PARALLELS AND CHRONOLOGY

Evidence for Israel in Egypt
- straightforward article on Joseph in Hyksos Egypt
http://www.christiananswers.net/q-abr/abr-a027.html

Dating the Exodus
- a proposed redating of virtually everything.
http://www.ldolphin.org/montgochron.html

- David Rohl site, challenging traditional Egyptian chronology.
http://www.nunki.net/index.html

- criticism of David Rohl
http://www.bga.nl/en/discussion/echroroh.html

- the Hyksos date and Bible chronology
http://bibleorigins.homestead.com/Exodus1540BCHyksos.html

4) READING HIEROGLYPHICS - TUTORS AND SIGN LISTS

Short Introduction to Hieroglyphics
- a fairly straightforward 'teach yourself Hieroglyphs'
http://webperso.iut.univ-paris8.fr/~rosmord/Intro/Intro.html

Hieroglyphics.net
- a good visual hieroglyphic dictionary, to and from English
http://hieroglyphs.net/000501/html/000-016.html

Hieroglyphics Sign Lists
- comprehensive sign list with a proposal for computer coding
http://24.8.193.241/1563/Hieroglyphica.htm

- a huge collection of 4700 hieroglyphic ideograms
http://www.ccer.ggl.ruu.nl/hiero/

Egyptology Resources
- academic resources, compiled by Cambridge Egyptologists
http://www.newton.cam.ac.uk/egypt/index.html

Pronunciation of Ancient Egyptian
- a detailed examination, with example sound files
http://www.friesian.com/egypt.htm

---

5) WRITING HIEROGLYPHICS - TRANSLATORS AND FONTS

Hieroglyphic Translator
- claims to translate sentences into Hieroglyphics
http://www.torstar.com/rom/egypt/

Hieroglyphic fonts
- 800 signs distributed across 4 font sets for Windows. Free.
http://personalwebs.myriad.net/steveb/egyptian/glyphttf.zip

- collection of fonts, Mac & Windows, free and demos
http://www.sil.org/computing/fonts/lang/Egyptian.html

- 4700 signs with a program to write them. Good but pricey.
http://www.ccer.ggl.ruu.nl/ccer/EXTLIB.HTML

Write your name in Hieroglyphics
- lots of sites offer this, but none as pretty as this one.
http://www.upennmuseum.com/cgi-bin/hieroglyphsreal.cgi

David

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New Kingdom Pharaohs

Adapted from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pharaoh#Eighteenth_Dynasty

Eighteenth Dynasty

Name	Comments	Dates
Ahmose, Ahmosis I	**Successor to Kamose**	**1570-1546**
Amenhotep I		**1551-1524**
Djehutymes I (Tuthmosis I)		**1525-1518**
Djehutymes II (Tuthmosis II)		**1518-1504**
Djehutymes III (Tuthmosis III)		**1503-1450**
Hatshepsut	**A rare female ruler**	**1498-1483**
Amenhotep II	**Early Exodus ruler**	**1453-1419**
Djehutymes IV (Tuthmosis IV)		**1419-1386**
Amenhotep III		**1386-1349**
Amenhotep IV Akhnaten	**Founded brief monotheism period worshiping Aten**	**1350-1334**
Smenkhkare		**1336-1334**
Tutankhamun		**1334-1325**
Kheperkheprure Ai		**1325-1321**
Horemheb	**Former General and advisor to Tutankhamun**	**1321-1293**

Nineteenth Dynasty

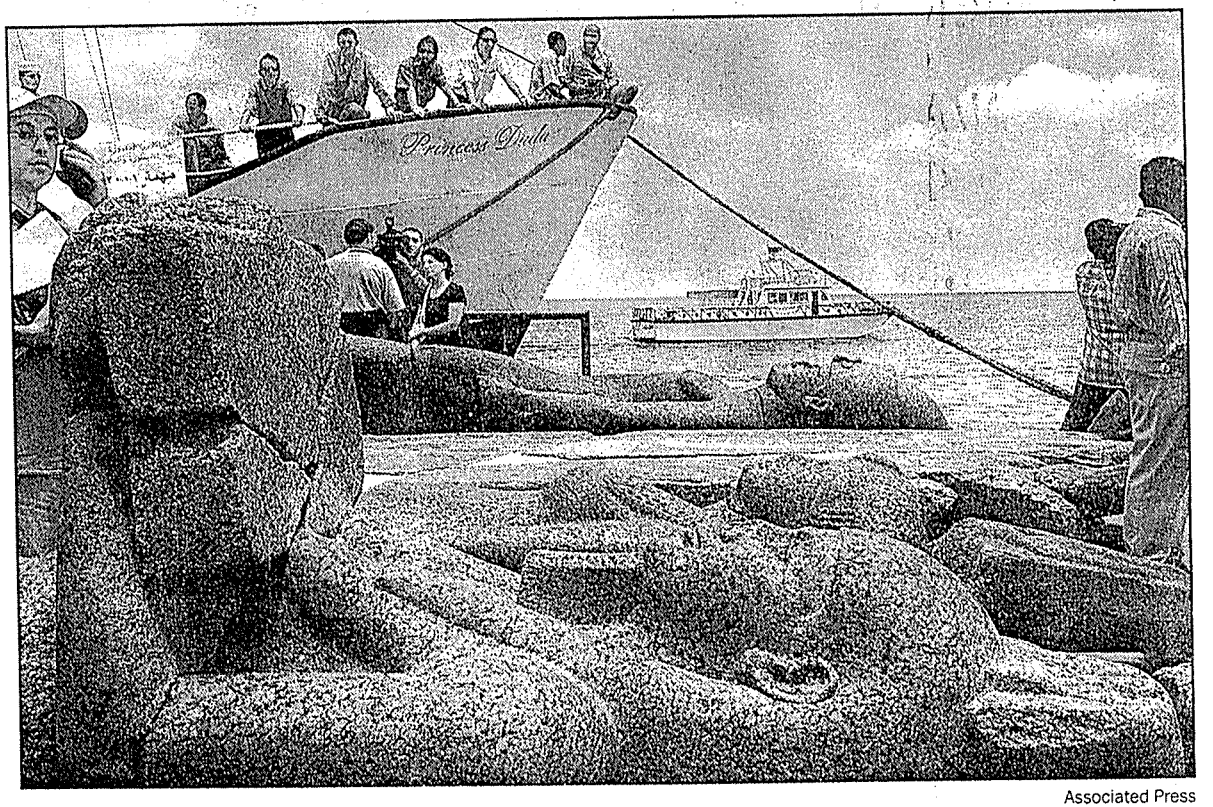
Name	Comments	Dates
Rameses I		1293-1291
Seti I		1291-1278
Rameses II the Great	The ruler of Moses by late date advocates	1279-1212
Merneptah		1212-1202
Amenemses		1202-1199
Seti II		1199-1193
Merneptah Siptah		1193-1187
Twosret	A rare female ruler	1187-1185

Twentieth Dynasty

Name	Comments	Dates
Setnakhte		1185-1182
Rameses III		1182-1151
Rameses IV		1151-1145
Rameses V		1145-1141
Rameses VI		1141-1133
Rameses VII		1133-1126
Rameses VIII		1126
Rameses IX		1126-1108
Rameses X		1108-1098
Rameses XI		1098-1070

"We discovered so many objects. The site is rich and amazing." – Diver Eric Smith

Sea yields artifacts of ancient Herakleion



Associated Press

A statue of the god Hapi, foreground, lies with two unidentified statues of a pharaoh and his queen on the deck of a barge in Alexandria, Egypt. Hapi was the Egyptian god of the annual Nile flood.

By Paul Garwood
Associated Press

ALEXANDRIA, Egypt — An earthquake 1,200 years ago sent the ancient port city of Herakleion crashing to the Mediterranean floor. On Thursday, archaeologists unveiled some of its hidden treasures, including a giant stone tablet that pinpointed the lost city's location.

The tablet, or stela, was one of two — and the other, researchers said, was among the largest ever found. The smaller block, almost black in color and about a third the size of the giant stela, stood supported by a frame.

The two stone tablets were displayed Thursday on a barge moored in Abu Qir Bay, east of modern Alexandria's downtown. On the same barge were three giant statues — one of Hapi, the god of the Nile flood, and the others of a pharaoh and his queen, both unidentified.

"Just after a couple of dives, we discovered so many objects. The site is rich and amazing," said diver Eric Smith, of Key West, Fla.

The excavation proves that Herakleion was "an important pharaonic harbor city and entrance to ancient Egypt," said French archaeologist Franck Goddio, the leader of the international team excavating the underwater site. "We have learned so much in just one year."

See **INSIDE** on **50A**

Egypt Today

INSIDE STORY

3 cities were dumped in sea by earthquake

INSIDE from 2A

Hieroglyphic text on the smaller stela gave the city's name and said the giant stone was set at the Nile's exit into the Mediterranean by order of Pharaoh Nektanebo I in 380 B.C., Goddio said.

About 1,200 years ago an earthquake sent Herakleion and nearby Canopus and Menouthis to the sea bottom. The three cities were known only through Greek tragedies, travelogues and legends until Goddio's team announced last year that they had been rediscovered after a two-year search off Egypt's northern coast in waters 20 feet to 30 feet deep.

The team has been working since then at a site about four miles out to sea. Temples, foundations and 10 sunken boats are among discoveries that have helped confirm the harbor's location.

Ibrahim Darwish, director of the underwater department of the Supreme Council of Antiquities, said as many as 20,000 pieces remain on the sea floor.

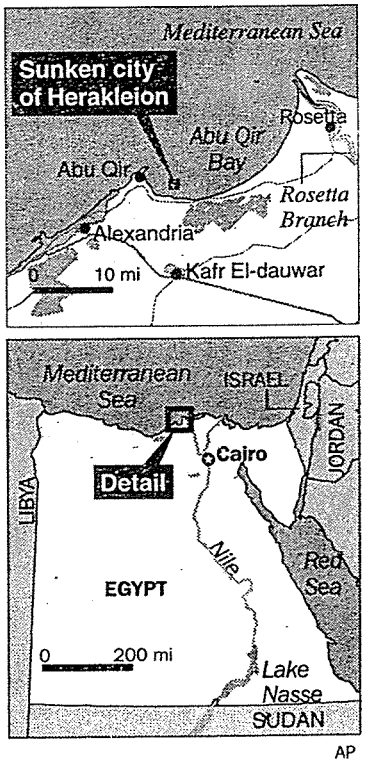
"Excavation could continue here for another 100 years, the site is that large," Darwish said of the dig, which measures about two-thirds of a mile by three-quarters of a mile.

The other stela displayed Thursday was found broken into 15 pieces that together weighed 10 tons. If pieced together, it would stand 20-feet tall, 10-feet wide and as deep as a hand. It bore Greek and hieroglyphic inscriptions that have not yet been deciphered.



Associated Press

This photo, dated May 2001, shows a French underwater archaeologist with the statue of the god Hapi sitting upright on the floor of the sea.



AP

The stelae and three statues were to be taken to the government antiquities laboratory in Alexandria for desalinization treatment before being sent on an international tour at the end of 2003, Goddio said. Details of the tour have not yet been worked out.

The soon-to-be-opened Alexandria library is being considered as a permanent home for the Herakleion discoveries. The modern research center, set to open later this year, commemorates the ancient Great Library at Alexandria, founded around 295 B.C. and destroyed under mysterious circumstances sometime in the first century B.C.

Darwish said authorities were looking at building two new Alexandria museums, one onshore and the other under water, where the pieces may be housed.

Herakleion was a flourishing customs port and at one time Egypt's largest harbor, located at the mouth of the Canopus branch of the Nile. That was until the founding of Alexandria by Alexander the Great in 331 B.C., who put to use its three large bays.

Travelers, such as the Greek Herodotus, who visited Egypt in 450 B.C., wrote about Herakleion and its temple dedicated to Hercules. Other ancient accounts described the city's luxury and its decadence.

The Plagues and the Gods of Egypt

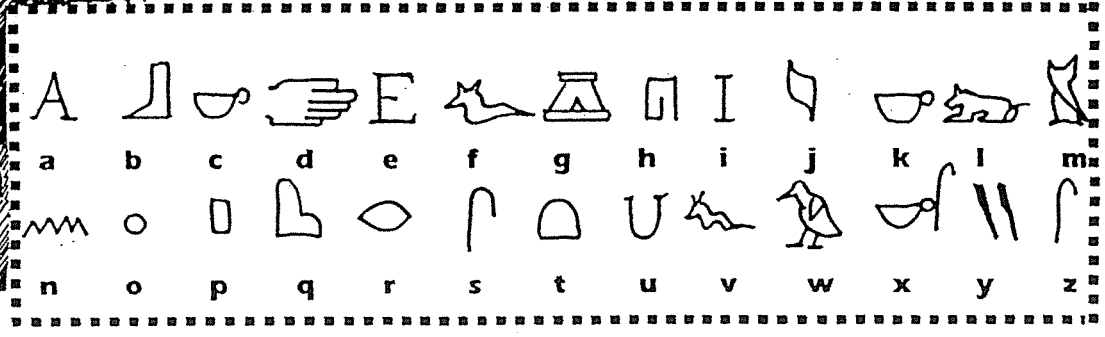
- Walton

PLAGUE	REFERENCE	POSSIBLE EGYPTIAN DEITY DIRECTED AGAINST
NILE TURNED TO BLOOD	Exodus 7:14-25	Khnum: guardian of the Nile Hapi: spirit of the Nile Osiris: Nile was bloodstream
FROGS	Exodus 8:1-15	Heqt: form of frog; god of resurrection
GNATS (MOSQUITOES)	Exodus 8:16-19	
FLIES	Exodus 8:20-32	
PLAGUE ON CATTLE	Exodus 9:1-7	Hathor: mother-goddess; form of cow Apis: bull of god Ptah; symbol of fertility Mnevis: sacred bull of Heliopolis
BOILS	Exodus 9:8-12	*Imhotep: god of medicine
HAIL	Exodus 9:13-35	Nut: sky goddess Isis: goddess of life Seth: protector of crops
LOCUSTS	Exodus 10:1-20	Isis: goddess of life Seth: protector of crops
DARKNESS	Exodus 10:21-29	Re, Aten, Atum, Horus: all sun gods of sorts
DEATH OF FIRSTBORN	Exodus 11:1-12:36	The deity of Pharaoh: Osiris, the giver of life

These are only some of the gods whom the plagues may have been directed against. It is not necessarily conclusive.
*Perhaps too early for this deity to have been involved.

Hieroglyphics





Hieroglyphics is a form of writing used by the ancient Egyptians in which picture symbols represent ideas and sounds. This type of writing was first done on stone.

1. The Rosetta Stone, a slab in which a decree is carved in hieroglyphics, gave the world the key to the understanding of this writing when it was found in 1799. Under the stone, write how many years ago this was found.
2. Egyptians also wrote on a type of paper made from the papyrus reed that grew along the Nile. Write the plural of papyrus under the title.
3. For legal documents and everyday records, the Egyptians invented demotic script. This was a simpler version of hieroglyphics. Next to the title, write why you think they wanted something simpler.
4. From about 3000 B.C. onward, each year in Egypt was named after an important event. Write what you would call the current year to the left of the title.
5. Use the hieroglyphics above to write your mother's name at the bottom of this page. Note: Capital letter vowels are represented as we know them since there were no vowels in hieroglyphics.
6. A cartouche was an oval frame enclosing the name of a ruler. Write your name in hieroglyphics in one of the ovals above.
7. Write the name of your best friend in hieroglyphics in the other oval.
8. Cartouches are often seen on monuments as nameplates of ancient rulers. On the back of this paper, design a monument including your cartouche.
9. Circle three proper nouns on this page.
10. On another piece of paper, write a letter to a classmate using hieroglyphics.

 ©MCMXCIV Instructional Fair, Inc.

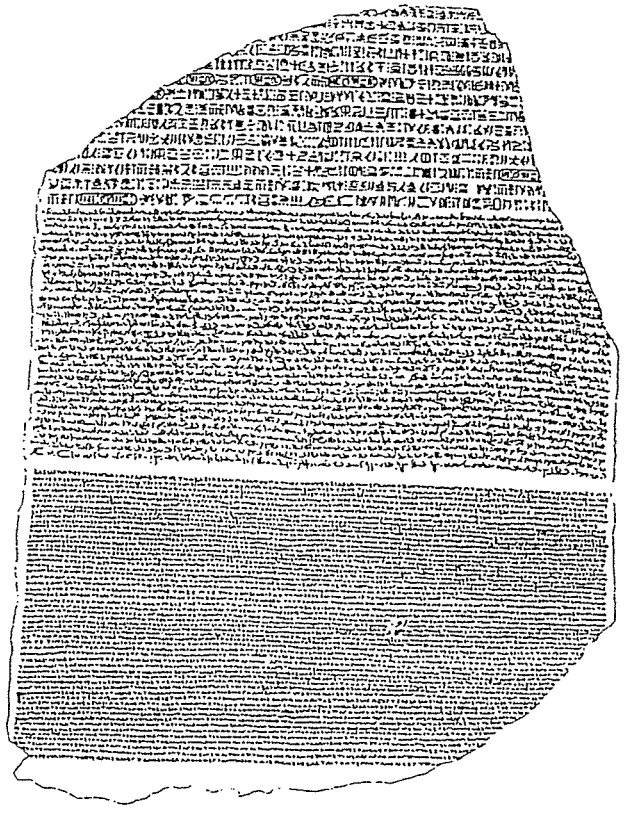
For a fun way to study this language purchase the kit and book by Catharine Roehrig, *Fun with Hieroglyphics* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of New York and Viking, A Member of Penguin Putnam, Inc., 375 Hudson Street, New York, New York 10014, USA, ©1990). It has 24 rubber stamps, an ink pad, and a guidebook for US$22.50.

How Hieroglyphics Were Deciphered

Ancient Inscriptions, 35

Rosetta Stone

In July 1799, in the aftermath of the French invasion of Egypt, a detail of Napoleon Bonaparte's troops was dispatched to build a fort on the left bank of the western or Rosetta branch of the Nile. The site was not far from the town of Rosetta (Arabic Rashid, ancient Bolbetine), situated about nine miles south-southeast of the Rosetta mouth, where the Nile empties into the Mediterranean Sea. While digging foundation trenches for the fort, the soldiers uncovered an ancient wall containing a large, broken slab of black basalt inscribed with ancient writing. Though reused as a building block in the construction of the wall, the Rosetta Stone, as it is called, is a fragment of a commemorative stela, which once stood in an Egyptian temple. It records the text of a decree issued in 196 B.C.E. at Memphis by an assembly of Egyptian priests extolling the deeds and virtues of King Ptolemy V Epiphanes (210–180 B.C.E.) and prescribing that copies of the decree should be displayed in temples throughout Egypt. In its unbroken condition, the Rosetta Stone was probably more than 4 feet high, but what remains is approximately 3 feet 10 inches high, 2 feet 6 inches wide, and just under 1 foot thick; it weighs 1,676.5 pounds. After the defeat of Napoleon's army, the stone, along with other antiquities, was ceded to the British under the terms of the Treaty of Alexandria (1801). It was then shipped to England and found its way into the collection of the British Museum before the end of 1802.



Rosetta Stone

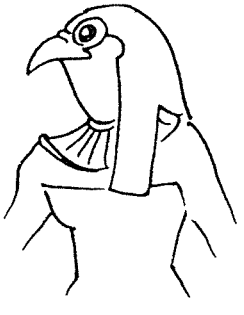
The Rosetta Stone is a bilingual inscription, that is, it bears copies of the priestly decree in two languages, Egyptian and Greek. The Egyptian text, moreover, is written in two scripts, hieroglyphic and demotic, so that altogether there are three versions of the decree, which are arranged on the stone as follows: hieroglyphic at the top, demotic in the middle, and Greek at the bottom. French scholars immediately recognized that the document might be bilingual when they examined the stone in Cairo shortly after its discovery. They made and distributed copies to other scholars in Europe in the hope that comparison of the undeciphered hieroglyphic and demotic texts to the fully understood Greek version might shed light on the language and writing of ancient Egypt.

Early efforts to exploit the potential of the Rosetta Stone for the decipherment of Egyptian concentrated on comparison of the Greek text to its demotic, not hieroglyphic section. There was more than one reason for this. The middle part of the stone, where the demotic text is recorded, is nearly complete, whereas much of the upper part, which bears the hieroglyphic section, is broken away.

8. Lessons to Learn from Egyptians







EE. Canaanites and Amorites

1. Identity:

   a) Who the Canaanites Were:

      (1) The words *Canaan* and *Canaanite* occur 160 times in the Bible.[7] Canaanites descended from Ham, son of Noah who looked upon his father's nakedness (Gen. 9:18-23). Canaan's offspring migrated westward after the tower of Babel dispersion (ca. 2350 BC), then southward from Syria.[8]

      (2) This also explains the origin of the Amorites, who were probably a different Syrian (Aramean) clan but of the same ethnic group.[9] Consistent with this is the OT tendency to mix usage of the terms *Canaanite* and *Amorite* (Gen. 36:2-3; Ezek. 16:3). The Canaanite language is one of two main branches of Northwest Semitic (the other branch is Aramaic). Closely related to Canaanite language were the Hebrew, Phoenician, and Moabite dialects.

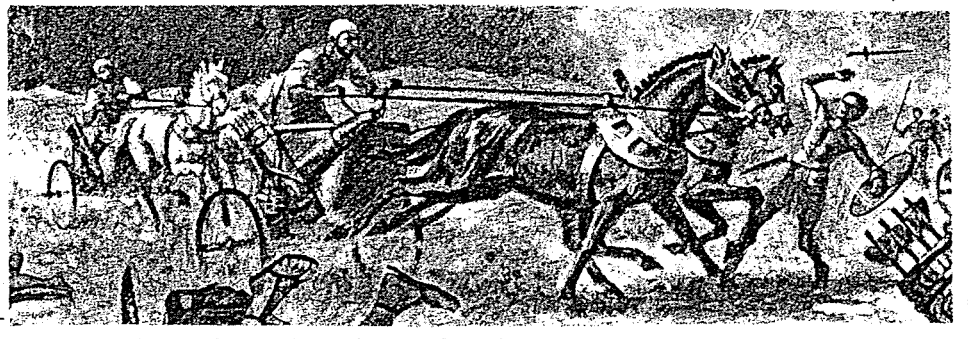
      (3) The Phoenicians were a mixed race of Canaanites and Semites who came later. They were not interested in conquering Israel but had commercial interests instead. Phoenician ships sailed throughout the Mediterranean from their key ports of Tyre and Sidon. The OT does not use the term "Phoenicia" but instead notes these cities (Judg. 1:31; 2 Sam. 5:11; 24:7; 1 Kings 7:14; 17:9; 16:31; Isa. 23:17; Jer. 47:4).[10]

   b) When Canaanites Lived: The Canaanites had already been in the land for hundreds of years when Abraham went to the land of Canaan (Gen. 12:1-7; 2060 BC).

2. Geography: Where Canaanites Lived (cf. pp. 15, 17)

   a) Canaan is an old name for Palestine. While Moses was in Egypt, God promised the Israelites the land of "the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites" (Exod. 3:8). These names are probably listed from greater to lesser in terms of size and influence, making the Canaanites the major occupants of the land.

   b) Canaanites lived in the flat, coastal areas of what eventually was to become Israel's land, stretching from the River of Egypt to Lebanon. Life in the flat lands enabled them to advance technologically with use of chariots. Joshua fought the Canaanite commander Sisera from Hazor in the far north (Judg. 4:2, 23-24; 5:19; 11:10).



7 Keith N. Schoville, "Canaanites and Amorites," in *Peoples of the Old Testament World*, 157. Much of the material above is taken from this article.

8 William F. Albright, *Yahweh and the Gods of Canaan*, 110-11 argues for a migration nearly a thousand years earlier than I have noted, probably arriving just before 3000 BC.

9 Schoville, 167.

10 Paul N. Benware, *Survey of the Old Testament* (Chicago: Moody, 1993), 273. Although the NIV/NLT reads "Phoenicia" in Isaiah 23:11, the Hebrew reads "Canaan" here (cf. NAS, NAU). However, the reference is certainly Phoenicia.

c) Numbers 13:29 notes, "The Amalekites live in the Negev; the Hittites, Jebusites and Amorites live in the hill country; and the Canaanites live near the sea and along the Jordan." This reference to life "along the Jordan" includes the large, flat plain of Jezreel that stretches from the coast to the Jordan in north-central Israel.

d) In contrast to the Canaanites, Amorites lived in the hills on the eastern side of the Jordan as well as the western side in what was later called the hill country of Judah.

3. Canaanite Religion



Astarte, or Ashtaroth, a Canaanite goddess of sex and war.

a) Deities: Baal (god of rain, thunder and lightening; also known as Hadad), Yam (god of the sea; cf. *yam* in Hebrew means "sea"), El (the patriarchal deity as Baal's father) and his wife Athirath (Asherah = Astarte, goddess of sexual life), Mot (god of the underworld, death, and sterility; cf. *mot* in Hebrew means "death"), and Anat, the sister of Baal (sometimes his wife).

b) Agricultural Cycle: Since the Canaanites lived on the plains and thus became farmers of the land, they turned to these deities for assistance—especially during the dry summer months. Canaanite myths depict Mot (Death) killing Baal for a time but after Baal's burial he was revived.

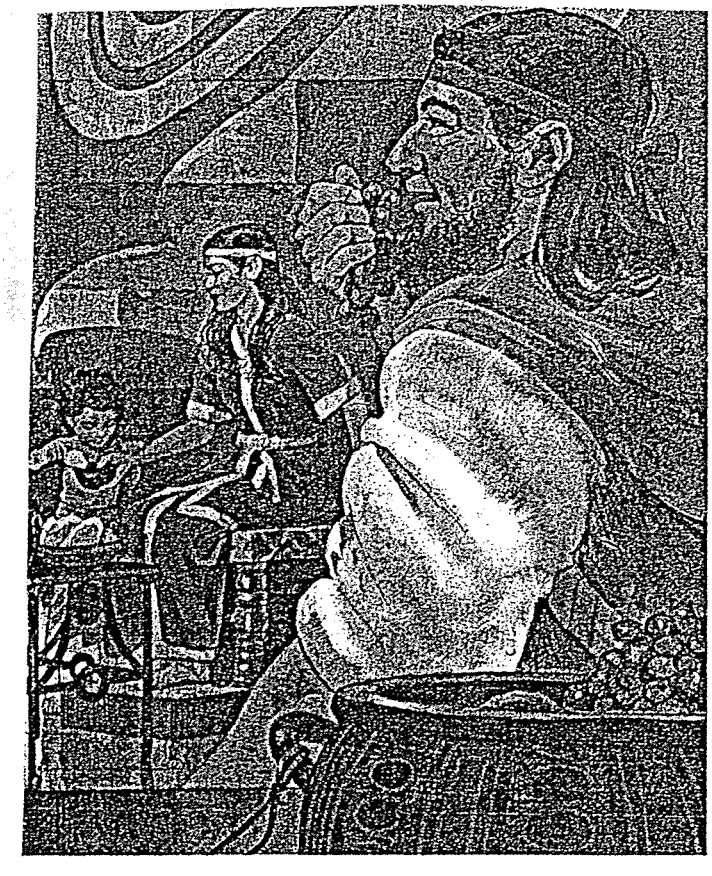
c) Practices: The saddest aspect of Canaanite religion was the appeasement of these deities to perpetuate the agricultural cycle.

(1) They believed their gods must have sex to make the land fertile—male gods such as El and Baal with female deities such as Asherah. This resulted in abhorrent sexual practices in their worship: adultery, incest, homosexuality, and bestiality. These practices are forbidden in Leviticus 18 precisely because they were practiced by the people of Canaan (18:3, 24-30). Sadly, the people believed that their own sexual perversions stimulated the deities to also engage in sex that brought about the seasonal cycles. This led to "sacred prostitution" in their temples.

(2) Canaanite worship also involved placing live babies into the burning hot hands of statues of Baal.[5] After the baby burned alive, they were pushed into a hole in the statue. Archaeologists have discovered the remains of hundreds of infants beneath these altars in the Canaanite cult—all this supposedly to guarantee their financial security. The only modern parallel to this practice that can be imagined is the wholesale slaughter of millions of unborn babies also for financial reasons.

(3) Canaanite religion is by far the worst of all ancient religions:

> "The brutality, lust and abandon of Canaanite mythology is far worse than elsewhere in the Near East at the time. And the astounding characteristic of Canaanite deities, that they had no moral character whatever, must have brought out the worst traits in their devotees and entailed many of the most demoralizing practices of the time, such as sacred prostitution, child sacrifice and snake worship."[6]





This carving from Megiddo, brought to life in the painting at the left, captures some of the grandeur of a great feast in a wealthy Canaanite family. In Canaanite stories the banquets of the gods were even more sumptuous. For food they slaughtered cattle, rams, calves, lambs, and goats. One story tells of a feast where Baal alone drank one thousand pitchers of wine to quench his thirst.

[5] Schoville, 179, disagrees by attributing this sacrifice to the Phoenicians: "Though there is little evidence in Syria-Palestine of child sacrifice among the Canaanites, ample evidence of the practice exists among their descendants, the Phoenicians, at Carthage in North Africa and at other colonies scattered around the Mediterranean basin." After the fall of Samaria, pagan peoples imported into the northern kingdom practiced child sacrifice (2 Kings 17:31).

[6] Merrill F. Unger, *Archeology and the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1960), 175; cited by Benware, 276.

4. Canaanite Literature (cf. see more texts at OTS, 79g)

   a) The Amarna Letters (in Canaanite Akkadian) comprise hundreds of diplomatic letters between city rulers of Canaan and the Egyptian pharaohs (mid 1500s BC). These give much information on social, political, and religious life at this time.

   b) Ras Sharma Tablets were written during the time of the Exodus (15th century) but never discovered until 1929. Prior to this scholars did not even know that this language of Canaan called Ugaritic existed. These writings of Canaanite deities have illuminated modern understanding of Hebrew poetry as Yahweh is often depicted as triumphing over these deities (e.g., the Lord over the waters).

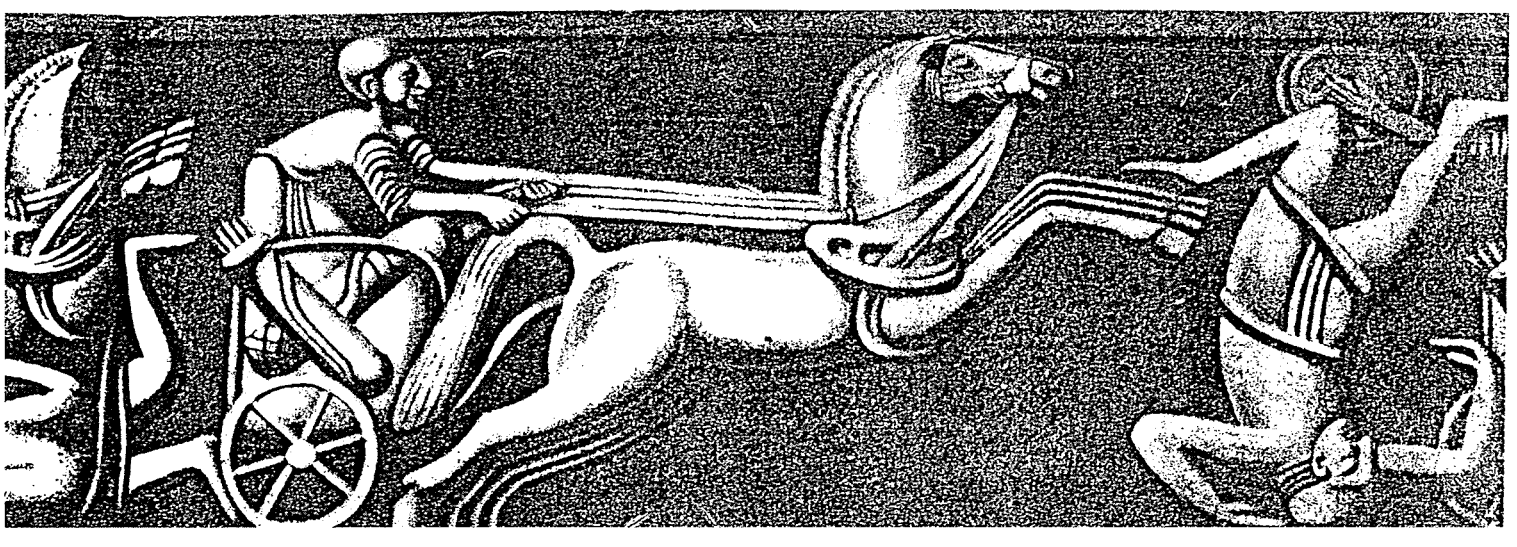
5. Significance: Why Canaanites Were Important

   a) Understanding the horrors of Canaanite religion with its child sacrifice helps us see why God commanded Israel under Joshua to rid the land of this menace. Israel was commanded never to make a treaty with them but to destroy them completely (Exod. 23:31-33; 34:11-17; Lev. 18:24-25; Deut. 7:1-2; 9:4-5; 12:29-31; 20:16-18). God told them, "You must not worship the LORD your God in their way, because in worshiping their gods, they do all kinds of detestable things the LORD hates. They even burn their sons and daughters in the fire as sacrifices to their gods" (Deut. 12:31). W.F. Albright notes that the decline of Canaanite civilization was due largely to the low moral level of its religion.

   b) Canaanite deities are often alluded to in the psalms and other biblical poetic literature. The Lord is often seen as "over the waters (*Yam* = god of the sea)"

   c) The pattern of Canaanite temples resembles the three-part form that God revealed to Moses (porch, long hall, and holy place; cf. pp. 167-68). Both temple types were also seen as the dwelling place of their deity (and thus both would not allow worshippers inside for religious gatherings). However, the courts were used for festival assemblies in both cases. One key difference is that Israel's tabernacle and temple had no statue set up to depict their deity.

   d) Canaanite culture was advanced on many fronts: engineering, art, metallurgy, inventions, trade, government, language/literature (Isa. 19:18), and especially writing. Your ability to read words on this page is directly attributable to the invention of the alphabet by the Phoenicians, descendants of the Canaanites. In fact, every alphabet in the world owes its origin to the Phoenicians except Korean, which developed independently in the 13th century BC.



6. Summary: How Canaanites Affected Israel

a) Religion: In the early days of the divided kingdom Israel began to mix Canaanite and true worship. However, after Ahab's marriage to Jezebel (daughter of the priest of Baal), the king brought Baal worship into central focus in Israel. God raised up Elijah to defeat Baal at Mount Carmel where this "god of rain" could not produce a single drop (1 Kings 18). Yet ultimately Israel imitated the depraved Canaanite religion with its materialism, idolatry and irresistible immorality. For this they experienced God's discipline in exile.

b) Buffer: The Canaanite military superiority over Israel seen in their use of iron chariots held Israel captive in the hills. Yet even this was used of God to keep the pagan influences of the plains from corrupting His people. The Canaanites controlled the international trade route, but this left them open to the corrupting practices of the super-powers of the day (Egypt and Mesopotamia).

c) Technology: Similarly, though Israel never completely destroyed the Canaanites and paid the price in a degenerated religion, by God's grace Israel also benefited technologically from those who were left behind.

(1) From the Canaanite remnant they learned "dry-land farming, the digging of cisterns to hold water in the dry season—in short, adaptation to subsistence agriculture and animal husbandry."[7]

(2) Canaanites were also more technologically advanced than Israel at working with metals. Thus their iron chariots controlled the western plains and Valley of Jezreel in Palestine.

d) Trade: The Phoenicians were the same people as the Canaanites, but after the 12th century. Forced out of Palestine in the 13-12 centuries, Phoenicians became the greatest mariners and traders of all times. They spread the Canaanite culture, religion, language, and alphabet all over the Mediterranean area.

e) Language: The Canaanites (northwest Semitic people of western Syria and Palestine before 12th century BC) shared a similar Semitic language as Israel, making borrowing possible, as seen in the Psalms. However, Canaanites had two alphabetic writing systems: at Ugarit and one also influencing later Phoenician. In this respect they surpassed Israel linguistically.

7. Lessons to Learn from the Canaanites and Amorites

a) Sometimes societies with the best technology are also morally debase.

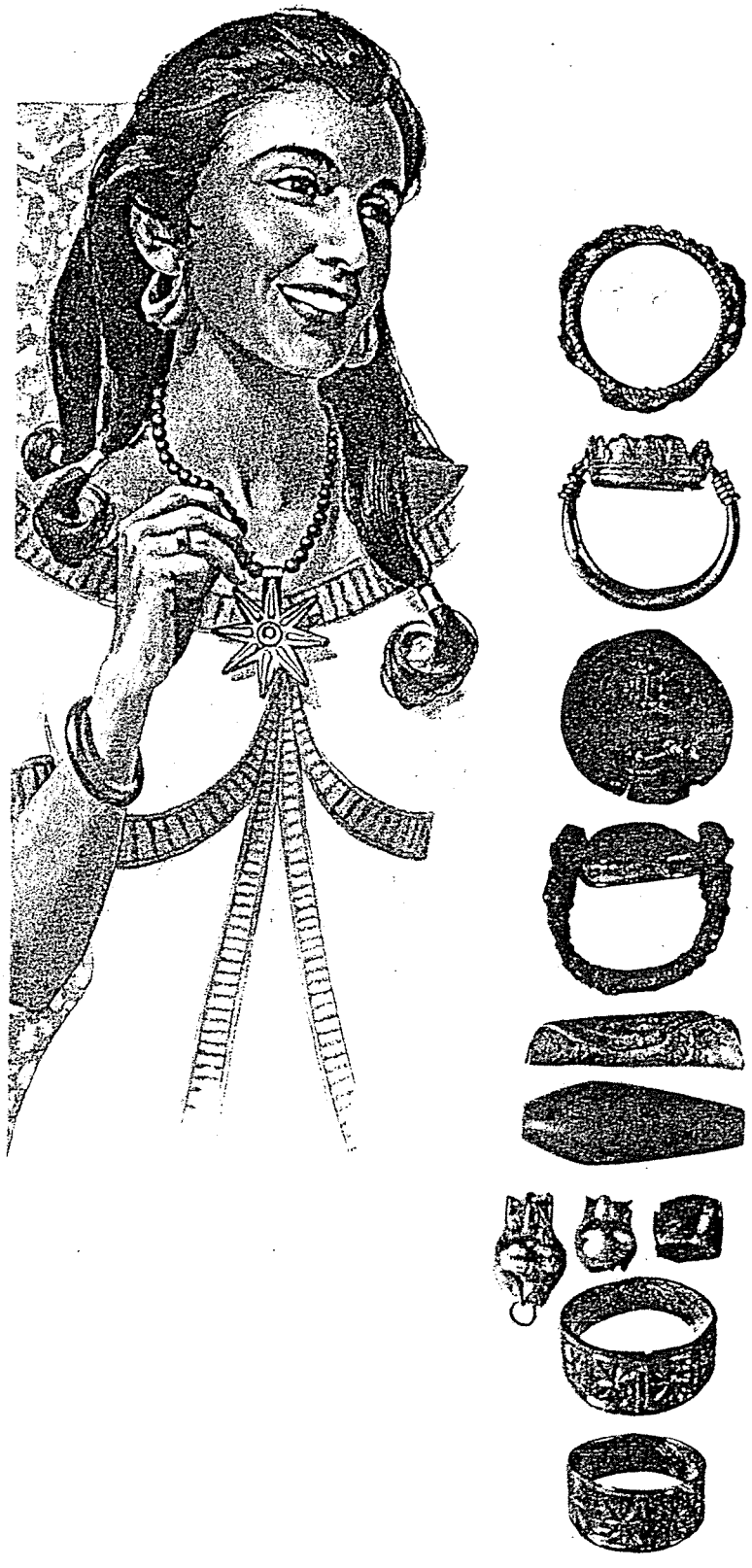
b) God is patient, having given the Amorites 400 years from the time of Abraham to sin (Gen. 15:16).

c) God knows that believers need total separation from sins of the flesh rather than allowing us to mingle with such people (Deut. 7; 2 Tim. 2:22).

[7] Schoville, 180.

Canaanite Jewelry

V. Gilbert Beers, *The Book of Life* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1980), 8:86



The Bible comes alive

Canaanite Jewelry

A Canaanite woman's gold chains and silver beads often represented her family's lifetime savings. For a married woman, jewelry also reflected her husband's high esteem. She might wear only a nose ring, a string of colored beads or a bronze anklet for every day, but the amount of wealth she could display on special occasions was a measure of her beauty and importance.

For weddings and festivals, a woman adorned herself with every bit of finery she owned. Rings and bracelets were just a start. Women added headbands and anklets with rows of jingling silver crescents and bells. They covered their foreheads with silver pieces set with gems. Jewels were sewn into veils and scarves.

Many women also wore necklace bands of solid gold, or strings of colored glass beads and semiprecious stones. Perfume was expensive; those who could afford it wore scented lockets that were called "boxes of refreshment." Amulet necklaces, worn to ward off evil, displayed gems of a special color. Others believed they kept evil away with fragrant spices or bits of colored thread. By the time a fashionable woman had arranged all her ornaments, she might be covered with several pounds of jewelry.

Canaanite men also displayed their wealth with gold earrings, arm bands and bracelets. Many wore seal rings and seals fastened to simple chains. Even camel harnesses were decorated with gold pendants and neck ornaments as a sign of wealth.

The Canaanites wore earrings, beads, and rings like these from Megiddo tombs (column at left). Other jewelry at right includes a silver bracelet (bottom) and a pin for fastening clothing. The flat, engraved metals are a type of amulet the Canaanites wore to bring good fortune.

G. Ammonites

1. Identity:

   a) Who Ammonites Were: This ancient people on the eastern side of the Jordan River and Salt Sea were distantly related to Israel as they descended from Abram's nephew Lot. Ammonites became the product of Lot's incestuous relationship with his daughter (Gen. 19:38). The name of their ancestor, *Ben-'ammi*, means "son of my people."[8]

   b) When Ammonites Lived: Lot was a contemporary to Abraham around 2000 BC, so his Ammonite descendants had occupied the Transjordan Plateau long before Israelites arrived to push them back in the Conquest (ca. 1400 BC).

2. Geography: Where Ammonites Lived (cf. pp. 15, 17)

   a) After Israel had been in their land for 300 years (ca. 1100 BC), "The king of the Ammonites answered Jephthath's messengers, 'When Israel came up out of Egypt [1405 BC], they took away my land from the Arnon to the Jabbok, all the way to the Jordan" (Judg. 11:13).

   b) The most prominent boundary of the Ammonites was the Jabbok River (Deut. 3:16; Josh. 12:2), which begins at present Ammon (ancient Rabbah Amman). From there it flows 62 miles northeast to the Jordan River so that the Jabbok forms a complete circle around the kingdom of Ammon.[9]

3. Deities: The primary god Milcom or Molech became a snare to Israel in the time of Solomon (1 Kings 11:7).

4. Literature was not a significant contribution of the Ammonites (cf. no Ammonite texts appear in the lists of literature on pp. 188-188a)

5. Significance: Why Ammonites Were Important

   a) Ammonites were not a great people in comparison to other ancient peoples.

   b) They did, however, have well-planned agricultural complexes and impressive buildings which Jeremiah accused as cause for pride (Jer. 49:4).

   c) Ammonites humiliated David's servants and this lead to Joab and Abishai capturing their capital (2 Sam. 11:1; 12:26-31; 1 Chron. 20:1-3).

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[8] Randall W. Younker, "Ammonites, " in *Peoples of the Old Testament World*, eds. Alfred J. Hoerth, Gerald L. Mattingly, and Edwin M. Yamauchi (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1994), 295.

[9] Ibid., 296-97.

6. Summary: How Ammonites Affected Israel

a) Ammonites were one of the neighbor nations God used to discipline Israel. Battles against God's people began in Judges 3:12-14 when the Ammonites joined forces with the Moabites and Amalekites, resulting in Israel being subject to King Eglon of Moab for eighteen years.

b) One key way the people of Ammon subdued Israel was through marriage of their women to Solomon (1 Kings 11:1). This resulted in Solomon building a pagan sanctuary to Milcom or Molech (1 Kings 11:7). Solomon's son and heir to the throne, Rehoboam, had an Ammonite mother (1 Kings 14:21, 31; 2 Chron. 12:13). His stubbornness led to the division of the kingdom.

7. Lessons to Learn from Ammonites

H. Moabites

1. Identity:

   a) Who Moabites Were: "[36]So both of Lot's daughters became pregnant by their father. [37]The older daughter had a son, and she named him Moab; he is the father of the Moabites of today. [38]The younger daughter also had a son, and she named him Ben-Ammi; he is the father of the Ammonites of today" (Gen. 19:36-38).

   b) When they Lived: Lot was a contemporary to Abraham around 2000 BC, so his Moabite descendants had occupied the Transjordan Plateau long before Israelites arrived to push them back in the Conquest (ca. 1400 BC).

2. Geography: Where Moabites Lived (cf. pp. 15, 17)

   a) Moabites occupied the region southeast of the Salt (Dead) Sea. Since the Edomites to their south were a strong people, the southern boundary of Moab was fixed at the dividing line between Moab and Edom at the brook Zered (modern Wadi el-Hesa).

   b) The northern boundary at the Arnon Gorge (present Wadi el-Mujib) became the boundary of Southern Moab in times of weakness, but when strong the Moabites extended across the gorge to the north as far as Heshbon (Num. 21:12; Deut. 2:13-14).[16] This region between the Arnon and Heshbon was called Northern Moab, known in the Bible as the "Plains of Moab" (Num. 22:1; Deut. 34:1).



Moabite stone, 9th century B.C. (height: 3' 9")

3. Deities: The god of war, Chemosh (Kemosh), was unquestionably the chief god of Moab. This is probably the same as the god Kamish in the Ebla tablets.

   a) This horrible worship even incited the Moabite king Mesha who was losing in his battle against Israel to offer his own son as a sacrifice (2 Kings 3:27).

   b) Other texts mention the influence of Chemosh over the Moabites (1 Kings 11:7; Num. 21:29; Jer. 7:31).

4. Literature

   a) The discovery of the Mesha Steele (Moabite Stone or Mesha Inscription) in AD 1868 confirms the biblical account of King Mesha's rebellion against Omri's son around 830 BC.

   b) This stele is the most important discovery

[16] Gerald L. Mattingly, "Moabites," in *Peoples of the Old Testament World*, eds. Alfred J. Hoerth, Gerald L. Mattingly, and Edwin M. Yamauchi (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1994), 318-19.

b) This stele is the most important discovery in Moab as it commemorates Mesha's achievements and rebellion after Omri's death (see these notes, 188a, 203).

5. Significance: Why Moabites Were Important

a) The King's Highway through the heartland of Moab was the major north-south transportation artery on the east side of the Dead Sea (Num. 20:17; 21:22; Deut. 2:27).

b) "Moabite religion included a priesthood (Jer. 48:7) and a sacrificial system (Num. 22:40-23:30; 25:1-5; 2 Kings 3:27; Jer. 48:35). What has been identified as a Moabite sanctuary has been uncovered at Dhiban; both the Mesha Inscription and the Hebrew Bible (1 Kings 11:7-8; 2 Kings 23:13) indicate that such structures existed."[41]

6. Summary: How Moabites Affected Israel

a) Animosity between Israel and Moab was seen as early as Israel's march to conquer the Promised Land. After being denied access to even pass through Moab, Israel conquered the Amorite towns which were previously held Moabite towns in the north (Num. 21:13, 21-35).

b) In response, Balak, king of Moab, requested the pagan prophet Balaam to curse Israel (Num. 22-24). This attempt serves to underscore God's blessing of Israel.

c) Nevertheless, Moab still served as a thorn in Israel's side by seducing some Israelite men sexually, leading to the worship of the Baal of Peor. This horrendous sin took the lives of 24,000 Israelites by plague (Num. 25:1-9).

7. Lessons to Learn from Moabites

a) God judges idolatry.

b) God can divinely protect His people, but His people can destroy themselves by choosing the path of sin.

c) God's mercy and grace always extends to those willing to turn to Him (e.g. Ruth).

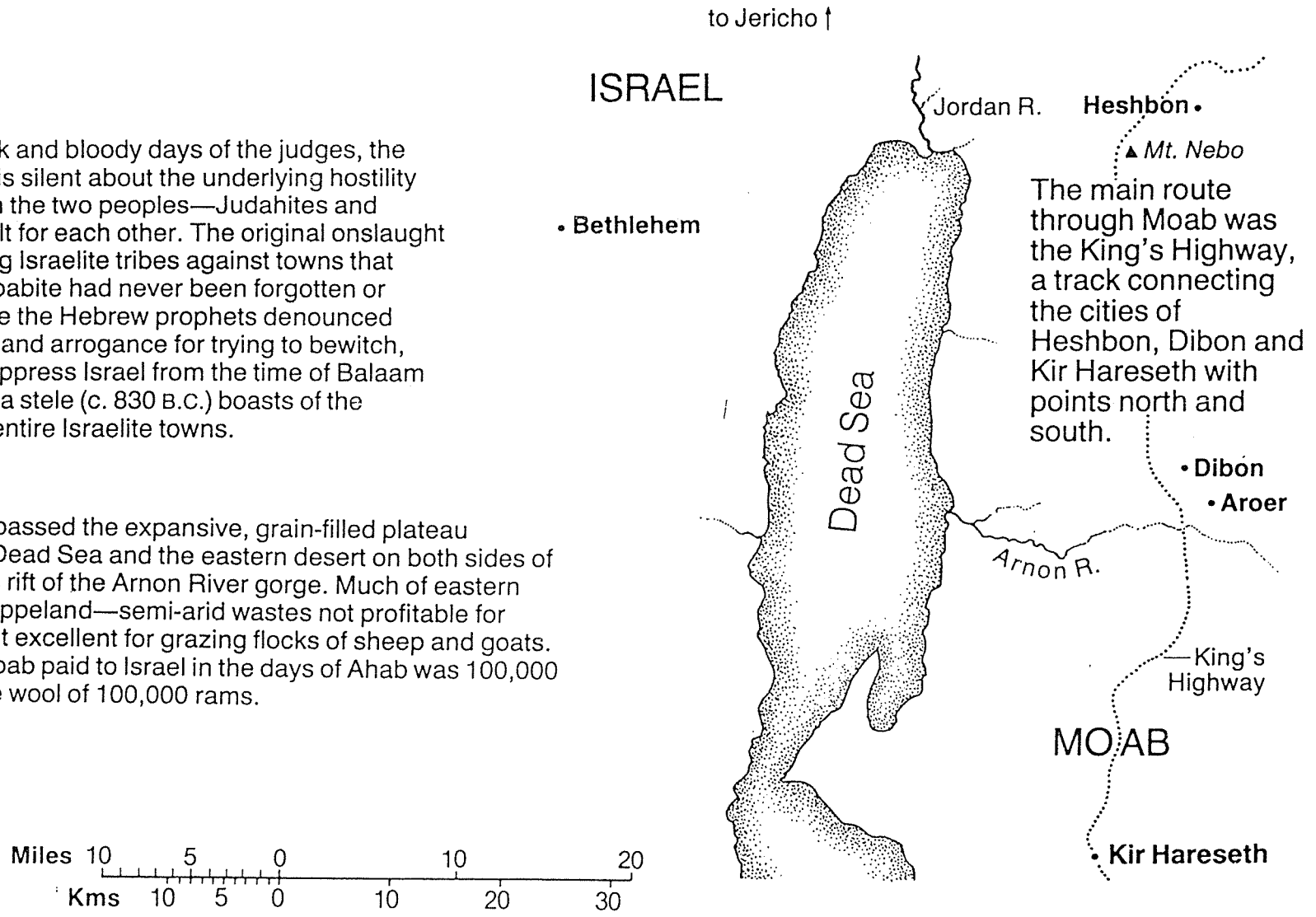
d) The Lord only needs to lift His blessings for nations to disappear from history...

[41] Ibid., 330.

The Book of Ruth

Set in the dark and bloody days of the judges, the story of Ruth is silent about the underlying hostility and suspicion the two peoples—Judahites and Moabites—felt for each other. The original onslaught of the invading Israelite tribes against towns that were once Moabite had never been forgotten or forgiven, while the Hebrew prophets denounced Moab's pride and arrogance for trying to bewitch, seduce and oppress Israel from the time of Balaam on. The Mesha stele (c. 830 B.C.) boasts of the massacre of entire Israelite towns.

Moab encompassed the expansive, grain-filled plateau between the Dead Sea and the eastern desert on both sides of the enormous rift of the Arnon River gorge. Much of eastern Moab was steppeland—semi-arid wastes not profitable for cultivation, but excellent for grazing flocks of sheep and goats. The tribute Moab paid to Israel in the days of Ahab was 100,000 lambs and the wool of 100,000 rams.



Moab in the Book of Ruth
The Bible Visual Resource Book, 53

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Table of Alphabets

E. Kautzsch, ed., 2d. English ed., *Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1910), xvii

TABLE OF ALPHABETS

Old Hebrew						Samaritan			Old Aramaic				Aramaic-Hebrew															
			Coins				MSS.						Square character					Rabbinic			Cursive							
Meša' c. 840 B.C.	Seals and Gems 9-5 cent. B.C.	Siloam c. 700 B.C.	Maccabean 2 cent. B.C.	Hasmonean 2-1 c. B.C.	Revolt 1-2 c. A.D.	Inscriptions 4-6 cent. A.D.	majuscule	cursive	Zenjirli 8 cent. B.C.	Weights, Seals, &c. 8-3 cent. B.C.	Teimâ inscr. 5-4 cent. B.C.	Egyptian cursive 5-3 cent. B.C.	Early inscr. 1-4 cent. A.D.	Babylonian 916 A.D.	Spanish 1474 A.D.	German 1347 A.D.	Ger. with Taggin. Modern	Egypt. 10-11 cent.	Spanish 15 cent.	German 1347	Oriental 16 cent.	Alger. 19 cent.	Spanish 15cent.?	Italian 15-16 cent.	German 19 cent.			
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26			

Israel's Early Eastern Neighbors

John H. Walton, *Chronological and Background Charts of the OT*, 2d ed., 71

Period	EDOM	MOAB	AMMON	AMALEK
FATHER	Esau: son of Isaac	Moab: son of Lot and his eldest daughter	Ben-Ammi: son of Lot and his second daughter	Amalek: son of Eliphaz, who was a son of Esau
EXODUS	The country was controlled to some degree by Amorites. Refused passage to the Israelites (Num. 20:14-21)	The country was conquered by Sihon and the Amorites (Num. 21:26) King Balak feared Israel and sought the services of Balaam to curse them (Num. 22)		Defeated by the Israelites at Rephidim (Exod. 17:8-16) Defeated the Israelites at Hormah following report of the spies (Num. 14:45)
JUDGES	c. 1350 Continued under the partial control of the Amorites (Judg. 1:35-36)	c. 1350 King Eglon oppressed Israel for 18 years Ehud delivered Israel by assassinating Eglon (Judg. 3:12-30)	c. 1350 Ally of Eglon of Moab c. 1100 B.C. Oppressed Israel for 18 years. Defeated by Jephthah (Judg. 10-12)	c. 1350 Ally of Eglon of Moab
UNITED MONARCHY	c. 1030 Saul took some cities from Edomite territory (1 Sam. 14:47) c. 1000 Conquered and subjugated by David (1 Chron. 18:12)	c. 1030 Saul took some cities from Moabite territory (1 Sam. 14:47) c. 1000 Conquered and subjugated by David (2 Sam. 8:2)	c. 1050 Nahash defeated by Saul at Jabesh-gilead (1 Sam. 11:1-11) c. 1030 Saul took some cities from Ammonite territory (1 Sam. 14:47) c. 990 Hanun defeated by David; Rabbah captured; Ammon subjugated (2 Sam. 12:26-31)	c. 1020 Agag defeated by Saul in southwest Palestine. Saul failed to destroy Amalek totally as the Lord had commanded (1 Sam. 15:1-9) c. 1010 Destroyed David's camp at Ziklag while he was gone. David pursued and wiped them out. This is last mention of them (1 Sam. 30)

I. Edomites

1. Identity:

   a) Who Edomites Were: The brothers Jacob and Esau both became the fathers of nations (Gen. 25:23). From Jacob came Israel whereas from Esau came the Edomite people. Thus the Edomites were the closest blood brothers to Israel of all the pagan peoples that surrounded Israel.

   b) When Edomites Lived: Esau was a twin son to Isaac along with his brother Jacob. Both were born in 1975 BC (Gen. 25:26; cf. OTS, 88). Therefore, the Edomites are new comers in comparison to the Jews whose ancestry is traced back to Abraham. One key difference from Israel, however, is that they were Semites who intermarried with the pagan Canaanites (Gen. 36:2).

2. Geography: Where Edomites Lived (cf. pp. 15, 17)

   a) After Jacob returned from Paddan Aram and reconciled with his brother Esau, the two agreed to live separately. Esau continued to live in Seir (Gen. 32:3; 33:14, 16) in the region southeast of the Dead Sea, whereas Jacob lived on the western side of the Jordan (Gen. 36:8).

   b) The western boundary between Edom and Israel below the Dead Sea changed continually over the years as Edom was conquered and then regained freedom. During Judah's exile the Edomites took advantage of the situation by occupying much of southern Judah. This area, known as Idumea, was the home of Herod's family in NT times.

   c) The northern boundary between Edom and Moab to its north was the natural barrier known as the river Zered (modern Wadi el-Hasa). On the west lay the wilderness of Judea and the Sinai Peninsula farther south. This area was formerly occupied by the Horites (Gen. 14:6), whom the Edomites dispossessed and settle in their place (Deut. 2:12, 22).

3. Deities: Scholars know very little about the deities that the Edomites worshipped.

   a) The shrine at Horvat Qitmit (the only known Edomite place of worship) has three rooms and podiums of identical size. This may imply that a plurality of gods was honored but their names still remain a mystery.

   b) Unlike other pagan groups, the OT does not attack Edom's gods by name nor note their practices as "abominations." The OT gives Edom a respect not given to any other neighboring people.[12]

4. Literature

   a) The language was also called Edomite. It appears to be within the Northwest Semitic languages with its structure resembling Hebrew and Phoenician.

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[12] Kenneth G. Hoglund, "Edomites," in *Peoples of the Old Testament World*, eds. Alfred J. Hoerth, Gerald L. Mattingly, and Edwin M. Yamauchi (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1994), 345.

However, some of its unusual letters clearly distinguish Edomite from related languages, but how widespread literacy among the Edomites was is uncertain.[13]

b) The Edomites left no significant literary works that have yet been discovered (cf. no Edomite texts appear on pp. 188-188a).

5. Significance: Why the Edomites Were Important

a) Edom in the OT often stands for pagan nations as a whole (Isa. 34:5-17; cf. Obadiah 15-21).

b) Edomites traded goods along the ancient Spice Route.

c) As the Babylonians conquered land from Babylon to Egypt, they apparently did not touch Edom (Jer. 40:11-12).

6. Summary: How the Edomites Affected Israel

a) Animosity existed between Israel and Edom.

(1) Early animosity between Israel and Edom began when Edom's king refused Israel right to pass through his land en route from Mt. Sinai (Num. 20:14-21).

(2) Edom gloated over Judah's demise (Obad. 11-14) and even possessed the southern territory of Judah after the Babylonian attack (Ezek. 35:10-12; cf. Ps. 137:7; Jer. 40:11-12).

(3) King Herod was an Idumean (a later Edomite) who massacred the Bethlehem babies (Matt. 2).

b) Yet some level of friendship is also evident.

(1) Israel revered Edomite wisdom traditions (Jer. 49:7).

(2) Job lived in the land of Uz somewhere in Edom (Lam. 4:21), so he had some level of connection with them.

(3) Edomites served in Saul's army (1 Sam. 21:7; 22:9).

[13] Ibid.

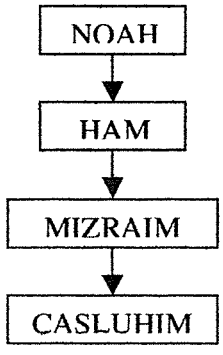
7. Lessons to Learn from Edomites

J. Philistines[14]

1. Identity:

a) Who Philistines Were (Biblical Evidence):

(1) Philistines descended from Ham (Gen. 10:13-14).



(2) Jeremiah 47:4 and Amos 9:7 also record the origins of Philistines. They came from Caphtor, a term that occurs in cuneiform documents in several languages as Kaptara and in Egyptian texts as Keftiu. Caphtor or Kaptara or Keftiu can be identified with the island of Crete and its environs.[15]

(3) Evidentally the Philistines originated in Egypt, migrated to Crete, then migrated back to Egypt. Ezekiel 25:15-16 and Zephaniah 2:4-5 use the term Cherethites in poetic parallelism with Philistines, meaning they were one and the same.[16]

b) When Philistines Lived (Non Biblical Evidence)

(1) The Philistines were a complex people, incorporating several groups and cultures from different times and places. Their zenith in world history was a brief period around 1150-1100 when they settled in southwestern Canaan.

(2) The Egyptian Pharaoh Rameses III noted the Philistines because of an eight year war between Egypt and "the peoples of the sea" or "Sea People." This inscription was found in the temple at Medinet Habu near Thebes.

(3) Philistines were called one of the Sea Peoples because many of them came to the eastern Mediterranean by sea and because they seem to have come from island or coastal areas in the Aegean or Anatolia (i.e., Asia Minor).[17]

(4) When these Sea People came to Egypt as part of a large-scale migration shortly after 1200 BC, it lead to a war in southwestern Canaan and the Nile Delta.

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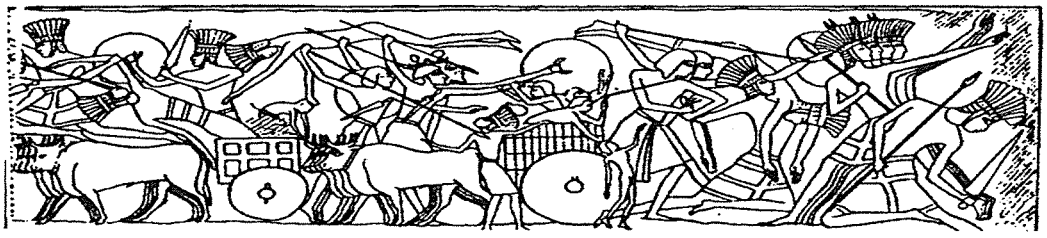
[14] Much of the material in this section is adapted from the 2001 OT Backgrounds class presentation by Budianto Lim, Chandra Koewoso, and Dany Christopher.

[15] Frederick W. Bush, "Caphtor," *ISBE,* 1:610-11; Richard S. Hess, "Caphtor," in *ABD* 1:869-70; Gary A. Rendsburg, "Genesis 10:13-14: An Authentic Hebrew Tradition Concerning the Origin of the Philistines," *Journal of Northwest Semitic Languages* 13 (1987): 90, n. 3.

[16] Kenneth A. Kitchen, "The Philistines," in *People of the Old Testament Times*, ed. Donald J. Wiseman (Oxford: Clarendon, 1973), 56, n.15

[17] Richard D. Barnett, "The Sea People," in *CAH* 2/2:360-69; Nancy K. Sandars, *The Sea Peoples* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1978), 105-15, 198-201.



(5) The result of the war was that Rameses III claimed a great victory but he allowed the Philistines and other groups to settle in the southwestern Canaan.

2. Geography: Where Philistines Lived (cf. pp. 15, 17)

(1) Region

(a) Philistines settled in the coastland of Canaan and then the area developed into the five city-states which are often called the Pentapolis.

(b) The cities of the Pentapolis can be remembered with the acronym "AGE": Ashkelon, Ashdod, Gaza, Gath and Ekron.

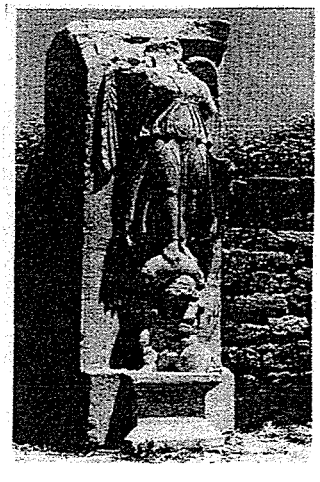
(2) Cities

(a) Ashkelon

(i) An ancient city on the Palestinian coast 20 km north of Gaza even before the Philistines arrived

(ii) It lays on the international highway (Via Maris) that led to Egypt

(iii) Its agriculture supplied Egypt with cattle, sheep, honey and oil. This city was also world famous for its wine



(iv) The first excavation was carried out in 1920-1921 by John Garsbang. He found these archaeological discoveries:

(a) New kinds of military devices

(b) The earth rampart

(c) Statue of Greek's goddess of victory in the city council chamber

(v) The biblical record for this city can be found in Judges 1:18 when Judah took Ashkelon as their territory. Judges 14:19 also notes Ashkelon in the story of Samson.

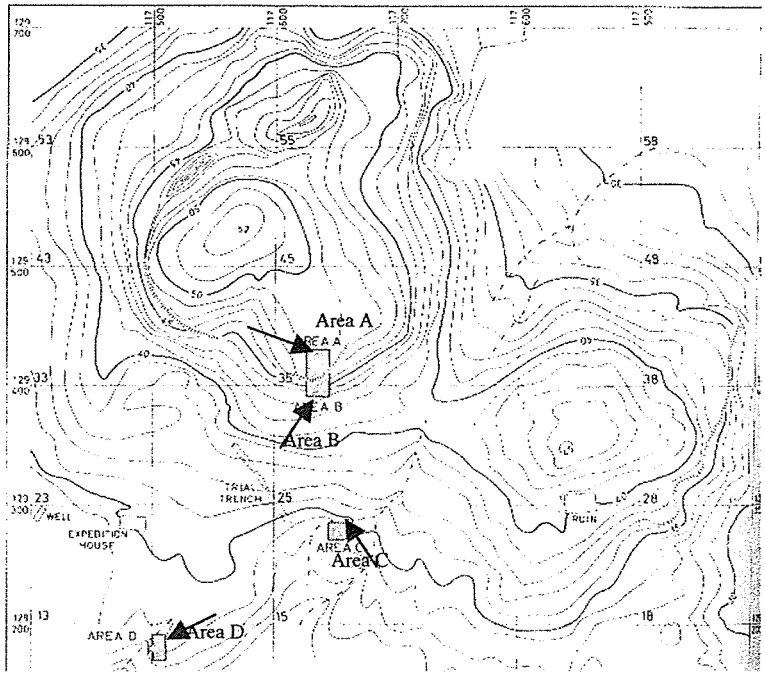
(b) Ashdod

(i) Ashdod was another ancient city in Palestinian area that fell under the Philistine conquest. It was founded about the sixteenth century BC.

(ii) It sits on the summit of a grassy hill fifty feet above sea level near the Mediterranean coast. It lays between Ashkelon and Ekron.

(iii) There were no formal excavations of this city until M. Dothan and D. N. Freedman began work there in 1962.[18]

(iv) Some archeological discoveries were found in this city according to this topographical map.

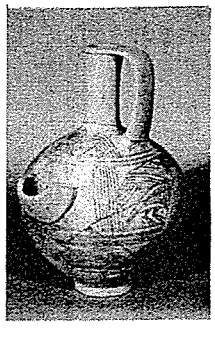


(v) Some findings in this city were:

(a) Area A:

(i) pottery, lamps and Rhodian stamps

(ii) "Fish Plate" of the Hellenistic Period



(b) Area B:

(i) Ring base pottery

(ii) Another pot from Mycenaean and Cypriote, showing that Ashdod was a substantial trading center along the eastern Mediterranean

(iii) The most interesting find was an inscribed potsherd of the Iron Age[19]

(c) Area C had more Philistine ware, including several beer mugs[20]

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[18] M. Dothan, "First Season Excavations at Ashdod, 1962," *Israel Exploration Journal* 12 (1962), 147-48 and D. N. Freedman, "The Second Season at Ancient Ashdod," *Biblical Archeologist* 26 (1963), 134-39

[19] *Ibid.*, 84-85

(d) Area D: A thirteen-foot thick portion of the outer wall was also discovered. It evidently encircled the lower city and was linked to the wall of the fortress on the acropolis.[21]

(vi) Joshua 11:22 notes Ashdod: "There were no Anakim left in the land of the sons of Israel; only in Gaza, in Gath and in Ashdod some remained"

(vii) Another significant passage about Ashdod is 1 Samuel 5 when the Philistines had a victory over Israel. They took the ark of God to Ashdod and placed it next to Dagon, one of their gods. Because of this God struck the Ashdodites with tumors. They finally returned the ark to Israel.

(c) Gaza

(i) Gaza is the most southwesterly town in Palestine.

(ii) The British School of Archeology in Egypt excavated this spot at the mouth of the Wadi Ghazzeh between 1930 and 1934 under Sir Flinders Petrie. The actual city of Gaza cannot be identified, though it is probably Tell el-`Ajjul which lies two miles from the coast and six miles south of the modern city of Gaza.[22]

(iii) Albright has also indicated that because of the appearance of pottery and weapons of the Early Bronze age the town was occupied even earlier.[23]

(iv) Joshua conquered this city while it was under Canaanite control with some Anakim remaining there (Josh. 10:41, 11:21).

(v) After Samson was caught by the Philistines, they brought him to Gaza where he got his revenge by killing 3000 men and women (Judg. 16).



[20] *Ibid.*, 109

[21] *Ibid.*, 137

[22] Edward E. Hindson, "The Philistines and the Old Testament" (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1983), 58

[23] W. F. Albright, "The Chronology of a South Palestinian City," *American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literature* 40 (1938), 21-37.

(d) Gath

(i) The actual site of Gath has never been identified with certainty. In 1956 the Israel Exploration Society began excavating Tell el-`Aerini (20 miles north of Gaza) supposing it to be ancient Gath.[24]

(ii) Gath means "winepress." It was the farthest city inland of the Philistines cities, bordering Israel on the edge of the Shephelah. "Winepress" seems an appropriate name for the city of Goliath, who had squeezed the life out of Israel until his own death.

(iii) The captured Ark of God was brought to Gath (Judg. 5). The people of Gath (Gittites) were struck with what many consider to be a bubonic plague.[25]

(e) Ekron

(i) This city has never been positively identified, though many feel it is the modern Khirbet al-Muqanna.[26]

(ii) Some explorations in 1957 revealed the site to have been occupied in the Early Bronze Age. The city was walled and covered forty acres at its peak.[27]

(iii) Many examples of typical Philistine pottery were found on this site,[28] as well as a double wall that included gates and towers.[29]

(iv) When the ark of God gave the Philistines trouble, they tried to send it to Ekron. However, the Ekronites cried out, saying "They have brought the ark of God of Israel around to us, to kill us and our people" (see 1 Sam. 5:10-6:12).

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[24] See Yeivin's articles in *Israel Exploration Journal* 6 (1956), 258-59; 7 (1957), 264-65; 10 (1960); 122-23.

[25] T.C. Mitchell, "Gath" in *NBD*, p.454

[26] The reports of J. Naveh, *IEJ*, 8 (1958), 87-100, 165-170 and Y. Aharoni, *PEQ* 90 (1958), 27-31.

[27] T.C. Mitchell, "Ekron", *NBD*, 355.

[28] Naveh, *IEJ*, 87f.

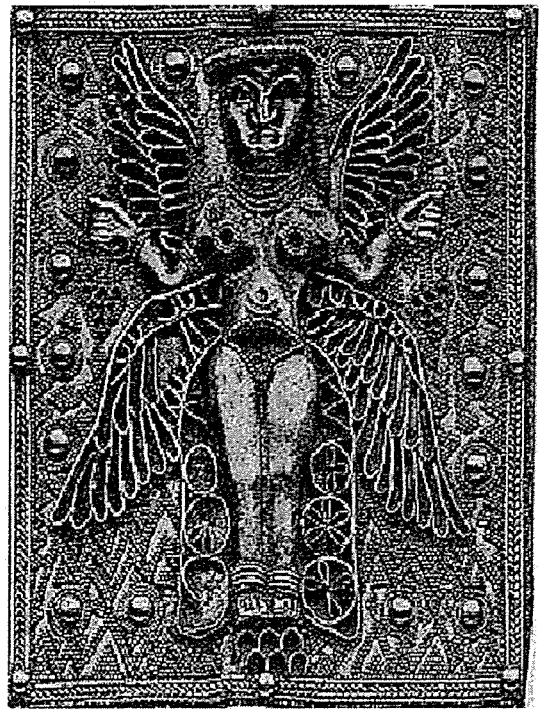
[29] Aharoni, Y. "Forerunners of the Limes: Iron Age Fortresses in the Negev," *Israel Exploration Journal*, 1-17.

3. Philistine Deities:

a) Astaroth

(1) Other names: Athtart, `Athtartu (Ugarit), `Ashtart (Phoenicia), Astarte (Greek), Ishtar (Mesopotamia).

(2) The mother goddess, the goddess of fertility, love and war (depicted at the right as a four-winged golden goddess)



(3) Meaning of her name: "shame"

(4) Israel worshipped Ashtoreth soon after they arrived in the Promised Land (Judg. 2:13).

(5) After his death, Saul's body was placed in the Astaroth temple (1 Sam. 31:10).

b) Baal Zebub

(1) "Baal" means "lord, master" while "Zebub" means "flies." But why would anyone—even a pagan—name his god "the lord of the flies"? Three suggestions have been proposed:

(a) Flies are everywhere, so does it mean the "omnipresence" of Baal Zebub is akin to the "omnipresence" of flies?

(b) Did it refer to the god who guards them from flies?

(c) Perhaps it is a mockery from the Israelites?

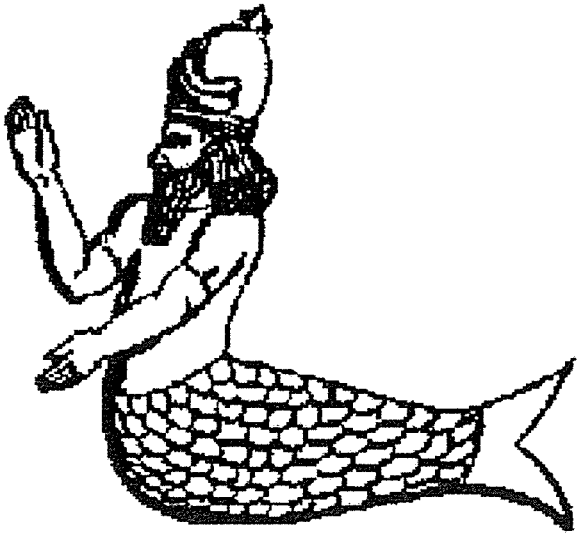
(i) Jesus was called Beelzeboul – Lord Prince / Lord Baal / lord of the heavenly dwelling (Matt. 10:25; 12:24, 27, etc...).

(ii) Perhaps Hebrews sarcastically referred to the Philistine god with this designation that sounds similar.

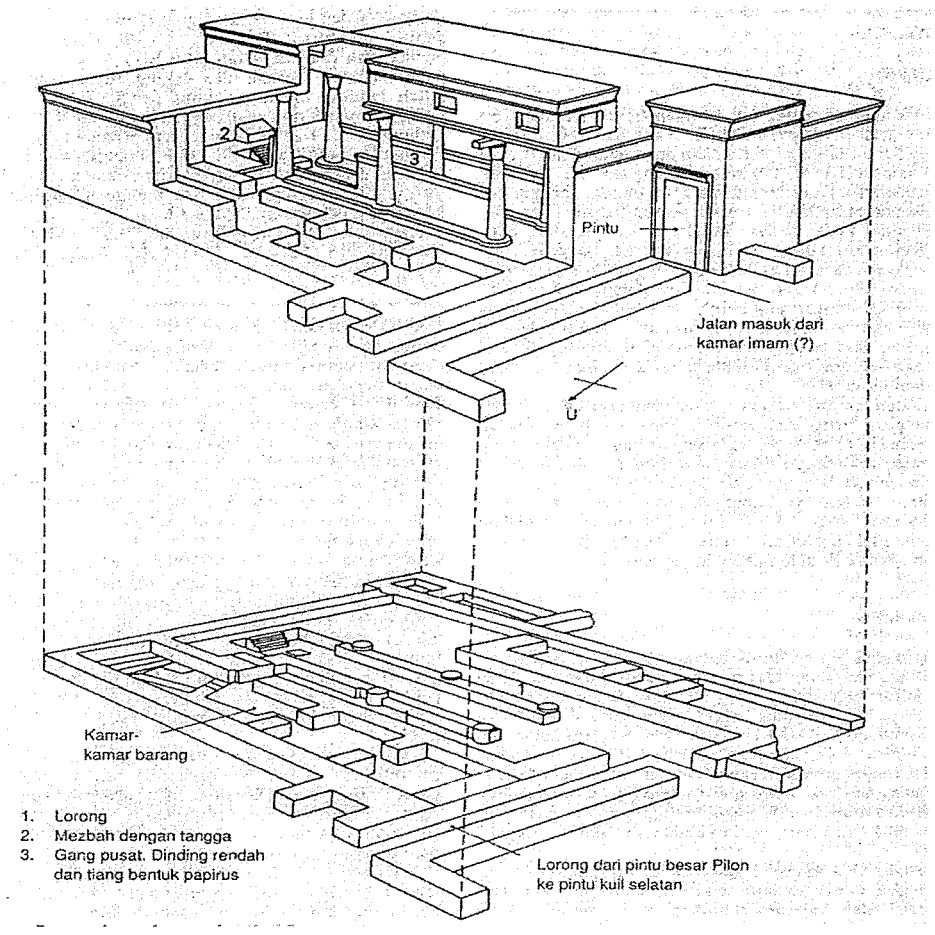
c) Dagon

(1) This god was believed to be half fish and half man.





(2) Dagon was a pagan deity with the body of a fish, and head and hands of a man. He was probably the god of agriculture. Dagon was worshiped in Mesopotamia and Canaan, with temples in Ashdod (1 Sam. 5:1-7), Gaza (Judg. 16:21-30), and in Israel (1 Chron. 10:10). Samson destroyed the temple [of Dagon] in Gaza (Judg. 16:30)" ("Dagon," *Naves Topical Bible*).



The Temple of Dagon

Dagon was the main Philistine god

4. Literature (cf. no texts on OTS, 79f-79g)

   a) Philistines are known not for great literary accomplishments, but for warfare. There exist few if any significant finds.

   b) Little is known of the Philistine language, although there seemed to be no language problem between Philistines and Israelites.

   c) Perhaps the Philistines adopted the local language after migrating to the area.

   d) Their names are usually Semitic (Abimelech, Gen. 26:8; Mininti, Dagon) but some are Asiatic (Achish and Goliath).

   e) Some Hebrew words are from the Philistines, such as the Hebrew word for "helmet" (*qoba*). This word is borrowed from the Philistines.

5. Significance: Why Philistines Were Important

a) The period of transition from the Bronze to Iron Age

(1) The Philistines are first mentioned by name: *prst* in the annals of Rameses III (ca. 1185 BC) and subsequent years. One Egyptian relief shows the prst armed with lances, round shields, long broadswords, and triangular daggers (see picture). They arrived in Palestine at *the period of transition from the Bronze to Iron Age.*

(2) These archaeological finds are consistent with the biblical statements that they bound Samson with fetters of bronze (Judg. 16:21) but by time of Saul controlled the iron industry of the area (1 Sam. 17:4-7).

b) The Philistine military organization

(1) The description of Goliath's battle gear (1 Sam 17:5-7):

(a) bronze helmet on his head

(b) coat of scale armor of bronze weighing five thousand shekels (57.5 kilograms)

(c) bronze greaves on his legs

(d) bronze javelin slung on his back

(e) spear shaft was like a weaver's rod

(f) iron point weighed six hundred shekels (6.9 kilograms)

(g) shield bearer went ahead of him (note: 1 shekel = 11.5 grams)



(2) Multi-faceted Forces (1 Sam. 13:5; 31:3)

(a) chariotry

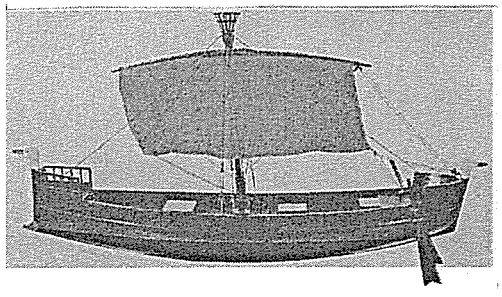
(b) cavalry

(c) infantry

(d) archers

(3) Egyptian Reliefs of Rameses III:

The sea people fought with infantry, ships, and chariots. Each foot soldier carried two spears, a round shield, and a long straight sword. They fought in groups of four. The chariots were pulled by two horses, had two six-spoke wheels, and were operated by crews of three who were also armed with two long spears. They could only engage in short-range combat, a disadvantage against the Egyptian charioteers equipped with bow and arrows.





6. Summary: How the Philistines Affected Israel

a) More culturally and technologically superior than Israel, the Philistines advanced life for the Jews in certain respects:

(1) God taught warfare to the Israelites through the Philistines (Judg. 3:1-3).

(2) Farming methods in Israel were improved through Philistine technology.

b) Israel's worship of Dagon and Baal made God jealous (Judg. 10:6-7).

c) Philistines were a tool of God to chastise His wayward people.

d) Their threat motivated Israel into wanting a strong military leader (king) to lead them into battle (1 Sam. 8).

e) Since Israel was God's chosen people, no matter what the Philistines did to Israel, God still controlled all events that happened between the two countries.

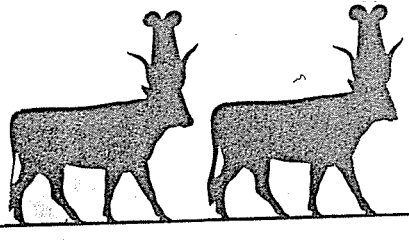
7. Lessons to Learn from Philistines: Some Thought Questions Based on 1 Samuel 17:

   a) How did David's view of the Philistines differ from that of the Israelites?

   b) Why was his view different?

   c) Why do non-Christians often have superior technology to Christians?

   d) Or do they?



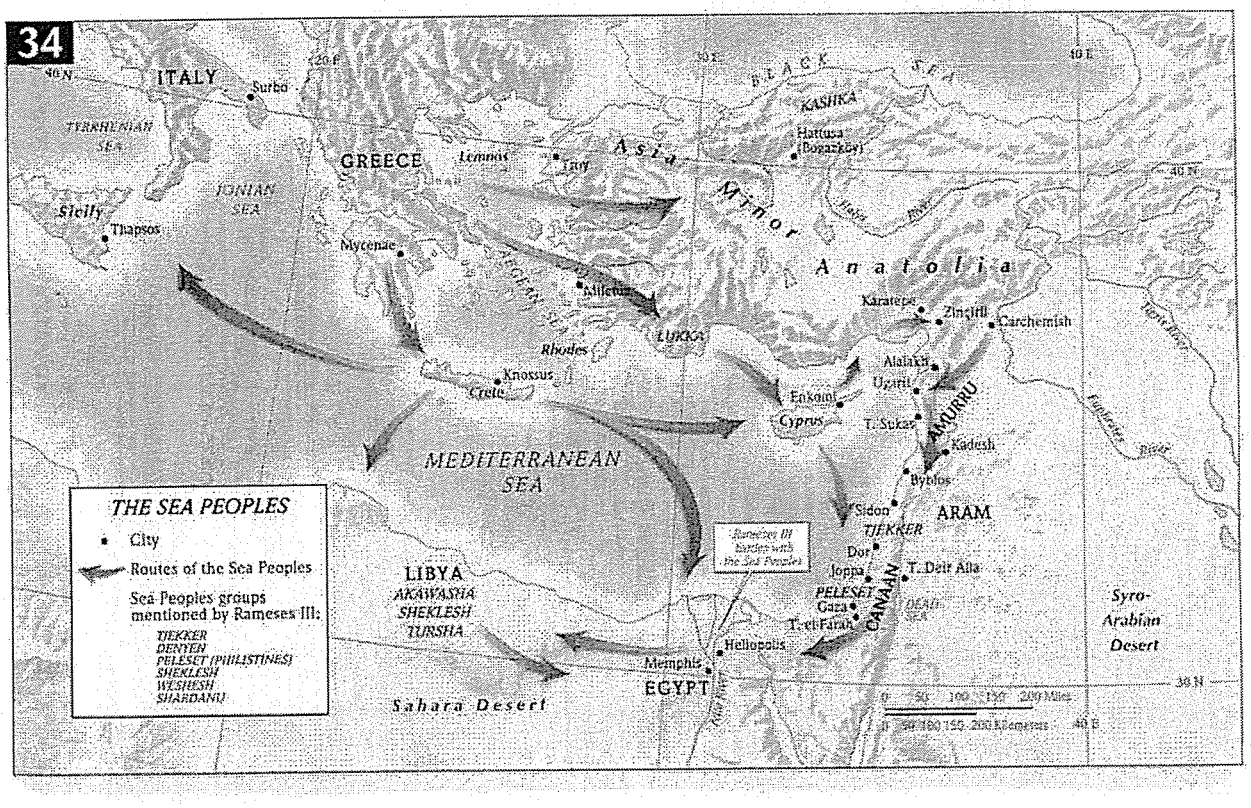
Israel's Early Western Neighbors

John H. Walton, *Chronological and Background Charts of the OT*, 2d ed., 73

	PHOENICIA	PHILISTIA
ORIGIN	Semitic Amorites	Aegean Sea people
PRE-JUDGES	c. 1500 Territory was divided between Hittite and Egyptian domination	Not yet in Palestine
JUDGES	1400—Began slow rebellion, first against Egypt 1380-1287—Mostly controlled by Hittites; control diminished until 1190 1190—Invasion by sea peoples. Independent city-states established 1100—Some control exercised by Tiglath-pileser I	1190—Defeated Hittites, destroyed capital. Defeated by Rameses III, settled on coast of Palestine. Five major cities: Gath, Gaza, Ashkelon, Ashdod, Ekron 11th cent—Controlled parts of at least Dan and Judah (Judg. 14:4; 15:11). Samson held somewhat in control 1060—Overran Israel; captured ark (1 Sam. 4) 1050—Israel subdued Philistia at Ebenezer (1 Sam. 7:7-14)
SAUL	Political independence; cultural development	Philistines held in check through most of this period. They were defeated at Michmash by Jonathan and at Elah through David. Overran country at end after defeating and killing Saul at Mt. Gilboa
1000-900 B.C.	Golden Age 981-942—Hiram I of Tyre; alliance with Israel. Expansion of sea trade and exploration; colonies in N. Africa, Spain, Asia Minor, and Mediterranean	David defeated and subdued the Philistines (2 Sam. 5:17-25)
900-722 B.C.	890—High Priest Ethbaal gains throne. Alliance with Israel continues with marriage of his daughter Jezebel to Ahab 865—Paid tribute to Assyria—Ashur-nasir-pal II 853—Joined 12-nation alliance against Shalmaneser III at Qarqar 841—Shalmaneser III takes some cities. Assyrian tributary through end of period	Paid tribute to Jehoshaphat (2 Chron. 17:11) Raided Judah during the reign of Jehoram (2 Chron. 21:16-17) 805—Assyrian Adad-nirari III collected tribute; subjugated by Uzziah but invaded Judah during reign of Ahaz (2 Chron. 28:18); subdued by Tiglath-pileser III of Assyria
722-570 B.C.	725—During reign of Shalmaneser V, Luli of Sidon tried to unite Phoenicia in revolt 701—Sennacherib responded by invasion—many cities taken, deportation, puppet ruler 677—Revolt crushed by Esarhaddon—Sidon destroyed 665—Baalit of Tyre revolted—suppressed by Ashurbanipal 584-571—Nebuchadnezzar besieged & took Tyre	Country subjugated and Gaza captured by Hezekiah (2 Kings 18:8) People captured and deported by Nebuchadnezzar

The Sea Peoples

Bible Atlas at www.swartzentrover.com (Map 34)



K. Phoenicians

1. Identity:

   a) Who Phoenicians Were:

      (1) Along with the Philistines (but even superior to them), the Phoenicians were the greatest seafaring people of the ancient world.

      (2) The word "Phoenicia" or "Phoenicians" never appears in the Bible. These people were referred to by the two key cities: Tyre and Sidon. The word "Phoenicia" means "[land of the] purple dye."[36]

   b) When Phoenicians Lived:

      (1) The Greek historian Herodotus (1:1 and 7:89) notes that Phoenicia was inhabited by a "Mediterranean" race around 3500 BC.

      (2) They were replaced with Semites migrating from Mesopotamia and Arabia (3000 BC), and were joined by other groups until a flourishing trade between Phoenicia and Egypt existed around the 18th century BC.

      (3) However, the "Golden Age" of Phoenicia occurred simultaneously with the "Golden Age" of Israel. Contemporary to David and Solomon was Hiram, king of Tyre (c. 981-947), who provided timber for the building of the temple.

2. Geography: Where Phoenicians Lived (cf. pp. 15, 17)

   a) The small coastal stretch of land comprising Phoenicia stretched started its southern boundary at Acco and Mount Carmel, directly west from the Sea of Kinnereth (NT: Galilee). Going north, the land stretched past Tyre and well past Sidon and Ugarit 120 miles to the north. At no point does the land stretch even past five miles wide.

   b) Phoenicia is also a mountainous but also very fertile region. Vegetation included evergreen shrubs, pine, oak, mulberry and beech trees, grape vines, fig trees, date palms, olive trees, wheat and barley, onions and garlic. However, the most notable trees were cedars, cypress, juniper, and almug. Unfortunately, these trees were not replaced so that modern Lebanon has but two small groves of cedars of less than a few hundred trees.[37]

   c) Phoenicia had strong neighbors to the north (Hittites) and south (Israelites & Philistines). This fact, coupled with the narrowness of their land with its limited food supply, forced ancient Phoenicians to supplement their food production with an extensive array of ships. They were famous in antiquity as sailors (cf. Isa. 23). Phoenician colonies extended across the Mediterranean to include Carthage (850 BC) and even one in southern Spain. Some believe their trade even included the Atlantic.

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[36] H. A. Hoffner, Jr., "Phoenicia," *Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*, 5 vols., ed. Merrill C. Tenney (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1975, 1976), 4:778.

[37] Ibid.

3. Deities:

   a) The high god of Phoenician religion was El, whose wife-consort took the name Ashtoreth.

   b) The most horrible of Phoenician beliefs was the worship of Baal (Hadd, the son of Dagan), meaning "lord." The high priest Ethbaal gained the throne and maintained an alliance with Israel by the marriage of his daughter Jezebel to Ahab, king of Israel (1 Kings 16:31).

   c) Lesser deities included:

      (1) 'Anat and 'Ashtart, two young female goddesses who consorted with Baal

      (2) Yam, sea god

      (3) Mot, god of death

      (4) Yarih, sun god

      (5) Adoni, vegetation and fertility god (Gr. Adonis, "my lord"), supposedly died when the summer heat began and then rose again annually.

4. Literature (cf. see more texts on pages 188-188a)

   a) Ugaritic was the language of the Phoenicians, stemming from the city of Ugarit.

   b) Until modern times no one even knew that this language existed. It has provided much insight into the Hebrew text (esp. the Psalms) by showing that YHWH's victory over the sea (Yam), death (Mot), etc. is actually a play on words by declaring the LORD's greatness over Ugaritic deities.

The Phoenician Alphabet

DEVELOPMENT OF THE ROMAN ALPHABET

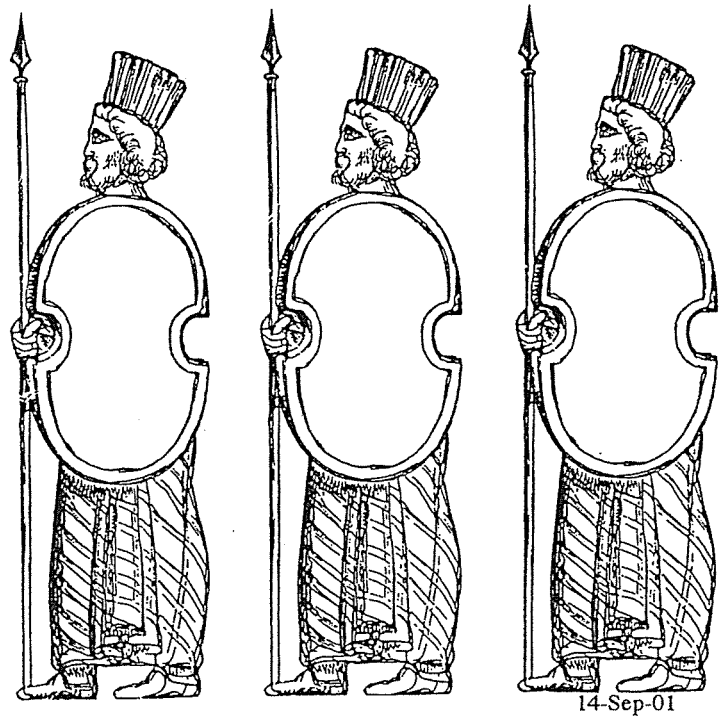
Phoenician	Greek	Etruscan	Roman
			A
	B		B
			C
			D
	E		E

This chart shows how each civilization that borrowed this alphabet changed it.

- Which letters of the Greek alphabet did the Romans change?

While the Phoenicians ruled the seas before the Romans and they invented the phonetic alphabet, it was the Romans who adapted it into the alphabet that western countries use today. Latin became the base language of modern languages called Romance languages as they stem from Rome (e.g., Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, French, Romanian, etc.).

However, we owe our numeric system (1, 2, 3, etc.) to the Arabs since the Roman numbering system is too complicated and long (try reading the page numbers of the syllabus with ease in these notes).



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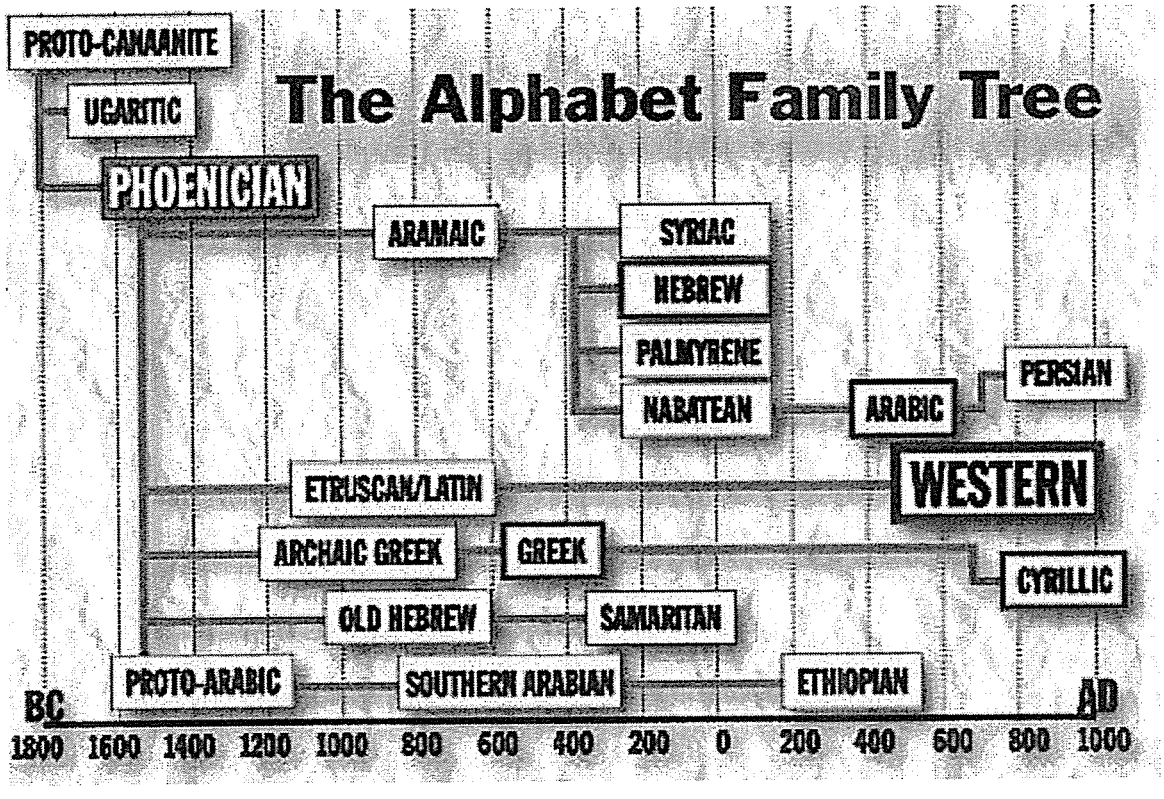
5. Significance: Why Phoenicians Were Important

   a) They were one of the first peoples to show that colonization can successfully be done across international waters.

   b) As seafaring traders, the Phoenicians introduced many products of other lands into the eastern Mediterranean.

   c) The Phoenician phonetic alphabet became the foundation of what later became the Romanized script, from which the languages of western civilization influenced the rest of the world. You can thank the Phoenicians that you can read this sentence! After all, this is where we get our word "phonetic"!



6. Summary: How Phoenicians Affected Israel

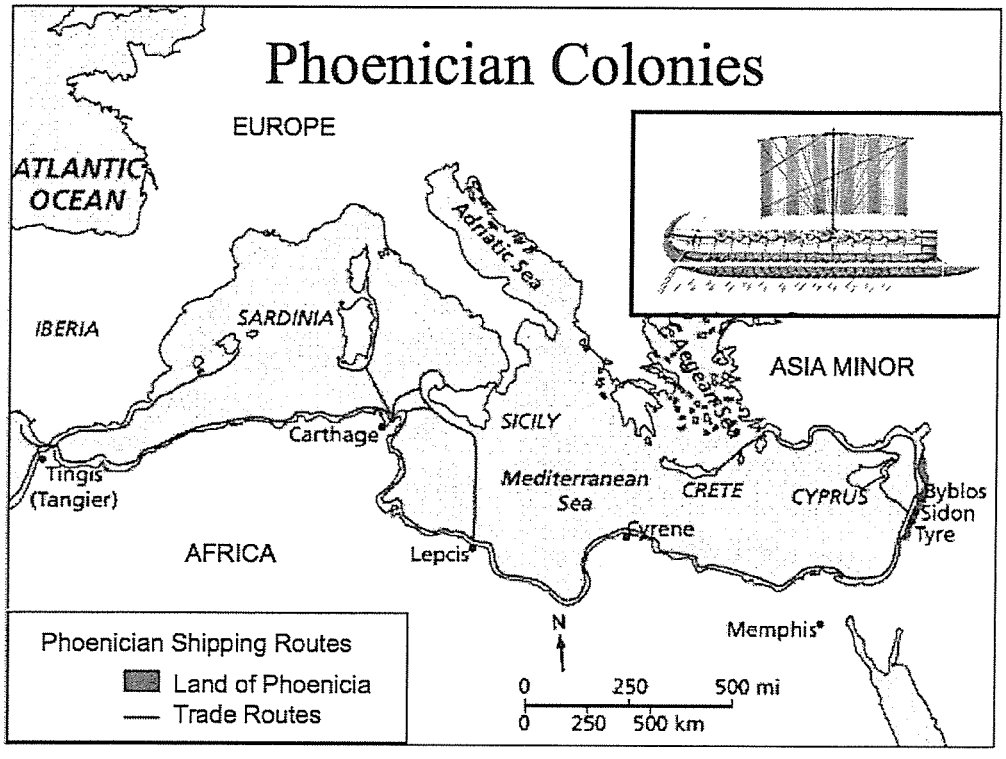
   a) Positive

      (1) Phoenician craftsmen helped build Solomon's temple (2 Sam. 5:11; 1 Kings 5:1). They were superior in knowledge to Hebrew craftsmen, so they helped train them (2 Chron. 2:13-14).

      (2) Our knowledge of Hebrew has been greatly advanced by the study of the forerunner of their language called Ugaritic.

      (3) Devotion to Baal provided Elijah opportunities to show YHWH as the only true God. He acted as the main representative of the LORD at Mount Carmel (1 Kings 18) as well as in his travels to Zarephath to provide oil for a widow, which Baal could not do even on "his own territory" (1 Kings 17:9-23).

(4) As the greatest of the maritime peoples, Phoenicians advanced life in Israel from trade with Tyre and Sidon. Their sailors taught Israelite men how to sail in the Red Sea (1 Kings 9) and the various Phoenician colonies brought wealth to the whole region due to extensive trade with Phoenicia.



b) Negative

(1) Jezebel, daughter of a Phoenician pagan priest, brought Baal worship into the northern nation of Israel which quickly contributed to it demise due to several elements:

(a) Idol worship contrary to Exodus 20:4, ""You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below."

(b) Ritual prostitution (both male and female) used to entice the fertility god and goddess to have sex in hopes that this would benefits the crops

(c) Human sacrifice may have been practiced in association with Baal worship.

(2) Baal worship also led to violence between worshippers of Baal with loyalists of Yahweh (1 Kings 18:3, 4, 25-40; 19:10).

7. Lessons from Phoenicia: What life principles can we learn from…

   a) Isaiah 23 (Phoenician economy)

   b) 1 Kings 18 (Phoenician religion)

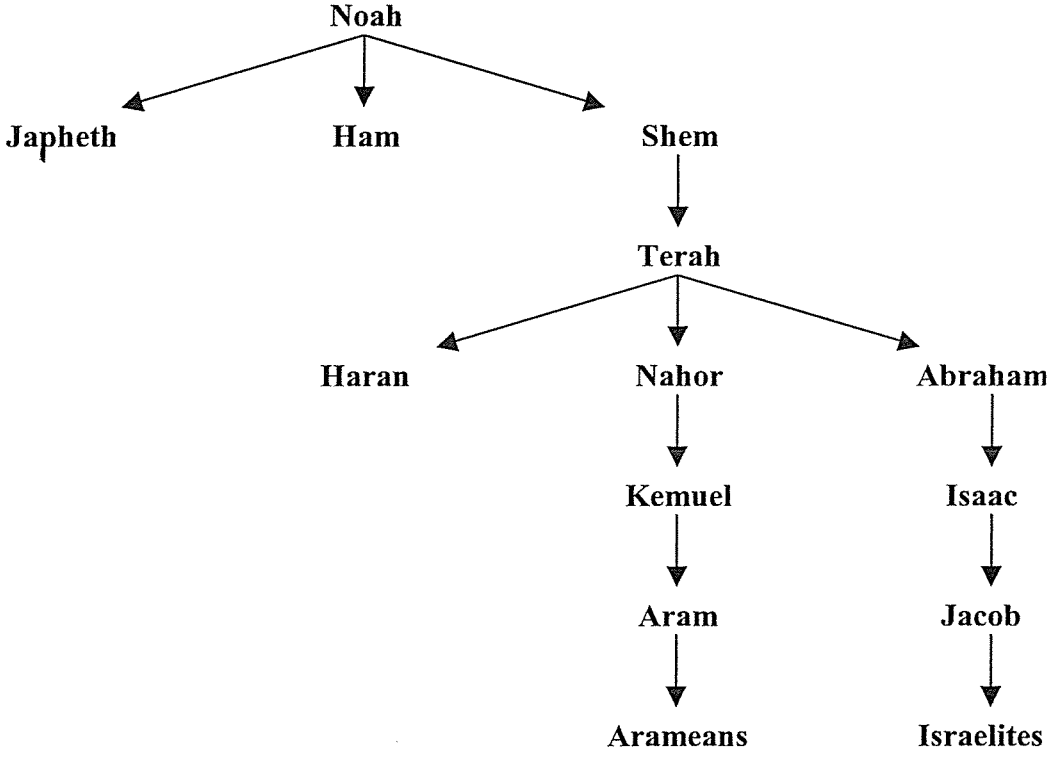
L. Arameans[37]

1. Identity:

a) Who Arameans Were:

(1) Arameans are also called Syrians.

(2) Terah, of the line of Shem, had three sons: Haran, Abraham, and Nahor. The line of Nahor's grandson Aram yielded the Arameans.



(3) The above chart shows that Arameans and Israelites were related as they both looked to Terah as their common ancestor.

[37] This section is indebted to the class presentation on the Arameans in OT Backgrounds, 2001, by Joy Sim, Shani Perera, and Bobby Lee.

(a) This association was so close that Isaac sent Jacob back to Aram for a wife. Laban and his brother Bethuel were both Arameans (Gen. 25:20), so Jacob's marriage to Rebekah was considered marriage within the family line.

(b) The close relationship between the Israelites and the Arameans is also confirmed in Deuteronomy 26:5, "Then in the Lord's presence you will recite these words: 'My ancestor was a wandering Aramean.'"

(i) This quotation uttered each time Jews went to the temple makes clear that the Jewish people were originally Arameans.

(ii) Since Arameans were pastoralists and villagers, with no political centralization, the recitation above also reminded Israelites that their ancestors (Abraham, Isaac and Jacob) were wanderers and thus should behave modestly, not be proud and conceited.

b) When Arameans Lived: As noted above, since the lineage of the Arameans is parallel to Israel, their common roots go back to Terah who was born about 2265 BC (cf. OTS, 86-87).

2. Geography: Where Arameans Lived (cf. pp. 15, 17)

a) Ancient and modern-day Syria and southern Mesopotamia comprised the boundaries of Aram.

b) The ancient capital of Aram was Damascus. It also serves as the present capital of Syria.

3. Deities:

a) As God called Elijah to show His superiority to Baal of Phoenicia, so Elisha demonstrated the inferiority of the Aramean deity Rimmon.

b) The Aramean commander Naaman had to journey to Israel for healing from Yahweh through Elisha (2 Kings 5). His deities couldn't help him.

c) Elisha's ministry among the Arameans is summarized thus:

> Elisha healed Naaman of leprosy (ch. 5) and rescued a young prophet's borrowed ax head (6:1-7). He gave timely warning, repeatedly saving Israel from defeat by the Arameans (6:23). When the Arameans came to Dothan to capture Elisha, he prayed and his servant was shown the armies of God protecting the city. The Arameans were stricken with blindness, and Elisha led them to Samaria and persuaded the king of Israel to feed and release them.[33]

d) After Aram defeated Ahaz in battle, Ahaz sacrificed to Aramean deities—yet this led to his downfall (2 Chron. 28:22-23).

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[33] "Elisha," in *New Bible Dictionary*.

4. Literature (see more texts on pages 188-188a; cf. Arnold/Beyer, 163-68)

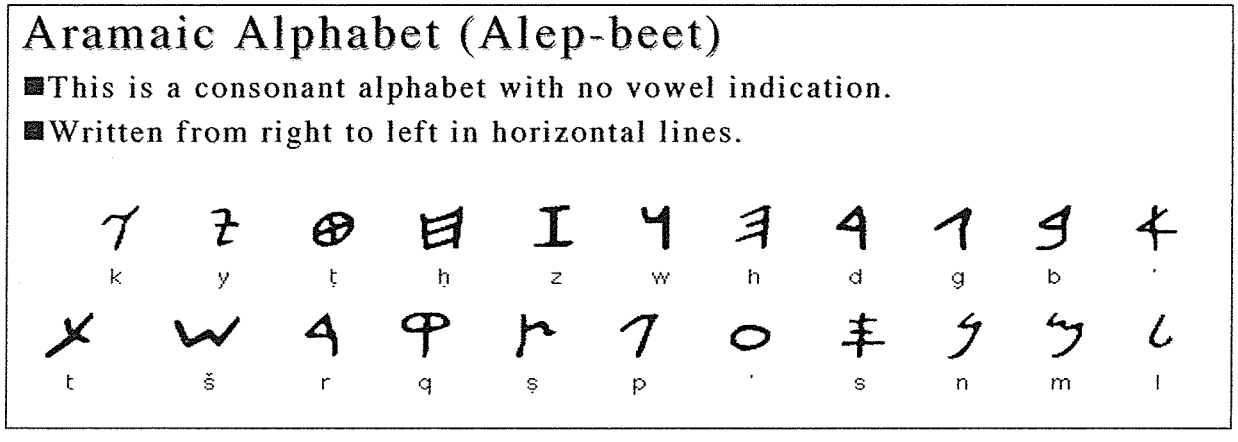
   a) Aramean political structure, art, and architecture never became influential.

   b) However, the Arameans transmitted their language called Aramaic to many other cultures. It actually is an alphabet and has a long tradition, surviving the Assyrian, Babylonian, and Persian empires.

> It is important to observe that the Greeks received their alphabet from the Phoenicians and Arameans, perhaps through contact with their merchants. The Hellenic tribal groups found written expression for their language through the Phoenician alphabet, which supplied the first twenty-two letters of the Greek alphabet (i.e., *alpha* through *tau*). Those Semitic letters that expressed sounds not used by the Greeks were adapted to express vowels.[34]

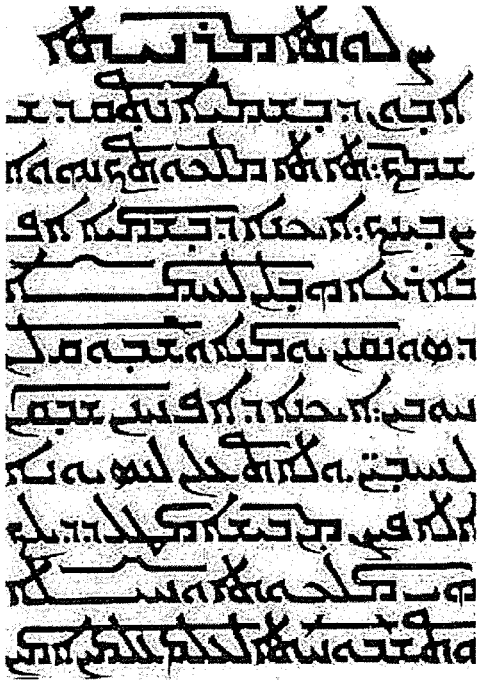
   c) The Elephantine Papyri in Egypt was written in Aramaic, even though Egypt is a long way from Syria.

5. Significance: Arameans were important due to their language.



[34] "Writing," in *New Bible Dictionary.*

The Lord's Prayer in Aramaic



Aramaic was the language of the Semitic culture, the language of the Hebrew patriarchs, and in the older days, the *lingua franca* of the Fertile Crescent.

The term "Hebrew" may come from "Eber," the common ancestor of several Semitic peoples and founder of the Hebrew race (Gen. 10:21-25; 11:14-17; 1 Chron. 1:18-19, 25; Luke 3:35).

Others believe it derives from the Aramaic word *Abar* or *Habar*, which means "to cross over." This name may have been given to the Hebrew people because Abraham and those with him crossed the Euphrates River and went into Palestine. Migration of this form is one reason all branches of the Semitic people had a common speech.

6. Summary: How Arameans Affected Israel

a) The Aramaic language developed in Aram but influenced Israel significantly.

(1) This northeastern Semitic language was the first one to use alphabetic letters for long vowel sounds. Other nations adopted this pattern and even Jews of the 8th century AD added vowel pointing so Hebrew words could be pronounced correctly (prior to this written Hebrew had only consonants).

(2) It was known by Hebrews in Hezekiah's time (2 Kings 18:26).

(3) Parts of Daniel and Ezra were written in Aramaic.

(4) Under the Persians it became the official inter-province (political) and trade language of the Mid-East. Those opposing the rebuilding of the wall of Jerusalem wrote to Artaxerxes in Aramaic (Ezra 4:4-7).

(5) The Arameans were a military force until Damascus fell to the attacking Assyrians (732 BC). Although the Aramean nation fell, its language did not; Aramaic, which is very similar to Hebrew, was adopted not only by Babylonian Jews as the "Jewish tongue," but also by the well-informed as the language of choice. It was not until Greek emerged several centuries later (ca. 300 BC) that Aramaic lost its prestige as the most sophisticated language. Jewish practices are still performed in Aramaic, including the *Ketubah* (wedding contract), the *Get* (divorce contract), and the *Kaddish* (mourner's prayer). Interestingly, much of the *Kabbalah* (Jewish mysticism) was written in Aramaic. Also, the Talmud was written in a combination of Aramaic and Hebrew.[40]

[40] This point is adapted from the previously noted class presentation by Sim, Perera, and Lee, p. 12.

(6) Well-known Bible places have Aramaic names:

(a) John 5:1-2

(b) John 19:13-15

(c) John 19:16-18

(7) Jesus and NT Jews spoke Aramaic as their everyday tongue.

(a) John 1:42

(b) Mark 14:36

(c) Mark 15:34

(d) John 20:16

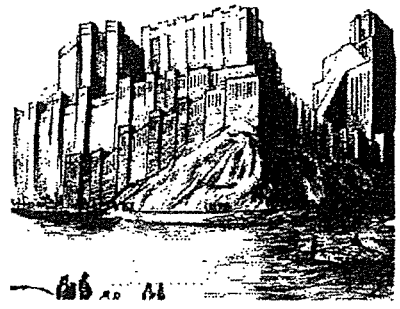
(8) Aramaic is still the modern-day liturgical language of several Eastern churches.

(9) The success of the Aramaic language should not be attributed as merely a "stronger" language than others in the ANE. Perhaps God sought to preserve the language since Aram was a descendent within the line of Shem (the line of blessing). This way even many generations later God's people would have a more accurate picture of His Word than would have happened if Babylonian or Egyptian or some other more distant language had become the trade language of the ancient world.

b) Aram was often used by God to discipline Israel when the nation strayed into idolatry (e.g., Ahab was killed by Ben-Hadad of Aram in 1 Kings 22). However, at several points Aram and Israel had friendly relations (see the article on pages 252-53).

7. Lessons to Learn from Arameans

M. Assyrians[42]



1. Identity:

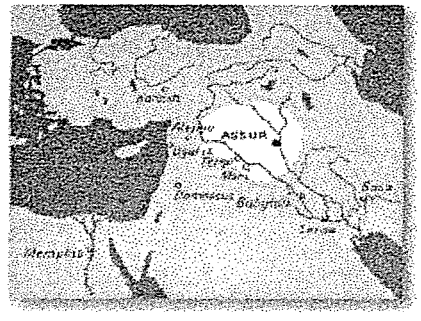
   a) Who Assyrians Were:

      (1) They were descendants of Asshur, one of the sons of Shem (Gen. 10:22). "Asshur" in Greek became "Assyria," which was applied to the kingdom.

      (2) The name "Asshur" is used for:

         (a) The original capital of Assyria

         (b) The Assyrian's national god



   b) When Assyrians Lived:

      (1) The original key city and later capital of Assyria was Nineveh, located north of Babylon within Mesopotamia.

> GEN 10:8 Cush was the father of Nimrod, who grew to be a mighty warrior on the earth. 9 He was a mighty hunter before the LORD; that is why it is said, "Like Nimrod, a mighty hunter before the LORD." 10 The first centers of his kingdom were Babylon, Erech, Akkad and Calneh, in Shinar. 11 From that land he went to Assyria, where he built Nineveh, Rehoboth Ir, Calah 12 and Resen, which is between Nineveh and Calah; that is the great city.

      (2) Old Assyria (1813-1781 BC) began the national heritage.

      (3) The time when Assyria became prominent in OT history was over 1000 years later when the nation conquered Israel and most of Judah (ca. 732-701 BC).

      (4) See the more detailed chart later in this study.

2. Geography: Where Assyrians Lived (cf. pp. 15, 17)

   a) The original Assyrian territory occupied the northern and middle sections of Mesopotamia between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers.

   b) Assyria at its height stretched its empire mostly southwesterly to include all the nations up to Egypt (650 BC).

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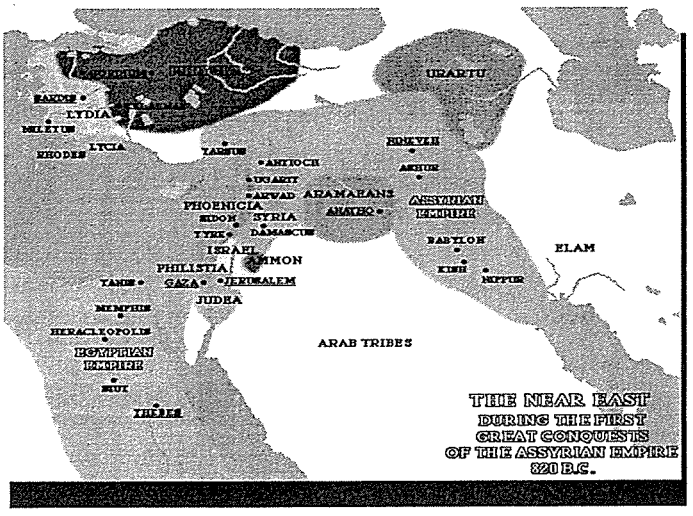
[42] Much of the material on Assyrians is adapted from the 2001 OT Backgrounds class presentation by Sim Joo Yee and Sun Wai Wai.



3. Deities:

   a) As noted earlier, the name "Assyria" derives from the ancient deity worshipped in Mesopotamia called Asshur.

   b) However, worship was syncretistic:

> The Assyrians early added to their worship of the primitive national god Asshur the Babylonian deities with their cultic apparatus. Wherever they influenced Israel and Judah, the effort was demoralizing, as the historical books of the Bible and the prophets bear abundant witness.[42]

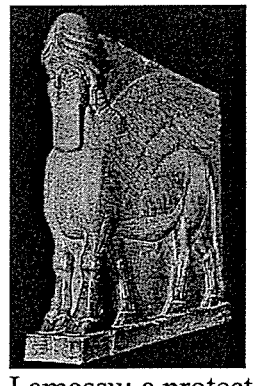
   c) The Assyrians also added to their pantheon several protective spirits:



- An Apkallu was a spirit which protected the king and those in the palace from evil spirits



Assyrian Deity



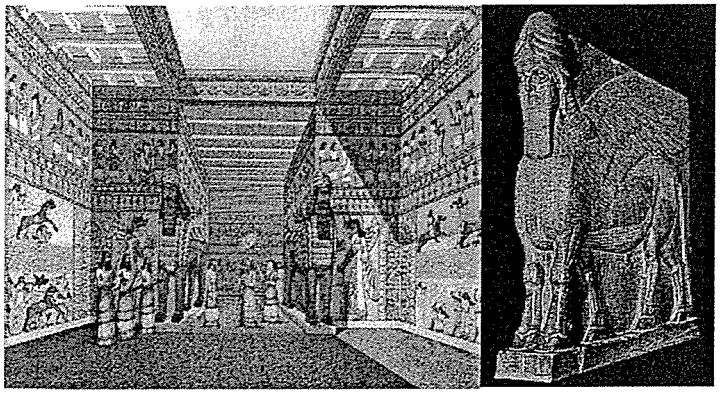
Lamassu: a protective spirit

[42] "Assyria," in *New Bible Dictionary.*

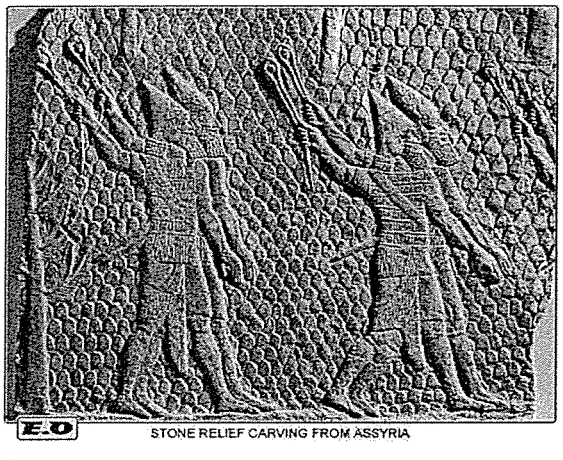
4. Art & Literature (cf. see more texts at OTS, 79f-79g)

a) Assyrians excelled in several capacities:

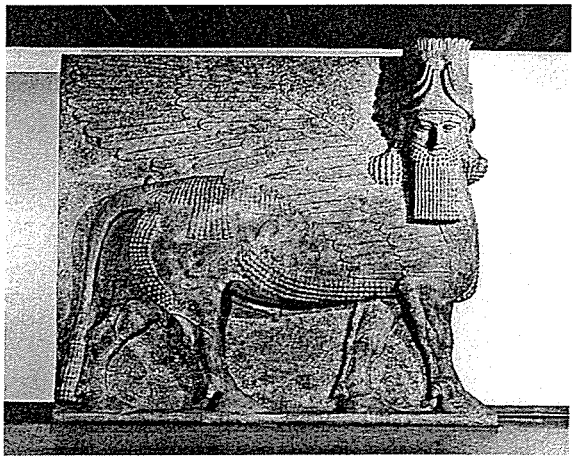
(1) Art revealed many huge winged bulls and lions which guarded palace entrances similar to Buddhist homes today.



Huge lions guarded the entrances to Assyrian palaces



Bas-reliefs of Assyrian kings hunting



The human-headed winged bull from the palace of King Sargon II at Khorsabad (721-705 BC)

(2) Architectural achievements include wall carvings and sculptures made with mud bricks and stone.

(3) Literature

(a) One of the unifying features of the Assyrians was their languages.

(b) Two languages of the Assyrians:-

(i) Akkadian (Ancient Assyrian)

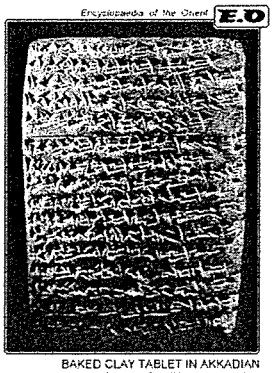
(a) Akkadian was written with the cuneiform writing system.

(b) Their administrative and legal documents were written in Akkadian

(ii) Neo-Syriac (Modern Assyrian)

(c) Assyrians used the Aramaic language from Aram as the second official language of the empire in 752 BC.





Baked clay tablet in Akkadian Cuneiform, Egypt, ca. 1400 BC

5. Significance: Why Assyrians Were Important

a) The literary contributions are notable (mentioned above).

b) The Assyrian war machine was quick, efficient, and deadly. The motives for war and expansion were threefold:

(1) Political ambitions: to expand the kingdom

(2) Economy: to plunder enemies of their money

(3) Spiritual reasons: to serve their god Asshur

c) Intermarriage was commonplace as it made national identity more important than ethnic origin. Assyrians did not care so much about one's background as long as loyalty to the state was maintained. This became a test case for Israel after the northern kingdom fell; Israel fell miserably by adopting the Assyrian value for intermarriage (2 Kings 17).

Naughty Ninevites

Elliott E. Johnson, "Nahum," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, 1:1493-1494

In 731 B.C. Ahaz, king of Judah (732–715), became a vassal of Tiglath-Pileser III, and Assyria invaded Damascus in the Syro-Ephraimite war. Shalmaneser V (727–722) besieged Samaria and defeated it in 722 B.C., thus defeating the Northern Kingdom (2 Kings 17:3-6; 18:9-10). Twenty-one years later (in 701), Sennacherib (705–681) invaded Judah and destroyed 46 Judean towns and cities. After encircling Jerusalem, 185,000 of Sennacherib's soldiers were killed overnight and Sennacherib returned to Nineveh (2 Kings 18:17-18; 19:32-36; Isa. 37:36). Esarhaddon (681–669) regarded Judah as a vassal kingdom, for he wrote in a building inscription, "I summoned the kings of the Hittite land [Aram] and [those] across the sea, Ba'lu, king of Tyre, Manasseh, king of Judah . . . " (Daniel David Luckenbill, *Ancient Records of Assyria and Babylonia*. 2 vols. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1926-7, 2:265).

In 669 B.C. Ashurbanipal succeeded his father Esarhaddon as king of Assyria. He may have been the king who released Manasseh king of Judah (2 Chron. 33:10-13). Ashurbanipal defeated Thebes in Egypt in 663 and brought treasures to Nineveh from Thebes, Babylon, and Susa. He established an extensive library at Nineveh.

The city of Nineveh fell to the Babylonians, Medes, and Scythians in August 612 B.C.

Nineveh was situated on the west bank of the Tigris River (see the map "The Assyrian Empire," near Jonah 1:1). Sennacherib fortified the city's defensive wall whose glory, he said, "overthrows the enemy." On the population of Nineveh, see "Authenticity and Historicity" in the *Introduction* to Jonah and comments on Jonah 4:11. Jonah called Nineveh "a great city" (Jonah 1:2; 3:2-4; 4:11).

The city's ruins are still evident today. The city was easily overtaken when the Khosr River, which flowed through it, overflowed its banks (see Nahum 1:8; 2:6, 8).

Nineveh was the capital of one of the cruelest, vilest, most powerful, and most idolatrous empires in the world. For example, writing of one of his conquests, Ashurnaṣirpal II (883–859) boasted, "I stormed the mountain peaks and took them. In the midst of the mighty mountain I slaughtered them; with their blood I dyed the mountain red like wool. . . . The heads of their warriors I cut off, and I formed them into a pillar over against their city; their young men and their maidens I burned in the fire" (Luckenbill, *Ancient Records of Assyria and Babylonia*, 1:148). Regarding one captured leader, he wrote, "I flayed [him], his skin I spread upon the wall of the city . . . " (ibid., 1:146). He also wrote of mutilating the bodies of live captives and stacking their corpses in piles.

Shalmaneser II (859–824) boasted of his cruelties after one of his campaigns: "A pyramid of heads I reared in front of his city. Their youths and their maidens I burnt up in the flames" (ibid., 1:213). Sennacherib (705–681) wrote of his enemies, "I cut their throats like lambs. I cut off their precious lives [as one cuts] a string. Like the many waters of a storm I made [the contents of] their gullets and entrails run down upon the wide earth. . . . Their hands I cut off" (ibid., 2:127).

Ashurbanipal (669–626) described his treatment of a captured leader in these words: "I pierced his chin with my keen hand dagger. Through his jaw . . . I passed a rope, put a dog chain upon him and made him occupy . . . a kennel" (ibid., 2:319). In his campaign against Egypt, Ashurbanipal also boasted that his officials hung Egyptian corpses "on stakes [and] stripped off their skins and covered the city wall(s) with them" (ibid., 2:295).

No wonder Nahum called Nineveh "the city of blood" (3:1), a city noted for its "cruelty"! (3:19)

Ashurbanipal was egotistic: "I [am] Ashurbanipal, the great [king], the mighty king, king of the universe, king of Assyria. . . . The great gods . . . magnified my name; they made my rule powerful" (ibid., 2:323-4). Esarhaddon was even more boastful. "I am powerful, I am all powerful, I am a hero, I am gigantic, I am colossal, I am honored, I am magnified, I am without equal among all kings, the chosen one of Asshur, Nabu, and Marduk" (ibid., 2:226).

Gross idolatry was practiced in Nineveh and throughout the Assyrian Empire. The religion of Assyria was Babylonian in origin but in Assyria the national god was Assur, whose high priest and representative was the king.

100 years before Jonah

80 years before Jonah

100 years after Jonah

80 years after Jonah

ASSYRIAN MILITARY HISTORY & TIMELINE

1845-1445 Egyptian bondage	1830-1531 Old Babylonian
	Old Assyrian
	1813-1781 Assyrian power grew under the Amorite ruler Shamshi-Adad I
	1700-1500 Hurrian Invasions
	1600-1150 Kassite
1525-1405 Moses	1500-1380 Assyria was a vassal to Mitanni
1445-1405 Wandering	
1405-1050 Conquest and Judges	1356-1078 Middle Assyrian
	1365-1330 Under Ashur-ubalit I, Assyria regained her power
	1319-1308 Territories regained as far west as Carchemish
	1307-1275
	1274-1245 Shalmaneser I was a vigorous fighter who fought the Iranian tribes
	1244-1208 His son, Tukulti-Ninurta I was determined to rule Babylon as well as Assyria
	1115-1077 The next strong leader was Tiglath-pileser I
	1078-935 Aramean and Chaldean
1050-971 Early United Kingdom	
971-931 Solomon: Late United Kingdom	
931-852 Early Divided Kingdom: Israel's kings at this time:	935-612 **Neo-Assyrian**
931-910 Jeroboam I	
909-886 Baasha	
885-874 Omri	890-885 A new Assyrian dynasty began with Tukulti-Ninurta II (885-860) whose son Ashurnasirpal II began a period of sustained pressure on the west by marching into Syria and Phoenicia
874-853 Ahab	
855-856 Syria attacked Israel twice but loses twice	
	859-824 Shalmaneser III

	853 A battle was fought at Karkar (Qarqar) in northern Syria in which Ahab of Israel joined a coalition of 12 kings against Shalmaneser III; Israel supplied two thousand chariots and fourteen thousand men (according to the Assyrian annals).
853-852 Ahaziah	
852-841Joram	841 The coalition broke up and Shalmaneser was able to overrun the territory of Hazael, although the city of Damascus was bypassed. He continued westward to the Dog River in Lebanon where he received tribute from the state of Tyre and Sidon and from Jehu of Israel (recorded on the Black Obelisk of Shalmaneser).
841-814 Jehu	
814-798 Jehoahaz defeated Ben-Hadad, son of Hazael (Syria) three times, recovering the Israelite towns	804 Adad-nirari invades Syria (Aramean ruler, Hazael of Damascus, who sought to build an empire by subduing Israel **Genesis 13:22** and other states). His annals claim that he also received tribute from the land of Omri (Israel).
798-782 Jehoash	
793-753 Jeroboam II	781-722 Shalmaneser IV continued Assyrian pressure on Syria **2 Kings 14:25-28** Jeroboam II profited from this Assyrian policy and was able to extend Israel's borders northward.
752-742 Menahem	745-727 Early in the reign of Tiglath-pileser III he took the throne of Babylon under the name Pulu, or Pul (**2 Kings 15:19; 1 Chron. 5:26**). His annals claim that he received tribute from Menahem (**2 Kings 15:19-20**) **Isaiah 7; 2 Kings 16:5** Pekah of Israel and king Resin of Damascus tried to remove Ahaz of Judah.
752-732 Pekah	
	2 Kings 16:7-9 Ahaz sought help from Assyria with silver and gold found in the temple of the LORD and the treasuries of the royal palace.
	732 Tiglath-pileser III captured Damascus and put an end to the Aramean state. **2 Kings 16:9** He put king Rezin of Damascus to death. His annals also tell us that he replaced Pekah, the murderer of Pekahiah, son of Menahem by 'Auzi **(2 Kings 15:29-30)** **2 Kings 15:29** Tiglath-pileser III took northern Israel and deported the people to Assyria. **2 Kings 16:10-18** Religious renovations in Judah in deference to the king of Assyria

732-722 Hoshea	727-722 Shalmaneser V, son of Tiglath-pileser III, continued to campaign in western Asia. **2 Kings 17:3-6** records how Hoshea of Israel stopped paying tribute to Assyria. Shalmaneser V besieged Samaria and it fell 3 years later. During the siege Shalmaneser evidently died.
722 Israel: exiled to Assyria	722-705 Sargon II claims to have taken the city and to have deported 27,270 people, settling them in the eastern provinces of his empire.
	626-539 Neo-Babylonian
	539-332 Persian
	332 Alexander

6. Summary: How Assyrians Affected Israel

   a) *Fall of Israel:* Assyria had conquered the northern kingdom of Israel (capital, Samaria) due to Israel's sin (722 BC). Thus the Assyrians became God's instrument of judgment upon His wayward people.

   b) The Lost Ten Tribes of Israel: These Jews exile from the northern kingdom were transplanted to Assyria (northern Iraq today) and other nations where they intermarried with pagan peoples (2 Kings 17:1-6, 24-26).

   c) *Rise of Samaritans:* Assyria brought other conquered peoples into Israel who married the few poor Israelites that remained. Their mixed-breed offspring were called Samaritans (cf. p. 59).

7. Lessons to Learn from the Assyrians

a) Worship only the Lord your God:-

(1) ***Have no idols.***

(2) ***Submit only to God,*** not men.

(3) ***Give God His due*** – do not rob Him of sacrifices & offerings.

b) Trust in the Lord:-

(1) ***To deliver you*** in times of trouble

(2) ***Trust God to provide***

> "If you do not stand firm in your faith, you will not stand at all" (Isa. 7:9).

c) Repent While You Can:-

(1) ***Return to God*** when you hear His voice.

> "If you return to the Lord … He will not turn His face from you if you return to Him" (2 Chron. 30:9).

(2) ***Stubbornness results in stern judgment*** (e.g. Manasseh)

d) Don't Compromise:-

(1) ***Under pressure*** (e.g. threat or danger)

> "Be careful, keep calm and don't be afraid" (Isaiah 7:4).

(2) ***For self-gain*** (e.g. political, economical reasons)

e) Don't Be Unequally Yoked with an Unbeliever:-

(1) ***Unholy alliances*** should be avoided (e.g. partnerships)

(2) Subordination & service to an unbeliever instead of God is deadly

f) Let Your Light Shine:-

(1) ***Make use of every opportunity*** you have to be the light & salt of the earth.

(2) **Otherwise** your lamp stand will be removed from you.

N. Babylonians (Neo-Chaldeans)[38]

1. Identity:

a) Who the Babylonians Were:

(1) The Babylonians descended from Shem but unlike the Hebrews (also Semites) they did not migrate from the Mesopotamian basin.

(2) They had a different language from the Persians to their north, who also traced their lineage to Shem (cf. pp. 17, 145). Likewise, today's Iraqis (modern descendents of Babylonians) speak Arabic while Iranians (modern Persians) speak Farsi.

(3) Babylon in Akkadian is "babilani" which means "the gate of God." This capital of the region led to the entire land being called Babylonia.

b) When Babylonians Lived:

(1) Mesopotamian history is a complicated series of people-groups who took over the previous society and occupied their land.

(2) The Babylonians rose to power in two periods separated by nearly a millennium. Thus, one must distinguish between Old Babylon and Neo (New) Babylon as these peoples were separated by many groups who controlled the same land area:

DOMINANT PEOPLES IN MESOPOTAMIAN HISTORY

Proto-Literate (3200-2850)
Early Dynastic (2850-2360)
Akkad (2360-2180)
Guti (2180-2082)
Ur III (2070-1960)
Isin-Larsa (1960-1700)
Old Babylonian (1830-1531)
Old Assyrian
Hurrian Invasions (1700-1500)
Kassite (1600-1150)
Mitanni (1500-1380)
Middle Assyrian (1366-1078)
Aramean & Chaldean (1078-935)
Neo-Assyrian (935-612)
Neo Babylonian (625-539)
Persian (539-332)
Alexander (332-)

Due to the similarities between Old Babylon with Assyria, and the fact that the Babylon of the OT is primarily the latter group, this study concerns itself with Neo-Babylon.

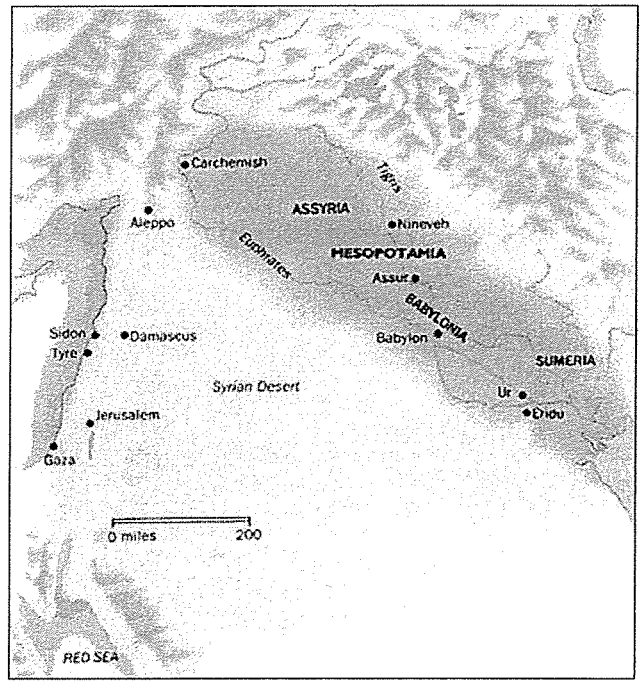
[38] This section is indebted to Ong Sim Chuan, Rick Toh, and Michael Yeong, paper on "The Chaldean (Neo-Babylonian) Empire, OT Backgrounds Class Presentation (SBC: 2001).

(3) Neo-Babylon was glorious but short-lived. With the exception of Nebuchadnezzar and his father, Neo-Babylonian rulers had short reigns as seen in this king list:

• Nabopolassar	– 625-604 BC
• Nebuchadrezzar II (son)	– 604-568 BC
• Evil-Merodach (son)	– 561-560 BC
• Neriglissar (brother-in-law)	– 559-556 BC
• Labosoarchad (son	– 556 BC
• Nabonidus	– 555-539 BC
• Belshazzar	– 539 BC

2. Geography: Where Babylonians Lived (cf. pp. 15, 17)

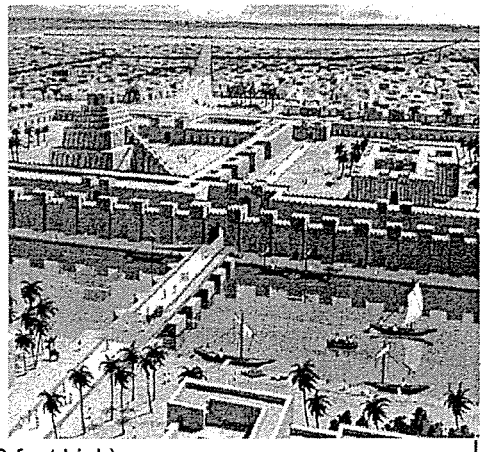
a) Babylon conquered Nineveh in Assyria in 612 BC. After a final victory over the fleeing Assyrians in Carchemish in 605 BC the Babylonians occupied roughly the same territory as Assyria then expanded it further.



b) The cities of Babylon and Nineveh were both built by Nimrod, a descendent of Ham (Gen. 10:8-12). However, these Hamites migrated to Cush (modern Ethiopia) and Semites occupied these cities. These Semites became the Old Babylonian empire (1830-1531 BC). Later the Neo-Babylonians occupied roughly the same area as modern Iraq.

c) Nebuchadnezzar's Babylon was an incomparable city of its day:

- The city formed a grand square, 14 miles on each side
- The brick wall was 56 miles long, 300 feet high, 25 feet thick with another wall 75 feet behind the first wall, and the wall extended 35 feet below the ground
- Watchmen occupied 250 tall towers around the wall
- A deep and wide moat encircled the city
- The Euphrates River flowed through the middle of the city. Ferry boats and a huge bridge with drawbridges closed at night
- The "Hanging Gardens" (one of the wonders of the ancient world) had water raised from the river by hydraulic pumps
- Eight massive gates led to the inner city and 100 brass gates
- Streets were paved with stone slabs 3 feet square
- The great Tower (Ziggurat) and 53 temples included the "Great Temple of Marduk" with 180 altars to Ishtar
- The golden image of Baal and the Golden Table (both weighing over 50,000 lbs. of solid gold) dazzled visitors
- The city had two golden lions and a solid gold human figure (18 feet high)



3. Deities:

(1) Babylonians had many gods – Sumerian, Akkadian, and gods imported from mountainous regions (N & E of Mesopotamia). These gods reflected the people's needs and fears

(a) Marduk (Bel/Baal)

(i) Son of Ea (wisdom)

(ii) Chief of Babylonian gods (rising sun)

(iii) Temples & a huge ziggurat (the temple of Esgalia)

(iv) Wife called Sarpanitu / Son - Nabu

(v) Sacred number 10 / Planet Jupiter

(vi) Statue of pure gold – Babylon

(vii) Made men and fashioned the world

(b) Other Babylonian gods

(i) Pantheons – overlapped many cities

(ii) Every street bore the name of one of the gods

(2) A RELIGIOUS METROPOLIS

- 53 temples of the chief gods
- 55 chapels of Marduk
- 300 chapels for earthly deities
- 600 chapels for heavenly deities
- 180 altars for the goddess Ishtar
- 180 for the gods Nergal and Adad
- 12 other altars for various gods

(3) RITUALS

- Daily presentation of offerings
- Cleaning garments of divine statues
- Purification of temples
- Special festivals (Akitu – New Year)

(4) TEMPLES

- Each city had its own god and temple
- Temples had their own land, slaves, animals & precious stones
- Priests foretold by reading nature & other elements
- Selling of charms and magical formulae

(5) PERSONAL IDOLS

- Each Babylonian had a 'personal' god
- People made special requests to their deities (e.g., relief from illness)
- Idols acted as mediators to higher gods
- "Benefit-driven" – people abandoned their god if prayers were unanswered

(6) ZIGGURATS

- Abundance of them showed the city and king's devotion to their city god
- These were huge stepped structures

4. Literature (cf. see more texts at OTB, 188-188a; OTS, 79f-79g)

a) Ancient Sumerian culture highly influenced the literature of Neo-Babylon.

- Babylon had been immersed in Sumerian culture since 3000 BC
- Adopted Sumerian system of formal education
- Nabu (god of scribal arts) said to have given Babylon her cuneiforms
- Cuneiform in Latin – 'cuneus' (wedge) / an ideogrammatical script (symbols)
- Transformed later to syllogrammatical script (simplified symbols) on clay tablets
- Sumerian writings were translated to Akkadian (*lingua franca* of ANE)
- Schools of scribes copied compositions and created catalogs
- Sumero-Babylonian dictionaries - imitation of the myths, epics, hymns etc
- After Babylon's fall in 539 BC Aramaic and Greek became the common languages

b) Types of Literature

(1) POETRY

- Parallelism - rendition of ideas two different ways side by side
- Couplets, singlets and triplets
- No Rhyme and Meter
- Several Epics - Enuma Elish & Gilgamesh Epic

(2) MUSIC

- Story telling or chanting of a verse - religious ceremonies & entertainment
- Used reed, flute, lyre, drum, trumpet and harp

(3) BABYLONIAN VERSION OF THE FLOOD (2000 BC)

Babylonian Mythology	Biblical Account
Many gods (Polytheism)	One God (Monotheism)
Gods quarrel /disagree	A Holy God
Confusion as to why the Flood came	God saw evil and corrupt people
Adad - thunder	Yahweh:
Ninurta- winds	• Created
Annunaki - lightning	• Sustained
	• executed judgment

(4) WISDOM LITERATURE

- Many such writings – problem of evil and suffering / devout pious observers
- Examples – The Theodicy, Dialogue of Pessimism

(5) PROPHECY

- Babylonian prophecy – forerunner of many occult religions and mystical books
- Describe past events in prophetic terms – validate his foretelling.

(6) LAW & ORDER

- RELIGIOUS INFLUENCE
  - SHAMASH- the sun god was also god of law and justice
  - Hammurapi (1792-1760 BC) – Punishments for crimes varied according to the crime; death penalty (drown / burn / decapitation)

- CIVIL LAW
  - Business practices led to a growing trade
  - Courts administered laws
  - 4 judges in each court / appeals could be made to the king
  - Capital punishment – flogging/ reduction to slavery & banishment

- LAW CODES
  - Many Law Codes unearthed (written 2350 to 1750 BC)
  - Almost all in verbal agreement
  - King's divine mission was to administer justly and fairly

- THE CODE OF HAMMURAPI (1780 BC)
  - Established legal practice in Babylon – institutions & customs
  - Retaliation – tit for tat in cases of physical injuries (lex talionois)

5. Significance: Why Babylonians Were Important

a) All false worship traces its way back to Babylon eventually. The Catholic Church in particular has propagated many of Babylon's false teachings, such as:[39]

[39] Ralph Woodrow, *Babylon Mystery Religion* (Ralph Woodrow, P.O. Box 124, Riverside, CA 92502: Ralph Woodrow Evangelistic Association, 1966, 1981). Interestingly, much of Woodrow's research comes straight from the

(1) Mother and child worship

(2) Obelisks, temples, and towers

(3) Relics

(4) Pilgrimages

(5) Indulgence selling

(6) Purgatory

(7) Supreme pontiffs

(8) Celibacy of priests

(9) Transubstantiation

(10) Easter Festival

(11) Winter Festival

b) Civil law today owes much to Babylonian order.

(1) Courts & judges gave punishments (capital, slavery, floggings, banishment, etc.)

(2) The Code of Hammurapi (1780 BC) predated the laws of Moses. It also established legal practice and many political, social economic, and religious institutions.

c) Technological achievements

(1) Mathematics (geometry, algebra, sexagesimal numbering system, measurement of time and degrees of angles)

(2) Science: astrology and astronomy (correct calculations of the solar and lunar year)

(3) Calendar of 12 lunar months

(4) Measurement by a water or sun clock

(5) Medicine: surgery, anatomy, physiology

(6) Circulation of blood, pulse

(7) Irrigation systems with canals

(8) Art: tapestries, rugs, gold and silver goods, gem cutting, manufactured textiles

(9) Organized trade was the key to Babylon's wealth, financed also by taxation to protect citizens from bandits

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Catholic Encyclopedia (New York: Robert Appleton, 1911). See also Alexander Hislop, *The Two Babylons* (New York: Loizeaux Brothers, 1853, reprinted 1959).

6. Summary: How the Babylonians Affected Judah

a) Babylon was God's instrument to repeatedly judge His people by bringing them into exile. They conquered Judah at least six times, though typically three are considered the most significant in impact (605, 597, and 586):

Nebuchadnezzar's Six Deportations to Babylon

Sequence & Size	Date	King of Judah	Number Taken	Key Captives	Results/ Comments
1 Minor	605 BC	Jehoiakim	Few (Dan. 1:3)	Daniel, his 3 friends, & other nobility & royalty	Tribute imposed. Egypt powerful.
2 Moderate	598 BC	Jehoiakim	3,023 (Jer. 52:28)	—	Minor deportation before the 597 BC deportation
3 Major	597 BC	Jehoiachin	10,000 (2 Kings 24:14)	Jehoiachin (2 Kings 24:12b), Ezekiel (Ezek. 1:2), Mordecai (Esther 2:6)	Large deportation. Jehoiachin replaced with his uncle Zedekiah.
4 Minor	587 BC	Zedekiah	832 (Jer. 52:29)	—	Minor deportation before the 586 BC destruction
5 Major	586 BC	Zedekiah	ca. 10,400* (2 Kings 25:11)	Zedekiah	Jerusalem & temple destroyed after 30 month siege
6 Minor	582 BC	—	745 (Jer. 52:30)	—	Four years after Jerusalem's destruction

b) The Babylonian exile helped Judah preserve its national heritage: The Babylonian policy of deportation required conquered countries to follow their pagan cult (cf. Dan. 2, 6). In contrast to the ten northern tribes that merged into Assyrian society, the Judean Jews in exile successfully resisted this.

(1) Separation: They were forbidden to carry on sacrifices, but they held fast to the *law of God, the Sabbath, and circumcision.* All these ways kept them a distinct people.

(2) Rise of the Synagogue: With the Jerusalem temple destroyed, local Jewish places of worship sprung up throughout Babylon.

(3) Elimination of Idolatry: The people repented from sin and finally learned the lesson that God abhors idols (Exod. 20:3-6) and that idolatry had caused the devastation of Jerusalem.

(4) Life in Babylon motivated prophets such as Ezekiel and Daniel to minister in exile. They anticipated and prayed for the restoration of Jerusalem (cf. Ezek. 34:13; 36:38; Dan. 6:10; 9:16, 25). Previously Jeremiah had limited the time of captivity to 70 years (Jer. 25:11-12; 29:10). These prophets also provide us with a glorious view of the restoration of Israel in the last days.

(5) All this had a positive effect to prepare the people intellectually and spiritually for a new beginning in Palestine.

c) However, the exile in Babylon also had a negative influence.

(1) Materialism reigned in the Jews who prospered in exile. They still applied Jeremiah's advice two generations earlier to settle down, plant gardens, marry, start businesses, and even support the city of Babylon itself (Jer. 29:5-7).

(2) As a result, 50 years later very few were willing to return to Judah once freedom was allowed under the Persian era that followed Babylonian rule. The number of exiles who returned with Zerubbabel, Ezra and Nehemiah, from captivity in Babylon were far less than those who stayed in the "Diaspora" (Jews who lived outside of Israel).

7. Lessons to Learn from Babylonians

   a) Idols are worthless.

   b) Affluence and materialism do not last.

   c) Do not get entangled in the influences of Babylon that still exist today (religious formalism, erroneous Catholic teachings, etc.).

   d) Avoid the Babylon of the future.

      (1) "And on her forehead a name was written, 'MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF THE PROSTITUTES AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH'" (Rev. 17:5).

      (2) What is the identity of this end-times Babylon?[40]

         (a) World system

         (b) Religions (Islam, Roman Catholic, Astrology, One World Religion)

         (c) Cities (Rome, Jerusalem)

         (d) Countries (Iraq, USA)

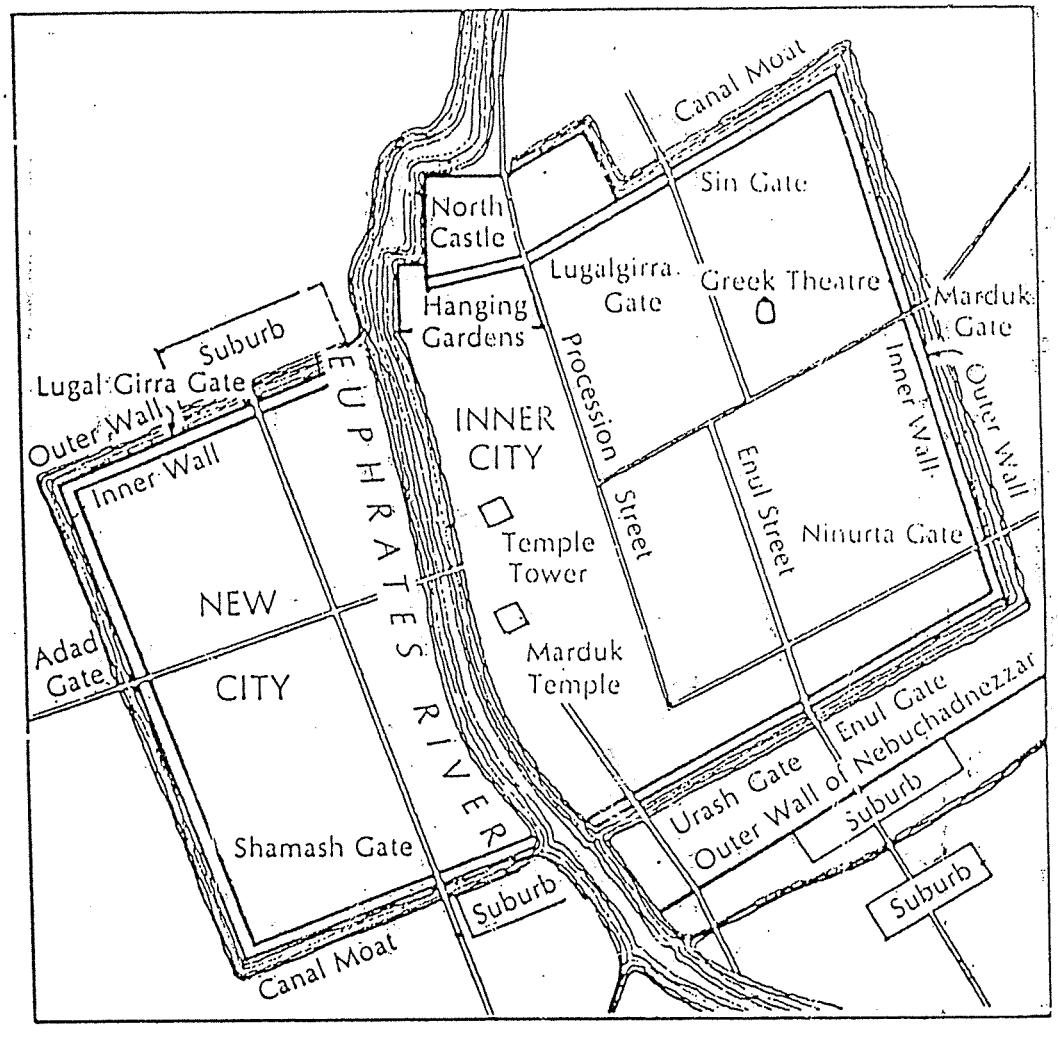
   e) Sometimes a "bad thing" is good for us because it is actually God's discipline that leads to repentance.

      (1) To cure Israel of her idolatry, God forced them into the most idolatrous nation of antiquity—yet this cured Israel from ever becoming idol-worshippers again.

      (2) God sometimes forces us to be "in the world" as this is the only way we will become His unique people.

[40] See Rick Griffith, "The Identity of Mystery Babylon," in the notes for *New Testament Survey*, 366-378.

Map of Babylon



CITY PLAN OF ANCIENT BABYLON

O. Persians[41]

1. Identity:

   a) Who Persians Were:

      (1) Persians were Semites who descended from Elam, son of Shem (Gen. 10:22). One can speak of the ancient Persians and Elamites as virtually the same.

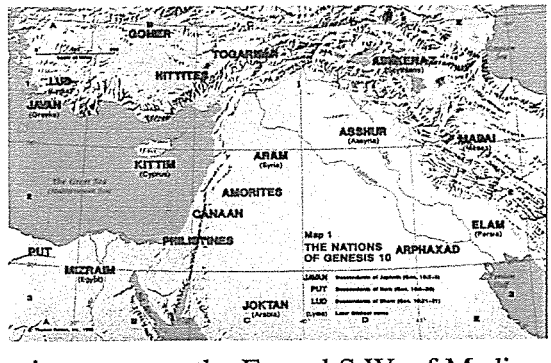
      (2) "The name *Persia* came from *Persis*, the Greek name for the region. The Persians themselves called the region the *land of the Aryans*, from which the name *Iran* comes. The Persians called their language *Aryan*."[42]

   b) When Persians Lived:

      (1) Being descendants of Shem's grandson, Persians had a long history dating back to as early as 3000 BC.

      (2) However, as far the OT interaction with Israel, Persia came on the scene at the end of the OT era. Isaiah "around 700 BC foretold how a man named Cyrus would subdue nations and 'open before him two leaved gates; and the gates shall not be shut' (Isa. 45:1). In 539 BC, seventy years after the destruction of Judah, Cyrus left Persia and attacked Babylon. The high walls around the city and the brass gates across the river meant the city was impenetrable. But Cyrus went upstream along the Euphrates and diverted the river (believed by most historians, but not confirmed). He then marched his armies along the river bed, under the brass gates and took the city with barely a shot. The city again prospered, but water was not so abundant (Jer. 50:38)."[43]

2. Geography: Where Persians Lived (cf. pp. 15, 17)



   a) Persia was north and east of Babylon, across the Tigris River.

   b) "The Elamites gave their name to Elymais, the region on the left or E. bank of the Tigris, opposite Babylonia, between it on the W. and Persia proper on the E., and S.W. of Media. The region is also named Susiana or Susis from its capital Susa, called Shushah in Dan 8:2, where Nehemiah (Neh 1:1) waited on king Artaxerxes, and where Ahasuerus (Xerxes) held his court in Esther's (Est 1:2; 2:5) time. Daniel mentions the river Ulai near, i.e. the Greek Euloeus. From Darius Hystaspes' time to Alexander the Great it was the Persian king's court residence."[44]

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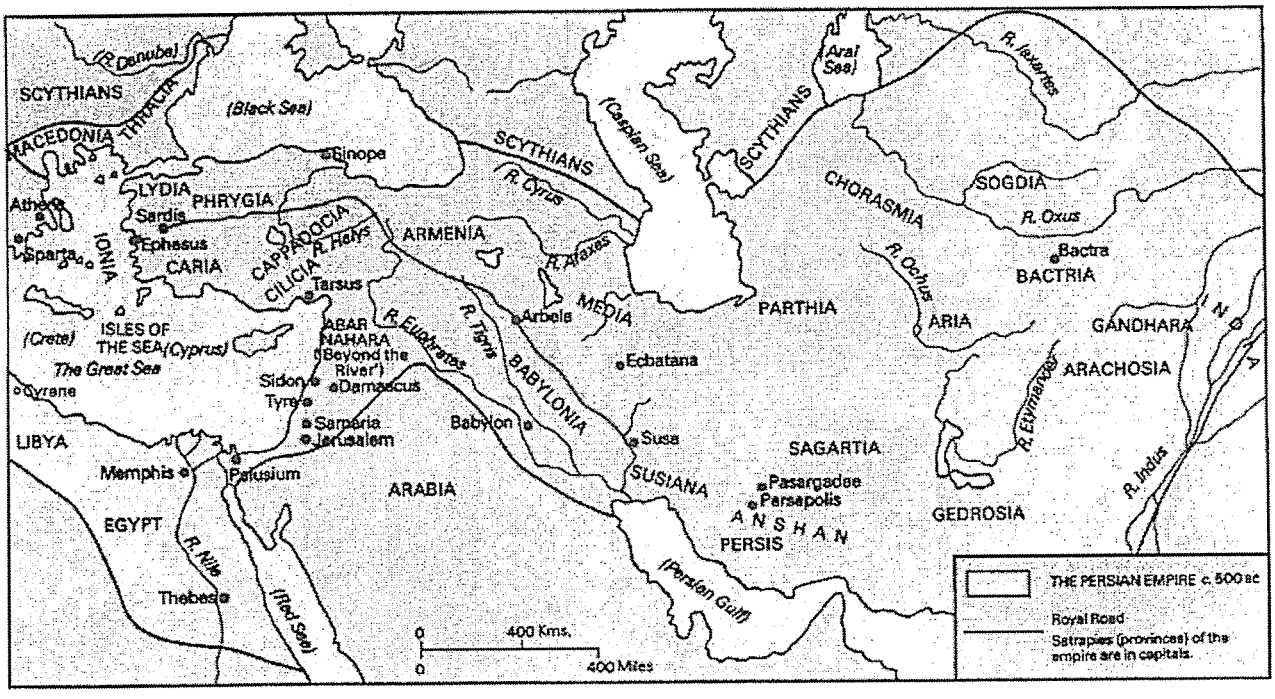
[41] This section used as a major source Michael Ting and Samuel Ticoalu, "Persia," a paper submitted for OT Backgrounds (SBC, 2001).

[42] Ibid., 2.

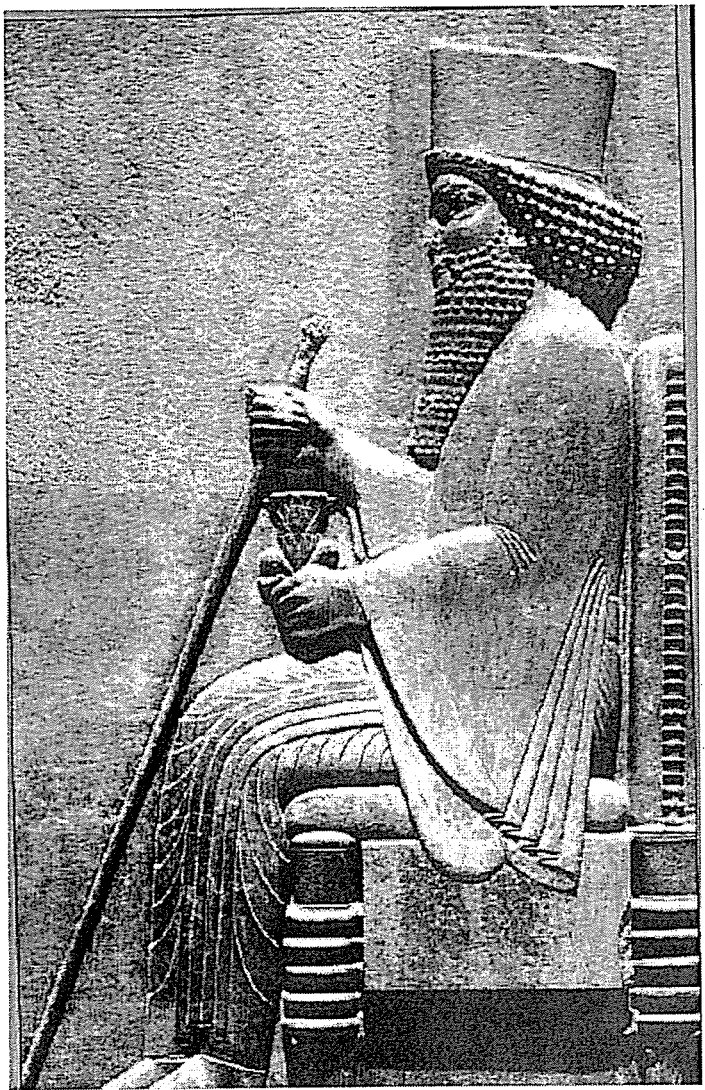
[43] Ibid.

[44] "Persia," *Fausset's Bible Dictionary* (Electronic Database: Biblesoft, 1998).

c) However, once Persia seized Babylon's conquests westward, it also proceeded even farther both to the west (to Greece) and to the east (to India). The kingdom ended up becoming several times larger than Babylon.

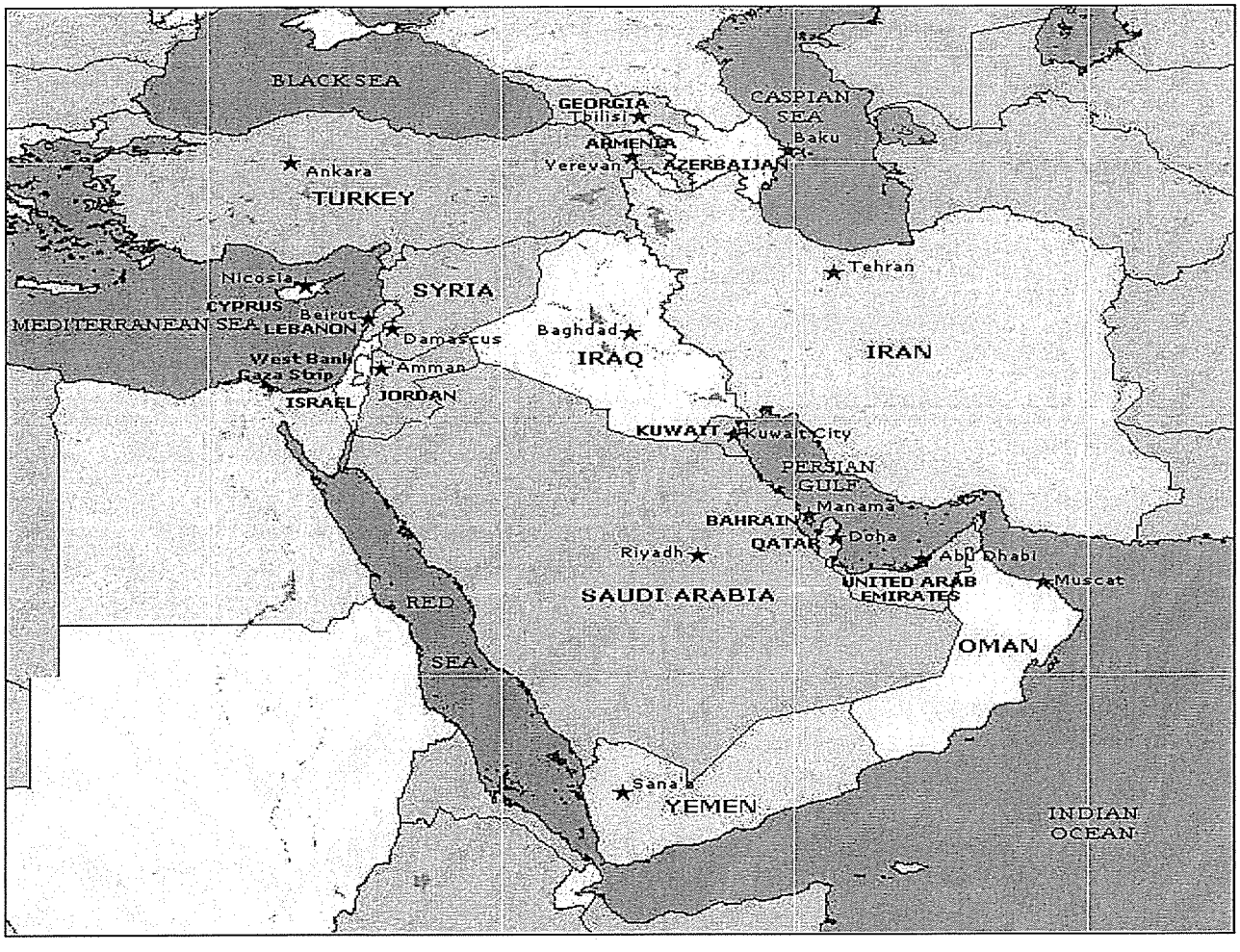


The Persian Empire in the fifth century BC, extending 'from India to Ethiopia' (Est. 1:1).



Darius the Great
(521-486 BC)

d) As modern Iraqis descended from the Babylonians, so modern Iranians owe their heritage to Persia. This may partly explain the animosity between the two groups since the Babylonians were conquered by Persia.



3. Persian Deities:

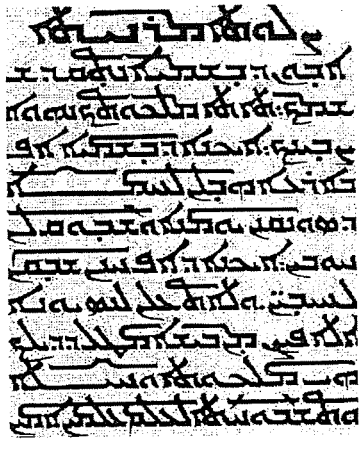
a) "The Persians believed in gods of nature, such as the sun and sky. The people believed the gods had social powers. Mithra, the god of light, for example, controlled contracts. The Persians had no temples. They prayed and offered sacrifices on mountains.

b) Zoroaster (or Zarathustra), a prophet who lived sometime between 1400 and 1000 B.C., reformed the ancient religion. He preached a faith based on good thoughts, words, and deeds, emphasizing a supreme god called Ahura Mazda, "the wise spirit." Zoroaster's followers, called Zoroastrians, gradually spread his religion throughout Persia. The teachings of Zoroaster are found in the Gathas, part of a holy book known as the Avesta."[50]

[50] Ibid., 4.

4. Persian Literature (cf. see more texts at OTS, 79f-79g)

   a) Unlike Babylon, the Persians were not masters of literature. They did, however, have a similar script made with wedge writing.



   b) Although they did have their own language, Persians borrowed Aramaic as their basic written language since it was widely used in Syria, Palestine, and Mesopotamia. The Persians extended Aramaic both east to India and west to Asia Minor (now Turkey).

   c) The Cyrus Cylinder is one of the most significant finds from Persia (Arnold/Beyer, *Readings from the Ancient Near East*, 147).

      (1) It cites the victory of Cyrus over Babylon by Marduk's command without even fighting (Dan. 5:30).

      (2) After his victory, Cyrus then praises Marduk and releases all of Babylon's captives, allowing them to return home (Ezra 1:2-4; 6:1-5; 2 Chron. 36:23).



5. Significance: Why Persians Were Important

   a) Persians were masters at administration that set a model for other nations.

      (1) Their organizational skills are noted in Esther 1:1 where it says that Xerxes "ruled over 127 provinces stretching from India to Cush."

      (2) They even developed an efficient "pony express" form of mail delivery throughout the vast empire.

(3) "Cyrus established the Persians as the dominant tribe in 549 B.C. He then moved west to defeat the Lydian Empire of Croesus in 545, and south to defeat Nabonidus of Babylon in 538. The conquest of Lydia gave Cyrus Asia Minor; the overthrow of Babylon made him master of the Euphrates River plain, Assyria, Syria, and Palestine. *It was the first of the world's great imperial organizations, foreshadowing Rome; it was humane when compared with the Assyrian Empire.* The conflict between Samaria and Jerusalem, depicted in the life of Nehemiah, is an illustration of the problems of such a large empire. Nehemiah was working by royal decree and yet found his work hampered by armed interference. Ezra's fear (Ezra 8:22) suggests similar pockets of anarchy. The four books of the OT in which Persia forms a background (Ezra, Esther, Ezekiel, and Daniel) all illustrate the royal tendency to delegate special authority to individuals for specific tasks."[46]

b) "It will be useful to list the Persian kings whose reigns have significance in OT history:

(1) Cyrus, 538-529 B.C. (2 Chron 36:22-23; Ezra 1-5 passim; Isa 44:28; 45:1; Dan 1:21; 6:28; 10:1).

(2) Cambyses, 529-522 B.C. Some have suggested that Cambyses is the mysterious Darius the Mede (Dan 5:31; 6:9, 25; 9:1; 11:1). Others think this obscure person was Gobryas, governor of Media, who exercised authority for Cyrus in Babylon.

(3) Gaumata, a usurper, who held brief royal authority until put down by Darius, 522-521 B.C.

(4) Darius I (Hystaspis), 521-486 B.C., the great imperialist, whose seaborne attack on Greece was defeated at Marathon in 490. This is the Darius (mentioned by Ezra) under whose protection permission was given for the temple to be built.

(5) Xerxes I (Ahasuerus), 486-465 B.C. (Esth 1:1-2; 2:16). This mad king in a mighty combined operation sought to avenge Marathon and was defeated by the Greeks at Salamis (480) and Plataea (479).

(6) Artaxerxes I (Longimanus), 464-424 B.C. It was this monarch who permitted Ezra to go to Jerusalem to restore the affairs of the Jewish community (Ezra 7-8), and who promoted the mission of his cupbearer Nehemiah, 13 years later. Darius the Persian (Neh 12:22) is Codomannus, the last king of Persia, overthrown by Alexander in 330."[47]

[46] "Persia," *New Bible Dictionary* (electronic edition, italics mine).

[47] Ibid.

Chronology of Persian History	
Prophet Zoroaster	**688-551 BC**
The ACHAEMENIAN DYNASTY	**559-330 BC**
Death of* Cyrus the Great, *the founder of the Achaemenians	**530 BC**
Rule of* Darius, *the second great Achaemenian ruler	**522-486 BC**
Xerxes, *the king*	**486-465 BC**
Alexander, *the Macedonian, conquers Persia*	**330 BC**
THE SELEUCID DYNASTY	**312-247 BC**
THE PARTHIAN DYNASTY	**247 BC-AD 226**
THE SASSANID DYNASTY	**226-651**
Rule of* Ardeshir, *the founder of the Sassanids	**226-240**
Death of the Sassanid king Shapur 1	**272**
Death of the prophet Mani, the founder of Manichaesim	**274**
Mazdakism	**End of 5th and 6th c.**
Rule of Chosroes I (Anosharvan)	**531-579**
Sassanid invasion of Byzantiun	**603**
Sassanid conquest of Alexandria	**619**

6. Summary: How Persians Affected Israel

   a) Restoration of Temple Worship (first return under Zerubbabel): Initially only the sacrifices were reestablished, but following the completion of the temple rebuilding came the reinstitution of the entire temple system (Ezra 1:1-3).

   b) Law of Moses Reestablished as the Law of the Land (second return under Ezra): Ezra the priest and scribe (1 Chron. 6:3-15; Ezra 7:6-7) taught the law and enforced it by order of the king (Ezra 7:14, 25-26), especially in respect to prohibiting intermarriage (Ezra 9—10; Neh. 10:30; 13:23-31). This led to copying scrolls of the OT used even in the time of Jesus.

   c) Economic and Spiritual Life Revived (third return under Nehemiah): The restoration of the walls, repopulating of Jerusalem, reinstitution of the Sabbath, spiritual revival among the people, and renewal of the intermarriage prohibition under Nehemiah all contributed to the placing of Israel more firmly in the land.

d) Rise of the Temple State: Though Judah was still a vassal state, Persia allowed the people a great deal of local autonomy (especially in cultural and religious matters) to win their allegiance. This resulted in peace, prosperity, and security. Eventually the Persian governor was replaced by a council of elders closely allied with the leading priestly families and directly accountable to the Persian king. The *Temple* was the place of power, the *Mosaic Law* was "the constitution," and the *High Priest* (from the ancient line of Zadok) was the highest official. However, there still was no Jewish king on the throne of Israel.

e) Aramaic Language Widespread: Although Aramaic was the language of Aram (Syria), during the Persian period it became the official language of the empire so that Hebrew began to die out as the everyday language of the Jews. By the time of Christ few Jews knew Hebrew and Aramaic was the common language of Palestinian Jews.

f) Jewish Diaspora: Although Persian policy allowed the Jews to return to Palestine and reestablish their religion and customs, very few did so. Those remaining in foreign lands became known as the Diaspora so that many Jewish settlements could be found around the empire. Paul later used the synagogues of these groups as points of contact in evangelizing the Roman world.

g) Samaritans, the inhabitants of Samaria to the north of Jerusalem, had earlier resulted from intermarriage with pagan peoples who occupied the land during Israel's Assyrian exile. Jews would not recognize them as true Israelites due to their "mixed blood" (2 Kings 17). Therefore, during Persian rule the Jerusalem community separated from them (Ezra 4:1-2) and this alienation and rivalry finally led to two political provinces (Samaria and Judea) and two sanctuaries of worship (Mt. Gerizim and Jerusalem) later under Alexander the Great. Years later the Samaritan woman spoke with Jesus at the well about these two sanctuaries (John 4:20).

h) Purim celebrated national redemption for Jews. It was added to the feasts of Israel during the reign (486-465 BC) of the Persian monarch Xerxes I (Ahasuerus). The story is recorded in the Book of Esther how Haman, Xerxe's prime minister and an enemy of the Jews, sought to annihilate all Jews on a certain day (14th of Adar), but his plot was foiled by the courage and intervention of Queen Esther, a Jewess. Xerxes reversed Haman's diabolical scheme and permitted the Jews to defend themselves on that day and the day after. Because Haman had selected the day by the throwing of *purim* ("lots"), the 14th and 15th of Adar (Feb./March) was chosen for a memorial festival called the Feast of Purim (cf. also 2 Maccabees 15:36; Josephus, *Antiquities*, 11.6.13).

i) Judaism became the term depicting the Jewish way of life in both its cultural and religious aspects from the post-exilic period onward. Orthodox Judaism strictly resisted outside influences that would seek to absorb or change it.

j) Close of OT canon: The prophet Malachi was the last OT prophet during the Persian era.

7. Lessons to Learn from Persians

a) God knows the future:

(1) He knew that Persians would conquer Babylon (Dan. 5:30).

(2) He knew that the Jews would return to Israel (Ezra 1:2-4).

(3) He even knew 150 years earlier that the king who would restore Israel from exile would be named Cyrus (Isa. 44:28; 45:1, 13).

b) God is a restoring God

(1) He brought His people back to their homeland after two generations of exile (book of Ezra-Nehemiah).

(2) Even those who did not return received His protection (book of Esther).

Medes & Persians

"The Bible in Its Context: A Reliable Record?" (Prof. Alan Millard, BGST, 11 Sept 2004)

I. Medes

A. We know very little about the Medes—no writings have been discovered at all.

1. Their capital at Ecbatana (modern Hamadan) ruled over a much larger territory than the original land of the Persians. Haran had been in the hands of the Medes, having taken it from the Babylonians.

2. Persia actually was a kingdom subject to the Medes until Cyrus rebelled against them.

3. Therefore, critics claim that Medes didn't even exist.

B. However, Isaiah and Jeremiah often noted the Medes as the ones to destroy Babylon (cf. Dan. 5:31 Darius the Mede).

C. The identification of Darius I and Cyrus has been debated.

1. John Whitcomb postulated that Darius the Mede was the same man as Gubaru, but Gubaru was the governor rather than the king.

2. However, Daniel prospered during the reign of Darius (as king of Persia), whom Millard equates with Cyrus (as king of Media) as a waw epexegeticum in Daniel 6:28. A parallel usage could be: "So the God of Israel stirred up the spirit of Pul king of Assyria (that is, Tiglath-Pileser king of Assyria), who took the Reubenites, the Gadites and the half-tribe of Manasseh into exile" (1 Chron. 5:26).

D. Greeks did not think highly of the Persians (e.g., they saw them as effeminate). Greek writings refer to the "Medes and the Persians" as does Daniel; however, Esther refers to the "Persians and the Medes"

E. The Cyrus cylinder records Cyrus's decree for conquered peoples to return to their land (cf. 1 Chron. 36; Ezra 1:1).

II. Persians (Achaemenids)

A. Darius I is depicted in three languages in a seal of a chariot. It is led by a lion (not horse) and shows him fighting another lion with arrows. The symbol of the Zoroastrians is above them, which is a religion that believes in the existence of good over evil. It still exists in India while being called Parsees. They believe that fire purifies and are against burial, so corpses are placed on high pillars for birds of prey to eat!

B. Another image shows him fighting a lion, which is stabilizing itself against Darius! Lions were kept in an enclosed space to make it easier for the king to hunt them!

C. The Persian Empire stretched from Greece to India and above the Black Sea to Arabia. The southern capital was Persepolis (Pasargade). Susa (the capital of Persia) became a new capital that had formerly been the capital of the Elamites.

D. At this time the cuneiform gave way to Aramaic, the trade language. This is unfortunate as Aramaic was written on leather, most of which has not survived.

E. Many 5th century Aramaic documents have been discovered on the Elephantine (*el-a-phan-TEEN-ay*) Island on the Nile Delta. This Jewish settlement had a temple but also syncretistic worship, as many of them had married pagans and their children had foreign names. The local Egyptians did not like them as the Jews sacrificed lambs in defiance of Egyptian gods; so Egyptians destroyed their temple. The Persians allowed it to be rebuilt on the condition that no sacrifices would be made at all.

F. The Palace of 100 Columns housed the king in a magnificent manner. Models made of it show how huge it was.

G. The Persian king held audience with incense between him and his visitor.

1. The incense protected the king from bad smells of the visitor who may not have had a bath! In like manner, Nebuchadnezzar commanded that incense be offered to Daniel after he interpreted the kings' dream (cf. Dan. 2:46).

2. The king held a large staff which one needed to touch (cf. Esther 4:11; 5:2; 8:4). This is probably another reason why incense separated the king from his visitor!

III. Conclusion

While Persians often get more press than the Medes, the latter were actually more significant in ancient days—especially to the Greeks.

PRESENTATION ON THE ARABS



By: Lim Chung Wei, Lion Soegiharto,
Loke Puay Yin, Edwin Low and Angelina Tan

A. Introduction

When one thinks of the word "Arabs, what is the first thing that comes to mind?

Muslims? Oil? Camels & desert? Terrorists? Enemies of Israel?

B. The People: Who are the Arabs?

1. Definition of "Arab"

   a. Today's definition

   Today, there are 3 factors in determining whether one is an Arab or not:[1]

   - Political: Do they live in a country of the Arab world? – covers more than 300 million people
   - Linguistic: Is their mother tongue Arabic? – covers more than 200 million people
   -
   - Genealogical: Can they trace their ancestry back to the original inhabitants of the Arabian Peninsular?

   As can be seen, the definition of "Arab" can be quite complicated. Even throughout history, the definition was constantly changing.

[1] "Arab" in *Free Dictionary.com* Http://encyclopedia.thefreedictionary.com/Arab.

b. A look at history

From	Referred to
9th century B.C.[2]	Nomadic Semitic peoples living in central and northern Arabian Peninsula[3]
Greek & Roman times	All who lived in the Arabian Peninsula including some sedentary civilisations[4]
Arab Empire	Arabic speaking ruling class of conquerors of Arabian origin[5]
Islamic Empire	The culture that spoke Arabic and was Arabic in taste and tradition[6]
Late 'Abbasid times	Bedouins who preserved the original Arabian way of life and language, including those of non-Arab descent (used as a social term)[7]
Present day	Those who cherish their Arabic culture and who see the mission of Muhammad and the memory of the Arab Empire as central in history[8]

As can be seen, the original definition of "Arab" had to do with Semitic people who lived a nomadic lifestyle in Arabia. This concurs with dictionary definitions.

c. Dictionary definitions

- In early classical Arabic dictionaries, it referred to all who spoke Arabic, were full *descendents of the Arab tribe* and who had *origins in Arabia*.[9]
- In early classical Arabic dictionaries, it referred to the *Bedouins*.[10]
- In the Arabic language, it means "those who speak clearly."[11]
- It is a Semitic word derived from the Hebrew "Eber" which means "*desert*."[12]
- It comes from a primary root word which means "to lie in wait, to mingle, to intermix, to give or be security, to engage and meddle with, to undertake close association, to be pleasant, to grow dusky at sundown, to be darkened toward evening."[13]

Again, all the definitions point to a nomadic people who lived under desert conditions. But who were the original Arabs? Where did they originate from? For that, the genealogy starting from Noah needs to be investigated.

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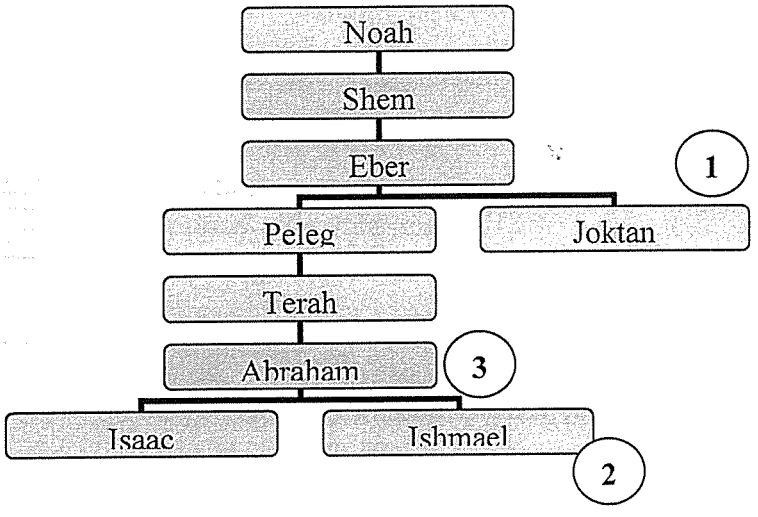
[2] Bernard Lewis, *The Arabs in History* (London: Arrow Books, 1950), 16.
[3] Peter Mansfield, *The Arabs* (Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1985), 14; Lewis, 15.
[4] Mansfield, 14.
[5] Lewis, 17.
[6] Lewis, 17.
[7] Lewis, 15, 17.
[8] Lewis, 9-10.
[9] Lewis, 13.
[10] Lewis, 13.
[11] Mansfield, 14.
[12] "Arab" in *Free Dictionary.com*
[13] "Arab" in *Free Dictionary.com*

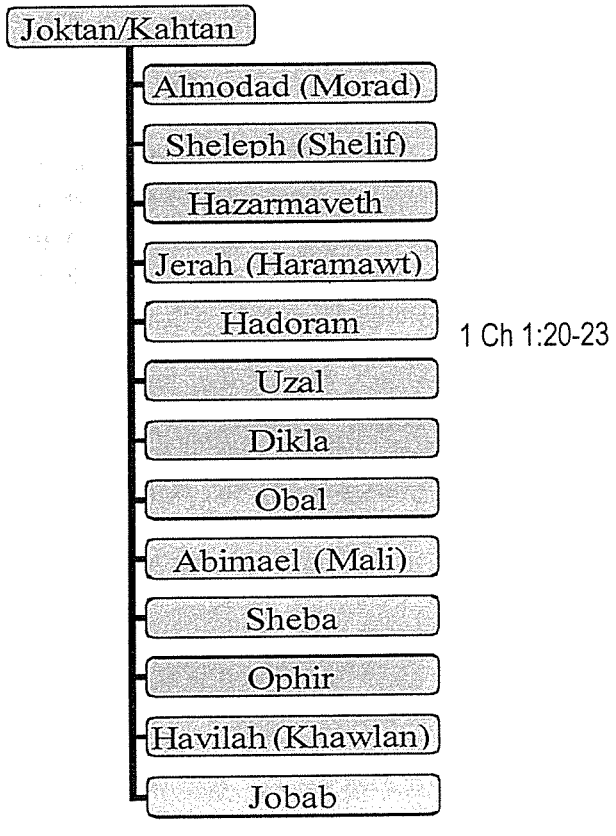
2. Genealogy



It is believed that there are three sources from which the Arab peoples came about:

1) From Joktan
2) From Ishmael
3) From Abraham

The first two are undisputed by most historians and scholars but the last is sometimes left out by some.



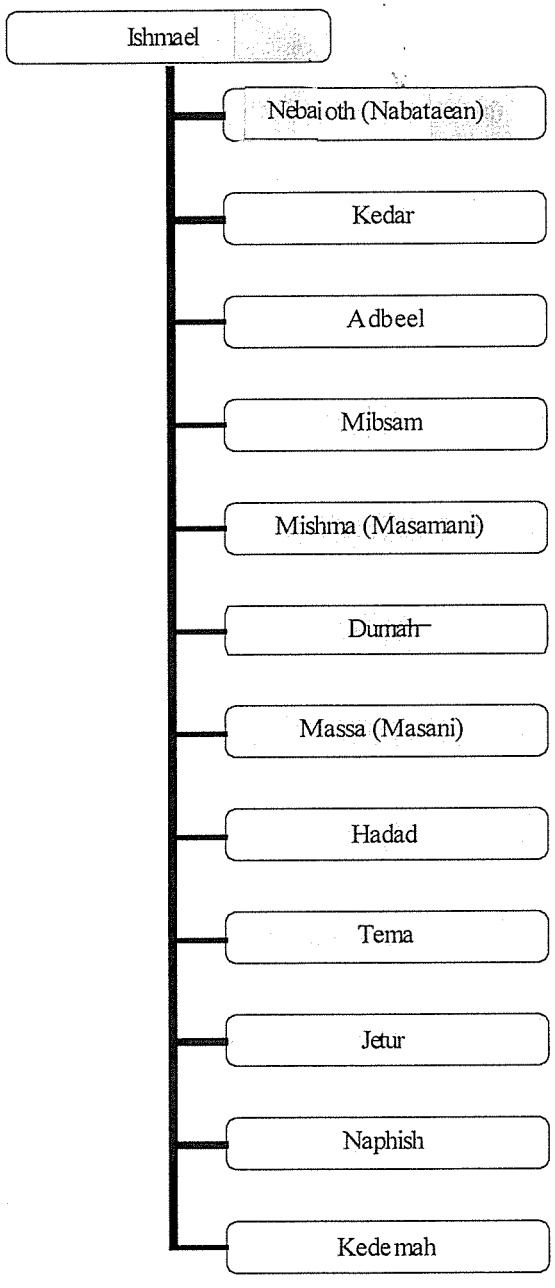
1 Ch 1:20-23

Joktan is also known as Kahtan and to this day, some Arabs still call themselves "sons of Kahtan." His 13 sons and their descendants form part of the Arab people.

Some points of interest:

1) Almodad was the father-in-law of Ishmael.
2) A famous descendant of Sheba was the Queen of Sheba who visited Solomon (1 Kings 10:1-10).
3) The descendants of Ophir colonised India and opened trade routes toward Arabia and Africa.

b. Second Source: Ishmael (Gen 25:13-15; 1 Chron 1:29-31)



Some points of Interest:

1) Nebaioth was associated with the Nabataeans who in turn founded Babylon. King Herod's mother was a Nabatean.
2) Adbeel was the ancestor of Mohammed.

The LORD promised Abram a son from his own body. But at that time, his wife Sarai was barren. She then gave her maidservant Hagar to Abram. However, when Hagar conceived, she despised Sarai who then mistreated her, resulting in her running away. Then an angel appeared to her and persuaded her to return and submit to Sarai. He also promised her,

"I will so *increase your descendants* that they will be *too numerous* to count... you will have a son. You shall *name him Ishmael*, for the LORD has heard of your misery. He will be *a wild donkey of a man*; his hand will be *against everyone* and *everyone's hand against him*, and he will *live in hostility toward all his brothers*" (Gen. 16:9-12).

When Abram was 86, Ishmael was born. Thirteen years later, God told Abram that His covenant with him would be fulfilled through Isaac who would be born of Sarai. But He also assured him,

"And as for Ishmael ... I will surely bless him; I will make him *fruitful* and will *greatly increase his numbers*. He will be the *father of twelve rulers*, and I will make him into a *great nation*" (Gen. 17:20).

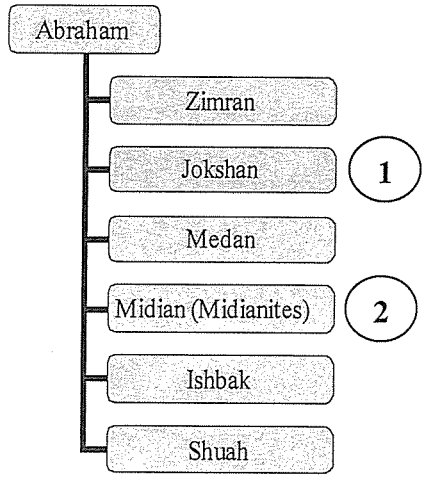
God did fulfil His promises to Hagar and Abraham for Ishmael had 12 sons who became the ancestors of 12 tribes of Arab people.

c. Third source: Abraham (Gen. 25:2-3; 1 Chron. 1:32)

After Sarah's death, Abraham married Keturah. Keturah gave him six sons who, with their descendants, formed another part of the Arab people.

Some points of interest:

1) The descendants of Jokshan colonised Ethiopia.
2) A famous Midianite was Jethro, Moses' father-in-law. In the time of the Judges, God also allowed the Midianites to oppress Israel as a result of Israel's evil acts (Jud. 6:1-6). However, He did eventually deliver them from the Midianites (Jud. 8:29).



All the charts above were gleaned from information taken from Louis Bahjat Hamada, *God Loves the Arabs, Too* (Tennessee: Hamada Evangelistic Outreach, Inc, 1986), 21-29.

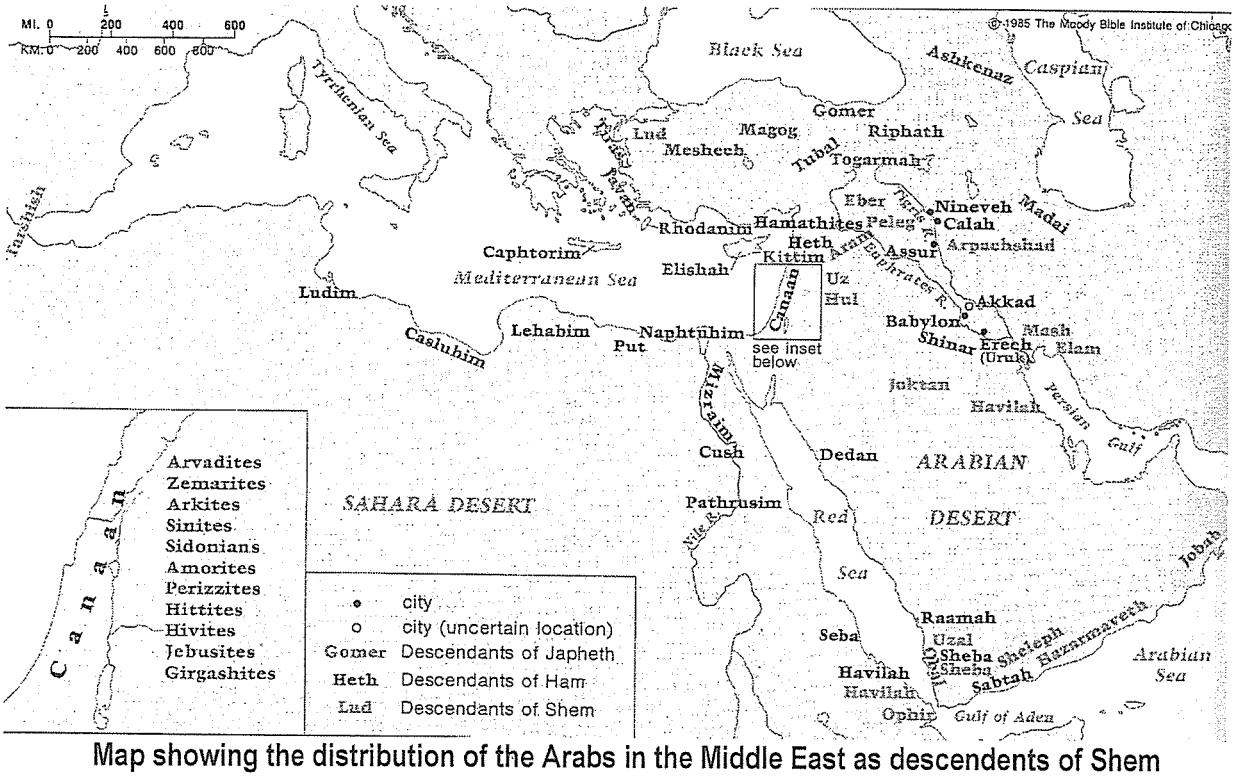
But as can be seen from all the genealogies, there is no mention of the word "Arab." Is there any mention of this word in the Bible then?

3. Bible References for the Word "Arab"

- It referred to a town in the hill country of Judah (Josh. 15:52).
- It referred to the race of a person named Gershem (Neh. 2:19, 6:1).
- It referred to a people who would not inhabit Babylon due to God's judgment on the city (Isa. 13:20).

As can be seen, Arabs already existed and were known as such in Old Testament times. They were also closely related to the Israelites by virtue of their ancestry.

C. Geography and Brief History



Map showing the distribution of the Arabs in the Middle East as descendents of Shem



Map showing Ancient Arabia and its three zones

Ancient Arabia was divided into 3 zones:

1. Arabia Petraea
(Arabia ruled from Petra)
Parts of Syria and Jordan

2. Arabia Deserta
(Desert Arabia)
Saudi Arabia

3. Arabia Felix
(Happy Arabia)
Yemen and Oman

1. Arabia Petraea (Arabia ruled from Petra)

The terrain of Arabia Petraea was basically mountainous and stony. The peoples who lived in this region were nomads and camel herders and they appeared in Assyrian inscriptions of the 9th century BC. These Arabs eventually left their nomadic way of life and built several towns. The earliest references to these Arabs can be found in the biblical book of Genesis, where Arabian merchants (Midianites) bought and sold Joseph (Gen. 37:28).

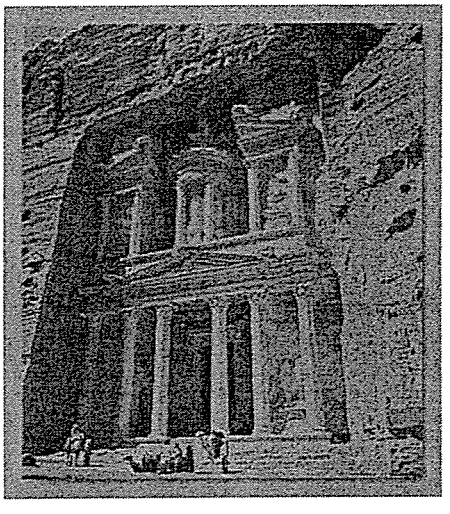
Midianites

This Arabian tribe descended from Midian, a son of Abraham. They inhabited principally the desert north of the peninsula of Arabia. The peninsula of Sinai (Egypt) was the pasture-ground for their flocks. They were virtually the rulers of Arabia, being the dominant tribe. They were also enemies of Israel and on several accounts attacked and waged wars against them. They also intermarried with the Israelites and roamed the northern part of the Arabian Desert.

A few hundred years before the New Testament era, we begin to see the emergence of the **Nabateaens and the City of Petra in** southern Jordan in the 2nd c. BC. Palmyra arose in central Syria in 3rd c. AD, but no great Arab empire emerged until Islam appeared in 7th c. AD.

The Nabateaens

The Nabateaens were an important group of people for a few reasons.
One of them was that they were the oilmen of the Dead Sea, harvesting jellied crude oil. They exported these petroleum products to Egypt well into the first century BC, and their wealth, already considerable, continued to grow.



In an account by Heironymous of Cardia, he witnessed scores of Arabic-speaking tribesmen camped on the shore, with pack-camels couched and reed rafts beached, waiting for what they called the ***thawr*** - the word was Arabic for "bull" - to appear in the middle of the sulfur- smelling waters.

These **"bulls,"** were actually great iceberg-like mounds of **jellied crude oil - bitumen -** that floated up from the depths of the murky water and drifted aimlessly with the wind (See *Aramco World*, November-December 1984). Every time a new "bull" rose into sight, a swarm of axe-wielding seamen leapt onto their reed-bundle rafts and began a frantic race toward the catch.

In the fourth century BC, Egypt's imports of bitumen from the Dead Sea were running at an all-time high and for good reason: The substance was fast becoming the main ingredient in the Egyptians' most important religious ritual - mummification. The Arabs prized the oily exudate immensely, even until today.

Another important point to note about the Nabateans was they were a wealthy nation that accumulated wealth from the caravan trade in spices and incense from southern Arabia to Egypt.

2. Arabia Deserta (Desert Arabia)

As its name implies, this part of the Arabian Peninsula was characterized by extreme heat during the day, an abrupt drop in temperature at night, and slight, erratic rainfall. The harsh climate of the peninsula, combined with a desert and mountain terrain, limited agriculture and rendered the interior regions difficult to access. Not much is known about this people except that they were camel riders in the 10th or 9th century BC. It was here that they developed the method for saddling camels to transport large loads. This then facilitated the transport of large loads and increased trade.

The nomadic tribes from Arabia Deserta frequently invaded the surrounding countries (i.e. Arabia Felix and Mesopotamia) and normally settled in these conquered lands.

By 250 BC, various Arabian tribes began moving into the Levant (= The eastern part of the Mediterranean with its islands and neighboring countries). There is record of the tribe of Qedar and the Nabatu making inroads into Edomite, Moabite and Jewish territories.

In the Parthian and Roman periods, several Arabian dynasties ruled towns in what is now Syria and Iraq. Parthia was an ancient kingdom which lay SE of the Caspian Sea in present-day Iran. From c. 250 BC to c. AD 230 the Parthians ruled an empire stretching from the Euphrates to the Indus.

Ancient historians often referred to the Arabs by their direct tribal name to avoid confusion.

3. Arabia Felix (Happy Arabia)

This area composed of the southern towns and kingdoms bordering on the Indian Ocean. The water bodies on either side of the Arabian Peninsula provided relatively easy access to the neighboring river-valley civilizations of the Nile and the Tigris-Euphrates.

The peoples of the area lived in *small kingdoms or city states* of which the best known is probably Saba, which was called **Sheba** in the Old Testament (1 Kings 10:1-10). The coastal people of Arabia were well-positioned to profit from trading with the neighboring nations. In antiquity, Yemen was famous for its incense and cinnamon (which was imported from India).

The incense trade was the most important source of wealth. Traders used camels to transport these goods along the **incense road.** These animals were domesticated in the 10th century BC and could travel some hundred kilometers a day! Several towns were founded along the incense road. **Mecca** was a little off the main road. As a result of trade, civilization developed to a relatively high level in southern Arabia by about 1000 B.C. The prosperity of Yemen encouraged the Romans to refer to it as Arabia Felix (literally, "happy Arabia").

Impact of Trade on Arabia

The increased trans-Arabian trade produced two important results:

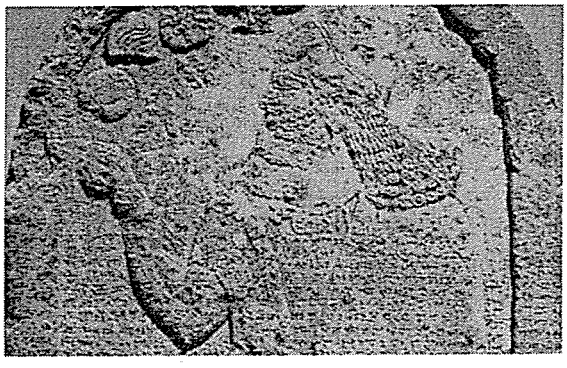
1. Cities arose that could service the trains of camels moving across the desert. The most prosperous of these were Petra in Jordan and Palmyra in Syria. Small caravan cities developed within the

Arabian Peninsula as well. The most important of these was Mecca, which also owed its prosperity to certain shrines in the area visited by Arabs from all over the peninsula.

2. This increased involvement in trade connected Arabs with the outside world. In the Near East, the Persians and the Romans were the great powers in centuries before the advent of Islam, and the Arabian tribes that bordered these territories were drawn into their political affairs. After A.D. 400, both empires paid Arabs not only to protect their southern borders but also to harass the borders of their adversaries.

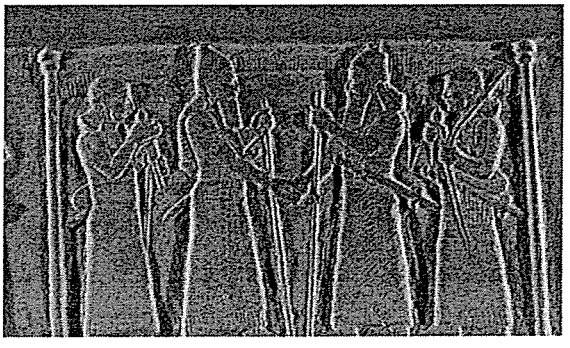
Ancient Historical Findings of the Arabs

1. Assyrian Empire



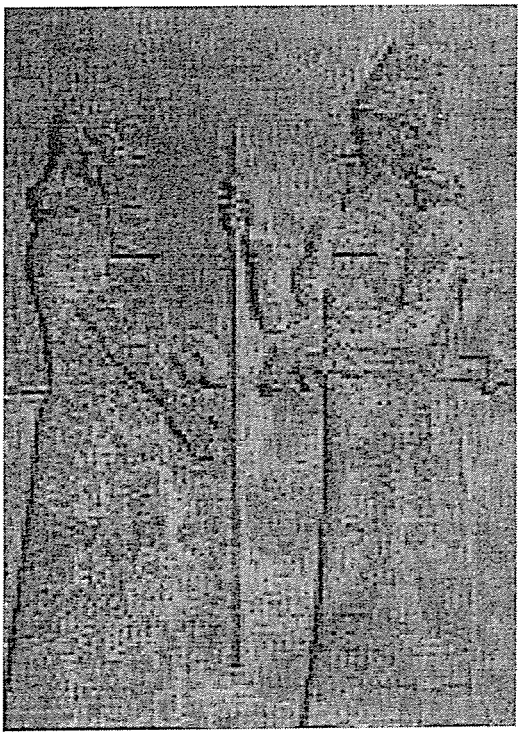
Assyrian King Shalamaneser III account of a battle at Qarqar in 853 BC

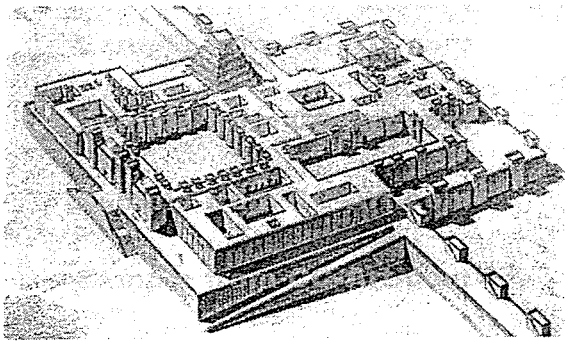
- mentions King Gindibu (Arabic Jundub), the Arabian and his 1000 camels



Tiglath-Pileser III (745-727BC)

- mentions a kingdom named Aribi





King Sargon II (721-705 BC)

- Claimed to have resettled some Arabic nomadic groups in Samaria as part of the Assyrian deportation

2. Babylonian Empire (~550 BC)
Under the Babylonian reign, we hear of the Arabs being subdued by the Babylonian King Nabonidus.

3. Persian Empire(~450 BC)
In the Persian reign, the Arabs were left by themselves and were not subdued by Cambyses. Persian King Cambyses did not subdue the Arabs when he attacked Egypt in 525 BC.

4. Greek Empire (~323 BC)
In the Greek empire, we see the emergence of Petra as a city and probably at this time, the Nabateaens were beginning to make inroads into former Edomite cities.

5. Roman Empire (27 BC)
By the time of the Roman Empire, we see Arabia/Nabatea defined. Historians such as Josephus and Strabo freely intermix the use of Arabs with Nabateans and vice versa. Nabatean kings were known as kings of the 'Arabs' and their kingdom was Arabia. The Nabatean Kingdom became known as the Province of Arabia once it was absorbed into the Roman Empire.

D. Religion

Religious practices of the pre-Islamic Arabs

1. Pre-Islamic Arabs (PIA) had syncretism in their religious beliefs and practices.
2. On the one hand, they followed the Abrahamic tradition. On the other hand, they succumbed to polytheism and idolatry.
3. For a long time, the descendants of Ishmael, followed the faith laid down by him and his father, However they gradually looked for ways of worshipping gods that suited their desires and needs. In this aspect, they were influenced by other peoples.
4. The PIA first obtained the human statutes of Ka'ba.
5. Polytheism was introduced at Makka after its occupation by Banu Khuza'ah, particularly by their leader 'Amr ibn Luhayy.' Amr followed the Syrians by introducing the worship of the idol Hubal.
6. Subsequently, Amr introduced the worship of the images of Wadd, Suwa', Yaghuth, Ya'uq and Nasr, the gods of the Prophet Nuh's people. These gods represented certain cults relating to astral worship or worship of the forces of nature or deification of some human qualities, all prevalent in ancient Assyria and Babylonia.
7. Then stone worship became common. When the PIA left Makka, they took stones from the sacred precincts as souvenirs of Ka'ba. After that they worshipped any other stone that impressed them.
8. Ultimately each tribe, clan and family had their special idol to worship. The PIA ended up worshipping many idols.
9. The Ka'ba became the principal dormitory of their idols. The PIA also developed a number of subsidiary Ka'bas in different places, each with its presiding god or goddess. In addition they also had a number of other shrines of specific idols scattered throughout Arabia. They visited these places, made supplications, prostrated themselves before them, circumambulated them, made sacrifices and practiced other rites.

2. Prayers
- Muslims are expected to perform prayers five times a day: at dawn, noon, afternoon, evening and night. These prayers involve a series of postures (standing, kneeling, hands and face on the ground)
- Worship of ritual prayer—a set sequence of motions and prostrations, performed facing in the direction of the Ka'ba in Mecca.
- Why do they pray?
    - Phone call to God to thank him for all the blessings that he is providing to us (i.e. perform the worship of gratitude)
    - Maintain God's remembrances
    - Keep up the spiritual motivations
    - Prevent sins

3. Almsgiving
- Muslims are expected to give alms to the Muslim community that amount to 1/40 (or 2 1/2 %) of one's income. This offering benefits widows, orphans, and the sick or it can be used toward furthering Islam.
- Since the giving of Alms helps the giver to salvation, they feel no sense of debt to the giver.

4. Fasting
- Muslims are expected to fast during the month of Ramadan. During this month Muslims abstain from food, drink and smoking during the daylight hours. At sundown they are allowed to partake of these pleasures again until sunrise the next morning. The fast develops self-control, devotion to God and identity with the destitute.
- More food is consumed during Ramadan in celebrations than any other month.
- Why fast?
    a. Spiritual exercise to train the spiritual muscle of self control
    b. Submission to God (to be in control of our evil desires so they are not in control of us)
    c. Test of submission (to do what God orders even if it causes pain to us)
    d. Remember those who have a 24-hours-a-day, seven-days-a-week Ramadan
    e. To encourage them, "If I can fast from lawful things, can't I fast from unlawful things?"

5. Pilgrimage
- Every Muslim is expected to make an official pilgrimage to Mecca at least once in his or her life. If one is unable to go due to health or financial resources a Muslim is permitted to have another person make the pilgrimage by proxy.
- This is to be performed by every Muslim once in his life (if physically able).
- Once completed "Haji" is added to the Muslim's name.
- It is only required of those who can afford it and are healthy enough to make the journey.
- It also serves as an annual conference for all Muslims.

6. Jihad
- Western media has placed a lot of focus on the concept of *jihad* or "holy war"
- **The word "Jihad" actually means striving.**
- In its primary sense it is an inner thing, to rid "self" from debased actions or inclinations, and exercise perseverance in achieving a higher moral standard.
- Sometimes it's considered the sixth pillar of Islam.
- Literally *jihad* means to "struggle."
- Interpreted 2 ways: against self and or against non-Muslim World

10. The PIA however did not derive any mythology or theology concerning the idols. Some polytheistic beliefs and practices had traces of the Abrahamic faith like the belief in the one Supreme God coupled with the belief in the existence of angels.
11. However there was no growth of any syncretistic system of belief. What emerged was an ill-assorted amalgam of beliefs and their by products. The PIA did not believe in the afterlife.

Arabia in Mohammed's time

- Various tribal religions
- Jewish communities
- Christian communities

Mohammed (Founder of Islam)

- Born about 570 in Mecca
- Orphaned at age 6
- Shepherd Boy raised by his uncle
- Worked the caravans
- Married a rich widow
- Had religious experience
- Hated idolatry
- Tried to convert Jews and Christians and was rejected
- About 610, claims to receive visions and messages.
- Fled to Medina, 622 (hegira)
- Return to Mecca, 630
- Unified Arabia by the time of his death in 632
- ***Muslims are expected to perform a pilgrimage to Mecca during their lifetime (Hajj) if they can possibly afford it.***

The Pillars of Islam

1. Creed /***Witness (Shahadah)***
2. ***Worship*** /Five daily prayers ***(Salat)***
3. Alms /***Tithing (Zakat)***
4. Fasting during Ramadan ***(Sawm)***
5. Pilgrimage to Mecca ***(Hajj)***

Haji denotes one who has made the Hajj
Some authorities add a sixth pillar:
6. Jihad or Holy War in defence of Islam.
Means active opposition to evil and injustice, more than literal warfare.

1. The creed

Muslims are expected to publicly recite the Shahadah (literally to "bear witness"):
"There is no god but Allah and Muhammad is the Prophet of Allah"
One must state this aloud publicly in order to become a Muslim. It is repeated constantly by the faithful.

- It is a quick way to renew the faith and remember God constantly
- As we engage in materialistic life, we forget God
- Islam requires the frequent remembrance and consciousness of God
- Remembrance of God keeps the spiritual motivations up

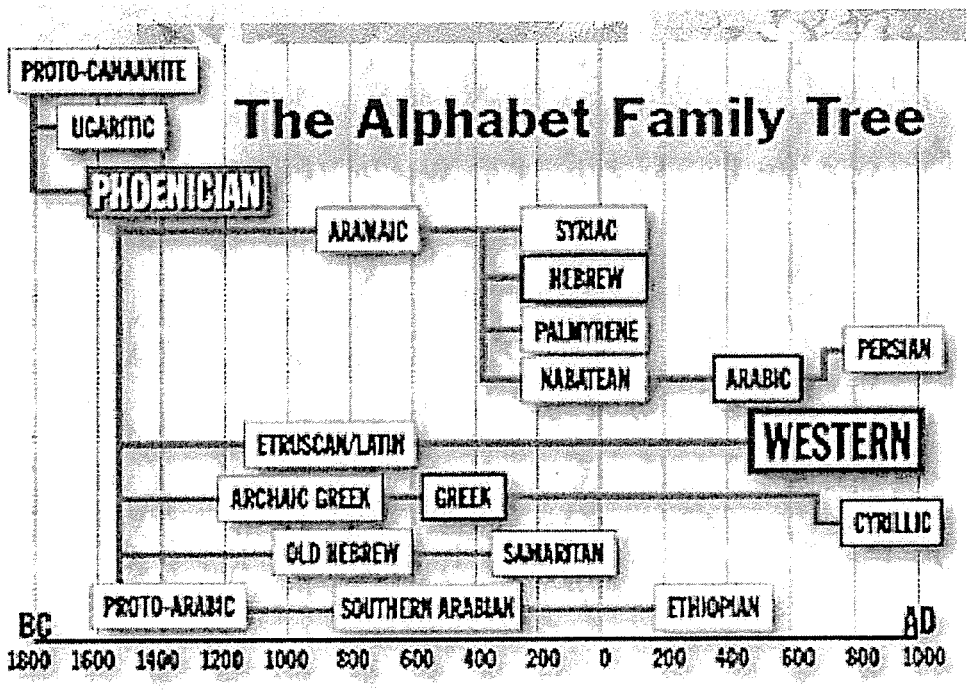
- Holy war is against other religions and their expansion of territory controlled by their ummah.
- Muhammad believed in using force to accomplish the submission required by Allah. He commanded his followers:
  - *"fight and slay the pagans wherever ye find them" (9:5)*
  - *"fight in the cause of God" (2:244)*

Salvation

- For Muslims, there is no way to know if they are going to heaven or not.
- All of their good and bad works will be put on a scale and weighed, but that is no guarantee.
- *The only way a Muslim can know if he is going to heaven is to die in a holy war fighting for Islam.*

E. Writing Systems

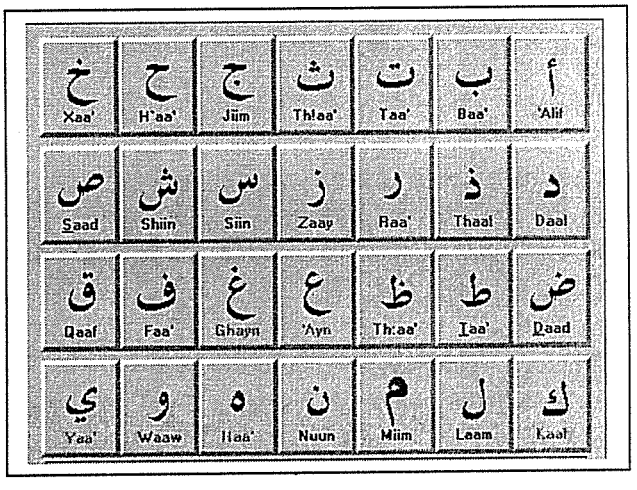
- Writing is believed to have originated in Mesopotamia (between Tigris & Euphrates rivers in modern Iraq).
- Sumerian (language isolate) and Akkadian (Semitic) were recorded on clay tablets.
- At first, the symbols were *pictograms*, each sign representing an object or idea.
- Gradually, they took on a range of meanings and eventually came to represent sounds.
- This early writing system was a system of lines and wedges (easier in soft clay than curves) and is known as *cuneiform (cuneus* is Latin for 'wedge').
- Cuneiform was first used for Sumerian/Akkadian materials about 2500 BC.
- Cuneiform was also used for other languages such as isolate Elamite, Indo-European Hittite and other Semitic languages, Ugaritic and Eblaite.



- After the rise of Islam in the 7th century, an increasing number of non-Arab Muslims used the alphabet.
- This prompted a need to facilitate reading and learning of Arabic.
- Abul Aswad al Du'ali created Arabic grammar in AD 688.
- He also created the system of Naqt or I'jam (letter-pointing).
- Next came the system for Tashkeel (vowel indication), which was later replaced with the current system of dots in AD 786.

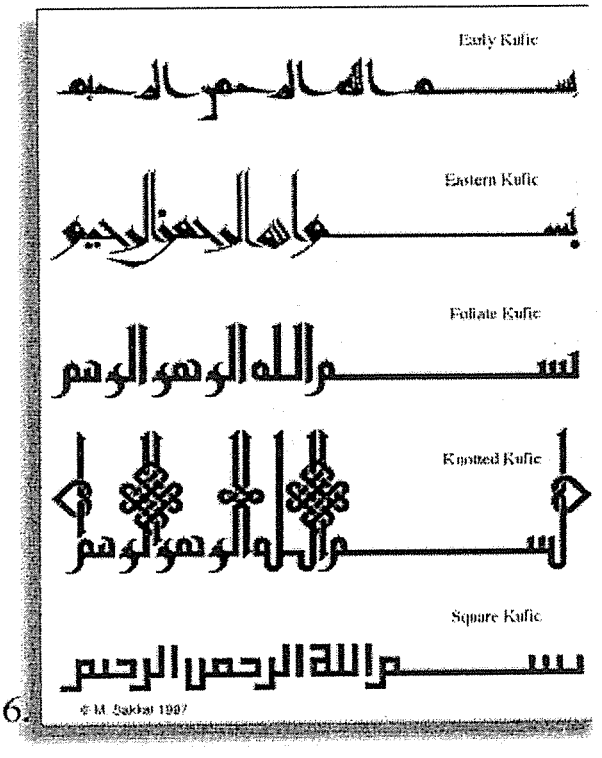
Arabic

Arabic developed from the Nabatean alphabet around the 2nd Century BC, an offshoot of the Aramaic alphabet. The Arabic alphabet is consonantal, written from right to left and is now used to write other languages such as Persian and Urdu. Each letter has different shapes depending on its position in the word as Arabic is written in a cursive style.



Cursive Scripts

- Abu Ali Muhammad Ibn Muqlah (AD 940) developed the first script to obey proportional rules.
- His system used dots as a measuring unit for line proportions.
- A circle with a diameter equal to the height of Alef was a measuring unit for letter proportions.



Kufic Style Calligraphy

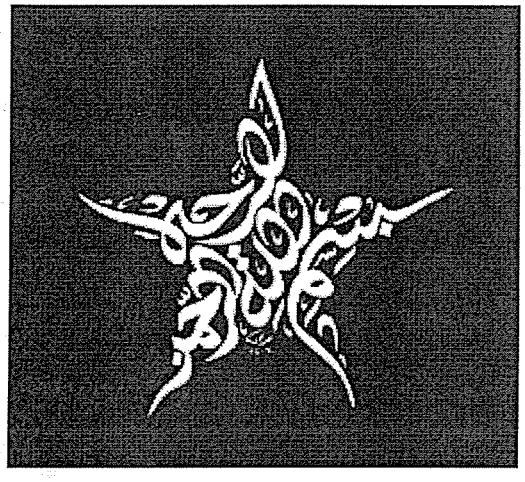
- The city of Kufah in Iraq was established as a soldiers' camp in AD 641, but quickly flourished into an urban center.
- There Arabic developed into an elegant and uniform script that became known as Kufic or Kufi.
- This reached perfection in the late 8th century AD and became the only script used to translate the Quran.

Other Cursive Styles

- Most early cursive examples lack elegance and were used mainly for practical purposes.
- Naskh (copying) was developed in the 10th century, then refined into an art form in Turkey in the 16th century.
- Thuluth is a more impressive, stately style often used for titles or epigrams.
- Nastiliq was developed in Iran in the 14th and 15th centuries. It very fluid and expressive, used often for romantic and mystical epics.
- Riq'a is the simpler style of everyday writing and is very easy to write.

Examples of Islamic Calligraphy

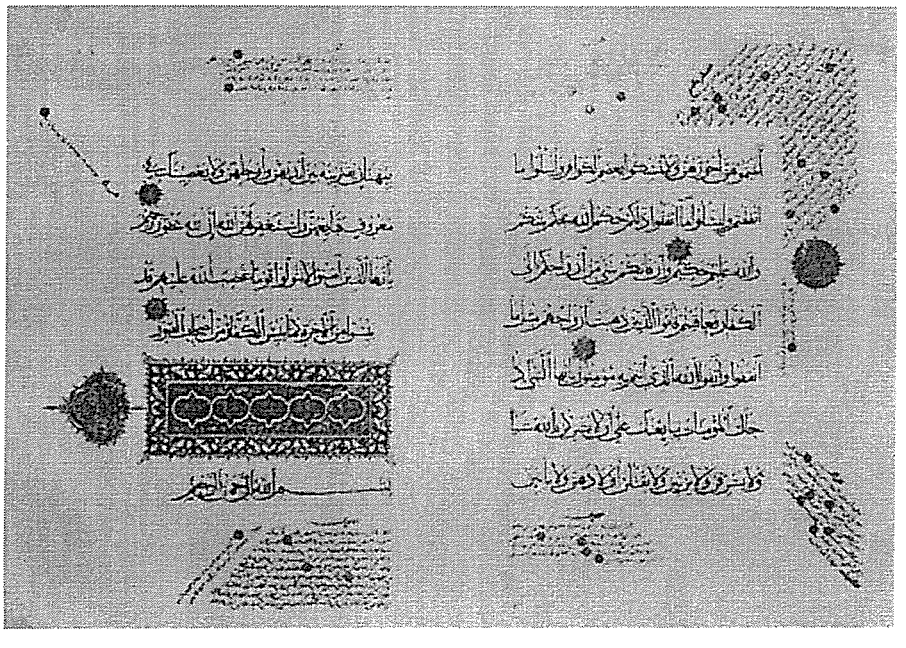
- The following examples were created by Hassan Sobhi Mourad.
- They have been displayed around Europe and the Arab world.



In the Name of God, Most Gracious, Most Merciful (Diwani Jali script)



Peace! - from a Lord Most Merciful!



Quran, Damascus, Syria, circa 1345 -1350 AD (Muhaqqaq script)

F. Arab Contributions

1. Trigonometrical Ratios: Arabs such as Al-Battani largely founded the science of trigonometry (e.g., algebra and analytical geometry).

2. Theology: Al-Ghazzali is considered the best theologian of Islam. His book, Destruction of the Philosophers, influenced Thomas Aquinas and Pascal.

3. Science: Ibn-al-Haytham was a noted mathematician who introduced the idea that light rays emanate in straight lines in all directions from every point on a luminous surface.

4. Philosophy: Ibn-Rushd was considered the greatest Muslim philosopher in Spain. He has influenced Jewish and Christian thought more than Islamic thinking. He distinguished between faith and reason by pointing out that the two need not be reconciled because they did not conflict.

5. Medicine: Ibn-Sina's contributions in the field of medicine are enormous. His studies became the approved textbook in the schools of Europe.

G. Lessons from our study...

1. God fulfilled his merciful plan to Hagar to make Ishmael's descendents too numerous to count (Gen. 12:2: 16:10).

2. God is a personal and relational (He spoke to Hagar who was not part of His main plan).

3. God keeps his words (Gen 16:12):
   - He will be wild donkey... live in hostility/to the east of his brothers...
   - Current situation in Middle East?

4. "Shortcut" sins have long-term effects.
   - Abraham's weak moments brought forth Ishmael.
   - Arabs and Jews have fought for centuries ever since!

5. God's plan for Israel and the Arabs is still unfinished...

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Socio-Economic Backgrounds to the Old Testament

Family Life[1]

1. Perspectives on Men

2. Perspectives on Women

   a) What are the key differences between women of pagan cultures and Israelite women?

   b) What do these differences tell us about God?

[1] Gower, 57-75.

3. Perspectives on Children

a) Mesopotamian Filial Adoption: A childless couple could adopt an adult outside the family to take care of them in their old age and perform religious rites in exchange for an inheritance (Gen. 15:2-4; cf. Kenneth Kitchen, *The Bible and Its World*, 70).

b) Mesopotamian Birthright: The oldest (or principal) son received a double share of the inheritance (Deut. 21:15ff.).

c) Value: Children (especially sons) were seen as the family's greatest asset.

Psalm 127

[3] Sons are a heritage from the LORD, children a reward from him.
[4] Like arrows in the hands of a warrior are sons born in one's youth.
[5] Blessed is the man whose quiver is full of them. They will not be put to shame when they contend with their enemies in the gate.

Towns & Villages[2]

Hospitality[3]

[2] Gower, 186-201, 234-40.
[3] Gower, 241-49.

1

Education in the Old Testament Times

(Hartati Muljani, Patrick Loh and Ronnie Ang)

In the ancient world of the Old Testament times, there was no such thing as a "secular culture." The Hebrews believed that all truth came from God the Creator, Judge and Redeemer who revealed to man the knowledge necessary for his own welfare. The Hebrew approach to education arose from their understanding of revelation from God. Education to the Hebrews were therefore about learning what God wanted them to learn.

A.W. Morton, "Education,"
Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible, 2:212

Education in Israel seen through 4 different stages

1. Abraham to Slavery in Egypt.
2. Moses to Pre-kingdom.
3. Kingdom Period.
4. Exile and Post-Exile

1. Abraham to slavery in Egypt

Abraham grew up in Ur and was therefore exposed to the civilized city's customs, practices and education. Scriptures did not mention whether Abraham attended any schools but he was nevertheless sufficiently exposed to be able to communicate with God and understand the covenant making.

From Abraham to his descendants settling down in Egypt, there exist no formal education system. They were mainly shepherds or herdsmen learning whatever trades necessary through working it out in the field. But the children were to be taught the things of God, including the covenant, circumcision and the promise of the land to posses as instructed in Genesis Chapter 17.

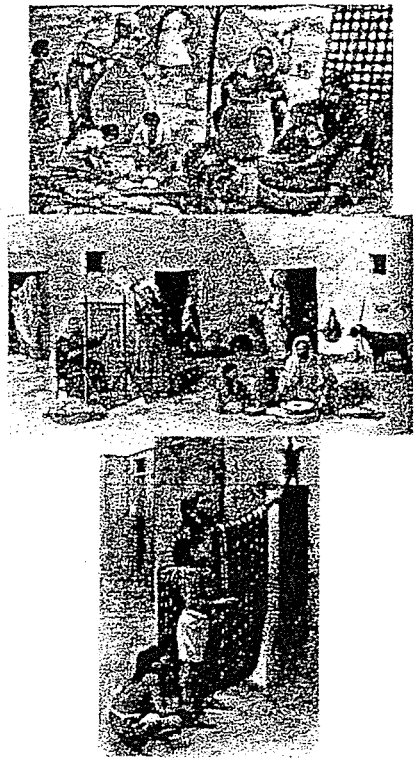
These were therefore taught and passed down to the children through the generations orally.

2. Moses to Pre-Kingdom

Moses was brought up and instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians (Acts 7:22). He would probably have learnt Egyptian hieroglyphics and Canaanite Script. He was therefore able to write and record the laws and commandments of God for the future generations as they prepared to occupy the land.

As the people were moving about in the desert, there was no system for formal education in teaching the children any trades or the laws of God. Family trades and skill were the responsibilities of each family.

2



The boys were taught the necessary skills of agriculture by their fathers and....

the girls were taught domestic skills by their mothers and...

the laws were taught to them orally in which they were to hear and remember while covenant-related customs and practices including circumcision and pass-over celebrations were also taught and carried out within the family household.

The Levites being called into priesthood would also be responsible in passing down the sacrificial acts and practices as recorded by Moses to their descendents for the continuation of their priestly responsibilities.

The prophetic school also began to develop after they conquered the land. Samuel was taught by Eli and he himself set up a school of prophets at Ramah (1 Sam 19:18-21).

3. Kingdom

With the establishment of the kingdom the education became more structured. The teaching of the knowledge of God was not monopolized by the priests but was also done by the prophets in their private schools. The students, however, were mostly the prophets' sons. Elisha was a disciple of Elijah the great prophet. There were also groups of prophets in Bethel which could be from the prophetic school of Elijah (2 Kings 2:3-7) as well as in Jerusalem under the teaching of Isaiah (Isaiah 8:16). Besides the Law, these prophets had more material for teaching both the prophets-to-be and the people of Israel. This was made possible by writing the prophecies e.g. Baruch wrote for Jeremiah, and Isaiah's disciples wrote for Isaiah (Jeremiah ... and Isaiah 8:16). The students had the task to preserve this writings.

The scribal training in Israel included the training to master foreign languages. This training was needed as the Aramaic language was used as the international language. The use of repetition as a way to impress the law to the students was described in Isaiah 28:9-10. "Precept upon precept, line upon line" was a description of a child's learning to spell. Other writings that were used as teaching materials were David's songs, the songs of Asaph, Heman and Jeduthun, and the wisdom of Solomon which was the proverbs.

4. Exile and Post-exile



With the destruction of the temple, synagogue were developed for the purpose of worship, education of the law and government of the community. The return from exile also saw a specialized class of scholars known as scribes. According to Jewish tradition, these scribes were equivalent to the earlier prophets and came to be known as 'lawyers', 'doctors of the law' and 'rabbis'. They taught and explained the written Law of God and applied the Law to contemporary life.



The teachings were written down to form the Mishnah at about AD200. And during the last centuries before Christ, a later group known as the Pharisees seem to have organized a school system for the children. Scholars believed that proper structure of education system existed by the time Christ came due to the influence of the Greeks.

Education in Pagan Nations

1. Education in ancient Sumer

Sumer, though being one of the earliest civilization in the Ancient Near East, had developed a proper education system of schools for the children. This followed the discovery of making tablets of imprints from baked clay and the development of the cuneiform characters.
A school system in Sumer consisted of:

Head: supervision of writing to maintaining discipline in the classroom. Assisted by preceptors.

Senior teacher: administer examinations and provide adult leadership.

Senior clerk: general administration concerning lives of students.

Specialists: providing instructions for teachings in the various subjects.

Scribes: primary responsibility for teaching the students.

The subjects taught include:

Mathematics, music, languages, public service, magic, geography and botany.



The aim of education was to prepare the students for religious, commercial and governmental work. The schools were simple open courtyards or sheltered brick walls.

4

Such education system in Sumer set the pattern and influenced other surrounding cultures, including those of Babylonians which had similar structure but benefited more due to advancement in architecture and buildings, languages, math and science over the years of civilization.

2. Education in ancient Egypt

Papyrus was the preferred medium for writing in Egypt as compared to tablets of clay used by Sumerians in Mesopotamia and hieroglyphs was the language of ancient Egypt.

Education in Egypt were concerned in three main areas for which schools were developed:

1. Schools for priests connected with temple and the subjects were mainly medicine, magic and religion.

2. Royal courts that specially trained young men destined for position of authority and texts were mainly aimed at character building. Moses would have likely been trained in such courts as a prince.

3. Schools sponsored by royal administration for the purpose of training people necessary for the running of government. This includes secretaries, clerks, letter writers and so forth.

4. Subjects taught include arithmetic, geography, poetry and astronomy.

During the old kingdom, education were restricted to children of bureaucrats but in the new kingdom (1567-1085 BC), the need for a huge workforce opened the schools to all qualified children. Scribal schools proliferated in the palace and temple.

The text during this period also included new emphasis on personal piety and the scribes developed a powerful sense of self-importance which was clearly revealed in the text The Satire of the Trades (which exalted the scribes over other occupations such as soldier, barber, fowler, harmer, potter and metal smith).

Observation and Conclusion

Jewish education was concerned about teaching the Torah while pagan education were advanced and structured for the need of the nations. Academic and technical developments were much neglected in Israel as the aim was about person and character forming according to the commandments of God. Skills for living were learnt through apprenticeship instead.

It is the duty of every father to instruct his children as commanded by the law (Exod. 10:2; 12:26-27). The children of Israel were initially taught at home by their fathers before schools were developed during inter-testamental time after exile.

There existed many educational symbols that the fathers can use to teach their children. The **feasts and festivals** when celebrated were opportunities for them to explain the root and purpose behind such celebrations (Exod. 13:8, Deut. 4:9; 6:20-21). **The tabernacle and temple** were symbols of God's presence in their midst and each visit to such place allowed them to understand the great things God had done in the past. The prophets also left behind many **prophetic messages and symbols** that gave the Israelites many fulfilled prophecies to learn while anticipating those that were yet to be fulfilled (Isaiah 8:1, Jeremiah 13:1-11; 28:13, Ezekiel 12:6).

Education to the Hebrews were therefore about learning what God wanted them to learn.

RURAL LIFE (student class presentation)

What is Rural Life?

Write a definition here:

A. SEASONS AND MONTHS IN ISRAEL

Everyday life in Israel was largely affected by that which was beyond the control of man, the seasons and the weather.

The Two Seasons

In the yearly cycle, the four seasons are not as clearly marked as they are in the lands to the north of Israel. But to the Jew every season was a special time and a reminder of the promises of God, as He said to Noah "seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter" (Genesis 8: 22).

Though the Bible specifically mentions summer, winter, spring and autumn, it may come as a surprise to know that the Bible never mentions four seasons, but only two.

The Hebrew word "stav," translated today as autumn, is mentioned only once in the Bible in the Song of Solomon: "for lo, the winter is passed, the rain is over and gone..." (Song 2:11), so "stav" really speaks of the time of the winter rains.

The Hebrew word "aviv," translated today as spring is mentioned twice in the Bible, both referring to a stage in the ripening of barley rather than a season. The month of Aviv (*hodesh ha'aviv*) is the time when this ripening of barley takes place. This is of course the Hebrew month of Nisan.

There is no mention of a season called spring anywhere in the Bible. Therefore we can conclude that the Bible only recognizes two seasons, summer and winter, or as the writers of the Talmud put it, "the days of sun" and "the days of rain."

The Four Seasons

Under the influence of the Greco-Roman civilization, the Jews divided the year into four seasons by using the original Hebrew names of the months in which each season began:

Tishri (October)
Tevet (January)
Nisan (April)
Tammuz (July)

The Climate

The climate of Israel is for the most part a land of sunshine and good weather. Though the land constituted a very small geographical area, there are considerable differences in temperature. For example Mount Hermon (located 40 miles north of the sea of Galilee), with its white snowcaps all year-round, towers 9000 feet above sea level, while the Dead Sea is 1292 feet below sea level. The land of Israel enjoys sunny blue skies from the beginning of May to the end of September, with little or no interruption, and this made it possible for the large number of pilgrims traveling to Jerusalem for the various Feasts, to spend several days with Christ in the wilderness.

All along the Mediterranean coastline the lands have a climate that is almost tropical. The winters are wet and the summers are hot and dry. Because of the blessing of this seasonal contrast in Israel, snow will fall on the mountains and tropical fruits will ripen in the plains.

Time

The Romans reckoned the hours from midnight, a fact which explains the apparent discrepancy between John 19:14, where, at the sixth hour (of Roman calculation), Pilate brings Jesus out to the Jews, while at the third hour of the Jewish, and hence the ninth of the Roman and of our calculation (Mark 15:25), He was led forth to be crucified. The night was divided by the Romans into four, by the Jews into three watches. The Jews subdivided the hour into 1,080 parts (*chlakim*), and again each part into seventy-six moments.

Rainfall

In Israel the amount of rainfall depends on how high above sea level one stands. It rains much more in the mountains then it does in the plains. The mountains many times capture the storm clouds and prevent them from reaching inland. The highest mountains, those north of Galilee, receive the most rain. For example, in the hills of Judea they may only receive 20-30 inches of annual rainfall whereas Mount Hermon and the other mountains in the area may receive 60 inches. As you reach the southern tip near Beersheba it may only rain less than 8 inches.

It is interesting to note that because of the Rift, the long straight land trench of the Jordan valley, the city of Jericho receives very little rainfall, maybe 4 inches annually, while in Jerusalem, only 15 miles to the West there is approximately 20 inches of annual rainfall. This may explain why Lot chose the area of Sodom and Gomorrah to dwell, and why 2 1/2 of the 12 tribes of Israel decided that the land east of the Jordan was a good land and remained there (Num. 32). During Roman times this land became famous for its fertility. In fact, Mark Antony had given his balsam plantations in this territory to Cleopatra.

Another interesting fact is that the rainfall in the land of Israel was never really consistent. Sometimes there were very wet winters and other times they were famines and drought. This fluctuation played a vital role in history of God's people teaching them that they needed to depend on Him rather than any certainties in the climate.

The Dew

In many areas in the land of Israel, especially along the coastline, there were extremely heavy dews. They came in from the Mediterranean on the summer days, and then fell to the ground as it cooled into night. Some areas along the coast had dew three-quarters of the year, which would provide for them nearly one-quarter of their moisture. This also played a major part in the life of the people of Israel. Elijah the prophet, for example, when he predicted the coming drought said, "there will be neither dew nor rain" (1 Kings 17:1).

B. WORK: CANAANITE AGRICULTURE / SHEPHERDING

Reasons for these two main types of making a living

When the Jewish people entered Canaan, they took up agriculture after the semi-nomadic life of forty years in the wilderness. They were entering into work that went back in their own history for hundreds of years and into a country that was extremely in rich plants. Ur of the Chaldeans, where Abraham had come from, was sustained by a healthy agricultural system based on irrigation ditches from the riverbank, stone ploughshares, and flint sickles. With this technology the Chaldeans grew two crops each season.

When the bulk of the population had left the nomadic life and was living in towns and villages, they still needed shepherds. The nomadic stage of life was never forgotten; in their statement of belief, the Jews began, "My father was a wandering Aramean" (Deut. 26:1-5).

CANAANITE AGRICULTURE

1. The Gezer Calendar

By the time the Jews dispossessed the Canaanites there were a considerable number of crops. A boy from those days wrote an exercise of the "thirty days hath September" variety, and it has been discovered in Gezer. It tells what was being done through the year in agriculture:

The two months are olive harvest	Sep/Oct
The two months are planting grain	Nov/Dec
The two months are late planting	Jan/Feb
The month is hoeing up of flax	Mar
The month is barley harvest	Apr
The month is harvest and festivity	May
The two months are vine tending	Jun/Jul
The month is summer fruit	Aug

Using the ancient schoolboy's calendar exercise, we can see some of the things they grew.

2. Grain crops

The two most important grains were wheat and barley, but millet was grown as well (Ezekiel 4:9). Wheat grew in the coastal Philistine plain, the Jordan valley, and the valley of Jezreel. Barley could be grown on poorer soil and needed a shorter growing season, and it was less valued as a crop than wheat (Psalm 81:16).

The cycle of grain production began when the former rains came in Oct/Nov and softened the soil sufficiently for it to be worked. The rains then continued in intermittently and heavily throughout the winter. Joel calls them "the autumn rains" and the "spring rains" (Joel 2:23). Without rain the plough could not be used because the soil would be baked hard in the summer sun (Jeremiah 14:4). It was not pleasant work because the winter rains were heavy and cold, and it was always tempting to wait for warmer days (Proverbs 204:4).

3. Agriculture / Farming

Today, most farming is done by the use of modern machinery. Very little is done by man or by animal. In Bible times, farmers did not simply sit on a tractor. It was done by hand and sometimes with the help of a beast.

To understand farming in the Canaan region, we need to know something about the climate and seasons of this land. Rain or water is an essential part of successful farming. It would be very unusual for us to go several months without any rain at all. But for those living in Canaan, this happens almost every year. In the dry and hot season (the summer months) there is hardly ever any rain. During the other half of the year rain does fall and it is colder. This is the wet season. The following chart shows the different seasons in relationship to farming:

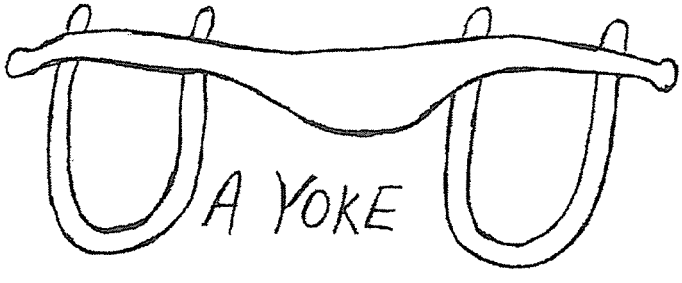
AUTUMN	WINTER	SPRING	SUMMER
OCT NOV DEC JAN FEB MAR APR MAY JUN JUL AUG SEP			
Early Rains ← Wet Season		Latter Rains ←	Summer Dry Season
PLOWING + PLANTING ←	growing	→	REAPING (HARVESTING)

The success of agriculture depended not on the rise of great rivers (e.g. Ur and Egypt) but on the winter rains, which varied from year to year, and on the conservation of water. Moses warned the Jewish people that the climate was uncertain and that their security was in God, who would provide the annual rainfall (Deut. 11:10-15). So uncertain was the rainfall that the Canaanite religion was based on a form of sympathetic magic that ensured fertility for the soil. Baal was a storm god (see Deut. 11:16-17). Now let us consider some of the important aspects of farming.

(1) Plowing

The ground must be prepared to receive the seed. In the Canaan region, the summer months are very hot and dry and the soil becomes almost stone hard. Before the seed is planted something must be done to soften the soil.

God Himself does the first thing to soften the earth. In the last part of October or the first part of November God sends rain that softens the earth (Psalm 65:10). These are called the *early rains.* Once God has done His work, then man is ready to do his work of plowing. The farmers always wait for the first or early rains before beginning to plow. Once the rain has come, the hard-working farmer will start plowing. The plough used by the farmer was a very simple instrument. It was a wooden stick with a small metal point. Usually two oxen (bulls) joined together by a yoke pulled the plow.



As the plough would go through the ground, it would loosen up and break up the soil. The blade of the plough would cut into the ground to a depth of about 3 or 4 inches. The soil must be prepared to receive the seed.

(2) Planting / Sowing

To sow means to scatter seed over the ground. After the ground is ploughed, the farmer is ready to plant the seed. The farmer would carry the seed in a basket or in a pouch attached to his waist. He would then take a handful of seed and throw or scatter the seed with a sweeping motion of the hand and arm. The seeds would then fall on the prepared soil.

After sowing the seed, the farmer would then plough the field again so that the soil would cover the seed (otherwise the birds would eat the seed). Sometimes the farmer would do this by dragging branches or a log behind a team of oxen.

(3) Harvesting / Reaping

Harvest time was a time of great joy. By about the middle of April the grain is ripe and ready to be cut down. To "reap" means to cut down the grain. This was done with a sharp sickle (a hand-sickle). The farmer would hold the stalks in his hand and would cut them off close to the ground with the sickle. The fallen stalks would then be bound into sheaves or bundles.



A view of a ripening wheat field in the lowland (Shephelah) region of Israel - This picture was taken in the late spring

(4) Threshing

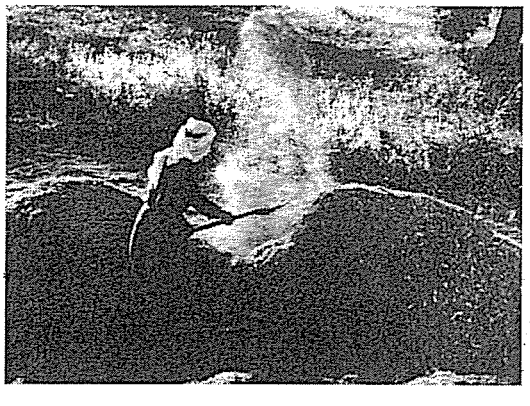
To "thresh" means to separate the wheat or barley kernels (or grain) from the stalk. The kernels of wheat or barley are used in making bread. The stalk is not used for food.

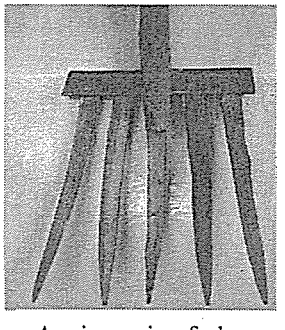
Threshing was done in two ways. For small quantities the sheaves (bundles) were beaten with a stick (Ruth 2:17) and this would force the grain to separate from the stalk. For large quantities the sheaves would be placed on the ground and oxen would trample on them (and they would trample out the grain).



Threshing floors like this one in the hill country of Ephraim were large open areas, oftentimes built on bedrock, located slightly below the highpoints on hillsides. Here grains were initially processed.

(5) Winnowing





A winnowing fork

After threshing, the worthless stalk (called chaff) and the grain are all crushed and are lying together. Winnowing is the method the farmer uses to separate the good from the bad. The farmer takes a pitchfork or a *shovel* (see picture above) and uses it to throw the *grain* (valuable part) and *chaff* (worthless part) into the air. The chaff and straw are lighter and are blown away in the wind. The grain or kernels of wheat (or barley) are heavier and they fall to the ground. When the farmer is finished winnowing there is nothing left on the ground but a pile of good kernels. The bad goes and the good remains.

SHEPHERDING

(6) Sheep and Goats

Sheep were needed to provide wool, meat, and horn containers. The fleece itself was sometimes used for clothing. The writer to the Hebrews remembered people persecuted in the past that wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins (Hebrews 11:37). The meat was eaten on special and sacrificial occasions and was normally boiled, occasionally roasted; the Passover lamb was always roasted whole (Exodus 12:9). Sheep also provided milk, and even their horns were used as containers for oil (1 Samuel 16:1; 1 Kings 1:39) or as a trumpet (Leviticus 25:9; Numbers 29:1; Joshua 6:4).

A sheep in the Bible can be either a sheep or goat; the same word is used for both on many occasions. Goat's milk was not only important because of the quantity (some six pints per goat, per day) but also because it was used to make a type of yoghurt (*leben*) and cheese (Proverbs 27:27). One goat was therefore kept with the family even though others went with the shepherd, and it often became a family pet. The meat may not have been as good as lamb or veal (see Luke 15:29), but it was substantial and often used for a meal (Judges 6:19) and was therefore used for sacrificial purposes (Leviticus 1:10).

Goat hair was woven into sackcloth that was used for tent coverings as well as for coarse clothing. The hangings in the tabernacle were made of goat hair (Exodus 26:7; 35:23, 26). It was used for stuffing articles such as pillows (1 Samuel 19:13), and the skin itself was a source of excellent leather. When a goat was killed, its skin was often filled with fat and sewn up to become a water carrier (a goatskin bottle).



Sheep Young Goat

(7) The shepherd's task

In the springtime, after the winter rains, there was plenty of pasturage near the village. After the grain was reaped, the sheep were allowed to feed on anything that was left. When that was gone they had to leave the area and seek the dried grasses that remained under the hot sun (1 Chronicles 4:39-40). Sources of fresh grass with a water supply (still water, if available) made such movements possible (Psalm 23:2). When surface water had disappeared, it was necessary to use well water for the sheep. It was customary to cover the wellhead with a large heavy stone that required several men to lift, thus protecting water rights. (The story of Jacob gives an example of this happening. Genesis 29:10 shows that Jacob had incredible strength, which also comes across in other parts of his story.



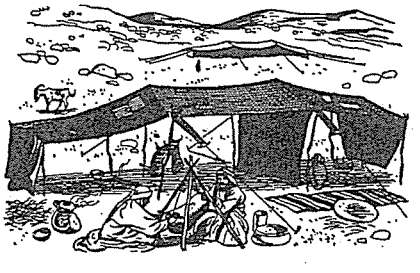
This picture of a flock of sheep and a few goats in Jordan was taken during the dry season. Note the meager vegetation available.

The sheep needed constant protection because in Bible times there were plenty of dangers to the flock from the wild animals that came up from the jungle surrounding the Jordan River gorge. Lions and bears were common (Judges 14:8; 2 Kings 2:25), and David's adventures in protecting his own flock were commonplace (1 Samuel 17:34-36). Amos tells of a shepherd who actually tried to take a sheep from a lion's mouth (Amos 3:12). Hyenas and jackals were also common. Not accidentally Jesus said that the Good Shepherd would give his life for the sheep (John 10:11). The shepherd had to fight back, because he had to make good any losses to the owners (Genesis 31:39; Exodus 22:10-13). Any hired help the shepherd might have used did not have the same kind of commitment (John 10:12-13).



C. HOUSING

1. Tent dwellings



Rural people who were nomadic lived in tents. The patriarchs Abraham, Isaac and Jacob lived most of their lives in tents, in and around the land of Canaan. It was said of Abraham that he "pitched his tent" in the vicinity of Bethel (Gen. 12:8), that Isaac 'pitched his tent in the valley of Gerar" (Gen. 26:17) and Jacob "pitched his tent before the city of Shechem" (Gen. 33:18).

Tents are made of black goat's hair. It is spun and woven into narrow strips to form a crude cloth. The coarse, heavy fabric is useful to protect the family in winter from the cold winds; in the summer the tent serves as a sunshade. Goat's haircloth that is used in making these tents is porous when it is dry, but becomes waterproof after rains have shrunk it together.

a) Erection of the tent

The main overhead portion is composed of a large canvas which is held up by poles, and the ends of the tent cloth are drawn out by cords which are tied to pegs and driven into the ground. It was one of these tent nails that Jael used in killing Sisera (Judges 4:21).

b) Interior Structure

The inside of the tent was divided into two or sometimes three sections. The entrance of the tent would lead into the first area that was for men. This first area was also the place for receiving guests. Beyond this was a second section for women and children. Sometimes there was a third area for servants or for cattle. The women in the inner area were screened from the view of those in the reception area, but they could hear the conversations in that room. Thus Sarah in her apartment overheard what the angel guest said in the reception area of Abraham's tent (Gen. 18:10-15).

c) Furnishings in the tent

- Rugs cover the ground, but at night the beddings are brought out, composed of mats or carpets on which to sleep
- Sacks of grain: hand mill and the mortar in which the grain is impounded
- Skin bags or bottles for water and other liquids, illustrated in the story of Hagar (Gen. 21:14-19)
- Leather bucket to draw water from any well
- Earthen pitcher used by women to carry the water
- Cooking utensils such as pots, kettles and pans
- Serving dishes include mats, platters or large dishes, cups
- Primitive lamp burning olive oil to illuminate the tent by night

The hearth is dug in the earth where the fire was kindled, and several stones are placed around it. The cooking utensils are placed on these and over the fire.

2. One-room houses

The average home of the common people was a one-room dwelling. The walls of the houses were often made of bricks, but these were not ordinarily burned, but were composed of mud dried in the sun. Job speaks of these kinds of dwellings as "houses of clay" (Job 4:19).



a) Roof

Construction of the roof:

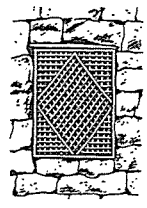
- Laying of beams
- Putting on a mat of reefs
- Coating clay over it
- Scattering sand and pebbles
- Using a stone roller to make it smooth to keep out the rain

Two characteristics of the roof are:
1) Being built largely of mud, it leaked whenever it rained hard; hence the proverb which likens the difficulty of keeping the water out with the difficulty of controlling a nagging wife (Prov. 27:15).

2) The roof was green because the seeds in the mud (natural and from drying out grain) sprouted. This is mentioned in 2 Kings 19:26; Psalm 129:6 and Isaiah 37:27.

The roof was used as a vantage point (Isa. 22:1), as a place for coolness and quietness (Zephaniah 1:5) conducive for worship, for drying crops, as a storage place (Josh. 2:6) and to sleep on a hot summer's night.

b) Some other features



- A single window was small and high and sometimes had a wooden lattice (Prov. 7:6) to keep out intruders.
- Raised platform: The floor was divided into two parts. The area nearest the door was leveled but at the back of the room was a raised platform of stone that was used for family activities such as eating, sitting and sleeping.
- At night, the lamp was lit. To sleep without a light is considered by most villages to be a sign of extreme poverty.

D. FAMILY LIFE

1. Emphasis on large families



Since child labour was a necessity in the fields, families were large. Children had to grow up fast in the hill country villages. As soon as they were able to take directions (Isa. 7:15), they were put to work in the home or fields. As they grew older some were sent to guard the herds (1 Sam. 16:11) or were apprenticed to craftsmen in the village. Children contributed to the daily chores and work in the family.

The father was the undisputed head of the household. Discipline and respect were due the head of the household. He was responsible for overseeing spiritual matters for the family, for educating the children, teaching the sons a trade, administrating the business, buying and selling, and negotiating the marriage of his children. Proverbs often refer to the father's instruction of his son. "Listen, my son, to your father's instruction "(Prov. 1:8; cf. 6:20).

Mothers bore the children, nursed them, and raised them in their early years. She held the household together by performing a wide variety of tasks. Proverbs 31:10-31 gives us a good description of the honor accorded the mother of the house. Her role in the family and society was to actively participate, along with her husband, in securing the best for her family, household and community.



Children were expected to be respectful and obedient to their parents (Exod. 20:12). A disobedient child was considered a disgrace to the family and the community (e.g. 1 Sam. 2:22-25 on Eli's sons).

2. Family continuity

Upon the death of the father, the authority that belonged to the father was handed down to his eldest son who took the position of leadership. Thus Isaac became the new leader over his father's household upon the death of Abraham. He and Rebekah had been living in that household under Abraham's authority; but the succession of authority passed on to him as the son (Gen. 25).

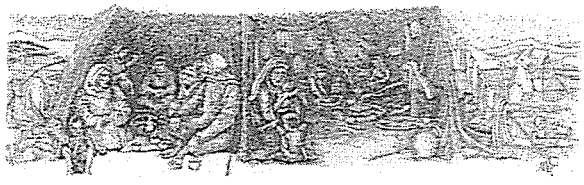
3. Youngest boy was often the shepherd.

The youngest boy in the family became shepherd of the sheep, especially when the peasant was a shepherd as well as a farmer of grain. As the older son grew up he transferred his energies from sheep raising to helping the father with sowing, plowing and harvesting the crops, and passed on the shepherd's task to the next younger boy. And so the job was passed from older to younger until the youngest of all became the family shepherd. Jesse raised his family of eight sons (1 Sam. 16:11) and David, being the youngest, became the family shepherd.

E. HOSPITALITY

Hosts believed that God himself sent them guests. Thus hospitality became a sacred duty. Abraham's enthusiasm in receiving the guests indicates his belief as such a sacred duty that he ran to meet the three men, asked Sarah to get the food ready, fetched a calf and "hurried to prepare it" (Gen. 18:2-7).

If a guest was entertained among the tent dwellers, the first section of the tent was the regular guest reception area. The visitor was invited to sleep in the open tent entrance with the men.



Guest accommodation among farmers was on the raised platform with the family or upon the roof if the weather was good. Saul was entertained on the rooftop and Samuel called to him in the morning (1 Sam. 9:26).

- One of the first things done for a guest was to offer him a drink of water. This recognized him as being worthy of peaceful reception. The sharing of food was a special act of hospitality.

- When a host accepted a man to be his guest he thereby agreed at whatever the cost to defend his guests from all dangers. In Psalm 23:5, the Psalmist felt utterly secure though he had enemies close by him, when he knew that God was his host (Ps. 23:5).

The farmer's law of hospitality

- Eating grain in the field.

When the grain in the wheat field had passed the "milk stage", and had begun to harden, it was then called "fereek" and was considered to be delicious to eat raw. Natives of the land would pluck the heads, and then rub them in their hands and eat them. For centuries the unwritten law of hospitality has been that travelers may eat of the wheat as they pass by or through a field, but they must not carry any away with them. The law of God allowed this privilege (Deut. 23:25).



- Grain left for the poor

The Mosaic Law also had a provision in it to help take care of the poor, in connection with the grain harvest (Lev. 23:22). Ruth the Moabites made use of this provision as a stranger in the land by gleaning in the field of Boaz (Ruth 2). The farmers would not think of touching the corner of their field when harvesting. It was left for the poor and the stranger.

F. TRAVEL

Reasons why people during the OT / NT times did not enjoy travel

1. Bandits (Judges 9:25; Luke 10:30)

2. At the mercy of the local people (Judges 19:15; Job 31:32)

Staging posts for the ordinary traveler did not develop until Persian times. Even then, most of them were havens for prostitution. This is the reason why Jesus told his disciples to seek accommodation in private homes (Matthew 10:11) and why it was important that Christians at that time to be given to hospitality (Romans 12:13; 1Timothy 3:2; 1 Peter 4:9).

3. Limited food

Travelers had to bring sufficient food for the journey (especially if there was a lack of staging posts or hospitable people to stay with).

4. Taxes

Taxes applied to people, goods, wheels and axles across successive tax districts even if there were no frontiers to cross.

5. Heat

Summer temperatures were extremely high so people usually traveled in the mornings or in the evenings to avoid the midday sun. The wise men from the East took advantage of their knowledge of the stars to travel at night (Matthew 2:9).

6. Time taken to greet one another

It was not considered polite simply to pass the time of day. It was necessary to ask and receive answers to questions like "Where are you going? Where are you from? What is your name?" etc. Such salutations took an inordinate amount of time. Jesus considered these salutations to be so great a problem that he told his disciples "do not greet anyone on the road" (Luke 10:4). Was Jesus trying to teach the disciples to be rude?

7. Animals have to be cared for

They needed rest and food. Each animal had different capabilities.

Modes of travel

1. The DONKEY

-Basic pack animal
-Must be near settlements
-First animal used by nomadic people
-Can carry people as well as goods
-Were used for pulling a plough (Isaiah 32:20)
-Cannot be paired with a larger animal such as an ox (Deut. 22:10)
-Can be harnessed to corn mills and to waterwheels
-Some marked out for royal usage (Judges 5:10)
-Replaced by mules as status symbol
-Gradually became a symbol of labour and peace although always the mount of ordinary people (Zechariah 9:9; John 12:15)

2. The CAMEL

-Domesticated about 2000 BC
-Gave nomadic tribes independence of settlements
-Able to store enough water for several days, so they can travel long distances
-Abraham used camels only for long journeys (Gen. 24:3, 64), as did Jacob (Gen. 31:17)
-Important beast of burden. Can take more than a donkey (Camel Load – 2 Kings 8:9)
-Not easy to ride however. So when traveling in groups, the humans would travel on a donkey whilst the camels would bear the loads.
-Most common type is the single humped camel (Dromedary). Although it lacks endurance (little fat to store water), it could travel at nearly 16 km/h

3. The MULE

-Mules were not used much until David's time because an animal bred from mixed parentage was contrary to the law (Leviticus 19:19)
-Used as royal mounts (2 Samuel 13:29). When Solomon rode on David's mule, it was sign that he was the heir apparent (1 Kings 1:33, 44)
-By the time of Isaiah, they were very common (Isaiah 66:20)

4. The HORSE

-Horses of the Bible were similar to the Arabian horses of today
-Used for war, though not so much to provide a mounted cavalry as to provide a means of pulling chariots (Genesis 41:43, Exodus 14:9)
-Also used on a farm (Isaiah 28:28)
-David used horses and chariots but it was Solomon who really developed their usage (1 Kings 4:28; 2 Chronicles 1:14; 9:25)
-Became a status symbol to have a horse, particularly if one had a chariot to go with it
-By Roman times, horses became symbols of power (Psalm 147:10)
-Dependent on good roads

What have I learned from this presentation?

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VII. Religious Backgrounds to the Old Testament

A. Pagan Religions of the Ancient Near East

1. Thought Questions

a) Compare and contrast the Gilgamesh Epic with the biblical record of this event (cf. OTS, 83a).

(1) Comparisons: both have multi-level boat, persons saved, birds (raven & dove), sacrifices, dimensions & chronology given, acts of worship, heroes blessed

(2) Contrasts: planned by council of gods, to stop noise disturbing gods' rest, hero saved secretly, cube-shared boat, 6 days & night, landed on Mount Nisir, sacrifice of appeasement, punishment later regretted, hero became immortal

b) What characteristics were common of most, if not all, Ancient Near East pagan religions?

c) How was Israel's religion distinct from these other religions of the OT era?

d) How did reading pagan writings for today's class help you appreciate Judaism? How did it aid your own walk with God?

e) What principles regarding how Israel dealt with Ancient Near East pagan religions should the church today also follow in respect to other religions?

Principle for Israel	Modern Parallel

Ancient Near Eastern Deities

DEITY	COUNTRY	POSITION	REFERENCE
Baal	Canaan	Young storm god	I Kings 16:31; 18:18-46
Ashtoreth (Astarte)	Canaan	Mother-goddess; love; fertility	Judg. 2:13; 10:6; I Sam. 12:10; I Kings 11:5
Chemosh	Moab	National god of war	Num. 21:29; Judg. 11:24; I Kings 11:7, 33; Jer. 48:7
Molech (Malcam, Milcom)	Ammon	National god	Zeph. 1:5; Jer. 49:1; I Kings 11:5, 7, 33
Dagon	Philistia	National god of grain	Judg. 16:23; I Sam. 5:2-7
Queen of Heaven	Canaan	Same as Ashtoreth (similar to Anat and Ishtar)	Jer. 7:18; 44:17-25

Palestinian Deities in Scripture

DEITY	COUNTRY	POSITION	REFERENCE
Marduk	Babylon	Young storm god; chief god	Jer. 50:2
Bel	Babylon	Another name for Marduk	Isa. 46:1; Jer. 50:2; 51:44
Nebo (Nabu)	Babylon	Son of Marduk	Isa. 46:1
Tammuz (Dumuzi)	Sumerian	Young storm god	Ezek. 8:14

Mesopotamian Deities in Scripture

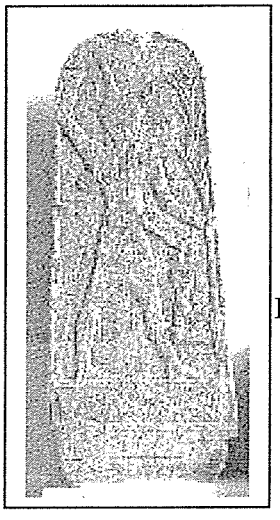
EGYPT	MESOPOTAMIA	CANAAN-SYRIA
Osiris—death **Isis**—life **Horus**—sun **Hathor**—mother goddess **Re**—sun **Seth**—evil; storm **Ptah**—artists; Memphite creator	**Anu**—head of pantheon **Enlil**—storm **Ea-Enki**—fresh water and subterranean water **Sin (Nanna)**—moon **Ishtar**—sex, fertility **Ninurta**—war **Tiamat**—salt water	**El**—head of Canaanite pantheon **Anat**—war **Mot**—death, sterility **Adad**—Syrian storm god **Teshub**—Hittite storm god **Hannahanna**—Hittite mother goddess **Arinna**—Hittite sun goddess

Major Deities not in Scripture

Walton 83

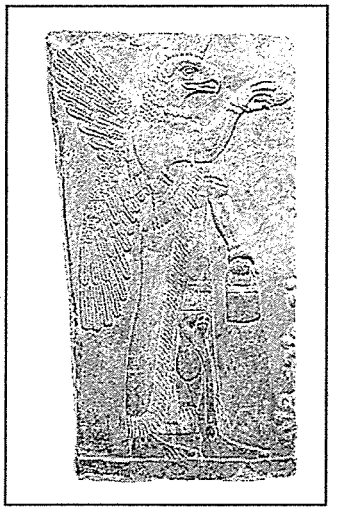
Deities of these civilizations, particularly Egypt, vary as to attributes and rank, depending on the time period and the areas of the country. The ones listed are basic.

SINGAPORE BIBLE COLLEGE



COMPARATIVE STUDY OF

PAGAN RELIGIONS OF ANTIQUITY



A PRESENTATION HANDOUT FOR THE COURSE:

OLD TESTAMENT BACKGROUNDS

SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY (ENGLISH)

BY

ALVIN TOH CHEUIN

BAYARMAGNAI JIJIGSUREN

TAN AI CHENG

LECTURER: DR RICK GRIFFITH

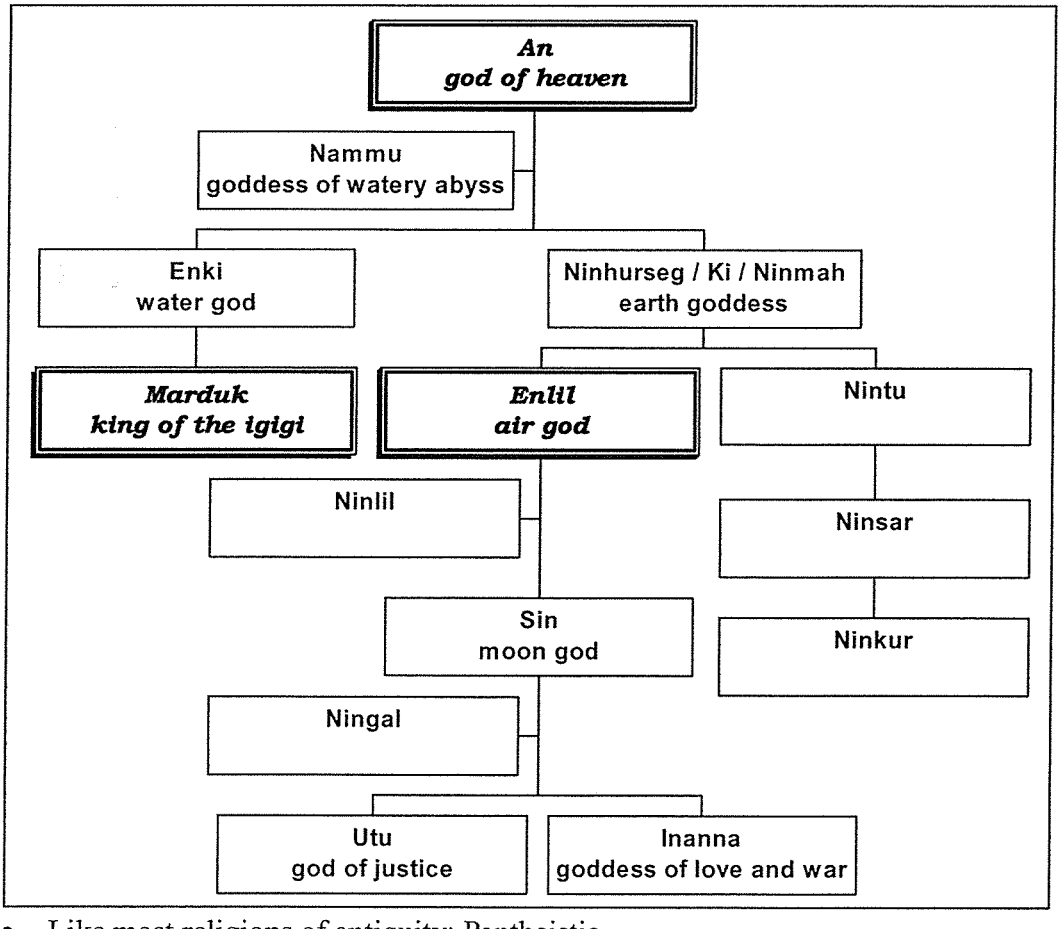
SCOPE

- Compare and contrast the major pagan religions of antiquity. How did their worship differ from one another?

METHODOLOGY

- Gathering of information on pagan religions according to the main people groups, eg Sumerians, Babylonians, Assyrians, Canaanites, Egyptians etc.
- Comparative analysis of religions under 3 main categories: characteristics of gods, temple worship, general beliefs and practices.
- Consider what we can learn from these counterfeit religions.

SUMER-BABYLONIAN PANTHEON



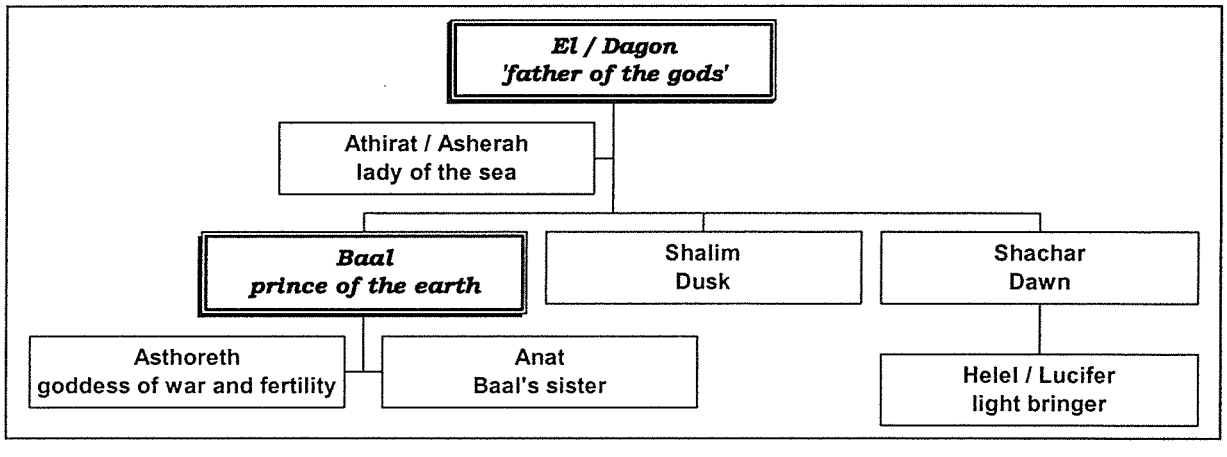
- Like most religions of antiquity: Pantheistic

- An (Anu) was the first god who pre-existed.

Enlil - Sumerian for "wind/storm-god".
- Initial leader of the pantheon.
- He is a short-tempered god who was responsible for the great flood.
- He is the creator of mankind.
- He was also god of the lands and of the earth.
- Banished to the place of the dead for raping his bride-to-be, Ninlil.

Marduk
- He supplants the Sumerian Enlil to become the leading figure of their pantheon.
- He is a "King of the Igigi", collective term for the gods.
- He was of proud form and piercing stare, born mature, powerful, and perfect and superior.
- He has four eyes, four ears, and emits fire from his mouth when he speaks. He is also gifted in magic.
- He has fifty names many of which are those of other deities whose attributes he usurped: 1. Asarluhi, 2. Marduk, 3. The Son, The Majesty of the Gods, 4. Marukka, 5. Mershakushu, 6. Lugal-dimmer-ankia (King of heaven and earth), 7. Bel, 8. Nari-lugal-dimmer-ankia, 9. Asarluhi, 10. Namtila, 11. Namru, 12. 'Asare, 13. Asar-alim, 14. Asar-alim-nuna, 15. Tutu, 16. Zi-ukkina, 17. Ziku, 18. Agaku, 19. Shazu, 20. Zisi, 21. Suhrim, 22. Suhgurim, 23. Zahrim, 24. Zahgurim, 25. Enbilulu, 26. Epadun, 27. Gugal, 28. Hegal, 29. Sirsir, 30. Malah, 31. Gil, 32. Gilima, 33. Agilima, 34. Zulum, 35. Mummu, 36. Zulum-ummu, 37. Gizh- numun-ab, 38. Lugal-ab-dubur, 39. Pagal-guena, 40. Lugal-Durmah, 41. Aranuna, 42. Dumu-duku, 43. Lugal-duku, 44. Lugal-shuanna, 45. Iruga, 46. Irqingu, 47. Kinma, 48. Kinma, 49. E-sizkur, 50. Addu, 51. Asharu, 52. Neberu, 53. Enkukur. He becomes a firm lawgiver and judge who, when angered is not stoppable.

CANAANITE PANTHEON



- Like most religions of antiquity: Pantheistic

- The Ammonites, Phoenicians, Moabites etc derived their gods from the Canaanite pantheon, just as Cannanites borrowed heavily from the Assyrians.

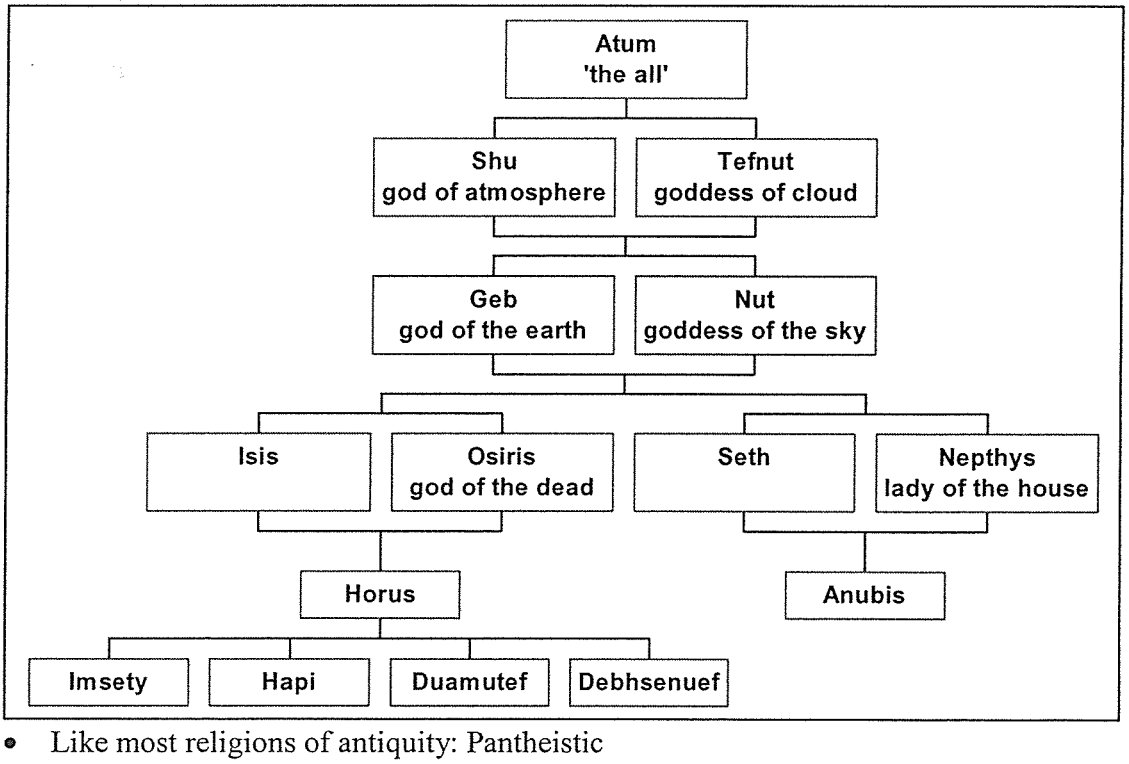
Baal

- Literally master, owner, husband
- Pince of the earth, god of fertility, rider of the clouds, lord of the sky and earth, god of thunder and lightning etc.
- this may be a title rather than a proper name because it is applied as a title to Hadad, the Amorite storm god whose cult object is the bull from 3000-1500 BC; it is equated with the Egyptian god, Seth in other texts and certain of the practices associated with Molech worship are correlated with Baal worship in the Torah (see Jer.19:5)
- He was slain by Mot but revived by Anath
- he was worshipped in the high places of Moab (Nu.22:41)
- The chief male deity of the Phoenicians and Caananites.

Dagon

- From the Hebrew word "dag" meaning fish. Dagon is the diminutive form of dag and signifies a "little fish". However the affection for this god appears to be immense. In certain ancient texts, this god is addressed as "dear little fish".
- From the Hebrew/Acadian word dagan meaning grain, thus Dagon is thought to have been a grain god.
- most associated with the Philistines in the OT with temples in Gaza (Judges 21, 23)

EGYPTIAN PANTHEON



- Like most religions of antiquity: Pantheistic

- Atum was the first god from which all other gods came. He was 'the all', 'perfection'. Sometimes also portrayed as Re or Ra, the sun god.

Amun-Ra

- Man with a ram-head.
- A ram Man wearing an ostrich plumed hat
- Amun was one of the most powerful gods in ancient Egypt. Yet he was believed to be swallowed up every night by sky goddess, Nut, and the reborn the following day.
- At the height of Egyptian civilisation he was called the 'King of the Gods'.
- Amun was important throughout the history of ancient Egypt. However, when Amun was combined with the sun god Ra he was even more powerful. He was then called Amun-Ra.

SIMILAR GODS BETWEEN PAGAN RELIGIONS

- The following is a sampling of the common gods shared by the following religions:

SUMER	BABYLONIAN
An - *God of heaven*	**Anu** - *Sky god*
Ki/ Ninmah	**Aruru/ Mammi** - *Mother goddess*
Enki - *Water god*	**Ea** - *God of the waters*
Enlil - *Air god*	**Ellil** - *Wind/storm god*
Nanna - *God of the sun*	**Sin** - *Moon god*
Inanna - *Goddess of love and war*	**Ishtar** - *Goddess of love and war*

CANNAANITE	PHILISTINE
El - *Father of the gods*	**Dagon** - *God of the grain*
Baal - *Prince of the earth*	**Baal** - *Lord of heaven*
Athtart - *Goddess of war and chase*	**Ashtoreth** - *Goddess of fertility*

PAGAN GODS LIKE HUMANS

- Had families and could procreate
- Ate and feasted and even got drunk
  - Dagon
- Experienced human feelings of jealousy, anger, lust etc
  - El (Canaanite god) who lusted after two ladies he saw, who later became his wives.
- Had feuds and battles amongst themselves
  - Many stories about the gods quarelling and fighting amongst themselves
- Have varying powers, not omnipotent
  - Various non-hostile 'creation' gods vs hostile 'chaos-death' gods
- Can die and re-live again
  - Ra, who dies every night and relives every morning.

OFTEN PORTRAYED AS HUMAN-ANIMAL

Dagon – Half human upper torso, fish lower torso and back
Horus – Human with hawk head
Ra - Human with eagle head
Anubis - Human jackal head
Enlil - Human with horse lower torso

PAGAN BELIEFS ON CREATION

SUMER-BABYLONIAN	Egyptian
Several creation myths exist; the longest is from Enuma Elish, tables I-V. It tells of Timat, mother goddess personifying the primeval ocean, fighting with the younger gods. Marduk, a leader of the younger gods, destroyed her and used her carcass as the present universe.	In the beginning, before there was any land of Egypt, all was darkness, and there was nothing but a great waste of water called Nun, The power of Nun was such that there arose out of the darkness a great shining egg, and this was Re. He could took any form and whatever he named came into being. By naming, he brought into being all creation. Last of all, he named mankind and took the shape of a man and became the first Pharaoh.

Observation:

- the mythical beginning of Sumer-Babylonian depict creation with war and violence. A classical case of the "fittest survive" mentality.
- The creator God of Egyptian is powerful. Yet, when he became Pharaoh and lived among men, his power seemed to dissipate into the air.

PAGAN BELIEFS ON THE GREAT FLOOD

Sumer-Babylonian	Egyptian	Assyrians
The gods had decided to destroy mankind. A god (probably Enki) warned the priest-king Ziusudra ("Long of Life") of the coming flood by speaking to a wall while he listened. He was instructed to build a great ship and carry beasts and birds upon it. In return, he was granted eternal life.	People had become rebellious. Atum, the first god, said he will destroy all He made and return the earth to the primoral water. (Unfortunately, the version of the papyrus with the flood story is damaged and unclear.)	The gods, led by Enlil, agreed to cleanse the earth of an overpopulated humanity, but Utnapishtim was warned by god Ea in a dream. He built a seven level ship with the seed of all living creature. It stormed for six days. Utnapishtim released a dove, a sparrow and a raven. Then he knew water had receded. After which, he made sacrifice to the gods and were given immortality with his wife to live at the end of the earth.

Observation:

- In Babylonian story, the destruction of the flood was the result of a disagreement among the gods. For Assyrian, it was because earth was overpopulated.
- Both Ziusudra and Utnapishtim were given immortality.

PAGAN BELIEFS ON LIFE AFTER DEATH

Sumer-Babylonian	Egyptian	Canaanites/ Phoenicians
Man was created as a broken, labor saving, tool for the use of the gods. At the end of everyone's life, lay the underworld, a generally dreary place. (Wolkstein & Kramer 1983: pp.123-4)	The Egyptians believed death was simply a temporary interruption, rather than a complete cessation of life. Eternal life could be ensured by means like piety to the gods, preservation of the physical of the physical form through mummification and provision of statuary and other funeral equipments.	Mot is the Mistress of the Underworld. Yet, there is no clear allusion to the state of existence after death. In the funerary texts of kings and commoners alike is the wish for a long life. The general belief is humans received what rewards due in this life and they have only the gloomy netherworld to look forward in the next.

Observation:

- Besides Egyptians who believed in some form of hope in next life based on works, the other cultures did not have favorable views of the after-life.

PAGAN BELIEFS ON GODS AFFECTING PRESENT LIVES

Sumer-Babylonian	Egyptian	Canaanite/ Phoenician
Gods were viewed first as providers for necessities, then as protectors for enemies, next as parents with whom personal relationships were possible, and finally (in the first millennium) as cruel warriors.	Because people had to stand before Osiris' tribunal for judgement, it was necessary to live according to maat, Egyptian concept of justice and righteousness. Admission to heaven was contingent on individual's record on the Book of the Dead. It contains list of sins and taboo one not to have doneto merit divine favor.	Canaanites were religious, expressing their worldview through myths in which the forces of nature were personified and deified. They attempted to engage with their gods through rites in hope of inducing changes in nature for the betterment of their lives.

Observation

- Consideration for morality was not so distinct in Sumer-Babylonian and Canaanite/ Phoenician cultures.
- Egyptians' motivation for morals was based on fear and entry to heaven on good works

PAGAN WORSHIP - PRIESTS

Sumer-Babylonian	Egyptian	Canaanites
• King = official representative of deity, insure fertility of land through careful observance of New year rituals • Elaborate priestly bureaucracy to maintain temple and its deity	• Pharaoh = divine, ultimate high priest who built temples and oversaw their maintenance. • Lay priests operated small chapels with patron deities not	Epic of Ugarit • King believed to have continuing close contact with gods, represented human community before gods. • Twelve priestly families with a high priest among them • Others: cultic prostitutes, singers, makers of vestments

• Queen might manage affairs of temple goddess.	worshipped anywhere else.	and sculptors. Priests function as scribes as well.

Observation:
- Political rulers assumed to have close contact with gods.
- Women function as special roles in temple.

PAGAN WORSHIP – TEMPLES

Sumer-Babylonian	Egyptian	Canaanites, Phoenician
• Temple = one-third of city, may lease land for income • Ziggurat, a stepped tower of three to seven stages • divine statue at foot of temple carved from wood, adorned with precious stones • Temples built on ruins , eventually becoming man-made mountains.	• Hypostyle hall for religious rituals, only important priests and pharaoh enter • Second hall only high priest and pharaoh can enter • Sanctuary -> shrine where the statue of the god or goddess was kept. god or goddess may enter the statue. • Sacred lake, next to the temple.	• Temples = dwelling place of deity • courts = festive assemblies • statue to depict deity • Tophet (child cemeteries) containing some twenty thousand cinerary urns with the remains of infant children and animals.

Observation:
- grand architecture depicting central importance of religion
- existence of statue to representing gods

PAGAN WORSHIP – RITES AND RITUALS

Sumer-Babylonian	The Temple of Ishtar (Ashteroth in Philistine, Venus in Greece)
• Public rituals, food sacrifices and libations. • Monthly rituals • On New Year, King married Inanna (fertility god) • City deities, family deities • People prayed by clasping hands in front of chests	• Sacred priestesses (temple prostitutes) embodied the goddess. Women go to the temples as sacred prostitute, and are worshipped as the incarnation of goddess. • Men would be welcomed and served by the Priestess by representing the divine male principal, the Horned One, the God. • Thus, Ishtar is called, "The Whore of Babylon, who leads men into fornication". • In return, she bless crop and grant fertility to women (to sacrifice to Baal?)

Observation:
- men and women go to temples not to worship but to be worshipped

Canaanites/ Phoenicians	Child Sacrifice
• Rituals imitate actions of characters in myths with recitation of myths • Indulge in sexual perversion in worship: adultery, incest, homosexuality, bestiality, so as to stimulate deities to engage in sexual acts believed to bring out seasonal cycle (Leviticus 18:3, 24-30)	• Placing live babies into burning hands on statues of Baal in return for good harvest • In Palestine, infants in jar with food offering in small vessels found under foundation of buildings; at least two showed marks of fire. They are believed to strengthen walls of houses and cities.

Moabites	Philistines
• National god Chemosh, worshiped by primarily by offering of first-born son (2 Kings 3:26-27)	• Baal, Lord of heaven, woshiped by both ritual immorality and child sacrifice (2 Kings 16:7, 21:6)

Observation:

- Exchange of life for material well-being depicts the extent of their immorality

APPLICATION

- Israel was influenced by paganism (psalms 106:34-42), so today, we should beware syncretism etc
  - Children colouring book ('the many faces of the Great Mother' - Ashteroth)
  - Girl scouts oath (reduce emphasis of God)
  - World Council of Churches (prayers to goddess Sophia)

- God centredness vs self indulgence (2 Cor 10:4-5)

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2. Polytheism

a) One key difference between pagan and Israelite religion is that every Ancient Near East religion taught the existence of several gods. Israel stood unique in its insistence upon monotheism. Even the monotheism in Egypt during the reign of Amehotep IV (Akhnaten) lasted only briefly (1350-1334 BC).

b) "Indeed, in every major culture throughout the ancient world of which we have any record, the overwhelming consensus was that the universe had been created by often a single and usually supreme divine being (even in notoriously polytheistic cultures)."[3] Thus, even polytheistic cultures had a tradition of monotheistic creation—a belief that undoubtedly went back to Adam and his descendants.

c) The polytheism of antiquity does not mean that these religions lacked a high god in their pantheon of deities. See the chart at the end of this study.

3. Monotheism

One should not assume that the true knowledge of God was lost completely in antiquity (as monotheistic creation above noted in the ANE). This makes sense since man innately knows there is but one God from creation (Rom. 1:20). In fact, other societies outside of the ANE also taught monotheism as well:

a) China: Knowledge of God is innate, preceding Christian missions. Taoist pagan philosopher *Lao-Tzu* of China wrote (6th cent. BC), "Before time, and throughout time, there has been a self-existing being, eternal, infinite, complete, omnipresent . . . Outside this being, before the beginning, there was nothing."[4] He obviously did not get this concept from Genesis as the Bible reached China centuries later!

b) Greece:

(1) Even in Greece with its well-known pantheon of deities the concept of a Creator God appears in remarkably close parallel to Genesis 1. Hesiod wrote in his 8th century BC *Theogony*, "First of all the Void came into being . . . next Earth . . . Out of the Void came darkness . . . and out of the Night came Light and Day . . ."[5] Yet the fact that Hesiod had a debased view of this Creator shows that he did not get this information from Genesis.

(2) Xenophanes lived two centuries after Hesiod and showed a much higher view of God: "Homer and Hesiod attributed to the gods all the things which among men are shameful and blameworthy—theft and adultery and mutual deception . . . [But] there is one God, greatest among gods and men, similar to mortals neither in shape nor in thought . . . he sees as a whole, he thinks as a whole, he hears as a whole . . . Always he remains in the same state, changing not at all . . . But far from toil he governs everything with his mind."[6]

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[3] Bill Cooper, *After the Flood* (Chichester, England: New Wine Press, 1995), 18.

[4] Lao-Tzu, *Tao-te-ching*. Trans. Derek Bryce (Lampeter, UK: Llanerch Pub., 1991), 13; cited by Cooper, 16.

[5] Hesiod. *Theogony*, tr. Norman Brown (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1953), 15; cited by Cooper, 19.

[6] Jonathan Barnes, *Early Greek Philosophy* (Harmondsworth, England: Penguin Classics, 1987), 95-97; cited by Cooper, 19.

(3) Plato also sought to replace Hesiod's perverse thoughts with a more reasonable model that was undoubtedly based on concepts that preceded Hesiod. Plato wrote, "Let us therefore state the reason why the framer of this universe of change framed it at all. He was good, and what is good has no particle of envy in it; being therefore without envy, he wished all things to be as like himself as possible. This is as valid a principle for the origin of the world of change as we shall discover from the wisdom of men . . ."[88]

c) Atheism

(1) But did the Ancient Near East have atheists? These were virtually nonexistent. To date anthropologists have not discovered an atheistic civilization of *any* age. This is why the Bible says only fools claim there is no God (Ps. 14:1). Even Buddhism, which is technically atheistic, gives the impression of worship of many gods due to its emphasis on appeasing spirits.[89]

(2) One key exception in antiquity was Greece. While other Greek philosophers taught monotheism, it appears that others arose to combat this true depiction of God:

(a) Thales of Miletus (ca. 635-545 BC) is generally thought of as the first materialist since Aristotle called him the "founder of natural philosophy." But other statements attributed to Thales teach creationism.[90]

(b) Anaximander (ca. 610-540 BC) studied under Thales and provides the first *recorded* challenge to creationism. He seems to be the first written evolutionist in his statement that Plutarch recorded as from Anaximander: ". . . originally, humans were born from animals of a different kind . . ."[91] However, his theory is so developed that he probably had built upon the teaching of many before him.

4. Nature of Pagan Deities

a) Morality of the gods was sinful—judgments were arbitrary.

b) Many were only local deities (esp. Canaanite).

c) Nature was often seen as personal (vs. inanimate in Judaism)

d) Syncretistic: religions of the plains (right-stage, cf. p. 19)

e) Myth was acceptable, as these religions were not historically based.

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[88] Plato, *Timaeus and Criteas*, tr. Desmond Lee (Harmondsworth, England: Penguin Classics, 1965), 42; cited by Cooper, 20.

[89] William S. LaSor, "Religions of the Biblical World," *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 4:79.

[90] Barnes, 61 and 68 respectively.

[91] *Ibid*, 73.

5. Pagan Worship Practices in the Ancient Near East

   a) Sacrificial system

      (1) Blood sacrifice (origin in Gen. 3:21?)

      (2) Child sacrifice practiced by Ahaz (2 Kings 16:3) and others (Ezek. 23:39)

   b) Priesthood

      (1) Not genealogically based

      (2) Open to both men and women (which led to cult immorality)

   c) High places

      (1) 2 Kings 16:4

      (2) God's plan (Deut. 12)

   d) Detestable elements

      (1) Masochism—1 Kings 18

      (2) Sacred prostitution—Baal and fertility religions

      (3) Child sacrifice—at least for Canaanites

      (4) Hittite concept of "sin" was an offense to the deity as the gods were unconcerned with the "righteousness" of their worshippers.[92]

6. Contrasts Between Monotheism and Polytheism

	Monotheism	Polytheism
Truth	Absolute	Relative
Idols	Prohibited	Accepted
Religions	Judaism, Christianity, Islam	Hinduism, Mormonism

[92] H. A. Hoffner, Jr., "Religions of the Biblical World: Asia Minor," *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 4:85.

7. How One's View of God Affects Morality & Mission

Pagan	Israel
Horrible god	Holy God
↓	↓
Man seen as OK in comparison	Man seen as sinful
↓	↓
Seeks pleasure & material needs	Seeks spiritual needs
↓	↓
Sacrifices appease deity for sex, food & money	Sacrifices atone sin to reconcile God & man
↓	↓
Local deity makes them rich	God forgives sin
↓	↓
Massacre others for wealth	Mission to others for their good

Note above the logical and chronological progressions. The point here is that people always become like the deity they worship. The pagans that God told Israel to annihilate worshipped horrendous deities (demons). As the Canaanites, Philistines, Amorites, etc. focused upon these bad examples, the people in turn became like them—bloodthirsty for more wealth and pleasure with no real spiritual concerns.

In like manner, the right side shows how Israel should have functioned. When God is properly seen as the sinless ruler of the universe who loves man, Israelites would naturally put spiritual concerns above their physical, material, sexual, and social needs. This eventually should have resulted in Israelites discharging their duties to reach the pagan nations with an evangelistic purpose.

Of course, it didn't work out like this in reality. The Lord knew that these nations would be a snare to his people, so he commanded them to eliminate them from the land (Deut. 13). God knew that Israel would become as morally corrupt as these pagans were if they worshipped their gods, so they should be destroyed and intermarriage was forbidden. Israel obeyed only to a limited extent, as even in the book of Joshua and at the time of David the land was not completely rid of the Philistines and Canaanites. The pagan people left in the land became a snare to Israel. This resulted in a miserable failure of Israel reaching any of the other nations with the truth of God.

What lessons do you think are here for the church of God?

8. Salvation

a) Appeasement was a greater concern than relationship. "It is fairly common to hear Christians say that Christianity is not so much a religion as a relationship; it is not often realized that exactly the same was true for the Jewish people."[1]

(1) Deuteronomy 6

(2) Judaism/Christianity vs. Islam

b) As far as I know, none of these religions taught salvation by faith alone. Only in worship of Yahweh do we have a God of grace who acted to redeem humans.[2]

c) Individual salvation was not an emphasis within pagan nations in the Ancient Near East. Their concern was the here-and-now rather than the afterlife. Israel also shared this lack of concern. OT verses addressing salvation and redemption generally reflect deliverance from one's enemies rather than deliverance from the power and guilt of sin (exceptions include passages such as Isa. 53).

B. Jewish

1. Perspective

As we now move into study of Judaism, first think through the worship service at your own church. How do the elements of your main church service reflect your theological understanding?

2. Dangers

a) When comparing Scripture with the many archaeological finds present today, two dangers must be avoided. First, one must not assume that Israel took all of its beliefs from the surrounding nations so that the nation had nothing different about it. Many unique elements do exist in the Old Testament.

b) The second danger is at the opposite extreme: to assume that since Israel's religion had a divine origin, *none* of the elements find parallels in the Ancient Near East. God's institution of Israel at Mount Sinai had several points of contact with other religions of that time.

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[1] Ralph Gower, *The New Manners and Customs of Bible Times* (Chicago: Moody, 987), 332.

[2] M. J. A. Hornsnell, "Religions of the Biblical World: Assyria and Babylonia," *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 4:94.

c) So Israel had both similarities and differences with pagan cultures:

Similarities	Differences (Unique Elements)
Animal Sacrifice was part of all ancient religious systems. Conservative scholars assume that God instituted this to Adam and his descendants (Gen. 4), but after Noah it was perverted.	Demoralizing Canaanite Cultic Practices held these pagans back from being a truly great culture. These practices were the worst in the entire Near East, including human sacrifice, sacred prostitution, eunuch priests, serpent worship, and brutal mythology with gods against gods. Canaanite sexual religion with its high god El, wife Asherah, and offspring in Baal and Dagon are related to the pagan "Queen of Heaven" (Jer. 7:18; 44:17), Roman sexual deities (Venus, Diana, Aphrodite) and Catholic Mariology. All these were part of the virgin cult that originated from earliest times in Babylonian mystery religion.
The Tabernacle instituted and built at Mt. Sinai had many similarities with those of pagan religions: portability, inner and outer courts, use of gold, sacrificial altars, priesthood, etc. (cf. p. 119 of these notes).	The Tabernacle of Judaism was also unique in some respects. For one, its specifics were designed by God Himself (Exod. 25—27) though it was built by men (Exod. 36:8—40:33). Also, it had God's very presence in the form of a pillar of fire at night and a pillar of cloud at daytime (Exod. 40:34-38).
Prophets: Men who delivered "messages" from Dagon or other deities to pagan kings such as to the king at Mari appear in societies other than Israel.	Prophecy: Pagan prophets gave briefer messages that were always in the king's political or military interests and sometimes with promise or threat, depending upon the king's response (Kitchen, 54-55). In contrast, Israel's prophets such as Nathan, Amos, Hosea, or Isaiah reproved and admonished even kings on issues of personal morality, social justice, or obedience to God. For a contrast between pagan and Israelite prophets, consult 1 Kings 22.

3. Monotheism

a) As already noted earlier, Israel stood unique among the pagan nations in its insistence upon monotheism. While many scholars advocate that monotheism began with Moses, the Bible *begins* with one Creator God (Gen. 1:1).

b) Although strictly monotheistic, Israel borrowed Canaanite religious language.

(1) Yahweh is depicted as storm-god (Ps. 18:7-15).

(2) Psalm 116:8 and other texts say the LORD triumphs over death: "For you, O LORD, have delivered my soul from death..." The Hebrew for "death" (*mot*) is the same word as the Canaanite god of death named Mot.

(3) "El" (e.g., "El-Shaddai") is the same as "El," head of the Canaanite pantheon.

4. The Jewish Temple

a) That temples played a huge part in OT life is seen in the fact that the NIV word for temple(s) appears 604 times!

b) Similarities between Jewish and Pagan Temples

(1) Purpose

(a) Both temple types worshiped a single deity. Although pagan religions were polytheistic, a single god had a separate temple dedicated to them rather than several gods being worshipped in the same temple.

(b) Sacrifices and offerings were characteristic of all ancient temples, pagan or Jewish. In the former they were to appease, whereas in the latter they atoned for sin.

(c) Both Jews and pagans viewed the temple not so much as the place where a deity was *worshipped*, but rather the place where the deity *dwelt*. These were in fact palaces of their divine king, although Solomon acknowledged that no "house" (*beth*) could contain God Himself (1 Kings 8:27). Interestingly, the Hebrew word *hêcāl* (הֵיכָל) means either "temple" or "palace" (BDB 228a).

(i) Infrequently it referred to the palace of Ahab (1 Kings 21:1) or of the king of Babylon (2 Kings 20:18 = Isa. 39:17; 2 Chron. 36:7; Dan. 1:4) or other pagan palaces such as those at Nineveh (Nahum 2:7).

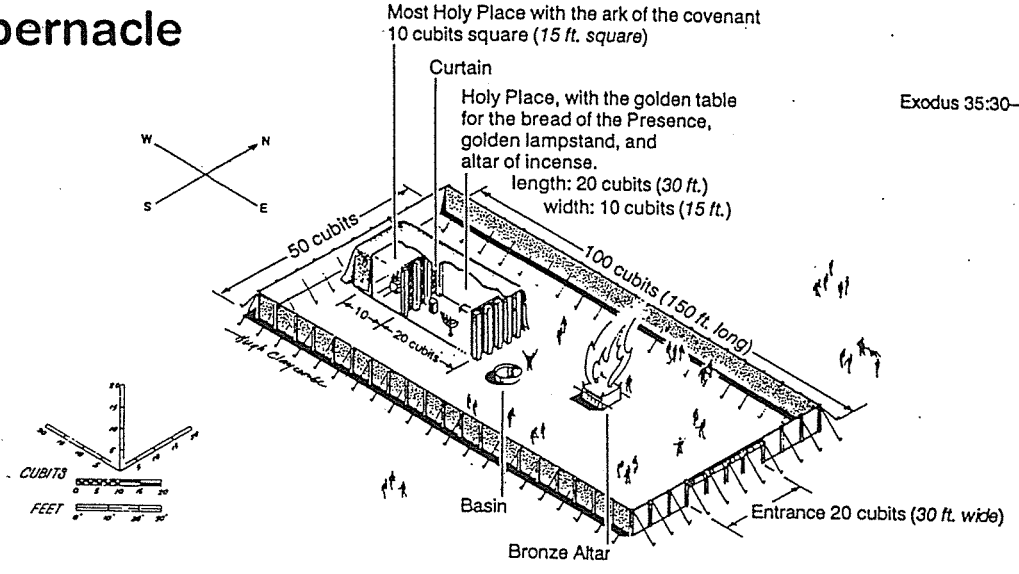
(ii) The same word *hêcāl* (הֵיכָל) is translated as the palace of God or "house of God," such as Solomon's temple (1 Kings 6:17)—which included the *bet* (בַּיִת) or holy place as distinguished from the inner sanctuary (1 Kings 6:1-2). Interestingly, though God's presence resided in the Holy of Holies, it was the holy place that was deemed the palace of the LORD. Jesus called the temple his "Father's house" (Luke 2:49; John 2:16).

The Tabernacle and Furnishings

The Bible Visual Resource Book, 25

Exodus

The Tabernacle



Exodus 35:30–36:38; 39:9–40:38

The new religious observances taught by Moses in the desert centered on rituals connected with the tabernacle, and amplified Israel's sense of separateness, purity and oneness under the Lordship of Yahweh.

A few desert shrines have been found in Sinai, notably at Serabit el-Khadem and at Timnah in the Negev, and show marked Egyptian influence.

Specific cultural antecedents to portable shrines carried on poles and covered with thin sheets of gold can be found in ancient Egypt as early as the Old Kingdom (2800-2250 B.C.), but were especially prominent in the 18th and 19th dynasties (1570-1180). The best examples come from the fabulous tomb of Tutankhamun, c. 1350.

Comparisons of construction details in the text of Ex 25-40 with the frames, shrines, poles, sheathing, draped fabric covers, gilt rosettes, and winged protective figures from the shrine of Tutankhamun are instructive. The period, the Late Bronze Age, is equivalent in all dating systems to the era of Moses and the exodus.

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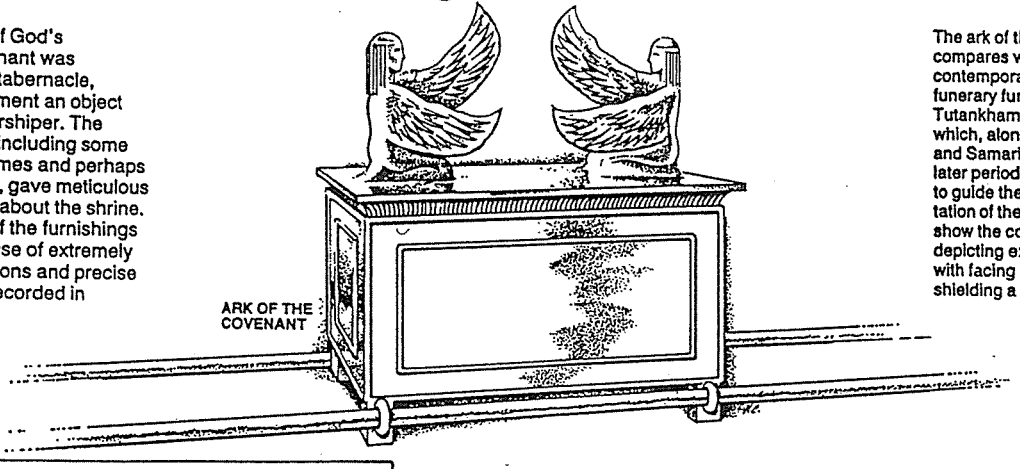
The Tabernacle Furnishings

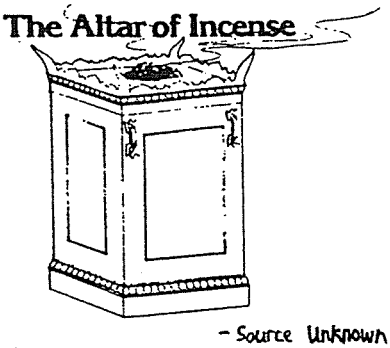
Exodus 37–38:8

The symbolism of God's redemptive covenant was preserved in the tabernacle, making each element an object lesson for the worshiper. The Levitical priests, including some with Egyptian names and perhaps Egyptian training, gave meticulous attention to facts about the shrine. Reconstruction of the furnishings is possible because of extremely detailed descriptions and precise measurements recorded in Ex 25-40.



The ark of the Testimony compares with the roughly contemporary shrine and funerary furniture of King Tutankhamun (c. 1350 B.C.), which, along with the Nimrud and Samaria ivories from a later period, have been used to guide the graphic interpretation of the text. Both sources show the conventional way of depicting extreme reverence, with facing winged guardians shielding a sacred place.

The Altar of Incense



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Exodus 30: 1-10 Read the description and purpose of the altar of incense.

The altar of incense was 1½ feet square and 3 feet high. Made of acacia wood overlaid with pure gold, it had rings on the corners in which to place long staves for carrying. The priests burned incense on the altar twice daily as an act of worship to the Lord (vv. 7-8). Elsewhere in Scripture, incense speaks of the worship of the saints (Rev. 5: 8; 8: 3-4).

– Source unknown

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The Tabernacle Furnishings

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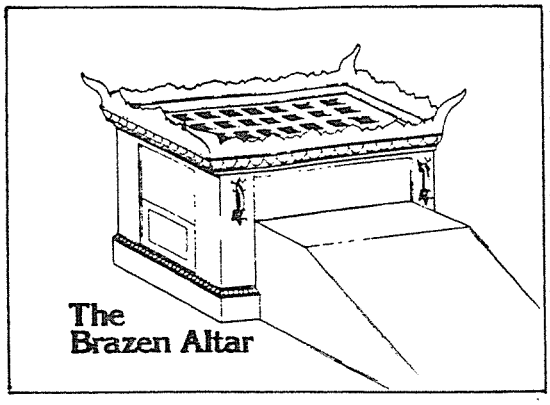
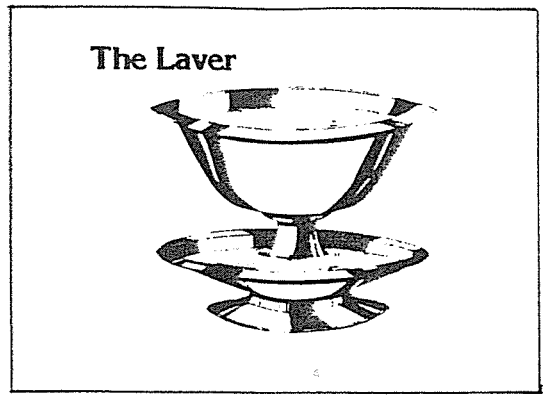


Exodus 27: 1-8. the dimensions (7½ feet square and 4½ feet high)

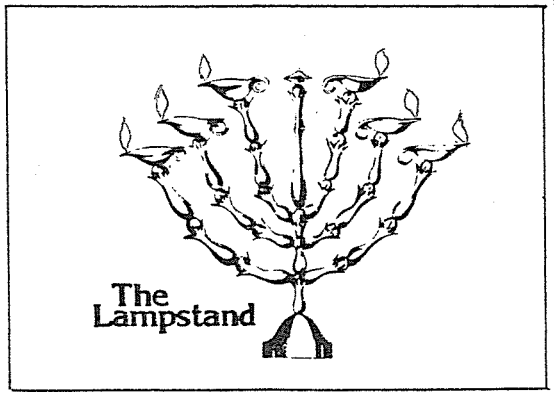
Note that it stood just inside the main gate of the court. Teach that the word altar means "slaughter place," and it was to this altar that the Israelites were directed to bring their animal sacrifices.

Note that when an Israelite presented a sacrifice he first placed his hands on the head of the animal and confessed his sins. He was thereafter identified with that animal. He then had to kill the animal, thereby indicating that the penalty of sin is death. The priest then took blood from the sacrifice and applied it in the proper place. At this point the animal was put on the altar. The altar pictures the cross where Jesus Christ poured out His blood as an atoning sacrifice for all mankind.



(Exod. 38: 8). the word *laver* literally means "lavatory," or a "place for washing."

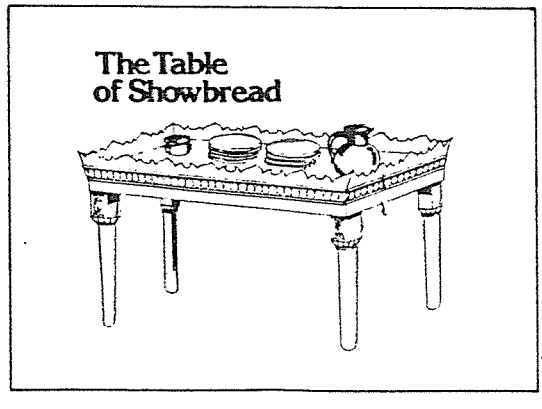
Before entering the tent, the priests washed their hands and feet at the laver. Although no dimensions are given in Scripture, the laver was certainly large enough to accomodate them. The laver represents our being cleansed from sin before entering into fellowship with God. For the Christian it means applying 1 John 1: 9, that is, confessing our sin and claiming the forgiveness and cleansing that God promises through the shed blood of Jesus Christ.



we are moving through the door and into the Holy Place. The next article is the golden lampstand, located against the south wall.

Exodus 25: 31-40. Note the ornate craftsmanship that went into its construction.

The purpose of the lampstand was to give the light needed by the priests as they went about their duties and worship in the Holy Place. Again, no dimensions are given, but we know it was formed of pure gold. The lampstand suggests the church, the body of Christ. Although Christ is the source of spiritual light (John 8: 12), He said we are the light of the world (Matt. 5: 14). As we allow His light to shine through us, we become His candlesticks. Placed by Him in sin's dark places, we reflect His glorious light (John 12: 36). The oil needed for fuel is representative of the Holy Spirit who provides means and power for the Christian today.

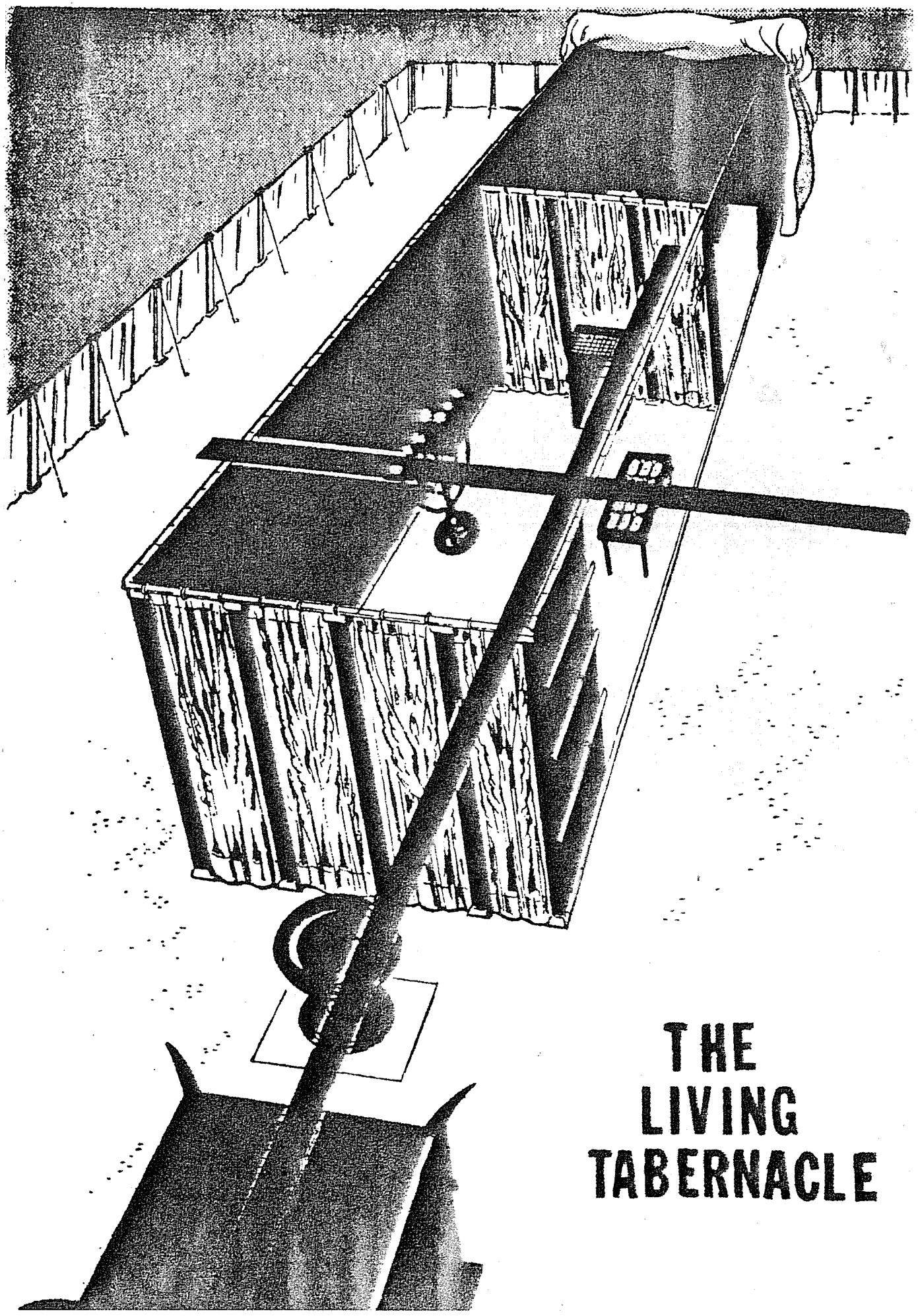


Exodus 25: 23-30.

The table of showbread was constructed from acacia wood and overlaid with pure gold. It was rather low (only 2½ feet high) and its outside dimensions were one foot by three feet. On it were placed twelve small cakes of bread and the utensils, which were made of pure gold.

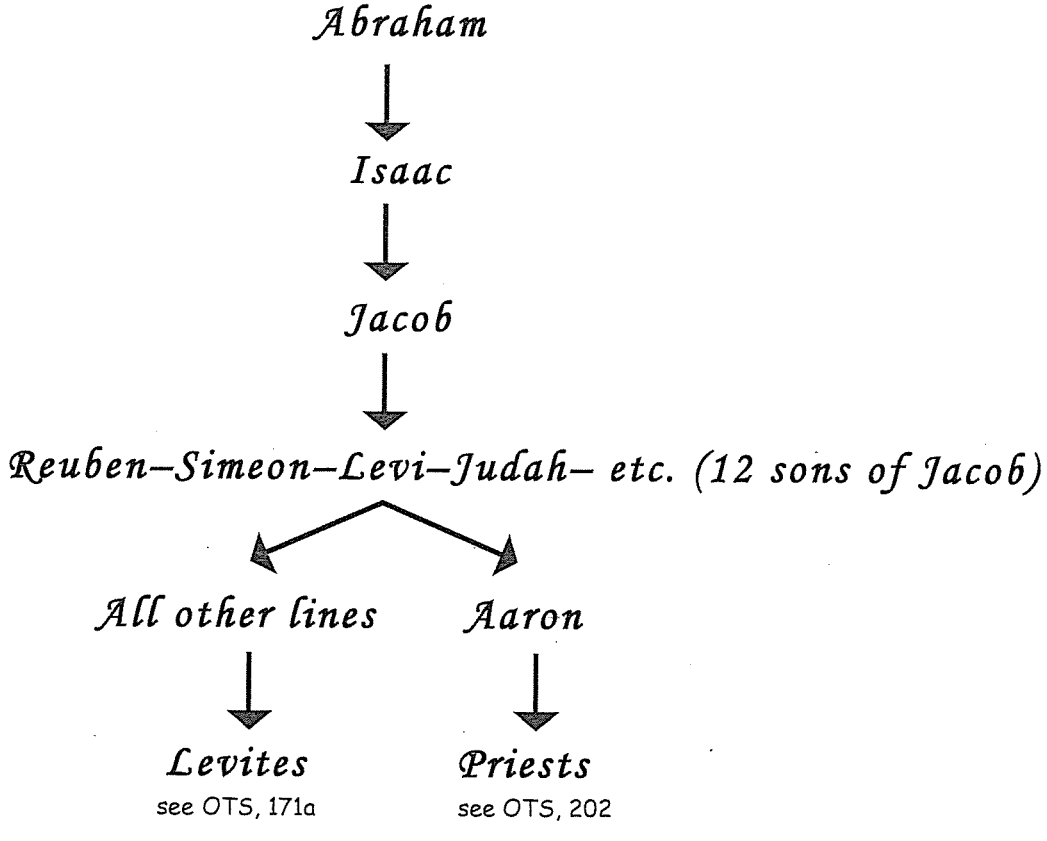
The bread, after it had been displayed, served as food for the priests. Actually, the consumption itself was an act of worship.

The application for the Christian is two-fold. First, Christ is the Bread of Life (John 6: 35), that is, He is our portion, our eternal provision. Second, "man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God" (Luke 4: 4). We are to partake daily of our spiritual food, the Bible God's Word.


THE
LIVING
TABERNACLE

Contrasting Levites and Priests

	Levites	Priests
Descendants of...	Levi	Aaron (also a descendant of Levi)
Population	Many (the larger group)	Few (a subset of the Levites, Josh. 21:4)
Role	Assisted priests (1 Chron. 23:28) and supervised religious activities permitted outside of the sanctuary: teaching (Deut. 33:10a), singing (1 Chron. 15:16-24), leading worship (1 Chron. 16:4-6; 23:5), officials, administration, judges & gatekeepers (1 Chron. 23:4-5)	Mediators between God and Israel whom David made into 24 divisions (1 Chron. 24:3-4), each which served two weeks annually so that their service would gradually move around the calendar (BKC, 1:613); taught God's Word (Mal. 2:7)
Sacrificial Role	Couldn't offer sacrifices nor incense (Num. 16:2-7, 38)	Offered sacrifices (Deut. 33:10b)
Location of Homes	Extensive–in 35 cities throughout the tribes in the central, northern, and eastern parts of Israel (Josh. 21:5-8)	Limited to 13 cities in the southern territories of Judah, Simeon, and Benjamin which were near the temple (Josh. 21:4, 9-13)



(d) Only priests in both pagan and Solomon's temples could enter the temple. In the case of Israel, this conveyed the holiness of Yahweh for only the high priest could enter here—and this only once a year (Lev. 16; 2, 29-34). Likewise, Egyptian priests alone entered their temples.[1]

(e) State treasuries were sometimes emptied to pay tribute from both Jewish (1 Kings 14:26; 15:18; 2 Kings 12:18; 16:8; 18:15-16; 24:13) and pagan (Judg. 9:4) temples.[2] As such both pagan temples and Israel's temple served as the "national bank." Egyptian temples stored food (wheat) and clothes, as did Israel's.[3] Yet in Israel this was a minor purpose for the temple in contrast to its religious role.

(f) Both pagan and Israelite temples were the primary gathering place or center of religious, social, educational, political and economic life for their people.[4] This contrasts with modern society's different icons to symbolize various aspects of life: Singapore's National Mosque, Church of the Good Shepherd, and Hindu and Buddhist temples (religious) versus the Treasury Building (economic), MOE (educational), Parliament (political) and National Stadium (social). As pagan temples depicted the political prominence of their king (esp. in Egypt), so the constructing Solomon's temple provided God's affirmation upon the line of David (Psalm 132). The Jewish temple was so important that the Psalmist noted that a single day spent in the sanctuary is better than one thousand elsewhere (Ps. 84:10).

(2) Location

(a) All ancient peoples (Jewish and heathen) built their temples on higher elevations. Worshippers needed to generally climb up to these places of worship. Pagans felt that this brought them closer to their gods.[5] The threshing floor with its higher location for Solomon's temple, however, had deeper significance. It was the spot where Abraham nearly sacrificed Isaac (according to tradition) and where David's intercession stopped the slaying of more people from a horrible plague (2 Sam. 24:16-24; 2 Chron. 3:1).

(b) Pagan temples typically were built near the palace of their kings. Likewise, the site of the Jewish temple was just north of David's palace (and Solomon's).

(3) Architecture

(a) Pagans had portable shrines similar to the tabernacle (cf. OTS, 119). They also built temples as did Israel. (Israel's temple was twice the size of the tabernacle.)[6]

(b) One would expect a similarity in architecture between the two types of temples, especially since Hiram's builders (1 Kings 5) assisted Solomon's workmen. Many pagan temples had the same tripartite division as Solomon's temple, such as those of Canaan (Arad and Hazor), Aram (Tell Tainat on the Orontes River) and in

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[1] R. A. Tomlinson, "Ancient Near Eastern and Mediterranean Temples," *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, ed. Mircea Eliade (New York: Macmillan, 1987), 383; cited in a research paper by Michael Lim, 2001.

[2] Tomlinson, 383.

[3] William Ward, "Temples and Sanctuaries: Egypt," *The Anchor Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 6:371, notes that from Solomon's temple that food and clothing were distributed to temple personnel, poor families, widows, and orphans.

[4] Not only was the Jewish temple the worship center but also the art gallery, concert plaza and poetry library of Hebrew culture (Leland Ryken, *et. al.*, "Temple," *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery* (Downers Grove: IVP, 1998). Similarly, Egyptian temples were centers of formal education in astronomy and medicine (Ward, 6:371).

[5] Gower, 333.

[6] Robert Backhouse, *The Student Bible Guide to the Temple* (London: Candle, 1996), 7.

Babylon:[7] This conveyed a sense of the greatness of the deity with a gradation of sacredness as one enters farther into the temple until finally arriving at the most sacred, innermost room. Common temple sections were:

(i) *Courtyard* with portico (vestibule or porch; cf. 1 Kings 6:3) wherein the people gather for festivals

(ii) *Grand hall* (sanctuary, nave or holy place), usually with posts to support the roof, benches against one or more walls, and an altar for offerings (cf. Solomon's temple had the table of showbread, lamp stand and altar of incense in this place of daily service)

(iii) *Inner sanctuary* called the Holy of Holies in Jerusalem (cf. 1 Kings 6:16, 27; 8:10) whereas pagan temples contained a pedestal or niche for the image of the deity at this point (though this room was sued in the Jewish temple only once a year)

(c) Twin pillars of Solomon's temple (1 Kings 7:21; 2 Chron. 3:17) find parallels in the Canaanite Orthostat temple at Hazor[8] and in Syrian temple supports for the roof.[9]

(d) Decorations were similar by using flowers and palms overlaid with gold.[10]

(e) Temples in general had cosmological significance where the building represented the world. In Egyptian temples the floor became the earth, the walls depicted nature, wild life and human activities, and the roof was painted with astrological signs.[11] Similarly, Solomon's temple portrayed the earth as God's footstool by designs from nature on its walls (1 Kings 7:36; Isa. 49:16) and heaven His throne.

c) Yet Israel's temple was unique from heathen temples in many ways. The right column below contrasts several purposes for the Jewish temple.

Pagan Temples	Jewish Temple
More than one temple typically existed for a single god so that competing shrines existed for the same deity—for example, temples for the god Amon-Re spread throughout Egypt[12]	God commanded that a single temple be built, perhaps to underscore Israel's belief in one God (Deut. 12) and/or to avoid competition (unify the tribes).[13] However, Jews in Elephantine, Egypt built another temple (not noted in OT)
Place to *appease* a deity such as Dagon (Judg. 16:23-27; 1 Sam. 5:2), Baal-berith	Place to *receive communication* with the LORD (1 Kings 8:27-29)— Solomon prayed at the dedication of

[7] Peter C. Craigie, and G. H. Wilson, "Religions of the Biblical World: Canaanite," *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 4:101; Keith N. Schoville, "Canaanites and Amorites," in *Peoples of the Old Testament World*, eds. Alfred J. Hoerth, Gerald L. Mattingly, and Edwin M. Yamauchi (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1994), 174; Bill T. Arnold, "Babylonians," in *Peoples of the Old Testament World*, 73; Jack Finegan, *Myth and Mystery: An Introduction to the Pagan Religions of the Biblical World* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1989), 125; cf. OTS, 228.

[8] Finegan, 126.

[9] Alfred J. Hoerth, *Archaeology and the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998), 281.

[10] R. J. McKelvey, "Temple," *New Bible Dictionary*, 2d ed. (Leicester: IVP, 1982), 1169; J. E. Jennings, "Temples," *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*, ed. Merrill C. Tenney (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976), 5:662.

[11] Jennings, "Temples," 5:662.

[12] Ward, "Temples and Sanctuaries: Egypt," 6:369; Jennings, "Temples," 5:657.

[13] Jeroboam I feared that if his people in the northern kingdom traveled to Jerusalem for temple worship, they would be loyal or united with the south. His prohibition from this travel underscores the temple's unifying influence (S. Westerholm, "Temple," *The New International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 4:764.

(Judg. 9:4) or el-Berith (Judg. 9:46), Ashtoreths (1 Sam. 31:10), Baal (1 Kings 16:32; 2 Kings 10:21-27), Rimmon (2 Kings 5:18), Nisroch (2 Kings 19:37), etc.	the temple that it would draw pagan peoples to Jerusalem to learn about the true God (1 Kings 8:41-43), such as the Queen of Sheba (1 Kings 10), which showed her that Israel was no longer a tribal nation but a monarchy of significance blessed by Yahweh
Place where people prayed to a deity, with a supposed "better chance" of being heard before the image of the god	Place of prayer for people of all nations (Isa. 56:7), though prayers were not necessarily answered more by praying at the temple itself
Worship motivation was personal or financial gain (increased fertility of crops, etc.)	Worship motivation is to glorify the true God (1 Kings 3:2; 8:12-13; cf. Jesus opposed using it for commerce in Matt. 21:12-13, quoting Isa. 56:7)
Sacrificial ritual was more diversified in usage of many types of animals	Only an unblemished bull, lamb, sheep, goat, dove or pigeon (Lev. 1:3, 10, 14) or ram (Lev. 5:14) underscored the holiness of the worshipper and the final Lamb of redemption in Christ
Sacrifices could also be performed at the high places as well as the temples (Jer. 32:35)	The temple alone was the proper place for sacrifices (Deut. 12:11) except for Samuel's sacrifice prior to the temple building (1 Sam. 9:12-13; cf. 1 Kings 3:2)—though high place sacrifice was later done contrary to God's command (2 Chron. 33:17)[14]
Human sacrifice acceptable	Human sacrifice in the temple prohibited by God (Jer. 32:35) yet practiced on occasion (Judg. 11:30-39; Ezek. 20:31; Jer. 19:5; Hos. 13:2)
Lacked any redemptive elements since atoning for sin was not one of their purposes	Pointed to final salvation and atonement in Christ (Heb. 8:1–10:20)
Built for a so-called "god" which was not really a god at all (cf. 1 Cor. 8:4-6); in reality these temples honored demons (1 Cor. 10:20-21)	Built for the One who said, "Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool. Where is the house you will build for me? Where will my resting place be?" (Isa. 66:1; cf. 1 Kings 8:27)
Idol (and/or carved images) as the centerpiece such as in the Philistine temple to Dagon (1 Sam. 5:2-5) and worship of Hadad at Hazor.[15] with no ark of a covenant or cherubim	Ark of the covenant was the focus with no physical depictions of God (1 Kings 6:23-27) or idols allowed; sacred stones were supposed to be destroyed (Exod. 23:24), though cherubim covered the ark but without seeking to depict God
Canaanite fertility symbols such as the lotus flower ornamented temples in Palestine as tribute to gods which supposedly made the land produce rain and crops[16]	Solomon had "engraved cherubim, lions and palm trees on the surfaces of the supports and on the panels, in every available space, with wreaths all around" (1 Kings 7:36), thus avoiding Canaanite fertility symbols
Lack of a covenant relationship with the deity being worshipped	Showed a covenant relationship between Israel and Yahweh as ark of the covenant was central

[14] See the study a few pages later in these notes on "Sacrifices at the High Places."

[15] Finegan, 126.

[16] W. E. Bailey, *Daily Life in Bible Times* (New York: Charles Scribner & Sons, 1943), 170-75.

Worshippers need not be concerned with sin in their lives (since concern was simply appeasement of gods to win their favor)	Worshippers must come before the LORD at the temple with a clean heart and clean hands (Ps. 15)
Priests need not be concerned with sin in their lives and could recruit whomever they wished to help serve in the temple[17]	Priests must offer sacrifices first for their own sin before ministering for others and maintain utmost standards of conduct, the most basic being that they must be descended from Aaron
So-called sacred prostitution characterized Canaanite temples (Gen. 38:21; Job 36:14) as temples included both men and women with all the sexual immorality this entailed	Prostitution was abhorrent to true Yahweh worship (Deut. 23:17-18). However, while having only male priests prevented temple heterosexual activity, at points male shrine prostitutes disgraced Judah (1 Kings 14:23-24; 15:12; 22:46; Hosea 4:14), even in the temple itself (2 Kings 23:7).
Altars had steps which exposed worshippers under their robes	Steps were prohibited at the temple altar to promote modesty and curb sexual sin (Exod. 20:24-25)
Pagan priests took care of their gods' daily needs	Priests of Yahweh themselves ate the consecrated bread since no one needs to take care of the true God
Political power with the ability to tax and administrate (Egyptian high priest of Amen-Re at Karnak took over kingship)	Had political significance but more separation between priests and kings
No false deity ever made a decision or command to build him a temple, not did any deity select a location or builder! Thus man decided the fate of the deity of his own making.	The LORD initiated the temple idea (Deut. 12:5) and the time (1 Kings 5:3-4), person (1 Kings 5:4), and location to build it (1 Chron. 22:1; 2 Chron. 28:3)
Built by man's design—as a result, the Egyptian temple of Amun at Karnak has been added to and altered over millennia[18]	Built according to God's specific instructions in size and purpose (1 Chron. 28:11-12)
Was never inhabited by deities since there exists but one true God	Contained God's actual presence (1 Kings 8:10-11) over the ark of the covenant and seen in God consuming the burnt offerings and sacrifices at the temple dedication (2 Chron. 7:1)
Was never approved by the LORD	Approved by the LORD as a single place of worship due to man's tendency towards worshipping local deities (Judges 17)
Did not begin to match the magnificence of Solomon's temple— small size of Palestinian temples show for priests, cultic	Unsurpassed beauty and greatness testified to pagan nations that Israel's deity is also unparalleled (1 Kings 8:13, 41-43; 10:9)[19]

[17] Ward, "Temples and Sanctuaries: Egypt," 6:370; John Robertson, "Temples and Sanctuaries: Mesopotamia," *The Anchor Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 6:375.

[18] Tomlinson, 384.

[19] Robertson, "Temples and Sanctuaries: Mesopotamia," 6:355.

and oracular usage rather than for professional adherents of Baal	
Their law, places, occasions, objects and rituals were not genuinely holy	Developed its own holy law, places, occasions, objects and rituals[20]
Canaan had regular festivals in conjunction with the agricultural cycle but required attendance unknown	Israel's festivals required attendance of all men three times yearly in coordination with the agricultural cycle (Deut. 12:12)
Did not represent a heavenly temple in their religion	Represented the heavenly temple of God (Heb. 8:5; Rev. 11:19; 14:17; 15:5)
Encouraged idolatry though idols cannot speak or walk (Jer. 10:5; Hab. 2:18-20)	Designed to turn Israel's hearts away from idolatry in Canaan (Deut. 12)
Ate blood in temple worship	Eating of blood was prohibited in general, so more so in the temple itself (Lev. 19:26; Ps. 50:13)
Little emphasis on use of music	Israel alone used music extensively (see below)

d) Corollary question: What is the NT parallel to the temple today for believers since no temple exists in Jerusalem anymore? Many denominations have priests, altar and church buildings patterned after the Jewish temple, but what does the Scripture say about this?

(1) While the church building serves many similar functions to the OT temple (gathering for worship, teaching, etc.), the first church structures were built in the third century AD. Thus, there exists no NT parallel to a church building since no such buildings existed in the early church.

(2) All believers in Christ are considered priests (1 Pet. 2:5, 9), so there exists no parallel priesthood in the sense of a special class of people who mediate between people and God. Instead, all believers have direct access into God's presence.

(3) The bodies of believers are now the temples of God (1 Cor. 3:16; 6:19). Thus they should be as pure as the OT temple since we are living sacrifices (Rom. 12:1).[21]

(4) The universal church is called a temple (Eph. 2:19-22; 2 Cor. 6:16). One might say that a single, worldwide church parallels the OT practice of a single temple for Israel. This points to the unity that should exist in the universal church (Eph. 4:3-6). Since the veil of the temple was torn (Matt. 27:51; Mark 15:38; Luke 23:45), all Christians are "stones" that make up the spiritual temple, the church (1 Pet. 2:4-5).

[20] Ralph Gower, *The New Manners and Customs of Bible Times* (Chicago: Moody, 1987), 335.

[21] Even Christ's body is likened to the curtain of the temple going into the Holy of Holies (Heb. 10:19-20). As the high priest needed to pass this curtain to enter into God's presence, so believers today must come into God's presence through faith in the bodily, sacrificial death of Jesus.

(5) However, two future temples will be built:

(a) The tribulation period will have a temple in which the Antichrist declares himself to be God (2 Thess. 2:4; cf. Dan. 9:27).

(b) A future temple will exist in the millennium (Ezek. 40–43).

(6) Heaven will also have a temple in the tribulation period (Rev. 7:15; 11:1, 19; 14:15, 17; 15:5-8; 16:1, 17) but not in the eternal state (Rev. 21:22).

(7) Church buildings today follow the design of the Jewish synagogue more than of the Jewish temple (cf. NT Backgrounds notes, 138-39). Catholic and Anglican teachings that the altar is a place where only the priest can step parallels the OT temple's Most Holy Place, but without biblical warrant.

(8) The demise of Solomon's temple has negative parallels today in the demise of church congregations who also become proud, materialistic and introverted by using the institution as a social club, amusement center, or business center to raise money. My concern here is not that "sacred ground" is desecrated but rather that the church's mission to be a light to the nations is undermined. Israel's role as a "light to the nations" (Isa. 51:4) parallels the church's task to bring the gospel to the nations (Mark 16:16).

(9) In light of the teaching above, how would you evaluate this song?

We have come into His house, and gathered in His name to worship Him (2x). We have come into His house, and gathered in His name to worship Christ the Lord, Worship Him, Jesus Christ our Lord. So forget about yourself, and concentrate on Him, and worship Him (2x). So forget about yourself, and concentrate on Him, and worship Christ the Lord, Worship Him, Jesus Christ our Lord.

5. Worship[22]

a) Family Worship: The primary place for children to learn worship was the home where Jews were commanded to "impress" the laws of God upon their children (Deut. 6:6-9). Fathers and mothers have always been in the most strategic role of teaching worship.

b) Active Worship: The responsibility of the worshipper was to slay the animal himself (Lev. 1:4-5). Many people incorrectly think that *the priest* did this job, but actually *the one being atoned for* took the knife and slit the throat of the bull. This is far more active participation than the modern passivity of sitting in a service hearing about the blood of Christ shed for our sin.

c) Ritualistic Worship: This happened in OT times (Isaiah 1:2-31; Amos 4:4-5) as well as the present. There is nothing new under the sun (Eccles. 1:9).

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[22] Contemporary titles on worship include John M. Frame, *Worship in Spirit and Truth* (Philipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian & Reformed, 1996); Andrew E. Hill, *Enter His Courts with Praise! Old Testament Worship for the New Testament Church* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1993); Barry Liesch, *People in the Presence of God* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1988); Robert E. Webber, *Worship: Old and New* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994).

d) Thought question: Why do you think God did not provide an order of service for the temple worship as a model for us?[23]

e) Music in Worship

(1) In the history of religions, only two religions in the world have developed the art of music to the point of proficiency.[24] "In all religions, we find the dirge and the chant being used. For the most part, they produce a cacophony of sound. Only Judaism and Christianity have developed music as an integral part of worship."[25] Our God has placed in our hearts a reality that is vital to sing about.

(2) Music permeated Israel's life and was not simply found in worship services. It played an important part in each of the following activities:[26]

(a) Music transmitted God's word orally to younger generations. Exodus 15 records Miriam's song to teach Israel how God brought the nation through the Red Sea.

(b) Music in prophecy is evident.

(i) Samuel told Saul that he would meet a band of prophets playing musical instruments (1 Sam. 10:5).

(ii) David appointed instrumentalists to declare God's messages accompanied by harps, lyres and cymbals (1 Chron. 25:1).

(c) Music in warfare led to victory when Jericho's walls fell from the blasts of horns (Josh. 6:4-20) and Jehoshaphat's singers went ahead of the army into battle (2 Chron. 20). Normally singers lead the parade *after* a victorious battle, so Jehoshaphat showed contempt for the enemy and confidence in the Lord. This psychological warfare strengthened the faith of his own people too.[27]

(d) Music as part of ministerial training *(?) may* have been employed in the development of the prophets being trained under Elisha and Elisha.[28] Evidence for this must first be proved from the text, however.

(e) Music in court also was commonplace.

(i) Enthronement celebrations (1 Kings 1:39-40; 2 Kings 11:14; 2 Chron. 13:14)

(ii) Solomon employed many male and female singers (Eccles. 2:8)

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[23] Hill, 50-51, posits three types of services, each with its distinct form: sacrificial liturgy (Lev. 8:14–9:22), covenant renewal liturgy (Neh. 9–10), and temple liturgy (Ps. 95).

[24] Pauline Ong, "Music in the Old Testament," unpublished research paper for the course "Old Testament Survey" (Singapore: Singapore Bible College, 2001), 1.

[25] Paul McCommon, *Music in the Bible* (Nashville: Convention, 1956), 5; cited by Ong, 1.

[26] The outline and verses of this section is adapted from Ong, 2-5.

[27] McCommon, 19.

[28] 1 Kings 20:35, 41; 2 Kings 2:3, 5, 7, 15; 4:1, 38; 5:22; 6:1; 9:1 all mention the company of the prophets. McCommon, 37 notes that study of music was required as is developed patience and stimulated the powers of concentration, but first it must be proved that these prophets were required to study music.

(f) Music in community celebrations also was important.

(i) Feasts (Isa. 5:12; 24:8)

(ii) Harvesting (Isa. 16:10; Jer. 48:33)

(iii) Well-digging (Num. 21:17-18)

(g) Music to comfort the afflicted became the means that David used to cheer up Saul with his harp (1 Sam. 16:14-23).

(h) Music expressed love.

(i) The love of Solomon and his maiden expressed in the Song of Songs is deemed the best song Solomon ever composed (Song 1:1)—and he wrote 1005 of them (1 Kings 4:32).

(ii) Songs also praised love from God (Ps. 31:21) and love for God (Ps. 18:1).

(i) Music expressed lament.

(i) David composed a funeral song about Saul and Jonathan and had it taught to the people (2 Sam. 1:17-18).

(ii) Jeremiah composed funeral songs about Josiah's death and these were still sung by choirs long after his tragic end (2 Chron. 32:25).

(j) Music in praise and worship is its chief role in the OT.

(i) Even before the temple became organized, the high priest wore bells so that music would come before the LORD in the tabernacle.

> "Make the robe of the ephod entirely of blue cloth... The gold bells and the pomegranates are to alternate around the hem of the robe. Aaron must wear it when he ministers. The sound of the bells will be heard when he enters the Holy Place before the LORD and when he comes out, so that he will not die" (Exod. 28:31, 34-35).

(ii) The book of Psalms is the Bible's hymnbook. Interestingly, though, in Psalms God left us only with the lyrics as we have only a vague idea of some of the musical terms used (no musical score appears in Psalms).

(a) "Selah" is probably the most common term that perplexes scholars today. *The NIV Study Bible* footnotes "Selah" in Psalm 3:2 with little clue to its meaning: "A word of uncertain meaning, occurring frequently in the Psalms: possibly a musical term."

(b) Thought question: Why do you think God left us the words but not the music?

(iii) Music was also used to gather pagan people for worship as illustrated by Nebuchadnezzar's instruments before his gold statue (Dan. 3:4-7).

(3) David appointed a vast array of musicians to lead in temple worship (1 Chron. 6:31-47; ch. 25):

(a) Choir directors

(b) Singers

(c) Instrumentalists (1 Chron. 9:33)

(4) Music is one of the few things that we do on earth that we will do forever in heaven. So if you don't appreciate music now, get used to it!

6. Salvation in the Old Testament

a) As noted earlier, individual salvation from the guilt of sin was not a key OT theme. Yet since people *did* enter into a relationship with God, the question still remains, "How *were* people saved during Old Testament times? Were only Jews saved? How? Was it through the tabernacle and temple sacrifices? Did killing these animals actually forgive sin?" These questions will naturally arise in a thinking person's mind when encountering the OT.

b) First, salvation has always been by faith and not by works of the Law. This is Paul's key point in Galatians and Romans and it applies to all times. Paul gives Genesis 15:6 as support: "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness" (Rom. 4:3; cf. vv. 11, 16-24; Heb. 11). Salvation in all ages is based in God's grace, not our works (Eph. 2:8-9). The ways He has shown His grace has changed over the ages, but His method of salvation by grace through faith is constant.

c) OT believers showed their faith in many ways: worship, offering sacrifices, or doing good deeds, but it was their *faith* that saved—not their sacrifices or worship or deeds. Their faith was placed in God's provision of a coming Saviour (1 Pet. 1:10-12), though they did not realize that this Redeemer specifically was Jesus Christ. Further, there is no hint that their salvation could be lost.

d) One may ask, "But doesn't the OT say sacrifices forgave people?" Leviticus promises Israelites that they "will be forgiven" by sin offerings and guilt offerings (4:20, 26, 31, 35; 5:10, 13, 16, 18; 6:7; 19:22; cf. Heb. 9:13). However, these refer to a *specific* sin rather than forgiveness from *all* sin for salvation; also, ritual without repentant faith was useless (Ps. 40:6-8; Isa. 1:11-20; Jer. 7:21-26).

e) This parallels our experience. We are saved from the penalty of sin by faith, just like Jews (and Gentiles identifying with Israel) in the OT—but we show faith by trusting Christ as our past sacrifice rather look forward to a future sacrifice. We still sin, but 1 John 1:9 promises, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness." We have *positional* forgiveness for all sins (past, present, and future) and a secure relationship with God. However, confession helps us experience *practical* forgiveness and restoration of our fellowship with Him. In like manner, Job sacrificed for cleansing and restored fellowship while saved (Job 42:7-9).

HERE'S AN ISSUE FOR YOUR SMALL GROUP...

Which is the most accurate depiction of salvation in the OT and NT?

Salvation by...

OT	Works	Faith + Works	Faith Alone	Faith + Works
NT	Faith	Faith Alone	Faith Alone	Faith + Works

Which verses in the Bible support your answer?

DISTINGUISHING SALVATION AND SANCTIFICATION

	Man's Role	God's Response	Life of Faith	Restored Fellowship
OT				
NT				

Old Testament Sacrifices

Leviticus *The Bible Visual Resource Book*, 29

Old Testament Sacrifices

NAME	OT REFERENCES	ELEMENTS	PURPOSE
BURNT OFFERING	Lev 1; 6:8-13; 8:18-21; 16:24	Bull, ram or male bird (dove or young pigeon for poor); wholly consumed; no defect	Voluntary act of worship; atonement for unintentional sin in general; expression of devotion, commitment and complete surrender to God
GRAIN OFFERING	Lev 2; 6:14-23	Grain, fine flour, olive oil, incense, baked bread (cakes or wafers), salt; no yeast or honey; accompanied burnt offering and fellowship offering (along with drink offering)	Voluntary act of worship; recognition of God's goodness and provisions; devotion to God
FELLOWSHIP OFFERING	Lev 3; 7:11-34	Any animal without defect from herd or flock; variety of breads	Voluntary act of worship; thanksgiving and fellowship (it included a communal meal)
SIN OFFERING	Lev 4:1-5:13; 6:24-30; 8:14-17; 16:3-22	1. Young bull: for high priest and congregation 2. Male goat: for leader 3. Female goat or lamb: for common person 4. Dove or pigeon: for the poor 5. Tenth of an ephah of fine flour: for the very poor	Mandatory atonement for specific unintentional sin; confession of sin; forgiveness of sin; cleansing from defilement
GUILT OFFERING	Lev 5:14-6:7; 7:1-6	Ram or lamb	Mandatory atonement for unintentional sin requiring restitution; cleansing from defilement; make restitution; pay 20% fine

When more than one kind of offering was presented (as in Nu 6:16, 17), the procedure was usually as follows: (1) sin offering or guilt offering, (2) burnt offering, (3) fellowship offering and grain offering (along with a drink offering). This sequence furnishes part of the spiritual significance of the sacrificial system. First, sin had to be dealt with (sin offering or guilt offering). Second, the worshiper committed himself completely to God (burnt offering and grain offering). Third, fellowship or communion between the Lord, the priest and the worshiper (fellowship offering) was established. To state it another way, there were sacrifices of expiation (sin offerings and guilt offerings), consecration (burnt offerings and grain offerings) and communion (fellowship offerings—these included vow offerings, thank offerings and freewill offerings).

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Rituals for Levitical Offerings

F. Duane Lindsey, "Leviticus," *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, 1:168-69

Rituals for Levitical Offerings

				DEDICATORY			COMMUNAL	EXPIATORY	
				BURNT	GRAIN	DRINK	FELLOWSHIP	SIN	GUILT
		REFERENCES		(Lev. 1:3-17; 6:8-13)	(Lev. 2; 6:14-23)	(Num. 15:1-10; Lev. 23)	(Lev. 3; 7:11-36)	(Lev. 4:1–5:13; 6:24-30)	(Lev. 5:14–6:7; 7:1-10)
SACRIFICIAL RITUALS	Worshiper's Actions	PRESENTATION: Selection of Offering		Bull (1:3), male sheep (1:10), male goat (1:10), or dove or young pigeon (1:14)	Grain or barley could be prepared in one of five ways: 1. Basic flour with oil; incense mixed with the part burned on the altar 2. Oven-baked cakes/ wafers mixed or served with oil 3. Griddle-baked cakes, with oil 4. Pan-baked cakes 5. If *firstfruits:* crushed heads of new grain	With a bull—½ hin With a ram—⅓ hin With a lamb—¼ hin (Note: one hin = ca. 1 quart)	Bull, lamb, or goat, male or female (3:1, 6, 12) (In the freewill offering, minor imperfections were permitted in animal, 22:23)	1. Young bull (for priest or nation) 2. Male goat (for tribal leader) 3. Female goat or lamb (for layperson) 4. Dove, young pigeon (for poor person) 5. Flour (1/10 ephah) (for very poor)	Usually a ram (a male lamb in the case of a cleansed leper or defiled Nazirite)
		LAYING ON OF HANDS		1:4 (except for bird) (see under "Sin offering")			(3:2, 8, 13—see "Burnt offering")	Sinner's identification with animal or subsequent symbolic transfer of sin and legal transfer of guilt	Confession (Num. 5:7) apparently accompanied by laying on of hands
		SLAYING OF ANIMAL		Done by worshiper except that a bird was killed by the priest (cf. 1:15)			At sanctuary entrance (see "Burnt offering")	1. At sanctuary entrance for priest/nation 2. North of altar for others (see "Burnt offering")	North of altar (Lev. 7:2)
		PREPARATION OF OFFERING		Skinning, dismembering, washing (cf. 1:6, 12, 16-17)	Worshiper normally prepared it in advance. Priest separated a memorial portion for burning on the altar				
SACRIFICIAL RITUALS	Priest's Actions	MANIPULATION OF BLOOD		1. Blood caught in a bowl and splashed against sides of the altar (1:5, 11) 2. Bird's blood drained out on side of the altar (1:15)			Blood caught in a bowl and splashed against sides of the altar (3:2, 8, 13)	Ritual varied according to the position of the worshiper (but involved "sprinkling" rather than "splashing" of blood), the occasion of sacrifice, or the type of animal (e.g., different if a bird)	Blood caught in a bowl and splashed against the sides of the altar (7:2)
		INCINERATION ON ALTAR		All the animal burned on the altar (1:8-9, 12-13, 15, 17)	Memorial portion burned on the altar by the priest (all was burnt if it was the priest's own offering)	Entire libation poured out to the Lord at the sanctuary (Num. 28:7)	Choice viscera (including "fat tail" of sheep) burned on altar	Choice viscera burned on the altar	Choice viscera burned on the altar
		DISTRIBUTION OR DISPOSAL OF CARCASS	Priest's dues	Skin (7:8)	Accompanying burnt offering: the priest ate unburned portion		Breast of animal was to be "wave offering" and eaten by priests	Priest received carcass of offering by leader or layperson	Priest received carcass
			Worshiper's portion	None	Accompanying fellowship offering: the worshiper ate unburned portion, but a small portion went to the priest		Communal meal for the worshiper's family at proper time and place		
			Remainder	Bird's crop to ashpit (1:16)			Remainder burned	Carcass burned outside the camp for priest or nation	

Special Sacrificial Rituals

F. Duane Lindsey, "Leviticus," *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, 1:168-69

Special Sacrificial Rituals

			DEDICATORY			COMMUNAL	EXPIATORY	
			BURNT	GRAIN	DRINK	FELLOWSHIP	SIN	GUILT
SPECIAL RITUALS	Consecration	1. Of priests (Ex. 29; Lev. 8)	Ram			Ram for the ordination	Bull (special ritual)	
		2. Of temple (2 Chron. 29)	70 bulls, 100 rams, 200 male lambs			Numerous bulls, sheep, and goats	Seven bulls, seven rams, seven male lambs, seven male goats	
	Deconsecration	Fulfillment of Nazirite vow (Num. 6:14-17)	Year-old male lamb	Regular grain offering, special bread offering		Ram	Year-old ewe lamb	
	Purification rituals	1. Broken vow (Num. 6:9-12)	Dove and young pigeon				Dove and young pigeon	Year-old male lamb
		2. Cleansing of leper (Lev. 14:12-20)	Year-old male lamb (dove or pigeon for poor)	Grain offering			Year-old ewe lamb	Year-old male lamb (plus log of oil)
		3. Man (15:14-15) or woman with hemorrhage (15:29-30)	Dove or young pigeon				Dove or young pigeon	
		4. Woman after childbirth (12:6-8)	Year-old lamb (or dove or pigeon)				Dove or young pigeon	
	Other	1. Jealousy ritual (Num. 5:15-26)		1/10 ephah barley meal, no oil or incense (Note: one ephah = 1/2 bushel, ca. 8 quarts)				
		2. Priest's daily grain offering (Lev. 6:19-23)		1/10 ephah fine flour				
		3. Sin offering of very poor (5:11-13)					1/10 ephah fine flour (no oil or incense)	
OCCASION			Voluntary worship; certain prescribed rituals and calendrical offerings	An auxiliary offering accompanying burnt and always accompanying fellowship offerings; could be sin offering for the very poor	An auxiliary offering normally accompanying burnt or fellowship offerings, but never with sin or guilt offering alone	THANK OFFERING: for unexpected deliverance or blessing already granted VOTIVE OFFERING: for blessing or deliverance granted in answer to prayer which had accompanying vow FREEWILL OFFERING: to express thankful devotion without regard to specific blessing	Unintentional sin against divine command by an individual or the entire nation	Misappropriation or denial of rightful due to God or man, normally assessable in monetary compensation
DISTINCTIVENESS			Wholly burned on the altar (Lev. 1:9)	As a nonbloody offering, it accompanied bloody offerings	Wine was probably a deliberate substitute for blood of pagan libations	Most parts eaten before the Lord by the worshiper (and his family)	(See "Occasion" above)	Sacrifice (see "Occasion" above) was usually accompanied by compensation plus fine to wronged party
OLD TESTAMENT THEOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE			Signified the worshipper's act of total dedication to God	Signified dedication of everyday life to God in recognition of His covenant mercies		The worshiper recognized the meat eaten as a token of God's covenant faithfulness	Provided atonement and forgiveness for specific unintentional sins where no restitution was involved	The ram was for expiation, accompanied by payment of restitution to the wronged party
TYPOLOGY			Christ died as the Lamb of God in complete dedication to the accomplishment of God's will	Christ's perfect person is associated with His sacrificial death		Christ's death is the basis of fellowship with God and other believers	Christ died as a satisfactory substitutionary sacrifice to provide the forgiveness of sins	Christ's death atones for the damage or injury caused by sin

SINGAPORE BIBLE COLLEGE

SALVATION

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Old Testament Backgrounds
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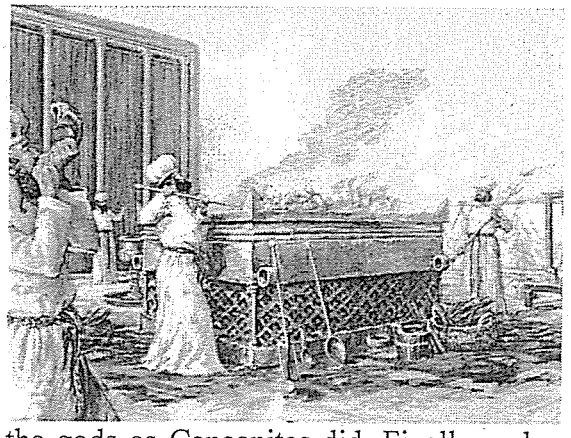
INTRODUCTION

The nations of the Ancient Near East were very expressive people groups, especially when it came to their sacrifices and rituals. As one scans through them, there appears to be a lot in common in their expressions. Yet when a study on the understanding of "salvation" amongst the various Ancient Near Eastern Nations was done in comparison to the beliefs of the Nation of Israel, deep-seated differences became visible.



In spite of the fact that the nations of the Ancient Near East had elaborate worship and cultic expressions, these "acts of worship" took on a different meaning for the Israelites. This distinctiveness was most visible in the sacrificial system of the nations. Firstly the Israelites did not use sacrifice as "clairvoyance,"[1] or the way the Mesopotamians commonly used the sacrificial animal to determine the future action of the gods. Secondly, to the Israelite, the sacrifice (of blood) was an expression of the covenant relationship with God, not to appease the gods as Canaanites did. Finally and most importantly was Israel's concept of holiness, which was an outworking of their understanding of God. Holiness impacted the sacrificial system for worship in Israel, a characteristic which was missing in the religions of their neighbors.

This paper will attempt to summarize the understanding of "salvation" amongst the various Nations of the Ancient Near East. In doing so, it will also take a closer look at what the Bible (the Old and the New Testament) teaches about salvation and will explore its relevance in today's context.

SALVATION IN PAGAN CULTURES

As one attempts to dig deeper to uncover the different ideas of "salvation" among the various Near Eastern Nations, one cannot but notice and consider the pantheon of gods that occupy the landscape, for it is the nature of their gods that shaped their understanding of salvation and afterlife. Considering this helps one better appreciate the Israelite view of salvation. While it is not within the scope of this study to analyze all these views, it would suffice to say that contrary to Israel, the nations of the Ancient Near East did not view their gods as a "Holy God." That is why the pursuit of salvation or an afterlife was evidently missing amongst several of the religions of the ancient Near East. Listed below is a summary of some vital beliefs of the nations around Israel in the Ancient Near East.

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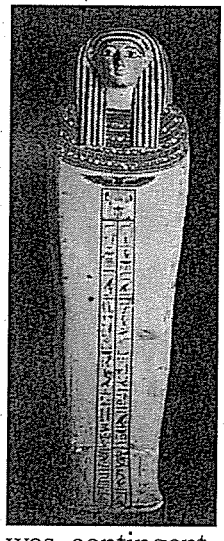
[1] Arnold T. Bill and Beyer E. Bryan (editors) , *Encountering the Old Testament: A Christian Survey,* (Baker Academic Publishers, a division of baker Book House, MI, 1998), 118

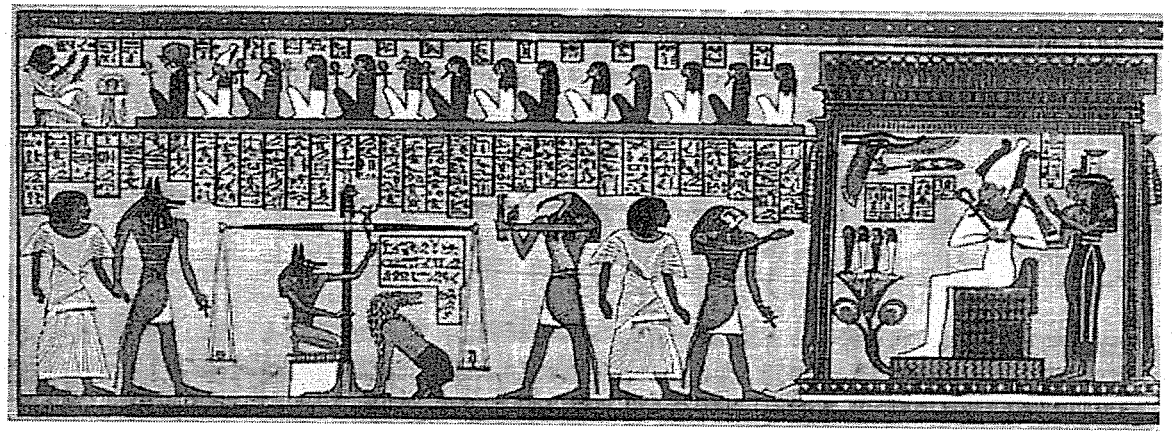
The Egyptians

Besides the Egyptians who believed in some form of hope of the next life based on works, the other cultures did not have favorable views of the afterlife.



The entire civilization of Ancient Egypt was based on religion, and their beliefs were vitally important to them. Their belief in the rebirth after death became the driving force behind their funeral practices. The Egyptians believed that death was simply a temporary interruption, rather than complete cessation, of life, and that eternal life could be ensured by means like piety to the gods, preservation of the physical form through mummification, and the provision of statuary and other funerary equipment.

Each human consisted of the physical body, the "ka," the "ba," and the "akh." The Name and Shadow were also living entities. To enjoy the afterlife, all these elements had to be sustained and protected from harm. Egyptians believed that Osiris presides over the netherworld and before whom everyone stands for judgment. Because people had to stand before Osiris's tribunal for judgment, it was necessary to live according to ma'at, the Egyptian concept of justice and righteousness. Admission to heaven was contingent on an individual being pronounced "*maa hrw.*" Spell 125 (the so-called negative confession) of the Book of the Dead contains a list of sins and taboos that the deceased claims not to have done so as to merit divine favor.[2]



Ma'at: The priests taught that mankind was commanded to reflect divine harmony by assuming a spirit of quietude, reasonable behavior, cooperation, and recognition of the eternal qualities of existence, as demonstrated by the earth and the sky. All Egyptians anticipated becoming part of the cosmos when they died, thus the responsibility for acting in accordance with its laws was reasonable.[3]

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[2] Alfred J. Hoerth, Gerald L. Mattingly, and Edwin M. Yamauchi (editors) *Peoples of the Old Testament World*, (Grand Rapids: Bakers, 1994), 285.

[3] Margaret Bunson, *The Encyclopedia of Ancient Egypt* (N.Y.: Gramery Books, 1991), 152.

The Sumerians

The Sumerians, as seen in the writing of "The Death of Gilgamesh," believed that humans are not destined for immortality.[4] The Paradise called Dilmun in the Sumerian religion was only for the immortal gods. Only one mortal, the Babylonian Noah, Utnapishtim, had gained admittance to Dilmun. See the "Epic of Gilgamesh."[5]

The Assyrians

The Assyrians believed that humans had no destiny beyond an afterlife in dust and gloom.[6]

The Babylonians

The Babylonian belief prior to Hellenistic times was that humans received the reward due to them in this life and that they had only a gloomy netherworld to look forward to in the next. See the Babylonian "Poem of the Righteous Sufferer" and "Gilgamesh Epic" and the Canaanite "Aqhat Epic."[7]

The Mesopotamians



The Mesopotamians believed that "the phenomenology of evil had to find a language by which a responsible agent could be incriminated as the bearer of guilt. Two ways were open: either through demonizing powers and forces manipulating men as pawns on a chessboard or through designating human culprits, thus making them the bearer of guilt. The former is fundamental. Before he becomes guilty through participation, man is a victim." See "Babylon Job."[8]

The Canaanites

The Canaanites were probably the group that had the most significant influence on the Israelites and often led them astray into the worship of false gods. Canaanites had a pantheon of gods headed by El. The greatest devotion was given to Hadad, the weather-god, also known as Ba-al, which means Master. Hadad held the keys of good harvests. He is also affiliated to El and to Dagan, the corn-god. His consort was Ashtart (Ishtar), goddess of battle, who is only occasionally distinguishable from Asherah, El's wife. There was another war-goddess, "Anat," also associated with Hadad.[9]

All in all, the Canaanites were a polytheistic people who were rich in their cultic practices. However, it is difficult to make a generalization regarding their understanding of salvation or the afterlife. It seems most likely that they were a people with religious practices that were more concerned about the here and now, rather than the here-after.

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[4] Alfred J. Hoerth, Gerald L. Mattingly, and Edwin M. Yamauchi, 26
[5] Samuel Noah Kramer, *History Begins at Sumer* (Anchor Books, 1959), 149.
[6] Alfred J. Hoerth, Gerald L. Mattingly, and Edwin M. Yamauchi, 103
[7] Ibid, 205.
[8] Mircea Eliade, *The Encyclopedia of Religion,* 326.
[9] Donald J. Wiseman [Ed.], *Peoples of Old Testament Times*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1973), 245

The Moabites

With regard to the Moabites, there is much speculation and little certainty. Seers such as Balaam were known and used. Chemosh appears to be the most prominent of Moabite gods, to whom all booty and prisoners could be devoted, not to mention the fact that the king's son was probably sacrificed to Chemosh.[10] All in all, there is little information with which to draw up any justifiable conclusions in favor of the Moabite understanding of salvation.

ISRAEL'S UNIQUE UNDERSTANDING OF SALVATION

When comparing the religions of the Ancient Near East with that of Israel, it becomes clear that the Jewish understanding of salvation is radically different from that of their neighbors. Israel's neighboring cultures did not understand salvation, or even search for it, the way that Israel did. The two primary reasons for this uniqueness are God's revelation to Israel about Himself and their understanding of sin.

The Holiness of God

The *search* for salvation is based on the realization of a *need* for salvation in the first place. If there is no need for salvation, there will be no search for it. The realization of the need for salvation comes from the realization that humankind is sinful and needs to be saved from the consequences of sin. However, there can be no concept of sin, if there is no standard of holiness to begin with. This was what separated Israel from the rest of the nations around them.

The primary reason for the uniqueness of Israel's understanding of salvation was because God had revealed Himself to Israel as one who is Holy. He said, "Be Holy because, I the LORD your God, am holy" (Lev. 19:2). Not only did God reveal Himself to be holy, He also gave them the moral law that defined holiness and revealed to the Israelites what was required of them. This was given to show that no one could live up to the standards of God's holiness because no one was holy. Everyone was a sinner. Therefore, it was God's revelation as someone who was holy that served to convict the Israelites that they were sinners in need of salvation.

In contrast, none of the gods of the Ancient Near East had revealed themselves to be holy in the way that the God of Israel had revealed Himself. On the contrary, the gods of the Ancient Near East were far less than perfect themselves. Therefore, because their gods themselves were not holy, there was no standard by which the people could be convicted of the fact that they were sinners themselves. The gods were immoral and so were the followers. Since there was no standard, there was no conviction of sin. Since there was no conviction of sin, there was no explicit search for salvation as in the case of the Jewish people.

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[10] Ibid, 45-46

The Cost of Sin

The book of Leviticus gives great insight into the Jewish understanding of salvation. Its sacrifices and offerings were for worship and forgiveness of sin. They showed that the cost of sin was heavy. Sin *demanded* atonement. Levitical laws made it clear that life must be given for life as atonement for sin. "For the life of the creature is in the blood, and I have given it to you to make atonement for yourselves on the altar; it is the blood that makes atonement for one's life" (Lev. 17:11). In the Old Testament, animal life was used as a sacrifice for sin. But this was only a token until Christ Himself would come and give His life as a final and complete atonement for sin, making salvation available to anyone who would believe in Him.

In view of God's holiness, Israel clearly understood that the cost of sin was heavy and that is the reason they looked to God for salvation from their sin. However, their neighbors did not feel the weight of their misdeeds as much as Israel did. As mentioned earlier, their many gods were immoral themselves. Therefore, the search for deliverance from sin was not as prominent in the neighboring cultures of Israel, as it was in Israel itself.

The primary concerns of Israel's neighbors were the pursuit of success and power. Their gods were gods of war (Chemosh of the Moabites), grain (Dagon of the Philistines), storm (Enlil of the Mesopotamians) and so forth. They sought their gods to gain their favor or to appease them when they were angry, so that they would bless them with success in areas like war, agriculture and wealth. The search for salvation, as the Jews understood it, was pitiful, if not entirely absent.

SALVATION IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

The Old Testament writers saw salvation as more physical than spiritual and more social than individual. This is not to suggest that it excludes the spiritual and individual aspects, but there is definitely a greater emphasis on the physical and social aspects of salvation.

One of the many Hebrew words used to signify salvation, "yasa" (to save, help in distress, rescue, deliver, set free) appears frequently in the Old Testament and the nature of deliverance as described in the Old Testament is commonly material in nature.[11]

With reference to the social–individual aspect of salvation, it is important to note that while it appears that individuals were raised up for the benefit of the community (Noah, Abraham, Joseph in Egypt, Moses, Judges and even Esther) and despite the importance attributed to these human agents, *salvation is eventually attributed to God.*[12]

God is the Author of Salvation

This truth is expressed time and time again throughout the Scriptures. Joseph acknowledged that it was God who authored good (Genesis 50) even though his brothers intended otherwise, and God, not Moses, is portrayed as the warrior in Exodus 15. In the

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[11] Walter Elwell, editor, *Baker Theological Dictionary of the Bible*, (Baker Books, Baker Book Hose Publishers, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 2000), 701

[12] Elwell, 701 - 702

book of Esther, Mordecai impresses upon Esther that it is God's sovereignty at work through her that has made her queen so that the Jews can be saved (Esther 4:14).

The Content of God's Salvation

The Old Testament primarily refers to Israel's deliverance from their enemies, and while this is true, it must not be concluded that salvation from sin is not addressed here. At the heart of the relationship between Yahweh and the Israelites is His call to Israel to be *distinct* from her neighbors. They were called to "*...be holy because, I the LORD your God, am holy*" (Lev. 19:2).

Through the following passages of scriptures, it is attempted to uncover God's plan for salvation with regards to His revelation of Himself as a holy and loving God, the exposing of man's sinful nature and God's ultimate plan for redemption.

God's revelation of Himself

The Creator of the universe (Gen. 1:1; 2:1)
No other God but Yahweh (Deut. 6:4, Exod. 15:11)
God is Almighty (Exod. 14:13)
God is Holy (Lev. 11:44)
God is Love (Deut. 33:3)
God is Eternal (Exod. 3:14)
None but God can save (Isa. 43:14)

Mankind

Created by God in his image (Gen. 1:27)
Man is unique among all the creatures (Gen. 2:7)
Man was created to rule over all living creatures (Gen. 2:28)

The Fall of Man and the Spread of Sin:

Sin is acting independent of God's counsel (Gen. 3)
Sin doubts the trustworthiness of God's character (Gen. 3:4-5)
The Pervasiveness of Sin:
    Cain and Abel (Gen. 4:1-6)
    The Generation of the flood (Gen. 6:5–9:28)
    The Tower of Babel (Gen. 11:1-9)

God's plan for Redemption:

God, the Seeker (Gen. 3:9)
God's Promise (Gen. 3:15)
God's Providence (Gen. 3:21)

God's plan as revealed to Israel:

Action	God's Expression	God's Expectation	Reference
To crush Satan through woman's seed	God's Promise	Call to repent, trust in God's saving grace	Gen. 3:15
Covenant was made with Noah after the flood	God's Forgiveness	Call to - Obedience, - Trust in God's saving plan	Gen. 9:9-13
Choosing Abraham to be the blessing bearer of the world	God's Initiative	Call to - Obedience, - Trust in God's unrevealed plan	Gen. 12:2-3
Delivered Israelites from Egypt	God's Redemption	Call to - Obedience, - Trust in God's revealed law	Exodus
Tabernacle Instituted	God's presence with his people	Call to a life of reverence	Exodus
Sacrificial system instituted	God's Holiness revealed	Call to express obedience by adherence to the sacrificial system	Leviticus
Saved them from the hands of their enemies	God's Deliverance	Call to obedience, trust God in his ability to save/ rescue/ deliver from enemies	Joshua, Judges, Samuel
Temple built	God's Glory in his people's midst	Call to live life in accordance to God's revealed law	Kings
Punishment for disobedience, Israel exiled	God's Righteousness revealed	Call to repentance and trust in god's forgiveness	Isaiah, Jeremiah
Repentance of Israelites and restoration of the kingdom	God's Faithfulness	Call to trust in God's faithfulness and loving kindness	Jeremiah, Daniel
The coming Messiah's revealed to Israel	God's fulfillment of His Salvation plan	Call to steadfast hope in God for salvation	Prophets

The revelation of God's salvation plan for his people is seen throughout the pages of the Old Testament and is punctuated with the nation's response. Yet it is always under girded by God's grace that constantly offers man the opportunity to be saved. God's progressively revealed plan of salvation follows this timeline.

Creation → Sin → Promise → Covenant → Law → Tabernacle → Temple → Destruction of the Temple → Exile → Redemption → Preparation for the coming of the Messiah.

It is made plain in the Old Testament that the sacrifices performed (by faith in the God who saves, not in the sacrifice itself or the righteousness of the individual) were sufficient to be saved. Yet there is a greater revelation, a greater fulfillment that would be revealed in the pages of the New Testament. This is dealt with in the next section.

SALVATION IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

It is important to recognize the consistency in the plan of salvation from the beginning and that the method of salvation in the New Testament does not change in comparison to the Old Testament. As John S. Feinberg states quoting Hodge,

> "...the plan of salvation has been the same from the beginning. There is the same promise of deliverance from evils of the apostasy, the same Redeemer, the same condition required for participation in the blessing of redemption, and the same complete salvation for all who embrace the offer of divine mercy."[13]

The New Testament continues the Old Testament affirmation that salvation belonged to God alone. However, it does certainly add to the teaching of the Old Testament. This addition does not abrogate, but rather amplifies the former revelation.

Before we look into the manner in which the revelation of God's plan for salvation has progressively grown, it is important to first recognize the consistency in that salvation plan. Firstly, *God's Promise* to man was that He would act on his behalf.[14] Secondly, *God's Provision* is basis for salvation, made possible by the provision of Christ as the final sacrifice for sin. Thirdly, *Man's Acceptable Response* is to be his acceptance of God's provision for salvation by faith.

The Objective Aspect of Salvation

The New Testament uncovers the mystery of salvation in Christ (Eph. 3:9; 6:19), a plan that God conceived before the foundations of the world (Eph. 1:3-14), which also applied to all the nations (Gen. 12), and is completed in Jesus. His death was for all (John 11:51-52) and repentance and forgiveness of sins was to be proclaimed to all nations (Luke 24:47) and this was the promised blessing through Abraham for all people (Gal 3:8). This then is the objective basis and means of salvation – God's sovereign choice of

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[13] John S. Feinberg and Paul D. Feinberg, *Tradition and Testament: Essays in Honor of Charles Feinberg,* (Chicago: Moody), 41.

[14] Genesis 3:15-16; Genesis 12 and 15; John 3:16.

Christ "... the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). This is the Christ who is described in the book of Hebrews as both the author and mediator of salvation (Heb. 2:10; 7:25). "In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of the sins in accordance in the riches of God's grace that He lavished on us with all wisdom and understanding" (Eph. 1:7-8).

The Subjective Aspect of Salvation

There is another aspect that needs to be considered and that is man's expression based on God's revelation. This constitutes the subjective aspect of salvation. It is God who chooses to reveal Himself to His people. This revelation then invites a response which expresses itself based on the nature of the revelation. It is important to note that it is not the *essence* of the response that changes but rather its *expression.*

> "The requirement (faith) confronts the non-believer as he contemplates God's message of salvation. The specific expression of faith confronts the believer as he contemplates how he is to live out the salvation he has already been given."[15]

In the Old Testament, it was faith expressing itself in animal sacrifice, whereas in the New Testament it is faith expressing itself through baptism and partaking of the Lord's Table.[16] The work of Christ does not nullify the aspect of faith. It only emphasizes the point, as the author to the Hebrews suggests, that hearing the Gospel is of no value unless it is combined with faith (Heb. 4:1). The New Testament articulates salvation in terms of past, present and future time.[17] The New Testament reiterates that just because salvation is provided (as a finished work on the Cross), it does not mean that humankind is saved (without actualization of that salvation in the life of the individual).[18] This is the reason why the apostle Paul in his letter to the Philippians records that it is both our work and His (Phil. 2:12b-13).

IMPLICATIONS FOR TODAY

The Holiness of God

Today we live in a world that is quite similar to that of the Ancient Near East. Most people are oblivious to their need for salvation because they are ignorant of the fact that God is holy. However, God's Holy Spirit convicts us of sin, righteousness and judgment. He convinces us that we are sinners and leads us to repentance and to a trusting faith in Jesus Christ. In contrast, other religions are conscious of sin, but have no sure way of salvation from their sin. In fact, many of the gods of today's religions are immoral in their lifestyle, just as it was so many centuries ago. That makes their gods powerless to save. Ultimately, it is Christ's perfect, holy and acceptable sacrifice on the cross that rescues us from sin and delivers us from the clutches of death and the devil.

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[15] Ibid.
[16] Feinberg, 61.
[17] Elwell, 703.
[18] Feinberg, 74.

Salvation Beyond this Life

One of the main reasons why people seek their gods today, just as they did ages ago, is because they want success and power. In that regard, pagan religions have not developed much since Old Testament times. Their gods are less than perfect and their pursuits are restricted to the comforts of this life. In contrast, the salvation that God has given to us not only rescues us from the consequences of our sin, it also demands that our pursuits be of eternal worth, as opposed to temporal value. Paul writes to the Galatians saying, "If only for this life you have trusted in Christ, you ought to be pitied more than all men." Jesus came to give us abundant life on earth and eternal life beyond this earth. We trust in Him for this life as well as the one to come. He is truly our all in all.

The Human Response

As far as the Church is concerned, when it comes to a salvation as great as the one that has been given to us, the only proper attitude to have is that of gratitude. Jesus said, "The one who is forgiven much, loves much." Perhaps one reason for the universal Church's apathy and lethargy is the fact that it does not realize the greatness of Christ's salvation, the extent of our sin, not to mention the heavy cost of redemption that had to be paid on our behalf. If the Church is to move forward in its journey, believers must individually and corporately strive to be thankful for the work of Christ. He gave His life as a sacrifice for our salvation, once in history and for all humanity.

Faith in all Seasons

Perhaps one of the banes of Christian living in today's generation is our perpetual lack of faith in God's ability to lead us and guide us until He safely brings us into our rest. Sometimes our earthly concerns and worries seem to dominate our moods and tend to lead us into a sub-standard way of living. God's salvation plan through the ages must serve to remind us that if God did not spare His own Son, but willingly gave Him up for us all, will He not along with Him give us all things? Maybe its time we started to act like we believe it.

CONCLUSION

All in all, Israel's understanding of salvation was radically different from that of her neighbors. While others were content to pursue their gods for success and power, Israel was taught to pursue God for salvation from their sin. They were taught that God was holy and the cost of sin was heavy. They were also taught a sacrificial system that would serve to remind them of the cost of sin. It would also serve as a temporary solution for sin until Christ Himself came into the world to be the final and ultimate sacrifice for sin, making salvation available to all peoples from all nations, by simple faith in the work of Christ. It also becomes evident that God's plan for salvation is a single unifying plan that is revealed progressively. This revelation begins and runs through the entire Old Testament and continues on into the New Testament.

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f) But why can't the "blood of bulls and goats...take away sins" (Heb. 10:4)? Sacrifices forgave and cleansed only from external ceremonial impurity (Heb. 9:13), but Christ *removed* all sin and cleansed *internally*. A clear treatment of OT sacrifices is John S. Feinberg, "Salvation in the Old Testament," *Tradition and Testament,* eds. John S. and Paul D. Feinberg (Chicago: Moody, 1981), 39-77 (adapted below into chart form). Issues 1-3 are the same for OT and NT but 4-5 are different:

	OT Times **(Moses to Christ's Death)**	**NT Times** **(Christ's Death to Today)**
Basis **of Salvation**	God's gracious provision of the death of Christ ("it is the blood that makes atonement for one's life" Lev. 17:11b)	God's gracious provision of the death of Christ ("without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness" Heb. 9:22)
Requirement **of Salvation**	Faith in the provision that God has revealed—as a gift (Ps. 51:16-17)	Faith in the provision that God has revealed—as a gift (Gal. 2:16)
Ultimate Content **of Salvation**	Object of faith is God Himself—prophets exhorted repentance, not sacrifices (Jer. 3:12; Joel 2:12)	Object of faith is God Himself—heroes of faith are cited to exhort faith in God (Heb. 11)
Specific Revealed Content **of Salvation**	Cumulative content of faith involved sacrifices & promises: animals (Gen. 3:21), Abel's sacrifice (Gen. 4:4), Abrahamic covenant (Gen. 15), etc.	New content of faith is the shed blood of Jesus Christ (1 Pet. 1:18-21) which removes sin (cp. OT sacrifices merely covered sin)
Believer's Expression **of Salvation**	Obey moral law, offer animal sacrifices, obey Mosaic law (civil and ceremonial aspects)	Obey moral law, observe Lord's Supper and baptism, etc. through the Spirit's enabling (Rom. 8:9)

7. Sacrifices

a) The focal point of Jewish worship was sacrifice.

(1) One could not approach God apart from giving Him something as King or apart from offering a substitute for atonement.

(2) How is atoning sacrifice also the focal point of Christian worship today (1 Cor. 2:2)?

b) Jewish sacrifices had to be performed only on a perfect animal.

c) God prescribed five types of sacrifices (Lev. 1–6; OTS, 128).

(1) Three non-required sacrifices of consecration expressed communion by one already in fellowship with God (dedicatory).

(a) Burnt offering

(b) Grain offering

(c) Drink offering

(2) One non-required sacrifice of communal worship

(3) Two mandatory sacrifices of confession expressed repentance from sin by one seeking restored fellowship with God (expiatory).

(a) Sin offering

(b) Guilt offering

(4) The proper order of these sacrifices was sin and guilt offerings first, followed by burnt offerings and ending with cereal offerings (Lev. 8:14–9:22; 2 Chron. 29:20-36).[35] In like manner, believers today should first confess their sins and offer themselves wholly to God, which is followed by fellowship with God.

d) Worship today needs to also accomplish parallel purposes:

(1) Confession:

(a) Believers need restored fellowship with a holy God (cf. Isa. 6:1-7).

(b) Believers must confess sin (James 5:16).

(2) Consecration: Believers must express their love for the Lord.

e) Sacrifice (even to the LORD) at the high places was prohibited from the time of Moses (Lev. 17:3-5) as God wanted the people to worship in a single sanctuary (Deut. 12:10-14; cf. 14:23-25; 16:6, 11, 15-16). See the study on the next page.

[35] Hill, 120.

Sacrifices at the High Places

One of the perplexing issues in the OT historical books concerns the high places. Were these spots alternate places to sacrifice to the LORD or did they always relate to pagan deities?

In patriarchal times, men like Job, Abraham, and Jacob built altars in many places and offered sacrifices. However, the first prohibition of sacrifices in various places is probably in Leviticus, which was revealed to the people at Mount Sinai even before they entered Canaan.

> Any Israelite who sacrifices an ox, a lamb or a goat in the camp or outside of it instead of bringing it to the entrance to the Tent of Meeting to present it as an offering to the LORD in front of the tabernacle of the LORD —that man shall be considered guilty of bloodshed; he has shed blood and must be cut off from his people. This is so the Israelites will bring to the LORD the sacrifices they are now making in the open fields. They must bring them to the priest, that is, to the LORD, at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting and sacrifice them as fellowship offerings (Lev. 17:3-5).

A similar text commands sacrifice at only one spot (later revealed to be Jerusalem):

> But you will cross the Jordan and settle in the land the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance, and he will give you rest from all your enemies around you so that you will live in safety. Then to the place the LORD your God will choose as a dwelling for his Name —there you are to bring everything I command you: your burnt offerings and sacrifices, your tithes and special gifts, and all the choice possessions you have vowed to the LORD. And there rejoice before the LORD your God, you, your sons and daughters, your menservants and maidservants, and the Levites from your towns, who have no allotment or inheritance of their own. Be careful not to sacrifice your burnt offerings anywhere you please. Offer them only at the place the LORD will choose in one of your tribes, and there observe everything I command you (Deut. 12:10-14; cf. 14:23-25; 16:6, 11, 15-16).

The judgments for disobeying the Mosaic law included God's destruction of these places. God said if Israel persisted in sin, "I will destroy your high places, cut down your incense altars and pile your dead bodies on the lifeless forms of your idols, and I will abhor you" (Lev. 26:30). For this reason God commanded the people, "Drive out all the inhabitants of the land before you. Destroy all their carved images and their cast idols, and demolish all their high places" (Num. 33:52; Deut. 33:29).

But Israel did not destroy them. In fact, after entering the land we find Samuel offering a sacrifices at a high place (1 Sam. 9:12-25; cf. 10:5, 13) where they were certainly legitimate (Homer Heater, "A Theology of Samuel and Kings," *Biblical Theology of the OT*, ed. Roy B. Zuck, 117, 126).

God even granted Solomon's request for wisdom at "the most important high place" (1 Kings 3:4)! How are we to deal with these texts, especially the last one which is preceded by the clear statement, "Solomon showed his love for the LORD by walking according to the statutes of his father David, except that he offered sacrifices and burned incense on the high places" (1 Kings 3:3). It appears that God is both blessing and condemning high place sacrifice in the same text.

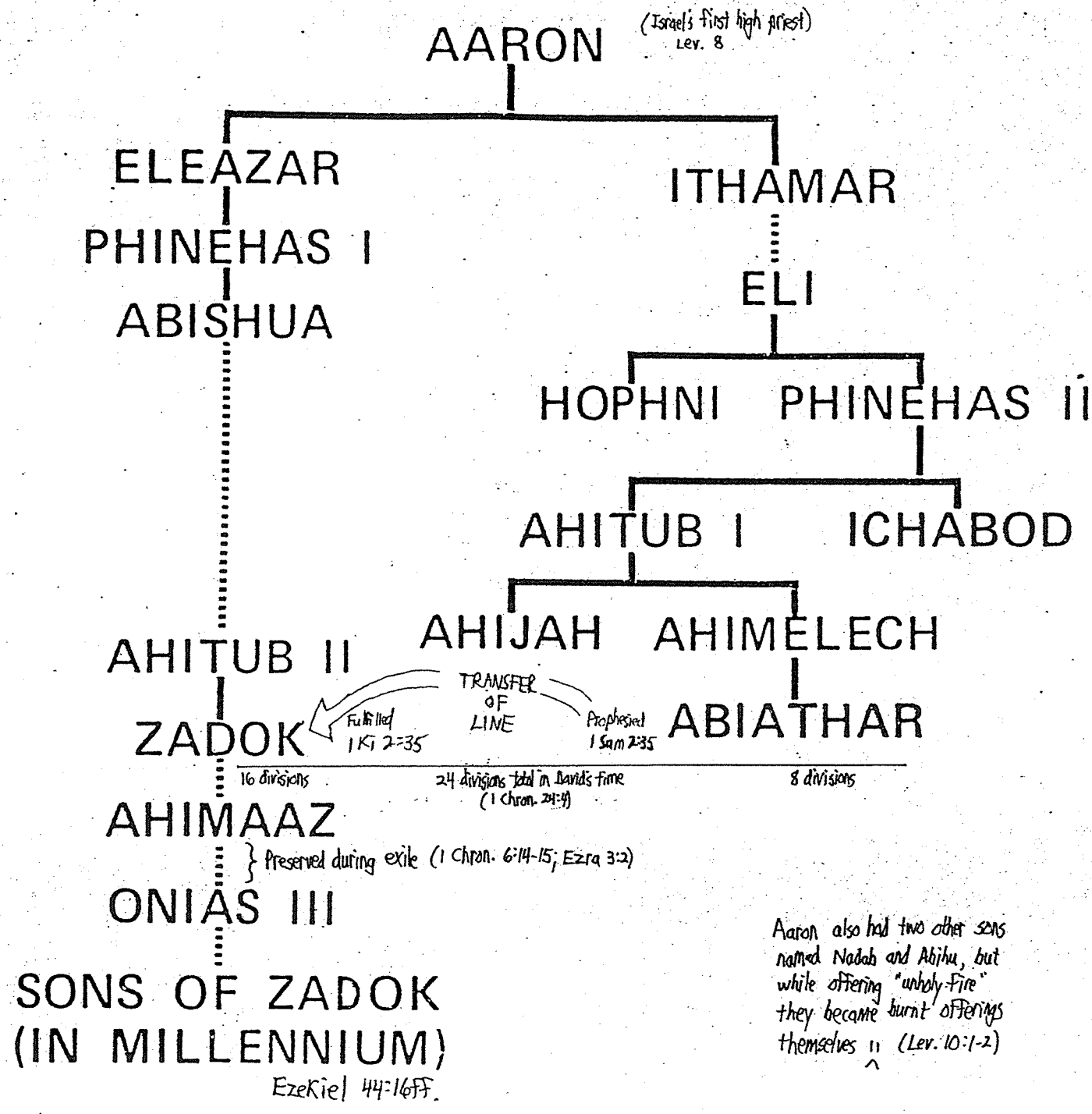
Perhaps the solution is found one verse earlier still: "The people, however, were still sacrificing at the high places, because a temple had not yet been built for the Name of the LORD" (1 Kings 3:2). Maybe God evidently made a concession to His command in Leviticus until the temple was built.

Yet after the temple was built, high place sacrifice was prohibited outright. Pagan high places were built by Solomon (1 Kings 11:7)—the very king who built the temple! And Jeroboam built them at Bethel and Dan to prevent the people in the north from going down to Jerusalem to sacrifice at the temple (1 Kings 12:31-32; 13:2, 32-33). Many kings made the mistake of allowing these places to continue (1 Kings 14:23; 15:14; 22:43; 2 Kings 12:3-4; 14:4; 15:4, 35; etc.). Brief revivals occurred when these places were torn down by Hezekiah (2 Kings 18:4) and Josiah (2 Kings 23:5-20), but the general practice was to rebuild them.

Disagreeing with this analysis is Heater, who states, "When David brought the ark to Jerusalem, the centralization of worship began. The high places, *legitimate places of worship*, continued throughout the history of the monarchy, but Jerusalem, the home of the Ark, increasingly became the center of worship" (ibid., 126-27, *italics* mine).

The Line of Aaron

Donald K. Campbell, Dallas Theological Seminary, 1986



Aaron also had two other sons named Nadab and Abihu, but while offering "unholy fire" they became burnt offerings themselves !! (Lev. 10:1-2)

(Adapted with comments by Rick Griffith)

8. Priesthood

a) That Yahweh worship was open to men only "stands counter to the whole thrust of Ancient Near East religion in which the interaction of male and female principals was an absolute necessity."[36] This assured that heterosexual sin would not be characteristic of the priesthood. If no female priestesses were allowed, this would assure that the men would never justify themselves in sexual sin with them in a supposed worship of YHWH.

b) Jewish priests needed a much higher moral standard than did pagan priests.

(1) They could allow themselves to become unclean only in the case of the death of a close relative (Lev. 21:1-4).

(2) "Priests must not shave their heads or shave off the edges of their beards or cut their bodies" (Lev. 21:5).

(3) They could not marry a woman who was divorced or a former prostitute (Lev. 21:7, 14).

(4) They must not be physically disabled (Lev. 21:17-21).

c) Other unique elements of Israel's priests:

(1) Genealogically determined

(2) Appointed by God

(3) Salary paid by worshippers

(4) No tribal allotment (land inheritance)

(5) Served two weeks annually at the temple (otherwise taught in the towns)

9. Calendar

a) Although the Canaanite religion negatively influenced Israel in numerous ways, one positive contribution could have been annual agricultural festivals that Israel adapted for her own purposes.[37]

(1) Perhaps God instituted holy festivals associated with the seasonal cycles as a deterrent to Israelites who would otherwise be tempted to join in the pagan celebrations.

(2) Believers today also have annual commemorations in addition to the normal weekly worship: Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Easter, Lent, Christmas, etc.

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[36] Craigie and Wilson, "Religions of the Biblical World: Canaanite," 4:100-101.
[37] Ibid., 4:101.

b) Synchronized Annual Jewish Calendar

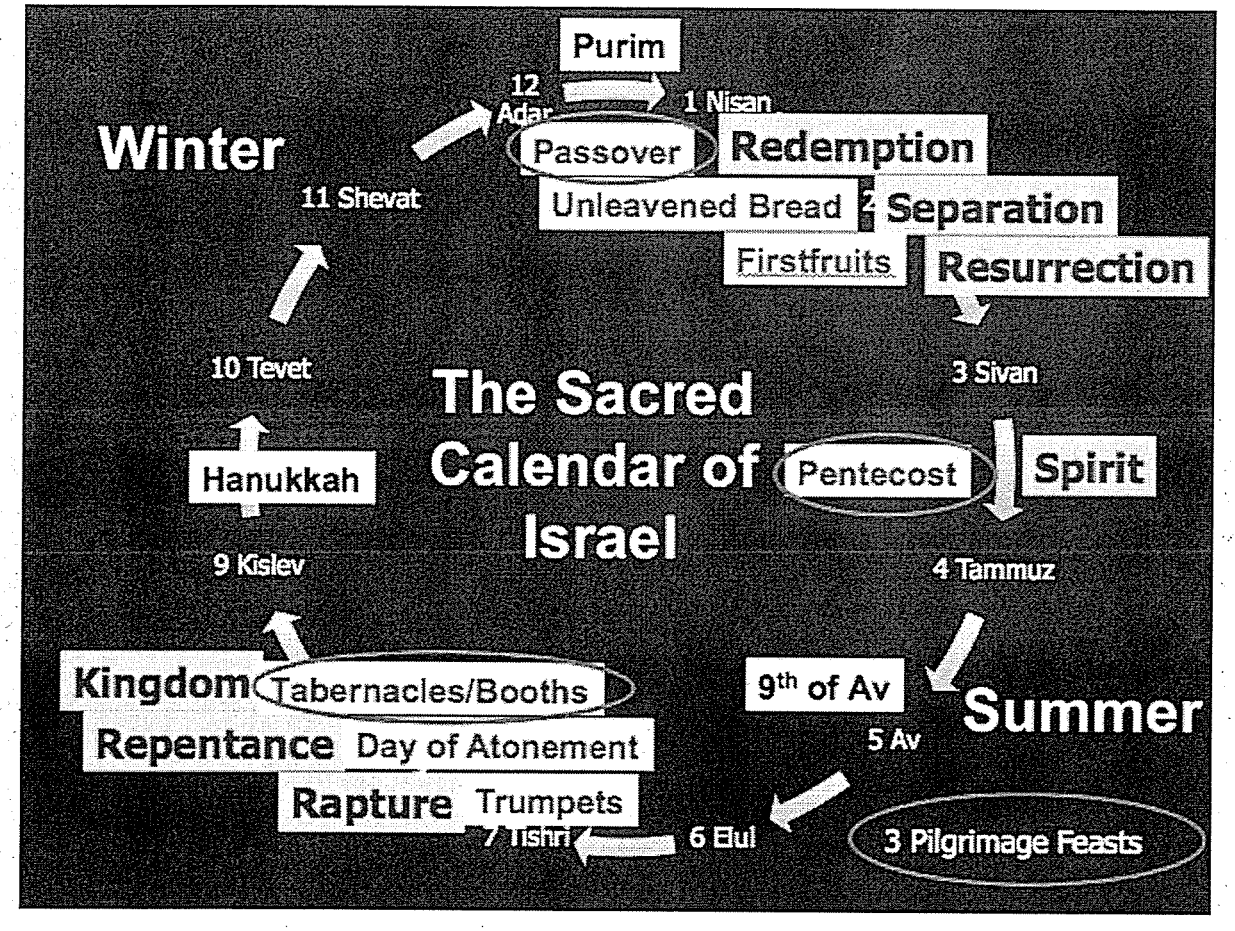
(1) We all use different calendars today—the civil calendar begins in January, the school calendar begins at SBC in July, the fiscal calendar begins when company books are cleared, and the lunar calendar begins at Chinese New Year in late January or February.

(2) In like manner, the Israelites had three systems of naming months.

(a) **Civil**—Abib, Bul, etc. were Canaanite names designating the secular calendar beginning in our present September-October. This was likely the calendar the patriarchs used.

(b) **Sacred**—At the Exodus a new, sacred calendar was employed identifying months by number (beginning at Passover in March-April). Later Nisan, Tishri, Kislev, etc. became adapted Babylonian names attached to these religious months. These names are still used today though the modern Jews begin the new year according to the civil reckoning (September-October).

(c) **Numbered**—First, second, third, etc. designated months of the sacred calendar (Lev. 23:5, 24)



(3) The Jewish Calendar is best seen on the following chart.[38]

Hebrew Calendar and Selected Events

NUMBER of MONTH		HEBREW NAME	MODERN EQUIVALENT	BIBLICAL REFERENCES	AGRICULTURE	FEASTS
1 Sacred sequence begins	7	**Abib; Nisan**	March–April	Ex 12:2; 13:4; 23:15; 34:18; Dt 16:1; Ne 2:1; Est 3:7	Spring (later) rains; barley and flax harvest begins	Passover; Unleavened Bread; Firstfruits
2	8	**Ziv (Iyyar)***	April–May	1Ki 6:1,37	Barley harvest; dry season begins	
3	9	**Sivan**	May–June	Est 8:9	Wheat harvest	Pentecost (Weeks)
4	10	**(Tammuz)***	June–July		Tending vines	
5	11	**(Ab)***	July–August		Ripening of grapes, figs and olives	
6	12	**Elul**	August–September	Ne 6:15	Processing grapes, figs and olives	
7	1 Civil sequence	**Ethanim (Tishri)***	September–October	1Ki 8:2	Autumn (early) rains begin; plowing	Trumpets; Atonement; Tabernacles (Booths)
8	2	**Bul (Marcheshvan)***	October–November	1Ki 6:38	Sowing of wheat and barley	
9	3	**Kislev**	November–December	Ne 1:1; Zec 7:1	Winter rains begin (snow in some areas)	Hanukkah ("Dedication")
10	4	**Tebeth**	December–January	Est 2:16		
11	5	**Shebat**	January–February	Zec 1:7		
12	6	**Adar**	February–March	Ezr 6:15; Est 3:7,13; 8:12; 9:1,15,17,19,21	Almond trees bloom; citrus fruit harvest	Purim
		(Adar Sheni)* — Second Adar	This intercalary month was added about every three years so the lunar calendar would correspond to the solar year.			

*Names in parentheses are not in the Bible

[38] *NIV Study Bible*, 101; cf. J. Lilly, "Calendar," *ZBPE*, 1:687-92; Nicholas de Lange, *Atlas of the Jewish World*, 89.

(4) Each calendar had twelve months of 30 days each. Thus they were all approximate to the actual solar (astronomical) calendar of 365.24219879 days (see the extra month needed above for accuracy).

(5) SIMCHAT TORAH

(a) "Jews in Israel and everywhere also celebrate the holiday of Simchat Torah ("Rejoicing in the Torah"), also known as Shemini Atzeret ("The Eighth Day of Assembly").

(b) "Simchat Torah immediately follows the last day of Succot (the Feast of Tabernacles). Its observance is mandated by Leviticus 23:36.

(c) "The day's prayer services at synagogues include special memorial prayers for the deceased, as well as a prayer for plentiful rainfall during the coming winter.

(d) "The day centers around special scriptural readings: the yearly cycle of weekly Torah (Genesis to Deuteronomy) reading is completed, and begins again. This is accompanied by dancing and singing which—in religious neighborhoods—often spill out into the streets.

(e) "Although Leviticus 23:36 commands an offering on this day, since no temple is present, such a command is not possible. Therefore, the reading of the Torah is substituted instead."[39]

c) Other Calendar Events in Intervening Years

(1) The Sabbath year was to be celebrated every seventh year as a year of rest for the land (Exod. 23:10-11; Lev. 25:1-7).

(a) Israel neglected this rest time and again. During the 814 years from Moses to the last king to rule, Zedekiah (1400-586 BC), there should have been 116 Sabbath years. Since Judah refused to let the land rest for 70 of these years, God forced the land rest during the 70 years exile (2 Chron. 36:21).

(b) Nehemiah reestablished the seventh-year Sabbath rest practice after the exile was complete (Neh. 10:31).

(2) The Year of Jubilee canceled all debts and returned land to its original family every 50th year (Lev. 25:8-55; 27:17-24; Num. 36:4).

[39] ICEJ News (October 22, 1997) of the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem (Middle East Digest/ICEJ News Service, PO Box 1192 Jerusalem 91010; website <http://www.intournet.co.il/icej/>). To subscribe (free), email a blank message to icej-news-service-subscribe@icej.org.il

d) Summary Observations on Festivals

(1) Festivals of worship on an annual basis clustered in two major months—the first and the seventh month. This provided balance in the yearly cycle by allowing periods of celebration every half year or so.

(2) The feasts included both times of rejoicing and sober reflection.

(3) Three feasts were to be celebrated in Jerusalem (see next page) whereas variety was offered in that the others could be observed at home.

(4) Festivals came in conjunction with the harvest cycle in Israel (note the chart below from http://www.wcg.org/lit/law/festivals/harvest.htm). God addressed the reality that the people would be tremendously busy at certain times, but before and after these times they were to acknowledge His provision. Thus, Firstfruits preceded the busy April to early May period while Pentecost celebrated the completed harvest in late May. Interestingly, the final harvest was of olives and Christ will return on the Mount of Olives at the end of the age (Zech. 14:4)!

Harvests Lasted Apr-Nov

Harvesting & Ingathering Based on Modern Agricultural Practices in Israel

	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov
Wheat			X						
Barley		X							
Oats			X						
Peas		X	X						
Chickpeas				X					
Lentils		X	X						
Vetch		X	X						
Sesame					X				
Flax					X				
Millet					X	X			
Grapes				X	X	X	X		
Figs						X	X		
Pomegranates						X	X		
Olives							X	X	X

http://www.wcg.org/lit/law/festivals/harvest.htm

(5) Feasts united the nation on the same calendar with communal festivities. By gathering together, Israelites saw themselves as a holy community.

(6) Feasts provided rest—but why would God have to command us to rest? Don't we already want rest?

(7) Feasts typically looked both back on how God had acted on behalf of the nation as well as typologically to Israel's future history (see next page).

Eschatology of Israel's Feasts (Leviticus 23)

	Date	Length	Feast	Significance (Past)	Typology (Future)
1.	Weekly	1 day	Sabbath* (Shabbat)	Reminder of: • Creation rest of God • Deliverance from Egypt Sign of Mosaic Covenant (Exod. 20, 31; Deut 5)	Millennial rest (Heb. 4:1-11)
2.	1-14 (Nisan)	1 day (Read Song of Songs)	Passover*† (Pesach)	Redemption from Egypt by blood of the sacrificial lamb (Exod. 12)	Redemption from sin by Christ's death as Lamb (1 Cor. 5:7b)
3.	1-15 to 1-21 (Nisan)	7 days	Unleavened Bread*†	Separation/break from dependence upon Egypt to dependence upon God	Separated life of the redeemed for God (1 Cor. 5:7a, 8)
4.	1-16 (Day after Harvest Sabbath)	1 day	Firstfruits (barley sheaf ceremony)	Anticipation of God's *future* material provisions -begins grain harvest	Resurrection of Christ (1 Cor. 15:20)
5.	3-6 (Sivan)	1 day (Read Ruth)	Pentecost† (Shavuoth) (Weeks) (Harvest)	Thanksgiving for God's *past* material provisions -ends grain harvest (Deut. 16:9-12)	Coming of the Holy Spirit to complete Christ's resurrection (Acts 2)
—	Spring-Summer	no feasts	—	Enjoyment of the harvest	Church Age
6.	7-1 (Tishri)	1 day	Trumpets (New Year) (Rosh Hashanah)	Preparation for national redemption and cleansing on Day of Atonement	Rapture (1 Thess. 4:13f.) Revelation (Matt. 24:31) —Kingdom preparation
7.	7-10 (Tishri)	1 day	Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur)	National repentance and cleansing from sins of the people (Lev. 16)	National repentance of Israel in the Tribulation (Rom. 11:26-27; Zech 12:9-14)
8.	7-15 to 7-21 (Tishri)	7 days (Read Eccles.)	Tabernacles*† (Booths/Tents) (Succot) (the Lord) (Ingathering)	Remembered wilderness wanderings in tents (Lev. 23:42-43; Neh. 8:13-18) & celebrated final harvest of the year (Deut. 16:13)	Fulfillment of the Abrahamic Covenant in Millennium —Judgment (Matt. 13:30, 39; Rev. 14:15) —Kingdom (Matt. 17:4)
9.	7-22 (Tishri)	1 day	Shemini Atzeret (Simchat Torah)	"Eighth Day of Assembly" "Rejoicing in the Torah"	

The following days are not commanded in Scripture and probably have no eschatological significance:

10.	5-9 (Ab)	1 day (Read Lam.)	9th of Ab (Tish'ah be'ab)	Destructions of Jerusalem: 586 BC & AD 70	↑
11.	9-25 (Kislev)	1 day + 7 more days of candle lighting	Hanukkah (Dedication) (Lights) (Illumination) (Maccabees)	Saving of the nation under Judas Maccabeus in 164 BC (cf. John 10:22)	*This Typology column shows that the order of Israel's annual feasts prophetically parallels her experience as a nation throughout history!*
12.	12-14/15 (Adar)	2 days (Read Esther)	Purim (Lots)	Saving of the nation under Esther (9:21)	**Note: 10% of the year was for celebrations!**

* Feasts celebrated in the Millennium (Isa. 66:23; Ezek. 45:21; 46:1; Zech. 14:16-19; Luke 22:16)
† Feasts celebrated in three annual Jerusalem pilgrimages by all male Israelites (Exod. 23:14-17)

C. Summary: Key Theological Distinctions Between Israel and Her Neighbors[40]

ISSUE	ISRAEL IDEAL	PAGAN POLYTHEISM
Ultimacy of deity	Yahweh is the ultimate power in the universe. He answers to no one and there are no limitations on his jurisdiction.	The gods have competing agendas and limited jurisdiction. Even as a corporate body they do not exercise ultimate sovereignty.
Manifestation of deity	Yahweh cannot be represented in material form or in the form of any natural phenomena.	Deities represented iconically, anthropomorphically, or in natural phenomena.
Disposition of deity	Yahweh is consistent in character and has bound himself by his attributes.	Deity is not bound by any code of conduct. Inconsistent, unpredictable and accountable only marginally to the divine assembly.
Autonomy of deity	Yahweh is not dependent on people for the provision of any needs.	People provided food and housing for deity (sacrifices and temples).
Requirements of deity	Made known in detail through the giving of the law.	Not revealed; could only be inferred from one's fortunes.
Response to deity	Yahweh expects conformity to the Law and to his holiness and justice.	Ritualistic, though maintaining an ordered society was important.
Creation of the cosmos	Yahweh undertook and sovereignly executed a cohesive plan of creation.	Accomplished by procreation of the gods, with no directing influence and was organized and established through conflict between the gods.
Human dignity	Derived from being created in the image of God and placed over creation. Yahweh created for people and with people in mind.	Since humans were a bother and an afterthought, created as slaves, dignity derived from the belief that they provided the needs of the gods.
Revelation	Yahweh's will, purposes, and nature were a matter of public record provided by Yahweh.	The will, purposes, and nature of deity could only be inferred.
Election	Israel understood herself to be the elect people of God.	Occasionally a king or dynasty was considered elect, but no sustained doctrine of election existed.
Historiography	History recorded as a means of Yahweh's revelation and therefore didactic.	History recorded as a means of propagandistic justification and certification of the current regime.
Divine intervention	Directed toward an established and consistent goal in keeping with Yahweh's intention of revealing himself and his attributes.	Directed toward maintaining a *status quo* or returning to a previous *status quo* and is primarily *ad hoc*.
Omens	Worldview of Israel rejected omen mentality.	Viewed as indicating whether the gods were bringing favorable or unfavorable circumstances.
Incantations	Worldview of Israel rejected manipulation of deity by incantations.	Incantations used as a magical means of coercing deity to respond in desired ways.

[40] John H. Walton, *Chronological & Background Charts of the Old Testament*, 2d ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 84.

Biblical vs. Pagan Prayer

I. Scope and Definitions

A. This study compares and contrasts the practices and theology of prayer in OT Israel and the pagan nations of the Ancient Near East.

B. By "prayer" this study refers to humans approaching a god, gods, or the true God in praise, thanksgiving, confession, or supplication.

II. Common Elements of Prayer that Israel Shared with Pagan Peoples

A. Content: Both included requests for protection and victory in battles and intercession during individual and national suffering, as well as many other matters (1 Sam. 12:6-25).[1] Both also include confession and include lamentations.[2]

B. Style: Pagans and Jews prayed in temples, had priestly mediation, were accompanied by sacrifices and had similar forms such as lifting hands, beginning with praise[3] (Ps. 103, 104), etc. Note these similarities:[4]

Hymn to Aton (Egyptian)	*Psalm 104 to Yahweh (Jewish)*
How manifold it is, what you hast made!	O Lord, how manifold are your works (v. 24)!
All the world, they do their work.	Man goes out to his work and his labor until the evening (v. 23)
Thou makest the seasons in order to rear all thou hast made.	He appointed the moon for seasons, the sun knows its going down (v. 19)
Everyone has his food and his time of life is reckoned.	These all wait for you, that you may give them their food in season (v. 27)

Letter from Sin-iddinam (Sumerian)	*Praise of Yahweh (Jewish)*
Utu is said to be "exalted judge of heaven and earth... just God... who heeds entreaty, who extends mercy, who knows... compassion, who loves justice, who selects honesty"	But you are a God ready to forgive, gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, and did not forsake them (Neh. 9:17)

[1] Several examples of ancient pagan prayers are available at these internet sites:
Paul Halsall, *Ancient History Sourcebook: A Collection of Babylonian Prayers, c. 1600 B.C.E.* (http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/ancient/1600babylonianprayers.html); Robert F. Harper, trans., "Penitential Prayers to Every God" (http://campus.northpark.edu/history/classes//Sources/SumerPrayer.html); *The Electronic Text Corpus of Sumerian Literature* (http://www-etcsl.orient.ox.ac.uk); cited by Laura Chao-Tan I-Lin, OT Backgrounds paper (Singapore: SBC, 2002), 7.

[2] Ferris J. Stephens, trans., "The Prayer of Lamentation to Ishtar," *ANET*, 3rd ed., (Princeton, Univ. Press, 1969), 111; cited by Patrick Loh, OT Backgrounds paper (Singapore: SBC, 2002), 2.

[3] Babylonian praises include titles similar to Israel's such as "Lord," "the one who knows all," the "Perfect One," etc. See "Hymnal Prayer of Enheduanna: The Adoration of Ianna of Ur," *Ancient Near Eastern* Texts, ed. James B. Pritchard (Princeton, NJ: Univ. Press, 1950), 2:126-31; cited by Tan Ai Cheng, OT Backgrounds paper (Singapore: SBC, 2002), 1.

[4] John A. Wilson, trans., "The Hymn to Aton," *ANET*, 2nd ed., (Princeton, Univ. Press, 1958), 1:226-230; cited by Loh, 1; "Letter from Sin-iddinam to the god Utu about the distress of Larsa," *The Electronic Text Corpus of Sumerian Literature*; cited by Chao-Tan, 2.

III. Contrasts between Biblical and Pagan Prayer

Issues	*Pagan Prayer*	*Biblical Prayer*
Objective or purpose	Convince deity to meet person's physical and/or material needs rather than punish him	Honor God (1 Kings 18:36-37) and express needs for Him to answer (meeting needs is less important than building one's relationship with God)
Initiative to Pray	Human	Divine, invites us into his presence (Ps. 100)
Covenant relationship	None: the devotee needed to introduce himself to the deity, who basically was uninterested in people except as his slaves	Covenants with Abraham, Moses, David, etc. enabled one to pray out of the context of a personal relationship with the God who knew the name of each person praying
Prayer to many gods at the same time	Allowed in Babylon[5] as well as prayer to a single, false deity (Babylonian *Anu*, Canaanite *El*, Egyptian *Atum*, etc.)	Prohibited to pray even to one other god besides Yahweh (Exod. 20:2)
Praise comparisons	Ishtar ("lady of Heaven") of Babylon is likened to Anu the high god and Enlil the Counselor, both of whom helped her attain greatness	Exodus 15:11 "Who among the gods is like you, O LORD? Who is like you--majestic in holiness, awesome in glory, working wonders?" Israel prayed to the LORD who needed no help to become great.
View of the deity's power	Limited (humans needed as slaves to meet the deity's needs)	Ultimate (Isa. 43:10), not dependent upon worshipers for his needs (Deut. 10:17)
Morality of deity to whom prayers were offered	Immoral, inconsistent, petty, so pagan prayer often sought to avert capricious and angry gods	Righteous and holy (Lev. 11:44); Abraham and Moses entreated the LORD based on His morality (Gen. 18:20-25; Exod. 32:9-14).
Morality of the one praying	Unimportant (worshipers often ended up horrible like their god)	Vitally important (worshipers became holy like their holy God)
Rituals	Public sex before worshippers,[6] infant sacrifices, etc.	Holy rituals only (Exod. 20:26 prohibits altar steps to prevent nakedness from being seen)
Posture	Prostrated themselves in sackcloth and ashes (Jonah 3:6)	Standing (Exod. 17:12; 1 Sam. 1:26), kneeling (Dan. 6:10) or both (1 Kings 8:22, 54), lying prostrate (Ps. 38:6; cf. Matt. 26:39) in sackcloth and ashes (Dan. 9:3)

[5] H. W. F. Saggs, *The Greatness That Was Babylon* (New York: Mentor, 1962), 314; cited by Wong Yu Ming, OT Backgrounds paper (Singapore: SBC, 2002), 2.

[6] The Babylonian goddess of love and war called Ishata required public cultic prostitution of her "worshippers" (*ANET*); cited by Tan, 3.

Issues	*Pagan Prayer*	*Biblical Prayer*
Direction	Unknown	Daniel prayed towards Jerusalem (Dan. 6:10) and later synagogues all faced towards Jerusalem as Solomon had entreated the people to pray this way (1 Kings 8:44, 48)
Location	Limited to a cultic place or in the presence of a god through vision (narrow), though Egyptians prayed to lesser gods at home	Offered anywhere (broad) as in the case of Nehemiah who prayed before the king, at the wall, etc.
Frequency	No regular pattern	Pious Jews prayed three times daily (Dan. 6:10; Ps. 55:17)
Communion	Absent between devotee and deity as no relationship existed between them	Vital to the relationship between an Israelite and the LORD, as seen in the conversation between Moses and God (Exod. 32:11-14)
Confession	General as pagans did not know a deity's requirements nor saw sin as a moral problem, so made a simple bow to an idol[7]	A sacrifice (Ps. 51:17) and prerequisite to supplication, either privately (Lamentations; Dan. 9:3-19) or publicly (Ezra 9:5-15) to restore one's relationship with the LORD
Formalistic	Accepted in most societies	Accepted during pre-exilic monarchy period[8]
Repetition	Acceptable	Not practiced in light of the worshippers relationship with God
Divination	Acceptable	Prohibited (Deut. 18:10; 2 Kings 17:17)
Sorcery	Acceptable	Prohibited (Deut. 18:10; 2 Chron. 33:6)
Magic & Spells	Acceptable	Prohibited (Ezek. 13:18, 20)
Shouting	Prophets of Baal and Asherah shouted so deities would better hear them (1 Kings 18:26, 28)	The true God hears just fine and even hears the heart cry of those who pray to Him (Ps. 51:6)
Masochism	Baal worshippers slashed their bodies to get Baal's attention and favor (1 Kings 18:26-29)	Elijah prayed a simple prayer with great effect apart from any dancing, shouting, or harm to his body (1 Kings 18:36-38)
Answers to Prayer	None, since there really exist no other gods	Initially direct communication (Gen. 3-4; 15:4) but later via prophet or other means
Foundation for making requests	Appeasement by sacrifice or ritual (praise given in exchange for the deity granting requests)	Covenant based upon the word of the covenant-keeping God

[7] Thomas L. Constable, *Talking to God* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1995), 99; cited by Ronnie Ang, OT Backgrounds paper (Singapore: SBC, 2002), 2. See the Sumero-Akkadian "Prayer of Lamentations to Ishtar" (*ANET*), "O god whom I know or do not know, (my) transgressions are many... the transgression which I committed, indeed I do not know... the prohibited (place) on which I have set foot, indeed I do not know" cf. Saggs, "Petition to Nabu," *Greatness...*, 312.

[8] Ferris J. Stephens, *Ancient Near Eastern* Texts, ed. James B. Pritchard (Princeton: Univ. Press, 1950), 391-92.

IV. Modern Pagan Prayer

A. Buddhists and Hindus pray to false deities for many of the same things as do Christians: sickness, financial problems, relationship stresses, etc. Many pray to several gods also.

B. New Age invites devotees to "tap into their Christ-consciousness" by the repetition of a mantra (Yoga) or other forms of pagan prayers, both individual and group.

C. Mormons, Hindus, African religions, and other unbelievers practice ecstatic speech.

V. Do You Agree or Disagree?

To explore your own ideas on this vital subject of prayer, please mark as A, U, or D beside each statement below to show whether you Agree, are Unsure, or Disagree with the teaching.

A. God does nothing except in response to prayer

B. Prayer is the most important activity for the Christian

C. Prayerlessness is evidence of self-sufficiency

D. My attitude is a barometer of my prayer life

E. The only prayer of an unbeliever that God answers is a prayer of repentance

F. The more people praying for you, the better

G. Prayer walks (praying on site) are more effective than praying from far away

H. We should pray against demons who control certain geographical areas

I. Satan knows the inaudible prayers of our heart (i.e., he can read our minds)

J. Satan counterfeits answers to prayer

K. We should confront principalities and powers in prayer

L. The type of prayer Satan hates most is praise

M. We should pray to the Holy Spirit

VI. Application

Do you pray more like Ancient Near East pagans or godly Israelites? Do you give God a "shopping list" to fill—or do you give Him the praise He is due as your primary concern?

> Call to me and I will answer you, and will tell you great and hidden things that you have not known ([ESV] Jeremiah 33:3)

Appendix 1: Mesopotamian vs. Biblical Prayers

Laura Chao-Tan I-Lin, OT Backgrounds paper (Singapore: SBC, 2002), 8 (1 of 4)

Note: In Appendix 1 **similarities** between pagan and biblical prayer are in **BOLD** and differences are UNDERLINED.

Babylonian Prayer 1: Petition to Nabu[9]

1. Titles of Deity and Exaltation	O Lord, the **strong one**, the **famous one**, the **one who knows all**, **Splendid one**, **Self-renewing one**, **Perfect one**, First-begotten of Marduk ..... Counselor of the gods,... the one who holds cult-centres firm, The one who gathers to himself all cults, ...
2. Relationship of deity to man - overlord - bless-er	....You **watch over all men**, You **accept their supplication**, You **bestow upon them well-being**; The whole of mankind makes prayer to you.
3. Account of personal circumstances	I, Balasu, son of his god, whose god is Nabu, whose goddess is Tashmetum, On account of the evil of the outbreak of fire in my house **I am afraid, I am troubled, I am very troubled.**
4. Acknowledgment of weakness and dependence on deity	I am one (liable to be) plundered (or) murdered, one whose punishment is great, **I am one who is weary, disturbed, whose body is very sick** So that taboo (and) pain have met me; **I bow before thee.** Sickness from magic, sorcery, witchcraft has covered me; .....
5. Request for favour/ blessing	O Lord, Wise One of the gods, **by thy mouth command good for me**; O Nabu, Wise One of the gods, by thy mouth may I come forth alive.

[9] H.W.F. Saggs, *The Greatness that was Babylon*, (New York: Mentor, 1962), 312.

Appendix 1: Mesopotamian vs. Biblical Prayers

Laura Chao-Tan I-Lin, OT Backgrounds paper (Singapore: SBC, 2002), 9 (2 of 4)

Israelite Prayer 1: Jehoshaphat's petition for victory against Moab and Ammon (2 Chron. 20: 5-12)

1. Titles of Deity and Exaltation	5 Then Jehoshaphat stood in the assembly of Judah and Jerusalem, in the house of the LORD before the new court, 6 and he said, "O LORD, **the God of our fathers**, are You not **God in the heavens**? And are You not **ruler over all the kingdoms of the nations**? **Power and might are in Your hand** so that no one can stand against You.
2. Relationship of deity to man - covenant maker/keeper - friend	7 "Did You not, O our God, drive out the inhabitants of this land before Your people Israel and give it to the descendants of Abraham Your friend forever? 8 "They have lived in it, and have built You a sanctuary there for Your name, saying,
3.Expression of hope and faith because of covenant relationship	9 'Should evil come upon us, the sword, or judgment, or pestilence, or famine, we will stand before this house and before You (for Your name is in this house) and cry to You in our distress, and You *will* hear and deliver us.'
4.Account of personal circumstances	10 "Now behold, the sons of Ammon and Moab and Mount Seir, whom You did not let Israel invade when they came out of the land of Egypt (they turned aside from them and did not destroy them), 11 see how they are rewarding us by coming to drive us out from Your possession which You have given us as an inheritance.
5.Request for judgment/ victory against enemies **6.Acknowledgment of weakness and complete dependence on deity**	12 "**O our God, will You not judge them**? For **we are powerless** before this great multitude who are coming against us; **nor do we know what to do**, but **our eyes are on You.**"

Appendix 1: Mesopotamian vs. Biblical Prayers

Laura Chao-Tan I-Lin, OT Backgrounds paper (Singapore: SBC, 2002), 10 (3 of 4)

Sumerian Prayer 2: Penitential Prayer to Every God[10]

1. Deities: – Numerous – Wrathful (this would seem to be unjustified since mankind is seen to be ignorant and lacking in judgment, therefore his unwitting sins should not be held against him) – Unknown – Unfriendly – Merciful? (seems to be an insincere attempt to persuade the deities to be merciful)	May the wrath of the heart of my god be pacified! May the god who is unknown to me be pacified! May the goddess who is unknown to me be pacified! May the known and unknown god be pacified! May the known and unknown goddess be pacified The sin which I have committed I know not. The misdeed which I have committed I know not. A gracious name may my god announce! A gracious name may my goddess announce! A gracious name may my known and unknown god announce! A gracious name may my known and unknown goddess announce! Pure food have I not eaten, Clear water have I not drunk. An offense against my god I have unwittingly committed. A transgression against my goddess I have unwittingly done. 0 Lord, **my sins are many, great are my iniquities**!
2. Sin: – Unknown – Unwitting – Numerous and great	My god, my sins are many, great are my iniquities! ... The sin, which I have committed, I know not. The iniquity, which I have done, I know not. The offense, which I have committed, I know not.
3. Suffering (most probable motivation for the prayer): – Seen as punishment for unknown sin	The transgression I have done, I know not. The lord, in the anger of his heart, hath looked upon me. The god, in the wrath of his heart, hath visited me. The goddess hath become angry with me, and hath *grievously stricken* me.
4. State of pray-er: – Completely alone – Bewildered	The known or unknown god hath *straitened* me. The known or unknown goddess hath *brought affliction* upon me. I sought for help, but *no one taketh my hand.* I wept, but *no one came to my side.* I lamented, but *no one hearkens to me.* I am afflicted, I am overcome, I cannot look up. Unto my *merciful* god I turn, I make supplication. I kiss the feet of my goddess and [crawl before her] ... *How long*, my god ... *How long*, my goddess, until thy face be turned toward me?
5. Condition of man: – Perverted and lacking judgment/ discernment between good and evil – Cast aside by deities	*How long*, known and unknown god, until the anger of thy heart be pacified? *How long*, known and unknown goddess, until thy *unfriendly heart* be pacified? *Mankind is perverted and has no judgment.* Of all men who are alive, who knows anything? *They do not know whether they do good or evil.*
6. Appeal: – Mercy – Forgiveness	0 lord, do not cast aside thy servant! He is cast into the mire; take his hand. The sin which I have sinned, turn to *mercy*! The iniquity which I have committed, *let the wind carry away* My many transgressions *tear off like a garment*! My god, my sins are seven times seven; *forgive my sins*! My goddess, my sins are seven times seven; *forgive my sins*! Known and unknown god, my sins are seven times seven; *forgive my sins.*

[10] Robert F. Harper, trans, *Assyrian and Babylonian Literature*, R. F. Harper, ed. (New York, 1901) (cited by David W. Koeller, http://campus.narthpark.edu/history/classes//sources/SumerPrayer.html).

Appendix 1: Mesopotamian vs. Biblical Prayers

Laura Chao-Tan I-Lin, OT Backgrounds paper (Singapore: SBC, 2002), 11 (4 of 4)

Israelite Prayer 2: Penitential prayer of David, when Nathan the prophet came to him, after he had gone in to Bathsheba (Psalm 51)

1. Deity: – Gracious, compassionate – Only one – Well-known to pray-er – Justified in wrath – Blameless **2. Sin** (consciousness of sin is the motivation for the prayer): – Nature of sin known – Consciously committed – Numerous and great **3. Suffering** (being cast out of God's presence and losing Holy Spirit): – Seen as punishment for sin **4. State of pray-er:** – Knows that God hears him – Looks forward with hope to forgiveness and future praise **5. Condition of covenant people:** – Know full well God's holy requirements and desire for truth, a contrite heart and righteous sacrifices – Will be restored when they repent **6. Appeal:** – Mercy – Forgiveness – Restoration 7. Desire to make restitution – Teaching transgressors the ways of God	1 Be gracious to me, O God, according to Your lovingkindness; According to the greatness of Your compassion **blot out my transgressions.** 2 **Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity** And **cleanse me from my sin.** 3 For I know my transgressions, And my sin is ever before me. 4 Against You, You only, I have sinned And done what is evil in Your sight, So that You are justified when You speak And blameless when You judge. 5 Behold, **I was brought forth in iniquity**, And in sin my mother conceived me. 6 Behold, You desire truth in the innermost being, And in the hidden part You will make me know wisdom. 7 Purify me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. 8 Make me to hear joy and gladness, Let **the bones which You have broken** rejoice. 9 **Hide Your face from my sins And blot out all my iniquities.** 10 Create in me a clean heart, O God, And renew a steadfast spirit within me. 11 **Do not cast me away from Your presence** And **do not take Your Holy Spirit from me.** 12 Restore to me the joy of Your salvation And sustain me with a willing spirit. 13 Then I will teach transgressors Your ways, And sinners will be converted to You. 14 Deliver me from blood guiltiness, O God, the God of my salvation; Then my tongue will joyfully sing of Your righteousness. 15 O Lord, open my lips, That my mouth may declare Your praise. 16 For You do not delight in sacrifice, otherwise I would give it; You are not pleased with burnt offering. 17 The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; A broken and a contrite heart, O God, You will not despise. 18 **By Your favor do good to Zion**; Build the walls of Jerusalem. 19 Then You will delight in righteous sacrifices, In burnt offering and whole burnt offering; Then young bulls will be offered on Your altar.

Ancient Near Eastern Literature Containing Parallels to the Old Testament

Assgn # — The Ancient Near East (ed. Pritchard), 2 vols. ↓ — OT Survey ↓

Assgn #	The Ancient Near East (ed. Pritchard), 2 vols. ↓	OT Survey ↓	LITERARY WORK	LANGUAGE	DATE	OT BOOK	NATURE OF PARALLEL
1	1:28-30		Atrahasis Epic (The Deluge)	Akkadian	~1635	Genesis	Creation, population growth, and flood with ark
1	1:31-39	1:73	Enuma Elish[1] (Creation Epic)	Akkadian	~1100	Genesis	Account of Creation
1	1:40-75	1:83a-b	Gilgamesh Epic[2]	Sumerian Akkadian	~2000	Genesis	Account of the Flood complete with ark and birds
1	1:1-2	1:105b-c	Memphite Theology	Egyptian	~13th c.	Genesis	Creation by spoken word
2	1:138-167		Hammurabi's Laws	Akkadian	~1750	Exodus	Laws similar to those given at Sinai in form and content
2	2:26-28		A Babylonian Theogony	Akkadian			
1	2:29-30		El, Asherlu and the Storm-god	Hittite			
1	1:226-230		Hymn to the Aten	Egyptian	~1375	Psalm 104	Wording used in motifs and analogies; subject matter
2	2:148-160		Ludlul bel Nemeqi	Akkadian	~13th c.	Job	Sufferer questions justice of deity
2	(2:136-141)		(cf. "Man and His God" Sumerian Wisdom Text)				
2	2:160-167		Babylonian Theodicy	Akkadian	~1000	Job	Dialogue between sufferer and friend concerning the justice of deity
2	1:237-243		Instruction of Amenemope	Egyptian	~1200	Proverbs 22:17-24:22	Vocabulary, imagery, subject matter, structure
2	2:42-45		Hittite Treaties (36)[3]	Hittite	2nd m.	Deuteronomy Joshua 24	Format and content
			Lamentations over the fall of Sumerian Cities (5)	Sumerian	20th c.	Lamentations	Phrasing, imagery, and subject matter
2	1:257-258		Egyptian Love Songs (54)	Egyptian	1300-1150	Song of Solomon	Content and literary categories employed
2	1:260-262?		Mari Prophecy Texts (~50)	Akkadian	18th c.	Preclassical Prophecy[4]	Addressed similar subjects (military undertakings and cultic activity)

1 See chart on p. 80 Comparison of Biblical and Babylonian Creation Accounts (OTS, 73)
2 See chart on p. 81: Comparison of Biblical and Babylonian Flood Accounts (OTS, 74)
3 See chart on p. 86: Treaty Format and Biblical Covenants

John H. Walton, *Chronological and Background Charts of the OT*, 2d ed., 82

Ancient Texts Relating to the Old Testament

The NIV Study Bible, Kenneth Baker, gen. ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995), xxii

Ancient Texts Relating to the Old Testament

Major representative examples of ancient Near Eastern non-Biblical documents that provide parallels to or shed light on various OT passages

AMARNA LETTERS Canaanite Akkadian *14th century B.C.*	Hundreds of letters, written primarily by Canaanite scribes, illuminate social, political and religious relationships between Canaan and Egypt during the reigns of Amunhotep III and Akhenaten.
AMENEMOPE'S WISDOM Egyptian *Early 1st millennium B.C.*	Thirty chapters of wisdom instruction are similar to Pr 22:17-24:22 and provide the closest external parallels to OT wisdom literature.
ATRAHASIS EPIC Akkadian *Early 2nd millennium B.C.*	A cosmological epic depicts creation and early human history, including the flood (cf. Ge 1-9).
BABYLONIAN THEODICY Akkadian *Early 1st millennium B.C.*	A sufferer and his friend dialogue with each other (cf. Job).
CYRUS CYLINDER Akkadian *6th century B.C.*	King Cyrus of Persia records the conquest of Babylon (cf. Da 5:30; 6:28) and boasts of his generous policies toward his new subjects and their gods.
DEAD SEA SCROLLS Hebrew, Aramaic, Greek *3rd century B.C. to 1st century A.D.*	Several hundred scrolls and fragments include the oldest copies of OT books and passages.
EBLA TABLETS Sumerian, Eblaite *Mid-3rd millennium B.C.*	Thousands of commercial, legal, literary and epistolary texts describe the cultural vitality and political power of a pre-patriarchal civilization in northern Syria.
ELEPHANTINE PAPYRI Aramaic *Late 5th century B.C.*	Contracts and letters document life among Jews who fled to southern Egypt after Jerusalem was destroyed in 586 B.C.
ENUMA ELISH Akkadian *Early 2nd millennium B.C.*	Marduk, the Babylonian god of cosmic order, is elevated to the supreme position in the pantheon. The 7-tablet epic contains an account of creation (cf. Ge 1–2).
GEZER CALENDAR Hebrew *10th century B.C.*	A schoolboy from west-central Israel describes the seasons, crops and farming activity of the agricultural year.
GILGAMESH EPIC Akkadian *Early 2nd millennium B.C.*	Gilgamesh, ruler of Uruk, experiences numerous adventures, including a meeting with Utnapishtim, the only survivor of a great deluge (cf. Ge 6–9).
HAMMURAPI'S CODE Akkadian *18th century B.C.*	Together with similar law codes that preceded and followed it, the Code of Hammurapi exhibits close parallels to numerous passages in the Mosaic legislation of the OT.
HYMN TO THE ATEN Egyptian *14th century B.C.*	The poem praises the beneficence and universality of the sun in language somewhat similar to that used in Ps 104.
ISHTAR'S DESCENT Akkadian *1st millennium B.C.*	The goddess Ishtar temporarily descends to the netherworld, which is pictured in terms reminiscent of OT descriptions of Sheol.
JEHOIACHIN'S RATION DOCKETS Akkadian *Early 6th century B.C.*	Brief texts from the reign of Nebuchadnezzar II refer to rations allotted to Judah's exiled king Jehoiachin and his sons (cf. Ki 25:27-30).
KING LISTS Sumerian *Late 3rd millennium B.C.*	The reigns of Sumerian kings before the flood are described as lasting for thousands of years, reminding us of the longevity of the preflood patriarchs in Ge 5.
LACHISH LETTERS Hebrew *Early 6th century B.C.*	Inscriptions on pottery fragments vividly portray the desperate days preceding the Babylonian siege of Jerusalem in 588-586 B.C. (cf. Jer 34:7).
LAMENTATION OVER THE DESTRUCTION OF UR Sumerian *Early 2nd millennium B.C.*	The poem mourns the destruction of the city of Ur at the hands of the Elamites (cf. the OT book of Lamentations).
LUDLUL BEL NEMEQI Akkadian *Late 2nd millennium B.C.*	A suffering Babylonian nobelman describes his distress in terms faintly reminiscent of the experiences of Job.
MARI TABLETS Akkadian *18th century B.C.*	Letters and administrative texts provide detailed information regarding customs, language and personal names that reflect the culture of the OT patriarchs.
MERNEPTAH STELE Egyptian *13th century B.C.*	Pharaoh Merneptah figuratively describes his victory over various peoples in western Asia, including "Israel."
MESHA STELE (MOABITE STONE) Moabite *9th century B.C.*	Mesha, king of Moab (see 2Ki 3:4), rebels against a successor of Israel's king Omri.
MURASHU TABLETS Akkadian *5th century B.C.*	Commercial documents describe financial transactions engaged in by Murashu and Sons, a Babylonian firm that did business with Jews and other exiles.
MURSILIS'S TREATY WITH DUPPI-TESSUB Hittite *Mid-2nd millennium B.C.*	King Mursilis imposes a suzerainty treaty on King Duppi-Tessub. The literary outline of this and other Hittite treaties is strikingly paralleled in OT covenants established by God with his people.
NABONIDUS CHRONICLE Akkadian *Mid-6th century B.C.*	The account describes the absence of King Nabonidus from Babylon. His son Belshazzar is therefore the regent in charge of the kingdom (cf. Da 5:29-30).
NEBUCHADNEZZAR CHRONICLE Akkadian *Early 6th century B.C.*	A chronicle from the reign of Nebuchadnezzar II includes the Babylonian account of the siege of Jerusalem in 597 B.C. (see 2Ki 24:10-17).
NUZI TABLETS Akkadian *Mid-2nd millennium B.C.*	Adoption, birthright-sale and other legal documents graphically illustrate OT patriarchal customs current centuries earlier.
PESSIMISTIC DIALOGUE Akkadian *Early 1st millennium B.C.*	A master and his servant discuss the pros and cons of various activities (cf. Ecc 1-2).
RAS SHAMRA TABLETS Ugaritic *15th century B.C.*	Canaanite deities and rulers experience adventures in epics that enrich our understanding of Canaanite mythology and religion and of OT poetry.
SARGON LEGEND Akkadian *1st millennium B.C.*	Sargon I (the Great), ruler of Akkad in the late 3rd millennium B.C. claims to have been rescued as an infant from a reed basket found floating in a river (cf. Ex 2).
SARGON'S DISPLAY INSCRIPTION Akkadian *8th century B.C.*	Sargon II takes credit for the conquest of Samaria in 722/721 B.C. and states that he captured and exiled 27,290 Israelites.
SENNACHERIB'S PRISM Akkadian *Early 7th century B.C.*	Sennacherib vividly describes his siege of Jerusalem in 701 B.C. making Hezekiah a prisoner in his own royal city (but cf. 2Ki 19:35-37).
SEVEN LEAN YEARS TRADITION Egyptian *2nd century B.C.*	Egypt experiences 7 years of low Niles and famine, which, by a contractual agreement between Pharaoh Djoser (28th century B.C.) and a god, will be followed by prosperity (cf. Ge 41).
SHALMANESER'S BLACK OBELISK Akkadian *9th century B.C.*	Israel's king Jehu (or his servant) presents tribute to Assyria's king Shalmaneser III. Additional Assyrian and Babylonian texts refer to other kings of Israel and Judah.
SHISHAK'S GEOGRAPHICAL LIST Egyptian *10th century B.C.*	Pharaoh Shishak lists the cities that he captured or made tributary during his campaign in Judah and Israel (cf. 1Ki 14:25-26).
SILOAM INSCRIPTION Hebrew *Late 8th century B.C.*	A Judahite workman describes the construction of an underground conduit to guarantee Jerusalem's water supply during Hezekiah's reign (cf. 2Ki 20:20; 2Ch 32:30).
SINUHE'S STORY Egyptian *20th-19th centuries B.C.*	An Egyptian official of the 12th dynasty goes into voluntary exile in Syria and Canaan during the OT patriarchal period.
TALE OF TWO BROTHERS Egyptian *13th century B.C.*	A young man rejects the amorous advances of his older brother's wife (cf. Ge 39).
WENAMUN'S JOURNEY Egyptian *11th century B.C.*	An official of the Temple of Amun at Thebes in Egypt is sent to Byblos in Canaan to buy lumber for the ceremonial barge of his god.

The Instruction of Amen-em-opet and Proverbs 22:17-24:22

Amen-em-opet

1st chapter

Give thy ears, hear what is said,
Give thy heart to understand them.
To put them in thy heart is worth while,
(But) it is damaging to him who neglects them.
Let them rest in the casket of thy belly,
That they may be a *key* in thy heart.
At a time when there is a whirlwind of words,
They shall be a mooring-stake *for* thy tongue.
If thou spendest thy time while this is in thy heart,
Thou wilt find it a success;
Thou wilt find my words a treasury of life,
And thy body will prosper upon earth.

2nd chapter

Guard thyself against robbing the oppressed
And against overbearing the disabled.
Stretch not forth thy hand against the approach of an old man,
Nor *steal away* the speech of the *aged.*

6th chapter

Do not carry off the landmark at the boundaries of the arable land,
Nor disturb the position of the measuring-cord;
Be not greedy after a cubit of land,
Nor encroach upon the boundaries of a widow. ...
Guard against encroaching upon the boundaries of the fields,
Lest a terror carry thee off.
One satisfies god with the will of the Lord,
Who determines the boundaries of the arable land.

9th Chapter

Do not associate to thyself the heated man,
Nor visit him for conversation.
Preserve thy tongue from answering thy superior,
And guard thyself against reviling him.
Do not make him cast his speech to lasso thee,
Nor make (too) free with thy answer.
Thou shouldst discuss an answer (*only*) *with* a man of thy (own) size,
And guard thyself against plunging headlong into it.
...
Do not leap to hold to such a one,
Lest a terror carry thee off

Proverbs

Prov 22:17-21

Incline your ear and hear the words of the wise,
And apply your mind to my knowledge;
For it will be pleasant if you keep them with you,
That they may be ready on your lips.
So that your trust may be in the LORD,
I have taught you today, even you.
Have I not written to you excellent things
Of counsels and knowledge,
To make you know the certainty of the words of truth
That you may correctly answer to him who sent you?

Prov 22:22-23

Do not rob the poor because he is poor,
Or crush the afflicted at the gate;
For the LORD will plead their case,
And take the life of those who rob them.

Prov 22:28

Do not move the ancient boundary
Which your fathers have set.

Prov 23:10-11

Do not move the ancient boundary,
Or go into the fields of the fatherless;
For their Redeemer is strong;
He will plead their case against you.

Prov 22:24-25

Do not associate with a man *given* to anger;
Or go with a hot-tempered man,
Lest you learn his ways,
And find a snare for yourself.

"Instruction of Amen-em-opet" from James B. Pritchard, *The Ancient Near East, Volume 1: An Anthology of Texts and Pictures* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Paperbacks, 1958), 237-243. Proverbs from NASB.

chart by Dr. Walter McConnell, SBC

Major Social Concerns in the Mosaic Covenant

Major Social Concerns in the Covenant

1. **Personhood**
   Everyone's person is to be secure (Ex 20:13; Dt 5:17; Ex 21:16-21,26-31; Lev 19:14; Dt 24:7; 27:18).

2. **False Accusation**
   Everyone is to be secure against slander and false accusation (Ex 20:16; Dt 5:20; Ex 23:1-3; Lev 19:16; Dt 19:15-21).

3. **Woman**
   No woman is to be taken advantage of within her subordinate status in society (Ex 21:7-11,20, 26-32; 22:16-17; Dt 21:10-14; 22:13-30; 24:1-5).

4. **Punishment**
   Punishment for wrongdoing shall not be excessive so that the culprit is dehumanized (Dt 25:1-5).

5. **Dignity**
   Every Israelite's dignity and right to be God's freedman and servant are to be honored and safeguarded (Ex 21:2,5-6; Lev 25; Dt 15:12-18).

6. **Inheritance**
   Every Israelite's inheritance in the promised land is to be secure (Lev 25; Nu 27:5-7; 36:1-9; Dt 25:5-10).

7. **Property**
   Everyone's property is to be secure (Ex 20:15; Dt 5:19; Ex 21:33-36; 22:1-15; 23:4-5; Lev 19:35-36; Dt 22:1-4; 25:13-15).

8. **Fruit of Labor**
   Everyone is to receive the fruit of his labors (Lev 19:13; Dt 24:14; 25:4).

9. **Fruit of the Ground**
   Everyone is to share the fruit of the ground (Ex 23:10-11; Lev 19:9-10; 23:22; 25:3-55; Dt 14:28-29; 24:19-21).

10. **Rest on Sabbath**
    Everyone, down to the humblest servant and the resident alien, is to share in the weekly rest of God's Sabbath (Ex 20:8-11; Dt 5:12-15; Ex 23:12).

11. **Marriage**
    The marriage relationship is to be kept inviolate (Ex 20:14; Dt 5:18; see also Lev 18:6-23; 20:10-21; Dt 22:13-30).

12. **Exploitation**
    No one, however disabled, impoverished or powerless, is to be oppressed or exploited (Ex 22:21-27; Lev 19:14,33-34; 25:35-36; Dt 23:19; 24:6,12-15,17; 27:18).

13. **Fair Trial**
    Everyone is to have free access to the courts and is to be afforded a fair trial (Ex 23:6,8; Lev 19:15; Dt 1:17; 10:17-18; 16:18-20; 17:8-13; 19:15-21).

14. **Social Order**
    Every person's God-given place in the social order is to be honored (Ex 20:12; Dt 5:16; Ex 21:15,17; 22:28; Lev 19:3,32; 20:9; Dt 17:8-13; 21:15-21; 27:16).

15. **Law**
    No one shall be above the law, not even the king (Dt 17:18-20).

16. **Animals**
    Concern for the welfare of other creatures is to be extended to the animal world (Ex 23:5,11; Lev 25:7; Dt 22:4,6-7; 25:4).

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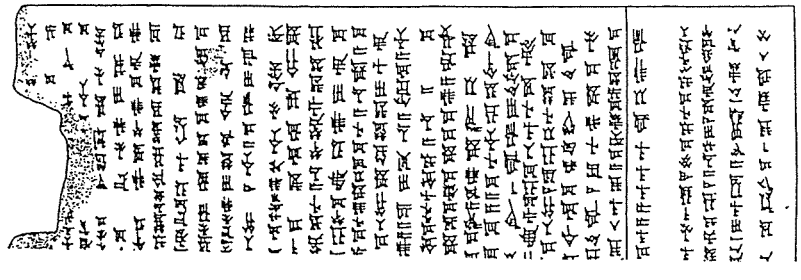
Biblical vs. Babylonian Creation Accounts

John H. Walton, *Chronological and Background Charts of the OT*, 2d ed., 80

GENESIS ACCOUNT	ENUMA ELISH
God is seen as ultimate source of power; transcends creation.	Magic incantations are ultimate source of power; the gods are subject to nature. III. 101; IV. 1-26, 91*
Organized coverage of creation; systematically includes general realms of nature.	Does not include creation of vegetation, animals or light—the existence of these is assumed. Moon and stars created, but not sun. V. 2-22
Purpose: Praise to God as Lord of creation; acknowledging Him as such. A tribute to God's ultimacy and authority.	Purpose: Hymn of praise to Marduk as champion and mightiest of the gods. Creation is incidental. VI. 100ff.
Begins before things as we know them existed (Gen. 1:1); as God created, He gave names. Gen. 1:5, 8, 10	Begins before heaven and earth were *named*; cannot imagine situation before they existed. I. 1-2
Starts with primeval deep. Hebrew: *tehom* Gen. 1:2	Starts with the deep—fresh water (Apsu) and salt water (Tiamat—cognate of *tehom*). I. 3-4
Creation given time sequence; set in blocks by "days." Gen. 1:5, 8, 13, etc.	No chronological structure of "days."
Creation by speech. Gen. 1:3, 6, 9, 11, 20	Creation from formerly existing matter. IV. 137-140; VI. 33
Waters separated above and below by firmament. Gen. 1:6-8	Corpse of Tiamat divided in two and set up as waters above and below. IV. 137-140
Man created to rule creation. Gen. 1:28	Man created to do the service of the gods so the gods wouldn't have to work so hard. VI, 8, 34
Man created from the soil. Gen. 2:7	Man created from blood of slain hero (Kingu). VI. 33

*Enuma Elish references designate tablet number and line.

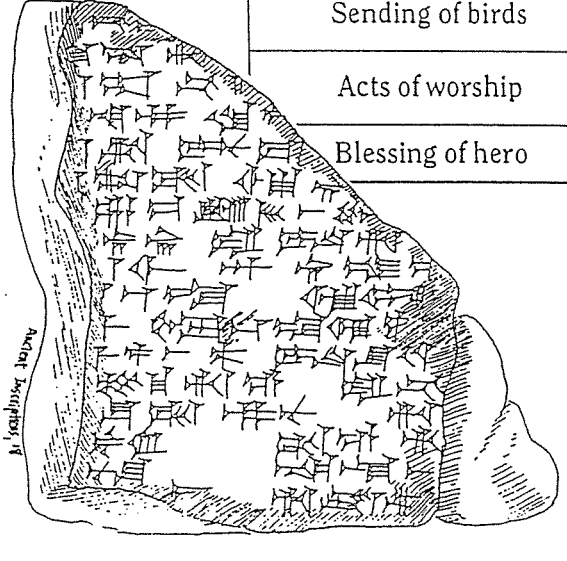


Babylonian Creation Story (Enuma elis)

Biblical vs. Babylonian Flood Accounts

John H. Walton, *Chronological and Background Charts of the OT*, 2d ed., 81; cf. these notes, 83b

ITEM	GENESIS ACCOUNT	GILGAMESH EPIC
Flood divinely planned	Planned by God	Planned at council of gods Anu, Enlil, Ninurta, Ennugi, Ea, Ishtar
Divine revelation of plan to hero	God wanted to spare Noah because of his righteousness	Ea warned hero, Utnapishtim, in a dream
Reason for flood	Sin of man	Noise of man disturbed the gods' rest
Punishment	Highly ethical and just	Ethically ambiguous and later regretted
Salvation of hero	Included in God's plan	Done secretly
Life saved	8 persons (family), representatives of each animal	Representatives of all living things, beasts, several families, craftsmen, and technicians
Building of boat	Flat-bottomed, rectangular, 300 x 50 x 30 cubits, 3 levels, door, window, pitch coating	Ziggurat-shaped, 120 x 120 x 120 cubits, 7 levels, 9 sections, door, window, pitch coating
Physical causes of flood	More comprehensive: land upheavals, subterranean waters, heavy rains	Rains, winds, breaking of dikes
Duration of flood	40 days, 40 nights	6 days and nights
Landing of boat	Mountains of Ararat	Mount Nisir
Sending of birds	Raven, dove (3 times)	Dove, swallow, raven
Acts of worship	Sacrifice of worship	Sacrifice for appeasement
Blessing of hero	Earthly covenant	Divinity, immortality



Fragment of the Gilgamesh Epic from Megiddo

The Gilgamesh Epic

Is the Bible the only ancient record to recount a flood of huge proportions? Hardly! Over 270 civilizations have flood stories similar to the Genesis account.[32] In fact, if the Flood did indeed occur, it would be surprising if other civilizations did *not* have oral traditions of it. Some are even older than the Bible.[33] For this reason a number of scholars feel that the Bible copied from older accounts.

But is it a problem that Genesis may not contain the oldest written flood story? And would this mean that the biblical account was only copying from other sources? No—to both questions. The true story was passed on from Noah and his sons to those who descended from them. As is always true with oral tradition, the details change over time and eventually some of these stories are recorded in written form.

While some earlier written sources may have been used, as Christians we understand by faith that God revealed to Moses the true account of creation, the fall, the flood, and other events which occurred long before Moses lived (ca. 1525-1405 BC).

We should expect that other peoples would seek to record the origin of the world, and that their pagan belief system would enter into these stories. One such Babylonian example is *The Epic of Gilgamesh.* While the original epic predated Genesis, the version of this story below is probably written around 1600 BC[34] and includes only part of Tablet 11.

The Great Flood

The great epic poem of Mesopotamian literature, The Epic of Gilgamesh, includes an account by Utnapishtim (a Mesopotamian version of the later biblical Noah), who had built a ship and survived the flood unleashed by the gods to destroy humankind. This selection recounts how the god Ea advised Utnapishtim to build a boat and how he came to land his boat at the end of the flood. In this section, Utnapishtim is narrating his tale to Gilgamesh.

The Epic of Gilgamesh

'In those days the world teemed, the people multiplied, the world bellowed like a wild bull, and the great god was aroused by the clamour. Enlil heard the clamour and he said to the gods in council, 'The uproar of mankind is intolerable and sleep is no longer possible by reason of the babel.' So the gods agreed to exterminate mankind. Enlil did this, but Ea [Sumerian Enki, god of the waters] because of his oath warned me in a dream. . . . 'tear down your house and build a boat, abandon possessions and look for life, despise worldly goods and save your soul alive. Tear down your house, I say, and build a boat. . . . then take up into the boat the seed of all living creatures. . . .' [Utnapishtim did as he was told and then the destruction came.]

"For six days and six nights the winds blew, torrent and tempest and flood overwhelmed the world, tempest and flood raged together like warring hosts. When the seventh day dawned the storm from the south subsided, the sea grew calm, the flood was stilled; I looked at the face of the world and there was silence, all mankind was turned to clay. The surface of the sea stretched as flat as a roof-top; I opened a hatch and the light fell on my face. Then I bowed low, I sat down and I wept, the tears streamed down my face, for on every side was the waste of water. I looked for land in vain, but fourteen leagues distant there appeared a mountain, and there the boat grounded; on the mountain of Nisir the boat held fast, she held fast and did not budge. . . . When the seventh day dawned I loosed a dove and let her go. She flew away, but finding no resting-place she returned. Then I loosed a swallow, and she flew away but finding no resting-place she returned. I loosed a raven, she saw that the waters had retreated, she ate, she flew around, she cawed, and she did not come back. Then I threw everything open to the four winds, I made a sacrifice and poured out a libation on the mountain top."

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[32] B. Lang, "Non-Semitic Deluge Stories and the Book of Genesis: A Biblical and Critical Survey," *Anthropos* 80 (1985): 605-16.

[33] Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis*, 2 vols. Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas, TX: Word, 1987, 1995), 1:159 dates a version of the Gilgamesh epic in the early second millennium. For the entire epic and his discussion, see his pages 159-66.

[34] Wenham, 159.

Flood Legends

Duane T. Gish, *Dinosaurs by Design* (Master Books, 4730 Barnes Rd., Colorado Springs, CO 80917: Creation-Life Pub., 1992), 74

Evidences of a worldwide flood can be found in the more than 270 flood stories and historic records found in many parts of the world. Flood legends are common in the folk tales of many other countries. Their various interpretations reflect the way details may change when stories are told from one generation to another because of the absence of written records available to them. Let's look at just a few of these stories.

Hawaii

Long after the death of Kuniuhonna, the first man, the world became a wicked, terrible place to live. There was one good man left; his name was Nu-u.

He made a great canoe with a house on it and filled it with animals. The waters came up over all the earth and killed all the people. Only Nu-u and his family were saved.





China

Ancient Chinese writings refer to a violent catastrophe that happened to the Earth. They report that the entire land was flooded. The water went up to the highest mountains and completely covered all the foothills. It left the country in desolate condition for years after.

One ancient Chinese classic called the "Hihking" tells the story of Fuhi, whom the Chinese consider to be the father of their civilization. This history records that Fuhi, his wife, three sons, and three daughters escaped a great flood. He and his family were the only people left alive on earth. After the great flood they repopulated the world.

An ancient temple in China has a wall painting that shows Fuhi's boat in the raging waters. Dolphins are swimming around the boat and a dove with an olive branch in its beak is flying toward it.

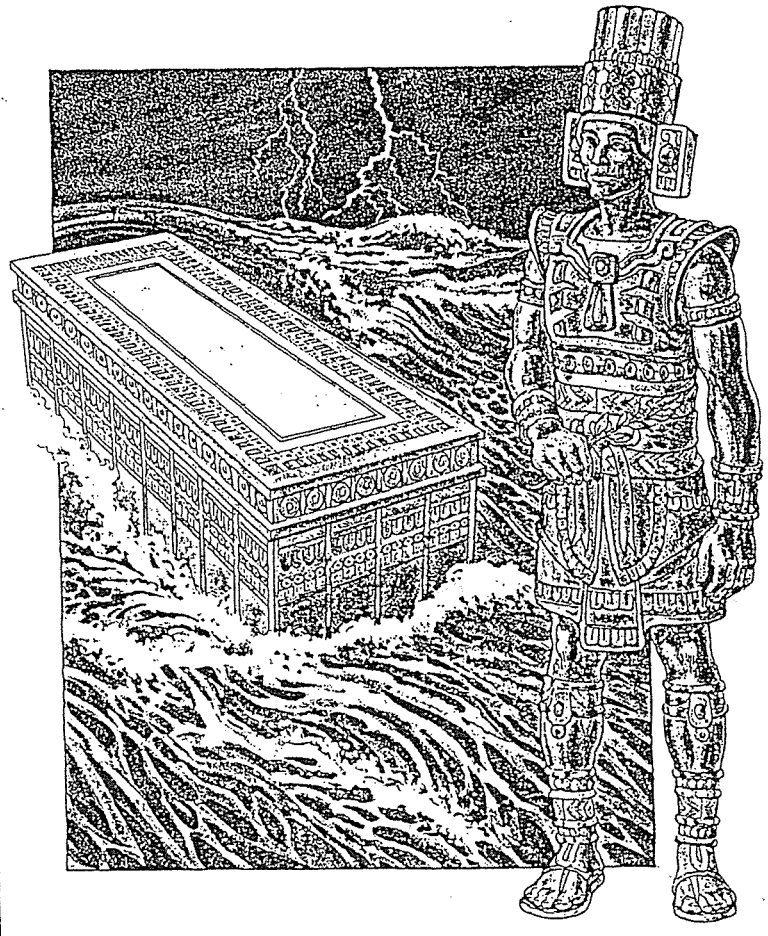
Flood Legends

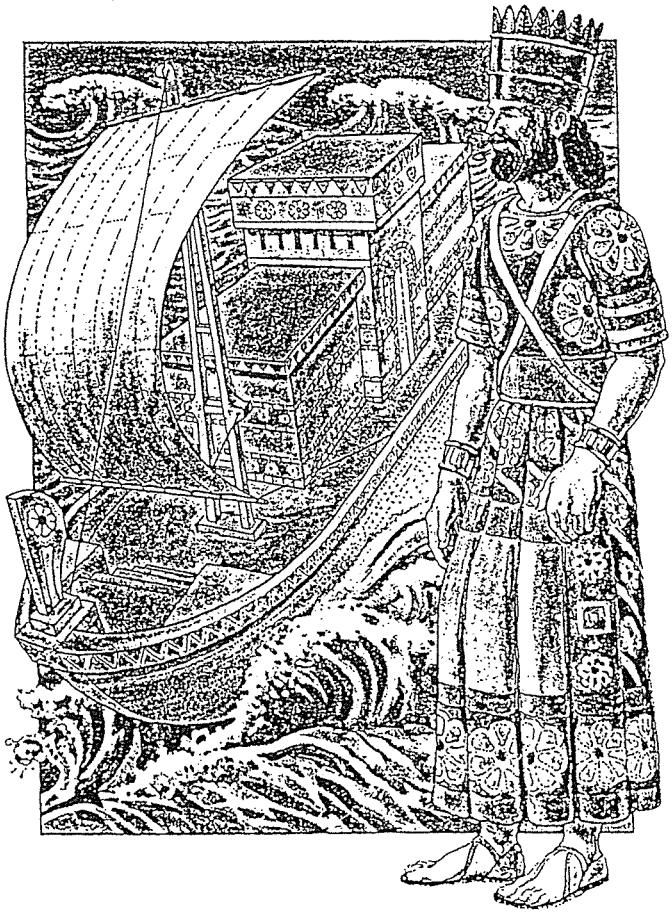
Duane T. Gish, *Dinosaurs by Design* (Master Books, 4730 Barnes Rd., Colorado Springs, CO 80917: Creation-Life Pub., 1992), 75

Toltec

Found in the histories of the Toltec Indians of ancient Mexico is a story of the first world that lasted 1,716 years and was destroyed by a great flood that covered even the highest mountains. Their story tells of a few men who escaped the destruction in a "toptlipetlocali," which means a closed chest. Following the great flood, these men began to multiply and built a very high "zacuali," or a great tower, to provide a safe place if the world were destroyed again. However, the languages became confused, so different language groups wandered to other parts of the world.

The Toltecs claim they started as a family of seven friends and their wives who spoke the same language. They crossed great waters, lived in caves, and wandered 104 years till they came to Hue Hue Tlapalan (southern Mexico). The story reports that this was 520 years after the great flood.





Babylonia

Other than the record found in the Bible, the most ancient account of the Great Flood, also called the Deluge, is a tablet inscription found in Babylonia. The tablet referred to an older tablet from which this was copied, but only fragments have been found of that older copy, which was handed down from a previous king of Babylon. Because many people lived several hundred years at that time, the account of the Flood could easily have been reported by someone like King Amraphel (Genesis 14:1), who was one of the early kings of Babylonia after the Flood.

Another flood account was prevalent during the time of Alexander the Great, probably recorded by a Babylonian historian for the benefit of the Greeks. He wrote of the ante-diluvian (pre-flood) rulers and of the "great Deluge" that covered the earth.

The Epic of Atra-khasis[1]

An account of both the creation of mankind and a flood

A summary by Dr. J. Paul Tanner

Several editions of this epic have survived in Assyrian and Old Babylonian history. In the story, although Anu exists as the father and king of the gods, Enlil has the role of warrior-leader in the pantheon of gods. It is his counsel and leadership that often results in action by the gods. Before the creation of mankind, there was a group of spirits known as IGIGI that were forced to do the menial work for the higher gods. Finally, however, they decided to complain about their heavy work and rebelled against Enlil, even storming his temple and surrounding his gate. When an attempt is made to ascertain the reason for their rebellion, the higher gods (and Enlil) discover that the IGIGI uprising is due to their distress and excessive toil. So the suggestion is made that mankind be created to bear the yoke of all the work. For this, they call on the services of Mami (= Belet-ili), the mother goddess to create mankind:

> "Mami, you are the birth-goddess, creator of humankind,
> Create humanity that he may bear the yoke,
> Let him bear the yoke assigned by Enlil,
> Let man carry the toil of the gods."[2]

Her technique for mankind's creation is rather bizarre. One god is slaughtered, and his flesh and blood is mixed with clay until man is made a living being. Following this, she reports back to the gods:

> "Mami opened her mouth and addressed the great gods:
> You commanded me a task, I have completed it;
> You have slaughtered a god together with his personality.
> I have removed your heavy work, I have imposed your toil on man."[3]

In the story there is not *one* original couple, but seven couples. After a time, however, Enlil becomes unhappy. The new humankind are too noisy, and so he calls for their punishment:

> "The noise of humankind [has become too intense for me, with their uproar] I am deprived of sleep. . . . let there be plague."[4]

One of the human beings is named Atra-khasis (whose name means "all-wise"). His god (whom he reveres and speaks to) is named Enki (= Ea), the god of waters and creation. Atra-khasis seeks the counsel of Enki, in how to escape the plague that Enlil brought upon them. Enki's advice is to appease the god Namtara, the god of pestilence and death, who has brought about the plague. So mankind does this and makes an offering (a baked loaf of sesame meal) to Namtara, and as a result the plague is lifted.

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[1] See Pritchard, *ANET*, 104-106; and Arnold and Beyer, *Readings from the Ancient Near East*, 21-31.
[2] Arnold and Beyer, 24.
[3] Ibid.
[4] Ibid., 26.

After some time, Enlil again becomes disturbed by the noise of mankind, complains to the assembly of gods, and calls for a famine. Adad (a storm god) is instructed to withhold rain, and thus cause the famine. Once again, mankind attempts to placate Adad with a meal offering, until finally the famine is lifted. Eventually, however, Enlil becomes enraged yet again at mankind. But this time he calls for the destruction of mankind by a flood, and Enki is commanded to bring forth the flood. Before doing so, however, the god Enki tips off the human Atra-khasis about what is to happen, and advises him to build a boat by which he and his family can survive. "Destroy your house, build a boat, abandon property and save life."[5] In the Neo-Assyrian version of the epic, Atra-khasis is told,

> "Enter [the ship] and close the door of the ship. Aboard her [bring] thy grain, thy possessions, thy goods, Thy [wife], thy family, thy relations, and the craftsmen. Beasts of the field, creatures of the field, as many as eat herbs . . . ."[6]

A bit at a loss to know how to do this, Atra-khasis seeks instruction from Enki, "I have never built a ship . . . . Draw a design [of it on the gr]ound, That seeing the [des]ign, I may [build] the ship."[7] In a Middle Babylonian version of the epic, it is stated that the ship shall be an ark, and its name shall be "Preserver of Life."

Atra-khasis follows the instructions of Enki and builds the ark. When the storm god Adad disrupts the weather and roars in the clouds, the storm waters begin. But Atra-khasis secures pitch to use in closing the door. The flood waters bring a great destruction on mankind, although in this epic it is said to only last seven days and seven nights. Enlil's intention was to totally destroy all mankind, leaving no survivors, but when he discovers that there is a survivor he is totally enraged:

> "The warrior Enlil saw the vessel and was filled with anger at the IGIGI: All we great Anunnaki decided together on an oath. Where did life escape? How did man survive in the destruction?"[8]

None other than Anu himself discloses that it was Enki who had helped one of mankind (i.e., Atra-khasis) to escape. With this, Enki addresses all the gods and confesses, "I am responsible for saving life."

And so we have this pagan account of man's creation and the destructive flood. Only Atra-khasis and his family survived to keep alive the human race.

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[5] Ibid., 29.
[6] Pritchard, 105.
[7] Ibid.
[8] Arnold and Beyer, 31.

B. Pagan

1. Historical

   a) Historical literature is especially plentiful in the Assyrian and Egyptian records as these writings attempt to chronicle the exploits of their kings in warfare. In addition, we have the Babylonian Chronicles and Persian histories such as in the Cyrus Cylinder.

   b) For Assyrian records, see OTS, 2:614 from the translations of David Luckenbill, *Ancient Records of Assyria and Babylonia*, 2 vols. (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1926-27).

2. Wisdom

   a) Instruction of Amenemope (Egyptian, 1200 BC) shows similarities to Proverbs 22:17–24:22 (see p. 188b).

   b) Egyptian Love Songs (1300-1150) also use poetic form in like manner to the Song of Songs.

3. Prophetic

   a) Mari Prophecy Texts (Akkadian, 1700 BC) are similar to those of the OT prophets in terms of military activity and religious themes.

   b) However, Israel's prophets differed from pagan "prophets" as they never were paid advisors to the king (cf. Ahab's prophets in 1 Kings 22). In fact, often they spoke against the king in ethical matters (e.g., Nathan vs. David in 1 Samuel 12).

4. Letters

   a) The Amarna Letters record correspondence from Canaanite scribes to Egypt in Akkadian in the 14th century BC.

   b) The Lachish Ostraca (writing on pottery fragments) depict the desperate conditions in the city of Lachish near Jerusalem during Babylon's siege of Jerusalem in 598-596 BC (cf. Jer. 34:7).

5. Legal

   a) Law-Code Form Similarities to Scripture:

      (1) Hittite treaties of the second millennium BC followed a basic form of about six different parts (see page 188c).

      (2) The Bible uses this same suzerain-vassal treaty form common during the 15th century. This included many of the same elements due to common institutions (marriage, government, private ownership) and common problems (death, murder, theft, slavery, etc.). This is seen in Exodus-Leviticus, Deuteronomy, and Joshua 24.

(3) Treaty Format and Biblical Covenants find many parallels:[2]

ORDER OF SECTIONS IN HITTITE TREATIES (2nd millennium)	DESCRIPTION	EXOD.-LEV.	DEUT.	JOSH. 24
INTRODUCTION OF SPEAKER	Identifying author and his right to proclaim treaty	Exod. 20:1	1:1-5	Vv. 1-2
HISTORICAL PROLOGUE	Survey of past relationship between parties	20:2	1:6-3:29	Vv. 2-13
STIPULATIONS	Listing of obligations	Decalogue 20:1-17 Covenant code 20:22-23:19 Ritual 34:10-26 Lev. 1-25	Chs. 4-26	Vv. 14-25
STATEMENT CONCERNING DOCUMENT	Storage and public reading instructions	Exod. 25:16?	27:2-3	V. 26
WITNESSES	Usually identifying the gods who are called to witness the oath	None	Chs. 31-32	Vv. 22, 27
CURSES AND BLESSINGS	How deity will respond to adherence to or violation of treaty	Lev. 26:1-33	Ch. 28	V. 20

[2] John H. Walton, *Chronological & Background Charts of the Old Testament*, 2d ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 86.

(4) Legal Texts of the Ancient Near East[3]

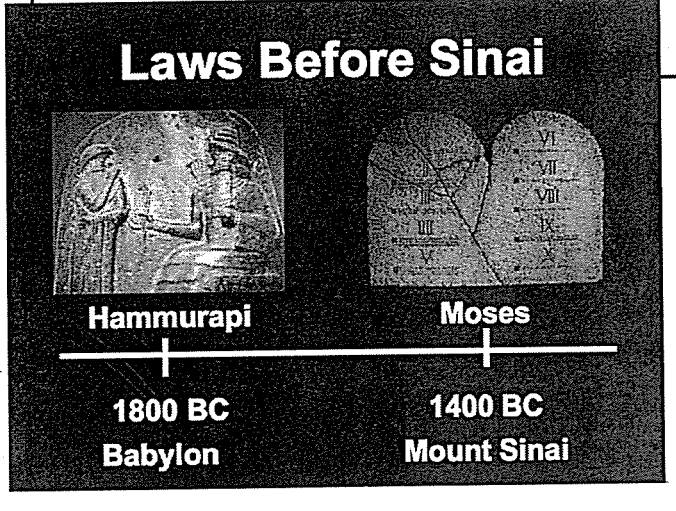
	NAME	CENTURY B.C.	DESCRIPTION
SUMERIAN	Reform of Uruinimgina (King of Lagash)	24th (E.D.III)	Social reform
	Laws of Ur-Nammu (King of Ur)	21st	About 31 laws remain. Fragmented
	Laws of Lipit-Ishtar (King of Isin)	19th (Isin-Larsa)	Parts of 38 laws with prologue and epilogue: civil law only
AKKADIAN	Laws of Eshnunna	18th (Old Babylonian)	60 paragraphs civil and criminal law
	Laws of Hammurabi (King of Babylon)	18th (Old Babylonian)	282 Laws remaining (35-40 erased) plus prologue and epilogue
	Middle Assyrian laws (Tiglath-Pileser I?)	12th (Middle Assyrian)	About 100 laws on 11 tablets civil and criminal law
HITTITE	Hittite laws (Murshilish I or Khattushilish I)	17th (Old Hittite)	About 200 laws civil and criminal law

[3] John H. Walton, *Chronological & Background Charts of the Old Testament*, 2d ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 87.

b) Specific Law-Code Penalties of the Babylonians vs. the OT:

Hammurapi (sometimes less accurately spelled Hammurabi) reigned long as king of Babylon (1792-1750 BC). His collection of laws became the longest and best organized (Arnold & Beyer, 111), but the penalties are generally stricter than in the OT and also favored the rich. For an introduction and full text of the sections referred to below, see http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/ancient/hamcode.html.

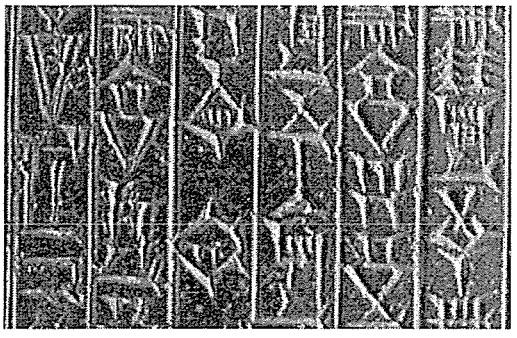
	Hammurapi	Moses
Stealing	Death (§ 4)	Restore 2x (Exod. 22:9)
Burglary	Death (§ 21)	Restore 2x (Exod. 22:7)
Harboring a slave	Death (§ 16)	No offense (Deut. 23:15)
Injuring a slave	Master paid (§ 199)	Slave freed
Injuring a rich man	Injurer gets same injury (§§ 196-197)	Injurer gets same injury
Injuring a poor man	Fined one mina of silver (§ 198)	Injurer gets same injury
Killing rich man's daughter	Kill injurer's daughter (§ 209)	Judge each case on its own
Injuring a slave	Fined five silver shekels (§§ 211, 213)	Judge each case on its own





Hammurapi receives his law code from the sun god Shamash

Hammurapi's Laws in Genesis



The book of Genesis assumes knowledge of several laws from Hammurapi (sometimes less accurately spelled Hammurabi), king of Babylon (1792-1750 BC). For an introduction and full text of the sections referred to below, see http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/ancient/hamcode.html.

1. The adoption law made Eliezer Abram's heir (Gen. 15). § 191.

2. The giving of Hagar to Abraham (Gen. 16) and of Bilhah (Gen. 30:4) and Zilpah (Gen. 30:9) to Jacob, accorded with this code. § 146.

3. The purchase of Machpelah by Abraham (Gen. 23) was conducted in strict conformity with its commercial enactments. § 7.

4. The taking of life for stealing, proposed by Jacob to Laban (Gen. 31:32), was enacted by this code, which punished sacrilege with death. § 6.

5. The taking of life by burning, with which Judah threatened his daughter-in-law Tamar (Gen. 38:24), is also according to the Babylonian code. § 110.

6. The proposal of Joseph's steward, that the one with whom the cup was found should die (Gen. 44:9), harmonized with the law punishing with death any theft from a palace. § 6.

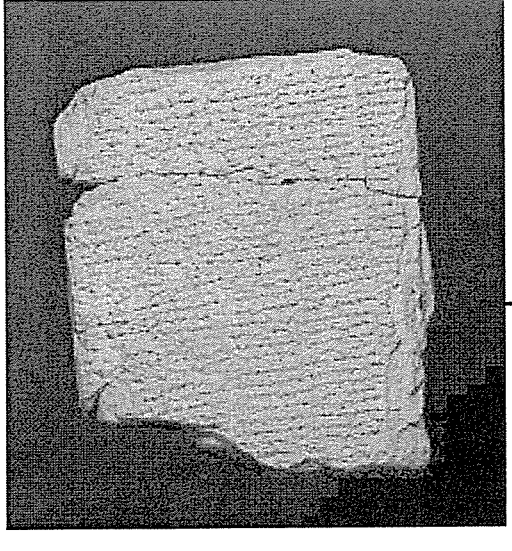
7. The giving of a special portion by Jacob to his favourite son Joseph (Gen. 48:22) was provided for by this code. § 165.

8. The cutting off of Reuben from his birthright (Gen. 49:4) was the prescribed way of punishing his offence according to Hammurapi's law. § 158.

9. The inability of Abram to sell Hagar (Gen. 16:6) accords with Hammurapi's prohibition of selling a maidservant who bears the owner children. § 119.

c) General Law-Code Differences of the Babylonians vs. the OT:

	Hammurapi	Moses
Law-Code Basis	The king's word	The character of Yahweh
Motive not to sin	Offense to a god's whims	God's holiness: "Be holy as I am holy" (Lev. 19:2) and love for Him (Deut. 6:4-5)
Enforcing Government	Civil	Theocratic
Social distinctions	Many	None
Punishment	Harsh (death penalty common)	Reasonable (capital punishment sparingly)
Deities	Polytheistic	Monotheistic
Women	Abuse allowed	Respected
Slaves	No rights (no rest, permanent)	Rights (Sabbath rest, freed after 7 years)
Human life	Cheap and Expendable	Highly valued



C. Old Testament

1. Hebrew Order of OT Books

a) The Hebrew Bible contains the exact same books as our present OT except in a different order under different classifications:

Hebrew Bible		Christian Old Testament	
The Law (Pentateuch)	Genesis	Genesis	**The Law** (Pentateuch)
	Exodus	Exodus	
	Leviticus	Leviticus	
	Numbers	Numbers	
	Deuteronomy	Deuteronomy	
The Prophets	*Joshua*	Joshua	**Historical Books**
	Judges	Judges	
	Samuel	Ruth	
	Kings	Samuel (1 & 2)	
	Isaiah	Kings (1 & 2)	
	Jeremiah	Chronicles (1 & 2)	
	Ezekiel	Ezra	
	Hosea	Nehemiah	
	Joel	Esther	
	Amos	Job	**Poetical Books** (Wisdom Literature)
	Obadiah	Psalms	
	Jonah	Proverbs	
	Micah	Ecclesiastes	
	Nahum	Song of Solomon	
	Habakkuk	Isaiah	**Prophets**
	Zephaniah	Jeremiah	
	Haggai	Lamentations	
	Zechariah	Ezekiel	
	Malachi	Daniel	
The Writings (Hagiographa)	**Psalms**	Hosea	
	Proverbs	Joel	
	Job	Amos	
	Song of Solomon	Obadiah	
	Ruth	Jonah	
	Lamentations	Micah	
	Ecclesiastes	Nahum	
	Esther	Habakkuk	
	Daniel	Zephaniah	
	Ezra	Haggai	
	Nehemiah	Zechariah	
	Chronicles	Malachi	

(1) Note differences in the Hebrew Bible column which designates those classified by Christians as historical writings (*italics*) and wisdom writings (**bold**).

(2) The twofold designation of "Law and the Prophets" (Matt. 5:17; 7:12; 22:40) was used in NT times, probably as a reference to the entire OT. In Luke 24:44, Jesus used this threefold designation: "Law of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms" (this first book of the Writings was used as representative of the whole section)

b) The Masoretic Text (MT): The Hebrew text circulated for 1000+ years with only consonants, but about AD 600-1000 a family of Hebrew scholars (the Masoretes)

copied the text in Babylon and Tiberias (the latter became the standard). They also added vowels (pointing), accents, and masora (notations), leaving us the Masoretic Text (MT). Thus ancient Hebrew texts look different from present Hebrew Bibles as they lack vowel points under each letter. Modern Hebrew also has no vowels.

c) The Hebrew Scriptures were revered by Jews in NT times. Even though most Jews did not have their own copy of the scrolls due to their size and expense, one wonders whether Jews then knew it better from hearing it read than Christians do today from having their own copy to collect dust on their shelves!

2. Greek: The Septuagint (LXX)

a) *History*: The LXX (Roman numeral 70) translated the Hebrew OT into Greek by 72 scholars in Alexandria, Egypt (c. 250 BC) for Ptolemy II (285-247 BC). This provided an OT for many Diaspora Jews who couldn't read Hebrew or Aramaic.

b) *Content*: 39 OT books with 15 Apocryphal books added later (except 2 Esdras and Additions to Esther) included differences in the text and order of the books.

c) *Value*: Why does the LXX merit study?[4]

(1) It is the earliest translation of the Hebrew Scriptures. Since each translation is in reality an interpretation, this earliest interpretation of the text helps us better understand the meaning attached to texts by very early scholars (pp. 235-36).

(2) It was valued highly by most Hellenistic Jews & Jewish converts to Christianity.

(3) In some form it constitutes the parent text from which several early Bible versions derive (Coptic, Ethiopic, Arabic, Armenian, etc.).

(4) It provides the Jewish intertestamental history since it includes the Apocrypha.

3. OT Canonicity: The term "canon" comes from the Greek *kanon*, for "rule" or "standard." Thus "canonicity" refers to the authoritative list of books in the OT or NT. Our present list of 39 OT books was formalized in AD 90-100 in the city of Jamnia, where these books were identified as the inspired OT. Why this late date given that the final book (Malachi) was completed almost 500 years previously?

a) Why did it take until the first century AD to record the official list of OT books?

(1) Apocrypha: Until the emergence of the Apocrypha in the intertestamental era, no other Jewish writings besides the MT had received widespread circulation. In fact, no extant Jewish documents exist from before the Apocryphal books! It is easy to see from this vast and recent literature that the orthodox Jews would see the need to list those books that had long been considered sacred.

(2) Many LXX manuscripts mixed Apocryphal books among the canonical, confusing the issue as to which books were indeed authoritative.

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[4] Taken from Melvin K. H. Peters, "Why Study the Septuagint?" *Biblical Archaeologist* 49 [September 1986]: 174-81; cf. review of this article by Walter R. Bodine in *Bibliotheca Sacra* 144 [April-June 1987]: 219-220.

OT Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha Jewish Literature

(This section adapted from John D. Grassmick, NTI Class notes, DTS, 1985)

a. *Definitions*

1) The OT Apocrypha ("hidden, secret") is a collection of 15 extrabiblical Jewish writings mostly composed from 250 BC—AD 100 (cf. list on p. 164).

a) *Acceptance:* None of these 15 was included in the Hebrew Masoretic Text (MT) though all but 2 Esdras were appended to the Septuagint (LXX). The Catholic Church has accepted 12 of these as Scripture since the Council of Trent (1546) and called them the "deuterocanonical" books ("second canon").

b) *Terms:* Don't confuse *apocrypha* with the similar-sounding *apocalypse* ("revelation, disclosure") with the opposite meaning! Apocalyptic denotes a writing style with symbolic imagery about future events similar to Revelation, Daniel, and Zechariah. To further confuse things, two books of the Apocrypha are apocalyptic in style (p. 162)! Also, note that there exists a huge body of literature called the NT Apocrypha that was penned in the centuries following NT times (cf. pp. 186-87).

2) The Pseudepigrapha ("falsely ascribed") is 63+ extrabiblical Jewish writings mostly composed from 200 BC—AD 200. Some were written in Hebrew/Aramaic (Palestinian origin) and others in Greek (non-Palestinian, most from Alexandria, Egypt).

a) *Acceptance:* None of these 63 is included in the MT, LXX, or Catholic Bibles. They are used simply as background literature to better understand Scripture.

b) *Names:* Some Pseudepigraphal writings bear the names of key OT persons such as Enoch, Moses, etc. These men did not actually write these books (thus the name meaning "falsely ascribed"), but these names were used to add authenticity to the books (yet some make no such claim and are anonymous). Catholics call the Apocrypha "Deuterocanonical" writings, and the Pseudepigrapha "the Apocrypha"!

b. *Literary Categories*

(Only 14 of the 78 Apocryphal and Pseudepigraphal writings are listed here. Each is in the Apocrypha unless otherwise noted.)

1) **HISTORY**

These works provide invaluable information on the intertestamental period.

a) 1 Esdras (ca. 150 BC) contains portions of Ezra-Nehemiah and 2 Chronicles ("Esdras" is Greek for the Hebrew "Ezra"). Josephus referred to 1 Esdras.

b) 1 Maccabees (ca. 100 BC) is the best historical source between the testaments as it provides very accurate information on the Sabbath, wars, etc.—especially the discussion of Antiochus IV and the Maccabean Revolt (167-164 BC).

c) 2 Maccabees (ca. 100 BC) is a theological, less historically accurate work.

2) **FICTION** (romances or novels or apologies)

These works extol the virtues of the Jews and their way of life. They contend that God blesses and rewards His people who are faithful to Him.

a) Tobit (ca. 200 BC) chronicles the story of how God rewards the faith of the man Tobit who is dedicated to the Torah in the midst of Babylonian idolatry.

b) Judith (ca. 150 BC) is a historical romance of how the heroine Judith delivers Judah from the Babylonians by beheading the commander of Babylon.

c) Letter of Aristeas (ca. 150 BC) is a Pseudepigraphal work about how the 72 scholars came together to translate the LXX in Alexandria for Ptolemy II's library. Unfortunately, only one verse describes the actual translation process.

d) Susanna (ca. 100 BC) records how this virtuous wife of a Babylonian Jew is accused of adultery but vindicated by Daniel's wisdom. He questions her accusers separately, showing their conspiracy and leading to their deaths.

e) Bel & the Dragon (ca. 100 BC) provides two stories as an addition to the book of Daniel. In the first account Daniel proves that the Babylonian idol "Bel" does not actually eat food and in the second Daniel refuses to worship a dragon, kills it, then is rescued from the lions' den—both stories depicting how God sustains those who worship Him in the face of idolatry.

f) 3 Maccabees (ca. late first cent. BC) has a misleading name as it records struggles of Alexandrian Jews who suffered under Ptolemy IV Philopator (221-204 BC), events which occurred a half century before the Maccabees. Both 3 & 4 Maccabees are noncanonical to Catholics and Protestants, though Eastern Orthodox churches accept them as canonical.

g) Sibylline Oracles (300 BC to AD 700) depict aged women (Sibyls) uttering ecstatic prophecies. These did not have reliable or factual data as they were continually changed and used for political propaganda. Some contain allusions to Christianity as well as paganism (Charlesworth, 1: vi, 317).

3) **WISDOM LITERATURE** (didactic)
These books read very much like the book of Proverbs. Jewish sages (wise men) were held almost in as high regard as the priest and prophet.

a) Ecclesiasticus—also called Sirach (ca. 190 BC) contains two-line proverbs and is very helpful in providing Greek parallels to NT Greek constructions.

b) Wisdom of Solomon (ca. 50 BC) is deemed the "Gem of the Apocrypha" due to its emphasis on encouraging Jews to live wisely to please the LORD. A Hellenistic Jew who tried to impersonate Solomon wrote it in Greek.

4) **APOCALYPTIC LITERATURE**
This highly symbolic literature claims to reveal the future. It views human history in two ages: the "present evil age" that will grow worse until God brings in the "age to come" (Messianic age). Such writings served to encourage Jews to endure persecution with the promise of the soon coming of the Messiah and the kingdom. It was extremely popular during Israel's period of foreign domination (intertestamental and NT era) but quickly faded after Jerusalem's destruction revealed that the kingdom was not indeed at hand.

a) 1 Enoch or Ethiopic Enoch (ca. 150 BC) is a Pseudepigraphal work trying to answer riddles such as why the angels fell (due to cohabiting with women in Genesis 6:1-4), the meaning of "son of man" (a preexistent heavenly Messiah), and especially eschatological themes such as the coming of Messiah and the kingdom, which is quoted in Jude 14-15. This book was well known in NT times and likely influenced NT theology (Charlesworth, 1:10).

b) 2 Esdras (ca. AD 90) is a theodicy, or explanation of some of the great mysteries of the moral world (how a good God can be reconciled with a sinful world), including why Jerusalem fell to the Romans. This apocalyptic apocryphal writing provided hope for salvation and restoration for the Jews.

c. ***Canonicity: Why was the Apocrypha/Pseudepigrapha rejected as inspired?***

1) Not Recognized as Authoritative by the Early Church: The Apocrypha was added to the LXX, but various LXX editions contain different books and most do not claim inspiration for them. Both Jews and Christians limited the OT canon to the present 39 books (e.g., Josephus *Against Apion* 1.8)

2) False Theology: Teachings incompatible with Scripture are numerous, such as...

a) *Purgatory* is taught in the Apocrypha. Judas Maccabeus in 2 Maccabees 12:41-46 discovered that some of his men killed in battle were wearing pagan amulets. Judas took up a collection from his surviving soldiers and sent it to Jerusalem as an "expiatory sacrifice," with the result, "And thus he made atonement for the dead that they might be freed from their sin" (v. 46).

b) *Salvation by works* is taught in the Pseudepigrapha. Two angels each record sins and good deeds, respectively, then place these records on a balance to see if a person goes to heaven or hell (Testament of Abraham 13:9-14 in Charlesworth, 1:890).

3) Lack of Claim to be the Word of God: Since it never makes a "thus saith the Lord" claim, why should we make such a claim on its behalf?

4) Lack of Dynamic Character: It does not read like an inspired writing.

5) Suspicious History of Acceptance by the Roman Catholic Church: Catholics did not affirm inspiration for the Apocrypha until the Council of Trent (AD 1546) in a counter-offensive to Protestant claims (that faith alone is sufficient for salvation and prayers for the dead are meaningless). While Pope Gregory I developed the purgatory idea much earlier (AD 593), indulgences were added to reduce purgatory time (AD 1190), and purgatory was elevated from doctrine to dogma in AD 1438 (Council of Florence), the Catholic Church obtained the "best" support for purgatory by canonising the Apocrypha in AD 1546 so that 2 Maccabees 12:41-46 (above) would be considered authoritative.

d. ***Value of the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha***

How have the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha helped interpret the NT? They provide...

1) History of the Jewish intertestamental era—the dashed hopes and disillusionments of the returning from the exile

2) Origins of Jewish sects and institutions—the shift from a covenant nation to a mix of conflicting religious communities

3) Development of theological beliefs—God shifts from direct revelation to intermediaries (angels), and emphasizes resurrection and salvation by obeying the Torah

4) Lexical background to many NT terms (e.g. "son of man"), images (e.g. apocalyptic imagery), and ideas (e.g., doctrine of the two ages)

5) Backdrop for new literary forms (e.g. letters)

6) Balance to rabbinical writings in understanding Judaism

e. List of Apocrypha Books and Acceptance by Various Groups...

Terminology of Authoritative Writings

Jews and those claiming to be Christians differ widely on which books are considered Scripture, as well as what to call them. Below is a summary to try to clear up some of the confusion.

	Jews	*Protestants & Anglicans*	*Catholics*	*Eastern Orthodox*
39 OT Books	Bible	Old Testament	Old Testament	Old Testament
27 NT Books	New Testament (uninspired)	New Testament (inspired)	New Testament (inspired)	New Testament (inspired)
4 Apocryphal Books (Tobit, Judith, Wisdom of Solomon, Ecclesiasticus)	Apocrypha (uninspired; not in MT but in LXX)	Apocrypha (uninspired)	Deuterocanonical (confirmed as canonical in 1546)	Apocrypha (confirmed as canonical in 1673)
8 Apocryphal Books (Baruch, Letter of Jeremiah, Additions to Esther, Song of Three Young Men, Susanna, Bel & the Dragon, 1-2 Maccabees)	Apocrypha (uninspired; not in MT but in LXX except Additions to Esther)	Apocrypha (uninspired)	Deuterocanonical (confirmed as canonical in 1546)	Apocrypha (not confirmed as canonical in 1673 but generally accepted as authoritative now)
3 Apocryphal Books (1-2 Esdras, Prayer of Manasseh)	Apocrypha (uninspired; not in MT but in LXX except 2 Esdras)	Apocrypha (uninspired)	Non-canonical (but often in the appendix since 1592, except Jerusalem Bible)	Apocrypha (not confirmed as canonical in 1673 but generally accepted as authoritative now)
3 Pseudepigraphal Books (Psalm 151, 3-4 Maccabees)	Pseudepigrapha (3-4 Maccabees only in LXX?)	Pseudepigrapha (uninspired)	Apocrypha (but in the appendix of the NRSV New Oxford Annotated Bible, 1977)	Apocrypha (not confirmed as canonical in 1673 but generally accepted as authoritative now)
60+ Pseudepigraphal Books (1 Enoch is the largest and most influential work)	Pseudepigrapha (uninspired, not in any OT editions)	Pseudepigrapha (uninspired, not in any Bible editions)	Apocrypha (uninspired, not in any Bible editions)	Pseudepigrapha (uninspired, not in any Bible editions)

(3) Antilegomena ("spoken against") designate the five disputed books below which may have encouraged the compilers at Jamnia to officially affirm them as inspired. These books were *not added* to the canon then; more probable was that the synod met to discuss if these should be removed or not. "The 'Council' was actually confirming public opinion, not forming it."[5]

(a) Ezekiel was thought to contradict Solomon's temple (cf. Ezek. 40–43)

(b) Esther did not mention God's name, prayer, or anything religious

(c) Ecclesiastes appeared Epicurean (advocating indulgence of the flesh)

(d) Proverbs had supposed contradictions (e.g., 26:4-5)

(e) Song of Songs was disputed due to its sensuality

(4) Samaritans considered only the five books of Moses as inspired, so perhaps the rabbis felt they must distinguish themselves from this limited tradition.

(5) Pharisaical tradition had become equal in authority to many, so perhaps the Jamnia council met in part to clarify the non-authoritative nature of these rabbinic writings.

b) What criteria were used to determine which OT books were inspired?

(1) History of Authoritative & Enduring Usage: Note that these rabbis did not *decide* which books were scriptural. They only put into an official list the OT writings that had been revered as Scripture by Jews for centuries.

(2) Doctrinal Suitability: The 39 OT books teach no doctrinal inconsistencies (truthfulness and harmony with progressive revelation). While Apocryphal and Pseudepigraphal writings were considered valuable as historical literature, they did not read like Scripture due to doctrinal inconsistencies.

(3) Prophetic Authorship (Samuel, David, etc.)

(4) Claim to be the Word of God ("The word of the Lord came to me...")

(a) The NT repeatedly refers to the OT as inspired. Jesus often referred to OT books as the word of God (e.g., Luke 18:31-33; 24:25-27; John 10:35; etc.), as did Peter (Acts 1:16), Stephen (Acts 7:38), Paul (Rom. 3:2), and James (Jas. 4:5).

(b) While NT usage was not influential at Jamnia due to the rabbinic (non-Christian) makeup of the council, nevertheless, it does confirm for Christians the authority of the 39 OT books. In contrast, only one Pseudepigraphal book is quoted in the NT (1 Enoch 1:9 in Jude 14-15), and this quote does not imply inspiration.

(5) Dynamic Character (Heb. 4:12): God's Word is alive and changes lives. This cannot be said of other so-called inspired writings.

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[5] R. K. Harrison, "The Canon of Scripture," in *Young's Analytical Concordance*.

Old Testament Canonicity

Group Project by Malcolm Goh and Joseph Jung, 2002

1 Order of Books

- Judas Maccabaeus, at the end of the war was said to have collected the lost books
- 2 Maccabees 2:14 "In like manner also Judas (Maccabaeus) gathered together all those things that were lost by reason of the war we had, and they remain with us"
- He probably then established the traditional order of the books in 164 BCE
- One traditional order is recorded in the Babylonian Talmud (Baba Bathra 14b-15a)

2 Council of Jamnia

- A council convened at Jamnia in AD 90
- This was not so much to gather the canon of the Tanak, but to confirm the places of the books already present
- Books disputed but still placed in the canon became known as the Anti-Legomena

3 The divisions of 'Scripture'

- Books that were undisputed was known as the Homolegomena
- The books that are definitely thrown out are known as the Apocrypha
- Disputed books are known as the Anti-Legomena, which includes Ezekiel, Esther, Ecclesiastes, Proverbs and the Song of Songs
- Books that were never considered part of the scriptures were known as the Pseudoagripha

4 Disputed Books (Anti-Legomena)

- Song of Solomon – Considered too sensual.
- Ecclesiastes -Considered too skeptical. However, the conclusion of the book is very much in line with the rest of Scripture: the fear of the Lord is the key to meaning in life.
- Esther - The main reason is that the name of God is never mentioned in the book. However, it is clear that throughout the book, we see God preserving His people, the nation of Israel.
- Ezekiel -thought to be contradicting the teaching of the Mosaic Law, there were no specific examples.
- Proverbs – Thought to contain internal contradictions, this is and was not true.

5 Criteria for the Canon?

- Doctrinal Stability (to Torah)
- History of Authoritative use and usage
- Claimed itself to be 'Word of God'
- Prophetic Authorship
- Dynamic Character

6 Jesus' Testimony to the Canon

- Luke 24:27 And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, He interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.
- Luke 24:44 Then he said to them, "These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled."
- Luke 11:51 from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah (2 Chron24:21), who perished between the altar and the sanctuary. Yes, I tell you, it will be required of this generation.
- Matthew 23:35 so that on you may come all the righteous blood shed on earth, from the blood of innocent Abel to the blood of Zechariah the son of Barachiah (2 Chron24:21), whom you murdered between the sanctuary and the altar.

- Law and Prophets (Mtt5[17] 7[12] 22[40])

Old Testament Canonicity

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7 New Testament testimony to the OT Canon and authority

- Jesus (Luke 18[31-33] 24[25-27] John 10[35])
- Peter (Acts 1[16])
- Stephen (Acts 7[38])
- Paul (Romans 3[2])
- James (James 4[5])

8 Closing the Canon

- The prophetic gift was said to have ceased
- 1 Maccabees 9:27 So was there a great affliction in Israel, the like whereof was not since the time that a prophet was not seen among them.

9 Number of books?

- There are 22 consonants in the Hebrew alphabet
- Many persons have come up with differing versions
- Some authors say there are 22 books, coincident with 22 letters of the Hebrew Alphabet, some say 24
- Josephus was the first to mention the number 22 around AD 96
- The number 24 was 1st recorded in 2 Esdras 14[44-48]
- The Qumran library seemed to have all but Esther

10 The Chronology

- Ca 722 BCE Pentateuch
- Ca 400 BCE Prophets canonized
- Ca 300 BCE Writings canonized
- Ca 285 BCE Septuagint (LXX) Torah
- Ca 132 BCE Septuagint (LXX (Full Version))
- Ca 130 BCE letter of Aristeas
- Ad 90 Council of Jamnia
- Ad 96 Philo testifies to the OT Canon
- Ad 100 Standard edition of consonantal text
- Ad 600 Massorites added vowel points, accents and the Masora to lock in the scriptures
- Ca Ad 918 Full codex found from Ben Asher Family

Ready to get confused?

Old Testament Canonicity

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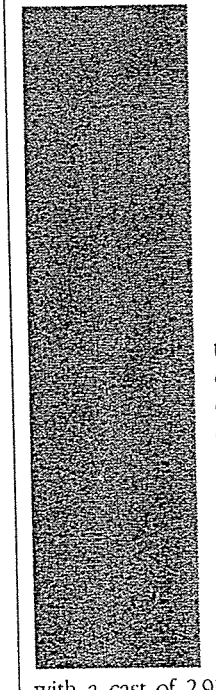
Books	JosephusAD96	Melito AD 170	Origen AD 230	Athanasius AD 367	Our Bible Today
Torah	5	5	5	5	5
Joshua			1	1	1
Ruth & Judges	1	2	1	2	2
Samuel and Kings		2	2	4	4
Chronicles	1 (Incld Sam+Kings)	2	1	2	2
Ezra & Nehemiah	1	1	1	2	2
Psalms	1	1	1	1	1
Proverbs	1	1	1	1	1
Ecclesiastes	1	1	1	1	1
Song of Songs	1	1	1	1	1
Isaiah		1	1	1	1
Jeremiah & Lamentations & Epistle of Jeremiah	1 (Jeremiah & Lamentations)	1 (Jeremiah & Lamentations)	1	2	2
Daniel	1	1	1	1	1
Ezekiel		1	1	1	1
Job	1	1	1	1	1
Esther	1		1	Epistle of Jeremiah	1
Prophets	6	1 (the 12)	1	12	12
Jesus Naue		1			
Total	22	23	22	39	39

HOW WE GOT OUR BIBLE / PART ONE

by Terry Hall

BEGINNING WITH MOSES, GOD USED A LONG LINE OF AUTHORS TO CREATE HIS WRITTEN REVELATION.

How We Got Our Old Testament



It had to be the strangest publishing project of all time. No editor or publishing house was responsible to oversee 40 independent authors, representing 20 occupations, living in 10 countries during a 1,500-year span, working in three languages with a cast of 2,930 characters in 1,551 places. Together they produced 66 books containing 1,189 chapters, 31,173 verses, 774,746 words, and 3,567,180 letters. This massive volume covers every conceivable subject, expressed in all literary forms — prose, poetry, romance, mystery, biography, science, and history.

What was the final product? *Reader's Digest*? No. The Bible!

One evidence that the Bible is a supernatural book is the unity it displays despite such wide differences among authors, cultures, and forms of expression.

Many Christians wonder how the Bible was put together. Believing God was the ultimate author, they also know the Bible wasn't dropped from heaven or discovered in a cave. So who decided which books would be included or excluded? And are we sure we have all those and only those books God intended?

No one can point to a specific place and day when the Bible was "born." It didn't come into being like a modern book, which is written and edited, then published on a certain date.

The Bible is a collection of 66 books (*Bible* means "the books"), but unlike an ordinary anthology, it was not a committee project in which scholars debated and voted on a roster of candidate books. Each Bible portion was treasured in its own right first and then added to the gradually growing collection of sacred books.

The final collection of sacred books is called the *canon* (from a Greek word for a measuring stick). The Bible books became the standard by which all other writings are measured, for they alone are vested with God's authority.

God set the stage for Scripture by creating humans with their ability to form languages and alphabets, knowing he would communicate through them. In the beginning, God communicated directly with individuals, but in Moses' time he began to add a written record of his revelation.

Paul later called the process *inspiration* ("to breathe in"; 2 Tim. 3:16), and Peter defined it as men writing "from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit" (2 Peter 1:21).

The Hebrew Writers

Jesus and many other Bible authors agree that Moses began the Bible about 1,450 years before Christ, writing at God's command (Luke 24:27; 2 Chron. 35:6). Moses' first five books comprise about one-fourth of the Old Testament or one-sixth of the whole Bible. They are considered a unit known as the *Law*, *Pentateuch* (Greek for "five books"), or *Torah* (Hebrew for "law").

Moses and other Old Testament prophets wrote in Hebrew. Its letters are written from right to left. Hebrew books are read from back to front. A few Old Testament chapters were later written in Aramaic, another Semitic language, using the same characters as Hebrew (Ezra 4:8-6:18; 7:12-26; Dan. 2:4b-7:28).

Ancient authors used whatever smooth surface was available — stones, clay tablets, but mainly parchment (dried and polished skins of calves or sheep). Pen-and-ink writing was done on scrolls (long strips of parchment sewn together and wound around poles like window shades). By the time of Jesus, Greek had become the world's trade language, and writing was done on papyrus (the soft, inner parts of reeds, pressed and rolled together).

Moses' writings were immediately considered to be from God and stored in the most holy place of the Hebrews' worship center (the sacred ark of the covenant; Deut. 31:24-26). Later they were transferred to the temple in Jerusalem.

The divine authority behind Moses' message was obvious, confirmed by miracles. Those who challenged him were stricken with leprosy or swallowed alive by the earth (Deut. 34:10,11; Num. 12:6-10; 16:28-35). Throughout the rest of Bible history, the Pentateuch was the basis for Jewish faith and life. Psalms quotes from it extensively, and it was the basis for the prophets' messages.

Having predicted God would raise up a line of prophets like himself, Moses be-

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gan a chain of Old Testament written revelation that continued for about a thousand years (from 1400 to 400 B.C.; Deut. 18:15-22). Moses' successor, Joshua, accepted the Law as one divine unit and added his sacred writings to the *book* of Moses, probably beginning with Deuteronomy 34 (the record of Moses' death; Josh. 1:7,8; 24:26).

The author of Judges-Ruth, which was originally one book, probably began with Joshua 24:28 (Joshua's death). Later Samuel added his history to the book, probably starting with David's family tree in Ruth 4:17 (1 Sam. 10:25). Nathan and Gad completed the history of David, starting with 1 Samuel 25:1 (Samuel's death; 1 Chron. 29:29,30).

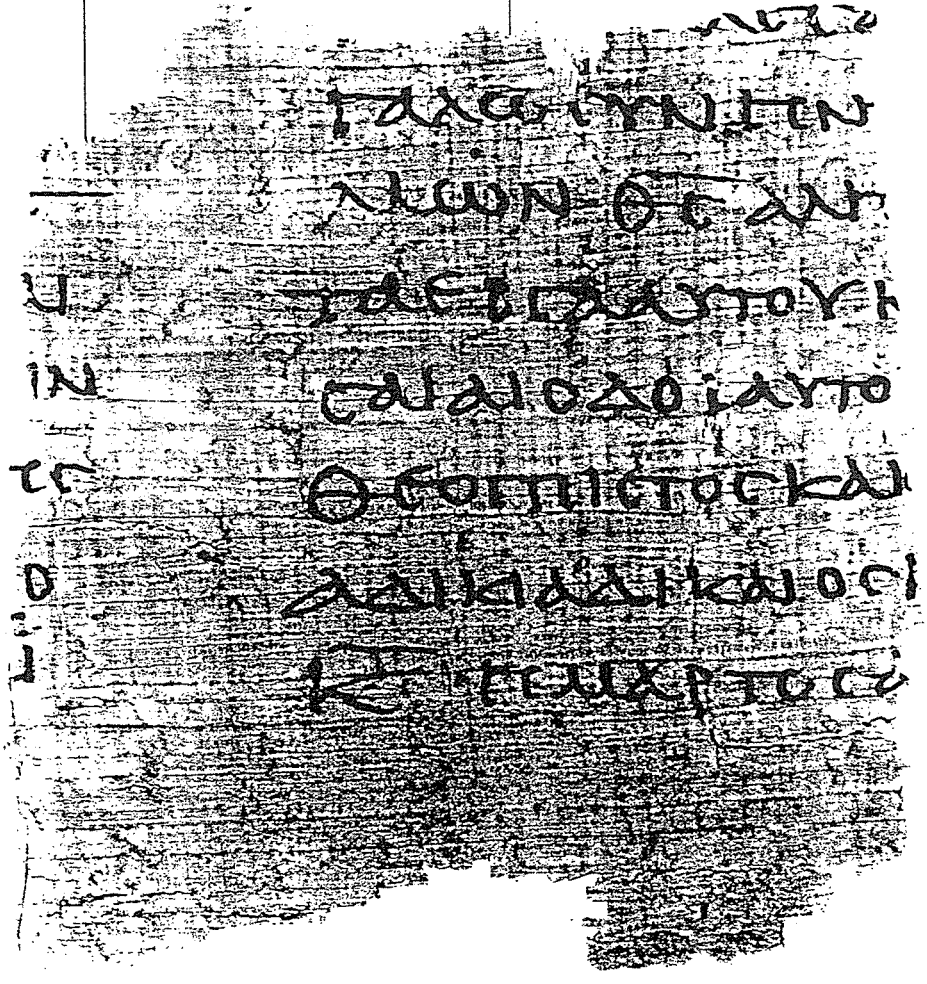
Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles (originally one book each) cover 500 years of Hebrew history and were written as a continuous narrative by a succession of prophets (2 Chron. 9:29; 12:15; 13:22; 20:34; 26:22; 32:32).

The writings of Moses, Joshua, Samuel, and the other prophets were stored in the tabernacle and venerated. Only writings from God's recognized prophets were collected, as the New Testament assures us (Heb. 1:1; 2 Peter 1:20,21).

The prophets were conscious of recording God's word, though they didn't always understand it (1 Peter 1:10-12). More than 3,800 times they claimed to be speaking or writing God's words with "The Lord says . . ." or "Hear the word of the Lord . . ." (Isa. 3:16; 1:10).

God repeatedly exhorted the Hebrews to heed the prophets as his spokesmen, accrediting their messages with supernatural signs and fulfilled prophecies. True prophets were allowed no margin for error; if they were not 100 percent accurate, they were to be killed. Disobeying a prophet of God brought severe penalties (Deut. 13:1-5; 18:17-22).

The Old Testament *Scriptures* ("sacred writings") formed an assembled collection when the last books were written in Ezra's time (about 425 B.C.). Jewish tradition says Ezra collected the remaining books after the Jews returned from the Babylonian exile. The invaders had destroyed or scattered many copies.



A fragment of a papyrus codex from Deuteronomy 32:3,4

Confirmed by Christ

For several centuries before Christ, the Jews reverenced the same Hebrew Old Testament they (and we) have today; it was the basis for their law and worship. There was no question about the authenticity of the collection.

The Lord Jesus Christ confirmed the authority of the Old Testament, calling it the Word of God and assuring his followers that neither the smallest Hebrew letter nor the least stroke of a pen would fall from it until all was fulfilled (Matt. 15:3-6; 5:18). He ordered his earthly life by the Old Testament Scriptures, taught and interpreted their principles, and appealed to them as the ultimate authority in temptation or dispute. Jesus said Moses and his writings were a more powerful witness from God than someone rising from the dead (Luke 16:31)!

Our Lord's view of the Old Testament settles the issue for most Christians; the authority of Christ and Scripture stand together.

Jesus' apostles shared their Master's view of the Old Testament, saying of it, "Prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit" and "All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness" (2 Peter 1:21; 2 Tim. 3:16).

Our Old Testament books are unquestionably the ones received and believed by Jesus and his apostles as the Scriptures. The New Testament quotes from nearly all 39 books as authoritative. Of the New Testament's 260 chapters, 209 quote the Old Testament. The New Testament is unanimous in considering the former testament a completed unit with a continuous story, calling it all "the Law" or "the Law and the Prophets."

Jesus said the Old Testament revelation spanned from Genesis to 2 Chronicles (the first and last books in the Hebrew Bible; Luke 11:50,51). Much evidence exists as to which books were considered part of the sacred collection.

Josephus, a respected Jewish historian (A.D. 37-95), said no Hebrew scriptures were added after the time of the Persian King Artaxerxes (464-424 B.C.—the era of Ezra, Nehemiah, and Malachi) "because the exact succession of the prophets ceased . . . no one has dared to add anything to them, or to take anything from them, or to alter anything in them . . . only 22 books, which contain the records of all time, and are justly believed to

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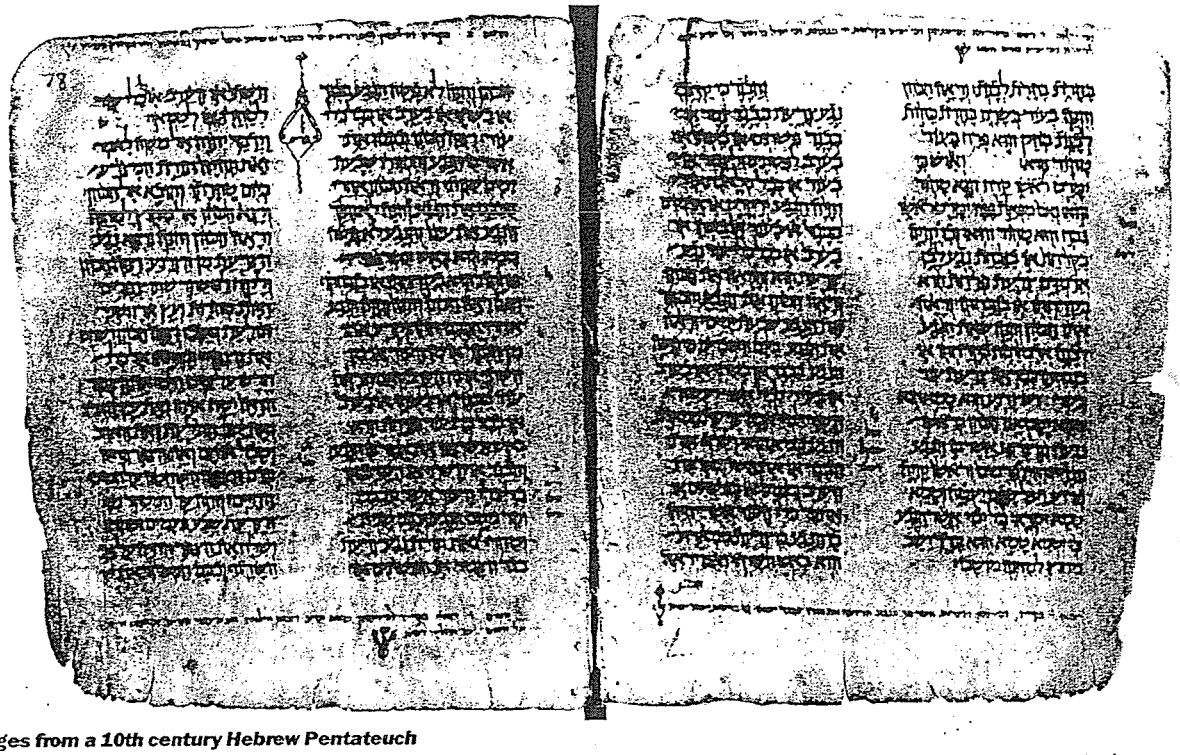


Pages from a 10th century Hebrew Pentateuch

be divine." (Josephus combined Ruth with Judges and Lamentations with Jeremiah to make 22 books.)

The Hebrew Bible has a different order and smaller number of books, but the exact same content as in our modern English Bibles. Its number of books is reduced to 24 by combining the pairs of Samuel, Kings, Chronicles, and Ezra-Nehemiah into one book each and by grouping all 12 Minor Prophets into one book (called *The Twelve*). The English arrangement stems from the Septuagint (the Greek version of the Old Testament, so called for its 70 translators).

The Septuagint, done about 200 B.C., bears silent witness that the Old Testament canon was complete and considered divine before that time. The now-famous scrolls discovered since 1946 in the Qumran caves near the Dead Sea date from about 250 B.C. They include copies of every Old Testament book except Esther. Other literature of the Essenes (the Jewish monastic community at Qumran) quotes from the Torah, Psalms, Proverbs, and many prophets as authoritative.

Reassuring Questions

About A.D. 90 at Jamnia (or Jabneh, a town near Joppa), an official council of Jewish leaders ratified the Old Testament canon, which had already been accepted for nearly 500 years. In the process, they questioned Esther for not mentioning God's name, the Song of Solomon for being sensual, Ecclesiastes for being skeptical, Ezekiel's description of the temple for contradicting Moses', and Proverbs for being self-contradictory.

But closer scrutiny resolved their questions. God's Hebrew name (YHWH) is found four times as an acrostic in Esther's margin, and God's power and protection was evident in saving the Jewish race from an annihilation decree. Song of Solomon is a picture of God's love for Israel. Ecclesiastes presents an accurate description of humanity's search for meaning in life apart from God. Ezekiel's temple is to be built when Messiah returns. And the apparently contradictory Proverbs apply to different situations (two different Hebrew words are used for "fool" in 26:4,5).

Such questioning helps assure us that succeeding generations didn't unthinkingly accept what they received. No Old Testament book was removed from the sacred collection, and other ancient books were flatly rejected at Jamnia.

For about 1,900 years after their completion, only the 39 Old Testament books as we know them were considered sacred. Books known as *apocrypha* ("hidden") were produced between 200 B.C. and A.D. 100. But they were not added to the Roman Catholic Bible until 1546, at the Council of Trent, in reaction to the Protestant reformers. The New Testament never quotes from the Roman Catholic Apocrypha, nor were they accepted by Jerome, who made the Catholics' official Latin version. The Apocrypha doesn't claim to be scripture or the work of prophets, but provides an interesting history of the times between the Bible's two testaments.

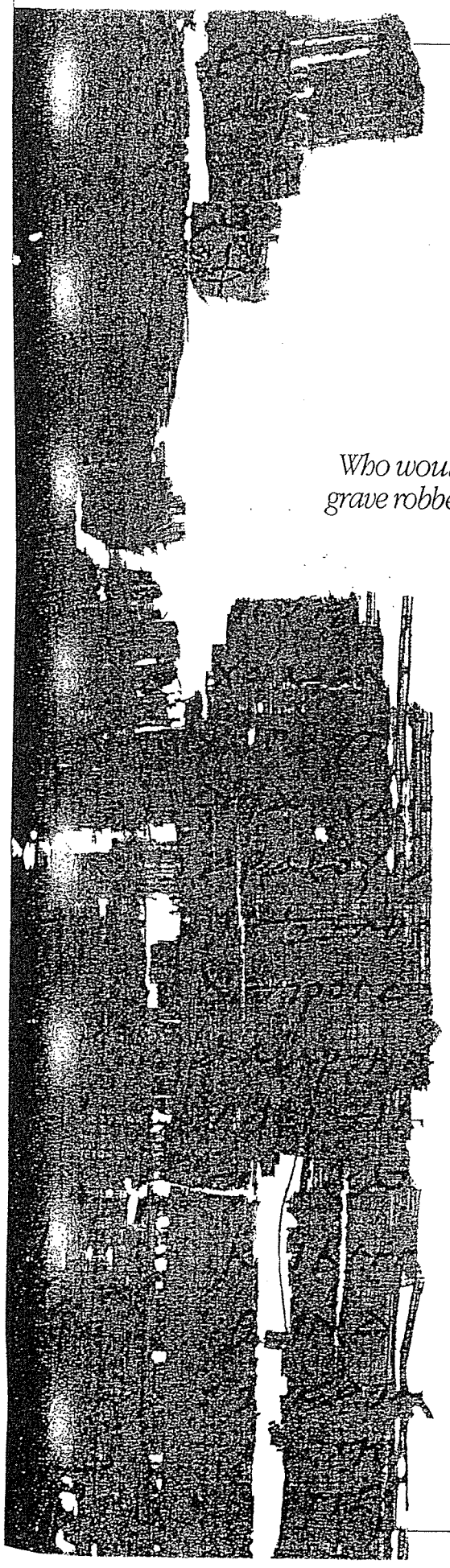
The Bible is a collection of authorized books flowing from the mind of God through the pens and personalities of his prophets. Individual Bible authors didn't always know how their work would fit into the book's overall plan. Today, beyond the cross of Calvary, it's easier to see how each piece of the Bible puzzle fits together perfectly.

The Bible has one main plot fully developed from beginning to ending. From book one to 66, the Bible library consistently depicts:

One true, eternal God, the source of all life and good • Man's inability to remain faithful to God, even under ideal conditions • God ever seeking to draw people into a relationship with himself • One diabolical head of the forces of darkness • Salvation from damnation as a gift from God received by faith • A central focus on the Lord Jesus Christ, with the Old Testament looking forward to his coming and the New Testament looking for his coming again.

Only God could have given such a book, so marked by consistency and lacking any unsolvable contradiction. Read any part of it and you encounter the plan of God the Father, the person of Jesus Christ, and the power of the Holy Spirit. ■

Next month: The New Testament canon
(See NT Survey Notes)





Scroll discovery site: Qumran Cave 4

Who would have guessed that shepherds, scholars, and grave robbers would serve a divinely appointed mission?

The Quest for the Original Bible

by Robert L. Hubbard

It was April 1844. The young man leaned lazily on the ship's railing as the beautiful Italian coastline receded behind him, unnoticed. His thoughts were riveted elsewhere.

For Constantin Tischendorf, this was no pleasure cruise. The German Bible scholar was headed for Egypt on a unique treasure hunt.

He would canvass monasteries in the Middle East in search of the earliest New Testament manuscript. His hunch was

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that somewhere among the desolate sands monks had copies far older than those available.

But Tischendorf was not alone. During the past two centuries, many such unsung heroes — people even Indiana Jones would admire — have discovered ancient Bible manuscripts. What follows are some of their stories.

Why the Quest?

Why search for ancient biblical manuscripts? The Bible's original Hebrew and Greek manuscripts (called "autographs") probably have vanished. Written on fragile materials like leather and papyrus, they could not survive centuries of changing weather and constant use. Hence, they lived on only in copies made by devoted scribes.

Long before the convenience of modern technology, one common way to copy the Bible was for one scribe to read his "original" (the best copy he had) line by line as other scribes wrote down what he read. When done, they would have as many new copies of Scripture as there were scribes writing.

Unfortunately, this opens the door for subtle mistakes in the transcription. For example, in Greek the pronouns *you* and *we* sound similar. A scribe who wrote what he heard could easily confuse them. This seems to explain why 1 Corinthians 7:15 reads "God has called *you* to live in peace" in some ancient manuscripts, while others state "God has called *us* to live in peace."

Furthermore, some scribes even harmonized parallel passages. For example, in Luke 5:30 the Pharisees ask Jesus, "Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and 'sinners'?" So one ancient scribe added "and drink" to the same episode reported in Mark 2:16. Later scribes, sincerely devoted to preserving the text, copied and recopied those changes.

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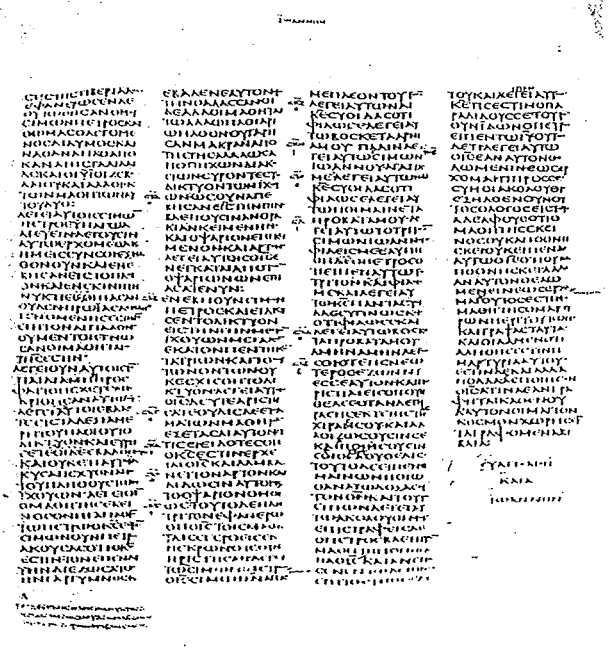
As a result, the thousands of manuscripts now available have many minor differences. Footnotes in our Bibles (for example, "other ancient manuscripts read . . .") point to variations the translators consider more important.

These differences, however, do not affect the Bible's message. The manuscripts teach the same gospel and the same doctrines. Nevertheless, because the Bible is God's Word, translators seek to work from a manuscript that is as close to the autographs as possible, in this way preserving God's intended message.

That's why the search for ancient biblical manuscripts is so important. The earlier the manuscripts, the more like the original they will be — and the better our understanding of what the Bible says.



A page of Tischendorf's prize: Codex Sinaiticus (A.D. 350-400)

The Wastebasket Clue

Two early manuscripts were found in the 19th century. A revived interest in ancient history had sent European scholars in all directions. The early shovels of modern archaeology unearthed ancient cities from Mesopotamia to Greece. Knowledge of the ancient world was increasing.

Amid that excitement, and with a firm faith in the Bible's authority, Constantin Tischendorf set out to search monasteries for the earliest New Testament manuscript.

His first stops after arriving in Egypt proved fruitless. But in May 1844 he reached the Monastery of St. Catherine, a small fortress-like structure at the foot of Mount Sinai. Greek Orthodox monks had lived there since about A.D. 500. And in 1761, an Italian visitor had reported seeing an impressive manuscript.

One day Tischendorf noticed a large basket full of old parchments in the library. According to the librarian, it was trash, destined to heat the monastery oven. Two other basketfuls had already stoked the fire. Among the "trash," Tischendorf found 129 large pages of a very old Septuagint (Greek Old Testament) manuscript.

Unfortunately, his excitement betrayed that the trash was in fact great treasure, and the monks let him take home only 43 pages. In 1846, he published them, dating them to the mid-fourth century A.D.

On his second visit to St. Catherine's in 1853, he failed to find the remaining pages. Tischendorf feared that they had already gone up in smoke.

Nevertheless, in 1859 he made a third visit. He got the czar of Russia, a man revered by eastern monasteries, to fund the trip — a wise move, as it turned out.

Despite the monks' cordial welcome, this visit at first also seemed a failure. When several days of searching through other manuscripts turned up nothing, Tischendorf resigned himself to returning empty-handed. On February 4, the night before his departure, he joined the monastery's steward for some refreshment.

There he struck pay dirt. Holding a gift from Tischendorf, a newly published Septuagint, the host said, "And I, too, have read a Septuagint." He then pulled from the shelf over the door a bulky volume wrapped in a red cloth.

Speechless, Tischendorf unwrapped what he later called "the most precious biblical treasure in existence." Inside were the pages he had seen 15 years earlier, other parts of the Old Testament, the whole New Testament, and two other early Christian writings.

Only Tischendorf's delicate diplomacy, however, gave that treasure to the world. This time he carefully concealed his excitement. He first negotiated permission to take it to Cairo to copy — a feat finished in only two months.

Then he convinced the monks to give the manuscript to the czar. When a dispute between bishops threatened the plan, Tischendorf negotiated a compromise. He would take the text to the czar, but return it if the new archbishop disapproved.

Three years later, Tischendorf published an edition of what is now called the Codex Sinaiticus. (A codex is a book-

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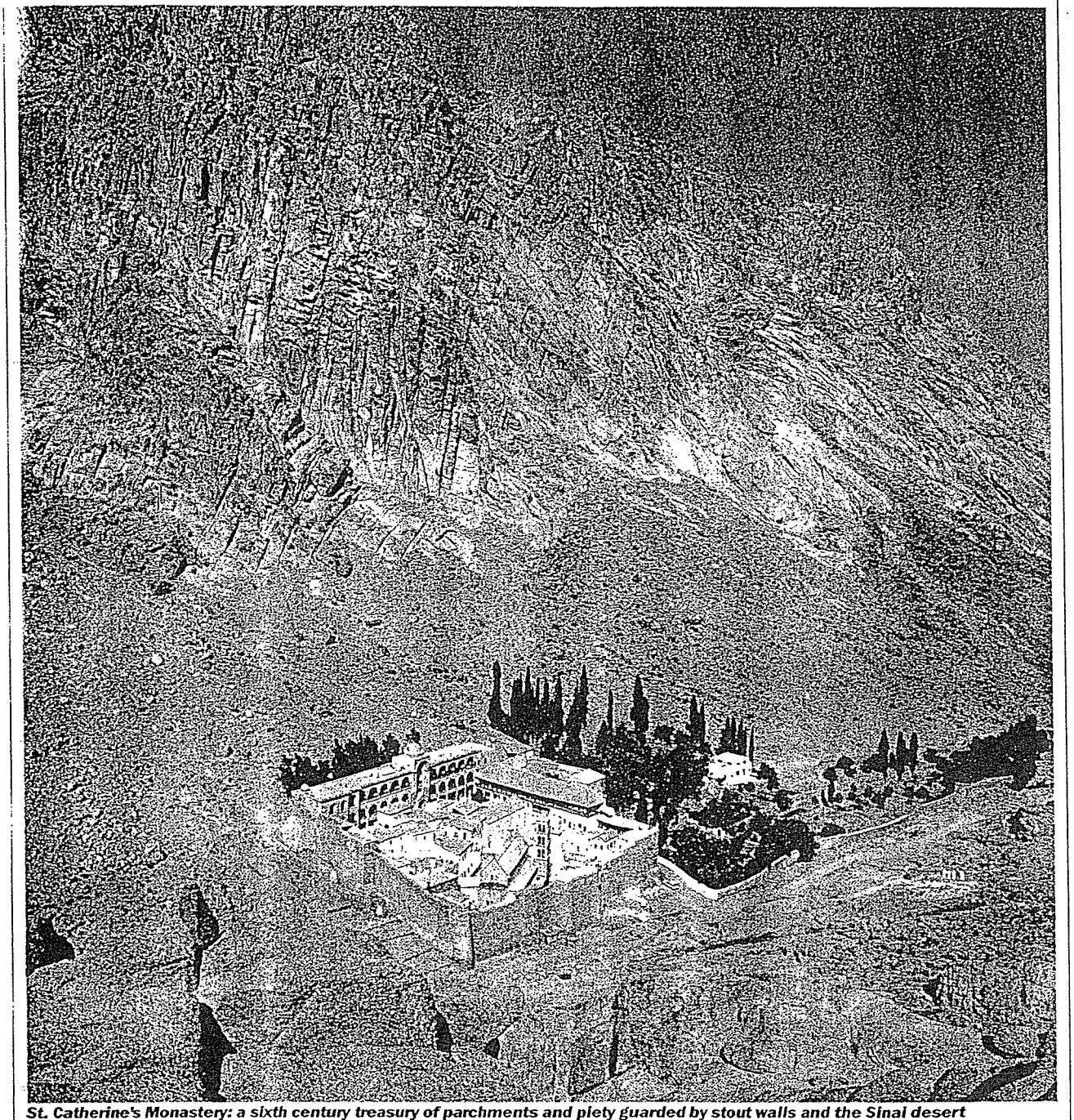

St. Catherine's Monastery: a sixth century treasury of parchments and piety guarded by stout walls and the Sinai desert

like collection of parchment or papyrus pages.)

For years the Sinaiticus resided in Russia in the library at St. Petersburg. In late 1933, however, the Soviet regime needed hard currency to buy machinery. After haggling with several buyers, it sold the manuscript to the British Museum for more than half a million dollars — a clue to its immense value.

The only complete copy of the Greek New Testament in uncial (rounded capital) letters, it is an early manuscript (A.D. 350-400) and ranks among the three most valuable complete Bible texts. Bible readers owe a great debt to the persistence of Constantin Tischendorf.

A Prize of War

The 19th century also yielded knowledge of a second valuable text, the Codex Vaticanus. The Vatican Library had owned it since Pope Nicholas V, a collector of ancient texts, brought it to Rome in 1448. It was listed in the library's first catalog (1475), but for centuries no one knew its value.

Rome's tight grip prevented scholars, especially those who were Protestant, from studying it. Rome's defensive stance is understandable. The 16th century Reformation had battered the Vatican with criticism; thousands of Catholics had become Protestants.

Napoleon gave scholars their first look. He had long dreamed of collecting Europe's best paintings and archives. When Pope Pius VII refused to side with France against England, Napoleon moved to realize some of that dream.

In 1809, his army occupied Rome and sent the pope into exile at Genoa, Italy. He then had the entire papal archive, including Codex Vaticanus, shipped to France as a prize of war. The next year,

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Leonard Hug, a German scholar, studied Vaticanus and announced its importance.

That glimpse whetted scholars' appetites. When Vaticanus returned to Rome in 1815 after Napoleon's fall, scholars pressured the Vatican to loosen its jealous grip. Once again, current events — this time, political revolutions in Europe that attacked the Catholic church — put Rome on the defensive. Nevertheless, after waiting several months, Tischendorf was allowed six hours with it in 1843.

Two years later, Rome granted English scholar Samuel Tregelles more time, but he was forbidden to make any notes or to copy any words. On each visit, attendants searched his pockets for writing materials. If he looked too intently at any one passage, they whisked the text away.

Finally, the persistence of Tischendorf paid off. In 1866, the Vatican allowed him to study it three hours a day under the eyes of an appointed official. It soon revoked that permission, however, when it learned he had copied 20 pages in eight days, a violation of the agreement.

His fervent plea gained him six more days and resulted in his publishing an edition of the text in 1867. A photographic edition issued 22 years later finally gave other scholars a long-awaited look.

Codex Vaticanus is even more valuable than Sinaiticus. It is the oldest and most complete Septuagint manuscript (though it lacks most of Genesis and Psalms 106-138). Its New Testament text is very early (A.D. 350-400) and is missing only the end of Hebrews, 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon, and Revelation. With Sinaiticus, it may have been among the 50 Bibles prepared by Eusebius, the early church leader and historian, for Emperor Constantine about A.D. 320.

The Egyptian Connection

Before the discovery of Sinaiticus and Vaticanus, few known manuscripts of the Greek Bible were dated before the 12th century. And many of these copies contained "conflations" (passages that combined differing readings of a text). Sinaiticus and Vaticanus provided scholars with manuscripts up to 800 years older and without conflations. Still, 300 years separated them from the New Testament autographs.

Egypt, however, seemed to offer hope of narrowing that gap. In 1897, excavators in central Egypt found a papyrus scrap from Matthew's Gospel dating about A.D. 200. Other ancient non-biblical documents had come to light there.

Then an exciting discovery brought the oldest manuscripts much closer to the autographs. The key individuals this time were a devoted scholar and a mining engineer who collected ancient documents.

As director of the British Museum, Sir Frederic Kenyon had devoted his life to the study of biblical manuscripts. (He later championed the museum's purchase of Codex Sinaiticus from Russia.) On November 19, 1931, he announced the discovery of several Old Testament and New Testament manuscripts, dated from A.D. 200 to 250.

No one knows exactly how the discovery was made. Evidently, sometime in 1930, Alfred Chester Beatty, a wealthy American mining engineer living in London, learned about the texts through Egyptian antiquities dealers.

Beatty purchased portions of 11 codices and had Kenyon evaluate them. They turned out to be parts of nine Old Testament books in Greek and fairly complete portions of 15 New Testament books, including the Gospels, Acts, and Paul's epistles.

Referred to as the Chester Beatty Papyri, their source is unknown. Presumably the dealer had bought the papyri from anonymous but enterprising finders who had located them in the ruins of an ancient Coptic monastery library, church, or graveyard in central Egypt.

The discoverers were clever; no sooner had Beatty made his purchase and Kenyon his evaluation than similar but smaller codices turned up at several universities. Apparently the finders sold parts of their discovery to different buyers to increase their profit.

In any case, this discovery provided sources that dated at least a century earlier than previously discovered manuscripts. The papyrus copy of Paul's letters (called P^{46}) apparently was made only 140 years after he wrote them.

Furthermore, these papyri suggest that Sinaiticus and Vaticanus might not be direct copies — or even copies of early copies — of the original autographs. The papyri have several textual readings that differ from them, yet might have been in the autographs.

Sinaiticus and Vaticanus, therefore, might simply be texts carefully compiled from several good manuscripts. In any case, Bible readers owe much to those unknown Egyptian treasure hunters.

Treasure in Earthen Vessels

We owe a similar due to the Ta'amireh tribe of bedouin in Palestine. For three centuries its herds have roamed the barren cliffs above the Dead Sea's western shore (the biblical "wilderness of Judah"). But in 1947, an amazing accident transformed this wasteland into a gold mine. The hero was a Ta'amireh shepherd boy.

Oddly enough, early writers seemed to know that scrolls had been stored in that area. Fourth century church historian Eusebius reported that Origen, a brilliant Christian scholar from the third century, used a Greek text of Psalms found with other Hebrew and Greek books about A.D. 200 in a jar near Jericho. In A.D. 800, Timotheus I, patriarch of the Nestorian church, described how a bedouin shepherd found many Hebrew manuscripts in a cave near there. And in a history of Jewish sects (A.D. 937), another writer mentions "the cave people," a sect from the first century B.C. whose books were found in a cave.

Scholars certainly needed earlier Old Testament Hebrew manuscripts. The earliest one available, the Nash Papyrus (about 150 B.C.), contained only Deuteronomy 6:4-6 and the Ten Commandments. The earliest complete Old Testament, the "Masoretic text," came from the ninth century A.D., almost 1,300 years after Malachi.

Greek translations like Sinaiticus and Vaticanus provided an indirect glimpse of the Hebrew original, but scholars could only guess what Hebrew words lay behind the Greek.

In the spring of 1947, a young shepherd named Muhammad adh-Dhib was pasturing his herd above the Dead Sea near Bethlehem when a runaway goat slipped into one of the many caves that dot the area. Perhaps to flush out the stray, he threw a stone inside. Instead of the expected "thud" and wounded "baa," the sound of shattering pottery echoed inside. Frightened, the boy fled.

Later Dhib returned with a friend and crawled into the cave. They found eight jars containing large leather scrolls wrapped in linen. The Ta'amireh tribe had long moonlighted by selling ancient artifacts. So the two tried to sell the scrolls in Bethlehem.

There are conflicting accounts of what happened next, but three of the "Dead Sea Scrolls" were finally sold to Professor E.L. Sukenik of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem and five to Metropolitan Samuel of St. Mark's Syrian Orthodox Monastery, also in Jerusalem. The Jewish-Arab conflict, which separated east and west Jerusalem, kept them in the dark about each other's purchase.

Between 1948 and 1951, most of the original Dead Sea Scrolls were published. In 1954, Sukenik's son, famous

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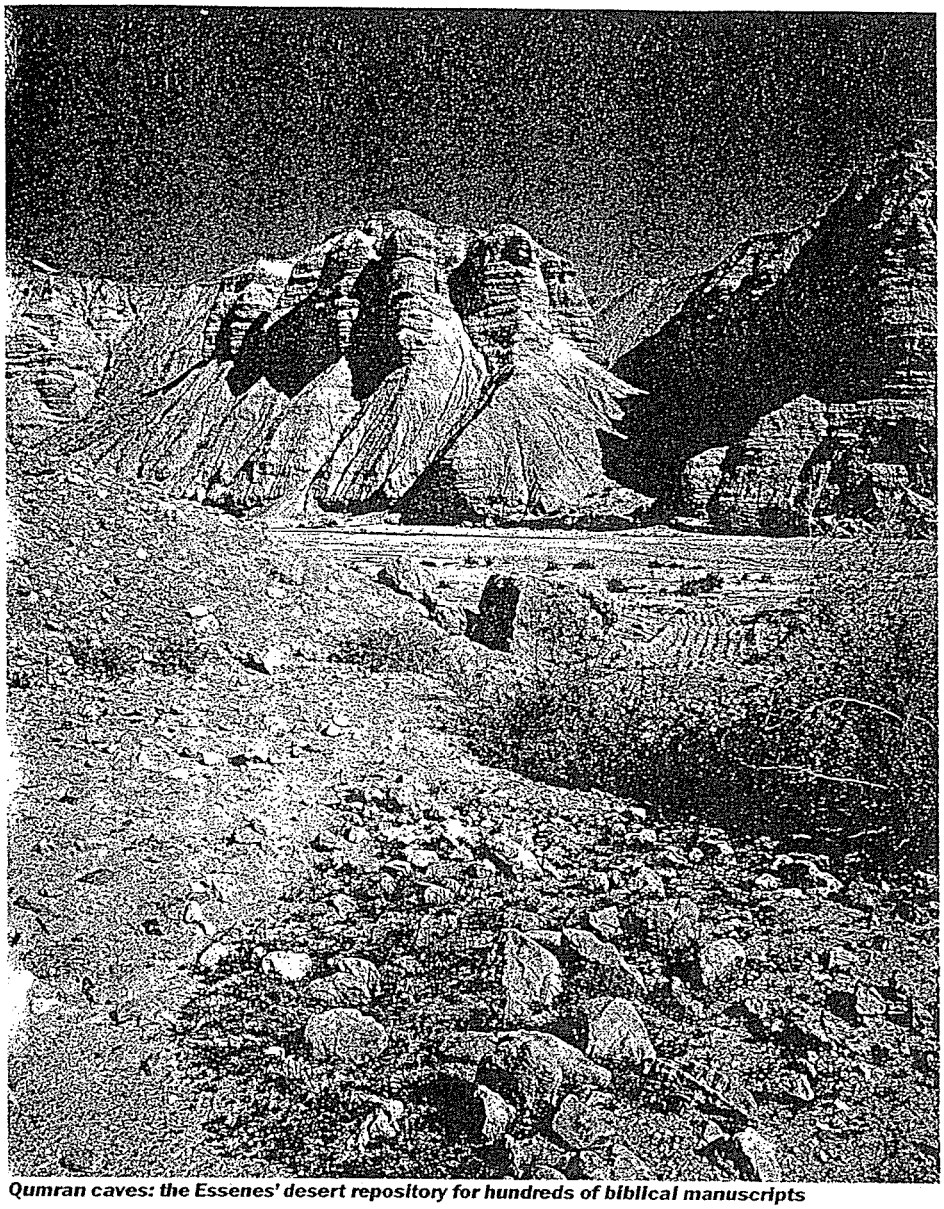

Qumran caves: the Essenes' desert repository for hundreds of biblical manuscripts

archaeologist Yigael Yadin, bought the Metropolitan's scrolls for $250,000. Thus, all the first scrolls now belong to Israel, where several are on display in the "Shrine of the Book" in Jerusalem.

The contents of these scrolls proved astounding. They contained two Hebrew texts — part of Isaiah and a commentary on Habakkuk chapters 1 and 2. Their script and writing style date to the first two centuries B.C. Excavation of Cave 1 (in 1949) and of ancient ruins a half mile away (from 1951 to 1956) shed light on their origin.

The site, called Qumran, was the monastery of the Essenes, an ancient Jewish religious sect. A stone writing desk and two inkwells linked the sect to the scrolls. Dated coins and pottery indicate the community existed from about 100 B.C. to A.D. 68, when the Romans destroyed it. Apparently the Essenes hid their precious scrolls in caves shortly before the Roman destruction.

After the find, archaeologists and bedouin competed in exploring hundreds of other nearby caves. Most often, the patient bedouin got the upper hand — and profited handsomely.

Eleven caves produced at least 400 biblical manuscripts. Cave 4 was especially significant. It yielded, in one scholar's words, "the ultimate in jigsaw puzzles" — thousands of scraps from 90 biblical manuscripts. Among them were parts of every Old Testament book except Esther.

In the search, the Ta'amireh also found manuscripts in caves 11 miles south of Qumran, at Wadi Murabba'at. These include letters from Bar Kokhba, leader of the second Jewish revolt (A.D. 132-135), a scroll of the Minor Prophets, and fragments of four leather scrolls (one each of Genesis and Deuteronomy, and two of Exodus).

The importance of the Dead Sea Scrolls cannot be understated. The very number of manuscripts is extraordinary. More important, they provide scholars with Hebrew manuscripts 1,000 years older than any previously known.

Furthermore, they clarify the meaning of some Hebrew words in the Old Testament. For example, no one knew the meaning of the last word in Isaiah 14:4. Scholars suspected it was a misspelling of the word "fury," that a scribe miscopied a "d" for an "r," as those Hebrew characters are similar. The Qumran scroll of Isaiah confirmed that suspicion; it clearly has "fury."

Finally, the scrolls show that both the Septuagint (such as Sinaiticus and Vaticanus) and the Samaritan Pentateuch (the Samaritan sect's Bible; see John 4) have an ancient and accurate Hebrew text behind them. This confirms their value for textual study. In some passages, their text may be even closer to the autograph than the Masoretic text.

The Quest's Testimony

The accounts of Tischendorf and others testify to God's providential care of his Word. He preserved it on a monk's shelf, in a church library, a pile of ruins, and a dusty cave.

Did the persistent Tischendorf spot the wastebasket clue as a result of luck? Was it by chance that the young shepherd's stone struck the jar? No, these discoveries also bear witness to God's providential guidance and gracious provision.

Granted, the cast of characters was imperfect. It included both the determined Tischendorf and the profiteering bedouin. Shady antiquities dealers and midnight grave robbers played a role.

Yet like the brutal Babylonians (Hab. 1,2) or the noble Ezra, they carried out a divine mission. Through them, God has provided his people with ancient copies of Scripture that reassure us the Bible we read today is what he intended to say through the prophets and apostles. ■

IX. Archaeological Backgrounds to the Old Testament

A. Definitions of Biblical Archaeology

1. Archaeology

   a) "The science or study of history from the remains of early human cultures as discovered chiefly by systematic excavations" (*Funk & Wagnall's*)

   b) "The scientific study of material remains (as fossil relics, artifacts, monuments) of past human life and activities" (*Webster's*)

2. Biblical Archaeology

   a) "'Biblical Archaeology' selects those material remains of Palestine and its neighboring countries which relate to the biblical period and narrative. These include the remains of buildings, art, inscriptions and every artifact which helps the understanding of the history, life and customs of the Hebrews and those peoples who, like the Egyptians, Phoenicians, Syrians, Assyrians and Babylonians, came into contact and influenced them."[1].

   b) Notice that none of the three definitions above specifically include literature.

3. Archaeological Terms[2]

   a) Classification of Objects

      (1) Artifacts—man-made objects (e.g., pots, jewelry, tools)

      (2) Epigraphs—materials with writing on them (e.g., inscribed stones, clay tablets, coins)

   b) Excavation Terminology

      (1) Tell—a mound containing the debris of human occupation that has accumulated at a site, built up in successive layers over the centuries through a sequence of habitation, destruction and reconstruction.

      (2) Field—a particular spot selected for excavation that is laid out in squares, usually five meters in dimension.

      (3) Square—a marked out division of a field

      (4) Bench Mark (datum point)—a permanent reference point in relation to sea level with which all other measurements must ultimately correlate.

      (5) Locus—a relative reference point based on a distinct and recognizable feature in the course of excavation (e.g. surface of a floor, wall, an oven, etc.).

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[1] D. J. Wiseman, "Archaeology," *New Bible Dictionary*, 2d ed. (Wheaton: Tyndale, 1982), 70

[2] This section is adapted from K. Schoville, *Biblical Archaeology in Focus* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1978).

(6) Stratum (plural, strata)—a layer of debris that consists of occupational phases that have a common cultural association and are distinguishable from earlier and later strata by evidence of major destructions, gaps in occupation, or other clear stratigraphical features.

(7) Balk surface or wall—the vertical face of the side of a square that allows visual examination of the excavated stratum.

(8) *In situ* (Latin)—in its original position. Photographs are taken *in situ.*

(9) Dump—the location where the unwanted excavated material is thrown away.

B. Brief History of Biblical Archaeology

1. The origin of biblical archaeology can be seen in the pages of the Scripture itself.

   a) Joshua specifically set up stones at the miraculous crossing of the Jordan River so that succeeding generations would ask what they meant (Josh. 4:20-23).

   b) During the reign of Judah's godly king Josiah, the "book of the law" (Deuteronomy?) was discovered during the temple cleaning (2 Kings 22:8).

2. Modern studies of biblical archaeology perhaps began in 1799 with the discovery of the Rosetta Stone in Egypt (a trilingual inscription which unlocked Egyptian hieroglyphics), but this was an accidental discovery during Napoleon's conquests.

3. Americans Edward Robinson and Eli Smith were the first to explore the surface of Palestine (1838), but the first excavations took place by the Frenchman DeSaulcy near Jerusalem in 1863. Yet for nearly a century no one could decipher the dates of any artifacts or strata.

4. Excavations still continue even 200 years later, typically in the summer when volunteers can be recruited from colleges and seminaries. Recently it was noted that Jerusalem alone had over 100 sites being excavated! There is much work to be done and much interest, especially noted in the tremendous success of the *Biblical Archaeology Re*view (BAR).

C. Methods of Biblical Archaeology

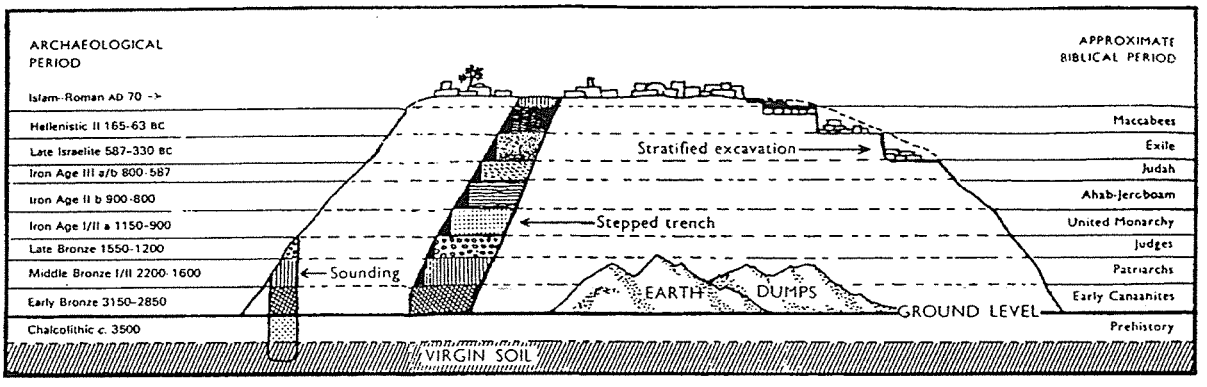
1. A *sounding* consists of a vertical pit dug straight down, typically as a quick way to see if more accurate but difficult methods should be used (below).

2. The *stepped trench* removes more dirt than the sounding and it continues up the tell at each successive stage.

3. *Stratification* is the most elaborate (and expensive) method.

   a) Most biblical archaeological sites appear on levels (strata) on a tell (mound of successive layers of destruction and rebuilding). Thus the stratigraphical method is the careful excavation of all objects found at each level or strata of a tell.

   b) Here's a typical tell with its various periods cut away (Wiseman, 72-73):



Schematic drawing of an ancient Palestinian tell showing methods of excavation and levels (strata) of occupation

4. How can archaeologists tell the age of a tell?

   a) Sometimes Carbon-14 dating is performed on remains. But this is only accurate if one knows how much carbon existed in the artifact when it was made, so it is not the best method to use. It also is not typically accurate beyond about 4000 BC and no literature exists older than this anyway which could confirm potential dates.

   b) The better way to date the tell is through means of pottery (see below).

D. The Typology (Pottery Analysis) Method of Biblical Archaeology

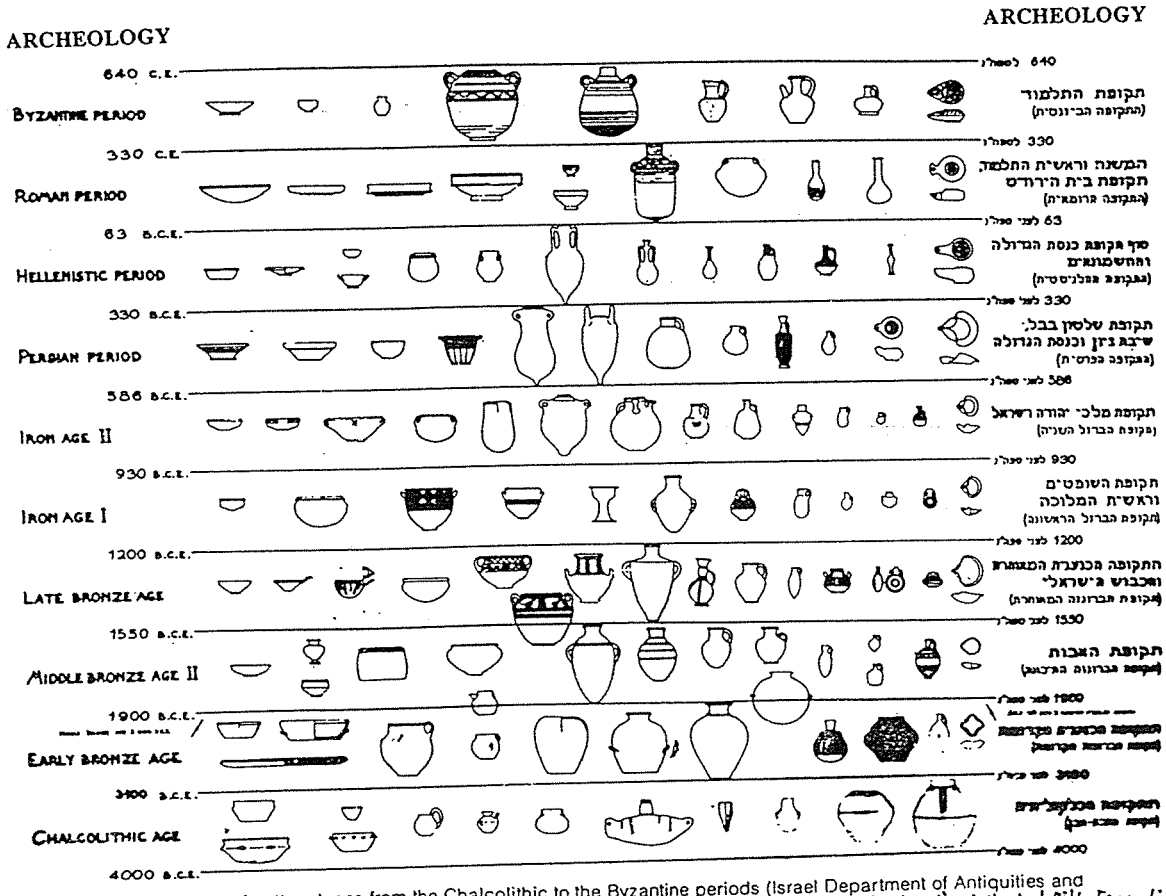
1. History: After archaeologists had no success in determining the ages of tells for many years, finally in 1890 Flinders Petrie discovered at Tell el-Hesi that pottery changed over the years but had a distinctive style for each age.

   a) The ages can be determined by comparing styles with those of Egypt (for which dates are certain).

   b) Now pottery within strata is the chief means of determining dates all the way back to about 4000 BC (Wiseman, 71).

2. Note the various pottery types in each age:[3]

Pottery Types in Various Biblical Ages



Sequence of pottery types from the Chalcolithic to the Byzantine periods (Israel Department of Antiquities and Museums)

– W.S. LaSor, "Archeology," International Standard Bible Ency., 1:241

[3] William S. LaSor, "Archaeology," *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979), 1:241.

E. Archaeological Periods[4]

ARCHAEOLOGICAL PERIODS IN PALESTINE	APPROXI-MATE DATES B.C.	EGYPTIAN DYNASTIES	APPROXI-MATE DATES B.C.	BIBLICAL CORRELATIONS	APPROXIMATE DATES B.C. (early chronology)
Neolithic Pre-pottery Neolithic Pottery	8000-6000 6000-4300				
Chalcolithic	4300-3300	Badarian, Nagada	3900-3300		
Early Bronze I Early Bronze II Early Bronze III Early Bronze IV	3300-2900 2900-2600 2600-2300 2300-2100	I and II III to V (Pyramid Age) First Intermediate Period (VII-X)	3000-2700 2700-2350 2190-2010	Post Flood	
Middle Bronze I Middle Bronze IIA Middle Bronze IIB Middle Bronze IIC	2100-1900 1900-1700 1700-1600 1600-1550	XII Second Intermediate Period Hyksos	1963-1786 1786-1550 1648-1540	Patriarchs Sojourn in Egypt	2150-1850 1876-1446
Late Bronze I Late Bronze IIA Late Bronze IIB	1550-1400 1400-1300 1300-1200	New Kingdom XVIII Empire Age XIX	1550-1295 1295-1186	Conquest Judges	1406-1400 1400-1050
Iron IA Iron IB Iron IC	1200-1150 1150-1000 1000-918	XXI	1069-945	United Monarchy	1050-930
Iron IIA Iron IIB	918-800 800-586	XXII XXVI	945-715 664-525	Divided Monarchy	930-586
Iron III	586-332			Captivity	586-539

[4] John H. Walton, *Chronological & Background Charts of the Old Testament*, 2d ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 78.

F. Major Finds in OT Archaeology

1. Major Inscriptions of Old Testament Significance[5]

NAME	LANGUAGE	DISCOVERER	LOCATION FOUND	DATE FOUND	SUBJECT	DATE OF ORIGIN	BIBLICAL SIGNIFICANCE
Beni Hasan Tomb Painting	Hieroglyphic	Newberry	Beni Hasan	1902	Tomb painting of Khnumhotep II	1900	Pictures Semites in Egypt
Laws of Hammurabi	Akkadian (Old Babylonian)	deMorgan	Susa	1901	Collection of Babylonian laws	1725	Illustrates ancient Near Eastern law
Merenptah Stela	Hieroglyphic	Petrie	Thebes	1896	Military accomplishments of Merenptah	1207	First mention of the name "Israel"
Sheshonq Inscription	Hieroglyphic		Karnak Temple	1825	Military accomplishments of Sheshonq	920	Confirmation of raid against Rehoboam
"House of David" Inscription*	Aramaic	Biran	Dan	1993	Syrian conquest of region	9th c.	Earliest mention of David in contemporary records
Mesha Inscription	Moabite	Klein	Dibon	1868	Military accomplishments of Mesha of Moab	850	Moabite-Israelite relations in 9th century
Black Stela	Akkadian (Neo-Assyrian)	Layard	Nineveh	1845	Military accomplishments of Shalmaneser III	840	Picture Israelites paying tribute
Balaam Texts	Aramaic	Franken	Deir Alla (Succoth)	1967	Prophecy of Balaam about the displeasure of the divine council	8th c.	Connected to a famous seer known from the Bible
Silver Scrolls	Hebrew	Barkay	Hinnom Valley Tomb	1979	Amulet containing the text of Num: 6:24-26	7th c.	Earliest copy of any portion of the Bible
Siloam Inscription	Hebrew	Peasant boy	Jerusalem	1880	Commemoration of the completion of Hezekiah's water tunnel	701	Contemporary example of Hebrew language
Sennacherib Cylinder	Akkadian (Neo-Assyrian)	Taylor	Nineveh	1830	Military accomplishments of Sennacherib	686	Describes siege of Jerusalem
Lachish Ostraca	Hebrew	Starkey	Tell ed-Duweir	1935	18 letters from the captain of the fort of Lachish	588	Conditions during the final Babylonian siege
Cyrus Cylinder	Akkadian	Rassam	Babylon	1879	Decree of Cyrus allowing the rebuilding of temples	535	Illustrates the policy by which Judah also benefitted

*Reading disputed; see *Biblical Archaeology Review*, July/Aug. 1994.

[5] Walton, 76.

2. Major Tablets of Old Testament Significance[6]

NAME	NUMBER OF TABLETS	LANGUAGE	DISCOVERER	LOCATION FOUND	DATE FOUND	SUBJECT	DATE OF ORIGIN	BIBLICAL SIGNIFICANCE
Ebla	17,000	Eblaite	Matthiae	Tell-Mardikh	1976	Royal archives containing many types of texts	24th c.	Provide historical background of Syria in late 3rd millennium
Atrahasis	3	Akkadian	Many found different parts	different parts in different sites	1889 to 1967	Account of creation, population growth, and flood	1635 copy	Parallels to Genesis accounts
Mari	20,000	Akkadian (Old Babylonian)	Parrot	Tell-Hariri	1933	Royal archives of Zimri-Lim containing many types of texts	18th c.	Provide historical background of the period and largest collection of prophetic texts
Enuma Elish	7	Akkadian (Neo-Assyrian)	Layard	Nineveh (library of Ashurbanipal)	1848-1876	Account of Marduk's ascension to the head of the pantheon	7th c. copy	Parallels to Genesis creation accounts
Gilgamesh	12	Akkadian (Neo-Assyrian)	Rassam	Nineveh (library of Ashurbanipal)	1853	The exploits of Gilgamesh and Enkidu and the search for immortality	7th c. copy	Parallels to Genesis flood accounts
Boghaz-Köy	10,000	Hittite	Winckler	Boghaz-Köy	1906	Royal archives of the Neo-Hittite Empire	16th c.	Hittite history and illustrations of international treaties
Nuzi	4000	Hurrian dialect of Akkadian	Chiera and Speiser	Yorghun Tepe	1925 to 1941	Archive containing family records	15th c.	Source for contemporary customs in mid-2nd millennium
Ugarit	1400	Ugaritic	Schaeffer	Ras Shamra	1929 to 1937	Royal archives of Ugarit	15th c.	Canaanite religion and literature
Amarna	380	Akkadian (W. Semitic dialect)	Egyptian peasant	Tell el-Amarna	1887	Correspondence between Egypt and her vassals in Canaan	1360 to 1330	Reflects conditions in Palestine in the mid-2nd millennium
Babylonian Chronicles	4	Akkadian (Neo-Babylonian)	Wiseman	Babylon	1956	Court records of Neo-Babylonian Empire	626 to 594	Record of capture of Jerusalem in 597 and history of the period

[6] Walton, 77.

3. Other Significant Finds that Confirm and Illuminate the Old Testament[7]

SIGNIFICANT ARCHAEOLOGICAL DISCOVERIES

1. Rosetta Stone(1798 by an officer of Napolean's Egyptian expedition)
   It is a slab of black basalt, 3 ft. 9 in. high by 2 ft. 4 in. wide. It was set up by the priests in honor of a decree issued by the king about 195 B.C. conferring certain honors upon them and exempting them from the payment of taxes. The stone was divided into 3 registers and written in 2 languages. The top most register gave the inscription in the old hieroglyphic; the middle in demotic, the ordinary Egyptian handwriting; and the third in Greek, which was the language of the government at that time. It was the key to deciphering the ancient Egyptian hieroglyphics (picture writing).
2. Behistun Inscription (1835; translated primarily by an English officer Henry Rawlinson, 1810-1895)
   The inscription is located on Mount Behistun in Persia, 300 feet above the plain. It is a 3 language record of Darius I the Great (522-486 B.C.) and his triumph over all enemies in the revolt following his coronation. One of the inscriptions was in Old Persian, another was a translation into Elamite, and the third was a translation into Babylonian (Akkadian). It was the key to deciphering Assyrian and Babylonian literature.
3. Moabite Stone (or Mesha Stone) (1868 by F. Klein at Dibon east of the Dead Sea.)
   It was set up by King Mesha of Moab (II Kings 3:4ff) about 830 B.C. to commemorate his victory over Israel. It was written in the Phoenician (Tyrian) alphabet.
4. Royal Library of King Ahurbanipal of Assyria (669-627 B.C.)
   (1848-1876 by Englishmen Layard and Rassam in Ninevah)
   The king ("Osnappar" of Ezra 4:10) collected and had copied thousands of documents of all sorts and stored them away in two palaces at Ninevah. They dealt with practically every field of learning and science known to scholars of the time. (Included were the Babylonian accounts of the creation (Enuma Elish) and the flood (Gilgamesh Epic).)
5. Armana Tablets (1887 in Egypt near the Nile River)
   About 350 letters were discovered in the archives of the palace of Pharoah Amenophis IV (1377-1360 B.C.). They are records of the diplomatice correspondence between the Armana pharoahs (1550-1200 B.C.) and the rulers of the major power centers of Asia. They provide insights into the social and political situation in the land of Canaan during that period of time. They also provide valuable information about the nature of the Canaanite language. They are written in Akkadian with Canaanite "glosses". There are numerous references to the activity of the "Habiru" as a disruptive social element in Canaan. (There is a strong relationship between "Habiru" and "Hebrew".)
6. Law Code of Hammurabi, King of Babylon (1792 B.C. -?)
   (1901 by French arcaeologists in Susa, though (presumably) it was originally in the temple of Shamash at Sippar, near Babylon.)
   A collection of common laws and court decisions, very similar in form to those in the Pentateuch.

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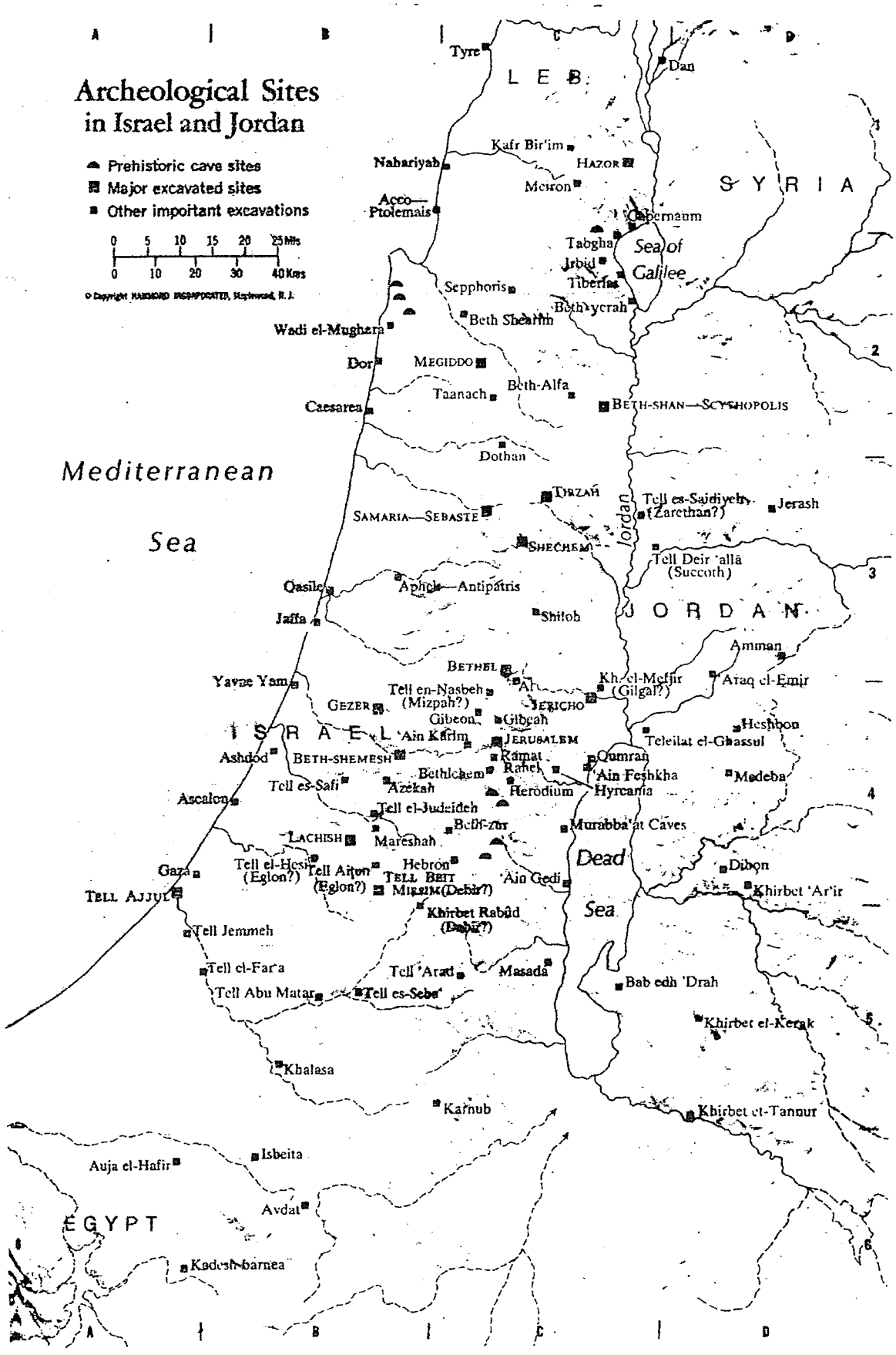
[7] These two pages are from Klaus Issler, unpublished notes from the course "Old Testament Survey," Campus Crusade for Christ, January 1980.

Other Significant Finds that Confirm and Illuminate the Old Testament (2 of 2)

7. Elephantine Papyri (1903 near Aswan, Egypt)
   It provides historical evidence for the situation in Judah around 400 B.C.
8. Hittite Monuments (1906 by Hugo Winkler, German Assyriologist, near Boghazköy, Turkey)
   Confirmed the existence of the Hittites, a major power in the Middle East in the second millennium B.C. Some of the tablets were written in Akkadian, the rest were written in Hittite hieroglyphics, unknown up to this point in time.
9. Tomb of King Tutankhamun (1346-1337 B.C.) (1922 by Howard Carter, near Thebes, Egypt)
   This is the only tomb of the pharoahs of Egypt that has been found intact. It was filled with fabulous artifacts including a solid gold coffin.
10. Sarcophagus of King Ahiram of Byblos (stone coffin) (1923 by Pierre Montet in Lebanon). A famous early Phoenician funerary inscription appears on the lid. It provides invaluable information of early Phoenician orthography and grammar. Dated about 1000 B.C.
11. Nuzi tablets (1925 by Edward Chiera in Iraq)
    From the house of a wealthy businessman, 1000 cuneiform tablets were discovered depicting the family's business affairs. They are written in Akkadian but with a generous sprinkling of Hurrian words. They record social customs that are very similar to those recorded in the Bible in connection with the Patriarchs.
12. Dead Sea Scrolls or Qumran Scrolls (1947-48 in caves near Qumran northwest of the Dead Sea)
    Discovered there were parts of some 400 manuscripts, including Biblical books. Every book in the Hebrew Bible, except the book of Esther, is included. The scrolls were written in Hebrew and Aramaic, and some were written in ancient Hebrew (Phoenician). Some of the scrolls bring us closer to the originals of some of the books of the Old Testament than do any other Biblical writings in existence. Before this discovery, the oldest known Biblical manuscript was dated between 900 - 1000 A.D.
13. Ebla Tablets (1974 by Paolo Matthiae, 40 miles south of Aleppo in northern Syria)
    After 10 years of work, 42 clay tablets were discovered. (16,000 additional tablets were unearthed in the next 2 years.) It is the largest archive from the ancient Near East thus far discovered that dates to the third millennium B.C. 80% were written in Sumerian and the remainder are written in a hitherto unknown Semitic language, Eblaite (or Paleo-Canaanite). Names such as Abramu and Israilu. This discovery holds promise of illuminating the Biblical accounts of the Patriarchs and the pre-patriarchal period of Genesis 1-11.

--compiled from Biblical Archaeology in Focus
K. Schoville, Baker 1978.

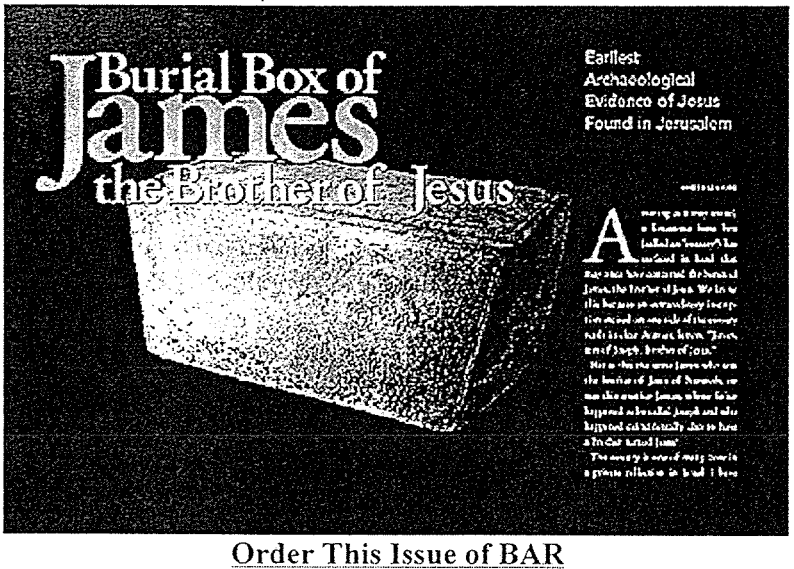
4. Major Sites of Palestinian Archaeology[8]



[8] E. M. Yamauchi, "Archeology of Palestine and Syria," *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, 1:271.

Evidence Of Jesus Written In Stone

Ossuary Of Jesus' Brother Backs Up Biblical Accounts



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After nearly 2,000 years, historical evidence for the existence of Jesus has come to light literally written in stone. An inscription has been found on an ancient bone box, called an ossuary, that reads "James, son of Joseph, brother of Jesus." This container provides the only New Testament-era mention of the central figure of Christianity and is the first-ever archaeological discovery to corroborate Biblical references to Jesus.

The Aramaic words etched on the box's side show a cursive form of writing used only from about 10 to 70 A.D., according to noted paleographer André Lemaire of the École Pratique des Hautes Études (popularly known as the Sorbonne University) in Paris, who verified the inscription's authenticity. The ossuary has been dated to approximately 63 A.D. Lemaire details his full investigation in the November/December 2002 issue of Biblical Archaeology Review, the leading popular publication in its field.

Ancient inscriptions are typically found on royal monuments or on lavish tombs, commemorating rulers and other official figures. But Jesus, who was raised by a carpenter, was a man of the people, so finding documentation of his family is doubly unexpected.

In the first century A.D., Jews followed the custom of transferring the bones of their deceased from burial caves to ossuaries. The practice was largely abandoned after the destruction of the Jewish Temple in 70 A.D. No one knows for certain why the practice started or stopped, but it provides a rare period of self-documentation in which commoners as well as leaders left their names carved in stone.

The new find is also significant in that it corroborates the existence of Joseph, Jesus' father, and James, Jesus' brother and a leader of the early Christian church in Jerusalem. The family relationships contained on the new find helped experts ascertain that the inscription very likely refers to the Biblical James, brother of Jesus (see, for example, Matthew 13:55-56 and Galatians 1:18-19). Although all three names were common in ancient times, the statistical probability of their appearing in that combination is extremely slim. In addition, the mention of a brother is unusual--indicating that this Jesus must have been a well-known figure.

Laboratory tests performed by the Geological Survey of Israel confirm that the box's limestone comes from the Jerusalem area. The patina--a thin sheen or covering that forms on stone and other materials over time--has the cauliflower-type shape known to develop in a cave environment; more importantly, it shows no trace of modern elements.

The 20-inch-long box resides in a private collection in Israel. Like many ossuaries obtained on the antiquities market, it is empty. Its history prior to its current ownership is not known.

The container is one of very few ancient artifacts mentioning New Testament figures. One such object is the ossuary of Caiaphas, the high priest who turned Jesus over to the Romans, according to the Biblical account. Caiaphas's tomb was uncovered in 1990. Also, some 40 years ago, archaeologists discovered an inscription on a monument that mentions Pontius Pilate.

"The James ossuary may be the most important find in the history of New Testament archaeology," says Hershel Shanks, editor of Biblical Archaeology Review. "It has implications not just for scholarship, but for the world's understanding of the Bible."

G. Value of Biblical Archaeology

1. Confirmation of Biblical History

a) The truth of Scripture stands whether or not it has confirmation from archaeology. (We do not need archaeology to prove the divine inspiration of the OT or NT.)

b) No archaeological discovery has ever contradicted a single biblical reference (although archaeology has at times contradicted some *theories* about the Bible).[9]

c) Many archaeological finds have confirmed the accuracy of the OT:

(1) Israel

(a) Negev: No one can rightfully dismiss the stories of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as folklore. The excavation of Ur (birthplace of Abraham) shows it to be a major centre of industry and religion at the height of its splendor just as noted in Genesis. The worship of the moon god Sin there is consistent with biblical notes of Abraham as a former idolater (Josh. 24:2).

(b) Jerusalem

(i) The Western Wall & Arches at the present time stand many feet above the wall of Solomon's temple (cf. OTB, 35).

(ii) Holy of Holies etching is notable in the large bedrock of the Dome of the Rock, indicating that the Ark of the Covenant within Solomon's temple stood at this spot.

(iii) The Place of Trumpeting at the southwest corner of the temple mount was recently discovered, verifying that this indeed was a Jewish place of worship (cf. OTB, 211).

(iv) The Gihon Spring wall and gate (1999 excavation) illuminate 2 Chronicles 33:14 which notes an outer wall in the Kidron valley, contrary to the long-held belief that the City of David had but one eastern wall (cf. OTB, 33-34).

(v) The discovery of Hezekiah's tunnel from the Gihon Spring testifies to the accuracy of the Bible (cf. OTB, 30-32).

(2) Babylon

(a) Sumerian flood stories and the 270 flood stories from around the world confirm an ancient belief in a worldwide flood (cf. OTB, 188g-h). One would expect to find this widespread belief for such a significant event (Gen. 6–9).

(b) Liberal scholars used to doubt the existence of King Belshazzar since his father (King Nabonidus) ruled during the fall of Babylon (Dan. 5). Later archaeology revealed that Belshazzar was, in fact, co-ruler with his father who was outside the capital for ten years. This enabled Belshazzar to offer Daniel position as "the third highest ruler in the kingdom" rather than second in command (Dan. 5:16).

[9] Nelson Glueck, *Rivers in the Desert* (New York: Farrar, Strous and Cudahy, 1959), 136.

(c) Previously, the law code of Moses in Deuteronomy was considered too advanced for his time. Yet after the discovery of Hammurapi's law codes that predate Moses, no one levels this attack any more.

(3) Assyria

(a) The Nuzi tablets provide contemporary descriptions of laws and customs of the patriarchal age.[10]

(b) The Display Inscription and the Annals of the Assyrian King Sargon note that 27,290 citizens of Samaria were exiled to Assyria, confirming the scriptural account (2 Kings 17:23).[11]

(c) Judah's king Jehu bows and gives tribute in the Black Obelisk of Shalmaneser, king of Assyria. This 1846 discovery confirms the existence of this king of Judah and also his being a vassal to Assyria.[12]

(4) Persia

(a) The Cyrus cylinder notes that this Persian king's policy towards captive peoples was to allow them to return to their home country.[13]

(b) This finding clearly put the return of Israel into a larger framework, making the biblical account not seem so extraordinary.

(5) Syria

(a) It used to be doubted that a people known as Hittites ever existed since there initially were no archaeological remains of the Hittite empire.

(b) Since the discovery of 40 Hittite nations and the Ugaritic language in 1905, this criticism has disappeared.[14]

2. Confirmation of the Transmission of Scripture

a) The Dead Sea Isaiah Scroll demonstrates the accuracy of transmission of the OT text. Comparing the DSS Isaiah scroll (ca. 200 BC) with one copied in the AD 800's shows minimal differences.

b) Thus archaeology shows that the Jewish scribes over the centuries showed extreme care to produce reliable copies of their sources.

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[10] E. M. Blaiklock, "Archaeology," *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*, ed. Merrill C. Tenney (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976): 281.

[11] James B. Pritchard, ed., *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Related to the Old Testament* (3rd ed., Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1969), 284-85.

[12] Jack P. Lewis, *Archaeological Backgrounds to Bible People* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1971), 97; Pritchard, ed., *ANET*, 281.

[13] Pritchard, ed., *ANET*, 316.

[14] Alfred J. Hoerth, *Archaeology and the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998), 19.

3. Insight into Interpretation of Scripture

   a) The meaning of words has become clearer by studying clearer texts and languages related closely to Hebrew (e.g., Ugaritic, Assyrian).

      (1) Formerly higher critics claimed that the language of the Pentateuch was too advanced for Israel (esp. Moses) to write it. Therefore, they concluded that it was written hundreds of years after Moses died. However, findings at Mari and Nuzi refute these speculations with language contemporary to Moses.

      (2) The KJV of Isaiah 21:8 reads, "And he cried, a *lion*." But the Dead Sea Scrolls discovery of the Isaiah scroll has a clearer text that clarifies that it should be translated, "And he who *saw* cried..."[15]

      (3) Discoveries in Ugarit note that the many references to the LORD being over the sea (Heb. *Yam*) actually mean that YHWH is superior to Yam, the sea god of the religion of Baal (see Ps. 29:3; 89:25).

      (4) For years translators did not know how to render the unusual Hebrew word *tsinnor* in 2 Samuel 5:8 where the text describes how Jerusalem was secretly entered and conquered. The KJV translates the sentence, "Whosoever getteth up to the *gutter*, and smiteth the Jebusites... shall be chief and captain." How could a gutter relate to conquering the city? Archaeological excavations of Jerusalem's eastern wall in the 19th century revealed that a water shaft extended down from the city to tunnels leading to water outside the city walls. Now modern translations translate *tsinnor* as "water shaft" instead of "gutter" which makes much more sense. See OTB, 31.

   b) Cultural backgrounds provide facts that the Bible does not mention.

      (1) Sir Charles Leonard Woolley through the excavation of Ur (1922-1934) highlighted the idolatrous background that Abraham came from in Ur. He found that every woman was required to offer her body to the priests at least once in her life (or else pay a temple prostitute to take her place). This gives added insight as to why God wanted Abraham to separate himself from Ur and it debase religion so that he could make a new nation out of his family.[16]

      (2) A discovery of the Lachish potsherds found in the city of Lachish close to Jerusalem confirmed that public opinion of Jeremiah was divided into those who believed he spoke with authority and others who thought he discouraged the people.[17]

      (3) The size of Hazor north of the Sea of Galilee was confirmed in the excavation of the site. Whereas most ancient cities comprised only 20 acres, Hazor covered 200 acres! This verifies the description of it being the head of several of the northern kingdoms (Josh. 11:10).[18]

4. Source of Revenue for Israel and Neighbor Nations: The Middle-East would be economically impoverished without oil. Though to a lesser degree, archaeological excavations also have brought significant amount of money into this part of the world.

---

[15] Blaiklock, 282-284.

[16] Clifford and Barbara Wilson, *The Stones Still Shout!* (Victoria, Australia: Pacific Christian Ministries, 1999), 32.

[17] Blaiklock, 282.

[18] Hoerth, Archaeology and the Old Testament,18.

H. Dangers and Limits of Biblical Archaeology

1. Priority: There exists an assumption among many archaeologists to hold the supremacy of archaeology over Scripture.

   a) Too often archaeologists pit their own findings against the Bible in order to "prove the Bible wrong." For example:

      (1) The Moabite Stone confirms that Mesha was indeed the king of Moab, but this stone says that Moab was victorious in battle while 2 Kings 3:26-27 claims victory for Israel. Both records cannot be correct, but it is inaccurate to say that the biblical record is thus disproved.

      (2) While Joshua 8:26-28 claims that Joshua destroyed Ai around 1400 BC and made it a "heap forever," archaeological excavations indicate the city was destroyed in 2400 BC. Joseph A. Callaway, the archaeologist who worked on the site for nine years, claimed that "there was no Canaanite city here for Joshua to conquer."[19] This is a claim that archaeology supersedes the biblical record and that archaeology cannot be mistaken.

   b) We must make a choice: an inerrant Bible, an inerrant archaeologist, or neither (most choose the last)!

2. Subjectivity: Archaeology is not an exact science, so its results are interpreted with the biases of each archaeologist.

   a) The archaeological record is incomplete and it will always remain so. One estimate is that less than two percent of the sites have been excavated.

   b) Not even one biblical site has been completely excavated.

   c) The following commentary exposes some modern critical NT scholar biases:

----- Original Message -----
From: "Crosswalk.com" <breakpoint.UM.A.3.6761@lists.crosswalk.com>
Sent: Tuesday, 26 March, 2002 2:07 AM
Subject: BreakPoint: The Stones Cry Out

BreakPoint cultural commentary with Prison Fellowship's Chuck Colson
http://news.crosswalk.com

The Stones Cry Out
Archeology Bears Witness To The Gospels
By Charles Colson

A few years ago, people exploring caves outside Jerusalem came across the find of a lifetime: an ancient burial cave containing the remains of a crucified man.

This find is only one in a series of finds that overturn a century-old scholarly consensus. That consensus held that the Gospels are almost entirely proclamation, and contain little, if any, real history.

[19] "Joseph A. Callaway: 1920-1988," *Biblical Archaeology Review* (Nov-Dec 1988): 24.

The remains belonged to a man who had been executed in the first century A.D., that is, from the time of Jesus. Jeffrey Sheler writes in his book *Is the Bible True?* that the skeleton confirms what the evangelists wrote about Jesus' death and burial in several important ways.

First, location -- scholars had long doubted the biblical account of Jesus' burial. They believed that crucified criminals were tossed in a mass grave and then devoured by wild animals. But this man, a near contemporary of Jesus, was buried in the same way the Bible says Jesus was buried.

Then there's the physical evidence from the skeleton. The man's shinbones appeared to have been broken. This confirms what John wrote about the practice of Roman executioners. They would break the legs of the crucified to hasten death, something from which Jesus, already dead, was spared.

This point is particularly noteworthy, since scholars have long dismissed the details of John's Passion narrative as theologically motivated embellishments.

Another part of John's Gospel that archeology has recently corroborated is the story of Jesus healing the lame man in John 5. John describes a five-sided pool just inside the Sheep Gate in Jerusalem where the sick came to be healed. Since no other document of antiquity -- including the rest of the Bible -- mentions such a place, skeptics have long argued that John simply invented the place. Apparently John didn't make up the pool, after all.

The dismissal of biblical texts without bothering to dig points to a dirty little secret about a lot of scholarly opinion: Much of the traditional suspicion of the biblical text can only be called a prejudice. That is, it's a conclusion arrived at before one has the facts.

Scholars long assumed that the Bible, like other documents of antiquity, was essentially propaganda, what theologian Rudolf Bultmann called "kerygma" or proclamation.

But this prejudice does an injustice to biblical faith. Central to that faith are history and memory. Christians believe that God has acted, and continues to act, in history. For us, remembering what God has done is an act of worship -- something that brings us closer to God.

Thus, while these discoveries in the desert may come as a surprise to some skeptics, they're no surprise to Christians.

While archeology alone cannot bring a person to faith, these finds are an eloquent argument for not dismissing the truth of Scripture before at least examining the evidence -- because, as we are learning every day, Jesus meant it when he said that "the very stones will cry out."

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Visit the Breakpoint website at http://www.breakpoint.org.

For more information about Chuck Colson and Prison Fellowship Ministries,
visit http://www.prisonfellowship.

3. Incomplete Record: Many Biblical Accounts cannot be Proven by Archaeology.

    a) Of course, they can't be disproved either (e.g., miracles)! Since we will always have insufficient proof, each individual must choose whether to believe the Bible until disproved by archaeology or to believe archaeologists until disproved by a new understanding of Scripture.

b) Biblical archaeology sometimes seeks to prove whether the Bible is true or not. This misguided motive tempts archaeologists to try to provide answers that they cannot provide and it tempts their readers to believe theories without extra-biblical support. As an anonymous person has said, "Absence of proof is not proof of absence."

c) One example of the failure of archaeology to provide convincing evidence is the lack of evidence for Israel's wilderness wanderings. Given that the desert sands buried most of the cities noted in Numbers several centuries ago, the Exodus and Wanderings must be accepted by faith without archaeological evidence at the present time.

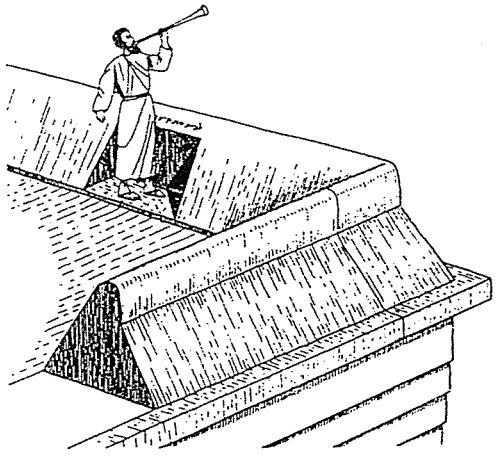
4. Complexity: Biblical Archaeology is the oldest archaeology in the world: This makes it the most complicated, with more strata than any other branch of archaeology and with the least amount of supporting literary sources.

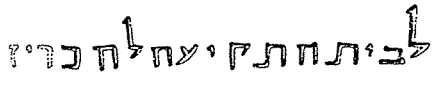
5. Limited Apologetic Value: Archaeology cannot prove God's existence nor bring a person to faith in Christ. This is the work of the Holy Spirit. It can, however, confirm with solid evidence some of the claims made by Scripture.



Jerusalem Slide Set

"Place of Trumpeting" Inscription





Reconstruction of "The Place of Trumpeting" and Inscription

Beginning in 1968, Israeli archaeologist Benjamin Mazar conducted excavations at the southwest corner of the Temple Mount in Jerusalem, exposing the lower portions of the massive walls built by Herod (see Slides 52–56 in the Jerusalem Archaeology Slide Set). The huge stone shown here—which is about eight feet wide, 3.4 feet high and 3.3 feet wide—was found lying on the Roman period street that ran beneath the southern wall of the Temple Mount. It apparently fell from the parapet some 130 feet above the street when the walls were tumbled by Titus's soldiers during the Roman destruction of Jerusalem in 70 C.E. The stone bears an incomplete Hebrew inscription, which reads, "Of the place of trumpeting...." The meaning of this text is elucidated by a reference made by the first-century C.E. historian Josephus to a place atop the Temple "opposite the lower city" (that is, at the southwest corner), "where it was the custom for one of the priests to stand each seventh day and announce with the trumpet the arrival [of the Sabbath] in the afternoon and [its] ending on the following evening, in order to give the people notice of the times for both leaving off and resuming work" (*Jewish War* 5.582). It seems clear that the place referred to by Josephus is the same identified in this inscription as the "place of trumpeting," where the priests blew the shofar to announce the arrival of the Sabbath in the days before the destruction of the Temple. – Ancient Inscriptions, 130

Archaeology Supports Biblical Flood

"The Church Around the World" Newsletter 31 (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale, December 2000), p. 2

PRAYER . . .

This year 165,000 Christians will die because of their faith in Jesus Christ, estimates David Barrett, author of *Today's Martyr*. According to Barrett, 43 million Christians have been martyred since the crucifixion of Christ. Christians are the most persecuted religious community in history.

Despite a Supreme Court ruling last June that banned student-led prayer at high school football games, opening prayers led by citizens and students from within the bleachers continue. At the home opener for Reynolds High School in Asheville, N.C., most of the crowd remained standing in prayer after the national anthem was played. Many prayed the Lord's Prayer, but others prayed in various ways. After about a minute, the prayer time ended with cheers. Prayer was reported at many other school games, particularly in southern states, including Arkansas, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Texas.

PRAISE . . .

Christian Colleges Growing

Conservative Christian colleges and universities across the country are experiencing an extraordinary increase in enrollment. The student population rose 24 percent from 1990 to 1996 at the 94 Christian schools that are members of the Council for Christian Colleges and Universities. Enrollment at secular and other religious schools is not keeping pace with the Christian schools. In the same time period, enrollment increased just 4 percent at public institutions, 5 percent at private institutions, and 11 percent at institutions with religious affiliations.

Survival Kits Encourage Spirituality

More than 200,000 Freshman Survival Kits (FSKs) were distributed to college freshmen this year. The kits, provided by Campus Crusade, provide attractive products and relevant messages to freshmen as they begin their college years. "We believe that it's important to communicate the gospel to every kind of student on every kind of campus," said Dan Hardaway, national coordinator for Freshman Survival Kits. "We see this as a pivotal point in a person's life." This year's FSKs will feature products designed to reach an increasingly diverse student population. "The innovations were driven by our local ministry leaders who were talking about complex campuses—campuses where up to 86 percent of students were minorities." Some products included in the kits are three types of scripture resources, videos covering topics like alcohol and relationships, three distinctly Christian music CDs with culturally relevant music, and popular books addressing the relevance of Jesus Christ to a person's life. ✓

Archaeology Supports Biblical Flood

Underwater explorer Robert Ballard, famous for his discovery of the wreckage of the Titanic, has found evidence of human habitation 300 feet below the surface of the Black Sea. About 12 miles off the coast of Turkey, Ballard's team found the remains of a building composed of wooden beams, as well as stone tools, on the sea floor. Researchers estimate that the settlements are around 7,000 years old and are remarkably well preserved because of the unusually low oxygen content of the water. Ballard told the Associated Press that at some point in history the region experienced a "sudden and dramatic change from a freshwater lake to a saltwater sea." Biblical archaeologists claim that the recent discoveries on the floor of the Black Sea support the biblical account of the Noahic flood.

THIS MONTH *You can...*

Inform your child's teacher about their religious rights in the public school. Gateways to Better Education has produced the Teacher Reacher Packet, which contains information that parents can pass along to teachers. Information cards for holidays will help teachers understand the law regarding teaching about religious aspects of holidays. The packet also includes the U.S. Department of Education's official guidelines, a parent-teacher conference checklist, a prayer request sheet, and thank-you cards to write an encouraging word to the teacher. For more information, or to order the Teacher Reacher Packet, call 1-800-A-FAMILY or order on-line at www.family.org.

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I. Resources

1. Books Defending Scriptural Reliability

   a) Dever, William G What Did the Biblical Writers Know and When Did They Know It?: What Archaeology Can Tell Us about the Reality of Ancient Israel. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001. Hardcover $25.00 $17.50

   "In this fascinating book noted Syro-Palestinian archaeologist William G. Dever attacks the minimalist position head-on, showing how modern archaeology brilliantly illuminates both life in ancient Palestine and the sacred scriptures as we have them today. Assembling a wealth of archaeological evidence, Dever builds the clearest, most complete [case] yet of the real Israel that existed during the Iron Age of ancient Palestine (1200-600 BC). Dever's exceptional reconstruction of this key period points up the minimalists' abuse of archaeology and reveals the weakness of their revisionist histories. Dever shows that ancient Israel, far from being an 'invention,' is a reality to be discovered. Equally important, his recovery of a reliable core history of ancient Israel provides a firm foundation from which to appreciate the aesthetic value and lofty moral aspirations of the Hebrew Bible" (The Dove Booksellers review).

   b) Hoerth, Alfred. *Archaeology and the Old Testament*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998.

   c) Price, Randall. The Stones Cry Out: How Archeology Confirms the Truth of the Bible. Harvest House, 1997.

   d) Sheler, Jeffrey. *Is the Bible True?* HarperCollins, 1999.

2. Journals (of varying perspectives)

   a) Michael D. Coogan, "10 Great Finds," *Biblical Archaeology Review* 21 (May/June 1995): 36-47.

   b) Johnson, Gary. "What Has Archaeology to Do with Faith?" *Biblical Archaeologist* 57 (1994): 3.

3. Websites (of varying perspectives)

   a) http://www.bib-arch.org/ (Biblical Archaeology Society publishes *Biblical Archaeology Review*)

   b) http://www.centuryone.org/arch-bible.html

   c) http://www.biblearning.org/code.nsf/wps/home

   d) http://www.probe.org

   e) http://www.infidels.org/library/magazines/tsr/1998/982front.html

J. The Archaeology of Jerusalem from David to Jesus[20]

1. Part 1: From the Beginning to the Babylonian Destruction

a) Introduction

b) Jerusalem topography (cf. NTB [New Testament Backgrounds], 21-24a)

c) Jerusalem's water source (cf. NTB, 21, 24b-c)

d) The Jebusite (Canaanite) wall built about 1800 BC

e) Israel's emergence in Canaan: 1200 BC but see my OT Survey, 99-100, 108-110

f) David's capture of Jerusalem & the City of David 1000 BC (cf. NTB, 23 #1)

g) Solomon's expansion to the north (cf. NTB, 23 #2)

h) Jerusalem in the Divided Kingdom (cf. NTB, 23 #3)

i) Hezekiah's reign and Sennacherib's invasion of Judah (cf. NTB, 23 #3)

j) Hezekiah's Tunnel (cf. NTB, 24 lower right)

k) The Siloam Inscription (cf. NTB, 24 lower right)

l) Hezekiah's Tunnel, again (cf. NTB, 24 lower right)

m) Warren's Shaft and its relation to David's conquest of Jerusalem (cf. NTB, 24c)

n) The Stepped-Stone Structure

o) The returning exiles build a new eastern wall (cf. NTB, 23 #4)

p) Israelite houses of the 8th-7th centuries BC

q) Tombs in the City of David

r) The Ivory Pomegranate from Solomon's Temple

s) The Babylonian conquest of Jerusalem—the tower and arrowheads

t) Tombs at the Shoulder of Hinnom and contents (cf. NTB, 21 far left)

u) Silver amulet with oldest biblical quotation (cf. NTB, 216)

v) Evidence that Jewish life in Jerusalem continued during Babylonian Exile

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[20] Adapted from the study guide by Hershel Shanks, narrator (two video series, Washington D.C.: Biblical Archaeology Society, 1995).

2. Part 2: From the Return of the Exiles to the World of Jesus

   a) Introduction

   b) The wall built by returnees from the Babylonian exile

   c) Hellenistic tombs in the Kidron Valley include Absalom's Tomb (built 1000 yrs. after his birth)

   d) Mattathias Tomb Inscription

   e) Herod the Great (cf. NTB, 79, 81-85)

   f) Herod's Temple Mount (cf. NTB, 85)

   g) Herodian masonry

   h) Eastern wall of Herod's Temple Mount, including the Straight Joint (cf. NTB, 24) and the southeast corner tower which divides Solomon's Temple Mount from Herod's extension of it.

   i) Solomon's Stables is the area built by Herod the Great under his southern extension of temple mount but named after Solomon by Crusaders who used them as horse stables (AD 1000).

   j) "Keep Off" inscription warned Gentiles not to enter the temple courts

   k) Southern wall of Herod's Temple Mount included Double Gate and Triple Gate (cf. Hulda's gates of NTB, 21, 24, 25)

   l) Robinson's Arch (cf. NTB, 25 lower left) was named after American scholar who thought it was a bridge; now we know it was a huge staircase (cf. NTB, 21, 24a).

   m) Tower at the southwestern corner of the Temple Mount includes Trumpeting Inscription (cf. NTB, 25 lower left, 204 bottom).

   n) Theodotus Inscription inscribed in Greek shows evidence of a Jerusalem synagogue (cf. Acts 6:9 synagogue of the freedmen).

   o) Wilson's Arch supported a bridge from the western wall (cf. NTB, 25); it was named after Charles Wilson (British explorer).

   p) Herodian mansion and artifacts

   q) Earliest depiction of menorah is 7 branched

   r) Roman destruction of Herodian temple and Jerusalem

   s) Gethsemane—this was a cave within a garden (cf. my "Bible Geography," 115-16)

   t) Golden Gate and gate beneath the Golden Gate discovered by Jim Fleming

u) "Lithostratus" disproved—couldn't be the Roman soldiers' game board since the stones were not laid until AD 41.

v) Site of Jesus' burial: Holy Sepulchre Church or Garden Tomb (cf. NTB, 24)? The tradition surrounding the Church goes back to the 4th century AD, it was a cemetery in Jesus' time, and it was outside the city wall in AD 33.

w) Pilgrim Ship in the Holy Sepulchre Church

x) Roman emperor Hadrian (ca. AD 132) renamed Jerusalem as Aelia Capitolina to removed any Jewish influence; Aelia was his second name and Capitolina reflected the three gods of Capitolina Hill in Rome.

y) The Roman Gate below the Damascus Gate

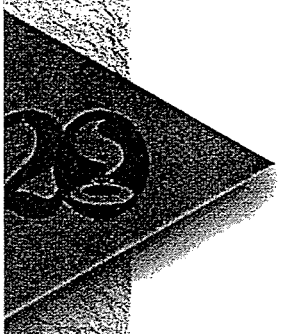
z) The Jerusalem Cardo (Roman main street in Byzantine era) is depicted on the Madaba map in a church in Jordan (cf. NTB, 218).

aa) Isaiah Inscription: In the 6th century AD Julian the Apostate began rebuilding the temple but died and the work stopped.

bb) The Dome of the Rock (cf. NTB, 25) was built by Muslims over the Holy of Holies (ca. AD 690) to "outshine" the dark Holy Sepulchre dome; King Hussein of Jordan covered the aluminum bronze alloy with gold in 1994.

K. Biblical Archaeology's "10 Great Finds"

Michael D. Coogan, *Biblical Archaeology Review* 21 (May/June 1995): 36-47 (1 of 12)



10 Great Finds

MICHAEL D. COOGAN

When BAR's editors invited me to prepare a list of significant finds for the 20th anniversary issue, I thought the task would be easy. I had already been deveoping the forthcoming BAS Slide Set on the Hebrew Bible and archaeology, so I figured I could easily cull 10 slides from these. But as I began to work, I realized that reducing the number from 140 to 10 would be difficult, especially when the chronological horzon was extended to include material later than the time of the Hebrew Bible.

Necessarily, this list is arbitrary and subjective. I selected ten discoveries that give a geographical overview of the lands of the Bible—illustrating how exploding knowledge of ancient cultures has enhanced our understanding of the contexts in which Biblical traditions emerged—and that make arresting and informative pictures.

The most significant discoveries are often texts. But texts seldom provide striking photographs, so I have chosen one—Tablet XI of the Gilgamesh epic—to stand for all the fascinating texts from Mari, Ugarit, Amarna, Qumran and Nag Hammadi, and many other tablets, inscriptions and manuscripts that transmit to us the words of ancient peoples. These silent witnesses have transformed our understanding of the Bible over the last century and a half.

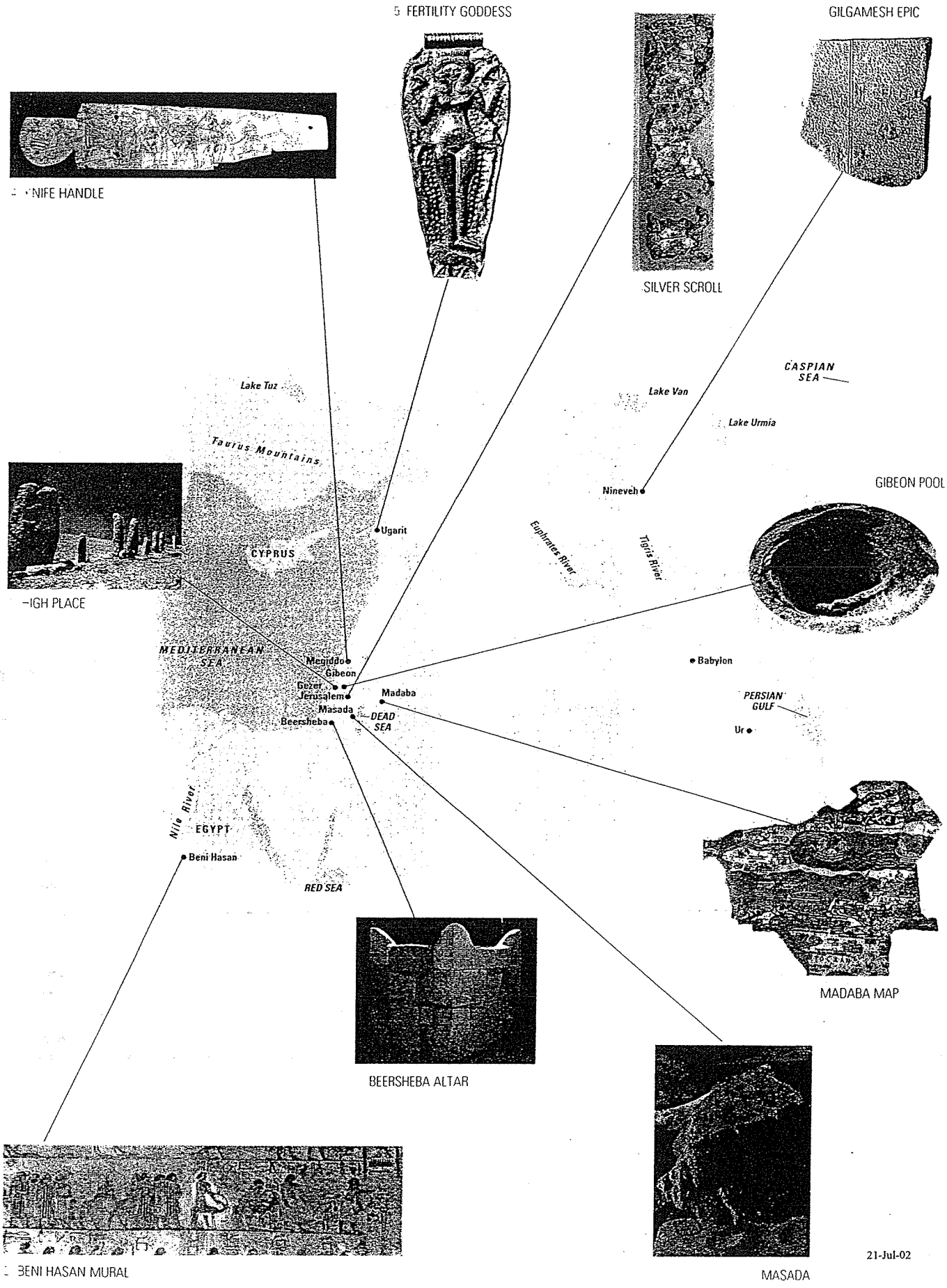
I've left out important sites such as Jericho, because neither the mound itself nor its stratigraphic sequences are especially photogenic.

As for Jerusalem, where there's an embarrassment of riches, I have chosen the exquisitely detailed sixth-century depiction of Jerusalem on the mosaic map from Madaba (in modern Jordan) to stand for all the excavations there since Biblical archaeology began.

This then is my list, arranged in chronological order. Remember that each, in one way or another, stands for many more. You may want to make your own list—perhaps we can update this selection for the 25th anniversary!

21-Jul-02

Michael D. Coogan, "10 Great Finds," *BAR* 21 (May/June 1995): 36-47 (2 of 12)



Michael D. Coogan, "10 Great Finds," *BAR* 21 (May/June 1995): 36-47 (3 of 12)

GILGAMESH EPIC, TABLET XI

Nineveh, modern Iraq

7th century B.C.E.

clay tablet with cuneiform script



BRITISH MUSEUM

1

Digging in northern Mesopotamia, with techniques too primitive to be called archaeology, the British explorer Austen Henry Layard uncovered tons of monumental sculptures and tens of thousands of inscribed clay tablets, many of which Layard shipped back to London. Among these finds are the famous Black Obelisk of the Assyrian king Shalmaneser III (858-824 B.C.E.)* and the library of King Assurbanipal (668-627 B.C.E.), which Layard discovered at Nineveh. After he returned to England in 1851 to pursue a diplomatic career, his work was carried on by Hormuzd Rassam, one of his assistants, who continued to uncover tablets and ship them to London.

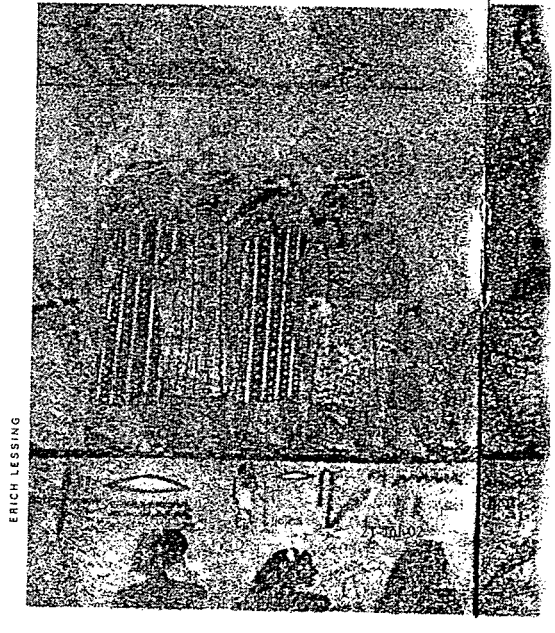
After the rapid decipherment of Akkadian (the Semitic language of Mesopotamia, whose two principal dialects are Babylonian and Assyrian), scholars at the British Museum began to catalogue and translate the clay tablets. In 1872, George Smith, an assistant in the museum's Assyrian Department, discovered on one of the tablets a story about a flood, written down in the seventh century B.C.E., that was strikingly similar to the Biblical story of Noah in Genesis 6-9:

> When the seventh day arrived,
> I put out and released a dove.
> The dove went; it came back,
> For no perching place was visible to it, and it turned round.
>
> I put out and released a swallow.
> The swallow went; it came back,
> For no perching place was visible to it, and it turned round.
>
> I put out and released a raven.
> The raven went, and saw the waters receding.
> And it ate, preened, lifted its tail, and did not turn round.**

Smith had happened upon Tablet XI of the Gilgamesh epic, one of the most popular literary works in the ancient Near East. He announced his discovery at a meeting in London of the recently founded Society of Biblical Archaeology on December 3, 1872, where his paper created a sensation. Because the tablet was broken, some of the flood narrative was missing, and Smith went to Nineveh to find the rest; on May 14, 1873, after only five days at the huge, largely untouched site, he succeeded in finding another tablet with the missing lines to the flood story.

The initial reaction was that the Biblical flood story was confirmed as historical—for here was another account of the same event. But subsequent discoveries and analysis demonstrated that Mesopotamian versions of the flood were significantly older than the Biblical accounts, suggesting that the story of Noah and the flood was, in part, a borrowed tale. Moreover, Biblical writers had access to the Gilgamesh epic, as the discovery in 1956 of another part at Megiddo in Israel dramatically proved.†

Gilgamesh's flood story is one of many texts that parallel and supplement Biblical traditions, strengthening our grasp of the cultural contexts in which the Bible was written, and often forcing us to reconsider traditional views of it.



ERICH LESSING

*See Tammi Schneider, "Did King Jehu Kill His Own Family?" BAR, January/February 1995.

**From Stephanie Dalley, *Myths from Mesopotamia* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1989), p. 114.

†See Tikva Frymer-Kensky, "What the Babylonian Flood Stories Can and Cannot Teach Us About the Genesis Flood," BAR, November/December 1978.

Michael D. Coogan, "10 Great Finds," *BAR* 21 (May/June 1995): 36-47 (4 of 12)

BENI HASAN MURAL

150 miles south of Cairo, Egypt

19th century B.C.E.

8 feet by 1½ feet

2

About 150 miles south of Cairo on the east bank of the Nile, at a village called Beni Hasan, stands a large necropolis cut into the rock cliffs. In one of the tombs, dating to the early 19th century B.C.E., is a large painting (below) 8 feet long by 1.5 feet high, showing eight men, four women and three children in a procession led by two Egyptian officials. The first official, a scribe, holds a tablet that supplements the hieroglyphic text at the top right of the scene, stating that 37 Asiatics are coming to trade in eye-makeup, which they apparently want to import. Their leader, Abishai, is "the chief of a foreign land." The Asiatics are equipped with weapons, something that seems to be a musical instrument and a bellows. They are accompanied by donkeys, an ibex and a gazelle; the men are bearded, and all the adults wear garments with elaborate designs.

Although the mural has been frequently used to illustrate the lifestyles of the Israelites' ancestors—as described in Genesis—many details of this scene remain unclear. Does it depict a caravan of traders, or Asiatics coming to negotiate a mining agreement (suggested by the bellows)? Where are they from—Moab, Sinai or somewhere else? What are they doing over 100 miles south of the Delta, where Egyptian and Asiatic contacts were centered? They certainly are not famished refugees seeking safe harbor in Egypt, like Jacob and his extended family in Genesis. And while it is tempting to link the Asiatics' clothing to Joseph's "coat of many colors" (Genesis 37:3; see also 2 Samuel 13:18), the precise meaning of the Hebrew phrase is unknown.

Still, these Asiatics are a vivid portrayal of what some groups traveling from the Levant looked like to the Egyptians, and can serve as a generic illustration of the ancestral traditions in Genesis.

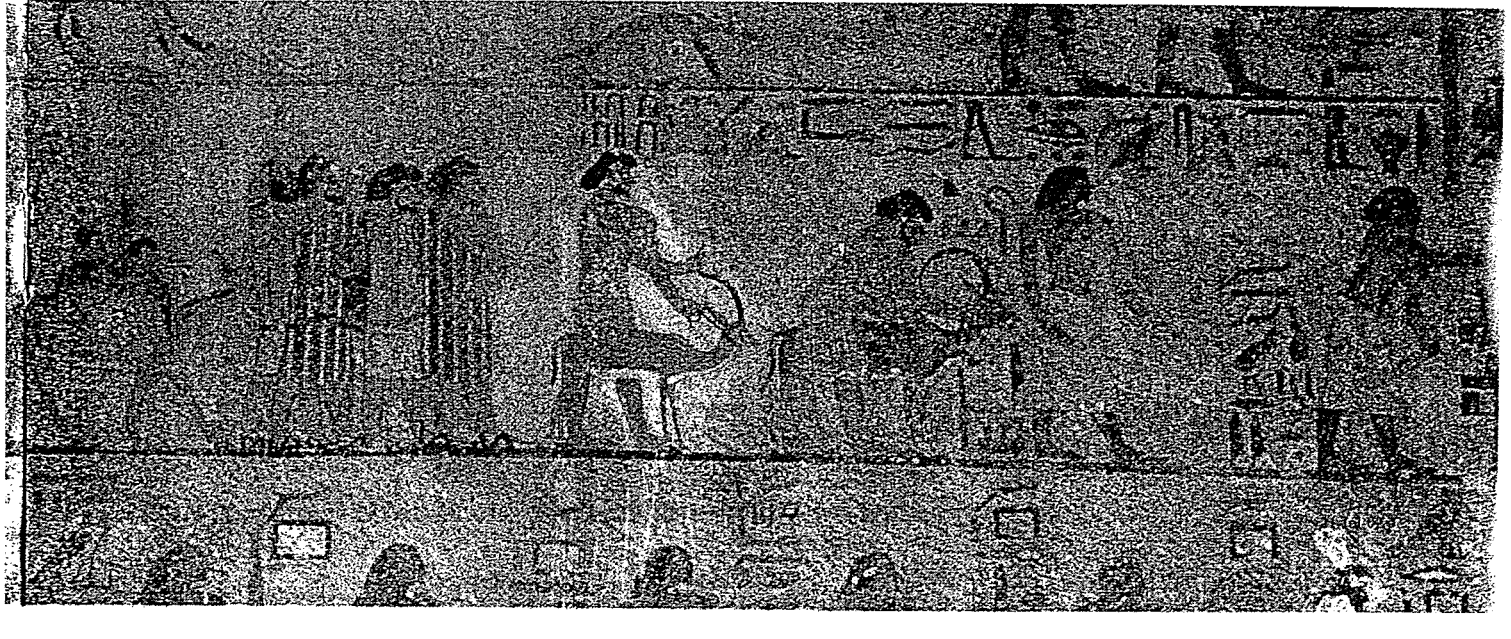
The presence of Asiatics in Egypt increased during the Hyksos period (17th and 16th centuries B.C.E.), the probable time of the migration of Jacob's family. These contacts have been well documented by archaeological work in the Nile delta, especially recent excavations at Tell el-Maskhuta and Tell ed-Dab'a.*

Economic and political contacts with Egypt continued throughout the Biblical periods, as archaeological finds attest.** The Joseph story in Genesis, Solomon's marriage to Pharaoh's daughter (1 Kings 9:16), and the campaigns of the pharaohs Shishak (1 Kings 14:25-26) and Neco (2 Kings 23:29-35) into Israel are just a few examples of such interaction. And though ancient Israel was more closely connected to the culture of the Canaanites, indirect Egyptian influence is evident in the iconography of Solomon's palace and Temple, in the love poetry of the Song of Songs, and in the adaptation of an Egyptian saying in Proverbs 22:17-24:22.

After the Exodus, Egypt continued to play an important if subsidiary role in Israel's history, and the discoveries of Egyptologists continue to shed light on the Biblical world.

* See Frank Yurko, "3,200-Year-Old Picture of Israelites Found in Egypt," BAR, September/October 1990; and "Can You Name the Panel with the Israelites?" with responses from Yurko and Anson F. Rainey, BAR, November/December 1991.

** See Charles R. Krahmalkov, "Exodus Itinerary Confirmed by Egyptian Evidence," BAR, September/October 1994.



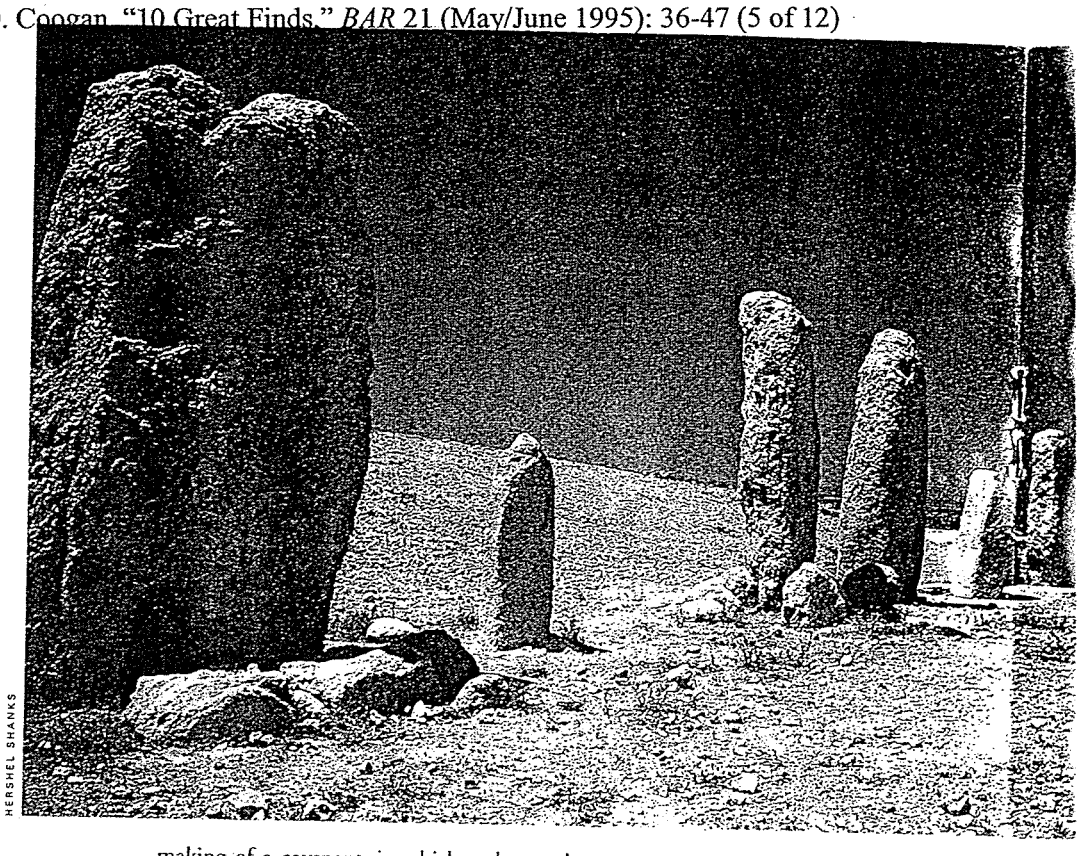
Michael D. Coogan, "10 Great Finds," *BAR* 21 (May/June 1995): 36-47 (5 of 12)

GEZER HIGH PLACE

near Tel Aviv

1600 B.C.E.

6 to 11 feet in height



HERSHEL SHANKS

3

This open-air monumental configuration was discovered by the Irish archaeologist R.A.S. Macalister during his first season of work at Tel Gezer in 1902. (For Biblical references to Gezer, see Joshua 10:33; Judges 1:29; 1 Kings 9:15-17; 1 Chronicles 4:16.) It consists of a row of ten stones ranging from about 5 feet to 11 feet in height; the stones are oriented north-south and extend nearly 55 feet from the first to the tenth. To the west of the fifth and sixth stones is a large rectangular basin, made from a block of stone, with a rectangular depression cut into its top. The stones and basin rest in a large plaza that was once plastered and demarcated by a low stone wall. Beneath the installation Macalister found a two-chambered cave containing an infant's skeleton.

Macalister wrongly concluded that the high place was constructed in the second half of the third millennium B.C.E., with the pillars and other features added later and the final touches made in about the 14th century B.C.E. Macalister believed—again, probably wrongly—that an elaborate series of ceremonies, including child sacrifice, took place there: Oracles were given from caves as at Delphi in Greece; priests perched atop the largest pillar; and people came to kiss the stones.

Most of Macalister's conclusions have since been abandoned, although his designation of the Gezer complex as a "high place" (a term whose precise meaning still eludes Biblical scholars) has stuck. William Dever's careful stratigraphic excavation of the high place, in 1968, established that the entire complex dated to the end of the Middle Bronze Age (c. 1600 B.C.E.), and remained in use perhaps into the Late Bronze Age.

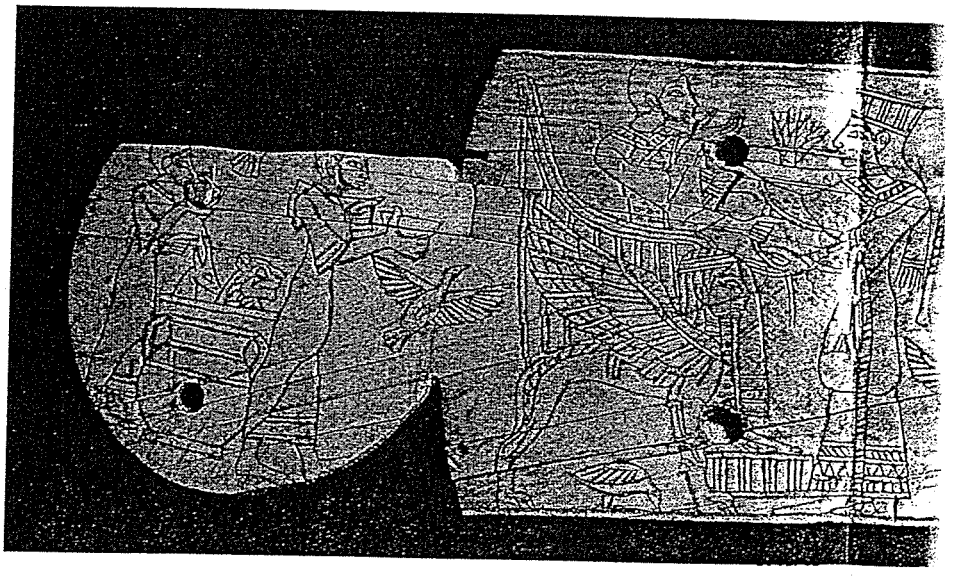
The most convincing explanation is that the installation memorialized the making of a covenant, in which each participating group erected a standing stone as a symbolic "witness" to its commitment to a coalition or a suzerain. This would account for the different origins and treatments of the stones. The use of stones as witnesses to a covenant is also mentioned in Genesis 31:43-54, where Jacob sets a stone on a pillar to act as witness to his pact with Laban, and in Joshua 24:25-27, where Joshua sets up a stone to witness the people's pact with God.*

The purpose of the large basin, however, remains unclear. Some have speculated that it functioned as a socket for a stone or wood object, a laver for ablutions or an altar.

In the ancient world, politics and religion were intertwined. Despite the tendency of archaeologists to attribute a religious function to any unknown feature, a religious interpretation seems most plausible here. Biblical terminology and practices have unquestionably helped shape our understanding of the Gezer high place.**

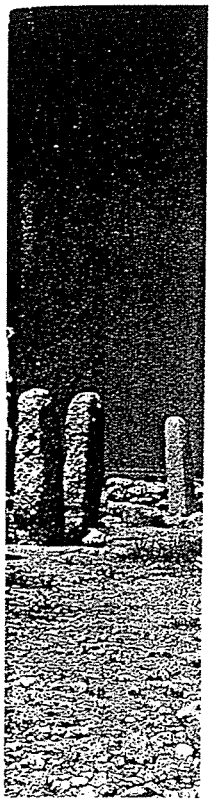
*For information on ancient Near Eastern covenants, see Kenneth A. Kitchen, "The Patriarchal Age: Myth or History?" BAR, March/April 1995.

**For information on the deterioration of the Gezer high place, see two articles in BAR: "The Sad Case of Tell Gezer," July/August 1983, and "Memorandum: Re Restoring Gezer," May/June 1994.



ERICH LESSING

Michael D. Coogan, "10 Great Finds," *BAR* 21 (May/June 1995): 36-47 (6 of 12)



4

KNIFE HANDLE

Megiddo, Israel

13th or 12th century B.C.E.

ivory, 10 inches long

The University of Chicago Expedition at Megiddo (1925-1939) was the most extensive archaeological project in Palestine up to that time. Among its many finds was a collection of nearly 400 ivories, discovered in 1937 in a cellar attached to a palace dating to the end of the Late Bronze Age (12th century B.C.E.). The hoard included combs with carved handles, a cosmetic bowl shaped like a duck and another shaped like a nude woman, small caskets and game boards, illustrating the sophistication and eclectic nature of Canaanite art of the Late Bronze Age: Cypriot, Mycenean, Hittite, Canaanite and Egyptian motifs and styles are represented.

As the collection also included gold, alabaster and jewelry, the rooms were probably a treasury of sorts, where valuable items were kept. Ivory pieces are difficult to date unless they are inscribed.* This collection may have been acquired over several generations. Although one piece in the Megiddo hoard contained the name of Pharaoh Ramesses III (1182-1151 B.C.E.), scholars have dated other pieces considerably earlier.

One of the most intricately carved ivories (below) is a knife handle ten inches long. Most likely, two scenes are represented. In the first, from the right, the king returns triumphantly from battle driving a chariot drawn by a horse that is led by two bound, nude, circumcised captives (occasionally identified as Shosu, a semi-nomadic people thought by some scholars to be the ancestors of the early Israelites**). The captives are preceded by a warrior carrying a spear and a shield. Behind the king is a warrior, or armor-bearer, with a sickle sword, and over the king's horse floats a stylized winged sun-disk. The king himself apparently wears a coat of mail on his torso and lower arms.

Immediately to the left of this scene and partially separated from it by three plants, is the second scene, in which the king is sitting on a winged-sphinx throne, drinking from a small bowl. He is being attended by two women; closest to him, the queen presents him a lotus blossom and a towel; behind her is a musician strumming a nine-stringed lyre. Behind the throne are two attendants serving drinks from a large tureen, above which, apparently on a shelf or table, are two rhytons, drinking cups with animal heads, one a lion and the other a gazelle. Three birds are whimsically placed in this scene, one beneath the throne and two in the air before and behind it.

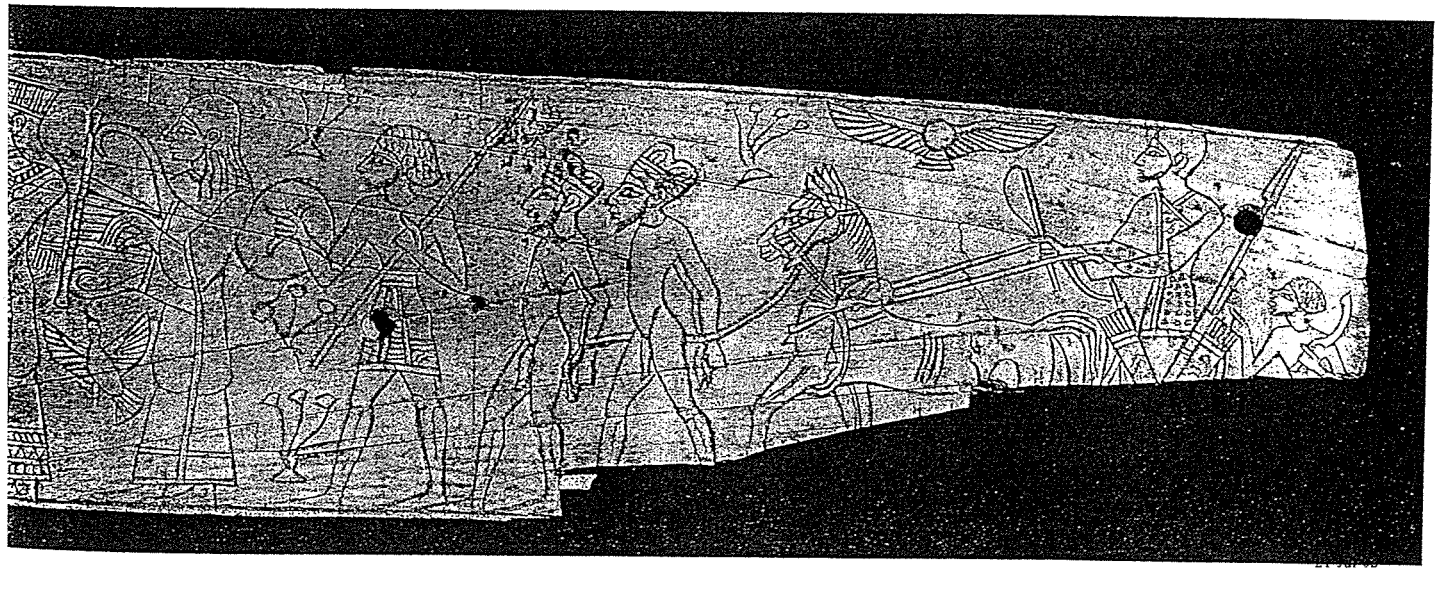
The scenes may present a narrative sequence: The king returns victorious from battle and then celebrates the victory. This ivory probably dates to the late 13th century B.C.E., when Megiddo was under Egyptian control.

The Megiddo ivory portrays the luxury of Canaanite royal courts—not very different from life in Solomon's court in Jerusalem. The royal throne in the ivory is often cited as a parallel to the throne of Yahweh in the Solomonic Temple (see 1 Kings 6:23-28 and Exodus 25:17-22).†

*See Richard D. Barnett, *Ancient Ivories in the Middle East, Qedem* 14 (Jerusalem: Institute of Archaeology, Hebrew University, 1982); and "Ancient Ivory: The Story of Wealth, Decadence and Beauty," BAR, September/October 1985.

**See "Can You Name the Panel With the Israelites?" and responses by Anson F. Rainey and Frank J. Yurko, in BAR, November/December 1991.

†See two articles in BAR, January/February 1994: Israel Finkelstein and David Ussishkin, "Back to Megiddo," and Graham I. Davies, "King Solomon's Stables—Still at Megiddo?"



Michael D. Coogan, "10 Great Finds," *BAR* 21 (May/June 1995): 36-47 (7 of 12)

FERTILITY GODDESS PENDANT

Ras Shamra, Syria (ancient Ugarit)

14th or 13th century B.C.E.

gold, 2 5/8 inches long

5



LOUVRE MUSEUM, PARIS

Like many significant discoveries, ancient Ugarit (modern Ras Shamra in Syria) was found not by professional archaeologists but by a sharp-eyed local resident. In 1928, a farmer plowing his field accidentally opened a tomb; a year later, French archaeologists led by Claude F.A. Schaeffer began excavations on a nearby mound called Ras Shamra (Cape Fennel), and within a few weeks found the first of thousands of inscribed clay tablets that would reveal much about the history of the western Levant, including the religion and culture of the Canaanites in the Late Bronze Age (1550-1200 B.C.E.).

Among the languages on the tablets was a dialect of Northwest Semitic, known as Ugaritic and closely related to Hebrew and Phoenician. This linguistic kinship points to deeper connections among Near Eastern peoples. The ancient inhabitants of the modern countries of Syria, Lebanon, Jordan and Israel shared a culture that was continuous in time and space. There were, to be sure, local differences, but what the discoveries from Ugarit and other sites show is that the commonalities, as between Canaanites and Israelites, were pervasive, so that many features of Biblical Israel that were once thought unique now prove to be variations of underlying Canaanite traditions.*

This gold pendant (right) was found in a princess's tomb in Minet el-Beida, Ugarit's port city. It resembles the many thousands of nude goddesses in diverse forms and media found throughout the Levant.** The pendant depicts a female figure facing the viewer and standing on a lion. Her hair is in the "Hathor" style (from the conventional depiction of the Egyptian goddess). In each hand she holds an ibex; two snakes crossed behind her waist extend downward on either side. The background is a stylized starry sky.

Inscribed Egyptian examples of the same goddess identify her as Qudshu ("Holiness"). This deity was worshipped under various names (Ashtart, Anat) in different places and at different times. She was the principal goddess of the Canaanites, and probably of the Israelites as well.

One element of popular religion in ancient Israel is the worship of a goddess known in the first millennium as Asherah. As with her manifestations elsewhere, she is the consort or wife of the chief deity—in Israel's case, Yahweh. She is known not only from archaeological discoveries, such as inscriptions from Kuntillet Ajrud in the northern Sinai, but also from the prophets: Jeremiah (7:18 and 44:17-19) calls her the "queen of heaven," which may explain the starry background of the pendant. There are traces of the goddess elsewhere in the Bible and the Apocrypha, notably in the figure of Wisdom, who is variously described as Yahweh's partner in creation (Proverbs 8:15-16; Wisdom of Solomon 8:1), a member of his council (Sirach 24:2), and even his lover (Wisdom of Solomon 8:3; Proverbs 8:30).†

Discoveries such as this pendant remind us that Israel was very much a part of the Levant, rather than a separate entity. As Ezekiel put it, "By origin and birth you are of the land of the Canaanites" (Ezekiel 16:3).

*See Michael D. Coogan, "Canaanites: Who Were They and Where Did They Live?" *Bible Review*, June 1993.

**See Oded Borowski, "Not All That Glitters Is Gold—But Sometimes It Is," BAR, November/December 1981.

†See the following articles in BAR: J. Glen Taylor, "Was Yahweh Worshiped as the Sun?" May/June 1994; Ruth Hestrin, "Understanding Asherah—Exploring Semitic Iconography," September/October 1991; Andre Lemaire, "Who or What Was Yahweh's Asherah?" November/December 1984; and Ze'ev Meshel, "Did Yahweh Have a Consort?" March/April 1979.

21-Jul-02

Michael D. Coogan, "10 Great Finds," *BAR* 21 (May/June 1995): 36-47 (8 of 12)

GIBEON POOL

6 miles north of Jerusalem

11th century B.C.E.

37 feet in diameter, 82 feet deep

6

In 1833, the American geographer and Bible scholar Edward Robinson recognized that the Palestinian village of el-Jib—located where the Bible suggests ancient Gibeon stood—preserved its name. Though not all scholars agreed, James B. Pritchard's excavations (1956-1962) settled the matter by finding 31 jar handles inscribed with the Hebrew word *gb'n* (Gibeon) in a winery at the site. In the late Iron Age (1200-586 B.C.E.), Gibeon was an important producer and exporter of wines that bore its name on the ancient equivalent of a label.

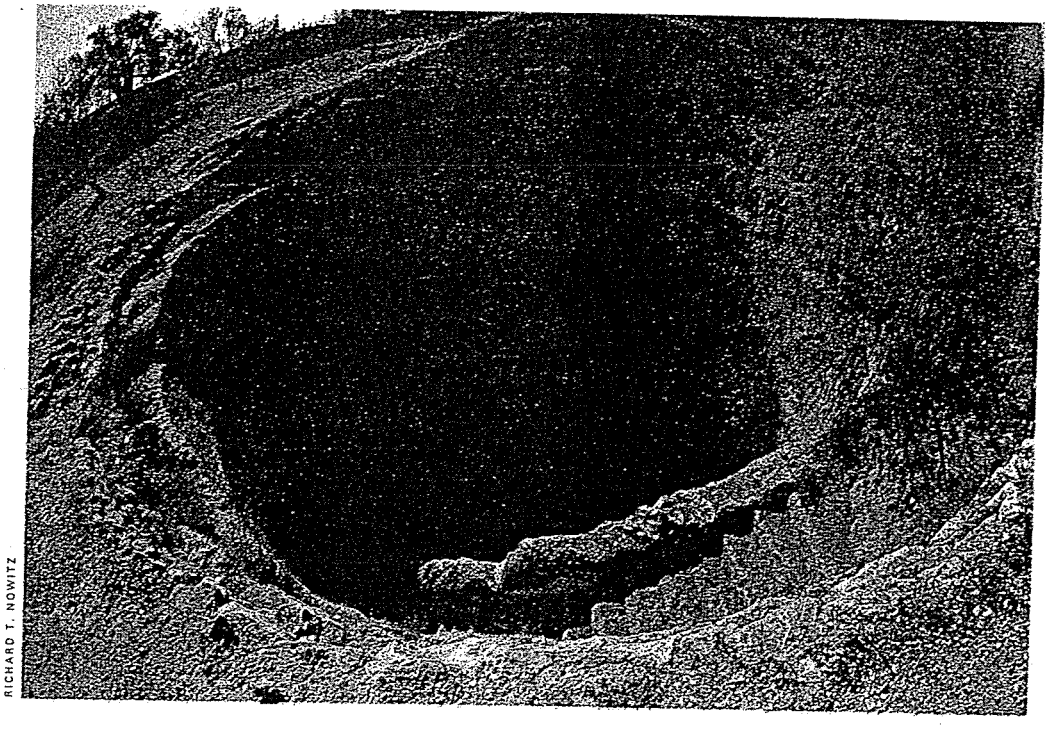
Among Pritchard's other discoveries was a complex water system. In the ancient Levant, the lack of rainfall in the summer months required large settlements to make special provisions to procure water. Often there were springs at the bases of the hills on which the ancient cities were built; in other cases, cities arose on sites with relatively high water tables, with the inhabitants sometimes devising elaborate methods to gain access from within the city walls to these sources of water—as was done at Gezer, Hazor, Megiddo and Jerusalem.*

At Gibeon, Pritchard found two separate water systems (see section drawing, below right). The first system, shaded light blue, consists of two connected tunnels. One tunnel slopes down from just inside the city wall to a water chamber outside of the city at the base of the hill on which the city was built. This chamber was filled by a spring located under the hill, almost directly beneath the entrance to the sloping tunnel. Another, feeder tunnel was built by Gibeonite engineers to enhance the flow of water from the spring to the chamber.

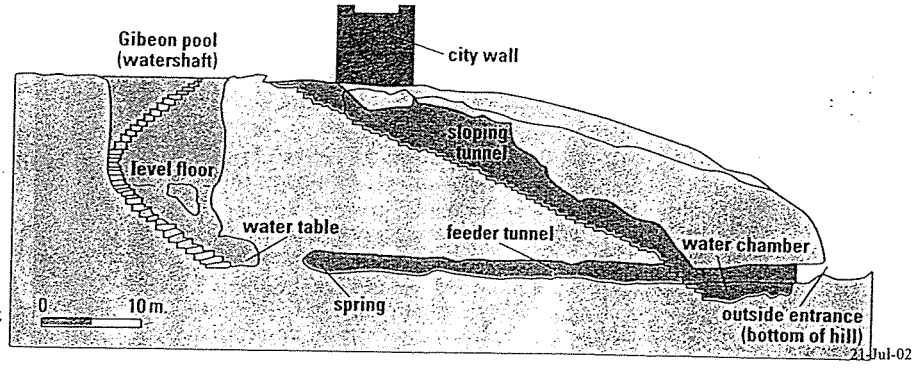
The second system (shaded light green in the section drawing, and shown in the top photo) consists of a large, round shaft 37 feet in diameter. This shaft, located near the entrance to the sloping tunnel of the first system, was cut into the limestone bedrock to a depth of over 82 feet. Also cut into the limestone are a staircase and railing, which wind down to a level floor about halfway to the bottom of the shaft. From there, the stairs drop straight down another 45 feet—to the level of the water table.

There is considerable disagreement among scholars about the dating of the Gibeon water systems: Was the shaft built before the sloping tunnel? Were the two phases of the shaft—one leading down to the level floor, and the other dropping to the water table at the bottom of the shaft—a single project? And when were the two systems built?

The Bible may give some answers. References to the "pool of Gibeon" in 2 Samuel 2:13 and Jeremiah 41:12 suggest that the larger circular shaft may have been in use as early as the 11th century B.C.E.



RICHARD T. NOWITZ



*See Dan Cole, "How Water Tunnels Worked," BAR, November/December 1982.

Michael D. Coogan, "10 Great Finds," *BAR* 21 (May/June 1995): 36-47 (9 of 12)

BEERSHEBA ALTAR

near Beer-Sheva, southern Israel

8th century B.C.E.

sandstone cube, 63 inches tall, wide and long

7

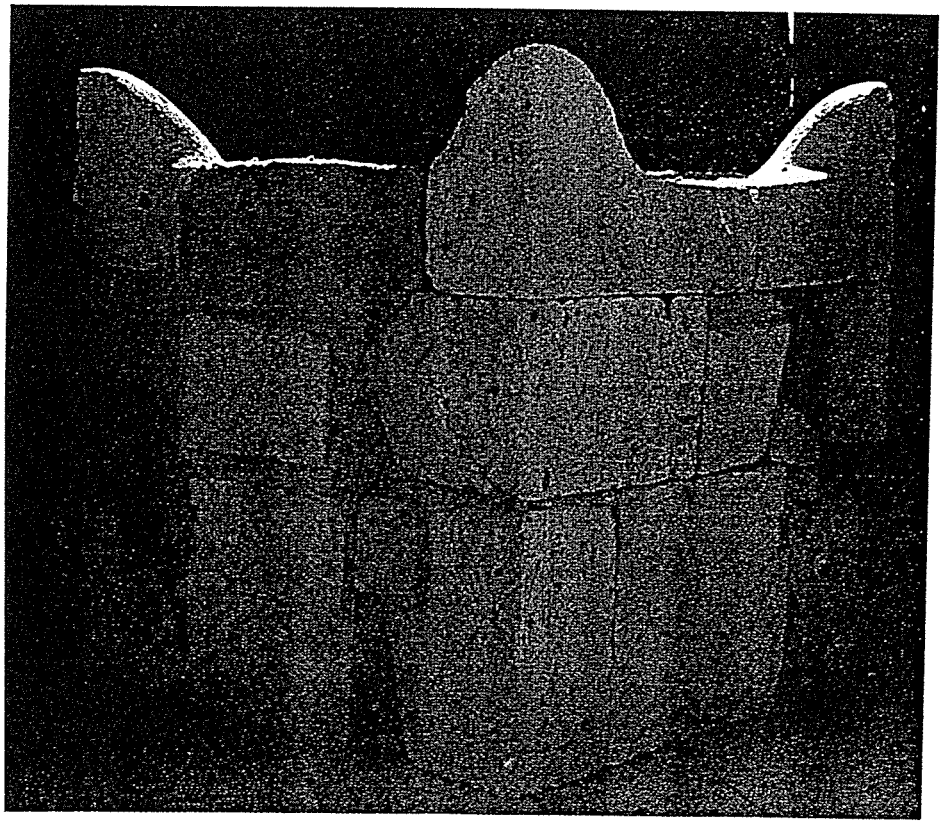
In Biblical tradition, Beersheba is the southern limit of ancient Israel ("from Dan to Beersheba"). Beersheba is mentioned in the ancestral narratives of Genesis, where it is associated with Abraham, Hagar, Isaac and Jacob; in King Josiah's religious reform of the late seventh century B.C.E.; and, in passing, in Amos (5:5 and 8:14). The site of Tell es-Seba' appears to preserve the ancient name (Beersheba means "well of the oath" [Genesis 21:31], "well of the seven" [Genesis 21:28-30] or "well of abundance" [Genesis 26:32-33]), and was the focus of eight seasons of extensive excavation by Yohanan Aharoni starting in 1969.* Not all scholars, however, accept this identification of Biblical Beersheba with Tell es-Seba' (4 miles east of modern Beer-Sheva), in part because there is no evidence that the site was occupied between the fourth millennium B.C.E. and the 12th century B.C.E.**

Among the most dramatic discoveries at the site were several large, carefully dressed stones found incorporated into the walls and fill under a rampart dating to the late eighth century B.C.E. When gathered together, these stones formed a cubical altar (below) with four tapered projections or "horns" (see, for example, Exodus 29:12; 1 Kings 1:51, 2:28). Though horned altars have been found elsewhere in Israel, this one, when reconstructed, was remarkably large: roughly 63 inches high by 63 inches wide by 63 inches long (though stones found later suggest the length may have been closer to nine feet).

Contrary to Biblical law (Exodus 20:25), the altar was built of hewn stones and had a serpent incised on one of its blocks. Sacrifices had apparently been burnt on the altar, for the top stones were blackened. The Beersheba altar, then, provides rare evidence of religious rituals carried out in a Judahite city other than Jerusalem.

Considerable controversy has arisen over the location of the altar within the city, since its stones were dismantled long ago. Aharoni proposed that a temple, analogous to the one he had found earlier at Arad, once stood at Beersheba and was completely obliterated during King Hezekiah's religious reform in the late eighth century B.C.E. and by subsequent building. Shortly after Aharoni's death in 1975, Yigael Yadin proposed an equally hypothetical reconstruction—that the altar was located in a *bamah*, a raised place where priests burned sacrifices, inside the city gate.† Yadin's view was attacked by Aharoni's students and colleagues, in one of the bitterest rivalries in the history of Israeli archaeology. Given the lack of stratigraphic evidence, neither proposal can be proven, but there is a growing consensus that Aharoni's association of the dismantling of the altar with Hezekiah's reform is correct. There was later some minor rebuilding of the city prior to its destruction by the Assyrian monarch Sennacherib in 701 B.C.E.

The Beersheba altar reminds us how little we know. Although archaeology often sheds light on Biblical traditions, almost every excavation raises more stratigraphic, interpretive and historical questions than it answers.



*See Anson F. Rainey, "Yohanan Aharoni: The Man and His Work," BAR, December 1976.

**See Volkmar Fritz, "Where is David's Ziklag?" BAR, May June 1993.

†See Hershel Shanks, "Yadin Finds a Bama at Beer-Sheva," BAR, March 1977. See also Beth Alpert Nakhai, "What's a Bamah? How Sacred Space Functioned in Ancient Israel," BAR, May/June 1994. 21-Jul-02

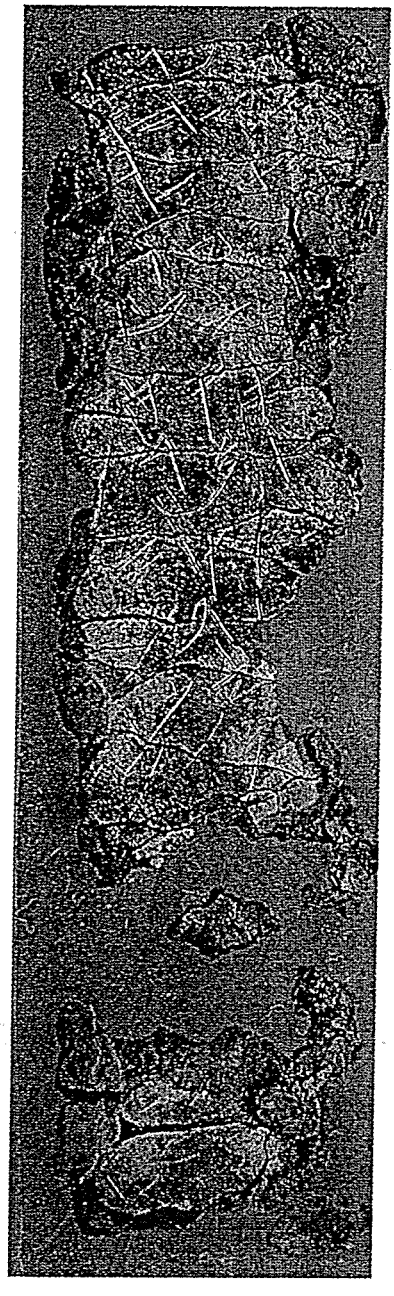
Michael D. Coogan, "10 Great Finds," *BAR* 21 (May/June 1995): 36-47 (10 of 12)

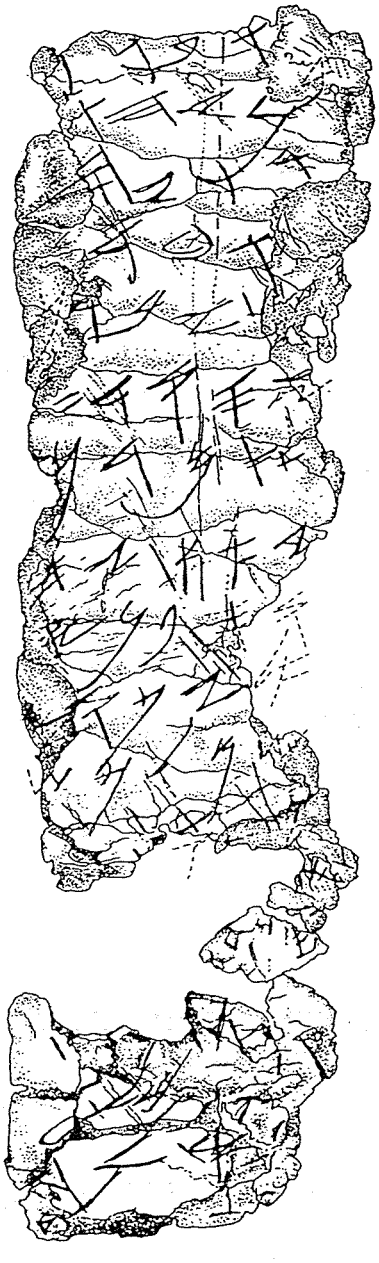
SILVER SCROLL AMULET

Ketef Hinnom, near Jerusalem

7th century B.C.E.

silver, 1½ inches by ½ inch





BRUCE AND KENNETH ZUCKERMAN, WEST SEMITIC RESEARCH/ISRAEL ANTIQUITIES AUTHORITY

8

On an escarpment known as Ketef Hinnom overlooking the Hinnom Valley (Gehenna) opposite Mt. Zion, southwest of the Old City of Jerusalem, Gabriel Barkay excavated seven burial caves from the late seventh century B.C.E., the last days of the Davidic monarchy. Like other ancient cemeteries, this one was located outside the inhabited city because of the association between death and ritual impurity.

In design, these family tombs, cut into the limestone cliff, are typical of the period. Most consist of a single chamber with burial benches on three sides. In one cave, the benches have headrests, and in four caves there are spaces under the benches for burial goods and offerings, as well as for the bones of the deceased once the flesh decomposed. Most of the caves had been plundered or destroyed, but in Cave 4, exposed in 1979, the repository was found undisturbed. It contained the bones of at least 95 people, along with over 250 complete pottery vessels from the late seventh to the fifth centuries B.C.E.—attesting to a continuity of use after the Babylonian destruction of Jerusalem in 586 B.C.E.—and some from the first century B.C.E. Among other finds in the repository were over 40 arrowheads, incised pieces of bone and ivory, and over 100 pieces of gold and silver jewelry.

The most significant objects in the repository of Cave 4 were two small cylindrical scrolls of pure silver (the smaller scroll, with a drawing, is shown above).* When rolled, these scrolls have a hole running lengthwise through the center, allowing them to be hung around the neck as amulets. The larger one measures 4 inches by 1 inch, and the smaller one only 1.5 by .5 inches, when unrolled: Inside, they are both inscribed with about 18 lines of writing, including the following:

> "May Yahweh bless and keep you;
> May Yahweh cause his face to
> shine upon you and grant you
> peace."

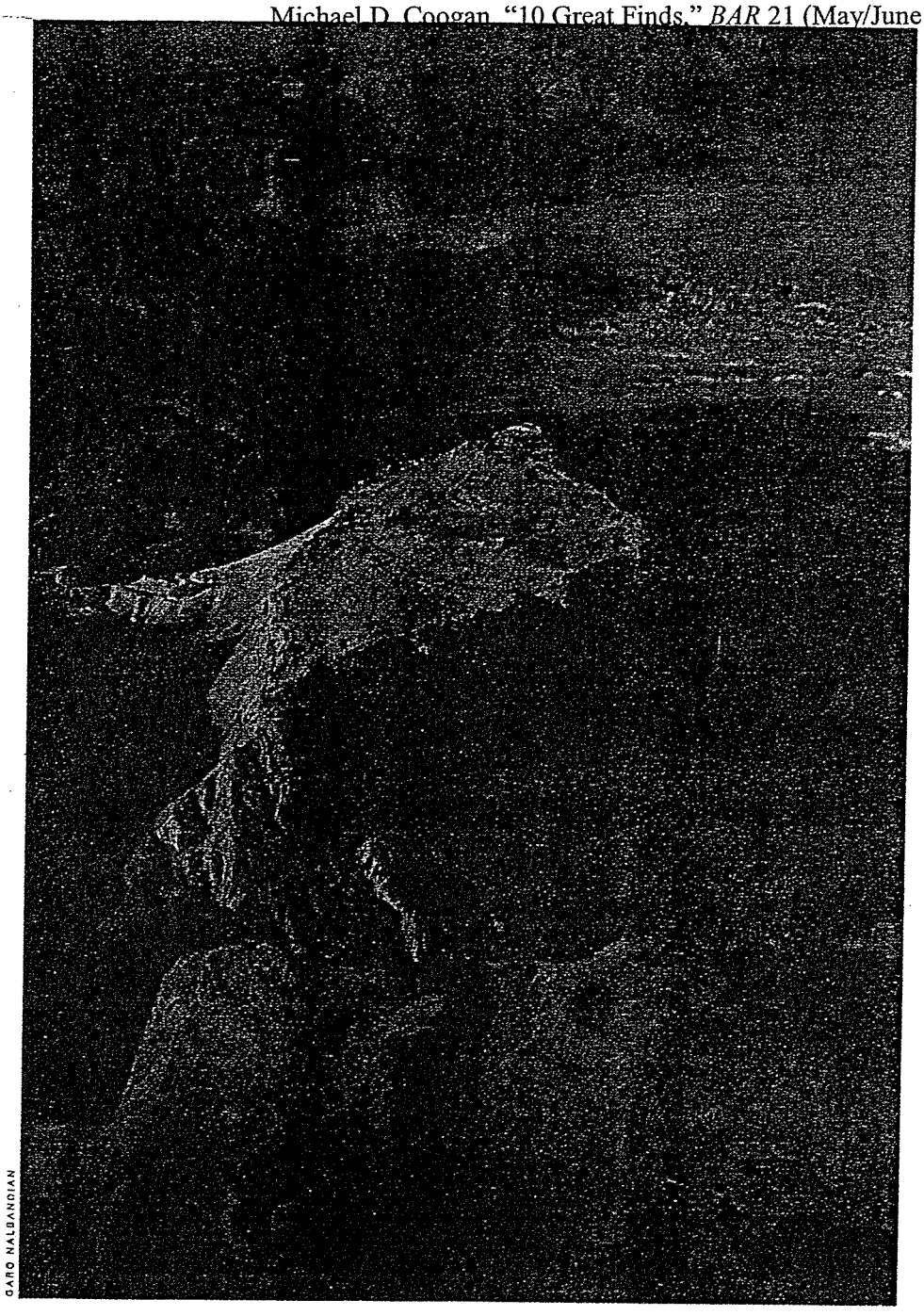
These familiar words are also found in the "Priestly Blessing" in Numbers 6:24-26, still used today by Jewish parents to bless their children on the Sabbath and in synagogue ritual.

The scrolls from Ketef Hinnom are the earliest inscriptions containing a text also found in the Bible. The text is not necessarily a quotation from the Bible; it is probably a popular blessing that was later incorporated into the Bible in a somewhat expanded form. But the two amulets are evidence of the antiquity of traditions preserved in the Bible; it also provides indirect evidence, as do the Dead Sea Scrolls and other manuscripts from the Second Temple period, of the accuracy of scribes who for centuries copied sacred texts

It is tempting to speculate on why these amulets were included among burial goods. They may simply have been prized possessions of the deceased; or, as some have suggested, they may have been placed in the tomb as a plea for divine protection of the deceased in the afterlife. In any case, the amulets' significance is inversely proportionate to their size, for they are our earliest witnesses to the text of the Bible.

*See Gabriel Barkay, "The Divine Name Found in Jerusalem," BAR, March/April 1983; see also Barkay, "The Priestly Benediction on Silver Plaques from Ketef Hinnom in Jerusalem," in *Tel Aviv* 19 (1992).

Michael D. Coogan, "10 Great Finds," *BAR* 21 (May/June 1995): 36-47 (11 of 12)



GARO NALBANDIAN

MASADA

southwest shore of the Dead Sea

2nd century B.C.E.

4593 feet in circumference

9

Excavations at Masada provide us with a précis, as it were, of the history of Roman Palestine from the Maccabees in the second century B.C.E. to the Byzantine period in the sixth century C.E. Led by Yigael Yadin between 1963 and 1965, these excavations give especially important information about the reign of Herod the Great (40-4 B.C.E.) and the First Jewish Revolt (66-73 C.E.).

Isolated in the rugged wilderness along the western shore of the Dead Sea, Masada was identified in 1838 by Edward Robinson and Eli Smith. Yadin excavated there mostly during two winters, the best season for working along the Dead Sea, where summer temperatures are brutally hot. Yadin made use of thousands of volunteers from around the world and from the Israeli army, which set a pattern for subsequent excavations in Israel and, recently, elsewhere in the Middle East as well.

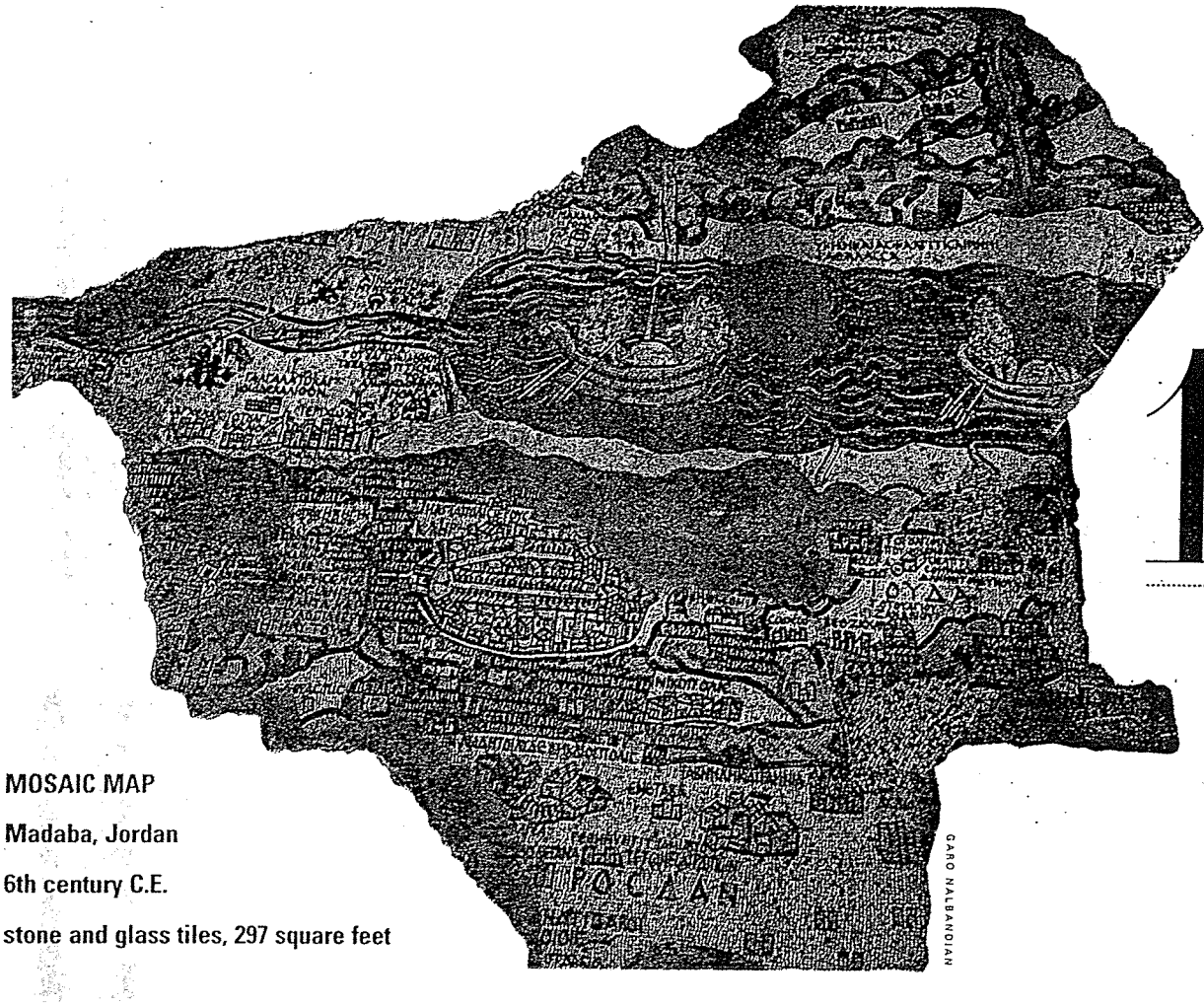
Herod the Great gave the site most of its distinctive features: the casemate (double) wall surrounding the crest of the hill, an elaborate system for diverting and storing runoff from winter rains, a storehouse complex covering about 2,200 square yards, a large bathhouse of Roman design, and a sumptuously decorated villa built on three terraces at the northern tip of the cliff. Masada was one of several citadels Herod built as refuges from his potential enemies; if need arose, he could live in luxury approximating that of his capital in Jerusalem.

During the First Jewish Revolt, Masada was the last stronghold of Jewish rebels fighting against Rome, often called the "Zealots." Roman camps surrounding the site, and the massive earthen ramp built by the Romans to attack the fortress's western wall, have been uncovered by excavators. The defenders built one of the earliest known synagogues, and also had a small library containing Biblical and non-Biblical manuscripts, including the best preserved early text of part of the apocryphal Hebrew Book of Ben Sirach. Among other intriguing finds at the site were eleven ostraca (pieces of pottery) inscribed with names—including the name of "Ben Yair," perhaps Eleazar Ben Yair, the leader of the defenders. According to Josephus, Ben Yair and ten others killed their compatriots, their families and themselves once defeat was inevitable, preferring death to capture by the Romans. Josephus relates that the ten were chosen by lot, and Yadin tentatively proposed that this ostracon was in fact one of the lots.*

Masada has become a symbol of Israeli independence; it also illustrates the interplay of archaeology and history with nationalism and politics that has long characterized the Middle East.

*See Ehud Netzer, "The Last Days and Hours at Masada," BAR, November/December 1991; and Jodi Magness, "Masada—Arms and the Man," BAR, July/August 1992.

Michael D. Coogan, "10 Great Finds," *BAR* 21 (May/June 1995): 36-47 (12 of 12)



GARO NALBANDIAN

10

MOSAIC MAP

Madaba, Jordan

6th century C.E.

stone and glass tiles, 297 square feet

The oldest surviving map of the Holy Land, this mosaic is preserved on the floor of a sixth-century church at Madaba in Jordan, about 18 miles south of Amman. The map was discovered in December 1884 during the construction of a modern church in the village, and was restored in 1965 by Herbert Donner.*

What survives of the map covers about 33 square yards of the nave of the ancient church. It is estimated, however, that originally it was more than three times as large. Composed of more than two million stone cubes (*tesserae*) and pieces of glass in a variety of colors, the map depicts the Holy Land as known by pilgrims and scholars in late antiquity—from Tyre in Lebanon to the Nile Delta, and from the Mediterranean to the Jordanian desert.

Numerous sites are identified in Greek on the map. Just to the north of Jerusalem is a text taken from Deuteronomy 33:12: "Benjamin, God shields him and dwells in between his mountains." The map's orientation is to the east, rather than to the north as in most modern cartography: This was ancient Semitic practice (the Hebrew word for east, *qedem*, literally means "what is in front"). Early Christian churches were also oriented to the east. Empty spaces on the map are filled with flora and fauna, often designed in charming detail. In the Jordan River, fish are swimming; and just east of the river, a lion chases a gazelle.

Jerusalem lies at the center of the map because it was thought to be the center of the world (see Ezekiel 5:5, 38:12). As the focal point of the map, Jerusalem is disproportionately large, measuring about 3 feet by 2 feet. It is depicted as a walled city fortified by towers. At the north (or left) side of the city is the Damascus Gate, just inside of which is a large open plaza with a column in its center seen as if lying on its side; the modern Arabic name for the Damascus Gate, *Bab el-'Amud* ("the gate of the pillar") recalls this feature. Running south (left to right) from the Damascus Gate through the center of the city is the ancient *cardo maximus*, a colonnaded street that leads to Zion Gate. At the far right in the oval of Jerusalem, just inside Zion Gate, is the "Nea" church with its peaked roof and double door, the "new" church of the mother of God, consecrated by the emperor Justinian in 542—one piece of evidence for the map's date. At the center of the city, on the west side of the *cardo* (at the bottom of Jerusalem) is the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, the traditional site of the death and burial of Jesus. The church appears upside down. It is entered by steps from the *cardo*; a roof covers the church, and a golden dome (appearing inverted) sits above the tomb itself.

Many of the details of the ancient city's topography in the Byzantine period as shown in the map were confirmed by the excavations of the late Nahman Avigad in the Jewish Quarter of the Old City. Avigad exposed nearly 220 yards of the *cardo*, as well as the extensive foundations of the Nea church.

*Donner's *The Mosaic Map of Madeba: An Introductory Guide* (Kampen: Kok Pharos, 1992) describes the map and summarizes its significance. Michael Avi-Yonah's *The Madeba Mosaic Map* (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1954) is still valuable.

21-Jul-02

X. Supplements

A. If I Forget Thee: Does Jerusalem Really Matter to Islam (Daniel Pipes)?

The architects of the Oslo peace accords understood Jerusalem's power. Fearing that even discussing the holy city's future before less combustible issues are resolved would detonate the fragile truce between Israelis and Palestinians, they tried to delay this issue to the end. But they failed: riots met the opening a new entrance to an ancient tunnel last September and now the building of apartments on an empty plot in eastern Jerusalem has brought the negotiations to a halt. As it becomes clear that the struggle for Jerusalem will not wait, the outside world must confront the conflicting claims made by Jews and Muslims on the city that King David entered three millennia ago.

When they do, they will no doubt hear relativistic clichés to the effect that Jerusalem is "a city holy to both peoples," implying a parallel quality to the Jewish and Islamic claims to Jerusalem. But this is false. Jerusalem stands as the paramount religious city of Judaism, a place so holy that not just its soil but even its air is deemed sacred. Jews pray in its direction, mention its name constantly in prayers, close the Passover service with the wistful statement "Next year in Jerusalem," and recall the city in the blessing at the end of meals.

What about Jerusalem's role in Islam? Its significance pales next to Mecca and Medina, the twin cities where Muhammad lived and which hosted the great events of Islamic history. Jerusalem is not the place to which Muslims pray, it is not once mentioned by name in the Qur'an or in prayers, and it is directly connected to no events in Muhammad's life. The city never became a cultural center and it never served as capital of a sovereign Muslim state. Jerusalem has mattered to Muslims only intermittently over the past 13 centuries, and when it has mattered, as it does today, it has done so because of politics. Conversely, when the utility of Jerusalem expires, the passions abate and its status declines.

In AD 622, the Prophet Muhammad fled his home town of Mecca for Medina, a city with a substantial Jewish population. On arrival, if not earlier, he adopted a number of practices friendly to Jews, such as a Yom Kippur-like fast, a synagogue-like house of prayer, and kosher-style dietary laws. Muhammad also adopted the Judaic practice of facing the Temple Mount in Jerusalem during prayer; "He chose the Holy House in Jerusalem in order that the People of the Book [i.e., Jews] would be conciliated," notes At-Tabari, an early Muslim commentator on the Qur'an, "and the Jews were glad." Modern historians agree: W. Montgomery Watt, a leading biographer of Muhammad, interprets the prophet's "far-reaching concessions to Jewish feeling" as part of his "desire for a reconciliation with the Jews."

But Jews criticized the new faith and rejected Muhammad's gestures, leading Muhammad to eventually break with them, probably in early 624. The most dramatic sign of this change came in a Qur'anic passage (2:142-52) ordering the faithful no longer to pray toward Syria but toward Mecca instead. (The Qur'an and other sources only mention the direction as "Syria"; other information makes it clear that "Syria" means Jerusalem.)

This episode initiated a pattern that would be repeated many times over the succeeding centuries: Muslims take religious interest in Jerusalem because it serves them politically and when the political climate changes, their interest flags.

In the century after Muhammad's death, politics prompted the Damascus-based Umayyad dynasty, which controlled Jerusalem, to make this city sacred in Islam. Embroiled in fierce competition with

a dissident leader in Mecca, the Umayyad rulers sought to diminish Arabia at Jerusalem's expense. They sponsored a genre of literature praising the "virtues of Jerusalem" and circulated accounts of the prophet's sayings or doings (called hadiths) favorable to Jerusalem. In 688-91, they built Islam's first grand structure, the Dome of the Rock, on top of the remains of the Jewish Temple.

In a particularly subtle and complex step, they even reinterpreted the Qur'an to make room for Jerusalem. The Qur'an, describing Muhammad's Night Journey (isra'), reads: "[God] takes His servant [i.e., Muhammad] by night from the Sacred Mosque to the furthest mosque." When this Qur'anic passage was first revealed, in about 621, a place called the Sacred Mosque already existed in Mecca. In contrast, the "furthest mosque" was a turn of phrase, not a place. Some early Muslims understood it as metaphorical or as a place in heaven. And if the "furthest mosque" did exist on earth, Palestine would have seemed an unlikely location, for that region elsewhere in the Qur'an (30:1) was called "the closest land" (adna al-ard).

But in 715, the Umayyads built a mosque in Jerusalem, again right on the Temple Mount, and called it the Furthest Mosque (al-masjid al-aqsa, or Al-Aqsa Mosque). With this, the Umayyads not only post hoc inserted Jerusalem into the Qur'an but retroactively gave it a prominent role in Muhammad's life. For if the "furthest mosque" is in Jerusalem, then Muhammad's Night Journey and his subsequent ascension to heaven (mi`raj) also took place on the Temple Mount.

But, as ever, Jerusalem mattered theologically only when it mattered politically, and when the Umayyad dynasty collapsed in 750, Jerusalem fell into near-obscurity. For the next three and a half centuries, books praising the city lost favor and the construction of glorious buildings not only stopped, but existing ones fell apart (the Dome over the rock collapsed in 1016). "Learned men are few, and the Christians numerous," bemoaned a tenth-century Muslim native of Jerusalem. The rulers of the new dynasty bled Jerusalem and its region country through what F. E. Peters of New York University calls "their rapacity and their careless indifference."

By the early tenth century, notes Peters, Muslim rule over Jerusalem had an "almost casual" quality with "no particular political significance." In keeping with this near-indifference, the Crusader conquest of the city in 1099 initially aroused a mild Muslim response: "one does not detect either shock or a sense of religious loss and humiliation," notes Emmanuel Sivan of the Hebrew University, a scholar of this era.

Only as the effort to retake Jerusalem grew serious in about 1150 did Muslim leaders stress Jerusalem's importance to Islam. Once again, hadiths about Jerusalem's sanctity and books about the "virtues of Jerusalem" appeared. One hadith put words into the Prophet Muhammad's mouth saying that, after his own death, Jerusalem's falling to the infidels is the second greatest catastrophe facing Islam.

Once safely back in Muslim hands after Saladin's reconquest, however, interest in Jerusalem dropped, to the point where one of Saladin's grandsons temporarily ceded the city in 1229 to Emperor Friedrich II in return for the German's promise of military aid against his brother, a rival king. But learning that Jerusalem was back in Christian hands again provoked intense Muslim emotions; as a result, in 1244, the city was again under Muslim rule. The psychology at work here bears note: that Christian knights traveled from distant lands to make Jerusalem their capital made the city more valuable in Muslim eyes too. "It was a city strongly coveted by the enemies of the faith, and thus became, in a sort of mirror-image syndrome, dear to Muslim hearts," Sivan explains.

The city then lapsed back to its usual obscurity for nearly eight centuries. At one point, the city's entire population amounted to a miserable four thousand souls. The Temple Mount sanctuaries were abandoned and became dilapidated. Under Ottoman rule (1516-1917), Jerusalem suffered the

indignity of being treated as a tax farm for non-resident, one-year (and so very rapacious) officials. The Turkish authorities raised funds by gouging European visitors, and so made little effort to promote Jerusalem's economy. The tax rolls show soap as the city's only export item. In 1611, George Sandys found that "Much lies waste; the old buildings (except a few) all ruined, the new contemptible." Gustav Flaubert of Madame Bovary fame visited in 1850 and found "Ruins everywhere." Mark Twain in 1867 wrote that Jerusalem "has lost all its ancient grandeur, and is become a pauper village."

In modern times, notes the Israeli scholar Hava Lazarus-Yafeh, Jerusalem "became the focus of religious and political Arab activity only at the beginning of the present century, and only because of the renewed Jewish activity in the city and Judaism's claims on the Western Wailing Wall." British rule over city, lasting from 1917 to 1948, further galvanized Muslim passion for Jerusalem. The Palestinian leader (and mufti of Jerusalem) Hajj Amin al-Husayni made the Temple Mount central to his anti-Zionist efforts, for example raising funds throughout the Arab world for the restoration of the Dome of the Rock. Arab politicians made Jerusalem a prominent destination; for example, Iraqi leaders frequently turned up, where they demonstrably prayed at Al-Aqsa and gave rousing speeches.

But when Muslims retook the Old City with its Islamic sanctuaries in 1948, they quickly lost interest in it. An initial excitement stirred when the Jordanian forces took the walled city in 1948 as evidenced by the Coptic bishop's crowning King `Abdallah as "King of Jerusalem" in November of that year but then the usual ennui [boredom] set in. The Hashemites had little affection for Jerusalem, where some of their most devoted enemies lived and where `Abdallah himself was shot dead in 1951. In fact, the Hashemites made a concerted effort to diminish the holy city's importance in favor of their capital, Amman. Jerusalem had served as the British administrative capital, but now all government offices there (save tourism) were shut down. The Jordanians also closed some local institutions (e.g., the Arab Higher Committee) and moved others to Amman (the treasury of the Palestinian waqf, or religious endowment).

Their effort succeeded. Once again, Arab Jerusalem became an isolated provincial town, now even less important than Nablus. The economy stagnated and many thousands left Arab Jerusalem. While the population of Amman increased five-fold in the period 1948-67, Jerusalem's grew just 50 percent. Amman was chosen as the site of the country's first university as well as of the royal family's many residences. Perhaps most insulting of all, Jordanian radio broadcast the Friday prayers not from Al-Aqsa Mosque but from a mosque in Amman.

Nor was Jordan alone in ignoring Jerusalem; the city virtually disappeared from the Arab diplomatic map. No foreign Arab leader came to Jerusalem between 1948 and 1967, and even King Husayn visited only rarely.

King Faysal of Saudi Arabia often spoke after 1967 of yearning to pray in Jerusalem, yet he appears never to have bothered to pray there when he had the chance. Perhaps most remarkable is that the PLO's founding document, the Palestinian National Covenant of 1964, does not even once mention Jerusalem.

All this abruptly changed after June 1967, when the Old City came under Israeli control. As in the British period, Palestinians again made Jerusalem the centerpiece of their political program. Pictures of the Dome of the Rock turned up everywhere, from Yasir Arafat's office to the corner grocery. The PLO's 1968 Constitution described Jerusalem as "the seat of the Palestine Liberation Organization."

Nor were Palestinians alone in their renewed interest. "As during the era of the Crusaders," Lazarus-Yafeh points out, many Muslim leaders "began again to emphasize the sanctity of Jerusalem in Islamic tradition," even dusting off old hadiths to back up their claims. Jerusalem became a mainstay of Arab League and United Nations resolutions. The formerly stingy Jordanian and Saudi governments now gave munificently to the Jerusalem waqf.

As it was under the British mandate, Jerusalem has since 1967 again become the primary vehicle for mobilizing international Muslim opinion. A fire at Al-Aqsa Mosque in 1969 gave Faysal the occasion to convene twenty-five Muslim heads of state and establish the Organization of the Islamic Conference, a United Nations for Muslims. Lebanon's leading Shi`i authority regularly relies on the theme of liberating Jerusalem to inspire his own people to liberate Lebanon. Since the Islamic Revolution, Iran's 1-rial coin and 1000-rial banknote have featured the Dome of the Rock. Iranian soldiers at war with Saddam Husayn's forces in the 1980s received primitive maps marking a path through Iraq and onto Jerusalem. Ayatollah Khomeini decreed the last Friday of Ramadan as Jerusalem Day, and the holiday has served as a major occasion for anti-Israel harangues.

Since Israeli occupation, some ideologues have sought to establish the historical basis of Islamic attachment to Jerusalem by raising three main arguments, all of them historically dubious. First, they assert a Muslim connection to Jerusalem that predates the Jewish one. Ghada Talhami, a scholar at Lake Forest College, typically asserts that "There are other holy cities in Islam, but Jerusalem holds a special place in the hearts and minds of Muslims because its fate has always been intertwined with theirs."

Always? Jerusalem's founding antedated Islam by about two millennia, so how can that be? Ibrahim Hooper, national communications director for the Washington-based Council on American-Islamic Relations explains: "the Muslim attachment to Jerusalem does not begin with the prophet Muhammad, it begins with the prophets Abraham, David, Solomon and Jesus, who are also prophets in Islam." In other words, the central figures of Judaism and Christianity were really proto-Muslims.

Second, and equally anachronistic, is the claim that the Qur'an mentions Jerusalem. Hooper (and others) argue that "the Koran refers to Jerusalem by its Islamic centerpiece, al-Aqsa Mosque." But this makes no sense: a mosque built a century after the Qur'an was delivered cannot establish what a Qur'anic verse originally meant.

Third, some Muslims deny Jerusalem any importance to Jews. `Abd al- Malik Dahamshe, an Arab member of Israel's parliament, flatly stated last month that "the Western Wall is not associated with the remains of the Jewish Temple." A fundamentalist Israel Arab leader went further and announced that "It's prohibited for Jews to pray at the Western Wall." Or, in the succinct wording of a protest banner: "Jerusalem is Arab."

Despite these deafening claims that Jerusalem is essential to Islam, the religion does contain a recessive but persistent strain of anti-Jerusalem sentiment. Perhaps the most prominent adherent of this view was Ibn Taymiya (1263-1328), one of Islam's strictest and most influential religious thinkers. (The Wahhabis of Arabia are his modern-day successors.)

In an attempt to purify Islam of accretions and impieties, Ibn Taymiya dismissed the sacredness of Jerusalem as a notion deriving from Jews and Christians, and from the long-ago Umayyad rivalry with Mecca. More broadly, learned Muslims living in the years following the Crusades knew that the great publicity given to hadiths extolling Jerusalem's sanctity resulted from the Countercrusade-that is, from political exigency-and treated it warily.

Recalling that God once had Muslims direct their prayers toward Jerusalem and then turned them instead toward Mecca, some early hadiths suggested that Muslims specifically pray with away from Jerusalem, a rejection that still survives in vestigial form; he who prays in Al-Aqsa Mosque not coincidentally shows his back precisely to the Temple area toward which Jews pray.

In Jerusalem, theological and historical claims matter, serving as the functional equivalent of legal documents elsewhere. Whoever can establish a deeper and more lasting association with the city has a better chance of winning international support to rule it. In this context, the fact that politics has so long fueled the Muslim attachment to Jerusalem has two implications. First, it points to the relative weakness of the Islamic connection to the city, one that arises as much from transitory considerations of mundane need as from the immutable claims of faith.

Second, it suggests that the Muslim interest lies not so much in controlling Jerusalem as it does in denying control over the city to anyone else. Jerusalem will never be more than a secondary city for Muslims.

In contrast, Mecca is the eternal city of Islam, the place where Muslims believe Abraham nearly sacrificed Isaac's brother Ishmael and toward which Muslims turn to pray five times each day. Non-Muslims are strictly forbidden there, so it has a purely Muslim population. Mecca evokes in Muslims a feeling similar to that of Jerusalem among Jews: "Its very mention reverberates awe in Muslims' hearts," writes Abad Ahmad of the Islamic Society of Central Jersey. Very roughly speaking, what Jerusalem is to Jews, Mecca is to the Muslims. And just as Muslims rule an undivided Mecca, so Jews should rule an undivided Jerusalem.

The author (Daniel Pipes) is editor of the Middle East Quarterly and author of *The Hidden Hand: Middle East Fears of Conspiracy* (St. Martin's Press).

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Though this essay is substantially longer that the typical IRIS mailing, we believe its content is well worth the exception.

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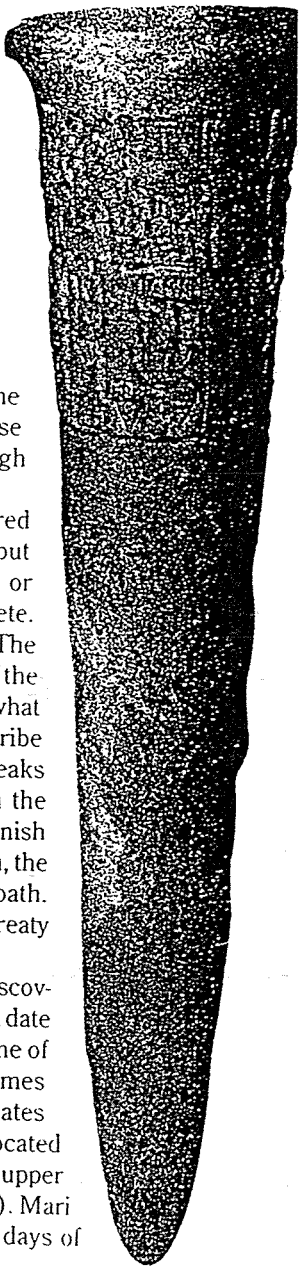
The Practice of Covenant Making

Bryan E. Beyer



THE HEBREW WORD TRANSLATED "COVENANT" *(berith)* [be-REETH] has many shades of meaning in the Old Testament. It may refer to a treaty between nations (1 Kings 5:12), an alliance of friendship (1 Sam. 18:3), or an agreement between a king and his subjects (2 Sam. 5:3). The word may also denote a covenant between God and His people. In the covenant, God bound Himself to fulfill certain commitments on behalf of His people. The covenant also called God's people to live in faithful, loving obedience to God and His Word.

In the ancient world, many nations knew of and made covenants or treaties.[1] As early as 2500—2300 B.C., the Sumerian king Eannatum, king of the city of Lagash, had established a treaty with Enakalle, king of the city of Umma. The treaty described Eannatum's victory over Umma and placed conditions on Enakalle. The treaty furthermore called upon the gods to avenge Eannatum's cause if Enakalle or anyone from Umma violated the treaty.[2]

About 2300 B.C., Naram-Sin, king of Agade (northern Mesopotamia), took control of some Elamite districts to the east. Part of the badly damaged text reads, "Naram-Sin's friend is my friend; Naram-Sin's enemy is my enemy."[3] The treaty suggested loyalty to each other and to the other's political relationships. Such an arrangement had advantages for both rulers. A king who held a treaty with another king did not have to stand alone against foreign attack. Treaties also could have economic benefits as well. Merchants from each country could sell goods in the other king's territory, or make use of trade routes that passed through that country.

Archaeologists have discovered other texts from this period, but these texts are generally broken or fragmented, and are not as complete. Still, a basic pattern appears. The treaties state the specific terms of the agreement and describe in detail what each party will do. They also describe curses that will befall whoever breaks the treaty. Finally, they call upon the gods to enforce the treaty and punish any violation. Interestingly, though, the stronger party does not take the oath. Only the subordinate party in the treaty binds himself to anything.[4]

Archaeologists have also discovered evidence of other treaties that date to about the time of Abraham. Some of the most interesting evidence comes from the ancient city of Mari and dates to about 1800 B.C.[5] Mari was located along the Euphrates River in upper Mesopotamia (modern north Iraq). Mari was an important city during the days of

:ammurapi (also spelled Hammurabi), king of Babylon.[6] ı fact, Abraham probably passed through Mari on his way 'om Ur to Haran before he left his father's household to go) Canaan.

Archaeologists have not discovered any written 'eaties at Mari. They have, however, discovered many :xts that refer to treaties. The Mari texts refer to a custom f killing a donkey's foal as part of a covenant ritual. The laughter of the foal sealed the covenant. On one occasion, vo tribal groups within the Mari kingdom were making a :eaty. One or both groups offered to substitute other ani- ıals for the sacrifice, perhaps in an effort to weaken the)rce of the treaty. But the Mari official in charge wrote a letter to the king of Mari, explaining, "They brought to me a whelp and a goat, but I obeyed my lord and did not give (permission for the use of) a whelp and a goat. I caused the foal, the young of a she-ass to be slaughtered."[7]

Another custom, at Mari and elsewhere, was the swearing of an oath. An oath could have the force of a treaty. It was always spoken, though scribes often recorded the purposes of the oaths on clay tablets. The parties involved would swear by the gods or by a specific god. By doing so, they were inviting the gods to judge them if they broke the agreement. The gods had given life, and they could take it away. An oath could make a simple promise more emphatic; people also used them to settle disputes.[8]

Ancient peoples regarded the oath as a serious act. Often a ritual gesture of touching the throat accompanied the swearing. This gesture apparently pointed to the fate of whoever broke the treaty. Most scholars believe that the act symbolized the cutting of the throat. Just as an animal's throat would be cut for the covenant ritual, so the gods would cut the throat (or take the life) of one who broke the covenant.[9] The ritual thus pointed to the deep level of commitment each party pledged. Perhaps the animal's throat was cut at the same time the parties symbolically cut their own throats as a solemn reminder not to break the treaty.

The format of ancient covenants or treaties varied slightly depending upon the relationship of the two parties to each other. Sometimes two equal parties formed a treaty; historians refer to these treaties as parity treaties. At other times, a strong ruler formed a treaty with a weaker ruler; historians refer to these treaties as vassal treaties.

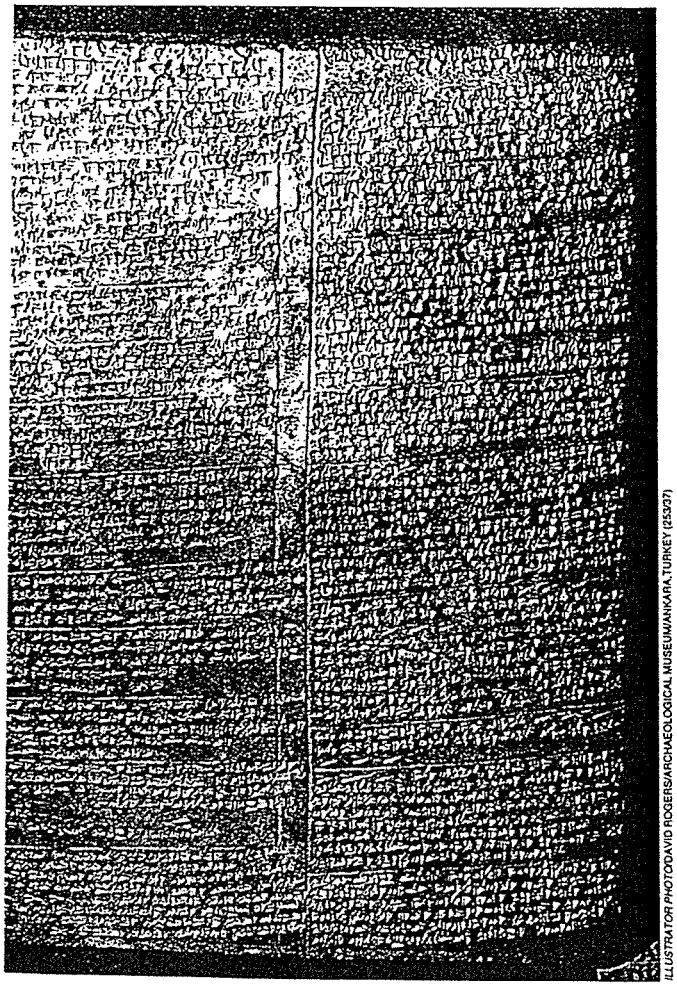
In an important letter found at Mari, a governor wrote,

> "There is no king who, of himself, is the strongest. Ten or fifteen kings follow Hammurapi of Babylon, the same number follow Rîm-Sin of Larsa, the same number follow Ibâl-pî-El of Eshnunna, the same number follow Amût-pî-il of Qatanum, twenty kings follow Yarîm-Lim of Yamhad."[10]

These kings, often allied through parity treaties, referred to each other as "brothers" in their correspondence. As one might expect, in a parity treaty both parties swore faithfulness to the other. Each placed himself under the judgment of the gods if he violated the treaty's conditions. Each promised to protect the other's interests, and ideally, the relationship worked to the benefit of both parties. However, some kings did violate the conditions of their treaties. When Hammurapi of Babylon became strong enough, he

Left: A clay nail from about 2450 B.C. A brotherhood treaty between Entemena of Lagas and Lugal-kinise-dudu of Uruk is inscribed on he nail. The text of this treaty was repeated on about fifty clay nails similar to the one pictured here.
ILLUSTRATOR PHOTO DAVID ROGERS. BRITISH MUSEUM (55723)

Below: A Hittite covenant treaty dating to the 16th-15th century B.C. This artifact is from Bogazkoy. There are many structural parallels between the Law of Moses and the Hittite treaties of the second and first millennium B.C.



ILLUSTRATOR PHOTO DAVID ROGERS/ARCHAEOLOGICAL MUSEUM/ANKARA, TURKEY (25327)

Lesson reference:
CUS: Genesis 12:1-3; 15:1-18

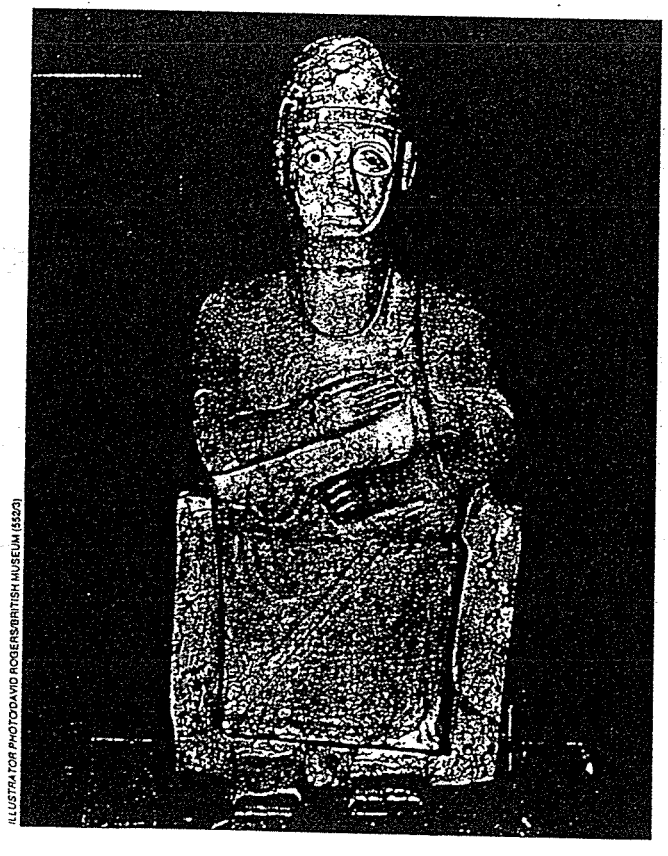
conquered many of his former allies.[11]

A vassal treaty served a different purpose than a parity treaty. In a vassal treaty, the agreement joined two unequal parties. A more powerful ruler (lord) entered into covenant with a lesser, dependent ruler (vassal). Either ruler could seek such an alliance. However, many treaties were one-sided, as if the stronger rulers had simply imposed their will on lesser rulers.[12]

In a vassal treaty, the vassal referred to his lord as "father," and the lord called his vassal "son." The stronger ruler usually wrote the treaty and the vassal accepted it. In some cases, the vassal was consenting to the lesser of two evils. He could refuse to accept the terms of the treaty and face the constant threat of war, or he could consent to the demands the stronger ruler placed on him.[13]

Many scholars have noted interesting structural parallels between the Law of Moses and the Hittite treaties of second and first millennium B.C. The basic elements of the Hittite treaties are the following:

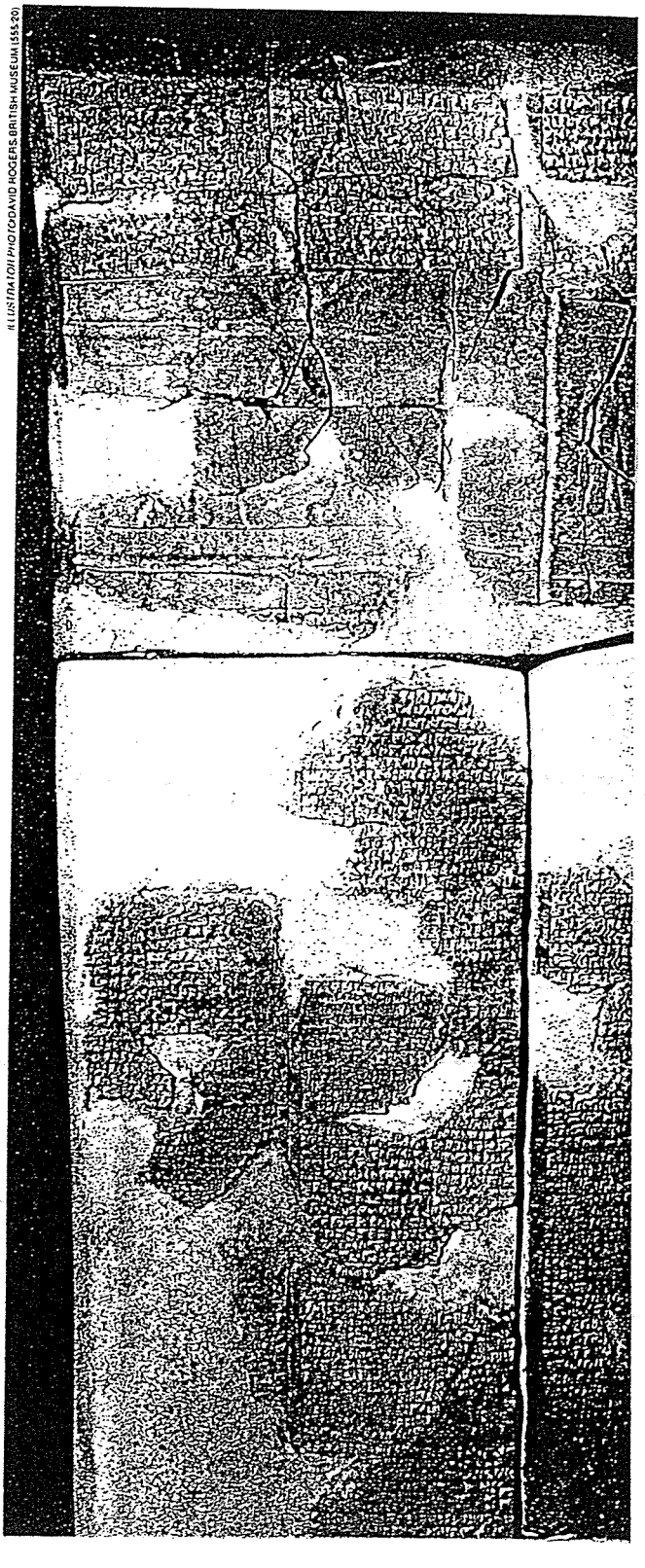
- Introduction of the speaker
- Historical introduction
- Terms of the treaty
- Statement concerning the document
- Naming of divine witness
- Curses and blessings[14]



ILLUSTRATOR PHOTO/DAVID ROGERS/BRITISH MUSEUM (55/20)

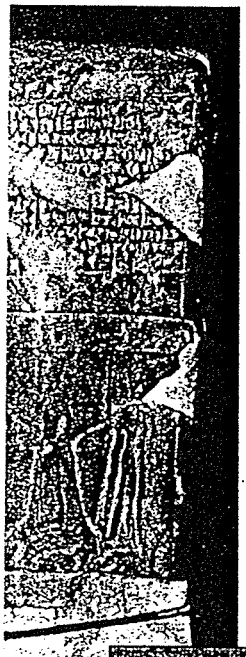
The Law of Moses and the Hittite treaties contain some similarities in format; theologically, of course, they are quite different. At any rate, we currently have no evidence that treaties or covenants prior to Moses' time followed an established format such as was reflected in the Hittite treaties.

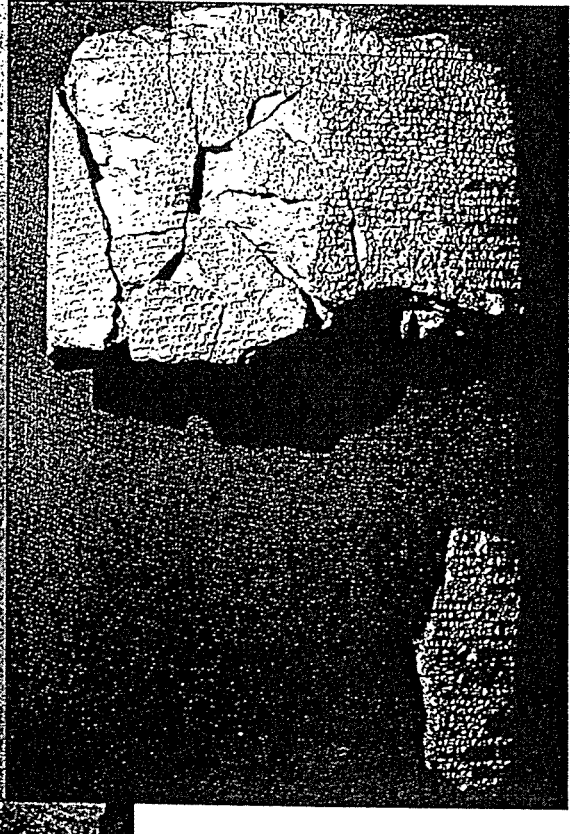
In Genesis 12:1-3, God began a covenant with Abram. The word *covenant* does not appear in the text, but the con-



ILLUSTRATOR PHOTO/DAVID ROGERS/BRITISH MUSEUM (55/20)

litions of a covenant do appear. Two parties were present. One offered a relationship to the other and bound Himself to certain promises. God's solemn word of promise established the covenant relationship. God promised Abram a new land, a new nation, a great name, and a special place of blessing in God's plans for the world. Abram responded in faith by packing up his family and belongings and journeying toward this new land, a land he did not yet know. Clearly, God was the superior party in the covenant relationship. The covenant was thus more like a vassal treaty than a parity treaty.





Far left: Statue of Idrimi, King of Alakh (16th century B.C.). The statue is inscribed with the king's autobiography. Family disputes in Aleppo forced Idrimi to flee and take refuge in Canaan. He was reconciled with his brothers, gathered troops and made a successful raid on the Hittites, and then reconquered Alakh. The inscription ends with customary curses on any who would desecrate the statue and blessing on those who would honor it.
Left: Copy of a treaty between Esarhaddon, king of Assyria, and Humbares, ruler of the city of Nahsimarta in Media, from Nimrud, Iraq (672 B.C.).
Below: The treaty of Kadesh is the earliest known peace treaty between ancient countries (1296 B.C.). The treaty was made between Hattusilis, king of the Hittites, and Ramses II, pharaoh of Egypt, to form an alliance against the "sea peoples" (probably Philistines).
ILLUSTRATOR PHOTO/DAVID ROGERS/MUSEUM OF THE ANCIENT ORIENT/ISTANBUL (5/1/6)

In Genesis 15:1-18, God confirmed the covenant He had begun in Genesis 12. When Abram expressed concern over his lack of a son, God told him that his descendants would exceed the number of the stars. Abram believed God, and God counted Abram's faith as righteousness. In other words, Abram's part in the covenant was to trust God to fulfill His promises.

God then directed Abram to slaughter certain animals and bring them to Him. Abram cut each animal in two, and lay the halves opposite each other. As darkness fell upon the land, a smoking oven and flaming torch appeared and passed between the pieces. God was confirming His covenant with Abram in a manner Abram would have understood from his own culture. God, in effect, was swearing a curse upon Himself if He broke His word to Abram.

In some ways, then, God's covenant with Abram parallels covenant and treaty customs of Abram's day. We observe two parties, specific conditions for a relationship, the swearing of oaths, and the sacrificing of animals. At the same time, an important difference also appears. Even though God is the superior party, *He* is the one who binds Himself to certain commitments and swears the oaths! Abram's duty is not to swear an oath, but simply to trust in the goodness of His Lord. The change God introduced in the covenant procedure pointed to His grace and love toward Abram. ○

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[1]Archaeologists have discovered almost sixty such treaties. For a current listing of these treaties, see John H. Walton, *Ancient Israelite Literature in its Cultural Context* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1989), 95-100.
[2]Historians call this treaty the "Stele of the Vultures." For a translation, see Samuel Noah Kramer, *The Sumerians: Their History, Culture, and Character* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963), 310-313.
[3]John J. Mitchell, "Abram's Understanding of the Lord's Covenant," *Westminster Theological Journal* 32 (1969-70): 27; and Dennis J. McCarthy, *Treaty and Covenant* (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1978), 32.
[4]McCarthy, 32.
[5]For further reading on Mari, see Abraham Malamat, "Mari," in *Encyclopedia Judaica*, vol. 11 (Jerusalem: Keter Publishing House, 1971), 972-989.
[6]Hammurapi (1792-1750 B.C.) was a king who wrote one of the earliest and best known law codes of the ancient world. Many of the laws closely resemble the laws God gave to Moses at Mt. Sinai. For a translation of Hammurapi's law code, see J. B. Pritchard, *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), 163-180.
[7]Abraham Malamat, "Mari," in *Encyclopedia Judaica*, vol. 11 (Jerusalem: Keter Publishing House, 1971), 985.
[8]Paul Hoskisson, "The Nisum 'Oath' in Mari," *Mari in Retrospect: Fifty Years of Mari and Mari Studies*, ed. Gordon D. Young (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1992), 208-209.
[9]J. M. Munn-Rankin, "Diplomacy in Western Asia in the Early Second Millennium B.C.," *Iraq* 18 (1956): 90-91; also Mitchell, 39.
[10]Munn-Rankin, 74.
[11]William W. Hallo and William K. Simpson, *The Ancient Near East: A History* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1971), 101.
[12]McCarthy, 51.
[13]Ibid.
[14]The list follows the basic pattern given by Walton, *Ancient Israelite Literature in its Cultural Context*, 101.

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You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself. Now therefore, if you will obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my own possession among all peoples; for all the earth is mine, and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.

Exodus 19:4-6

Dyrness, William.
Themes in OT Theology

6
The Covenant

Background of the Covenant Idea

A covenant is a solemn promise made binding by an oath which may be either a verbal formula or a symbolic action (Mendenhall 1962, 714). In the OT the covenant rests on God's promise and lies at the heart of the biblical notion of history. Though it is especially identified with the covenant made at Sinai, its full range extends from creation clear through to the prophets. It is the core of the Hebrew understanding of their relationship with God.

From the time of Julius Wellhausen—about one hundred years ago—it has been believed by all but a few scholars of the OT that the covenant idea came late into Israel's consciousness. The early relationship between God and his people was held to be a "natural" one. That is, God was considered as a tribal deity, almost as a symbol of the people. Basic to this line of thinking is the idea of development so dear to the nineteenth century. This early faith matured by the time of the classical prophets, who added the ethical element to religion,

Dyrness

which then was understood in terms of a "covenant" between God and his people. This conception then was developed very late in Israel's history, though of course it was read back into the history that they subsequently wrote of their early life.

Beginning a generation ago the vast field of Oriental law and covenants was studied with a view to finding the context for the OT understanding of covenant. It was seen very early that the idea of covenant was an extremely important means of regulating behavior between peoples, especially in the area of international relations. Believing that they reflected a long and varied tradition of ancient law, G. E. Mendenhall studied Hittite suzerainty treaties from the late Bronze Age (1400-1200 B.C.) as a way of throwing light on the biblical idea of covenant (Mendenhall 1954). A suzerainty treaty was the formal basis of the empire. It spelled out the terms of relationship between the Hittite state and the vassals (lesser groups of peoples) which gave allegiance to the empire. The king would offer to protect a people in exchange for their support and tribute. This was the only choice for many peoples who were caught between larger powers, and it provided for them a means of security amid troubled times.

Mendenhall notes six elements that were nearly always found in the Hittite treaty texts (Mendenhall 1954, 58-60):

1. Preamble—"These are the words of the king of . . ."
2. Historical prologue—recorded the previous aid extended by the suzerain to his vassals and the debt which they owed him for this deliverance; past benefits called for future obedience.
3. Stipulations—spelled out the obligations of the vassal state, including the trust and tribute which was due.
4. Provision for temple deposit and periodic public readings—made certain that all the people were aware of their obligations.
5. Invocation of divine witnesses—those of both suzerain and vassals; even the mountains, winds and clouds were called to witness (compare Deut. 32:1 and Is. 1:2).
6. Blessings and curses—pronounced on those who obeyed

or neglected the treaty stipulations (compare Deut. 28). Now there is no single place in the OT where a precise parallel to this form is to be found, but OT scholars are generally agreed that this treaty form lies behind the OT understanding of the covenant. Similarities are immediately apparent in Exodus 20—23 and especially the book of Deuteronomy. Craigie, in fact, sees this structure as the basic organizing principle of the book of Deuteronomy. Aside from the fundamental difference that Israel bound herself, not to an earthly king, but to the Lord God, the form offers instructive parallels. The deliverance from Egypt established their relationship (Ex. 20:1-2), though later celebrations of their relationship expanded the context to the patriarchs (Josh. 24:2-13). In return they promised to obey the stipulations of the decalog (Ex. 19:8). The law was to be deposited in the ark which was sacred to the Lord (Ex. 25:16). The solemn renewal of the covenant, of which we have an example in Joshua 24 and which many scholars believe to have been an annual remembrance, fits as well. Even the tradition about the murmurings in the wilderness receives new meaning; the stipulations of the Hittite treaties specifically forbade murmurings against the suzerain! Like their secular equivalents, Israel was forbidden from entering into any agreement with neighboring nations (and, of course, from having anything to do with their gods). The promise of the king's protection was predicated on their exclusive obedience.

At the very least, scholars are now more open to the idea that the covenant concept goes back early into history; indeed, the covenant is now recognized as one way of accounting for the unity that this nomadic people was able to achieve so early (a "natural" relationship would not suffice). As Mendenhall concludes: "It can hardly be denied now that some kind of tradition of a covenant between a deity and the patriarchs was an important element in the pre-Mosaic heritage of ancient Israel" (Mendenhall 1962, 718).

Conservative scholar Meredith G. Kline (1963 and 1972) has drawn out the implications of this in terms of understand-

ing the whole OT as a treaty document, and thus recognizing its inherent authority. The treaty, once validated, must not be tampered with or changed under pain of serious punishment. If the relationship was changed, the treaty was not altered; it was simply destroyed and a new one drawn up. Thus the covenant form was ready at hand for the Lord to use. The OT in its entirety, Kline believes, can be understood as a treaty document. "All inspired literature deriving from . . . cult and associated with that culture served the covenant and inevitably bore its stamp" (Kline 1972, 47). This then is the theme of the OT: God's relation to Israel based on the covenant.

Part of the accommodation of revelation, which we have seen before, is that God takes concepts that are current and uses them for his purposes. But the end result is that the idea is greatly expanded. So the covenant relationship, as it developed in history, became something that the original usage could not have comprehended. This is characteristic of God's redeeming action: God meets us where we are and takes us on from there. In the end, we will note, covenant comes to include the whole earth in its purview, and its validity is eternal. What human covenant could have been developed to express this breadth?

Development of the OT Covenant

1. The Covenant with Noah. The covenant idea is already implicit in the promise made to Adam and Eve in Genesis 3:15, and it is reflected in God's merciful promise to Cain (Gen. 4:15) in marking him so that no one would slay him. But properly the covenant idea does not appear before God's promises to Noah. Notice that even before the flood God says to Noah: "I will establish my covenant with you . . ." (Gen. 6:18). Then, as if to define the covenant, he tells him that he and his family are to come into the ark. Here the basis of the covenant as a solemn promise is apparent, for God takes the initiative to promise Noah and his family deliverance.

The covenant is then sealed (renewed?) after the flood (Gen. 9:1-17). Notice here the covenant is not merely a contract between two parties. God comes to Noah and his sons and announces that he will establish his covenant with them and with every living creature. The scope then of this promise is not limited to Noah and his seed, but is universal. (That all creation is included indicates how little God expected a conscious, favorable reply!) There are no conditions given, and the validity is to "all generations." As a sign of God's promise the rainbow becomes symbolic of the covenant between God and the earth (v. 13). It is very important to keep in mind the purpose of God's gracious activity, an intention present in the later covenant with Abraham: all the people of the earth are to be blessed. God narrows the line of his covenant people, not to exclude some, but that through those chosen all may come to know of his grace.

2. The Covenant with Abraham (Gen. 15 and 17). The basis of this covenant is present already in Genesis 12:1-3, where God calls Abram to leave his home and promises to make of him a great nation. In chapter 15, in response to Abram's question about his possessing the land (v. 8), God performs with Abram a solemn rite concluding in verse 18: "On that day the LORD made a covenant with Abram." Nothing could assure the certainty of this promise more than this solemn ceremony sealed by God's oath (see Jer. 34:18-22). First he promises to give the land (see also Gen. 17:8). (That this reference is to the Davidic empire is hinted at in 17:6, where God promises that "kings shall come forth from you.") Then God promises that Abram will become the father of a great nation, in fact, of "a multitude of nations" (17:4). Finally, God pledges to be God to them and to their descendants after them (17:7).

God's initiative is once again in the forefront. God is the suzerain (15:18; 17:7). The covenant is finally to be eternal (17:19) for all their descendants after them. Isaac is specifically included in this covenant (17:21), the first in the long line of descendants that will know God as their God and become his people. Ishmael is blessed but pointedly excluded from the covenant (17:20).

In this instance Abraham and his seed must "keep" the covenant (17:10-14). As a sign of this every male shall be circumcised (v. 10), and any that is not circumcised shall be cut off from his people. (M. G. Kline believes the cutting of circumcision to be symbolic of the curse pronounced on anyone who breaks the covenant—1968, 43.) Here is the first sign of reciprocity in the covenant. On the one hand, it is hard to conceive of circumcision as an obligation in the sense of a stipulation. Rather, it is a "sign" of the covenant "a guarantee through time of the validity of Jahweh's oath" (Mendenhall 1962, 718). As in the case of the rainbow, circumcision was to be an identifying marker of those who were later to share in God's promise. On the other hand, their grateful participation in the grace that God was extending was registered by their faithfulness in circumcising their children. It served as a type of the ordinances that were later to be signs of God's promises: baptism and the Lord's Supper. Circumcision was to be the symbol of the purification of all their lives—later explained in the elaboration of covenant law. All of this is an expression of God's desire for communion with his covenant people. And while the covenant was unconditional in the sense that God would never forget his promises and leave himself without a witness—that is, those who would respond in faith to these promises—the continuance of each individual in the blessings of these promises was contingent upon their response of faith. "Keeping is the condition of continuance in this grace and of its consummating fruition; it is the reciprocal response apart from which communion with God is impossible" (Murray, NBD, 265-66). Further on we shall see how both conditional and unconditional elements continue to characterize the covenant relationship.

3. The Mosaic Covenant. While this covenant tradition was to become the fundamental basis of the nation of Israel, the continuity with the earlier promises of God was obvious to all (see Ex. 3:15). The parallels with international treaty forms now become so striking that it is clear that Israel viewed this as the basis of her religious and social life. We saw

earlier a fundamental variation from the secular form of treaty: God stood in the place of the king as their ruler, their suzerain (thus accounting for the ancient antipathy to kingship, Judg. 8:23). Unique also—and following directly from the first difference—is the placing of moral and spiritual values above political and economic considerations. The implications of this for Israel will be seen further along.

First, then, the people were sovereignly chosen in that they were delivered from the bondage of Egypt (Ex. 19:4). The motive for this is later expressed as God's love for them (Deut. 7:6-8). Yet as we noted, this choice was also an expression of his remembrance of his covenant with the fathers (Ex. 2:24). This continuity is particularly evident in the joyful recounting of God's protection in Psalm 105:8-15. The purpose of the exodus was redemptive, delivering the people from bondage and making it possible for them to worship God in purity and truth (which helps to explain the important but difficult statement in Ex. 3:12; see also Ex. 6:6-8 and 19:4-6). While the treaty parallel suggests a fundamental suzerain-vassal relationship between God and his people, it would be a mistake to limit our understanding of the covenant relation to this. The people are also adopted into a filial relationship with God (Ex. 4:22; Deut. 8:5). He was not only their suzerain; he was their Father.

In this covenant definite stipulations are present. Here keeping the covenant is enlarged to mean Israel's obedient response to God's initiative (Ex. 19:4-5; Deut. 26:16-19). We shall look more closely at these stipulations in the next chapter; they include both apodictic ("You shall not") and case law ("If . . . then you will"). As we will see, these stipulations are not to be viewed as one of the bases on which the covenant rests (the other being God's promise)—as though this were a bilateral treaty—but rather the condition of their continuing to enjoy the blessings the suzerain promised to them. But in this case, since the suzerain is God himself, the stipulations involve a life of obedience in which his holy character is to be reflected. This idea is summed up in Leviticus 19:2: "You

shall be holy; for I the LORD your God am holy."

While the promise evident in the Abrahamic covenant is not missing, the emphasis here is on the stipulations which God imposes on his people. That is, the covenant is made and put in operation on the basis of God's (the suzerain's) decision. It is because of this prior fact—that they were God's people, his personal possession—that they are urged to reflect this reality by their obedient response. God's choice of them is fixed. Only their continuance in the blessings of that promise is a result of their obedience. This covenant challenge to Israel is a recurrent theme through the books of the Kings—sometimes called the Deuteronomic history. In these books their continued existence as a nation is made to rest on their faithfulness to their covenant obligations. For the northern kingdom the crucial event was the great sin of Jeroboam (1 Kings 13:33-34). Until the final catastrophe comes, the writer repeats the judgment against each king like a refrain: "He walked in the way of Jeroboam." When the blow falls and Assyria captures Israel, the reason is clear: "The people of Israel walked in all the sins which Jeroboam did; they did not depart from them, until the LORD removed Israel out of his sight" (2 Kings 17:22-23). The curses of the covenant are brought to pass because of Israel's sin. Her doom is sealed.

4. The Covenant with David. Running side by side with the threat to Israel in the Deuteronomic history is the promise to David. Here we are impressed again with God's pattern of taking up his promises and repeating them, each time in a larger and more comprehensive framework. God not only remembers his promises, but each time he speaks of them he throws in additional blessings for good measure. As Mendenhall puts it: "In David, the promise to the patriarchs is fulfilled, and renewed" (Mendenhall 1962, 718). The promise to David, spoken through the prophet Nathan, is found in 2 Samuel 7:12-17. The word *covenant* does not appear there, though the idea is present. In Psalm 89:3-4, 27-28, God's covenant with David is described in much the same terms as his covenant with Abraham. Again its immutable character based on God's initiative is evident—the promise element is to the fore (Ps. 89:3-4; 2 Sam. 7:13). Here, however, a new element is added: kingdom or empire. This includes both the "realm," the land that God promised to the fathers, and the notion of God's "ruling" over that realm. Thus God seems to say that he will take David's throne for himself and make it his own to ensure its permanence (2 Sam. 7:16).

The descendants of David are urged to keep his testimonies so that they will continue to sit on the throne (Ps. 132:12), but a novel element is added to the covenant promises: "When he [that is, your offspring] commits iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, with the stripes of the sons of men" (2 Sam. 7:14; though there is a hint of this in Deut. 8:5). What kind of judgment could this be that would *ensure* the continuance of this throne?

Now, for a moment, we move ahead several centuries to the postexilic Chronicler, who again features the covenant of David. The theology of the books of the Chronicles is a part of the most interesting—and overlooked—sections of the OT. Written sometime around 400 B.C., the books are set in the midst of one of the great challenges to the people of Israel. The refugees have returned from exile and are faced with the immense task of rebuilding the nation. Where could they draw strength to live in such unsettled times? Would this remnant be able to find a source of strength in its own (southern) traditions? The answer given by the Chronicler is that the rebuilding must be a restoration. Only by recalling the covenant forms that David received from Moses and that were most perfectly realized in the temple worship could God be properly honored. They must remember, moreover, that God is their true king and that David's reign was a sign of this greater reign. Recalling Nathan's promise, the Chronicler reiterates God's intention for the Davidic line: "A son shall be born to you. . . . He shall be my son," God tells David, "and I will be his father, and I will establish his royal throne in Israel for ever" (1 Chron. 22:9-10).

This promise to David which features an eternal ruler is

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picked up in Psalm 2:7: "You are my son, today I have begotten you." That this reference, which is so important to the NT interpretation of Christ (see Acts 13:33), has a messianic reference is clear from the following verse, where the son is promised the nations as his inheritance.

The idea that a child of God would be the mediator of an eternal covenant had earlier played a role in the servant songs of Isaiah. In Isaiah 42:1, 6, God chooses his servant ("my child" in the LXX) to bring justice to the nations. "I have given you as a covenant to the people," God says, "a light to the nations" (v. 6). Isaiah 55:3-4 refers to the everlasting covenant as God's "steadfast, sure love for David." Malachi calls this same figure "my messenger" (Mal. 3:1; "Who can endure the day of his coming?"). This rule will be a universal kingdom, involving all nations as God had promised Abraham (Is. 2:2-4), but bringing judgment (chastening) as well as blessing (Is. 2:9-12).

The prophet Jeremiah calls this kingdom a new covenant (Jer. 31:31-34). Writing in the midst of the destruction of all the outward symbols of God's covenant promises just before the exile, Jeremiah insists that God is not finished with his covenant people. One day God promises to make a new covenant, new in the sense that it will be unlike the former covenant which the fathers broke (v. 32). The Hebrew construction here implies that though the new covenant will succeed where the other did not, it will carry forward (as well as supersede) the reality of the Mosaic covenant.

What would be the nature of this covenant? First, it would be realized "after those days" (v. 33), that is, after another of God's redemptive acts described earlier in the chapter as a building and a gathering (see vv. 4, 10, 16). Second, it would involve placing the law in the heart, which is interpreted as knowing the Lord (v. 34). Israel's failure, Jeremiah knew, had been a lack of knowledge (see 4:22; 8:7 and 24:7). Now by inward revolution knowledge would be natural. Third, this new standing before the Lord would be for everyone ("from the least of them to the greatest," v. 34), not just for the prophets or priests. Finally, this new relationship would include the forgiveness of sins (v. 34). Sin, that is, would be dealt with in a final way and it would no longer be remembered. In the midst of personal and national tragedies Jeremiah lifted the hopes of the people and prophesied of a new and living way, the new covenant Christ would seal by his blood (see Lk. 22:20 and 1 Cor. 11:25).

Immediately after the exile Ezra and Nehemiah were faced on their return to Jerusalem with widespread syncretism and paganism. It was natural to focus on the covenant as God's reassuring promise and also to attempt to insure enforcement of the law by political means. If failure to keep the law had been the cause of their tragedies, they must ensure that the law be kept. (Mendenhall, however, believes this pattern of enforcement had already begun during Josiah's pre-exilic reform described in 2 Kings 23.) The people responded to Ezra and made an oath to walk in God's law: "Now therefore, our God, the great and mighty and terrible God, who keepest covenant and steadfast love, let not all the hardship seem little to thee that has come upon us.... Yet thou hast been just in all that has come upon us.... Because of all this we make a firm covenant and write it" (Neh. 9:32-33, 38). God was bound to his promise to Abraham as Israel was bound to keep the law given at Sinai. It was during this time that the Chronicler holds up before the people the hope to be found in the theocratic rule of David.

For the rabbis during the intertestamental period the covenant conception of the Chronicler was still central. They often spoke of God as king, who had solicited their worship by his saving acts. But the conditional element was also prominent. God's people had to accept God's kingship by obedience. In the covenant, God had provided for atonement by the keeping of the law which in turn established (or re-established) the covenant relationship (scholars often refer to this view as covenantal nomism). What Paul set out to correct was a misconception, not about the requirements of the covenant, but about the way that it is established. The new

covenant is established, not by the keeping of the law, but through Christ's redeeming death and believers' faith response to him.

Before we discuss some theological principles that grow out of the covenant idea, two items call for comment. First, a question: was the covenant conditional or unconditional? From our brief survey we can see that it is oversimplifying to speak of either a conditional *or* an unconditional covenant. In a sense there are two sides to the OT covenant. One emphasizes the promissory, as in the promise to the patriarchs and to David; the other, stemming from Sinai and featured in the Deuteronomic school, gives more place for conditions or stipulations (though neither lacks promise or stipulations). But the two perspectives complement rather than contradict each other. The promise of salvation given to the patriarchs becomes the blessing of the Sinai covenant which Israel would enjoy through its continued faithfulness. Nathan voices again the promise of eternal blessing (2 Sam. 7), while Isaiah promises a faithful successor to David who will realize the covenant blessings for all his people. At this point the treaty form, while not excluded, is taken into a larger covenant ideal that will be brought about through the work of the Son of David, Jesus the Messiah.

The second item has to do with the nature of the covenant idea. In approaching the OT, systematic theologians have sometimes made the mistake of seeing covenant as a changeless idea. We have seen ample evidence that the reality of the covenant took a variety of forms in its historical development. The treaty form furnishes us with an important starting point and a background for our thinking. But we do well to allow for other patterns to help us as well. If we are to be biblical in our understanding of the covenant we must recognize its historical character and allow the biblical nuances to determine our theology.

Theological Implications of the Covenant

Lying behind the covenant is the sovereign will of the gracious God: "I . . . will be your God, and you shall be my people" (Lev. 26:12). His will now directs a particular course of events. The importance of this can hardly be overestimated. Now the life of Israel (and thus of each person in Israel) has taken on a unique meaning; history itself receives direction and significance. This is because God has entered into history and tied himself to particular events, which he promises will have everlasting consequences. The end is only dimly envisioned, but this is because God sets the terms and fixes the goals.

This implies that for this people there is a new security to life. The covenant, as it is filled in by the law, helps man to know where he stands. He can count on things because a stable element has been added to his life and to history. Trust is possible; the paralyzing capriciousness of Near Eastern gods is totally excluded. At the same time, each man and woman, each family, is called on to surrender in obedience and love. Apart from such a response there is no bulwark of protection against this God. He has lovingly provided this means to communion, but, at the same time, he has excluded all other ways.

With such a foundation it now becomes possible to establish a well-defined moral and social order that will consistently reflect this foundation. This order, which comes to expression in the law and the cult, we shall examine next.

But the basic demand is to know the Lord, that is, to enjoy a living and personal relationship with this God. This is of more consequence than the sacrifices and offerings which are to *express* this relationship (Hos. 6:6). The spirituality of this bond, which is the goal of the covenant, has important implications. It embraces potentially all the people, from the least to the greatest, and makes possible a remarkable individual and group cohesion. Without diminishing individual responsibility, it makes real human solidarity possible. Moreover, all of life takes on the character of a response to God, a walking humbly in accordance with God's will (Mic. 6:8). From the start, then, there can be no split between the sacred and profane spheres of life; at least potentially every movement can be sacred unto the Lord. Finally, from its very

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beginning this association between God and his people hints of a universal application. It could not happen at once, but the covenant bond was not essentially exclusive. As Eichrodt puts it: "This association draws no clear line to exclude the stranger, but is continually absorbing outsiders into itself" (Eichrodt, I, 39).

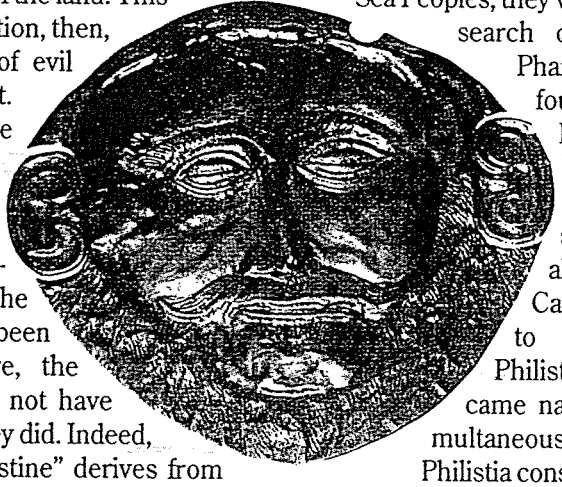
Now it is possible to understand the biblical view of history. This relationship between God and his people arose in the course of actual events. It is not a bond inherent in nature, as with most primitive religions, but one that God has made in particular events. Events can now—when viewed in relation to this program—be decisive or *crucial* (in the original meaning of that word). There is a direction and a momentum, to things that point us naturally to the crucial events of the life of Jesus of Nazareth.



PHILISTIA & ISRAEL

Timothy Turnham

IN THE BIBLE the Philistines are the bad guys. In part this is due to the theological role the Philistines play in the biblical account of Israel. They, like other foreign nations, are seen as a reflection of God's satisfaction with the people of Israel. When the Israelites disobeyed God, the Philistines would attack and win. When Israel repented, they would drive the Philistines out of the land. This neighboring nation, then, was symbolic of evil and punishment.



Actually, the Philistines had more connection with Israel than may be apparent. Had the Philistines not been who they were, the Israelites could not have become who they did. Indeed, the name "Palestine" derives from the Greek version of the word Philistine. So the record of Israel and Philistia is really two-sided—a theological morality play about the consequences of one's relationship with God and a historical story of two young nations vying for land and power.

The Bible claims the Philistines came from Caphtor (Crete). They were apparently part of a large migration that swept the Aegean during the 13th century B.C.[1] References to Philistines in extra-biblical sources date to the 1200s. Some Philistine names, including Goliath, have Asiatic origins. The Bible itself refers to Philistia as the "Negeb of Crete."

The migrants were displaced from Greece and neighboring islands for reasons unknown. Collectively called the Sea Peoples, they ventured south in search of new homes. Pharaoh Rameses III fought these Sea Peoples, defeating them about 1190 B.C. He settled them along the shore of Canaan as vassals to Egypt. Thus Philistia and Israel became nations almost simultaneously.

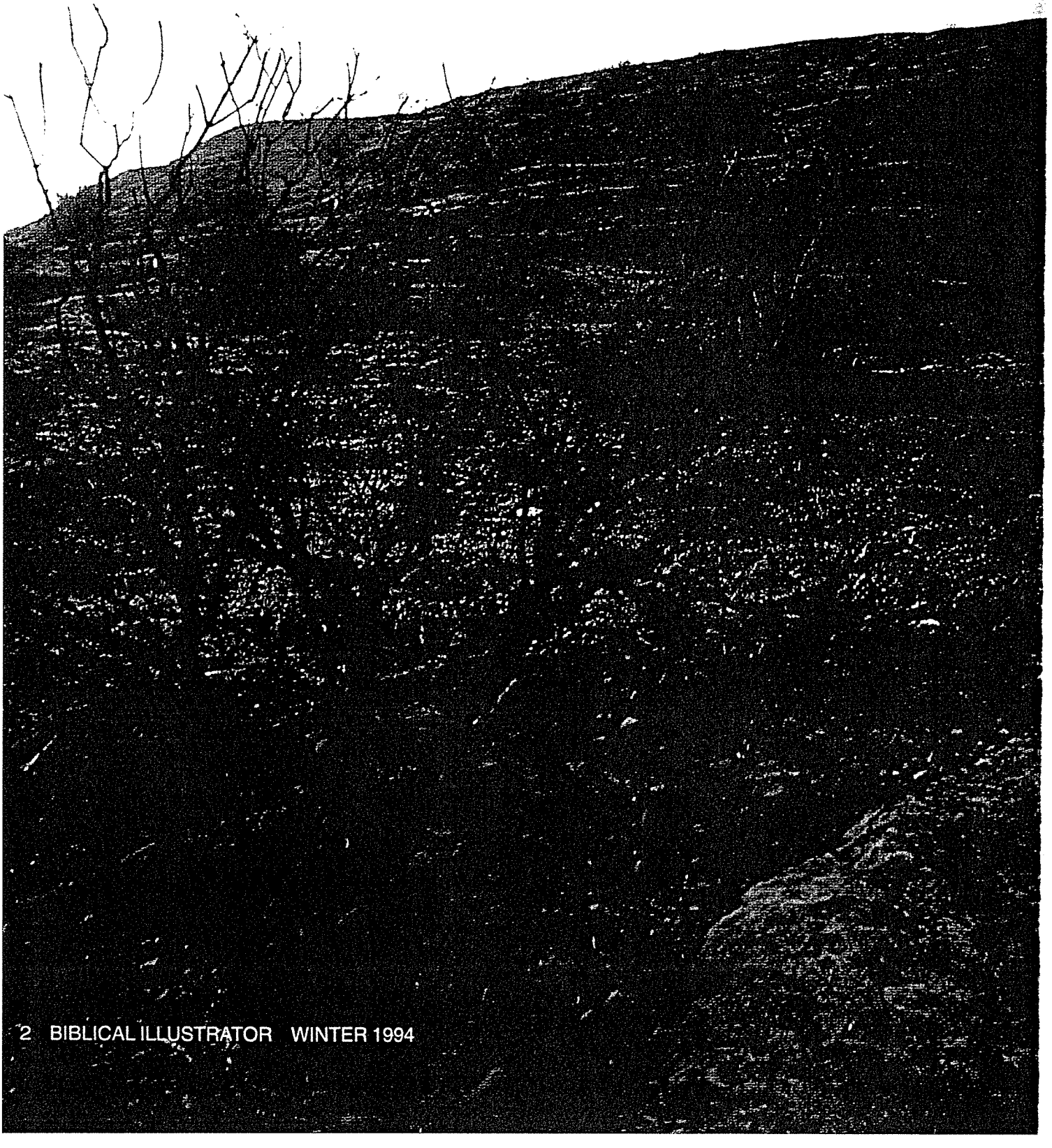
Philistia consisted of five city-states—Gaza, Ashdod, Ashkelon, Gath, and Ekron—captured when Philistines settled in the region. Though separated into five holdings, the nation was surprisingly strong, able to work in concert when required.

Utilizing the rulers' military exper-

Lesson Reference:
CUS: 1 Samuel 13:5-14

Azekah Valley area where David fought and slew Goliath. The Israelites, under the leadership of King Saul, were encamped on this hill awaiting battle with the dreaded Philistines.
ILLUSTRATOR PHOTO DAVID ROGERS

Lower right: Mycenaean face. The Bible indicates the Philistines came from Crete as part of a large migration that swept the Aegean during the 13th century B.C. Crete was a center of trade in the eastern Mediterranean.
ILLUSTRATOR PHOTO DAVID ROGERS MILWAUKEE PUBLIC MUSEUM MILWAUKEE (6.12.3)



tise, the Philistines outfitted an army comprised of their own people, native Canaanites, and mercenaries. In classic Greek tradition, they sometimes challenged opponents to individual combat with a hero representing each side. The Goliath account is the record of such an incident. They also used bands of raiders as "shock troops."[2] David led one such group for a while.

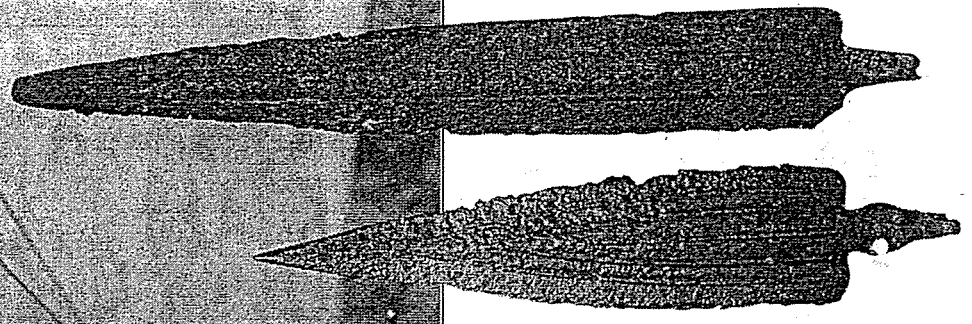
Egyptian records show Philistines with wagons, chariots, and ships—the latter with a unique high stem and bow and a straight mast centered on the boat. Soldiers wore Aegean-style kilts and a headdress topped with a large plume.[3]

Despite the richness of Philistine holdings, these people pushed east in search of more land. Pottery fragments in the Negeb to the south and Shephelah to the east indicate significant Philistine settlement in these regions. Expansion led them into conflict with Israel.

The first recorded interaction between Israel and Philistia is a verse stating that Shamgar killed 600 Philistines with an oxgoad (Judg. 3:31). That he used an oxgoad may be telling. The Philistines held a monopoly on the manufacture of iron, using that power to provide superior arms for themselves and to prevent enemies from acquiring similar weapons. The edges of bronze spears and swords could not hold up for long against the harder edges of iron weapons.



ILLUSTRATOR PHOTO/KEN TOUCHTON/NATIONAL MARITIME MUSEUM/HAIFA (10006)



Above: Ship of the Sea Peoples (model). The Sea Peoples, migrants displaced from Greece and neighboring islands, ventured south in search of new homes. The future Philistines were among these people. **Upper right:** Middle Bronze daggers. The Philistines held a monopoly on the manufacture of iron, using that power to provide superior arms for themselves. The edges of bronze weapons could not hold up for long against the harder edges of iron weapons.
ILLUSTRATOR PHOTO/DAVID ROGERS/BRITISH MUSEUM (54S/25a)

The Samson stories reflect relations between Israel and Philistia verging on war. Such skirmishes and forays are a familiar pattern in countries disputing territory. For some time Israel was able to survive these skirmishes.

The Israelites were essentially a loose federation of tribes with no central government. If an enemy threatened one region, tribes in that area would defend their territory. Sometimes a tribe fought alone; sometimes two or more joined forces. Under the judges the twelve tribes never acted concertedly to defend themselves.

The Philistines changed this. Despite tales of prowess displayed by Samson and other judges, the Israelites were in trouble. Faced with well-armed,

disciplined troops trained with the military skill of the Sea Peoples, Israel could not hold. While engaged in battle—the iron weapons of the Philistines clashing against the bronze of the Israelites—the forces of Israel would suddenly find themselves flanked by chariots. These armored carts provided virtual invincibility for the Philistines. In the mid-11th century a major battle was fought in the region of Ebenezer and Aphek—well into Israelite territory. The Philistines won a decisive victory. In a desperate ploy the Israelites brought the ark of the covenant from Shiloh, assuming this box would bring the presence of Yahweh, "Lord of hosts, who is enthroned on the cherubim" (1 Sam. 4:4, RSV). Instead Israelite forces were decimated, the priests were slain, and the ark was taken captive. Some evidence suggests that the Philistines marched all the way to Shiloh.

With the capture of the ark came dissolution of life as Israel had known it. The central shrine was without its icon. The priests were dead. The tribal confederation was powerless to confront the Philistines.

Israel enjoyed a hiatus under the leadership of Samuel. The biblical account is sketchy, saying the Israelites drove the Philistines out of Mizpah after the voice of God scared them. Even when the Philistines surrendered the ark, though, Israel was not strong enough to reestablish a center of worship. Instead, "the ark was lodged at Kiriath-jearim . . . some twenty years, and all the house of Israel lamented" (1 Sam. 7:2, RSV).

During this time Samuel was in charge. Despite claims that he had no trouble from the Philistines (see 1 Sam. 7:10), the area of his rule was restricted to a radius of a few miles in the central region. Philistia must have controlled large parts of Israel's territory. This situation was untenable.

Israel selected a king. Clearly they could not defend themselves without some unifying government. Still, Scripture records significant ambivalence over the issue. Samuel in particular held an awkward position. He spoke against it on theological grounds; no mention is made that selection of a king would strip him of his status. Though opposed to the notion, he was called on to help select and to anoint the candidate—Saul.

Saul proved a popular, if unfortunate, choice as Israel's first king. Signs from God and unanimous approval by the people gave his kingship impetus. In one of his initial acts Saul established an army that was able—with help from his son Jonathan—to win the first significant victory over the Philistines. Still, Saul struggled with the Philistines throughout his reign. Ultimately they killed him.



ILLUSTRATOR PHOTO©DAVID ROGERS/BRITISH MUSEUM (54594)

Above: Shardana warriors, Sea Peoples related to the Philistines, from the temple of Rameses III at Medinet Habu, Western Thebes.

The Philistines also played a theological role in Saul's life. As king he won great victories over them; but when he offered a sacrifice to God in preparation for battle, he was told God would abandon him. Uncertain of how to proceed, he waited in camp until Jonathan carried the battle to the Philistines. With God's help a victory was won. But when Saul tried to sanctify the victory with an oath to God, he was chastised by the people. At every turn Samuel was there to criticize him, to threaten him, to reject him. Yet the threat came not from the hand of Samuel or from God, but from the Philistines who were agents of the Almighty in shaping the king and the nation.

If the Philistines shaped Saul's reign, they also defined David's character. Propelled to popularity by his defeat of Goliath, David quickly became a natural rival to Saul.[4] Indeed, Samuel anointed him as the king who would succeed Saul. Spurred by jealousy, Saul tried to kill David and ultimately drove him away.

David gathered a group of disaffected men around him and lived along the Israel/Philistia border. He staged raids into Philistine territory when he could, and between raids he supported his troops by demanding tribute from the local population. (1 Sam. 25).

Soon the people in the region grew tired of David's demands and began to report his movements to Saul. Trapped among a disgruntled populace and pursued by a jealous king, David turned to an unlikely source for protection—the Philistines! Now Saul's greatest internal threat was in service to his greatest external enemy.

David swore himself into service to Achish of Gath. Achish assumed David would raid Israel and so weaken that country; instead David fought the Amalekites to the south. He deceived Achish by killing everyone in the villages he raided—women and children

included—so no witnesses could report his actions. By this means he not only befriended the Philistines and the Israelites, he also accumulated considerable wealth.

First Samuel ends with the record of a decisive battle between the Philistines and Saul. David and his men prepared to fight alongside the Philistines but were sent home at the last minute because the Philistine soldiers did not trust them.

While Saul prepared to lead the Israelites to battle, David found a way to ingratiate himself with those from whom he had demanded protection money. He took a portion of the spoil accumulated from raids and sent generous gifts to the leaders of Judah in "all the places where David and his men had roamed" (1 Sam. 30:26-31, RSV). Thus Saul sent their people to death in battle while David showered them with the spoils of his victories.

Saul's end came in the Philistine's greatest victory. They marched north along the border between Israel's holdings and those of other coastal groups. Thus their supply lines were protected, and they were able to use their chariots to good advantage. On Mount Gilboa they slaughtered the Israelites and killed Saul's three sons. In despair Saul committed suicide. The Philistines routed the Israelites, chasing them all the way to the Jordan.

Israel was without a king and in desperate need of a leader. Into this void came David. He left Philistia and marched with his men and their accumulated spoils into Judah. To the defeated Judeans he must have looked like a savior; they immediately proclaimed him king. Unfortunately other Israelites were not so enamored, choosing Saul's son Isbosheth as their king. So the Philistines watched in security as a bitter civil war was fought between David's forces and Ishbosheth's supporters. This war lasted over six years.

David led his men in battle against Isbosheth and Abner. Both Ishbosheth and Abner were killed by men under David's command. David had the assassins who killed Isbosheth slain and mutilated. Thus the Israelites, now without a king, were able to forget their enmity against David and anoint him king of the united tribes.

The situation with Philistia changed. No longer was Israel a band of tribes engaged in civil war. The Israelites were united under a dynamic leader whose skill in battle was honed by years of living as an outlaw, raider, and upstart king. He had learned the lessons of military strategy from one of their own and commanded a sizeable force of seasoned troops. When David defeated the Jebusites and established a new capital in the captured city Jerusalem, the Philistines realized they had to deal with this threat.

The Philistines marshaled their forces in the valley of Rephaim. They faced an enemy familiar with their strategy and who copied their use of chariots in battle. David defeated them. Again they marched on the valley. This time David's forces routed the Philistine troops and chased them "from Geba to Gezer" (2 Sam. 5:25). David went on the attack and ultimately destroyed the Philistines' power.

David controlled coastal areas north and south of Philistia. He made incursions into Philistine territory, but with the exception of Gath he did not occupy its cities. Perhaps he wished to avoid conflict with Egypt, which still held claim to that region.

Under Solomon Philistine power continued to wane. Egypt conquered Gezer, then gave the city to Solomon as dowry when he married Pharaoh's daughter.

Animosity between Israel and Philistia still resulted in clashes. Fighting near Gibbethon continued for a number of years (1 Kings 15:27; 16:15). Jehoshaphat, king of Judah from 873–849, received tribute from the Philistines. Under his successor, Jehoram, the Philistines invaded Judah, even sacking the king's house (2 Chron. 21:16-17).

Soon the Philistines and the Israelites had a greater concern than fighting each other. They found themselves in the unenviable position of being between Egypt to the south, Assyria to the north, and Babylon to the east. They ultimately perished in the wake of battles between these powers.

Assyria exacted tribute from the Philistines by about 805 B.C. When they tried to rebel, Assyrian leaders sent in punitive forces, beginning in 734 and continuing well into the seventh century. When Isaiah wrote, "Wail, O gate; cry, O cry; melt in fear, O Philistia, all of you! For smoke comes out of the north, and there is no straggler in its ranks" (Isa. 14:31, RSV), he was not foretelling—he was reporting on daily life in Philistia! Meanwhile Assyria had already destroyed the Northern Kingdom, Israel, and had reduced Judah to vassal status.

Ultimately Assyria collapsed, defeated by internal strife and external threat. Egypt took advantage of the situation and secured the Philistines as allies against the growing strength of Babylon.

Nebuchadnezzar proved too strong, though, and in 604 he captured Ashkelon. As he would later do in Judah, the Babylonian leader deported the rulers and the people of Philistia. Although some of the cities survived for centuries, the nation known as Philistia ceased to exist.

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[1]Probably some Aegean settlements did exist in the eastern Mediterranean area during the patriarchal period (see Gen. 21:32; 26:1-18). However, the major part of the migration did not take place until the 13th century B.C.

[2]"Philistines," *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, vol. 3, ed. George Arthur Buttrick (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1962), 792.

[3]Ibid., 793.

[4]The familiar story of David killing Goliath with his sling is recorded in 1 Samuel 17. Second Samuel 21:19 says, however, that after Saul died, Goliath was killed by Elhanan, a soldier in service to King David. The Chronicler gave an account that said Elhanan killed Goliath's brother (1Chron. 20:5). This account is probably to be preferred, thus leaving the account in 1 Samuel 17 intact.

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Israel and Syria during the ninth century B.C. shared a relationship that was both confusing and complex.





ILLUSTRATOR PHOTO/ BOB SCHATZ [9/27/19]

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Israel *in the Ninth Century B. C.*

by Marsha Ellis Smith

THE POLITICAL AND HISTORICAL SITUATIONS that provide the background for the broad expanse of time involved in the narrative of the Bible are often complex and confusing. This is particularly so in relation to the activity between Israel and Syria in the ninth century B.C. Israel, the united kingdom, had become Israel and Judah, the divided kingdom; a weakened Egypt no longer posed a threat, but Assyria remained an ever-present and powerful reality to the east; and the Aramaeans of Syria were proving to be a menacing force to Israel.

Above: Entire site of Ahab's city and palace at Samaria.
Left: Market streets in modern Damascus, the capital of ancient and modern Syria.

Before examining the interaction between Syria and Israel from 900 to 800 B.C., we should look at each country's historical background.

Israel—Historical Background

The glory of the united kingdom of Israel ended some time before the actual demise of the kingdom itself. Because of tribal loyalties, none of the three kings of the united kingdom—Saul, David, and Solomon—seem to have molded all the tribes into an indissoluble whole. Therefore, when Solomon developed oppressive policies, the people became further divided and alienated from the monarchy. After

Lesson Reference:
FBS: 2 Kings 5:2-6,9-14

Solomon's death in 922 B.C., his son Rehoboam attempted to hold the nation together, but faced resistance when he threatened to intensify his father's oppressive policies. The united kingdom split into two kingdoms, with Rehoboam, son of Solomon, ruling the Southern Kingdom (originally composed of only one tribe—Judah—but soon included Benjamin also), and with Jeroboam ruling over the rest of the tribes of the Northern Kingdom. The Southern Kingdom became known by the name of its original tribe—Judah; the Northern Kingdom retained the name Israel.

From 922 B.C. to the end of the Northern Kingdom in 722 B.C., relations between the two kingdoms of Israel and Judah were strained.

Syria—Historical Background

The land of Syria, and its inhabitants known as the Aramaeans, lay to the northeast of the Northern Kingdom of Israel.[1] As early as the 23rd century B.C., the word "Aram," used as the name of a region or place, appeared on a cuneiform inscription of the Akkadian King Naram-Sin. The name "Aram" is found in numerous inscriptions of Mesopotamian origin from this time period and later. (Ancient Mesopotamia was located in the area of the modern country of Iraq.) Although the precise origin of the Aramaean people is unknown, many scholars point to the land area of Mesopotamia.

During the 12th century B.C., the Aramaeans moved westward into northern and southern Syria, especially into and around Damascus and Palmyra (Tadmor). As Aramaean power grew, the Aramaeans were able to take land belonging to Tiglath-Pileser I of Assyria. By the 11th and 10th centuries B.C., the height of Aramaean power was reached. Two of the Aramaean states (Zobah and Damascus) were conquered by David; but later after the division of the kingdom, they regained their freedom.

The one major contribution of the Aramaean culture was the Aramaic language that became the business language of the ancient near East and the vernacular of Palestine.

Israel and the Aramaeans

During Solomon's reign, Rezon (biblical Hezion) from the Aramaean state of Zobah, conquered the kingdom state of Damascus and created what would become the most powerful northern adversary of the northern kingdom of Israel.

Rezon was followed to the throne by Tabrimmon about whom little is known. Benhadad, son of Tabrimmon, was the next ruler of Damascus. (Although scholars disagree regarding exactly how many Benhadads existed in history—either three: Benhadad I, contemporary of Baasha; Benhadad II, from the time of Elijah and Elisha; and Benhadad III, son of Hazael; or two: Benhadad I whose life spanned the time period from Baasha through Elisha; and Benhadad II, son of Hazael—this article will follow the latter plan.)

Benhadad I and King Baasha of Israel.[2]

Benhadad entered into an alliance with Baasha of Israel; but when Asa of Judah approached Benhadad with a better offer, Benhadad allied with Asa against Baasha. In doing so, Benhadad conquered many northern Israelite cities that further expanded his kingdom into Israelite territory.

Benhadad I and the Omride Dynasty of Israel.

Omri:[3] After several years of civil war, Omri came to power in Israel. Known for his military genius and political diplomacy, Omri purposely moved his capital city from Tirzah to the hill of Samaria, a more fortifiable location. Omri also cultivated a warm trade relationship with the strong Phoenicians, while conquering the Moabites to the south. Although no mention is made in Scripture of any contact between Omri and Benhadad, Omri's name was obviously known by the Syrians and other nations for Israel's rulers were referred to as the "house of Omri" in inscriptions from this time forward. During Omri's reign, Benhadad continued to grow in power and military strength.

Ahab:[4] Ahab continued his father Omri's policies in foreign diplomacy particularly with the Phoenician city of Tyre to the extent that he married Jezebel, daughter of the king of Tyre. This proved to be more of a problem to Ahab than a benefit due to Jezebel's introducing Israel to the cult of the Tyrian god Melcarth. During Ahab's reign Benhadad, having been left alone by Shalmaneser the Assyrian, was afforded the opportunity to further his military strength. Finally, the Aramaean attack feared by both Ahab and his father Omri was launched. Benhadad and an alliance of vassal kings attacked the capital city of Samaria. Ahab and his troops defeated this first attack. Benhadad then attacked the next year, this time choosing Aphek as the target, and was again defeated. In the aftermath of his defeat of the Aramaeans, Ahab wisely treated Benhadad with respect, again demonstrating Ahab's giftedness in diplomatic relations. The next year Ahab and Benhadad were aligned together in a coalition army, led by Benhadad, against the Assyrians, led by Shalmaneser III at the battle of Qarqar in 853 B.C. Technically the Assyrians won, but after this battle Shalmaneser did not have any more military successes in this campaign.

Ahab grew unhappy with Benhadad and the Syrians when Benhadad did not fulfill his promise to return the northern Israelite cities he had earlier conquered. Therefore, Ahab with support from Jehoshaphat of Judah attacked Benhadad; but Ahab paid the price for this battle with the loss of his life.

Ahaziah and Jehoram (Joram), sons of Ahab:[5] Ahaziah had an accident that rendered him physically incapacitated and reigned for only two years. Ahaziah's brother, Jehoram, ascended to the throne at the end of those two years during a time of Moabite rebellion. While he was dealing with that situation, the Assyrians made three more



attempts at invasion and at each attempt they were met by a coalition of forces. Israel was probably in this combined coalition army, although no extrabiblical evidence has yet been found of Israel's name in the lists of nations involved.

Hazael and the House of Jehu: Benhadad I grew seriously ill and sent Hazael, an official of the court, to the Israelite prophet Elisha to ask if Benhadad would survive this illness. Elisha's answer to Hazael was that the illness would not kill Benhadad, but that Hazael would be king. When Hazael returned to Benhadad, he killed the king and seized the throne.[6]

After Benhadad's death, Jehoram and the king of Judah combined forces to regain control of Ramoth-Gilead that had earlier been taken by the Aramaeans. Jehoram was wounded in battle. He was later assassinated, and his throne usurped by Jehu.[7] This ended the Omride Dynasty.

Hazael and Jehu:[8] When the Assyrians made another sweep through Syria and upper Palestine, Jehu chose to pay tribute to Shalmaneser rather than to align with Damascus in a fight against the Assyrians.[9] Hazael of Damascus never forgot this incident. In 841 B.C. and again in 837 B.C., Damascus stood alone against the Assyrians. In both battles, the Assyrians claimed victory. The city of Damascus, however, was spared from destruction. When Shalmaneser became preoccupied with other lands to be conquered, Hazael was able to turn his attention to his old southern adversary—Israel. He plundered much of Israel's holdings that laid east of the Jordan but probably did not completely subdue Jehu.

Left: Replica of the Black Obelisk of Shalmaneser III, king of Assyria from 858-824 B.C. The obelisk was discovered at Nimrod.

Hazael and Jehoahaz:[10] Hazael's ravaging of Israel continued into the reign of Jehoahaz until the Aramaeans had crushed Israel's strength. Hazael then turned his military attention to the Philistines and to Judah. Of all the Aramaean rulers, Hazael is remembered as the most ruthless of the Aramaean kings, particularly as he related to Israel.

Conclusion

Israel and Syria during the ninth century B.C. shared a relationship that was both confusing and complex. First they would fight each other; then they would join forces to fight together against the Assyrians; then they would fight each other again; then when Damascus was attacked by the Assyrians, Israel would not help them; and finally Hazael tried to overrun Israel. The relationship continued to be strained much of the time through the last days of the Northern Kingdom.[11] Both nations were eventually conquered by the Assyrians within a few years of each other.[12]

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[1]For more detailed information about the Aramaeans and their relationship with Israel, see the following: A. Malawat, "The Aramaeans" in *Peoples of Old Testament Times*, D. J. Wiseman, ed. for The Society for Old Testament Study (London: Oxford University Press, 1973); and Conn Grayson Davis, "The Aramean Influence upon Ancient Israel to 732 B.C." (Ph.D. diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, KY, 1979).

[2]1 Kings 15:16-22.

[3]1 Kings 16:16-28.

[4]1 Kings 16:29, 1 Kings 20:1-43; 22:1-40.

[5]2 Kings 8:16-29.

[6]2 Kings 8:7-15.

[7]2 Kings 8:28-29; 9:14-28.

[8]2 Kings 10:31-33.

[9]Jehu of Israel is pictured paying tribute to Shalmaneser on the relief of the Black Obelisk of Shalmaneser that dates from the 9th century B.C. See "Shalmaneser, Black Obelisk of," in *The New International Dictionary of Biblical Archaeology*, E. M. Blaiklock and R. K Harrison, eds. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1983), 409.

[10]2 Kings 13:1-9.

[11]2 Kings 13:22-25; 16:5-9.

[12]2 Kings 16:10—17:6 Israel was conquered in 722 B.C.

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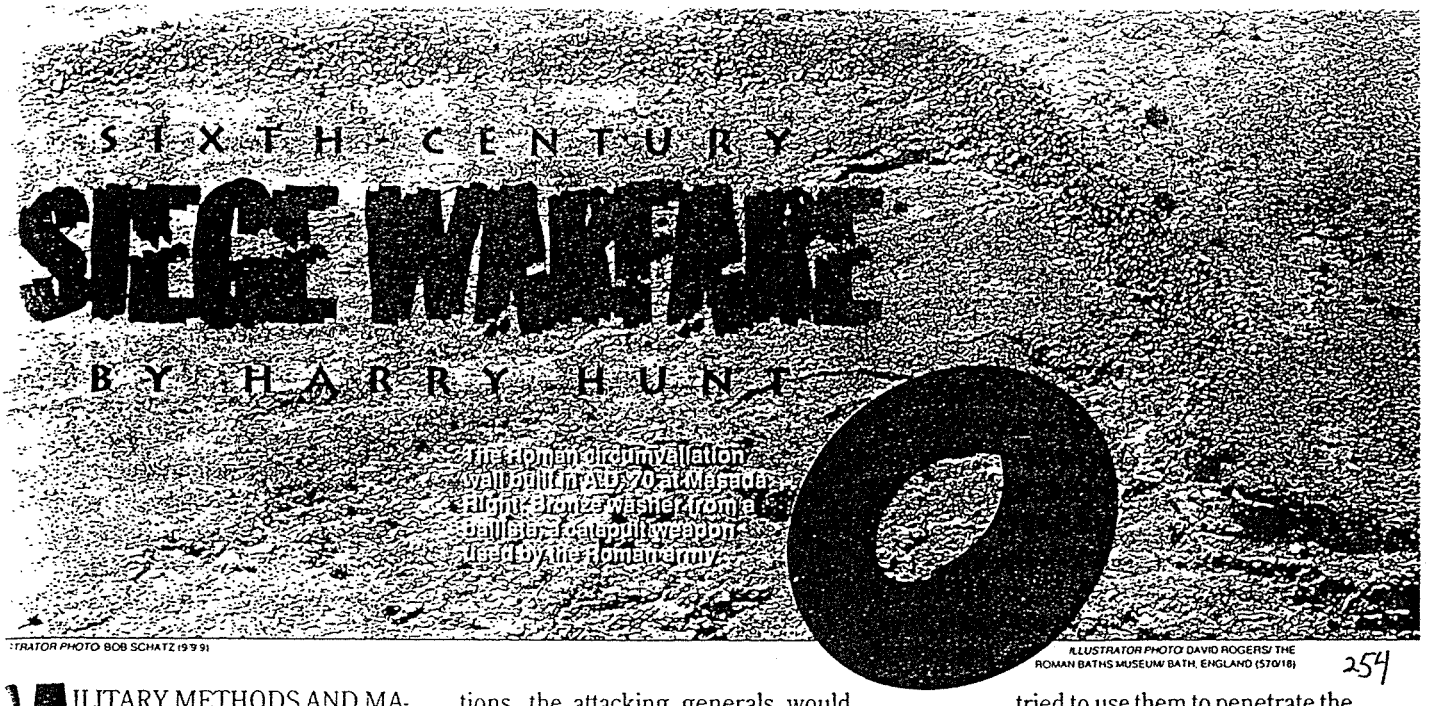

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MILITARY METHODS AND MACHINERY changed greatly during the Old Testament days. Unfortunately, because of our lack of archaeological data and our inability to understand the data that is available, we do not know much about when the changes occurred or why. However, military tactics and weaponry were quite sophisticated throughout the Old Testament era. Apparently, the Israelites were as familiar with such techniques and equipment as anyone.

Siege Warfare

One of the more common military strategies used in the ancient Near East during this time was siege warfare. Most cities built massive walls around their perimeters. During an invasion the people retreated into the city and closed its gates behind them.

When this happened, the approaching enemy would place the city under a state of siege (2 Kings 18:17—19:36). First, they would encircle the city with troops to prevent anyone who was in the city from escaping (Ezek. 4:2a). Second, they would set up camps of troops in strategic locations leading into the city to prevent reinforcements from coming to rescue the city (2 Kings 18:17). Third, while all of this was happening, there would be negotiations going on with the city to reach some kind of settlement.

Finally, at some point in the negotiations, the attacking generals would decide that the people inside the city had enough food, water, and fortitude to remain there for a while. At that point, the attackers had to decide whether they had the manpower and supplies to enforce a lengthy siege.

Once the decision had been made to continue with the siege, they returned to the task of trying to get the city to surrender as quickly as possible. First, they turned to psychological warfare (which usually involved derogatory speeches about the defenders and their gods as well as threats of what the attackers would do to them when they finally took the city). However, that tactic may not have been effective (2 Kings 18:18-36; 19:8-13). Second, they tried to disrupt the city's water supply. Since few cities had any kind of internal water supply, this was relatively easy to do and quite effective. Third, and finally, they cut off their food supply. Even though most cities maintained stores of food and water, there were limitations to what they could do. Thus, if they could prolong the siege long enough, the attackers could starve the inhabitants into surrendering (2 Kings 6:24—7:20; Ezek. 4:4-15).

If all of this was not successful, the attackers would begin to try more stringent measures. They began to construct what are known as siege works and then tried to use them to penetrate the city's walls (Ezek. 4:2b). However, most of the cities (like Jerusalem) were built on the top of knolls or hills, and it was quite difficult to get close to the walls. Moreover, most of the walls were very tall and thick when the attackers did get to them. They were almost impossible to scale over, tunnel under, or penetrate. Finally, if all of that were not enough, the city's defenders were usually standing on top of the walls shooting arrows, hurling stones, and pouring boiling oil down on any one who tried to approach them. Getting through the walls was a dangerous and difficult job, but it was about the only way to shorten the siege.

Under the protection of large shields, some of the attackers would begin to erect earthen mounds (or hastily constructed walls) as near to the city walls as they could. Such a process (known as circumvallation) not only served as a means of protection for their own soldiers as they sought to build their siege works and to break through the city's walls, but it also helped to prevent anyone from escaping from the city.[1] Since most of these city walls were difficult to get to, such an undertaking required a large amount of materials

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Lesson Reference:
FBS: Ezekiel 4:1-13;
2 Kings 24:20b—25:12

(most was obtained locally), manpower (some of which may have been captives), and time.

While all of that was going on, other people were building towers (some stationary and others portable) that could be used to elevate the soldiers (and particularly the archers) to the same height as the defenders on the city's walls and thus negate their ability to deter the attackers (Ezek. 4:2b). Still others were constructing ramps to roll (or slide) their assault weapons up as near to the wall as possible. Meanwhile, others were beginning the process of building the war machines (Ezek. 4:2c). In essence, everyone was busy at something.

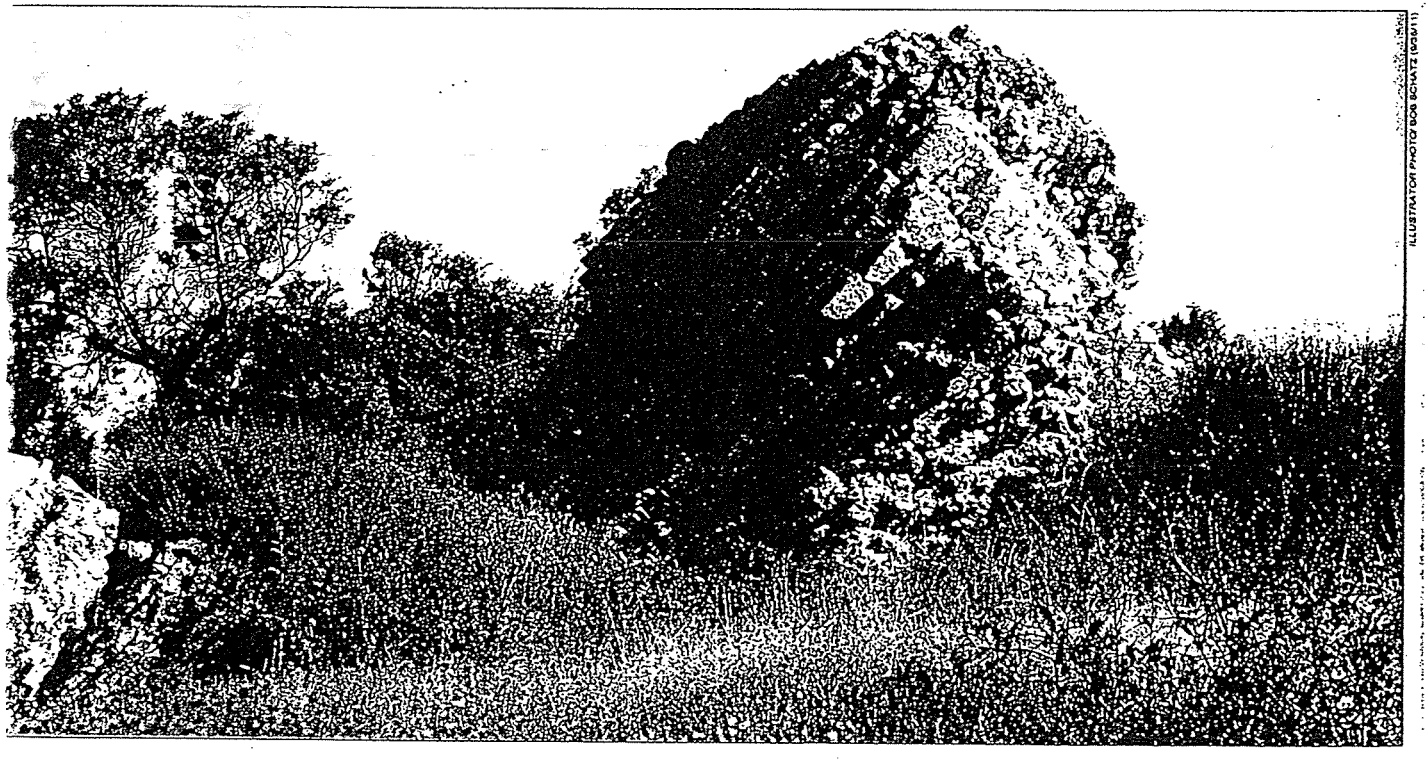
Apparently there were basically two types of war machines.[2] First, there was the catapult constructed so that the attackers could throw anything from a large stone to flaming torches over the walls. Unfortunately, the catapults were not accurate or efficient. Second, and more feared, were the battering rams. Apparently, there were nearly as many types of them as there were armies that used them. Nevertheless, they all worked on the same principle. A pendulum (or ram) would swing out far enough in front of the structure to penetrate the city's walls. There was an endless variety of objects (such as rocks, tree trunks, metal rods or poles) that could be used as pendulums. The idea was to try to weaken the wall in such a way as to make it crumble and thus let the attackers simply walk right in and take the city.

Though such weapons had been used since the days of the early Egyptian dynasties, the Assyrians seem to have perfected them before passing them on to the Babylonians.[3] Naturally, the Israelites were quite familiar with them and even used some of them against their enemies. As a part of his military strategy, King Uzziah not only reinforced the towers along the walls in Jerusalem but also raised them to new heights to make it more difficult for an enemy to attack the city's walls (2 Chron. 26:9-10,15).[4] The most famous acknowledgment of such siege tactics is Hezekiah's tunnel that was dug from the spring of Gihon to the pool of Siloam in order to provide a more dependable source of water during a siege (2 Kings 20:20; 2 Chron. 32:30).[5] Yet that was not enough to save the city from Nebuchadnezzar's wrath (Ezek. 4:1-3; 2 Kings 25:1; Jer. 52:4).

The Fall of Jerusalem

The Southern Kingdom became a vassal of the Babylonian empire in 605 B.C. (2 Kings 24:1a; 2 Chron. 36:6). Prior to 598 B.C. Jehoiakim, Judah's king, rebelled against the Babylonians (2 Kings 24:1b). The Babylonians were furious, attacked Jerusalem, and placed it under siege. During the siege Jehoiakim died and was replaced on the throne by his young son Jehoiachin (2 Kings 24:6; 2 Chron. 36:8-9; Jer. 22:18-19). Jehoiachin was unable to prevent the city from falling to the Babylonians. In 598 B.C. they deported the young king and many of the other leading citizens (such as Ezekiel) to Babylon and resettled them

Below: Ruins at Ashkelon showing a tumbled defense tower, perhaps destroyed by an earthquake.
Right: Excavations of massive walls along the south end of the Temple Mount at Jerusalem.



ILLUSTRATOR PHOTO/BOB SCHATZ (9/30/11)

on the banks of the river Kebar (2 Kings 4:10-17; Jer. 22:24-30). The Babylonian king, Nebuchadnezzar, allowed Judah to continue to exist and placed Josiah's son, Zedekiah, on their throne (2 Kings 4:17).

Apparently things went smoothly for a while, and thus a belief developed that the worst was over and that God had merely chastised His people with a brief slap on the wrist. However, sin was still rampant in Jerusalem and the Southern Kingdom. God decided to allow the Babylonians to destroy them. Before He did, He gave them one last chance to repent. This call for repentance came through Jeremiah's prophetic messages in Jerusalem (Jer. 2:1—38:28) and Ezekiel's messages in Babylon (Ezek. 1:1—24:27).

Jeremiah spoke about the nature of sin, and he said that even their status as God's chosen people living in the promised land would not save them (Jer. 2:1—10:25). Ezekiel warned his audience that the worst was yet to come (Ezek. 4:1—24:27). In fact, Ezekiel began by depicting a devastating siege of Jerusalem in which the city would be taken and destroyed (Ezek. 4:1-3). In essence, God told Ezekiel to take a (clay) brick and to draw a picture of the city of Jerusalem being placed under siege. However, Ezekiel did not stop there. He also added images of forts, mounds, camps, and battering rams. Surely, such a picture should have made the people fearful, for normally, those inside the city would suffer greatly before being forced to surrender.

Yet despite such warnings, Zedekiah decided to rebel against the Babylonians (2 Kings 24:20b; Jer. 52:3b). Naturally, this made them furious indeed. Nebuchadnezzar gathered his troops, headed for Jerusalem, and placed it under siege (2 Kings 25:1a; Jer. 39:1; 52:4-5). Apparently, Nebuchadnezzar's experience with the Judeans in 598 B.C. had convinced him that the siege might take a while. Thus, he went ahead and built the dikes (or walls) around the city and began preparing for a lengthy siege (2 Kings 25:1b).

Even though Jerusalem had enough water (thanks to Hezekiah's tunnel), the people had not been able to plant or harvest crops for almost two years. That took its toll and famine gradually began to overcome the city (2 Kings 25:3; Jer. 52:6).[6] The constant attack on the walls finally began to pay off, and in 586 B.C. (after about 18 months of bombardment), the walls began to crumble (2 Kings 25:4a; Jer. 39:2; 52:7a). Even though the people of Jerusalem tried to flee, Zedekiah and the others were quickly captured and brought to Nebuchadnezzar who was in no mood for leniency (2 Kings 25:4b-6; Jer. 39:3-5; 52:7b-8). He not only had Zedekiah's sons slain before his eyes, but he also had Zedekiah's eyes put out (2 Kings 25:6-7a; Jer. 39:7a; 52:9-11a). However, Zedekiah's life was spared. He spent the rest of his life as a prisoner of war in Babylon (2 Kings 25:7b; Jer. 39:7b; 52:11b; Ezek. 12:12-13).

Unfortunately, Nebuchadnezzar was not through. He ordered his chief butcher (or commander of the guard) to completely destroy Jerusalem (2 Kings 25:8-12). In a systematic fashion, he burned everything that he could burn, and he demolished the buildings and walls so that no two stones were left standing on one another (2 Kings 25:9-10; Jer. 39:8; 52:12-14). Then, he rounded up the people and deported them to Babylon (2 Kings 25:11; Jer. 39:9a; 52:15). He left some of the poorest in the land to work it (2 Kings 25:12; Jer. 39:9b; 52:16). Thus, it was a dark and terrible day indeed.

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[1]Robert O. Coleman, "The Chaldean Destruction of Jerusalem," *Biblical Illustrator* 6 (Fall 1979): 27.
[2]J. W. Wevers, "War, Methods of" in *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, vol. 4 (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1962), 804.
[3]Wevers, 804.
[4]Yagil Yadin, *The Art of Warfare in Biblical Lands* (Jerusalem: International Publishing Co., 1963), 325-26.
[5]Yadin, 321.
[6]John Gray, *I and 2 Kings*, rev. ed. (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1970), 764-65.

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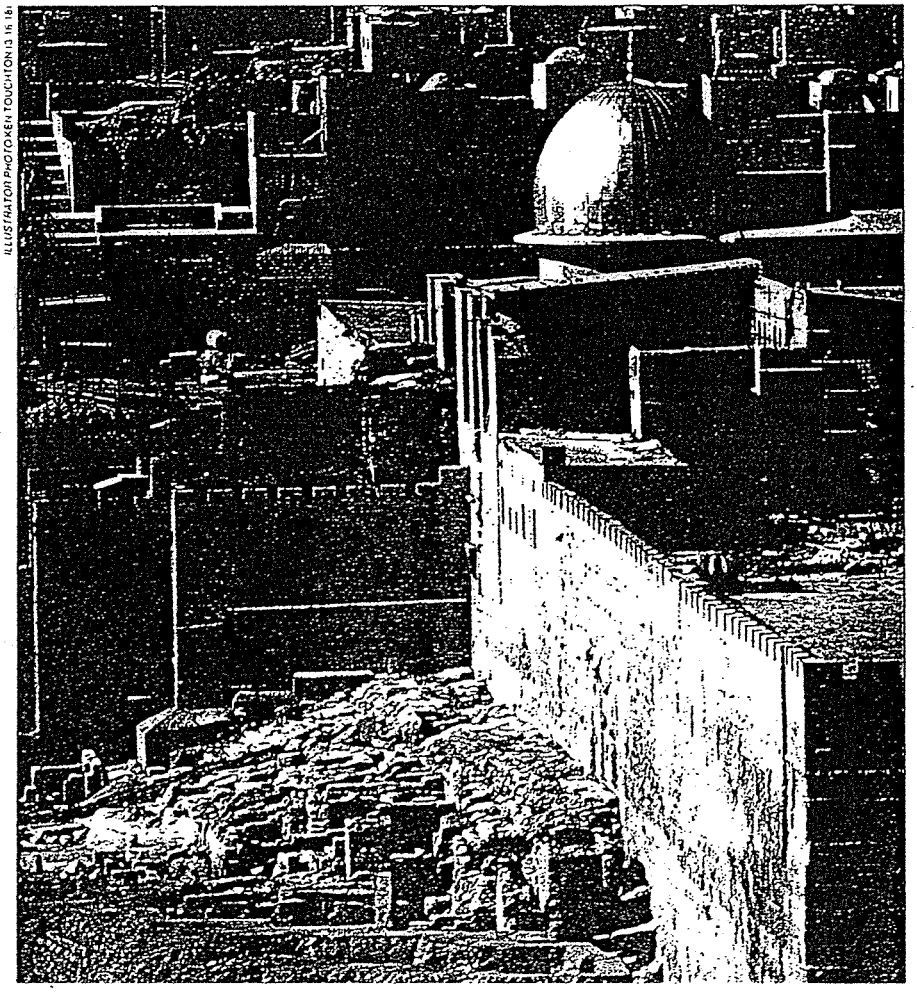


ILLUSTRATOR PHOTO/KEN TOUCHTON 13 16 18

East of Jordan

We live in an age in which leisure pursuits include travel to most places of the world. Israel probably has more history, beauty, and significance within its small area than most places. A visit to Israel not only illustrates much of the Bible, but it makes it come alive in the sense that reading a story in the Bible about a place has a personal significance when one has visited it, which a mere reader never experiences. It must, however, never be forgotten that the Holy Land does not stop at the river Jordan.

East of the river Jordan is the Kingdom of Jordan, always ready and willing to welcome visitors. There are not many sites, but what is there is more than worth the time spent. The capital, Amman, is itself the ancient city of Ammon of the Ammonites. It was known as Philadelphia in New Testament times — a Roman city of the Decapolis. The Ammonite citadel and the Roman theatre can be visited.

South of Amman is Madaba (with a church containing a wonderful mosaic map of Jerusalem and of the Holy Land in the third century AD) and the King's Highway through the desert, which passes the Crusader fortress of Kerak to reach the Nabataean city of Petra. Petra is probably one of the most wonderful places in the world — a city cut off by time in a rose-red, secluded valley. Near Madaba is the spot on Mount Nebo where Moses died after he had looked across into the Promised Land. North of Amman is Jerash, another city of the Decapolis that is almost as well preserved as Pompei and is reached by crossing the river Jabbok where Jacob wrestled.

It is hoped that this brief travelogue will encourage people to go to the land of the Bible and will give them some idea of what to look for when they are examining tour brochures. It takes a steady three weeks to see things adequately and to absorb all that there is to see and experience.

Religion

Gower, 331-37
The New Manners + Customs of Bible Times

The first four stories of the Bible spell out why it was that God needed to act to save humankind. The story of creation (Genesis 1) tells us that we live in God's world, where his rule and laws operate. When the rules are broken, as in the second story of Adam and Eve, there is separation from God. The results of the sin and separation become clear in the other stories. Sin brings the judgment of God (Genesis 6–8; see especially 6:5) and social chaos (Genesis 11:1–9), as human beings become separated from each other.

These stories give the reason for all that follows. In his love for humankind, God as Creator wanted to restore humanity to all that he intended it to be. To do this it was necessary for God to deal with human sin. We know, from the New Testament, how this was done. God entered this world as a human being in the person of Jesus. Having entered the world he showed us how to live. Jesus said, "I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you" (John 13:15). He allowed himself to be put to death, although he was innocent, so that as God he could take upon himself the punishment for the sins of the whole world. Peter put it, "He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree" (1 Peter 2:24), and Paul wrote, "Having canceled the written code, with its regulations, that was against us and stood opposed to us; he took it away, nailing it to the cross" (Colossians 2:14).

Jesus died and rose so it would be possible for him to indwell us by his spirit and overcome death for us. But also Jesus helps those who believe in him to overcome the bias toward sin that is at the heart of every human being: "If we have been united with him in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection" (Romans 6:5). The problem was how to get from man's need at the beginning of time to the point where, in Jesus, those needs could be met.

A covenant relationship

In Old Testament times God chose to enter into a close relationship first with an individual, then with his immediate family, and finally with his descendants so that they would gradually be prepared for his personal coming and for a deeper relationship than had hitherto been possible. Abraham was the individual (Genesis 12:1–2), and the covenant relationship entered into with Abraham and his family (Genesis 15:9–18) was renewed with his grandson Jacob (Genesis 28:13–15) and with Moses (Exodus 3:6; 24:3–8).

It is fairly common to hear Christians say that Christianity is not so much a religion as a relationship; it is not often realized that exactly the same was true for the Jewish people. God did not found a Jewish religion but entered into a covenant relationship with his people. It would seem that during Moses' time when religion was important in neighboring nations, God gave the Jews a carefully circumscribed religion that would help sustain the covenant relationship. Consequently the religion of the Jewish people was quite different from that of their contemporaries.

Because God used the Jews' religion to prepare the way for Jesus, Judaism did not stand still but developed. The Jews came into contact with contemporary religions, and therefore their religion developed by reaction to and interaction with them. Holy places, holy days, holy persons, and holy events therefore became part of the Jewish faith, but all was not what God had hoped it would be. Like the commandment allowing divorce, the Jewish cult seems to have been an accommodation to human weakness (Matthew 19:8). God wanted a broken and a contrite spirit rather than sacrifices (Psalm 51:17), justice rather than festival days (Amos 5:21–24), and instead of offerings of rams and oil he wanted people who were just, loved kindness, and walked humbly with their God (cf. Micah 6:8).

The law that provided for the trappings of a religious system was never intended to be an end in itself but was intended to reveal the extent of human need (Romans 3:19; 7:5, 7–9) so that we would be led to Christ (Galatians 3:24–25). It was intended to be a means of showing the kind of life God wanted us to live through the power of his Spirit (Romans 8:4).

And herein lay the conflict between Jesus and the Jewish religious leaders at that time. The religion of the Jews therefore had an important place in God's plan, but it was never intended to be an end in itself. It was a means of sustaining the covenant relationship until God himself should come.

Assyrian religion

There was little or no connection between the religion of Israel and the ancient religions of the Assyrians (where Abraham first experienced religion) or the Egyptians. It is true that perhaps in the hope they might bring some kind of protection, Rachel stole the household gods from her father (Genesis 31:19). However, even though Jacob later buried the offending articles, such idols turned up on a number of occasions in subsequent history (Genesis 35:4; Judges 17:5; 1 Samuel 19:13; 2 Kings 23:24; Zechariah 10:2).

The references in Zechariah 10:2 and Ezekiel 21:21 indicate household gods were used in divination, always a feature of Assyrian religion; and the fact that they could be hidden in the camel's saddlery (Genesis 31:34) indicates that they were small. However nothing has so far been found to indicate exactly what the idols were like. Suggestions have therefore been made that they would rot, or that they would be identified as something else. Some scholars have even suggested that they were rag dolls or mummified infants' heads.

In ancient Mesopotamia, people believed in families of gods. Anu was the king of heaven and was very remote. His son, Enlil, ruled over the earth's surface and was treated as king of the gods. Ishtar was Anu's wife and was in charge of war and love. Each god had a main temple where people went at festival times.

The gods themselves and the fantastic mythology that was used to describe events such as the creation, were quite different from the religion of the Jews. In the Babylonian creation story, for instance, Tiamat, the primeval ocean, gave birth to dry land (Ki) and heaven (Anu), and all the gods descended from Ki and Anu. The ocean decided to destroy them all but was, in the end, conquered by the young god Marduk. Marduk made the earth from half of Tiamat's body and the sky from the other. In the battle,

Tiamat's helper, Kingu, was destroyed, and mankind was made from Kingu's blood mixed with clay.

Egyptian religion

One might have expected some kind of influence from Egyptian religion, particularly as Joseph married Asenath, who was a priest's daughter (Genesis 41:50), and because the Jewish people had been in Egypt for so long a period (Exodus 12:40–41). It appears, though, that the Jews kept their religion and their lives quite separate from the Egyptians. Jacob accepted Joseph's two sons into the family (Genesis 48:5–6), and Joseph's descendants identified the God they worshiped with Jacob (Israel) and not Egypt (Exodus 5:1). There is therefore no sign of Egyptian polytheism, which included Re (the sun), Yeb (the earth), Thoth (the moon), Hapi (the Nile), and Amon (the god of hidden powers). There is no mention of the animals that were linked with the gods and whose form often replaced them in contemporary art (Thoth and the ibis, Hapi and bulls, Horus and falcons).

The gods of Egypt were believed to be like human beings, and in their huge temples, which were barred to ordinary people, priests fed them, washed and clothed them, and took them out on festival days. Nothing could be more different from the God of Israel. Although the Jews believed in some kind of life after death (they were "gathered" to their "people," Genesis 49:29, 33, and Joseph's body was mummified, Genesis 50:26), there seems to have been little in common between Egyptian belief in life after death and that of the Jews. Egyptians believed that the soul went through the halls of the dead and needed subsistence for the journey until it arrived at the halls of judgment.

Canaanite religion

It therefore seems strange that the Canaanite religion was so great an attraction for the Jewish people and led to the spiritual chaos that brought about the judgment of God. Canaanite religion was an elaborate system that resulted from the need to ensure regular crops in an uncertain climate. Although the pantheon of gods was presided over by El, the key god was Baal, who was god of the storm, springs, and water. (There are references to Baal in Judges

2:13; 1 Kings 16:31; Jeremiah 19:5, and many other places.)

The rainfall of winter and the drought of summer were believed to indicate that Baal had died and that there was a need for him to be brought to life again by magic rites. (Weeping for Tammuz, who was a Babylonian deity, was similar. It was believed that human tears could help the god bring back the rains; Ezekiel 8:14.)

Similarly, the Canaanites believed that the gods could be helped to bring about fertility of the soil if the people fertilized one another in the places of worship. Therefore, there was a crude sexuality in the name of religion. Every Canaanite sanctuary had its own prostitutes for that purpose. Each sanctuary was dominated by a wooden pole, or asherah, which symbolized the female sex principle in the name of the goddess Asherah, and by an erect stone, or mazzebah, which symbolized male sexuality.

The Canaanites believed that the gods could be persuaded, even coerced, by magic ritual. This led to the extreme of child sacrifice. Sanctuaries to the gods were made on artificial mounds, or "high places," often placed on hilltops in the belief that they brought the worshipers physically closer to the gods. Assimilation of the Canaanite religion was a steady process, and in Elijah's time the prophet believed that true worshipers of the God of Israel were a very small minority (1 Kings 19:10).

The reason the Canaanite religion had such an attraction was probably that when the Jews arrived in Canaan they found that they had a relatively inferior form of culture. They did not know how to build, to perform arts, or even to farm adequately because they came from a seminomadic background. The Canaanites were sophisticated and successful by comparison, and seemed to know what should be done to ensure good crops. When such feelings of inferiority were aided and abetted by excuses for sexual license, it is not difficult to understand why the Canaanite religion had so great an influence.

Holy laws

Against the background discussed above, the Jewish religion developed with its own holy law, holy

The Judean wilderness. The patriarchs often encountered God in lonely and unpromising places.

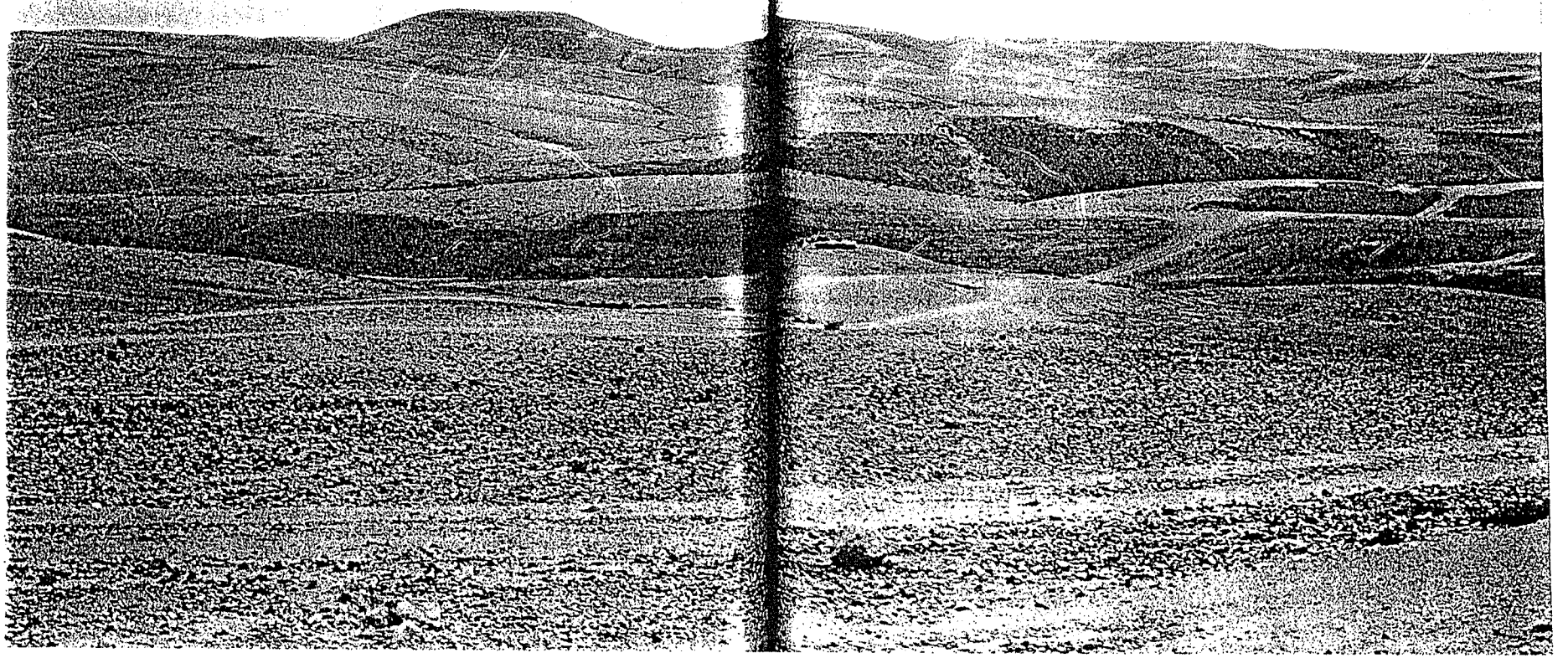
places, holy occasions, holy objects, and holy ritual. The law (Torah) has already been discussed (p. 82), and it was a key point of Jewish religion. It was a guide to good relationships with God and with other people. Torah means "guidance" and "instruction." The law was not always perfect. Jesus, for example, said that the divorce laws had been put in because "your hearts were hard" (Matthew 19:8). At the same time the Torah revealed the character of God: his holiness, justice, and goodness. It was possible to see what God was like from the standards he required.

Holy places

In patriarchal times, holy places were places where it had proved possible to meet with God, and such places were marked with an altar and sacrifice. When Abraham left Haran for Canaan and stopped

at Shechem, God appeared to him and said that the land was promised to his descendants. Genesis 12:7 then records that Abraham "built an altar there to the Lord, who had appeared to him." Altars were also built at Bethel (Genesis 12:8) and Hebron (Genesis 13:18), and Jacob renewed the altar at Bethel (Genesis 35:1).

Such places became holy places for the family. Jacob buried under a tree in Shechem the household gods he had brought from Laban's family (Genesis 35:4), and Hebron became the burial place for members of the family (Genesis 23:19; 25:9; 49:29–31). Joseph was buried at Shechem (Joshua 24:32). The same principle was followed until the time of the Temple at Jerusalem (Exodus 20:24), so that Gideon in effect made a sacrifice on an altar when the angel of the Lord appeared to him (Judges 6:19–21), and so did Manoah (Judges 13:19–20).



Pritchard, The ANE

II. Myths and Epics from Mesopotamia

A Sumerian Myth

TRANSLATOR: S. N. KRAMER

ANET, 42-44

THE DELUGE (Atrahasis Epic)

This Sumerian myth concerning the flood, with its Sumerian counterpart of the antediluvian Noah, offers the closest and most striking parallel to biblical material as yet uncovered in Sumerian literature. Moreover, its introductory passages are of considerable significance for Mesopotamian cosmogony; they include a number of important statements concerning the creation of man, the origin of kingship, and the existence of at least five antediluvian cities.

(approximately first 37 lines destroyed)
"My mankind, *in* its destruction I will . . . ,[1]
To Nintu [2] I will *return the* . . . *of* my creatures,
I will *return* the people *to* their *settlements*,
Of the cities, verily they will build their *places of (divine) ordinances*, I will make peaceful their shade,
Of *our*[3] houses, verily they will lay their bricks in pure places,
The places of our decisions verily they will found in pure places."
He directed the . . . *of the temenos*,
Perfected the rites (and) the exalted (divine) ordinances,
On the earth he . . . d, placed the . . . there.
After Anu, Enlil, Enki, and Ninhursag
Had fashioned the black-headed (people),[4]
Vegetation luxuriated from the earth,
Animals, four-legged (creatures) of the plain, were brought artfully into existence.
(approximately 37 lines destroyed)
After the . . . of kingship had been lowered from heaven,

[1] There is some possibility that it is more than one deity who is speaking. Our interpretation of the text assumes that the speaking deity (or deities) plans to save mankind from destruction, but this is uncertain.
[2] Nintu is the Sumerian mother goddess known also under the names Ninhursag and Ninmah.
[3] Perhaps "of the houses of the (divine) ordinances."
[4] The word "black-headed" usually refers to inhabitants of Sumer and Babylon; in the present context, it seems to refer to mankind as a whole.

After the exalted [*tiara*] (and) the throne of kingship had been lowered from heaven,
He[1] [pe]rfected the [rites (and) the ex]alted [(divine) ordinances] . . . ,
Founded the [*five*] *ci*[*ties*] in . . . p[ure places],
Cal[led] their names, [appor]tioned them *as* [*cu*]*lt-centers*.
The *first* of these cities, Eridu, he gave to Nudimmud,[2] the leader,
The second, Badtibira, he gave to . . . ,
The third, Larak, he gave to Endurbilhursag,
The fourth, Sippar, he gave to the hero Utu,[3]
The fifth, Shuruppak, he gave to Sud.[4]
When he had called the names of these cities, apportioned them *as cult-centers*,
He *brought* . . . ,[5]
Established the *cleaning* of the small rivers *as* . . .
(approximately 37 lines destroyed)
The flood . . . Gen. 6
. . .
Thu[s w]as treated . . .
Then did Nin[tu *weep*] like a . . . ,
The pure Inanna [set up] a lament for *its*[6] people,
Enki took coun[sel] with himself,
Anu, Enlil, Enki, (and) Ninhursag . . . ,
The gods of heaven and earth [uttered] the name of[7] Anu (and) Enlil.
Then did Ziusudra, the king, the *pašīšu* [of] . . . ,
Build giant . . . ;
Humbly obedient, reverent*ly* [he] . . . ,
Attending daily, constantly [he] . . . ,
Bringing forth all kinds of dreams, [he] . . . ,
Uttering the name of heaven (and) earth, [he] . . .
. . . the gods a *wall* . . . ,
Ziusudra, standing at *its* side, list[ened].
"Stand *by the wall* at my left side . . . ,[8]
By the wall I will say a word to thee, [take my word],

[1] Identity of deity or deities uncertain; perhaps it is Anu Enlil.
[2] Nudimmud is a name for the water-god Enki.
[3] The sun-god, known as the tutelary deity of both Sippar and Larsa.
[4] The tutelary goddess of Shuruppak identified by the later Babylonian theologians with the goddess Ninlil, the wife of Enlil.
[5] It may deal with rain and water supply.
[6] That is "the earth's" or "the land's." [7] "Conjured by Anu (and) Enlil."
[8] The name of the speaking deity is not given, no doubt, Enki.

19

[Give] ear to my instruction:
By our . . . a flood [*will sweep*] over the cult-centers;
To destroy the seed of mankind . . . ,
Is the decision, the word of the assembly [of the gods].
By the word commanded by Anu (and) Enlil . . . ,
Its kingship, its rule [*will be put to an end*]." (160)
(approximately 40 lines destroyed)
All the windstorms, exceedingly powerful,
attacked as one, (201)
At the same time, the flood sweeps *over the cult-centers.*
After, for seven days (and) seven nights,
The flood had *swept over* the land,
(And) the huge boat had been tossed about by the windstorms on the great waters,
Utu came forth, who sheds light on heaven (and) earth.
Ziusudra opened a *window of* the huge boat,
The hero Utu *brought his rays into* the giant boat.
Ziusudra, the king,
Prostrated himself before Utu, (210)
The king kills an ox, *slaughters* a sheep.
(approximately 39 lines destroyed)
"Ye will utter 'breath of heaven,' 'breath of earth,' verily
it will *stretch* itself by *your*. . . ." (251)
Anu (and) Enlil *uttered* "breath of heaven," "breath of earth," *by their* . . . , it stretched itself.
Vegetation, coming up out of the earth, rises up.
Ziusudra, the king,
Prostrated himself before Anu (and) Enlil.
Anu (and) Enlil cherished Ziusudra,
Life like (that of) a god they give him,
Breath eternal like (that of) a god they *bring down* for him.
Then, Ziusudra the king,
The *preserver of the name of vegetation (and)*
of the seed of mankind. (260)
In the land[1] *of crossing*,[2] the land of Dilmun, the place where the sun rises, they[3] caused to dwell.
(Remainder of the tablet,
about 39 lines of text, destroyed.)

[1] The Sumerian word twice rendered by "land" in this line may also be translated as "mountain" or "mountain-land."
[2] Perhaps the crossing of the sun immediately upon his rising in the east; the Sumerian word used may also mean "of rule."
[3] That is, probably Anu and Enlil.

Akkadian Myths and Epics

TRANSLATOR: E. A. SPEISER

THE CREATION EPIC (Enuma Elish)

ANET, 60, 66-69, 514

The struggle between cosmic order and chaos was to the ancient Mesopotamians a fateful drama that was renewed at the turn of each new year. The epic which deals with these events was therefore the most significant expression of the religious literature of Mesopotamia. The work, consisting of seven tablets, was known in Akkadian as *Enūma eliš* "When on high," after its opening words. It was recited with due solemnity on the fourth day of the New Year's festival.

There is as yet no general agreement as regards the date of composition. None of the extant texts antedates the first millennium B.C. On the internal evidence, however, of the context and the linguistic criteria, the majority of the scholars would assign the epic to the Old Babylonian period, i.e. the early part of the second millennium B.C. There does not appear to be any convincing reason against this earlier dating.

(Tablets I-III recount the birth of the gods, who spring from the primordial Apsu and Tiamat, and the choice of Marduk as the champion of the younger gods in the battle against Tiamat.)

Tablet IV

They erected for him a princely throne.
Facing his fathers, he sat down, presiding.
"Thou art the most honored of the great gods,
Thy decree is unrivaled, thy command is Anu.[1]
Thou, Marduk, art the most honored of the great gods, *Fig. 141*
Thy decree is unrivaled, thy word is Anu.
From this day unchangeable shall be thy pronouncement.
To raise or bring low—these shall be (in) thy hand. I Sam. 2:7
Thy utterance shall be true, thy command shall be unimpeachable.
No one among the gods shall transgress
thy bounds! (10)
Adornment being wanted for the seats of the gods,
Let the place of their shrines ever be in thy place.
O Marduk, thou art indeed our avenger.
We have granted thee kingship over the universe entire.

[1] i.e. it has the authority of the sky-god Anu.

When in Assembly thou sittest, thy word shall be supreme.
Thy weapons shall not fail; they shall smash thy foes!
O lord, spare the life of him who trusts thee,
But pour out the life of the god who seized evil."
Judg. 6:36-40 Having placed in their midst a piece of cloth,
They addressed themselves to Marduk, their first-born:
"Lord, truly thy decree is first among gods.
Say but to wreck or create; it shall be.
Open thy mouth: the cloth will vanish!
Speak again, and the cloth shall be whole!"
At the word of his mouth the cloth vanished.
He spoke again, and the cloth was restored.
When the gods, his fathers, saw the fruit of his word,
Joyfully they did homage: "Marduk is king!"
They conferred on him scepter, throne, and *vestment*;
They gave him matchless weapons that ward off the foes:
"Go and cut off the life of Tiamat.
May the winds bear her blood to places undisclosed."
Bel's destiny thus fixed, the gods, his fathers,
Caused him to go the way of success and attainment.
He constructed a bow, marked it as his weapon,
Attached thereto the arrow, fixed its bow-cord.
He raised the mace, made his right hand grasp it;
Bow and quiver he hung at his side.
In front of him he set the lightning,
With a blazing flame he filled his body.
He then made a net to enfold Tiamat therein.
The four winds he stationed that nothing of her might escape,
The South Wind, the North Wind, the East Wind, the West Wind.
Close to his side he held the net, the gift of his father, Anu.
He brought forth Imhullu "the Evil Wind," the Whirlwind, the Hurricane,
The Fourfold Wind, the Sevenfold Wind, the Cyclone, the Matchless Wind;
Then he sent forth the winds he had brought forth, the seven of them.
To stir up the inside of Tiamat they rose up behind him.
Then the lord raised up the flood-storm, his mighty weapon.

He mounted the storm-chariot irresistible [and] terrifying.
He harnessed (and) yoked to it a team-of-four,
The Killer, the Relentless, the Trampler, the Swift.
Sharp were their teeth, bearing poison.
They were versed in ravage, in destruction skilled.
On his right he posted the *Smiter*, fearsome in battle,
On the left the Combat, which repels all the zealous.
For a cloak he was wrapped in an armor of terror;
With his fearsome halo his head was turbaned.
The lord went forth and followed his course,
Towards the raging Tiamat he set his face.
In his lips he held a spell;
A plant to put out poison was grasped in his hand.
Then they milled about him, the gods milled about him,
The gods, his fathers, milled about him, the gods milled about him.
The lord approached to scan the inside of Tiamat,
(And) of Kingu, her consort, the scheme to perceive.
As he looks on, his course becomes upset,
His will is distracted and his doings are confused.
And when the gods, his helpers, who marched at his side,
Saw the valiant hero, blurred became their vision.
Tiamat emitted [a cry], without turning her neck,
Framing savage[1] defiance in her lips:[2]
"Too [imp]ortant art thou [for] the lord of the gods to rise up against thee!
Judg. 12:6
Is it in their place that they have gathered, (or) in thy place?"
Thereupon the lord, having [raised] the flood-storm, his mighty weapon,
[To] enraged [Tiamat] he sent word as follows:
"*Why* art thou risen, art haughtily exalted,
Thou hast charged thine own heart to stir up conflict,
. . . sons reject their own fathers,
Whilst thou, who hast born them, hast foresworn love!
Thou hast appointed Kingu as thy consort,
Conferring upon him the rank of Anu, not rightfully his.

[1] "her incantation" is not impossible.
[2] Tiamat's taunt, as recorded in the next two lines, is not clear.

Against Anshar, king of the gods, thou seekest evil;
[Against] the gods, my fathers, thou hast confirmed thy wickedness.
[Though] drawn up be thy forces, girded on thy weapons,
Stand thou up, that I and thou meet in single combat!"
When Tiamat heard this,
She was like one possessed; she took leave of her senses.
In fury Tiamat cried out aloud.
To the roots her legs shook both together.
She recites a charm, keeps casting her spell,
While the gods of battle sharpen their weapons.
Then joined issue Tiamat and Marduk, wisest of gods.
They strove in single combat, locked in battle.
The lord spread out his net to enfold her,
The Evil Wind, which followed behind, he let loose in her face.
When Tiamat opened her mouth to consume him,
He drove in the Evil Wind that she close not her lips.
As the fierce winds charged her belly,
Her body was distended and her mouth was wide open.
He released the arrow, it tore her belly,
It cut through her insides, splitting the heart.
Having thus subdued her, he extinguished her life.
He cast down her carcass to stand upon it.
After he had slain Tiamat, the leader,
Her band was shattered, her troupe broken up;
And the gods, her helpers who marched at her side,
Trembling with terror, turned their backs about,
In order to save and preserve their lives.
Tightly encircled, they could not escape.
He made them captives and he smashed their weapons.
Thrown into the net, they found themselves ensnared;
Placed in cells, they were filled with wailing;
Bearing his wrath, they were held imprisoned.
And the eleven creatures which she had charged with awe,
The band of demons that marched . [. .] before her,
He cast into fetters, their hands [. . .].
For all their resistance, he trampled (them) underfoot.
And Kingu, who had been made chief among them,
He bound and accounted him to Uggae.[1]

[1] God of death.

He took from him the Tablets of Fate, not rightfully his,
Sealed (them) with a seal[1] and fastened (them) on his breast.
When he had vanquished and subdued his adversaries,
Had . . . the vainglorious foe,
Had wholly established Anshar's triumph over the foe,
Nudimmud's desire had achieved, valiant Marduk
Strengthened his hold on the vanquished gods,
And turned back to Tiamat whom he had bound.
The lord trod on the legs of Tiamat,
With his unsparing mace he crushed her skull.
When the arteries of her blood he had severed,
The North Wind bore (it) to places undisclosed.
On seeing this, his fathers were joyful and jubilant,
They brought gifts of homage, they to him.
Then the lord paused to view her dead body,
That he might divide the monster and do artful works.
He split her like a shellfish into two parts:
Half of her he set up and ceiled it as sky,
Pulled down the bar and posted guards.
He bade them to allow not her waters to escape.
He crossed the heavens and surveyed the regions.
He squared Apsu's quarter, the abode of Nudimmud,
As the lord measured the dimensions of Apsu.
The Great Abode, its likeness, he fixed as Esharra,
The Great Abode, Esharra, which he made as the firmament.
Anu, Enlil, and Ea he made occupy their places. *Figs. 167, 168*

Tablet V

He constructed stations for the great gods,
Fixing their astral likenesses as constellations.
He determined the year by designating the zones:
He set up three constellations for each of the twelve months.
After defining the days of the year [by means] of (heavenly) figures,
He founded the station of Nebiru[2] to determine their (heavenly) bands,
That none might transgress or fall short.

[1] This was an essential act of attestation in Mesopotamian society.
[2] i.e. the planet Jupiter. This station was taken to lie between the band of the north, which belonged to Enlil, and the band of the south, which belonged to Ea.

Alongside it he set up the stations of Enlil and Ea.
Having opened up the gates on both sides,
He strengthened the locks to the left
and the right.
In her[1] belly he established the zenith.
The Moon he caused to shine, the night (to him) entrusting.
He appointed him a creature of the night to signify the days:
"Monthly, without cease, form designs with a crown.
At the month's very start, rising over the land,
Thou shalt have luminous horns to signify six days,
On the seventh day reaching a [half]-crown.
At full moon[2] stand in opposition[3] in mid-month.
When the sun [overtakes] thee at the base of heaven,
Diminish [thy crown] and retrogress in light.
[At the time of disappearance] approach thou the course of the sun,
And [on the twenty-ninth] thou shalt again stand in opposition to the sun."

(The remainder of this tablet is broken away or too fragmentary for translation.)

Tablet VI

When Marduk hears the words of the gods,
His heart prompts (him) to fashion artful works.
Opening his mouth, he addresses Ea
To impart the plan he had conceived in his heart:
Gen. 1:26 "Blood I will mass and cause bones to be.
I will establish a savage, 'man' shall be his name.
Verily, savage-man I will create.
He shall be charged with the service of the gods
That they might be at ease!
The ways of the gods I will artfully alter.
Though alike revered, into two (groups) they shall be divided."
Ea answered him, speaking a word to him,
Giving him another plan for the relief of the gods:
"Let but one of their brothers be handed over;
He alone shall perish that mankind may be fashioned.[4]
Let the great gods be here in Assembly,

[1] Tiamat's.
[2] Akkadian *šapattu*, the prototype of the "Sabbath" in so far as the injunctions against all types of activity are concerned.
[3] I.e. with regard to the sun. This verb was a technical term in Babylonian astronomy.
[4] Out of his blood.

Let the guilty be handed over that they may endure."
Marduk summoned the great gods to Assembly;
Presiding graciously, he issues instructions.
To his utterance the gods pay heed.
The king addresses a word to the Anunnaki:
"If your former statement was true,
Do (now) the truth on oath by me declare!
Who was it that contrived the uprising,
And made Tiamat rebel, and joined battle?
Let him be handed over who contrived the uprising.
His guilt I will make him bear. You shall dwell in peace!"
The Igigi, the great gods, replied to him,
To Lugaldimmerankia,[1] counselor of the gods, their lord:
"It was Kingu who contrived the uprising,
And made Tiamat rebel, and joined battle."
They bound him, holding him before Ea.
They imposed on him his guilt and severed his blood (vessels).
Out of his blood they fashioned mankind.
He[2] imposed the service and let free the gods.
After Ea, the wise, had created mankind,
Had imposed upon it the service of the gods—
That work was beyond comprehension;
As artfully planned by Marduk, did Nudimmud create it—
Marduk, the king of the gods divided
All the Anunnaki above and below.[3]
He assigned (them) to Anu to guard his instructions.
Three hundred in the heavens he stationed as a guard.
In like manner the ways of the earth he defined.
In heaven and on earth six hundred (thus) he settled.
After he had ordered all the instructions,
To the Anunnaki of heaven and earth had allotted their portions,
The Anunnaki opened their mouths
And said to Marduk, their lord:
"Now,[4] O lord, thou who hast caused our deliverance,
What shall be our homage to thee?
Let us build a shrine whose name shall be called

[1] "The king of the gods of heaven and earth."
[2] Ea.
[3] Here and elsewhere in this epic the Anunnaki are understood to be the celestial gods (normally Igigi) as well as those of the lower regions.
[4] Not "O Nannar," as translated by some.

'Lo, a chamber for our nightly rest'; let us repose in it!
Let us build a throne, a recess for his abode!
On the day that we arrive[1] we shall repose in it."
When Marduk heard this,
Brightly glowed his features, like the day:
"Like that of *lofty* Babylon, whose building you have requested,
Let its brickwork be fashioned. You shall name it 'The Sanctuary.'"
The Anunnaki applied the implement;
For one whole year they molded bricks.
When the second year arrived,
Fig. 189 They raised high the head of Esagila equaling Apsu.[2]
Having built a stage-tower *as high as* Apsu,
They set up *in it* an abode for Marduk, Enlil, (and) Ea
In their presence he *adorned* (it) in grandeur.
To the base of Esharra its horns look down.
After they had achieved the building of Esagila,
The Anunnaki *themselves* erected their shrines.
[. . .] all of them gathered,
[. . .] they had built as his dwelling.
The gods, his fathers, at his banquet he seated:
"This is Babylon, the place that is your home!
Make merry in its precincts, occupy its broad [places]."
The great gods took their seats,
They set up festive drink, sat down to a banquet.
After they had made merry within it,
In Esagila, the *splendid*, had performed their rites,
The norms had been fixed (and) *all* [their] portents,
All the gods apportioned the stations of heaven and earth.
The fifty great gods took their seats.
The seven gods of destiny set up the three hundred [in heaven].
Enlil raised the bo[w, his wea]pon, and laid (it) before them.
The gods, his fathers, saw the net he had made.
When they beheld the bow, how skillful its shape,
His fathers praised the work he had wrought.
Raising (it), Anu spoke up in the Assembly of the gods,
As he kissed the bow: "This is my daughter!"
He named the names of the bow as follows:

[1] For the New Year's festival.
[2] Meaning apparently that the height of Esagila corresponded to the depth of Apsu's waters.

"Longwood is the first, the second is [. . .];
Its third name is Bow-Star, in heaven I have made it shine."
He fixed a place which the gods, its[1] brothers, [. . .].
After Anu had decreed the fate of the Bow,
And had placed the *exalted* royal throne before the gods,
Anu seated it in the Assembly of the gods.
When the great gods had assembled,
And had [. . .] the fate which Marduk had exalted,
They pronounced among themselves a curse,
Swearing by water and oil to place life in jeopardy.
When they had granted him the exercise of kingship of the gods,
They confirmed him in dominion over the gods of heaven and earth.
Anshar pronounced supreme his name Asar(u)luhi:
"Let us make humble obeisance at the mention of his name;
When he speaks, the gods shall pay heed to him.
Let his utterance be supreme above and below!"
"Most exalted be the Son, our avenger;
Let his sovereignty be surpassing, having no rival.
May he shepherd the black-headed ones,[2] his creatures.
To the end of days, without forgetting, let them acclaim his ways.
May he establish for his fathers the great food-offerings;
Their support they shall furnish, shall tend their sanctuaries.
May he cause incense to be smelled, . . . their spells,
A likeness on earth of what he has wrought in heaven.
May he order the black-headed to *re*[*vere him*],
May the subjects ever bear in mind their god,
And may they at his word pay heed to the goddess.
May food-offerings be borne for their gods and goddesses.
Without fail let them support their gods!
Their lands let them improve, build their shrines,
Let the black-headed wait on their gods.
As for us, by however many names we pronounce, he is our god!
Let us then proclaim his fifty names. . . .

[1] Referring to the Bow.
[2] A common Akkadian metaphor for "the human race."

ANET, 72-79, 83-90, 92-97, 514-515

The Epic of Gilgamesh

The theme of this epic is essentially a secular one. The poem deals with such earthy things as man and nature, love and adventure, friendship and combat—all masterfully blended into a background for the stark reality of death. The climactic struggle of the protagonist to change his eventual fate, by learning the secret of immortality from the hero of the Great Flood of long ago, ends in failure; but with the failure comes a sense of quiet resignation. For the first time in the history of the world a profound experience on such a heroic scale has found expression in a noble style. The scope and sweep of the epic, and its sheer poetic power, give it a timeless appeal. All but a few of the Akkadian texts come from the library of Ashurbanipal at Nineveh. Unlike the Creation Epic, however, the Gilgamesh Epic is known also from versions which antedate the first millennium B.C. From *Fig. 69* the middle of the second millennium have come down fragments of an Akkadian recension current in the Hittite Empire, and the same Boğazköy archives have yielded also important fragments of a Hittite translation, as well as a fragment of a Hurrian rendering of the epic. From the first half of the second millennium we possess representative portions of the Old Babylonian version of the epic, which pertain to Tablets I-III, and X. That this version was itself a copy of an earlier text is suggested by the internal evidence of the material. The original date of composition of the Akkadian work has to be placed at the turn of the second millennium, if not slightly earlier.

Tablet I (i)

He who saw everything [to the end]s of the land,
[Who all thing]s experienced, [conside]red all!
[. . .] together [. . .],
[. . .] of wisdom, who all things . [. .].
The [hi]dden he saw, [laid bare] the undisclosed.
He brought report of before the Flood,
Achieved a long journey, weary and [w]orn.
All his toil he engraved on a stone stela.
Of ramparted Uruk the wall he built,
Of hallowed Eanna,[1] the pure sanctuary. (10)
Behold its outer wall, whose cornice is like copper,
Peer at the inner wall, which none can equal!
Seize upon the threshold, which is from of old!
Draw near to Eanna, the dwelling of Ishtar,
Which no future king, no man, can equal.
Go up and walk on the walls of Uruk,
Inspect the base terrace, examine the brickwork:
Is not its brickwork of burnt brick?
Did not the Seven [Sages][2] lay its foundations?

[1] The temple of Anu and Ishtar in Uruk.
[2] The seven sages, who brought civilization to seven of the oldest cities.

(Remainder of the column broken away. A Hittite fragment [cf. J. Friedrich, *ZA*, XXXIX (1929), 2-5] corresponds in part with the damaged initial portion of our column ii, and hence appears to contain some of the material from the end of the first column. We gather from this fragment that several gods had a hand in fashioning Gilgamesh, whom they endowed with superhuman size. At length, Gilgamesh arrives in Uruk.)

(ii)

Two-thirds of him is god, [one-third of him is human].
The form of his body [. . .]
(mutilated or missing) (3-7)
[. . .] like a wild ox lofty [. . .]; (8)
The onslaught of his weapons verily has no equal.
By the *drum*[1] are aroused [his] companions. (10)
The nobles of Uruk *are gloo*[*my*] in [their chamb]ers:
"Gilgamesh leaves not the son to [his] father;
[Day] and [night] is unbridled his arro[gance].
[Is this Gilga]mesh, [the shepherd of ramparted] Uruk?
Is this [our] shepherd, [bold, stately, wise]?
[Gilgamesh] leaves not [the maid to her mother],
The warrior's daughter, [the noble's spouse]!"
The [gods hearkened] to their plaint,
The gods of heaven Uruk's lord [they . . .]:
"Did not [*Aruru*][2] bring forth this strong wild ox? (20)
[The onslaught of his weapons] verily has no equal.
By the *drum* are aroused his [companions].
Gilgamesh leaves not the son to his father;
Day and night [is unbridled his arrogance].
Is this the shepherd of [ramparted] Uruk?
Is this their [. . .] shepherd,
Bold, stately, (and) wise? . . .
Gilgamesh leaves not the maid to [her mother],
The warrior's daughter, the noble's spouse!"
When [Anu] had heard out their plaint,
The great Aruru they called: (30)
"Thou, Aruru, didst create [the man];
Create now his double;
His stormy heart let him match.
Let them contend, that Uruk may have peace!"
When Aruru heard this,

[1] Here perhaps the reference is to the abuse for personal purposes of an instrument intended for civic or religious use.
[2] A goddess.

A double of Anu she conceived within her.
Aruru washed her hands,
Pinched off clay and cast it on the steppe.
[On the step]pe she created valiant Enkidu,
Offspring of . . . , essence of Ninurta.
[Sha]ggy with hair is his whole body,
He is endowed with head hair like a woman.
The locks of his hair sprout like Nisaba.[1]
He knows neither people nor land;
Garbed is he like Sumuqan.[2]
With the gazelles he feeds on grass,
With the wild beasts he jostles at the watering-place,
With the teeming creatures his heart delights in water.
(Now) a hunter, a trapping-man,
Faced him at the watering-place.
[One] day, a second, and a third
He faced him at the watering-place.
When the hunter saw him, his face became motionless.
He and his beasts went into his house,
[Sore a]fraid, still, without a sound,
(While) his heart [was disturbed], overclouded his face.
For woe had [entered] his belly;
His face was like that [of a wayfarer]
from afar.

(iii)

The hunter opened [his mouth] to speak,
Saying to [his father]:
"My father, there is [a] fellow who [has come from the hills],
He is the might[iest in the land]; strength he has.
[Like the essence] of Anu, so mighty his strength!
[Ever] he ranges over the hills,
[Ever] with the beasts [he feeds on grass].
[Ever sets he] his feet at the watering-place.
[I am so frightened that] I dare not approach him!
[He filled in] the pits that I had dug,
[He tore up] my *traps* which I had [set],
The beasts and creatures of the steppe
[He has made slip through my hands].[3]
[He does not allow] me to engage in fieldcraft!

[His father opened his mouth to speak],

[1] Goddess of grain. [2] God of cattle. [3] Perhaps "he has made me forfeit."

Saying to the hunter:
"[My son], in Uruk [there lives] Gilgamesh.
[No one is there more mighty] than he.
[Like the essence of Anu, so mi]ghty is his strength!
[Go, then, toward Uruk set] thy face,
[Speak to him of] the power of the man.
[Let him give thee a harlot-lass]. Take (her) [with thee];
[Let her prevail against him] by dint of [greater] might.
[When he waters the beasts at] the watering-place,
[She shall pull off] her cloth[ing, laying bare] her ripeness.
[As soon as he sees] her, he will draw near to her.
Reject him[1] will his beasts [that grew up on] his steppe!"
[Giving heed to] the advice of his father,
The hunter went forth [to Gilgamesh].
He took the road, in Uruk he set [his foot]:
"[. . .] Gilga[mesh . . .],
There is a fellow [who has come from the hills],
He is the might[iest in the land; strength he has].
Like the essence of Anu, so mighty [his strength]!
[Ever] he ranges over the hills,
Ever with the beasts [he feeds on grass],
Ever [sets] he his feet at the watering-place.
I am so frightened that I dare not approach [him]!
He filled in the pits that [I] had dug,
He tore up my *traps* [which I had set],
The beasts and creatures [of the steppe]
He has made slip through my hands.
He does not allow me to engage in fieldcraft!"
Gilgamesh says to him, [to] the hunter:
"Go, my hunter, take with thee a harlot-lass.
When he waters the beasts at the watering-place,
She shall pull off her clothing, laying bare her ripeness.
As soon as he sees her, he will draw near to her.
Reject him will his beasts that grew up on his steppe!"
Forth went the hunter, taking with him a harlot-lass.
They took the road, going straight on the(ir) way.
On the third day at the appointed spot they arrived.
The hunter and the harlot sat down in their places.

[1] Lit. "regard as stranger, deny."

One day, a second day, they sat by the
watering-place.
The wild beasts came to the watering-place to drink.

(iv)

The creeping creatures came, their heart delighting in
water.
But as for him, Enkidu, born in the hills—
With the gazelles he feeds on grass,
With the wild beasts he drinks at the watering-place,
With the creeping creatures his heart delights in water—
The lass beheld him, the savage-man,
The barbarous fellow from the depths of the steppe:
"There he is, O lass! Free thy breasts,
Bare thy bosom that he may possess thy ripeness!
Be not bashful! Welcome his ardor!
As soon as he sees thee, he will draw near to thee.
Lay aside thy cloth that he may rest upon thee.
Treat him, the savage, to a woman's task!
Reject him will his wild beasts that grew up on his
steppe,
As his love is drawn unto thee."
The lass freed her breasts, bared her bosom,
And he possessed her ripeness.
She was not bashful as she welcomed his ardor.
She laid aside her cloth and he rested upon her.
She treated him, the savage, to a woman's task,
As his love was drawn unto her.
For six days and seven nights Enkidu comes forth,
Mating with the lass.
After he had had (his) fill of her charms,
He set his face toward his wild beasts.
On seeing him, Enkidu, the gazelles ran off,
The wild beasts of the steppe drew away from his body.
Startled was Enkidu, as his body became taut,
His knees were motionless—for his wild beasts had gone.
Enkidu had to slacken his pace—it was not as before;
But he now had [wi]sdom, [br]oader understanding.
Returning, he sits at the feet of the harlot.
He looks up at the face of the harlot,
His ears attentive, as the harlot speaks;
[The harlot] says to him, to Enkidu:
"Thou art [wi]se, Enkidu, art become like a god!
Why with the wild creatures dost thou roam over the
steppe?

Come, let me lead thee [to] ramparted Uruk,
To the holy temple, abode of Anu and Ishtar,
Where lives Gilgamesh, accomplished in strength,
And like a wild ox lords it over the folk."
As she speaks to him, her words find favor,
His heart enlightened, he yearns for a friend.
Enkidu says to her, to the harlot:
"Up, lass, escort thou me,
To the pure sacred temple, abode of Anu and Ishtar,
Where lives Gilgamesh, accomplished in strength,
And like a wild ox lords it over the folk.
I will challenge him [and will bo]ldly address him,

(v)

[I will] shout in Uruk: 'I am he who is mighty!
[I am the] one who can alter destinies,
[(He) who] was born on the steppe is mighty; strength
he has.'"
"[Up then, let us go, that he may see] thy face.
[I will show thee Gilgamesh; where] he is I know well.
Come then, O Enkidu, to ramparted [Uruk],
Where people are re[splend]ent in festal attire,
(Where) each day is made a holiday,
Where [. . .] lads . . . ,
And la[ss]es [. .] . of figure.
Their ripeness [. . .] full of perfume.
They drive the great ones from their couches!
To thee, O Enkidu, who rejoicest in living,
I will show Gilgamesh, the joyful man!
Look thou at him, regard his face;
He is radiant with manhood, vigor he has.
With ripeness gorgeous is the whole of his body,
Mightier strength has he than thou,
Never resting by day or by night.
O Enkidu, renounce thy presumption!
Gilgamesh—of him Shamash is fond; *Fig. 144*
Anu, Enlil, and Ea have broadened his wisdom.
Before thou comest down from the hills,
Gilgamesh will see thee in (his) dreams in Uruk: . . .

(Remaining lines of the Assyrian Version of Tablet I are here omitted since the Old Babylonian Version of Tablet II takes up at this point.)

[I shall invest my body with uncut hair],
And, clad in a [lion] skin, [I shall roam over the steppe]!"

With the first glow of dawn, [Gilgamesh]
Loosened his band [. . .].

(The remainder of the tablet is missing or too fragmentary for translation, with the exception of the following lines:)

(v)

With the first glow of dawn, Gilgamesh
fashioned [. . .],
Brought out a large table of *elammaqu* wood,
Filled with honey a bowl of *carnelian*,
Filled with curds a bowl of lapis,
[. . .] he decorated and exposed to the sun.

Tablet IX

(i)

For Enkidu, his friend, Gilgamesh
Weeps bitterly, as he ranges over the steppe:
"When I die, shall I not be like Enkidu?
Woe has entered my belly.
Fearing death, I roam over the steppe.
To Utnapishtim,[1] Ubar-Tutu's son,
I have taken the road to proceed in all haste.
When arriving by night at mountain passes,
I saw lions and grew afraid,
I lifted my head to Sin[2] to pray.
To [. . .] of the gods went out my orisons.
[. . .] preserve thou me!"
[As at night] he lay, he awoke from a dream.
[There were . . .], rejoicing in life.
He raised his axe in his hand,
He drew [the dirk] from his belt.
Like an ar[row] he descended among them.
He smote [them] and hacked away at them.

(The remainder of Tablet IX gives the adventures of Gilgamesh as he passes successfully the darkness of the mountain range of Mashu guarded by scorpion-men.)

[1] Mesopotamian hero of the Flood—Sumerian Ziusudra and Greek Xisouthros. [2] The moon-god.

Tablet X

This tablet, which traces further the successive stages in Gilgamesh's quest of immortality, happens to be represented by as many as four separate versions. Two of these, however, the Hittite and Hurrian, are extant only in fragments that are too slight for connected translation. Substantial portions are available, on the other hand, in the Old Babylonian and Assyrian recensions.

OLD BABYLONIAN VERSION

(i)

(top broken away)

"[. . .] . . .
With their skins [he clothes himself], as he eats flesh.
[.] . . , O Gilgamesh, which has not happened
As long as my wind drives the waters."
Shamash was distraught, as he betook himself to him;
He says to Gilgamesh:
"Gilgamesh, whither rovest thou?
The life thou pursuest thou shalt not find."
Gilgamesh says to him, to valiant Shamash:
"After marching (and) roving over the steppe,
Must I lay my head in the heart of the earth
That I may sleep through all the years?
Let mine eyes behold the sun
That I may have my fill of the light!
Darkness withdraws when there is enough light.
May one who indeed is dead behold yet the radiance of the sun!"

(ii)

(Beginning lost. Gilgamesh is addressing Siduri, the ale-wife:)

"He who with me underwent all hard[ships]—
Enkidu, whom I loved dearly,
Who with me underwent all hardships—
Has now gone to the fate of mankind!
Day and night I have wept over him.
I would not give him up for burial—
In case my friend should rise at my plaint—
Seven days and seven nights,
Until a worm fell out of his nose.
Since his passing I have not found life,
I have roamed like a hunter in the midst of the steppe.
O ale-wife, now that I have seen thy face,
Let me not see the death which I ever dread."

The ale-wife said to him, to Gilgamesh:

(iii)

"Gilgamesh, whither rovest thou?
The life thou pursuest thou shalt not find.
Ps. 115:17 When the gods created mankind,
Death for mankind they set aside,
Life in their own hands retaining.
Thou, Gilgamesh, let full be thy belly,
Eccles. 5:18 Make thou merry by day and by night.
Of each day make thou a feast of rejoicing,
Eccles. 8:15 Day and night dance thou and play!
Eccles. 9:8-9 Let thy garments be sparkling fresh, (10)
Thy head be washed; bathe thou in water.
Pay heed to the little one that holds on to thy hand,
Let thy spouse delight in thy bosom!
For this is the task of [mankind]!"

(remainder of the column broken away)

(iv)

In his wrath he shatters them. [1]
When he returned, he goes up to him. [2]
Sursunabu [3] his eyes behold.
Sursunabu says to him, to Gilgamesh:
"Tell me, thou, what is thy name?
I am Sursunabu, (he) of Utanapishtim [4] the Faraway."
Gilgamesh said to him, to Sursunabu:
"As for me, Gilgamesh is my name,
Who have come from Uruk-Eanna,
Who have traversed the mountains, (10)
A distant journey, as the sun *rises*.
O Sursunabu, now that I have seen thy face,
Show me Utanapishtim the Faraway."
Sursunabu [says] to him, to Gilgamesh.

(remainder broken away)

(The Assyrian Version of Tablet X gives the episodes of the meetings with Siduri and with Sursunabu [Urshanabi in the Assyrian Version] and an account of the crossing of the Waters of Death to the abode of Utnapishtim. The concluding part of Tablet X follows:)

[1] Apparently the mysterious "Stone Things." [2] To the boatman.
[3] The Urshanabi of the Assyrian Version. [4] Assyrian Utnapishtim.

(v)

Gilgamesh also said to him, to Utnapishtim: (23)
"That now I might come and behold Utnapishtim,
Whom they call the Faraway,
I ranged and wandered over all the lands,
I traversed difficult mountains,
I crossed all the seas!
My face was not sated with sweet sleep,
I fretted myself with wakefulness;
I filled my joints with misery.
I had not reached the ale-wife's house,
When my clothing was used up. (30)
[I sl]ew bear, hyena, lion, panther,
Tiger, stag, (and) ibex—
The wild beasts and creeping things of the steppe.
Their [flesh] I ate and their skins I *wr[apped about me]*."

(The remainder of this column is too mutilated for translation. The beginning of the last column is broken away, except for the conclusion of the sage observations of Utnapishtim:)

(vi)

"Do we build a house for ever? (26)
Do we seal (contracts) for ever?
Do brothers divide shares for ever?
Does hatred persist for ever in [the land]? Eccles. 9:6
Does the river for ever raise up (and) bring on floods?
The dragon-fly [leaves] (its) shell (30)
That its face might (but) glance at the face of the sun.
Since the days of yore there has been no [permanence]; Eccles. 1:11; 1:4; 2:16; 9:5; 3:19
The *resting* and the dead, how alike [they are]!
Do they not compose a picture of death,
The commoner and the noble,
Once they are near to [their fate]?
The Anunnaki, the great gods, foregather;
Mammetum, maker of fate, with them the fate decrees:
Death and life they determine.
(But) of death, its days are not revealed." Deut. 30:19

Tablet XI

Gilgamesh said to him, to Utnapishtim the Faraway:
"As I look upon thee, Utnapishtim,
Thy features are not strange; even as I art thou.
Thou art not strange at all; even as I art thou.
My heart had regarded thee as resolved to do battle,

[Yet] thou liest indolent upon thy back!
[Tell me,] how joinedst thou the Assembly of the gods,
In thy quest of life?"

Utnapishtim said to him, to Gilgamesh:
"I will reveal to thee, Gilgamesh, a hidden matter
And a secret of the gods will I tell thee:
Shurippak—a city which thou knowest,
[(And) which on Euphrates' [banks] is situate—
That city was ancient, (as were) the gods within it,
When their heart led the great gods to produce the flood.
[*There*] *were* Anu, their father,
Valiant Enlil, their counselor,
Ninurta, their assistant,
Ennuge, their irrigator.[1]
Ninigiku-Ea was also present with them;
Their words he repeats to the reed-hut:[2]
'Reed-hut, reed-hut! Wall, wall!
Reed-hut, hearken! Wall, reflect!
Man of Shuruppak, son of Ubar-Tutu,
Gen. 6:14 Tear down (this) house, build a ship!
Give up possessions, seek thou life.
Forswear (worldly) goods and keep the soul alive!
Gen. 6:19-20 Aboard the ship take thou the seed of all living things.
The ship that thou shalt build,
Her dimensions shall be to measure.
Gen. 6:15 Equal shall be her width and her length.
Like the Apsu thou shalt ceil her.'
I understood, and I said to Ea, my lord:
'[Behold], my lord, what thou hast thus ordered,
I will be honored to carry out.
[But what] shall I answer the city, the people and elders?'
Ea opened his mouth to speak,
Saying to me, his servant:
'Thou shalt then thus speak unto them:
"I have learned that Enlil is hostile to me,
So that I cannot reside in your city,
Nor set my f[oo]t in Enlil's territory.
To the Deep I will therefore go down,
To dwell with my lord Ea.
[But upon] you he will shower down abundance,
[The *choicest*] birds, the *rarest* fishes.

[1] More specifically, "inspector of canals."
[2] Presumably, the dwelling place of Utnapishtim. Ea addresses him through the barrier of the wall.

[*The land shall have its fill*] of harvest riches.
[He who at dusk orders] the husk-greens,
Will shower down upon you a rain of wheat."[1]

With the first glow of dawn,
The land was gathered [about me].
(too fragmentary for translation)
The little ones [carr]ied bitumen,
While the grown ones brought [all else] that was needful.
On the fifth day I laid her framework.
One (whole) acre was her floor space,
Ten dozen cubits the height of each of her walls, Gen. 6:15
Ten dozen cubits each edge of the square deck.[2]
I laid out the contours (and) joined her together.
I provided her with six decks, Gen. 6:16
Dividing her (thus) into seven parts.
Her floor plan I divided into nine parts.
I hammered water-plugs into her.
I saw to the punting-poles and laid in supplies.
Six 'sar'[3] (measures) of bitumen I poured into the furnace, Gen. 6:14
Three sar of asphalt [I also] poured inside.
Three sar of oil the basket-bearers carried,
Aside from the one sar of oil which the *calking* consumed,
And the two sar of oil [which] the boatman stowed away.
Bullocks I slaughtered for the [people], Gen. 6:21
And I killed sheep every day.
Must, red wine, oil, and white wine
[I gave the] workmen [to drink], as though river water,
That they might feast as on New Year's Day.
I op[ened . . .] ointment, applying (it) to my hand.
[On the sev]enth [day] the ship was completed.
[*The launching*] was very difficult,
So that they had to shift the floor planks above and below,
[*Until*] two-thirds of [*the structure*] [*had g*]*one* [*into the water*].

[1] As has long been recognized, these lines feature word plays in that both *kukku* and *kibâti* may designate either food or misfortune; Wily Ea plays on this ambiguity: To the populace, the statement would be a promise of prosperity; to Utnapishtim it would signalize the impending deluge.
[2] The ship was thus an exact cube.
[3] The number 3,600. If the measure understood with it was the *sutu* (seah), each *sar* designated about 8,000 gallons.

Gen. 8:8-10 The dove went forth, but came back;
Since no resting-place for it was visible, she turned round.
Then I sent forth and set free a swallow.
The swallow went forth, but came back;
Since no resting-place for it was visible, she turned round.
Gen. 8:7 Then I sent forth and set free a raven.
The raven went forth and, seeing that the waters had diminished,
He eats, circles, caws, and turns not round.
Then I let out (all) to the four winds
And offered a sacrifice.
Gen. 8:19-20 I poured out a libation on the top of the mountain.
Seven and seven cult-vessels I set up,
Upon their pot-stands I heaped cane, cedarwood, and myrtle.
Gen. 8:21 The gods smelled the savor,
The gods smelled the sweet savor,
The gods crowded like flies about the sacrificer.
When at length as the great goddess [1] arrived,
She lifted up the great jewels which Anu had fashioned to her liking:
'Ye gods here, as surely as this lapis
Upon my neck I shall not forget,
I shall be mindful of these days, forgetting (them) never.
Let the gods come to the offering;
(But) let not Enlil come to the offering,
For he, unreasoning, brought on the deluge
And my people consigned to destruction.'
When at length as Enlil arrived,
And saw the ship, Enlil was wroth,
He was filled with wrath over the Igigi gods:[2]
'Has some living soul escaped?
No man was to survive the destruction!'
Ninurta opened his mouth to speak,
Saying to valiant Enlil:
'Who, other than Ea, can devise plans?[3]
It is Ea alone who knows every matter.'
Ea opened his mouth to speak,
Saying to valiant Enlil:
'Thou wisest of gods, thou hero,
How couldst thou, unreasoning, bring on the deluge?

[1] Ishtar. [2] The heavenly gods.
[3] An allusion to one of the common epithets of Ea.

On the sinner impose his sin,
On the transgressor impose his transgression!
(Yet) be lenient, lest he be cut off,
Be patient, lest he be dis[lodged]!
Instead of thy bringing on the deluge, Ezek. 14:13-21
Would that a lion had risen up to diminish mankind!
Instead of thy bringing on the deluge,
Would that a wolf had risen up to diminish mankind!
Instead of thy bringing on the deluge,
Would that a famine had risen up to l[ay low] mankind!
Instead of thy bringing on the deluge,
Would that pestilence had risen up to smi[te down] mankind!
It was not I who disclosed the secret of the great gods.
I let Atrahasis [1] see a dream,
And he perceived the secret of the gods.
Now then take counsel in regard to him!'
Thereupon Enlil went aboard the ship.
Holding me by the hand, he took me aboard.
He took my wife aboard and made (her) kneel by my side.
Standing between us, he touched our foreheads to bless us:
'Hitherto Utnapishtim has been but human.
Henceforth Utnapishtim and his wife shall be like unto us gods.
Utnapishtim shall reside far away, at the mouth of the rivers!'
Thus they took me and made me reside far away,
At the mouth of the rivers.
But now, who will for thy sake call the gods to Assembly
That the life which thou seekest thou mayest find?
Up, lie not down to sleep
For six days and seven nights."
As he sits there on his haunches,
Sleep fans him like the whirlwind.
Utnapishtim says to her, to his spouse:
"Behold this hero who seeks life!
Sleep fans him like a mist."
His spouse says to him, to Utnapishtim the Faraway:
"Touch him that the man may awake,

[1] "Exceeding Wise," an epithet of Utnapishtim.

That he may return safe on the way whence he came,
That through the gate by which he left he may return to his land."
Utnapishtim says to her, to his spouse:
Gen. 8:21 "Since to deceive is human, he will seek to deceive thee.
Up, bake for him wafers, put (them) at his head,
And mark on the wall the days he sleeps."
She baked for him wafers, put (them) at his head,
And marked on the wall the days he slept.
His first wafer is dried out
The second is gone bad, the third is soggy;
The crust of the fourth has turned white;
The fifth has a moldy cast,
The sixth (still) is fresh-colored;
The seventh—just as he touched him the man awoke.

Gilgamesh says to him, to Utnapishtim the Faraway:
"Scarcely had sleep surged over me,
When straightway thou dost touch and rouse me!"
Utnapishtim [says to him], to Gilgamesh:
"[Go], Gilgamesh, count thy wafers,
[That the days thou hast slept] may become known to thee:
Thy [first] wafer is dried out,
[The second is gone] bad, the third is soggy;
The crust of the fourth has turned white;
[The fifth] has a moldy cast,
The sixth (still) is fresh-colored.
[The seventh]—at this instant thou hast awakened."
Gilgamesh says to him, to Utnapishtim the Faraway:
"[What then] shall I do, Utnapishtim,
Whither shall I go,
[Now] that the Bereaver has laid hold on my [members]?
In my bedchamber lurks death,
And wherever I se[t my foot], there is death!"

Utnapishtim [says to him], to Urshanabi, the boatman:
"Urshanabi, may the landing-pl[ace not rejoice in thee],
May the place of crossing renounce thee!
To him who wanders on its shore, deny thou its shore!
The man thou hast led (hither), whose body is covered with grime,
The grace of whose members skins have distorted,

[1] By asserting that he had not slept at all.

Take him, Urshanabi, and bring him to the washing-place.
Let him wash off his grime in water clean as snow,
Let him cast off his skins, let the sea carry (them) away,
That the fairness of his body may be seen.
Let him renew the band round his head,
Let him put on a cloak to clothe his nakedness,
That he may arrive in his city,
That he may achieve his journey.
Let not (his) cloak have a moldy cast,
Let it be wholly new."
Urshanabi took him and brought him to the washing-place.
He washed off his grime in water clean as snow.
He cast off his skins, the sea carried (them) away,
That the fairness of his body might be seen.
He renewed [the band] round his head,
He put on a cloak to clothe his nakedness,
That he might ar[rive in his city],
That he might achieve his journey.
[The cloak had not a moldy cast, but] was [wholly] new.
Gilgamesh and Urshanabi boarded the boat,
[They launch]ed the boat on the waves (and) they sailed away.

His spouse says to him, to Utnapishtim the Faraway:
"Gilgamesh has come hither, toiling and straining.
What wilt thou give (him) that he may return to his land?"
At that he, Gilgamesh, raised up (his) pole,
To bring the boat nigh to the shore.
Utnapishtim [says] to him, [to] Gilgamesh:
"Gilgamesh, thou hast come hither, toiling and straining.
What shall I give thee that thou mayest return to thy land?
I will disclose, O Gilgamesh, a hidden thing,
And [*a secret of the gods* I will] tell thee:
This plant, like the buckthorn is [its . . .].
Its thorns will pr[ick thy hands] just as does the *rose*.
If thy hands obtain the plant, [thou wilt find new life]."
No sooner had Gilgamesh heard this,

Than he opened the *wa[ter-pipe]*,
He tied heavy stones [to his feet].
They pulled him down into the deep [and he saw the plant].
He took the plant, though it pr[icked his hands].
He cut the heavy stones [from his feet].
The [s]ea cast him up upon its shore.

Gilgamesh says to him, to Urshanabi, the boatman:
"Urshanabi, this plant is a plant *apart*,
Whereby a man may regain his *life's breath*.
I will take it to ramparted Uruk,
Will cause [. . .] to eat the plant . . . !
Its name shall be 'Man Becomes Young in Old Age.' [1]
I myself shall eat (it)
And thus return to the state of my youth."
After twenty leagues they broke off a morsel,
After thirty (further) leagues they prepared for the night.
Gilgamesh saw a well whose water was cool.
He went down into it to bathe in the water.
A serpent snuffed the fragrance of the plant;
It came up [from the water] and carried off the plant.
Going back it shed [its] slough.

Thereupon Gilgamesh sits down and weeps,
His tears running down over his face.
[He took the hand] of Urshanabi, the boatman:
"[For] whom, Urshanabi, have my hands toiled?
For whom is being spent the blood of my heart?
I have not obtained a boon for myself.
For the earth-lion[2] have I effected a boon!
And now the tide will bear (it) twenty leagues away!
When I opened the *water-pipe* and [. . .] the year,[3]
I found that which has been placed as a sign for me:
I shall withdraw,
And leave the boat on the shore!"
After twenty leagues they broke off a morsel,
After thirty (further) leagues they prepared for the night.

[1] Note that the process is one of rejuvenation, not immortality.
[2] An allusion to the serpent?
[3] The opening of the *rāṭu* (normally "pipe, tube," apparently took place in connection with Gilgamesh's dive (cf. also l. 271). But the details remain obscure. In the *Eridu Creation Story*, II, the same term is used, perhaps for a pipe connecting with a source of sweet waters which would nourish the miraculous plant.

When they arrived in ramparted Uruk,
Gilgamesh says to him, to Urshanabi, the boatman:
"Go up, Urshanabi, walk on the ramparts of Uruk.
Inspect the base terrace, examine its brickwork,
If its brickwork is not of burnt brick,
And if the Seven Wise Ones laid not its foundation!
One 'sar' is city, one sar orchards,
One sar margin land; (further) the *precinct* of the Temple of Ishtar.
Three sar and the *precinct* comprise Uruk."

(Tablet XII has been omitted from this abridgment, since it is an inorganic appendage to the epic proper.)

A COSMOLOGICAL INCANTATION: THE WORM AND THE TOOTHACHE

ANET, 100-101

Among the incantations which contain cosmological material, one of the best-known attributes toothache to a worm that had obtained the permission of the gods to dwell among the teeth and gums. The present text, which is designated ideographically as an "Incantation against Toothache," dates from Neo-Babylonian times and was published by R. Campbell Thompson in *CT*, XVII (1903), Pl. 50. But the colophon indicates that the copy had been made from an ancient text. And indeed, the Mari documents of the Old Babylonian period include a tablet with the Akkadian label *ši-pa-at tu-ul-tim* "Toothache Incantation." The text itself, however, is in Hurrian. But although it cites various deities of the Hurrian pantheon—and is thus clearly religious in nature—the context does not correspond to the Neo-Babylonian legend, to judge from the intelligible portions.

After Anu [had created heaven],
Heaven had created [the earth],
The earth had created the rivers,
The rivers had created the canals,
The canals had created the marsh,
(And) the marsh had created the worm—
The worm went, weeping, before Shamash,
His tears flowing before Ea:
"What wilt thou give for my food?
What wilt thou give me for my sucking?"
"I shall give thee the ripe fig,
(And) the apricot."
"Of what use are they to me, the ripe fig
And the apricot?
Lift me up and among the teeth
And the gums cause me to dwell!
The blood of the tooth I will suck,

I. Egyptian Myths and Tales

TRANSLATOR: JOHN A. WILSON

The Memphite Theology of Creation

ANET, 4-5

When the First Dynasty established its capital at Memphis, it was necessary to justify the sudden emergence of this town to central importance. The Memphite god Ptah was therefore proclaimed to have been the First Principle, taking precedence over other recognized creator-gods. Mythological arguments were presented that the city of Memphis was the "place where the Two Lands are united" and that the Temple of Ptah was the "balance in which Upper and Lower Egypt have been weighed."

The extracts presented here are particularly interesting, because creation is treated in an intellectual sense, whereas other creation stories (like *ANET*, pp. 3-4) are given in purely physical terms. Here the god Ptah conceives the elements of the universe with his mind ("heart") and brings them into being by his commanding speech ("tongue"). Thus, at the beginning of Egyptian history, there was an approach to the Logos Doctrine.

The extant form of this document dates only to 700 B.C., but linguistic, philological, and geopolitical evidence is conclusive in support of its derivation from an original text more than two thousand years older.

(53) There came into being as the heart and there came into being as the tongue (something) in the form of Atum. The mighty Great One is Ptah, who transmitted [*life* to all gods], as well as (to) their *ka*'s, through this heart, by which Horus became Ptah, and through this tongue, by which Thoth became Ptah.[1]

(Thus) it happened that the heart and tongue gained control over [every] (other) member of the body, by teaching that he[2] is in every body and in every mouth of all gods, all men, [all] cattle, all creeping things, and (everything) that lives, by thinking and commanding everything that he wishes.

(55) His Ennead is before him in (the form of) teeth and lips. That is (the equivalent of) the semen and hands of Atum. Whereas the Ennead of Atum came into being by his semen and his fingers, the Ennead

[1] Ptah thought of and created by speech the creator-god Atum ("Totality"), thus transmitting the divine power of Ptah to all other gods. The gods Horus and Thoth, a commonly associated pair, are equated with the organs of thought and speech. [2] Ptah, as heart and tongue.

(of Ptah), however, is the teeth and lips in this mouth, which pronounced the name of everything, from which

Fig. 158 Shu and Tefnut came forth, and which was the fashioner of the Ennead.

The sight of the eyes, the hearing of the ears, and the smelling the air by the nose, they report to the heart. It is this which causes every completed (concept) to come forth, and it is the tongue which announces what the heart thinks.

Thus all the gods were formed and his Ennead was completed. Indeed, all the divine order really came into being through what the heart thought and the tongue commanded. Thus the *ka*-spirits were made and the *hemsut*-spirits were appointed, they who make all provisions and all nourishment, by this speech. (*Thus justice was given to*) him who does what is liked, (*and injustice to*) him who does what is disliked. Thus life was given to him who has peace and death was given to him who has sin. Thus were made all work and all crafts, the action of the arms, the movement of the legs, and the activity of every member, in conformance with (this) command which the heart thought, which came forth through the tongue, and which gives value to everything.

(Thus) it happened that it was said of Ptah: "He who made all and brought the gods into being." He is indeed Ta-tenen, who brought forth the gods, for everything came forth from him, nourishment and provisions, the offerings of the gods, and every good thing. Thus it was discovered and understood that his strength is greater than (that of the other) gods. And so Ptah

Gen. 2:2 was satisfied,[1] after he had made everything, as well as all the divine order. He had formed the gods, he had made cities, he had founded nomes, he had put the gods in their shrines, (60) he had established their offerings, he had founded their shrines, he had made their bodies like that (with which) their hearts were satisfied. So the gods entered into their bodies of every (kind of) wood, of every (kind of) stone, of every (kind of) clay, or anything which might grow upon him,[2] in which they had taken form. So all the gods, as well as their *ka*'s gathered themselves to him, content and associated with the Lord of the Two Lands.

[1] Or, "so Ptah rested."
[2] Upon Ptah, in his form of the "rising land." Note that divine images were not the gods themselves, but only places.

II. A Hittite Myth

TRANSLATOR: ALBRECHT GOETZE

El, Ashertu and the Storm-god

ANET³, 519

This "Canaanite Myth" is only a fragment from a larger context. One may hope that more of it will turn up in the future.

(i) ["... . Give thyself to me, then] I shall give myself to thee; I shall *harass* thee with my word, [with my sp]indle I shall prick thee. [. . . .] I shall *stir* thee up." The Storm-god heard the words. (5) He went on his way and betook himself to the well-spring of the Mala-River. [He] came to El-kunirsha, the husband of Ashertu, and entered El-kunirsha's tent.

El-kunirsha beheld the Storm-god and asked him: "[Why] didst thou come?" Thus said the Storm-god: "When I entered thy house, (10) Ashertu sent out (her) maidens to me (saying). 'Come, sleep with me!' [When] I refused, she became *aggressive* and said to me as follows: 'Give thyself to me, [then] I shall give myself to thee; I shall *harass* thee with my word, (15) with my spindle I shall prick thee.' This is why I have come, my father. For, [with a message] I did not come, I have come to thee on my own. Ashertu is impugning thy virility. Although she is thy wife she keeps on sending to me: 'Come, sleep with me.'" El-kunirsha began to reply to the Storm-god: (20) "Go, sleep with her! Lie with my wife and humble her!"

The Storm-god hearkened to the word of El-kunirsha. With Ashertu he slept. The Storm-god said to Ashertu: "Of thy sons I slew 77, I slew 88." Ashertu (25) heard this humiliating word of the Storm-god and her mind got incensed against him. She appointed wailing-women and began to wail for 7 years. They keep eating (and) drinking. . . .

(gap)

(ii?) ["... I shall listen ... [... and] I shall sleep with thee." [When El-kunirsha] heard these words, he said to his wife: "[. . .] the Storm-god, I shall turn him over to thee. (5) As thou pleasest, thus d[eal] with him!"

ISHTAR heard those words. In El-kunirsha's hand she became a *cup*; she became a *ḫapupiš* bird and roosted on his wall. Whatever words husband and wife speak, those ISHTAR (10) overhears. El-kunirsha and his wife went upon her bed and slept with each other. But ISHTAR flew like a bird across the . . . and found the Storm-god in the . . . . (The column breaks off. Apparently ISHTAR tells the Storm-god of El and Ashertu's plot.)

(Of the other columns too little is preserved to yield a comprehensible context.)

Yarimuta, of *Inhia*, of *Aqhi*, of 'Arqata,[2] of Yarimuta, of *Isinu*,[3] of Asqanu, of *Demitiu*, of *Mut-ilu*, of Jerusalem of *'Akhmut*, of *Iahenu*, and of *Iysipi*;

(g 1) their strong men, their swift runners, their allies, their associates, and the Mentu[4] in Asia;

(h 1) who may rebel, who may plot, who may fight, who may talk of fighting, or who may talk of rebelling —in this entire land.

Egyptians

(m 1) All men, all people, all folk, all males, all *eunuchs*, all women, and all officials,

(n 1) who may rebel, who may plot, who may fight, who may talk of fighting, or who may talk of rebelling, and every rebel who talks of rebelling—in this entire land. Josh. 1:18

(o 1) Ameni shall die, the tutor of Sit-Bastet, the *chancellor* of Sit-Hat-Hor, (daughter of) Nefru.[5]

Sen-Usert the younger, called Ketu, shall die, the tutor of Sit-Ipi, (daughter of) Sit-Hat-Hor, and tutor of Sit-Ipi, (daughter of) Sit-Ameni, the *chancellor* of Ii-menet, (daughter of) Sit-Hat-Hor. . . .

(8) Ameni, born to Hetep and son of Sen-Usert, shall die.

Baneful Forces

(p 1) Every evil word, every evil speech, every evil slander, every evil thought, every evil plot, every evil fight, every evil quarrel, every evil plan, every evil thing, all evil dreams, and all evil slumber.

[2] Or 'Iraqtum, another name for the same, in Phoenicia.
[3] This has been compared to (Beth)-Shan.
[4] The "Mentu in Setet" is an old designation for Egypt's immediate neighbors to the northeast.
[5] There are two significant factors about these specifically named Egyptians. First, the names are names characteristic of the 12th dynasty royal family. Second, several of them are functionaries of women who seem to be princesses or queens. One thinks of a harem conspiracy as the setting for such curses.

Egyptian Hymns

TRANSLATOR: JOHN A. WILSON

THE HYMN TO THE ATON

ANET, 369-371

The Pharaoh Amen-hotep IV broke with the established religion of Egypt and instituted the worship of the Aton, the sun disc as the source of life. "The Amarna Revolution" attempted a distinct break with Egypt's traditional and static ways of life in religion, politics, art, and literature. Pharaoh changed his name to Akh-en-Aton (perhaps "He Who Is Serviceable to the Aton") and moved his capital from Thebes to Tell el-Amarna. Pharaoh's own attitude to the god is expressed in the famous hymn which follows. Beyond doubt, the hymn shows the universality and beneficence of the creating and re-creating sun disc. A similarity of spirit and wording to the 104th Psalm has often been noted, and a direct relation between the two has been argued.[1] Because Akh-en-Aton was devoted to this god alone, the Amarna religion has been called monotheistic. This is a debatable question, and a reserved attitude would note that only Akh-en-Aton and his family worshiped the Aton, Akh-en-Aton's courtiers worshiped Akh-en-Aton himself, and the great majority of Egyptians was ignorant of or hostile to the new faith. *Figs. 108, 110*

[1] As in Breasted.

Praise of Re Har-akhti, Rejoicing on the Horizon, in His Name as Shu Who Is in the Aton-disc,[2] living forever and ever; the living great Aton who is in jubilee, lord of all that the Aton encircles, lord of heaven, lord of earth, lord of the House of Aton in Akhet-Aton;[3] (and praise of) the King of Upper and Lower Egypt, who lives on truth, the Lord of the Two Lands: Nefer-kheperu-Re Wa-en-Re; the Son of Re, who lives on truth, the Lord of Diadems: Akh-en-Aton, long in his lifetime; (and praise of) the Chief Wife of the King, his beloved, the Lady of the Two Lands: Nefer-neferu-Aton Nefert-iti, living, healthy, and youthful forever and ever; (by) the Fan-Bearer on the Right Hand of the King . . . Eye. He says:

Thou appearest beautifully on the horizon of heaven,
Thou living Aton, the beginning of life!
When thou art risen on the eastern horizon,
Thou hast filled every land with thy beauty.
Thou art gracious, great, glistening, and high over every land;
Thy rays encompass the lands to the limit of all that thou hast made:
As thou art Re, thou reachest to the end of them;[4]
(Thou) subduest them (for) thy beloved son.[5]
Though thou art far away, thy rays are on earth;
Though thou art in *their* faces, *no one knows thy* going.

When thou settest in the western horizon,
The land is in darkness, in the manner of death.

[2] The Aton had a dogmatic name written within a royal cartouche and including the three old solar deities, Re, Har-of-the-Horizon, and Shu.
[3] Akhet-Aton was the name of the capital at Tell el-Amarna.
[4] Pun: *Ra* "Re," and *er-ra* "to the end."
[5] Akh-en-Aton.

They sleep in a room, with heads wrapped up,
Nor sees one eye the other.
All their goods which are under their heads might be stolen,
(But) they would not perceive (it).
Every lion is come forth from his den;
All creeping things, they sting.
Darkness *is a shroud*, and the earth is in stillness,
Ps. 104:20-21 For he who made them rests in his horizon.

At daybreak, when thou arisest on the horizon,
When thou shinest as the Aton by day,
Thou drivest away the darkness and givest thy rays.
The Two Lands are in festivity *every day*,
Awake and standing upon (their) feet,
For thou hast raised them up.
Washing their bodies, taking (their) clothing, (5)
Their arms are (raised) in praise at thy appearance.
Ps. 104:22-23 All the world, they do their work.

All beasts are content with their pasturage;
Trees and plants are flourishing.
The birds which fly from their nests,
Their wings are (stretched out) in praise to thy *ka*.
All beasts spring upon (their) feet.
Whatever flies and alights,
Ps. 104:11-14 They live when thou hast risen (for) them.
The ships are sailing north and south as well,
For every way is open at thy appearance.
The fish in the river dart before thy face;
Ps. 104:25-26 Thy rays are in the midst of the great green sea.

Creator of seed in women,
Thou who makest fluid into man,
Who maintainest the son in the womb of his mother,
Who soothest him with that which stills his weeping,
Thou nurse (even) in the womb,
Who givest breath to sustain all that he has made!
When he descends from the womb to *breathe*
On the day when he is born,
Thou openest his mouth completely,
Thou suppliest his necessities.
When the chick in the egg speaks within the shell,
Thou givest him breath within it to maintain him.
When thou hast made him his fulfillment within the egg, to break it,

He comes forth from the egg to speak at his completed (time);
He walks upon his legs when he comes forth from it.

How manifold it is, what thou hast made! Ps. 40:5
They are hidden from the face (of man).
O sole god, like whom there is no other!
Thou didst create the world according to thy desire,
Whilst thou wert alone:
All men, cattle, and wild beasts, Ps. 104:24
Whatever is on earth, going upon (its) feet,
And what is on high, flying with its wings.

The countries of Syria and Nubia, the *land* of Egypt,
Thou settest every man in his place,
Thou suppliest their necessities:
Everyone has his food, and his time of life is reckoned. Ps. 90:10 Ps. 104:27
Their tongues are separate in speech,
And their natures as well;
Their skins are distinguished,
As thou distinguishest the foreign peoples.
Thou makest a Nile in the underworld,
Thou bringest it forth as thou desirest
To maintain the people (of Egypt)[1]
According as thou madest them for thyself,
The lord of all of them, wearying (himself) with them,
The lord of every land, rising for them,
The Aton of the day, great of majesty.

All distant foreign countries, thou makest their life (also),
For thou hast set a Nile in heaven,
That it may descend for them and make waves upon the mountains, (10) Ps. 104:6, 10
Like the great green sea,
To water their fields in their towns.[2]
How effective they are, thy plans, O lord of eternity!
The Nile in heaven, it is for the foreign peoples
And for the beasts of every desert that go upon (their) feet;

[1] The Egyptians believed that their Nile came from the waters under the earth, called by them Nun.
[2] The rain of foreign countries is like the Nile of rainless Egypt.

(While the true) Nile comes from the underworld
for Egypt.

Thy rays suckle every meadow.
When thou risest, they live, they grow for thee.
Ps. 104:19 Thou makest the seasons in order to rear all that
thou hast made,
The winter to cool them,
And the heat that *they* may taste thee.
Thou hast made the distant sky in order to rise therein,
In order to see all that thou dost make.
Whilst thou wert alone,
Rising in thy form as the living Aton,
Appearing, shining, *withdrawing or approaching*,
Thou madest millions of forms of thyself alone.
Cities, towns, fields, road, and river—
Every eye beholds thee over against them,
For thou art the Aton of the day over *the earth*. . . .

Thou art in my heart,
And there is no other that knows thee
Save thy son Nefer-kheperu-Re Wa-en-Re,[1]
For thou hast made him well-versed in thy plans and
in thy strength.[2]

The world came into being by thy hand,
Ps. 104:30 According as thou hast made them.
When thou hast risen they live,
Ps. 104:29 When thou settest they die.
Thou art lifetime thy own self,
For one lives (only) through thee.
Eyes are (fixed) on beauty until thou settest.
All work is laid aside when thou settest in the west.
(But) when (thou) risest (again),
[*Everything is*] made to flourish for the king, . . .
Since thou didst found the earth
And raise them up for thy son,
Who came forth from thy body:
the King of Upper and Lower Egypt, . . . Akh-en-
Aton, . . . and the Chief Wife of the King . . . Nefert-iti,
living and youthful forever and ever.

[1] Even though the hymn was recited by the official Eye, he states that Akh-en-Aton alone knows the Aton.
[2] Pharaoh was the official intermediary between the Egyptians and their gods. The Amarna religion did not change this dogma.

HYMN OF VICTORY OF MER-NE-PTAH ("ISRAEL STELA")

ANET, 376, 378

The date of this commemorative hymn (or series of hymns) relates it to Mer-ne-Ptah's victory over the Libyans in the spring of his fifth year (about 1230 B.C.). However, the text is not historical in the same sense as two other records of that victory, but is rather a poetic eulogy of a universally victorious pharaoh. Thus it was not out of place to introduce his real or figurative triumph over Asiatic peoples in the last poem of the hymn. In that context we meet the only instance of the name "Israel" in ancient Egyptian writing.

. . . .

The princes are prostrate, saying: "Mercy!"[1]
Not one raises his head among the Nine Bows.
Desolation is for Tehenu; Hatti is pacified;
Plundered is the Canaan with every evil;
Carried off is Ashkelon; seized upon is Gezer;
Yanoam is made as that which does not exist;[2]
Israel is laid waste, his seed is not;[3] *Fig. 96*
Hurru is become a widow for Egypt![4] Jer. 49:10
All lands together, they are pacified; Lam. 1:1
Everyone who was restless, he has been bound
by the King of Upper and Lower Egypt: Ba-en-Re Meri-
Amon; the Son of Re: Mer-ne-Ptah Hotep-hir-Maat,
given life like Re every day.

[1] Or "Peace!" The Canaanite word *shalom* is used here.
[2] Hatti was the land of the Hittites. Yanoam was an important town of northern Palestine.
[3] Much has been made of the fact that the word' Israel is the only one of the names in this context which is written with the determinative of people rather than land. Thus we should seem to have the Children of Israel in or near Palestine, but not yet as a settled people. This would have important bearing on the date of the Conquest. This is a valid argument. Determinatives should have meaning, and a contrast between determinatives in the same context should be significant. This stela does give the country determinatives to settled peoples like the Rebu, Temeh, Hatti, Ashkelon, etc., and the determinative of people to unlocated groups like the Madjoi, Nau, and Tekten. The argument is good, but not conclusive, because of the notorious carelessness of Late-Egyptian scribes and several blunders of writing in this stela.
The statement that the "seed," i.e. offspring, of Israel had been wiped out is a conventional boast of power at this period.
[4] The land of the biblical Horites, or Greater Palestine.

An Akkadian Hymn

TRANSLATOR: FERRIS J. STEPHENS

HYMN TO ISHTAR

ANET, 383

After extolling the charms and virtues of the goddess, the hymn concludes by enumerating the blessings which she has bestowed upon the king, Ammiditana. While these are represented as accomplished facts, the statements should be taken as

Ronald Youngblood, The Heart of the OT

CHAPTER ONE

MONOTHEISM

I am God, and there is no other.

— ISAIAH 45:22

A few theologians in our time are still telling us that God is dead. These so-called Christian atheists do not always agree in their explanations of what it means to say, "God is dead." Some of them feel that God died when Christ came to earth nearly two thousand years ago. Others state that God has died within our own lifetime. Still others insist that, although God may very well be alive somewhere, for all practical purposes He has died because we have refused Him entrance into our hearts and denied Him relevance in our conduct and experience.

Needless to say, the true Christian could never deny the existence of God in theory and ought never to deny the relevance of God in practice. Of the Son, Jesus Christ, we often sing, "You ask me how I know He lives? He lives within my heart." And if we know God the Son, we know God the Father also (John 14:7). It is highly unlikely that the temptation to "Christian atheism," which is in itself a contradiction in terms, could ever seriously affect the person who has been born anew by the Holy Spirit.

Similarly, the temptation to atheism was not a serious problem for the believing Israelite in ancient times. He was convinced that only a fool would be so ignorant, intellectually and spiritually, as to deny

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the existence of a supreme being (Ps. 14:1; 53:1). For the people of God in the Old Testament period, the practice of the presence of God was life itself. The fear of the Lord was for them the very beginning of knowledge and wisdom (Prov. 1:7; 9:10).

However, other temptations concerning the nature of God tantalized the people of ancient Israel. If they did not doubt the fact that there was at least one God, their neighbors from other nations often faced them with the possibility that there might be *more* than one. Egypt, for example, was a polytheistic nation. Its people believed and taught that there were many gods. In fact, they were convinced that the pharaoh himself was a god. Many of Israel's nearer neighbors, among them Edom and Moab, were henotheistic or monolatrous. They believed in and worshiped only one primary god, but they did not deny the existence of other secondary gods and goddesses. One of the questions that the Old Testament seeks to answer is whether the people of Israel would remain true to the God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the Creator and Lord of the universe. Would they maintain their belief in monotheism, or would they be attracted to monolatry, or henotheism, or polytheism?

Many students of comparative religion have taught that monotheism is a product of evolution. As mankind evolved, they have said, so also did the religions of mankind evolve from lower stages to ever higher stages, finally arriving at monotheism, the highest stage of all, the stage that proclaims the truth that there is only one God. Since Israel is a part of mankind, we are told, the Israelite religion must have begun, in the dim and distant past, as animism, which teaches that all natural objects, whether animate or inanimate, are alive and indwelt by a supernatural spirit. From animism the idea developed in Israel that certain spirits are more powerful than others and therefore deserve to be called "gods." Among these would be the sun-god, the ocean-god, the river-god, the bull-god, and many similar deities. Thus, we are told, Israel became polytheistic. Eventually, the *most* powerful of Israel's gods assumed his place of prominence above the others, and the people became henotheistic, believing

in his supreme authority, and monolatrous, worshiping him alone. Finally, it is supposed, Israel reached the place in its religious development where it was willing to admit that the lesser gods did not even exist and that, in fact, there was only one God. Comparative religion often teaches, then, that the religion of Israel underwent a process of evolution from animism to polytheism to henotheism to monotheism.

But it cannot be shown that there is a universal tendency on the part of polytheistic religions to gradually reduce the number of deities until finally arriving at only one deity. In some instances, in fact, such a religion may even add *more* deities as its adherents become aware of more and more natural phenomena to deify! At any rate, the Old Testament teaches that monotheism, far from having evolved through the centuries of Israel's history, is one of the inspired insights revealed to the covenant people by the one true God Himself.

The pure form of monotheism described in the Old Testament is unique to Biblical religion. The God of the Old Testament is the transcendent Creator of everything that exists. He stands outside the universe; He is not a part of it. There are only three religions in our modern world that share this viewpoint, and all of them are based on the revealed religion of Israel. Judaism, in accepting the Old Testament as its Scriptures, has joyously affirmed the Old Testament view of the being of God as well. The opening statement of its basic creed, known as the *Shema,* begins with the well-known words of Deuteronomy 6:4: "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord." In a similar way Christianity has confessed the same truth because Christ Himself declared it to be a part of the first commandment (Mark 12:28-30). Paul, in fact, defined monotheism in its most classic form in I Timothy 2:5: "There is one God." As the third major religion of our time that has embraced a transcendent form of monotheism, Islam or Mohammedanism has expressed the doctrine in the same clear-cut and categorical way. Five times a day the Mohammedan *muezzin* mounts his minaret and in a loud voice calls the faithful to prayer: "There is no god but God."

Certain other modern religions embrace forms of monotheism that are inferior to the Old Testament teaching. Such forms are derived

from former dualistic or polytheistic systems. Moreover, they suggest that God is a part of this world order and not separate from it, and this by necessity rather than by choice. Only the Old Testament religion and its derivatives proclaim the one true God who is transcendent by nature and who is at the same time immanent by condescension and grace. Only in such a context do we find statements like this: "Thus says the high and lofty One who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: 'I dwell in the high and lofty place, and also with him who is of a contrite and humble spirit' " (Isa. 57:15).

The monotheistic ideals of Israel's religion characterized it from the very beginning. Israel's Creator God is portrayed in majestic grandeur in the first verse of Genesis. His existence is assumed rather than argued. He is placed outside the universe and above it as its Creator. The view of God taught by the first chapter of Genesis is opposed to an entire phalanx of false philosophies. Against materialism, which teaches that matter is everything and that it is eternal, Genesis 1 teaches that God is eternal, above matter, and the Creator of matter (which is therefore *neither* eternal *nor* everything). Against pantheism, which teaches that everything is God or gods, or that God is (or gods are) *in* everything, Genesis 1 teaches that God is *separate* from His creation and that He is *above* it. Against dualism, which teaches that there is a continuing struggle taking place between two more or less equally matched gods or principles, one evil and the other good, Genesis 1 posits one good God who in sequence declares His creative works to be "good" and concludes by stamping the whole creative week "very good." Against polytheism, which teaches that there is a plurality of gods who are often at odds with each other, Genesis 1 declares that there is only one beneficent God. No one can doubt that one of the great themes of the Old Testament is its pure and unyielding monotheism.

It is also clear, however, that other alternatives competed for the attention and allegiance of God's children in ancient times. The teachings of the Near Eastern nature religions made their influence felt on the backgrounds and spiritual struggles of the Hebrew people from the patriarchal period and onward. Joshua 24:2 demonstrates

that the ancestors of Abraham were polytheists. Abraham's kinsmen in Syria continued to keep statues of deities in their dwellings, a practice of which Rachel, the wife of Jacob, apparently approved at one time (Gen. 31:17-35). Jacob himself found it necessary on one occasion to say to his household and to all who were with him, "Put away the foreign gods that are among you, and purify yourselves" (35:2). Indeed, we have no way of knowing whether Abraham, the patriarch who is considered by each of the three monotheistic religions previously mentioned to be its founder, was himself a theoretical monotheist. That he was a practical monotheist cannot be denied. God monopolized Abraham to the extent that he had neither time nor room for competing deities, whether real or imaginary. But Abraham's own personal inclinations may well have been henotheistic rather than monotheistic, because nowhere in the Book of Genesis does he clearly deny the existence of other gods.

Moses is generally believed to be the father of Israelite monotheism. This does not mean that no Israelites were monotheists before him, nor does it mean that all Israelites would be monotheists after him. It simply means that Moses was the first, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, to define the nature of God in a clearly monotheistic way. The monotheistic background of Genesis 1 is in full agreement with such statements of Moses as we find in Deuteronomy 4:35, 39: "The Lord is God; there is no other besides him. . . . The Lord is God in heaven above and on the earth beneath; there is no other." The first of the Ten Commandments, "You shall have no other gods before me" (Exod. 20:3; Deut. 5:7), deals with the temptation to succumb to henotheism or polytheism, a temptation that was a source of constant danger to the Israelites of the Old Testament period down to the time of the Exile. The commandment is firm in its insistence that Israel is to have only one Object of worship and allegiance: the one true God, the Lord God of Hosts.

James Henry Breasted, a great Egyptologist of a former generation, referred to Pharaoh Amen-hotep IV, also known as Akh-en-Aton, as the first monotheist in history. It is certainly true that Akh-en-Aton and his family broke with Egyptian polytheism and

worshiped only the sun as the source of all life. But we should also observe that Akh-en-Aton did not deny to his courtiers the questionable privilege of worshiping him as the deified pharaoh. As for the rest of the Egyptian population, they remained either ignorant of or antagonistic toward the new religion that Akh-en-Aton had instituted. We must also note that this so-called monotheism was neither more nor less than sun-worship.

Nevertheless, it is intriguing to speculate as to whether the religion of Akh-en-Aton and Mosaic monotheism are related in any way. If those scholars are correct who believe that the Exodus of the people of Israel from Egypt occurred in about 1290 B.C., the boy Moses would have lived in the court of Akh-en-Aton, who ruled over Egypt from about 1369 to about 1353 B.C. It would therefore be possible to look upon the pharaonic religion of this period as a degraded form of the monotheism of Moses. Another option would be to view Mosaic monotheism as a divinely inspired and revealed reaction against the crudities and absurdities of Akh-en-Aton's faith. In any event, if Moses and Akh-en-Aton were contemporaries they could hardly have avoided discussing together the nature of God, a subject which was so significant in the lives of both of them.

During another critical period in Israel's history, a contest took place on Mount Carmel between Elijah on the one hand and the "four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal and the four hundred prophets of Asherah" (I Kings 18:19) on the other hand. It soon became evident, however, that the real contest was between the God of Elijah and the Baal of Jezebel. Elijah challenged the false prophets with this ultimatum: "You call on the name of your god and I will call on the name of the Lord; and the God who answers by fire, he is God" (18:24). The climax of the story leaves no doubt that Baal was no match for the living God whom Elijah served.

But the results of the contest on Mount Carmel were soon forgotten, and the writing prophets from the eighth century B.C. and onward found it necessary to remind their people again and again of the vast gulf that separated the one true God from the idols of His imaginary pagan counterparts. Although the common noun *baal*

means simply "lord" or "husband," to avoid all possibility of misunderstanding the people of Israel were never to refer to the Lord as "My Baal" (Hos. 2:16). The prophets ridiculed idolatry as foolish worship of inanimate objects (4:12; Isa. 2:8, 20; 17:8; 31:7). Such false gods lack entirely the personal dimension that characterizes genuine deity.

It is true that on some occasions the prophets seem to ascribe to pagan gods actions that are appropriate only to living beings. For example, Isaiah tells us that when the Lord comes to Egypt "the idols of Egypt will tremble at his presence" (Isa. 19:1). At a later period Jeremiah says of the gods of Babylon that "Bel is put to shame, Merodach is dismayed. Her images are put to shame, her idols are dismayed" (Jer. 50:2). Whether we are to understand such statements in a figurative way or whether we are to interpret them as referring to demonic activity underlying false worship it is difficult to say. Perhaps there is an element of truth in both explanations. In any case, the contrast between dead idols and the living God is brought into sharp relief in such passages as the following from the pen of Jeremiah: "Idols are like scarecrows in a cucumber field, and they cannot speak; they have to be carried, for they cannot walk. Be not afraid of them, for they cannot do evil, neither is it in them to do good. . . . But the Lord is the true God; he is the living God and the everlasting King. At his wrath the earth quakes, and the nations cannot endure his indignation" (10:5, 10).

All of the evidence at our disposal leads us to believe that after the destruction of Jerusalem and Solomon's temple in 586 B.C. the people of Judah were rarely, if ever, tempted by idolatry. Judah had experienced severe retribution; she would now experience sincere repentance. She knew that she was being punished for her sins, and the sight of the excessive polytheism of Babylon was revolting to the exiled remnant and helped to make the Jews a truly monotheistic people from that day to this. Judaism today gladly shares with Christianity the divine affirmation of the Scriptures: "Thus says the Lord, . . . 'I am the Lord, and there is no other. . . . And there is no other god besides me, a righteous God and a Savior; there is none besides

me' " (Isa. 45:18, 21). Since the sixth century B.C. observant Jews have been thoroughly and uncompromisingly monotheistic.

This fact helps to explain why the Jews of Jesus' time found it so difficult to accept His messianic claims. He said that He was God's Son, and such statements seemed blasphemous and worthy of death to His monotheistic countrymen (John 10:22-39). But the doctrine of the deity of Christ is not at all incompatible with the highest form of monotheism. In fact, hints pointing to a plurality within the personality of God are to be found already in the Old Testament itself. In addition to the Father, the Spirit and the Word were active in creation from the beginning (Gen. 1:1-3), and the Word is none other than Jesus Christ (John 1:1-14). We must allow for progressive revelation as God discloses to us, step by step, His nature and purposes (Heb. 1:1, 2). That God is one is a doctrine enunciated clearly and frequently in the Old Testament. That God is three in one is a doctrine that is merely foreshadowed by the Old Testament and that does not burst forth into the clear light of revelation until New Testament times (Matt. 28:19; II Cor. 13:14).

Often mentioned in connection with Old Testament prefigurations of the uniplurality of God is the manifestation of His being that is known as the "angel of God" or the "angel of the Lord." Interpreters differ widely in their understanding of this divine messenger. Some feel that he was an angel, a finite spirit who executed the commands of God and who was in subjection to God. Others insist that he was a manifestation of God who became a creature, one in essence with God while at the same time becoming different from Him, a kind of pre-incarnation appearance of the Second Person of the Godhead.

While it is indeed difficult to decide between these two views and their various modifications, of which there are many, a fact that has come to the fore in recent years may be of some help. In ancient times a messenger of a royal court carried with him all of the credentials of the king himself when he was dispatched on an imperial mission. His personality, his attributes, his commands, while remaining his own, were also the king's. The royal messenger represented

the royal person in every respect. Whereas this may be a poor illustration of the matter at issue, in a similar way the angel of God could refer to God as his sender, and at the same time he could speak as though he himself were God Himself. In such a way the angel of God foreshadowed the uniplurality of the divine nature in the Old Testament period.

At any rate, God did not reveal Himself prematurely in clearly defined trinitarian terms in the Old Testament Scriptures. To have done so would have been to provide needless temptations to polytheism in the light of the cultures of that early time. The deity of the Messiah and the personality of the Holy Spirit were thus kept in the background of Old Testament teaching. On the other hand, although the New Testament writers clearly affirmed trinitarianism, they did not shrink from teaching monotheistic doctrine as well. For them, no conflict existed between the two ideas. Paul's sermon on Mars' Hill is thoroughly monotheistic (Acts 17:22-31), and to the church at Corinth he stated in no uncertain terms that "there is no God but one" (I Cor. 8:4). On the latter occasion he hastened to add, however, by using a partial trinitarian formula, that "for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist" (8:6). So also we as Christians today joyfully confess, as trinitarian monotheists, that God is one and that He is also three in one.

FOR FURTHER READING

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Note: details of individual water systems are to be found in the separate excavation reports.

Agriculture

9

The majority of people in the west today live in urban communities. They experience the sights, sounds and smells of the countryside only rarely, perhaps on holidays or during weekend trips. In biblical times, many people who lived in towns also worked in the fields beyond the wall, and they stabled their own animals in the courtyard or rooms of their house (see page 59). Without the convenience of large stores stocking the frozen, canned and preserved produce of many lands, they were more consciously dependent upon the harvest of the soil their own hands had worked.

The land they lived in, despite its southern desert and barren central highlands, was known as 'a land flowing with milk and honey', that is, one which was rich and fertile, able to feed many people. As early as the twentieth century BC, a political refugee from Egypt named Sinuhe fled to Canaan and settled for some while with an Amorite clan. He wrote about his adoptive land: 'It was a good land, named Yaa. Figs were in it, and grapes. It had more wine than water. Plentiful was its honey; abundant its olives. Every [kind of] fruit was on its trees. Barley was there and emmer. There was no limit to any [kind of] cattle.'

Sinuhe's description is almost exactly paralleled in the biblical book of Deuteronomy. It was 'a good land... with wheat and barley, vines and fig trees, pomegranates, olive oil and honey; a land where bread will not be scarce and you will lack nothing'.

◁◁ Numbers 14: 8

◁ Deuteronomy 8: 7–9

Pomegranates.





Ploughing with an ass, south of Jerusalem.

PLOUGHS AND HOES

Modern agriculture is highly mechanized. Tractors plough several furrows at at time and sow seeds quickly. Combine harvesters cut broad swaths of corn and can reap crops in huge fields in a few hours. Throughout Bible times, however, tools were primitive and work was slow; the only 'mechanization' was a pair of oxen pulling a single-furrow plough, and they worked at walking pace.

Luke 9: 62 ▷▷

The farmer had a small range of implements. During Saul's time there seem to have been four chief ones: 'Israel went down to the Philistines to have their ploughshares, mattocks, axes and sickles sharpened.' The same passage also mentions forks, and goads (pointed implements to urge oxen to move, as cowboys use spurs on horses). Different Bible versions, however, translate the word differently, and the RSV adds the necessary footnote: 'The Hebrew of this verse is obscure.' We depend on archaeology to find ancient tools and identify them with the words used in the Bible.

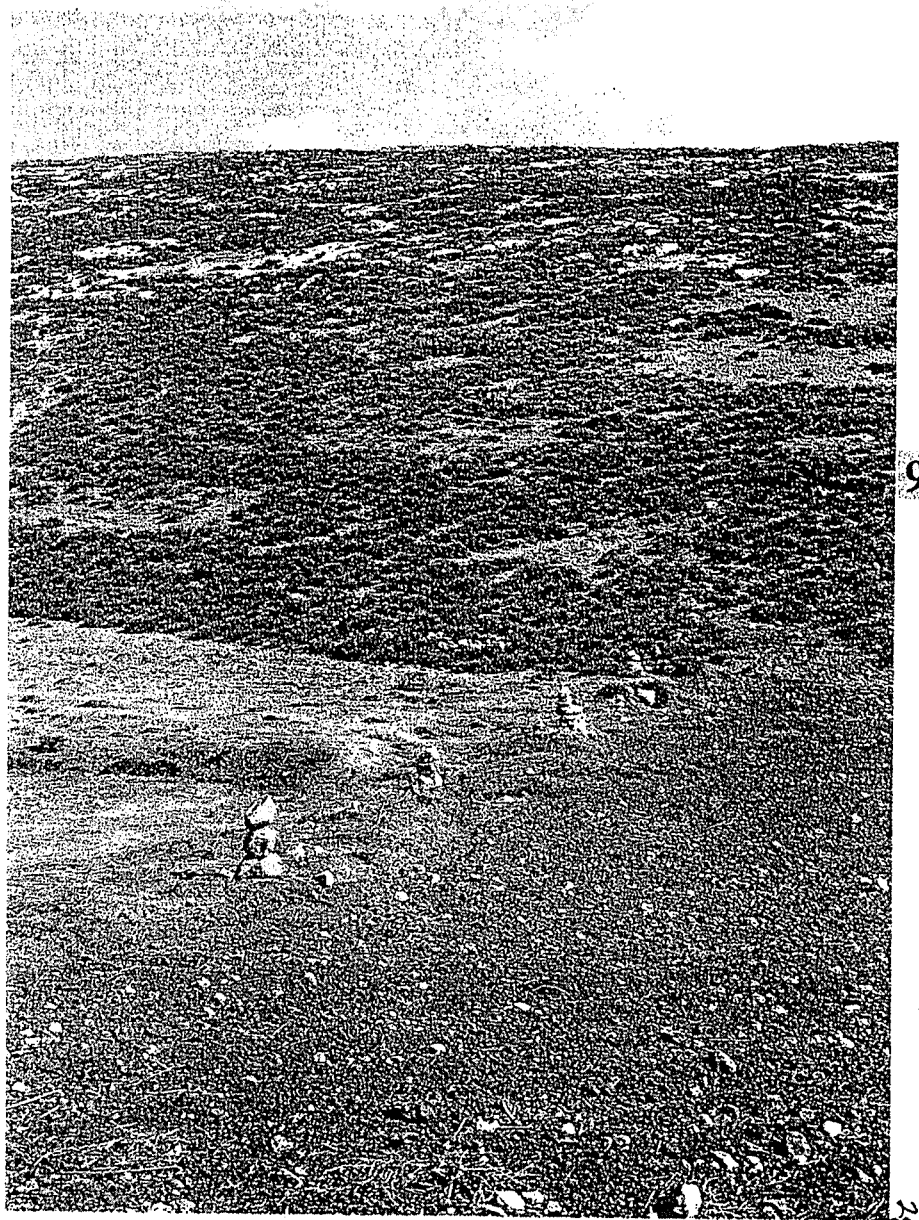
1 Samuel 13: 20 ▷

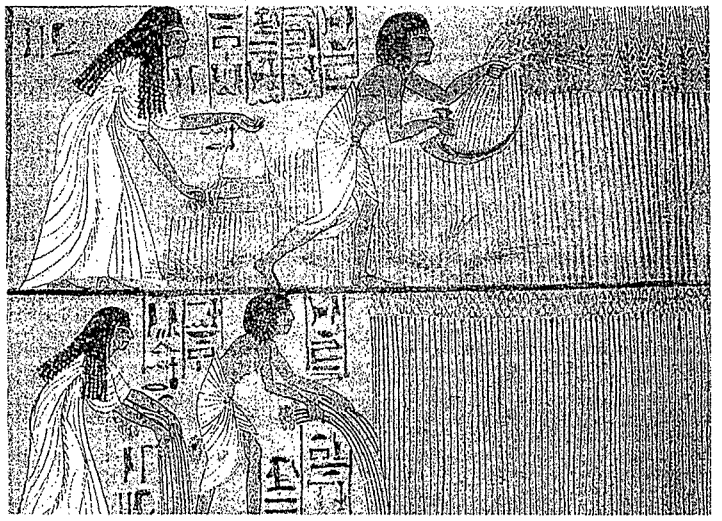
The plough, the farmer's basic tool for turning the soil over and breaking up fallow ground to prepare it for sowing, had a single point and could turn only one furrow at a time. When Jesus said, '"No-one who puts his hand to the plough and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God"', his hearers would have realized it was a vivid and challenging word picture.

If the field was to be properly prepared each furrow had to be straight, and exactly parallel to the next one. The ploughman would have to concentrate hard and physically hold the plough straight when it hit a clump of grass or stone and so threatened to deviate from the line. One glance over his shoulder, at someone shouting in the next field, perhaps, and he would wander off course. The Christian life, Jesus was saying, demands a person's undiverted attention.

The early Israelite plough was little more than a forked stick. Usually the stem of the stick was attached to the centre of the yoke which was fixed to the shoulders of the oxen. Between the two forks there was a slanting piece of wood, reaching from the ploughman's hand to the earth. At the top of this

Stone boundary markers south of Hebron.





Senedjem and his wife harvesting grain and seeds. This Egyptian tomb painting of about 1200 BC shows clearly the sickle of the period and the method of reaping described on this page and the next.

was a cross-piece handle, and at the bottom was the plough point which cut down into the soil and turned it over. Furrows were by no means as deep as those ploughed today. Sometimes a cruder version was used, with the plough piece being tied to the shaft from the yoke. Plough points were made from stone, bronze or hardwood until about the tenth century BC when iron became common.

Isaiah 7: 25 ▷▷

Ploughs could be drawn by a single ox or mule, two oxen or two mules, and even an ox and a mule yoked together – a practice forbidden, however, in the Mosaic law. When Elijah the prophet found his successor Elisha, the latter 'was ploughing with twelve yoke of oxen, and he himself was driving the twelfth pair'. This would seem to indicate that a large field was being worked by a team of a dozen men, just as several tractors today will work in the same field to get the job done more quickly. The oxen and plough were obviously Elisha's own, whether or not the field was, because after his call he killed the animals for a feast and roasted them on a fire made from his ploughing equipment.

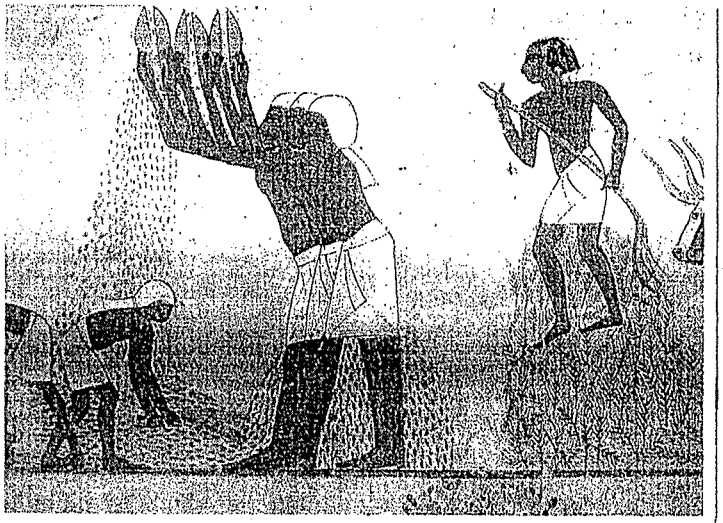
Deuteronomy 22: 10 ▷

1 Kings 19: 19 ▷

To cultivate the ground further by breaking up hard lumps of soil and removing weeds between rows of plants, farmers used a hoe or mattock. Probably the hoe was broader and lighter than the mattock. Isaiah records that hoes were used to clear hillsides or to work the soil in terraces where oxen might not be able to plough.

In New Testament times the Roman mattock had two prongs behind the heavy blade. Farmers also used a combined pick and hoe, which had a rounded hoe blade and a pick projecting behind it.

Finally, the sickle was the tool with which crops were cut down. Sickles were hand held, and in early times were made from sharp flints set into a



Winnowing. This illustration is from a wall painting in the tomb of Menna at Thebes, 15th century BC.

haft. From the tenth century BC onwards they were normally made from iron, and the remains which have been discovered reveal that the crescent shape was similar to that of modern sickles, although the ancient tools were usually smaller than their modern western equivalents.

WHEAT AND BARLEY

Wheat and barley were grown extensively in Palestine, providing the population with bread. Wheat was the more popular and was grown on the well-drained lower areas while barley did better in drier places. Sometimes barley was grown on the poorer soil in areas where wheat was more usual; both crops were growing near Bethlehem in the time of Ruth. Barley was probably the 'standing corn' of the Philistines which Samson set alight. Spelt, an inferior kind of wheat, was also planted around the borders of wheat and barley fields.

Before the farmer could sow grain, he had to clear the ground of stones. Even the best soil contained many stones, and these had to be picked out by hand and heaped up around the boundaries of the field. A larger pile might serve as a special landmark and the law made interfering with a landmark a serious offence. Then the ground was broken up with a plough, and the seed sown.

◁ Deuteronomy 19: 14
Deuteronomy 27: 17

The seed was sown 'broadcast' from mid-November to mid-January. The farmer walked up and down the field carrying a bag of seed and scattering handfuls over the ground. Then he ploughed the field so that the seed would be covered up. Otherwise the sower followed the plough and threw the seed into the furrows. Then the oxen were driven back over the field to trample the seed into the earth.

◁◁ Ruth 2: 23

◁◁ Judges 15: 5

Inevitably the sowing was uneven and some of the seed was wasted. Jesus' famous parable of the sower illustrates this. Some seed fell on the

◁ Matthew 13: 3–9

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path beside the field to be eaten by birds; some fell on stony, unploughed patches where the roots could not feed properly; and some fell in the undergrowth or was choked by weeds which grew in the field.

2 Samuel 6: 6f

The Assyrians and Babylonians developed a prototype seed-drill which was fixed on to the plough. It had a seedbox on top of a hollow tube, and seeds would drop down the tube into the furrow behind the plough point. There is no evidence that the Israelite farmers copied the idea.

2 Samuel 24: 18–25

Once the crop began to grow it had to be protected from birds which enjoyed eating the young shoots; no doubt the children of the family were employed as living scarecrows. The ground between rows of growing corn was cultivated with hoes to keep the soil loose and free from weeds.

Deuteronomy 25: 4

By mid-April or early May the barley was ready for harvest and the wheat was cut about a month later. The whole family would stop everything else and help with the harvest, a long and tiresome process; larger landowners might hire outside labourers.

The reaper held several stalks in one hand and cut them close to the ears of corn with a sickle. The cut stalks were laid on the ground, and other people tied them in small bundles with a straw, then gathered the bundles into sheaves. The law required some corn (indeed some of all crops) to be left in the fields for the widows, orphans and strangers who had no land to harvest. The fruit of the earth was to be shared fairly. Once the cut corn had fully dried in the sun (rain at harvest time was a major disaster) it was taken to the threshing-floor where the grain kernels could be separated from the stalks and husks.

Isaiah 41: 15

Isaiah 28: 27

Deuteronomy 24: 19–22

The threshing-floor was a flat area of land or a large rocky surface, chosen because it would catch the breeze. Threshing-floors are often mentioned as well-known places in the Bible; for example, when David recaptured the ark of the covenant from the Philistines, the oxen pulling the cart stumbled at 'the threshing-floor of Nacon'. A man called Uzzah tried to steady the rocking ark and he died as a result. Each farmer had an area of the floor, or, if he was rich, he might have one all to himself. David bought one from Araunah.

Small quantities of grain (and more delicate crops such as dill or cummin) were beaten with rods cut from a tree. Larger quantities were threshed by allowing animals to trample over them, although oxen were not allowed to be muzzled so that they too could share in the harvest and eat while they worked. As an alternative method of threshing a bumper harvest, some farmers used a threshing-sledge, a flat board which curved upwards at the front. Sharp stones or metal fragments were set into the bottom of the board, and it was pulled round by a beast tethered to a vertical central pole. To give it extra weight, the farmer usually stood on the sledge.

The book of Isaiah has two passages which illustrate the threshing process. In one the prophet describes 'a threshing-sledge, new and sharp, with many teeth'. In the other he points out how different crops required different treatment: 'Caraway is not threshed with a sledge, nor is a cartwheel rolled over cummin; caraway is beaten out with a rod, and cummin with a stick.'

The threshing process got the grains off the stalks, but of course they were still mixed up on the floor. In the morning or evening, when there was a breeze, the farmer took a wooden fork with broad prongs, picked up a pile of chaff and grain and tossed it into the air, an operation called winnowing. The heavy grains fell into a pile and the lighter chaff was blown away to fall into a separate pile on one side of the floor. The grains were then collected and stored, later to be turned into flour for baking.



A fork is used to winnow grain by fanning it into the wind from a threshing floor on a high place.

Once the local people had gathered in the harvest, they usually had a party to celebrate: 'people rejoice at the harvest'. It was a momentous time: food was stored up for the months ahead and a period of back-breaking work was over. The Feast of Weeks (later known as Pentecost) celebrated the wheat harvest. The contemporary 'harvest festival' in churches has its origin in the same emotions of relief and gratitude felt by Europeans who, before the industrial revolution, lived as close to the land as did the Israelites.

That may help to explain why Jesus and the apostles saw the climactic end to history as a harvest; once again a deeply significant event in their lives was turned into a powerful symbol of God's purposes. Jesus spoke of the kingdom of God being like a man who sowed seed, watched it grow, and then 'puts the sickle to it'. In the book of Revelation, John sees someone '"like a son of man" with a crown of gold on his head and a sharp sickle in his hand.' A voice called out, '"Take your sickle and reap, because the time to reap has come, for the harvest of the earth is ripe."'

Isaiah 9: 3

Mark 4: 26–29

Revelation 14: 14–16

1 Kings 4: 25 ▷▷

1 Kings 21: 1–16 ▷▷

1 Chronicles 27: ▷▷ 26–31

Genesis 4: 2 ▷

Genesis 12: 16 ▷

Genesis 26: 12 ▷

Genesis 37: 5–7 ▷

2 Chronicles 26: 10 ▷▷

Judges 6: 4 ▷

Judges 6: 11, 25, ▷ 37;
Judges 8: 2

1 Kings 4: 20 ▷

Jeremiah 39: 10 ▷▷
Jeremiah 40: 10 ▷▷
Jeremiah 41: 8 ▷▷

1 Kings 4: 22f ▷

AGRICULTURE THROUGH THE CENTURIES

The Bible spans a broad period of history, and over the centuries farming methods and knowledge slowly developed and changed. Agriculture was practised in Palestine long before the Israelites arrived there, and there is evidence that the inhabitants had passed from the hunting stage of human development to the cultivating stage by the Mesolithic Period which began about 10,000 BC.

The twin pillars on which farming is built – cultivating crops and caring for animals – were distinguished early in the biblical narratives. Adam's son Abel 'kept flocks', while Cain 'worked the soil'. Abraham seems to have been more of a herdsman than a cultivator, although he must have obtained grain and fruit from somewhere. As a nomad, he moved round the edges of settlements with his sheep, cattle, donkeys and camels, looking for fresh pasture. Isaac his son 'planted crops in that land', however, and his grandson Joseph got himself into trouble dreaming about sheaves of wheat, with which he must have been familiar.

Crops and flocks must have been equally important in the emerging nation of Israel as it settled into Canaan during the time of the Judges. The Midianites regularly raided Israelite settlements 'and ruined the crops all the way to Gaza and did not spare a living thing for Israel, neither sheep nor cattle nor donkeys'. Gideon, who was to defeat Midian, had cattle, sheep, vineyards and wheat fields. Vineyards and olive groves had been taken over from the Canaanites by the invading Israelites under Joshua.

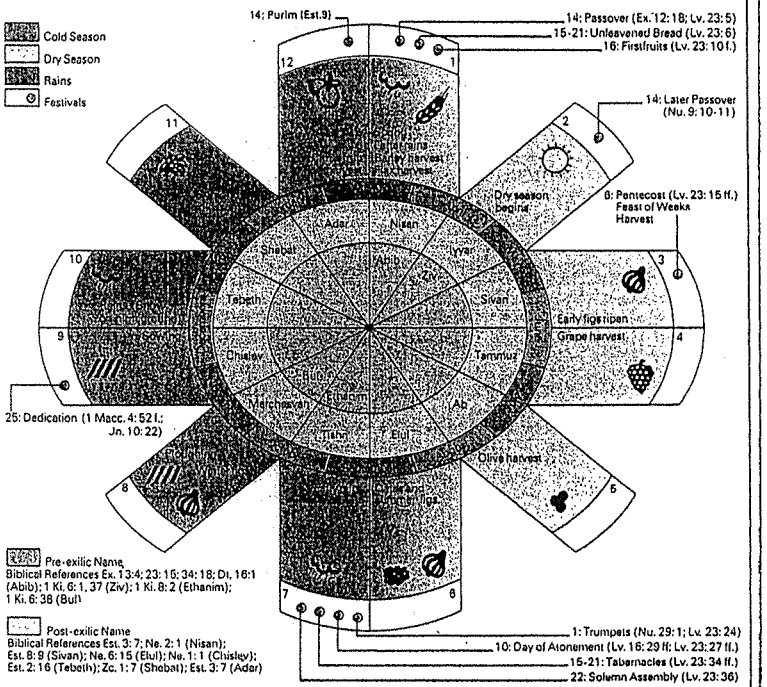
Under David and Solomon peace was slowly established and the people 'ate, they drank and they were happy'. New political pressures caused Solomon to impose heavy taxes, but their size indicates that agriculture was prospering. The king's daily requirements included 6.6 kilolitres (185 bushels) of fine flour and twice as much meal; ten stall-fed cattle, twenty pasture-fed cattle and a hundred sheep and goats, 'as well as deer, gazelles, roebucks and choice fowl'.

However, this also meant the rise of the landlord. Under Solomon each man 'lived in safety under his own vine and fig tree', but his successors began buying out smallholders and the seizure of Naboth's vineyard by the petulant King Ahab was only one example among many of compulsory purchase or outright theft of agricultural lands by unscrupulous leaders. Even in David's time there appear to have been royal estates including grain fields, vineyards, olive and sycamore groves, and pastureland. The prophets denounced landowners who swallowed up people's livelihoods and demanded huge consignments of grain to pay off mortgage debts.

Large government storehouses have been excavated in Megiddo, Hazor, Beer-sheba and Beth-shemesh, where grain, wine and olive oil were kept. This was either collected as taxes, or was surplus from royal or other large estates. Documents written on broken pottery (ostraca) found in the palace at Samaria refer to collections of wine and oil and probably date from the reign of Jeroboam II (c. 786–746 BC).

Tools improved from the time of the Kings, and iron ploughs, sickles and hoes replaced older implements made from bronze. People moved to the fringes of arable land and brought new areas under the plough. King Uzziah, who 'loved the soil', 'built towers in the desert and dug many cisterns, because he had much livestock in the foothills, and in the plain'. Fortresses with associated farming settlements have been found in the central Negeb dating from the ninth to the seventh centuries BC, and the later (second and third centuries BC) Nabataeans dammed and distributed water along otherwise waterless hill slopes.

After the fall of Jerusalem and the deportation of 587 BC, the ruling Babylonians gave vineyards and fields to 'some of the poor people, who owned nothing'. Their crops yielded wine, summer fruit and oil, and they built up stores of wheat, barley, oil and honey. In later centuries Persian and Greek armies traversed the land; since they needed large and local food supplies, agriculture in Palestine was presumably flourishing again by then.



The Hebrew calendar, based on the agricultural and religious year, showing seasons and festivals with their modern equivalents.

In the New Testament period, rice began to be grown in wet areas such as the Plains of Esdraelon. Chickens had made an appearance, too, according to Jesus, and his reference to Peter's denial 'before the cock crows' suggests they were common. The few Old Testament references to eggs seem to be those of non-domestic birds which were found, rather than farmed, but there are two stamp seals from c. 600 BC which depict cocks, both bearing Hebrew names.

Landowning seems to have continued on a large scale. Jesus told stories about a rich fool with huge barns, landowners with tenant farmers, and labourers who worked a day at a time for farmers who needed them. A bigger change came through the expansion of trade. It had not been lacking in Old Testament times, but the new Roman roads opened up western Asia, Anatolia and Europe to each other. Roman aqueducts also opened up new agricultural areas.

Both improved trade and water-supplies encouraged the development of huge wheat fields in northern Palestine, lower Galilee, Bashan east of Jordan, and in Lebanon, to feed the demands of the expanding Roman Empire. The area east of Galilee, the Hauran of southern Syria (including the ancient Bashan) became one of the great granaries of the Empire. It is not surprising, then, that in his parable of the debtors Jesus depicted one man owing 35 kilolitres (1,000 bushels) of wheat.

◁◁ Matthew 23: 37

◁◁ Matthew 26: 34

◁◁ *E.g.* Deuteronomy 22: 6;
Isaiah 10: 14

◁◁ Luke 12: 6–21;

◁◁ Matthew 21: 33–41;

◁◁ Matthew 20: 1–7

◁ Luke 16: 7

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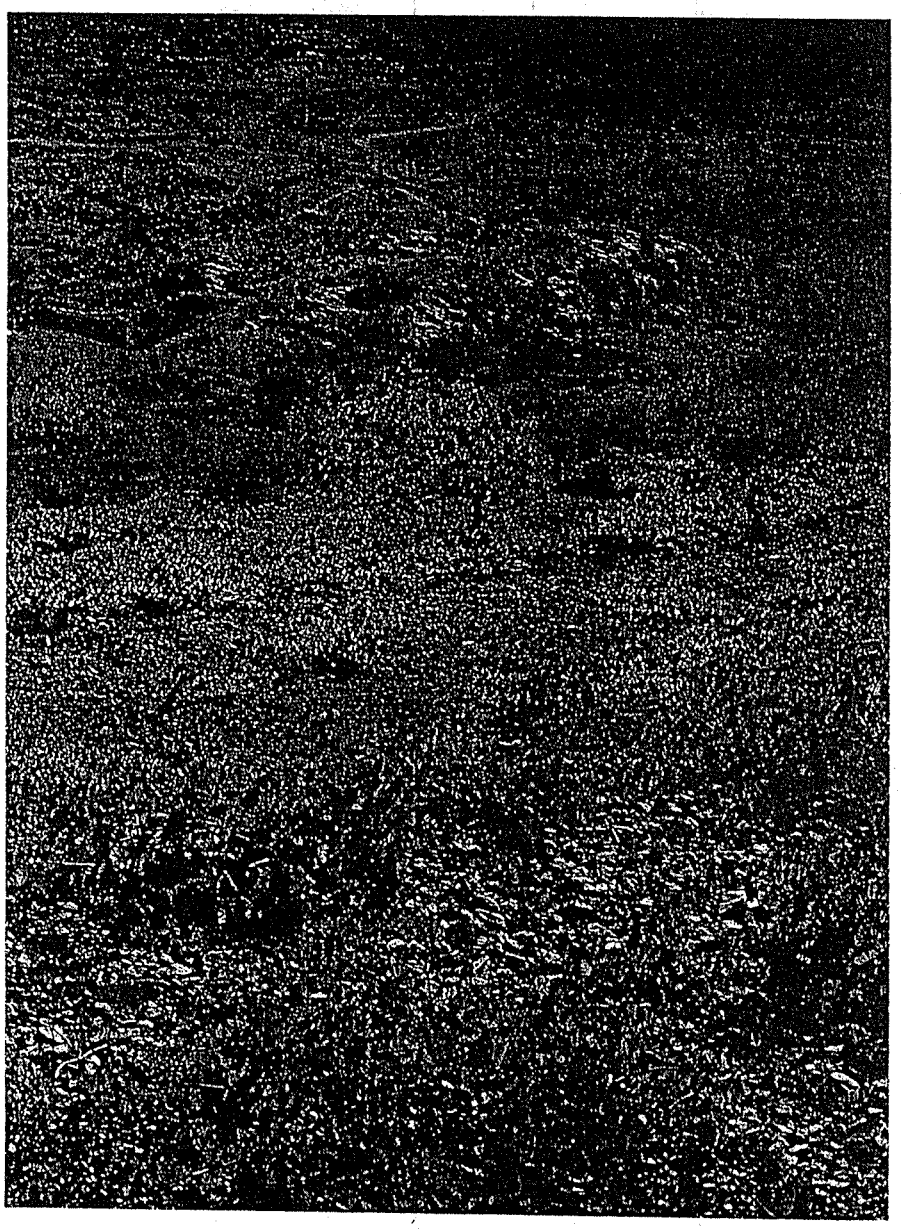


Vineyard on a hillside near Hebron.

GRAPES AND OLIVES

After the grain harvest, the weeks between mid-June and mid-August were used for tending the vineyards. Grape-vines grow easily throughout Palestine, especially on the sunny hillsides. Once planted they need minimal care except for soil cultivation and branch pruning in spring, after the plant has blossomed and again after harvest.

Isaiah described it thus: 'Before the harvest, when the blossom is gone and the flower becomes a ripening grape, he will cut off the shoots with pruning knives, and cut down and take away the spreading branches.' The intention was to channel all the plant's energy into producing fruit rather than wood, an idea which Jesus used vividly when describing God's habit of 'pruning' his followers so that they will be more useful to him. The pruning hook used by Israelite farmers had a small, sharp, curved blade; it could quite easily be beaten into a spear – and, therefore, a spear could become a pruning hook, as in Isaiah's vision of peace.

The grapes ripened towards the end of July and were harvested in August and September. Thieves, birds and animals all liked a plump ripe grape, and farmers had to build 'watchtowers' – small shelters – in their vineyards where they lived and slept like guards during the harvest period. (They did the same in vegetable gardens, too, and the practice continues to this day in the Near East.)

The farmer usually harvested his own grapes, although large landowners would sub-let their vineyards to tenants for a 'rent' of a share in the harvest, as one of Jesus' parables revealed. The gathered grapes were eaten fresh, dried into raisins, or turned into wine.

Olive trees were often grown on the higher slopes above the vineyards in the western part of Palestine. Olives grow in shallow soil and are able to withstand long periods of drought, but they do not thrive in the long cold periods which can occur in southern Judah. They require very little attention except for periodical hoeing of the soil.

event of the agricultural year. It could be done in a more leisurely way than the grain or grape harvest because the fruit ripened slowly, and it often lasted from mid-September until after the start of the rains in late October. Most olives were picked by hand although those on the higher branches would be shaken or beaten down. Although they are slow to mature, olive trees can live for hundreds of years, and today old gnarled trees are sometimes uprooted and planted in new groves. A good tree can produce 45 to 68 litres (10 to 15 gallons) of oil each year.

◁◁ Isaiah 18: 5

◁◁ John 15: 1f

FRUIT, FLAX AND VEGETABLES

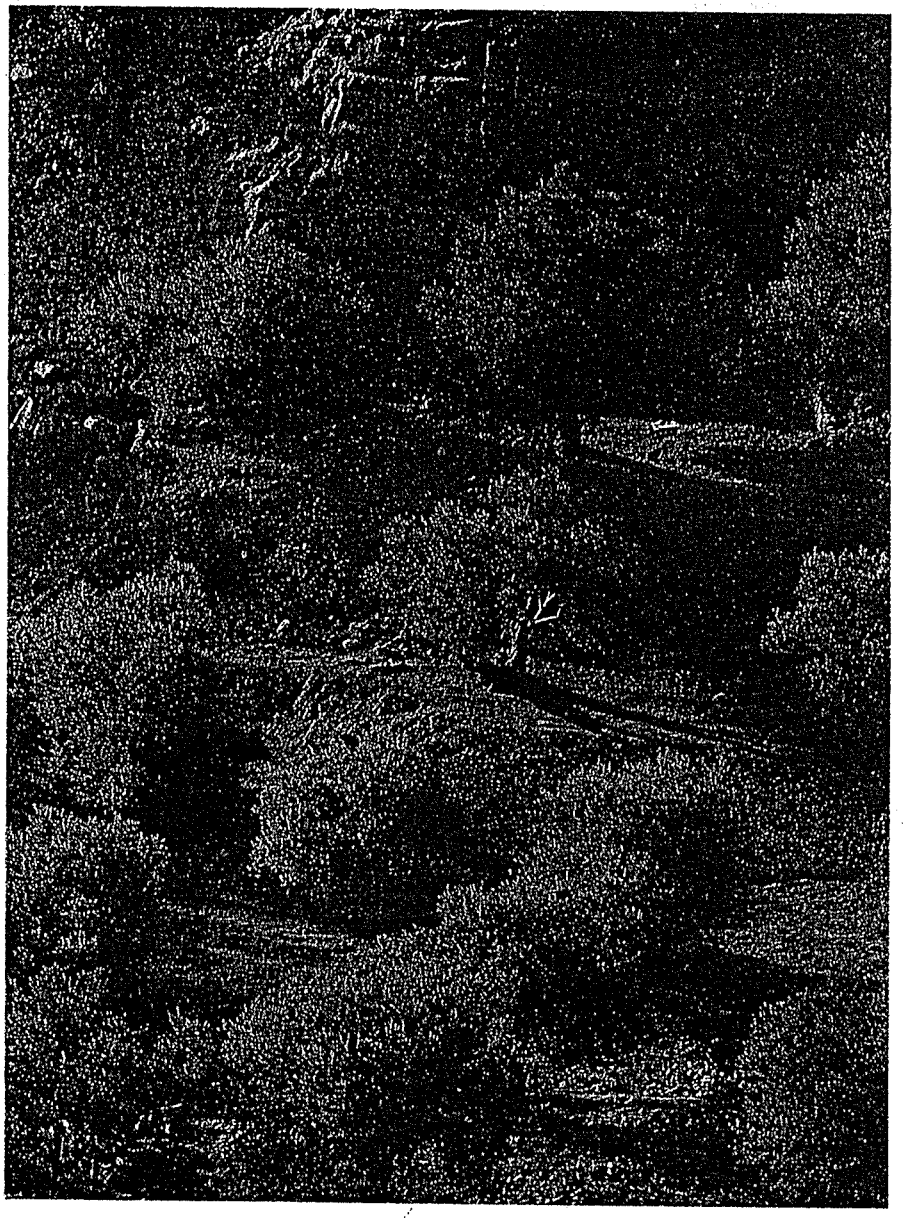
A number of fruits associated with the Near East today do not seem to have been known there even in New Testament times. Apricots were introduced to the west from China no earlier than the first century BC, and citrus fruit (oranges, lemons and grapefruit), which now thrive in Israel, together with apples, tomatoes and squash, arrived after the apostolic age, probably with the Arabs who moved into the region.

◁◁ Isaiah 2: 4

◁◁ Isaiah 1: 8; Isaiah 5: 2

While wheat, grapes and olives seem to have been the chief crops in Bible times (they are often named together), there were other fruits and some vegetables to give variety to people's diets. Figs provided fruit in the early summer, and as they were seen as a sign that summer was coming, Jesus

◁◁ Matthew 21: 33–46



Olive grove in the Hinnom valley, Jerusalem.

used them as a symbol of the approach of God's judgment. The shady fig tree was seen as a symbol of security, too: 'every man will sit under his own vine and under his own fig-tree, and no-one will make them afraid.'

Related to the fig was the sycamore*, a sturdy tree reaching between 9 and 12 m (30 and 40 ft) in height. It grows in the lowlands of Palestine and also in Egypt, and its fruit, with yellow and black spots, grows directly on the trunk and branches of the tree. The prophet Amos 'took care of sycamore fig-trees', which means he cut the top off each fig to make sure the ripening fruit was clean and free from insects. It was this kind of tree which Zacchaeus, the diminutive tax collector, climbed in order to see Jesus.

Another harbinger of summer was the almond tree, which burst into pink and white blossoms while all other trees were bare. That is why the book of Jeremiah opens with a play on words. The prophet sees an almond tree (*shāqēḏ*), and God says, 'I am watching' (*shôqēḏ*) ('I am early on the watch', NEB), meaning he is getting ready to act.

Pomegranates were gathered, too. Their shape was carved in the temple decorations, and the Song of Solomon mentions a wine made from their juice. Their large numbers of separate seeds made them symbolic of fertility.

There are many biblical references to the palm tree, suggesting that dates grew in some parts of Palestine, although there are no references to dates as such. The palm grew well in the Jordan valley north of the Dead Sea and was mentioned in Jewish writings like the Mishna and Talmud, and referred to by the Roman writer Pliny and the Jewish historian Josephus. The palm often gave its name *tāmār* to the place where it grew, *e.g.* Tamar and Hazezon Tamar. Jericho was also known as 'the city of palms'.

Flax, although not a food crop, was cultivated and was important because it was used to make linen cloth and rope. It was harvested a month before barley. It was cut off with a hoe at ground level, then laid out to dry in the sun. Joshua's spies hid from guards under stalks of flax laid out to dry on the flat roof of Rahab's house in Jericho.

There are a number of vegetables mentioned in passing in the Bible. These include beans, chick peas and lentils, all important sources of protein. For flavouring, the people grew onions, leeks, garlic and cucumber, and spices such as dill, cummin and mint.

SHEEP AND SHEPHERDS

From the arrival in Egypt of Joseph's family, whom he described as shepherds, to the angelic announcement of the birth of Jesus to the men watching their flocks outside Bethlehem, raising and caring for sheep was a vital part of Israelite economy.

The sheep were a fat-tailed variety and provided milk as well as meat and wool. They were hardy and could live outdoors all the year round. Although they required water every day, they could live off sparse grass if necessary. There were in fact good pasture lands in the central highlands and on the Transjordan plateaux.

In the early days of Israel, almost every family owned a few sheep and therefore someone in the family was a shepherd. Jacob's future wife, Rachel,

* The correct spelling is sycomore, although most Bible versions have an *a* instead of an *o*, which may cause confusion with the leafy and rapid growing European sycamore tree which does not produce edible fruit.

◁◁ Mark 13: 28f

◁◁ Micah 4: 4

◁◁ Ezekiel 47: 18–19
Genesis 14: 7

◁2 Chronicles 28: 15

◁◁ Amos 7: 14

◁ Joshua 2: 6

◁◁ Luke 19: 4

◁◁ 1 Kings 7: 18

◁◁ Song 8: 2

◁ Genesis 29: 6–10

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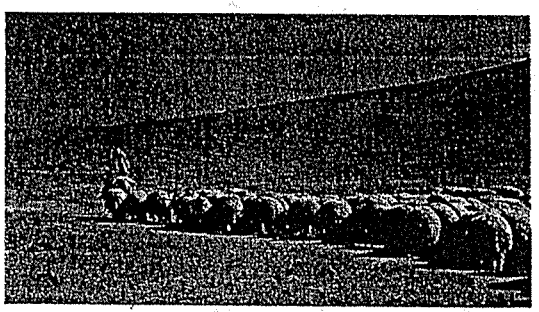


Above: shepherd on a donkey leading his flock of sheep in Syria. This clearly illustrates the ancient custom of going before, rather than driving the sheep.

Right: Arab woman watching over her goats between Bethlehem and Hebron.

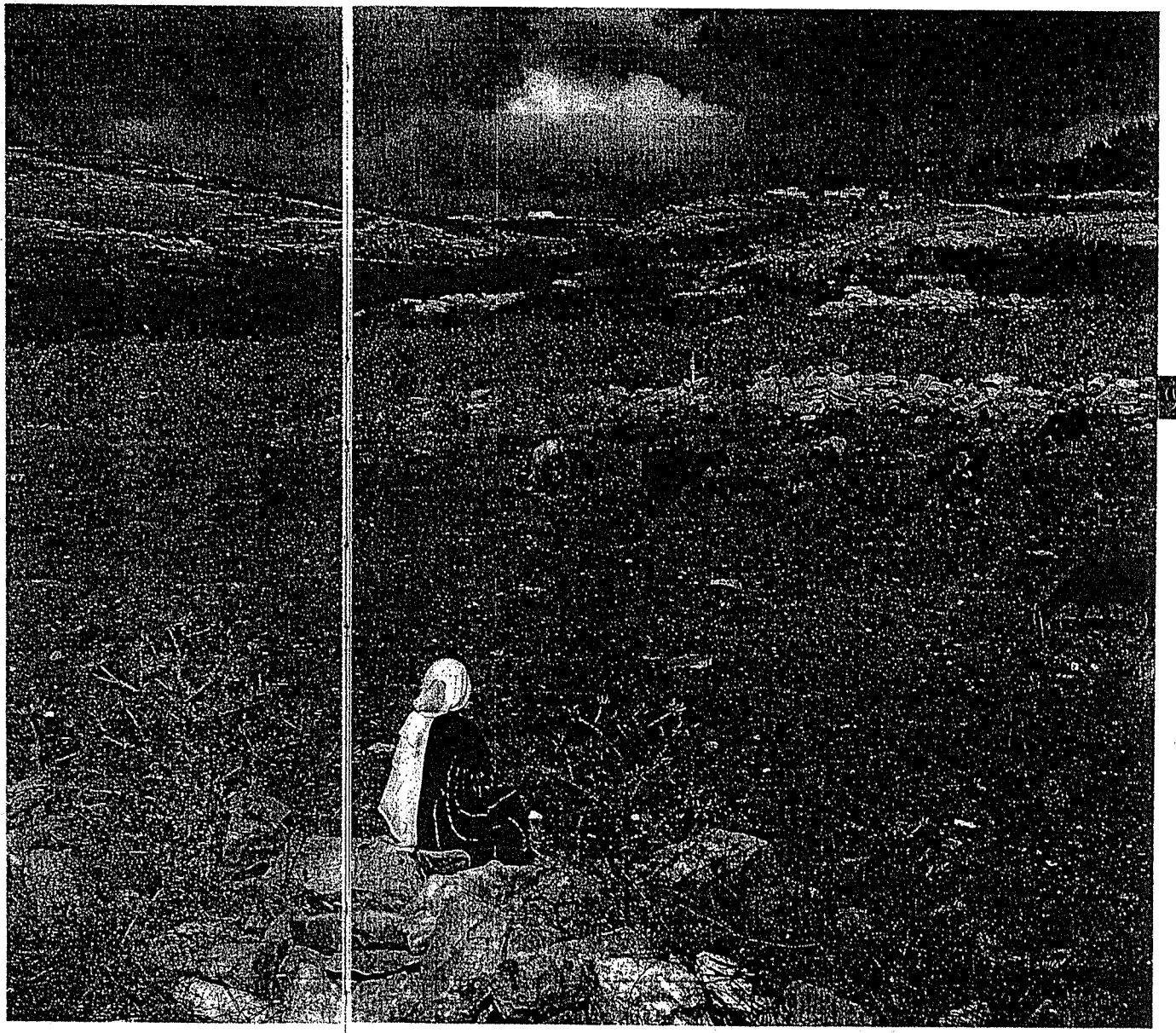
had the job of watering the sheep, and the future king, David, the youngest of eight brothers, had the task of watching the sheep. Each animal represented part of a person's wealth in the days before riches were measured in terms of figures on a bank statement. A lost sheep meant lost wool and milk and meat; a lost ewe meant fewer lambs next year. When Jesus told a parable about a lost sheep, meaning a person who had wandered from God, he was talking about a disaster, not a mishap.

1 Samuel 16: 11 ▷

Luke 15: 3–7 ▷

The shepherd (or in the case of large flocks, the head-shepherd) had to find adequate pasture and water for the flock, and this often involved seasonal migrations. He also needed to know the location of caves, where he could shelter from storms, cold nights and wild animals, and of wadis and rocks where he could find shade on hot days. He carried a sling and a wooden club to fend off lions, bears, wolves, jackals and hyenas which would attack the flock; and a staff to prod the sheep as they moved on or rescue them from crevasses.

When the flock was far from home the shepherd set up a camp near a water source. A fire provided warmth and



WHERE FARMING TOOK PLACE

Not all areas of Palestine were equally suited to all crops and livestock. Wheat flourished best on the well-drained areas of the valley of Jezreel, in lower Samaria and Galilee, and in much of Transjordan. Barley grew in the drier areas of the south and east, and in the Philistine territory in the south-west.

Olives require the warm Mediterranean climate to survive, and they grew abundantly in the fertile valleys of Ephraim, on the western slopes of Gilead, and in parts of Judah. Vines are more hardy, and grew in Judah and Galilee.

John 10: 25–33 ▷▷

discouraged wild animals. A simple pen or 'sheepfold' built from stones lying around would have kept the animals together at night. People who owned only a couple of sheep would send their animals out each morning under the care of a village shepherd, who led them to pasture beyond the cultivated fields and returned them at night to their owners' houses.

Matthew 25: 32f ▷▷

The shepherd developed a close relationship with his sheep, and had a distinctive call which the sheep could recognize. At a watering place several flocks might mingle together, but each shepherd could extract his own sheep from the rest simply by calling them. Unlike most modern shepherds, he would lead the sheep from in front rather than drive them from behind.

John 10: 1–18 ▷

Jesus took up this everyday image and applied it to himself. He was the good shepherd, he said, who knew all his people by name, so that when he called, they followed. He protected them from attack, and was prepared to die so that they could live. It was a familiar symbol to the Jew, who already knew that:

E.g. Ezekiel 34: 17 ▷▷

Proverbs 27: 23, 27 ▷▷

Psalm 23: 1–4 ▷

> The LORD is my shepherd,
> I shall lack nothing.
> He makes me lie down
> in green pastures,
> he leads me beside
> quiet waters,
> he restores my soul. ...
> I will fear no evil,
> for you are with me;
> your rod and staff,
> they comfort me.

In applying the image to himself, Jesus was virtually claiming equality with God, something he stated explicitly shortly afterwards in John's narrative, as he returned again to the shepherd picture.

GOATS AND OXEN

Goats played a more important role in the Palestinian economy than cattle. They often mingled with, and sometimes had to be separated from, the sheep (giving Jesus a natural picture of the division of mankind at the day of judgment). Goats and sheep were more mobile and able to live on poorer grass than cattle.

Palestinian goats had long ears and long curved horns. They could be black, black and white or brown and white. When they were kept with sheep they tended to be the dominant animals of the group, which may explain why the Old Testament sometimes describes political leaders as goats.

Goats provided milk, meat, hair and skins for their owners. The book of Proverbs urges its readers to 'give careful attention to your herds' so that 'you will have plenty of goats' milk to feed you and your family and to nourish your servant girls'. A good nanny-goat would yield 3.5 litres (6 pints) of milk a day. Goats' hair was coarse and used for making rough cloth and for stuffing pillows. When a goat's skin was scraped, cleaned and had its hair removed, it could be used as a container for water, milk or wine.

THE FARMER'S YEAR

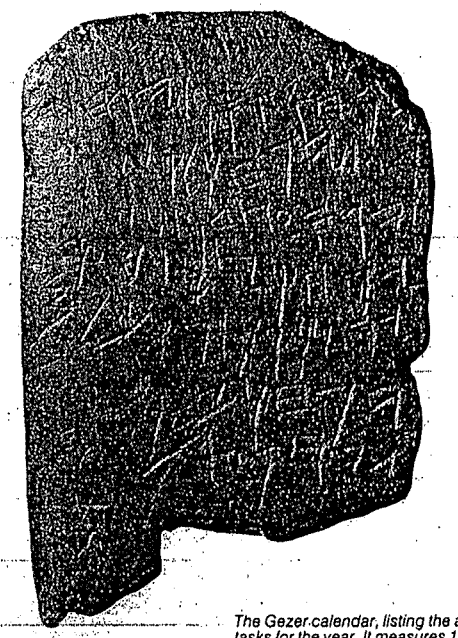
A calendar of the farmer's year was found at Gezer in 1908. It is inscribed in old Hebrew script on a rectangular block of soft limestone small enough to be held in the hand, and is generally reckoned to be a schoolboy's writing exercise from the tenth century BC. It was probably a well-known verse like the English 'Thirty days hath September ...

Months of vintage and oil harvest;
Months of sowing;
Months of spring pasture;
Month of flax pulling;
Month of barley harvest;
Month of wheat harvest and measuring;
Months of pruning;
Month of summer fruit.

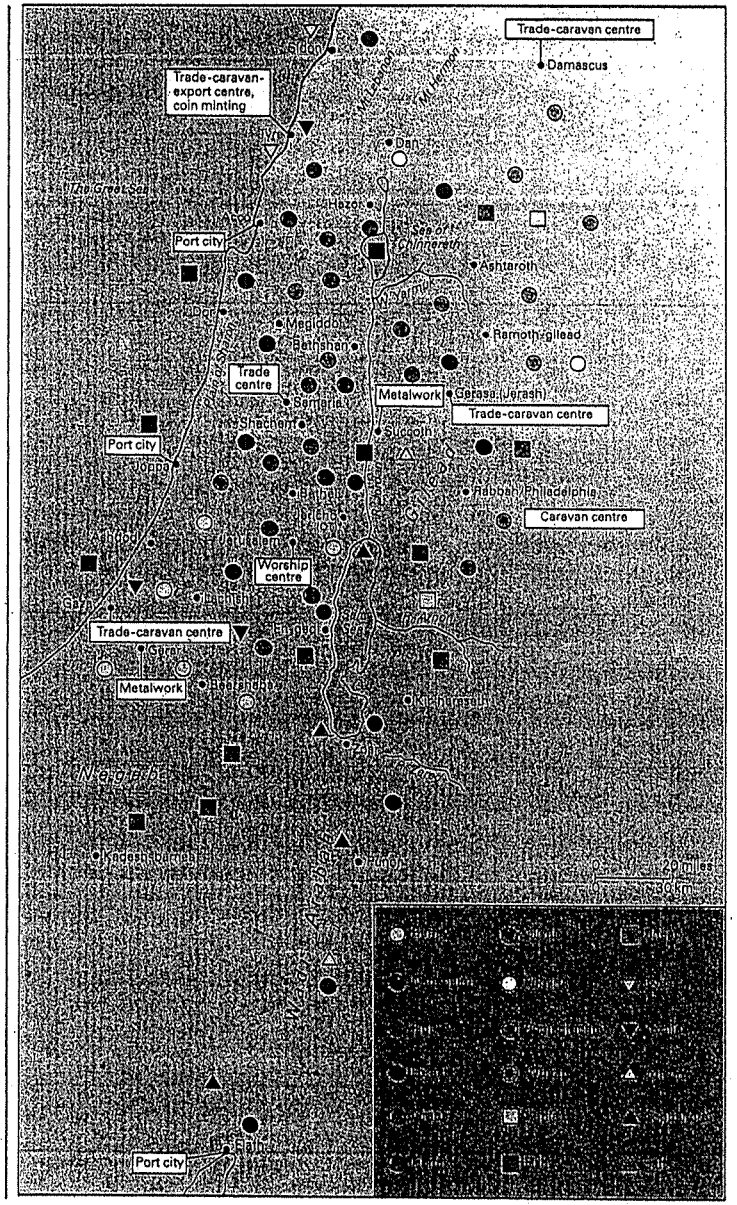
Some translators take the word 'months' here to be 'two months' which, since it occurs four times, accounts for eight months. The other four make up the twelve months. This calendar follows the civil year although the true agricultural year began with the planting or sowing season (second on the list).

The winter rains came in late October, lasting until mid-January. That was the time for ploughing and sowing. Wheat and barley were planted in late October or early November and other grains (sesame, millet and lentils) were sown, along with vegetables like cucumbers, chick peas, onions, leeks and garlic, from mid-January to mid-March.

Flax was harvested in March-April, barley in April-May and wheat in May-June. Then came the pruning season for vines until mid-August. Grapes were gathered in August and September, followed by olives until mid-November. The hot dry summer lasted, theoretically, from June to August.



The Gezer calendar, listing the agricultural tasks for the year. It measures 11 cm (just over 4 in) high.



The economy of ancient Palestine.

Some goat herds were quite large: Jacob had at least 220 animals and Nabal 1,000. Goats are destructive animals, however, and have been largely responsible for the deforestation of parts of Palestine and the Levant area, destroying even the young cedars of Lebanon by nibbling the shoots.

Oxen also provided milk and meat, but they were more work animals than sources of food. They pulled ploughs and carts even as early as the exodus, when they helped transport Israel through the desert. Their need of good pasture and water made them generally unsuitable for nomadic groups, however, although Abraham had herds of cattle, as he stayed in some places for long periods. Job is said to have had 500 yoke (pairs) of oxen before calamity struck him, and 1,000 pairs afterwards. They are unlikely to have been nearly so numerous as the more versatile goats.

DROUGHTS AND DISASTERS

The land 'flowing with milk and honey' was not a perfect place, a new Eden where everything in the garden was lovely. Farmers in Palestine, like those the world over, faced their share of pests and natural disasters which hindered their work and threatened their livelihood.

The book of Genesis suggests that the universal battle against nature arose ultimately because people turned their backs on God:

> Cursed is the ground because of you;
> through painful toil you will eat of it
> all the days of your life.
> It will produce thorns and thistles for you,
> and you will eat the plants of the field.
> By the sweat of your brow
> you will eat your food
> until you return to the ground,
> since from it you were taken...

◁◁ Genesis 32: 14;

◁◁ 1 Samuel 25: 2

Paul in the New Testament takes up the theme and writes that

> the creation was subjected to frustration ... in hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God.

◁ Romans 8: 20f

◁◁ Numbers 7: 3, 6–8

The Palestinian farmer fought the elements on three fronts: the weather, disease and pests. The weather was a constant problem. There was a drought every year from June to August (sometimes even from May to September), but this was a seasonal pattern the farmer learned to live with. More problems arose when the first winter rains came early, followed by another period of drought. The rain caused seeds in the ground to germinate, but the drought killed off the young shoots.

◁◁ Job 1: 3; Job 42: 12

Almost as bad was the delay of the winter rains until early December. In the steppe lands of the Negeb and parts of the southern Jordan valley the top soil had been baked dry for months and all the vegetation had been burned off by the sun. The later the rains came, the more soil erosion took place; there were no plant roots to hold the earth together.

Long-term droughts are recorded in the Bible. One predicted by Elijah the prophet lasted for three years. Such droughts were often regarded as signs of God's judgment on the people; God said through Amos,

◁ 1 Kings 17: 1

◁◁ Genesis 3: 17–19

> 'I also withheld rain from you
> when the harvest was still three months away.

◁ Amos 4: 7f

I sent rain on one town,
but withheld it from another.
...
People staggered from town to town
for water
but did not get enough to
drink,
yet you have not returned to
me,'
declares the Lord.

Jeremiah records a pathetic poem, in the form of a lament, during a drought. He writes of people who

Joel 2: 25 ▷▷

'... return with their jars unfilled;
dismayed and despairing,
they cover their heads. ...
Even the doe in the field
deserts her newborn fawn
because there is no grass.
Wild donkeys stand on the
barren heights
and pant like jackals;
their eyesight fails
for lack of pasture.'

Jeremiah 14: 3–6 ▷

Other weather problems included the hot sirocco or khamsin winds which desiccated (or blighted) vegetation in the spring and autumn, bringing the highest temperatures of the year. Hailstorms could destroy crops and animals. 'He destroyed their vines with hail', recalls the psalmist, 'and their sycamore-figs with sleet. He gave over their cattle to the hail, their livestock to bolts of lightning.' Floods could wash out the crops, too.

Psalm 78: 47f ▷

Joel 2: 1–11 ▷▷

One of the Israelite farmer's worst enemies was the locust. There are two groups, the 'runners' (*cursuria*) which the Israelites regarded as unclean, and the 'leapers' (*saltatoria*) which the Levitical law described as winged creatures with 'jointed legs for hopping on the ground' and thus declared 'clean' and edible; locusts and grasshoppers are still regarded as a delicacy in the East.

Amos 4: 9 ▷▷

Leviticus 11: 21 ▷

Matthew 3: 4 ▷

Locusts are migratory creatures largely wind-driven from the Arabian desert, but their migrations do not occur at fixed seasons or regular intervals; they can arrive at any time. The female lays her eggs in holes in the ground, and the wingless larvae that hatch out devour all the vegetation in their path. After a series of moults they develop wings and fly in great dark clouds, and they are equally voracious at every stage.

The Old Testament uses a variety of Hebrew names for them. The prophet Joel lists several: 'the great locust and the young locust, the other locusts and the locust swarm'. This attention to different varieties of locusts and different stages of their growth shows how much they occupied the Israelite mind. Indeed, Joel pictures the coming Day of the Lord as like a locust swarm.

Before them the land is like the
garden of Eden,
behind them, a desert waste –
nothing escapes them. ...
They all march in line,
not swerving from their course.
...
They climb into the houses;
like thieves they enter
through the windows.
Before them the earth shakes,
the sky trembles,
the sun and moon are darkened,
and the stars no longer
shine.

Some plant diseases are recorded in the Bible, although their exact nature is uncertain. Mildew is mentioned by Amos (along with blight, the effect of the hot wind) and this was probably a fungoid disease. Some scholars identify it as *puccinia graminis*. Isaiah may have referred to the fly and maggot which trouble modern sheep when he wrote 'the worm will devour them like wool'.

The final hazard faced by farmers in Bible times was human. Raiders from neighbouring countries or conquerors from further afield would have had little respect for crops and livestock. Rural life was far from idyllic. It was hard and insecure. People lived from month to month, often not knowing whether there would be sufficient food available for everyone.

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factor to the high mortality rate among infants as well as their mothers. For example, Rachel died giving birth to Benjamin as the family traveled between Bethel and Bethlehem (Gen 35:16–19). In another case, Phinehas' wife went into premature labor after hearing the news of her husband's death in the battle against the Philistines at Aphek. The double shock to her system caused her death, although the child did survive (1 Sam 4:19–20).

Children had to grow up fast in the hill country villages. As soon as they were able to take directions (Isa 7:15), they were put to work in the home or the fields. As they grew older some were sent to guard the herds (1 Sam 16:11) or were apprenticed to craftsmen in the village. Occasionally a child was also sent to serve in the religious shrines like that at Shiloh. After he was weaned at the age of three or four, Samuel was taken to Shiloh to begin his training as a priest (1 Sam 1:24).

Israelite children were expected to be respectful and obedient to their parents (Ex 20:12). They were to answer the call and orders of their elders (1 Sam 3:5). A disobedient child was considered a disgrace to the family and the community (e.g., 1 Sam 2:22–25—Eli's sons). The ultimate expression of obedience by a child is found in the case of Jephthah's daughter (Jdg 11:34–39). She willingly submitted to being sacrificed so that her father's oath could be honored.

C. Burial Practices

The narrative's description of burials during this period generally functions as a means of establishing or solidifying claim to tribal territories. For instance, the bones of Joseph, which had been carried by the people out of Egypt at the time of the exodus, were buried in a plot of ground near Shechem (Jos 24:32). This piece of

father Jacob from King Hamor (Gen 33:18–20). By this action the Joseph tribes legitimized their claim to that area. Similarly, Joshua was buried "in his own inheritance at Timnath-serah" in the hill country of Ephraim (Jos 24:30).

The burials of Gideon and Samson, in contrast to the proprietary burials mentioned above, were in family tombs. Gideon was buried in the "tomb of Joash his father, at Ophrah of the Abiezrites" (Jdg 8:32) and Samson "between Zorah and Eshtaol in the tomb of Manoah his father" (Jdg 16:31). As in the patriarchal tomb at Hebron, the cave of Machpelah, these burial places imply multigenerational residency in the area.

The burial caves or rock-cut tombs themselves were located outside the village proper. Some personal possessions were buried with the corpse, but they were often simply symbols of who the person was in life. Still some items may have been designed as comforts in the afterlife or as wards to drive away evil spirits. Superstitions about the spirits of the dead may have existed, but they do not figure in any narrative other than the story of Saul and the witch of Endor in 1 Sam 28:8–19.

VI. RELIGIOUS PRACTICES

In what ways did the Israelites in the exodus and settlement period worship God?

The religious practices of the Israelites in the period of the exodus and settlement range from the magnificent spectacle of thousands of people confirming the covenantal obligations at Sinai (Ex 19:17 and 24:3–8) to private family worship at the shrine of Micah with its graven image (Jdg 17:4–5). Coming out of the polytheistic environment of Egypt, the Israelites were not immediately able to adapt themselves to a strict monotheism.

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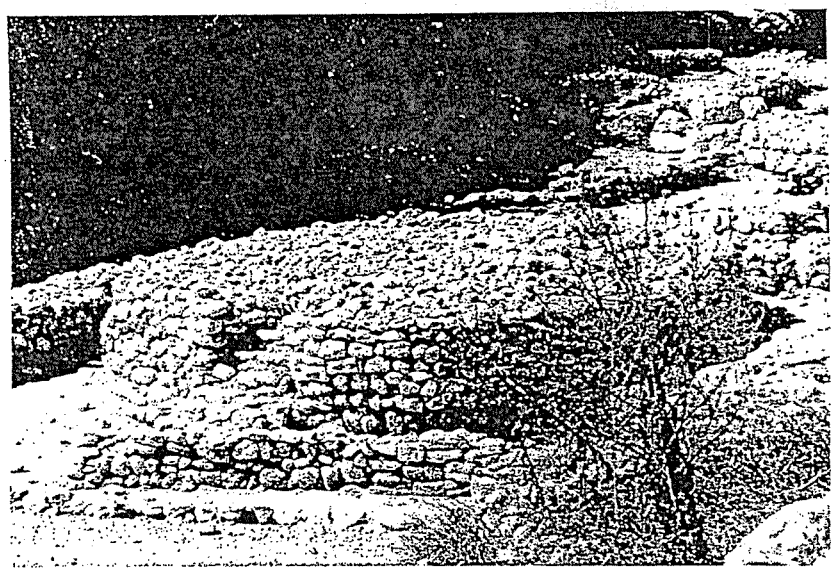
The signs of power displayed by Yahweh and his spokesman Moses would have been enough to convince the people to leave Egypt and return to Canaan. Nevertheless, once they arrived there, many found the lure of other cultures and other gods irresistible (Jdg 3:6).

A. Altars

Altars served a variety of purposes. They were sometimes expressions of thanksgiving for a military victory (Ex 17:15–16) or part of a purification ritual preparing the people to ask God what must be done to achieve victory (Jdg 21:4–23). At times an altar was built as a memorial or "witness" of the faithfulness of the people to the covenant (Jos 22:10–34). For the most part, however, altars were used to make sacrifices to God.

According to the Covenant Code in Ex 20:24–25, altars were to be constructed of earth or uncut stone. This injunction reflects the basically nomadic character of the people during the wilderness period. It goes well with the command that

The remains of an altar at Megiddo. Photo by Ralph Harris. 2-14



there should be no steps going up to the altar so as not to expose "your nakedness" (v 25). Both instructions probably reflect an attempt to differentiate Israelite altars and sacrifices from those of the Canaanites.

The further stipulation (v 24) that their altars were to be built "in every place where I cause my name to be remembered" ties them to specific events in the nation's history and perhaps to long-used sacred sites. Thus Gideon built an altar after experiencing a theophany and a command to liberate his people from the Midianites (Jdg 6:23–24). In Jdg 21:4–23, the tribes gathered at Bethel, a site associated with Israelite worship as far back as Abraham and Jacob, built an altar, sacrificed, and asked God's guidance in preparation for battle.

B. Types of Sacrifices

There were two major types of sacrifices made on these altars: burnt offerings (holocaust) of animals and peace or thank offerings of animals or cereal. These were done to expiate sin, offer thanks, or give God his due (firstfruits; Ex 22:29 and 23:19). All expressed the people's respect for the power of their God, and all eventually acquired very elaborate rules and rituals (Lev 1–7). It was their lack of respect in stealing from a portion of the sacrifice that was set aside as God's alone (Lev 7:1–21) that caused the deaths of Eli's sons in 1 Sam 2:12–16.

C. Religious Holidays

Some sacrifices are associated with national gatherings (Jdg 2:5) or communal events like the Passover (Ex 12 and Jos 5:10). This latter type is tied to the development of a calendar of religious holidays. These feasts centered on the major events of the agricultural year: planting season, wheat harvest, and the autumn ingathering of

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fruit, grapes, and olives (Ex 23:14–17). The number of feasts and the rituals associated with them also became more elaborate after the settlement period (Lev 23:1–44 and Dt 16:1–17).

D. Spontaneous Sacrifices

Spontaneous sacrifices also occur in the narrative although some of these appear to be tied to the laws of hospitality. In Jdg 6:17–21, Gideon is visited by an angel. He did not at first perceive that his visitor was a divine being and offered him a "present" of a "prepared kid," unleavened cakes, and a pot of broth. The angel instructed him to place the food on a rock and pour the broth over it as a libation. After the angel touched it with his staff, flames consumed the offering and he disappeared.

A similar case occurs in Jdg 13:15–19. Samson's parents were visited by a "man of God" who foretold the birth of their son. When he appeared a second time to Manoah and his wife, they offered him a meal as an expression of hospitality and thanks for his good news. The angel refused their food but suggested that they offer the kid as a burnt offering on a rock. When this was done the angel ascended in the flames from the makeshift altar.

One final example of spontaneous sacrifice occurs in 1 Sam 6:14–15. Here, the people of Bethshemesh were surprised by the return of the ark of the covenant from its Philistine captivity. They rejoiced by breaking up the Philistines' cart for fuel and sacrificing the two cows which had drawn it to their fields. Two Levites elevated the ark during the ceremony by placing it on a rock which overlooked the sacrifice.

E. Human Sacrifice

The only example of human sacrifice by the Israelites in the settlement period is found in Jdg 11:30–39. Jephthah, the Gileadite judge, in preparing to fight a battle against the Ammonites, took a vow that he would sacrifice the first person who came out of his tent to greet him on his return. This turned out to be his virgin daughter. He was probably reluctant to carry out his promise, but she insisted that he fulfill his oath, although she did ask for a two-month period to mourn her untimely death.

This practice seems uncharacteristic of Israelite society and therefore may be an example of a Canaanite practice which the Transjordanian tribes had adopted. Jephthah's rash oath (prohibited in Lev 5:4) may be another sign of this cultural borrowing. His oath is also similar to the one taken by Saul in 1 Sam ~~12~~14:38–39—also in a war against the Ammonites.

F. National Places of Worship

A few sites in the period of the settlement have national religious significance. Some, like Shechem and Bethel, have a previous history of Israelite religious and social activity. Others, like Shiloh and Keriath-jearim, are tied to the presence of the ark of the covenant and have no pre-settlement background as an Israelite cultic site. In no case, however, is there one site that is preeminent over the others like Jerusalem will be in later periods. This was probably due to the fragmented nature of the tribes during the settlement period. They could not always travel to a central shrine when they did not control all of the country.

National gatherings at particular sites, therefore, represented significant events in the history of the people. According to Jos 18:1, the "whole congregation of the people of Israel assembled at Shiloh, and set up the tent of meeting." The tent of meeting and the ark had traveled with the people during the conquest. Now that the conquest was over, the ark was brought to a centralized location in the hill country where the

distribution of the land could be made to the tribes. Since Shiloh had no previous ties to Israelite history, it was an ideal, neutral site for the distribution.

Shiloh was not the site, however, of the overriding religious event of the late conquest period. Instead, Shechem is where Joshua gathered the tribes and performed a covenant renewal ceremony (Jos 24). He recited the epic history of the people from the time of the patriarchs through the conquest and demanded that they put away the old gods and old religious practices and worship Yahweh. To register their assent to the covenant, he wrote down the statutes and ordinances on a stone and placed it as a memorial stele "under the oak in the sanctuary of the Lord" (vv 25–26). Shechem's association with the very beginnings of Yahweh worship (Gen 12:6–7) provided the proper symbolic background for this ceremony.

Bethel serves as a central shrine in Jdg 20:27, just as it will in the monarchy period (1 Kgs 12:29). With the ark standing in their midst, the tribes gathered here during a war against the rebellious tribe of Benjamin. The tribes were initially defeated by Benjamin and now were "weeping" before the Lord at Bethel. This is reminiscent of Jdg 2:5, where God told them he would no longer drive the Canaanites out of the land for them and they wept (*bochim*). The key may then be that national weeping and repentance were to be done at Bethel.

During the late settlement period, Shiloh once again is described as the site where the ark of the covenant resided. The people journeyed here once a year to bring their sacrifices (1 Sam 1:3). This narrative presupposes a fairly long residence for the ark and a temple to house it (1 Sam 3:3). The yearly pilgrimage by Elkanah and his wives may reflect the injunction in Ex 23:16 to keep the feast of ingathering and implies that the

Israelites held fairly tight control over the area around Shiloh. Even so, it seems unlikely that all of the villagers throughout the hill country would have made the trip each year.

After the Israelites were defeated by the Philistines at Aphek (1 Sam 4:5–11) and the ark was captured, Shiloh was probably destroyed. Archaeological excavations at the site show a destruction level around 1050 BC, and the transference of the ark to Kiriath-jearim (1 Sam 6:21) implies that Shiloh no longer existed. Immediately after this, Mizpah, in the territory of Benjamin, served as the site of a gathering (1 Sam 7:5). On this occasion Samuel purified the people through fasting and a libation of water. He completed the ritual by sacrificing a whole nursing lamb as a sin offering for the people (v 9) and by setting up a memorial stone (Ebenezer, v 12).

Throughout the remainder of Samuel's career as judge and during Saul's early kingship, Mizpah (another Mizpah in Transjordan was the assembly point for Jephthah's army, Jdg 10:17) was the site for national gatherings. It was the gathering place in Jdg 20:1 for the tribes to hear the complaint of the wronged Levite, and it was one of the places on Samuel's judicial circuit (1 Sam 7:16). He also called the people together at Mizpah to choose a king by lot (1 Sam 10:17).

G. Local Shrines

Since the tribes were scattered throughout the hill country and travel was difficult at best, local shrines and local religious customs were the norm for the majority of Israelite villagers. As it says in Jdg 3:5, the Israelites dwelt among the Canaanite people "and they took their daughters to themselves for wives, and their own daughters they gave to their sons; and they served their gods."

Despite the injunction against sacred images (Ex 20:4–5), several of the narratives in Judges

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mention them as accepted objects of worship. In Gideon's village, his father built an altar to Baal and set up a sacred pole or Asherah (Jdg 6:25–26). Gideon tore this altar down but later he had a golden ephod (a garment worn by priests, but also used to adorn idols in Canaanite worship) made from spoil taken in a war against the Midianites (Jdg 8:24–28). He set it up in his home town of Ophrah and it eventually became an object of worship.

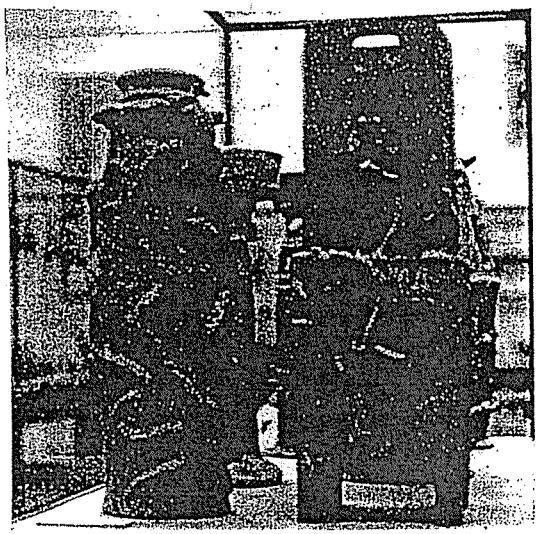
The most blatant record of the worship of sacred images within a household or local shrine appears in Jdg 17:3–5, 7–13. Micah, a man of the hill country of Ephraim, received a large quantity of silver from his mother; he used a portion of it to fabricate a graven image, an ephod, and other sacred images known as teraphim. These were placed in a shrine in his housing cluster, and one of his sons was designated as officiating priest. Later, a man from the city of Bethlehem was hired by Micah as his official Levitical priest. Micah was sure he had done the right thing and said, "Now I know that the Lord will prosper me, because I have a Levite as priest" (v 13).

Micah's shrine and images strictly cut across Israelite legal boundaries. But this is practically excused with the statement that "In those days there was no king in the land and every man did what was right in his own eyes" (v 6). This same statement (20:1) was also used to justify the theft of the images and the hiring away of the priest by the migrating tribe of Dan in 20:14–31.

The question then arises, why did a Levite, a man charged with teaching and maintaining the law, consent to serve a group of sacred images? Why did Micah set them up in the first place and why did the Danites jump at the chance to steal them for themselves? The answer almost certainly is that popular religion, the religion of the local villages, was not the pure monotheism required by the law at Sinai. Recent excavations at the Judges' period settlement of Tell Qiri revealed a similar household shrine with incense burners and a large number of animals bones. A substantial percentage of the bones proved to be the right foreleg of goats. This is reminiscent of the law in Ex 29:22, which calls for the sacrifice of the "right shoulder" of the ram.

Evidence such as this suggests that the Israelites found it hard to give up household gods and were attracted to the agricultural gods and ritual practices of the Canaanites. For example, the original ritual behind the Day of Atonement (Lev 16:7–10) may have a Canaanite or pre-Yahwist background with its use of a sacrificial goat upon whose head the sins of the people were placed. Driving it out into the wilderness as an offering to a demon (Azazel) is also out of character for later Israelite worship.

Thus it can be seen that much of what the later biblical writers (Dt 12:2–3 and 2 Kgs 23:8–9) described as Canaanite worship practices were also common to the Israelites throughout much of



Cult incense stands. Photo by LaMoine DeVries. 2-15

their history. This is especially true of the use of the "high place" or *bamah* for worship. For instance, in 1 Sam 9:12–13 Samuel went to a city to bless a sacrifice being made on the "high place." In later periods, however, many of the kings were condemned for not outlawing the high places (2 Kgs 12:3 and 16:4).

So many examples of idolatry and the borrowing of Canaanite rituals suggest that during this period the people were still polytheistic or at best henotheistic in their beliefs. This latter term implies that they may have accepted the worship of Yahweh as their chief God but still continued to believe in the existence of other gods. This can be seen in Joash's statement to his friends after Gideon destroyed their Baal altar (Jdg 6:31):

> Will you contend for Baal? Or will you defend his cause? . . . If he is a god, let him contend for himself, because his altar has been pulled down.

A similar note of henotheistic beliefs surfaces in Jephthah's reply to the Ammonites' demands for the return of the land "from the Arnon to the Jabbok and to the Jordan" (Jdg 11:13–24). He first recited the history of how Yahweh had given the Israelites victory over Sihon, king of the Amorites (see Num 21:21–32). Then, summing up their right to keep these captured lands he stated:

> Will you not possess what Chemosh your god gives you to possess? And all the Lord our God has dispossessed before us, we will possess. (v 24)

H. Circumcision

Circumcision, like sacrifice and fasting, functions within the biblical narrative as a means of purifying the people. It continues to function as a distinctive sign of the covenant, differentiating the Israelites from the "uncircumcised" Philistines. However, its reintroduction at crucial points in the narrative implies a ritual purification role for circumcision.

This practice was first introduced in Gen 17:10 in the time of Abraham. It is not mentioned again until Ex 4:24–26, where Moses' wife Zipporah circumcises their son as they begin their journey back to Egypt. The significance of this act is uncertain except in terms of the need to be fully in compliance with the covenant before beginning to serve Yahweh once again. This interpretation can also be used to explain the circumcision of the Israelite men before they left Egypt in the exodus (Jos 5:5) and just before they began the conquest (Jos 5:2–3). It is also tied, in these last two instances, with the Passover ritual, which was performed before they left Egypt (Ex 12) and while they waited to heal after being circumcised in Jos 5:8–10.

I. Cult Prostitution

While it is not described as a widespread problem in the settlement period, cult prostitution does appear to have been practiced by the Israelites. In the neighboring communities of the Canaanites, their worship of fertility gods commonly included the use of both male and female cult prostitutes. Sexual activity at local shrines was designed to promote the fertility of the land and symbolize the primary function of the storm god Baal and his consort Asherah.

First Samuel 2:22 suggests that Eli's sons had subverted the activities of women whose job it was to clean up the debris of the sacrifice "at the entrance to the tent of meeting" at Shiloh. This function originated in the wilderness period (Ex 38:8). What was now happening at Shiloh, however, was that the priests were lying with these women and in effect forcing them to play the role of cult prostitutes like in Canaanite religion. For this action and others, the entire priestly clan of Eli was killed and the shrine at Shiloh ceased to function (1 Sam 2:31–36).

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Back to Ancient History Sourcebook |

Ancient History Sourcebook: A Collection of Babylonian Prayers, c. 1600 BCE

To Ishtar, Begetress of All.

1. O fulfiller of the commands of Bel.....

. . . . . .

Mother of the gods, fulfiller of the commands of Bel
You who brings forth verdure, you O lady of mankind,---

5. Begetress of all, who makes all offspring thrive
Mother Ishtar, whose might no god approaches,
Majestic lady, whose commands are powerful
A request I will proffer, which---may it bring good to me!
O lady, from my childhood I have been exceedingly hemmed in by trouble!

10. Food I did not eat, I was bathed in tears!
Water I did not quaff, tears were my drink!
My heart is not glad, my soul is not cheerful;
.....I do not walk like a man.
.....

15. .....painfully I wail!
My sighs are many, my sickness is great!
O my lady, teach me what to do, appoint me a resting-place!
My sin forgive, lift up my countenance!
.....

20. My god, who is lord of prayer, ----may he present my prayer to you!
My goddess, who is mistress of supplication, ---may she present my prayer to you!
God of the deluge, lord of Harsaga, ---may he present my prayer to you!
The god of pity, the lord of the fields, ---may he present my prayer to you!
God of heaven and earth, the lord of Eridu,---may he present my prayer to you!

21. The mother of the great water, the dwelling of Damkina,---
may she present my prayer to you!
Marduk, lord of Babylon, ---may he present my prayer to you!
His spouse, the exalted offspring (?) of heaven and earth,---
may she present my prayer to you!
The exalted servant, the god who announces the good name,---
may he present my prayer to you!

22. The bride, the first-born of Ninib, ---may she present my prayer to you!
The lady who checks hostile speech, ---may she present my prayer to you!
The great, exalted one, my lady Nana, ---may she present my prayer to you!

To Ishtar, He Raises to You a Wail.

1. .....He raises to you a wail;
.....He raises to you a wail
On account of his face which for tears is not raised, he raises to you a wail;
On account of his feet on which fetters are laid, he raises to you a wail;

5. On account of his hand, which is powerless through oppression, he raises to you a wail;
On account of his breast, which wheezes like a bellows, he raises to you a wail;
O lady, in sadness of heart I raise to you my piteous cry, "How long?"
O lady, to your servant---speak pardon to him, let your heart be appeased!
To your servant who suffers pain---favor grant him!

10. Turn your gaze upon him, receive his entreaty!
To your servant with whom you are angry---be favorable unto him!
O lady, my hands are bound, I turn to you!
For the sake of the exalted warrior, Shamash, your beloved husband,
take away my bonds!

15. Through a long life let me walk before you!
My god brings before you a lamentation, let your heart be appeased!
My goddess utters to you a prayer, let your anger be quieted!
The exalted warrior, Anu, your beloved spouse,---may he present my prayer to you!
Shamash, god of justice, may he present my prayer to you!

20. .....the exalted servant, ---may he present my prayer to you!
.....the mighty one of Ebarbar, ---may he present my tears to you!
"Your eye turn truly to me," may he say to you!
"Your face turn truly to me," may he say to you!
"Let your heart be at rest", may he say to you!

25. ALet your anger be pacified", may he say to you!
Your heart like the heart of a mother who has brought forth, may it rejoice!
Like a father who has begotten a child, may it be glad!

To Nanna, Lord of the Moon.

1. O brilliant barque of the heavens, ruler in your own right,
Father Nanna, Lord of Ur,
Father Nanna Lord of Ekishshirgal,
Father Nanna, Lord of the brilliant rising,

5. O Lord, Nanna, firstborn son of Bel,
You stand, you stand
Before your father Bel. You are ruler,
Father Nanna; you are ruler, you are guide.
O barque, when standing in the midst of heaven, you are ruler.

10. Father Nanna, you yourself ride to the brilliant temple.
Father Nanna, when, like a ship, you go in the midst of the deep,

You got, you go, you go,
You go, you shine anew, you go,
You shine anew, you live again, you go.

15. Father Nanna, the herd you restore.
When your father looks on you with joy, he commands your waxing;
Then with the glory of a king brilliantly you rise.
Bel a scepter for distant days for your hands has completed.
In Ur as the brilliant barque you ride,

20. As the Lord, Nudimmud, you are established;
In Ur as the brilliant boat you ride.
.....
. . . . . .
The river of Bel (?) Nanna fills with water.

21. The brilliant (?) river Nanna fills with water.
The river Diglat [Tigris] Nanna fills with water.
The brilliance of the Purattu [Euphrates] Nanna fills with water.
The canal with its gate Lukhe, Nanna fills with water.
The great marsh and the little marsh Nanna fills with water.

To Bel, Lord of Wisdom.

1. O Lord of wisdom ruler.....in your own right,
O Bel, Lord of wisdom.....ruler in your own right,
O father Bel, Lord of the lands,
O father Bel, Lord of truthful speech,

5. O father Bel, shepherd of the *Sang-Ngiga* [black-headed ones, or Babylonians],
O father Bel, who yourself opens the eyes,
O father Bel, the warrior, prince among soldiers,
O father Bel, supreme power of the land,
Bull of the corral, warrior who leads captive all the land.

10. O Bel, proprietor of the broad land,
Lord of creation, you are chief of the land,
The Lord whose shining oil is food for an extensive offspring,
The Lord whose edicts bind together the city,
The edict of whose dwelling place strikes down the great prince

15. From the land of the rising to the land of the setting sun.
O mountain, Lord of life, you are indeed Lord!
O Bel of the lands, Lord of life you yourself are Lord of life.
O mighty one, terrible one of heaven, you are guardian indeed!
O Bel, you are Lord of the gods indeed!

20. You are father, Bel, who cause the plants of the gardens to grow!
O Bel, your great glory may they fear!
The birds of heaven and the fish of the deep are filled with fear of you.
O father Bel, in great strength you go, prince of life, shepherd of the stars!
O Lord, the secret of production you open, the feast of fatness establish, to work you call!

25. Father Bel, faithful prince, mighty prince, you create the strength of life!

Source:

From: George A. Barton, *Archaeology and The Bible*, 3rd Ed., (Philadelphia: American Sunday School, 1920), pp. 398-401.

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Jerusalem Through the Ages

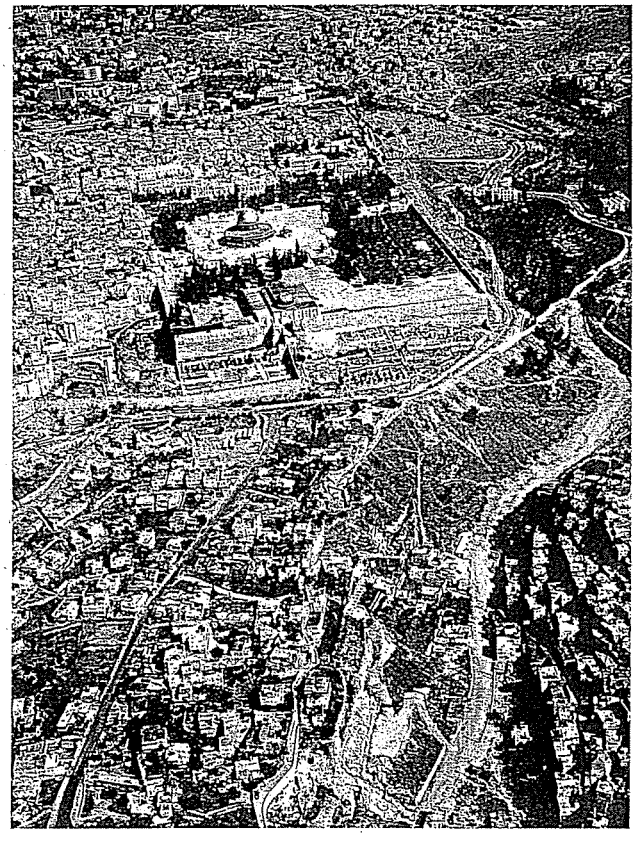
Barry J. Beitzel, *The New Moody Atlas of Bible Lands*, 2d ed. (Chicago: Moody, 2009), 220-231 (1 of 12)

JERUSALEM THROUGH THE AGES

Jerusalem enjoys a sacred mystique with the Jew, Muslim, and Christian alike. It was the place of Judaism's first Temple, the place where Christians believe Jesus died and was resurrected, and the place where Muslims believe Mohammad ascended to heaven. Shrines for all three religions coexist there, and prayer at or for Jerusalem is a prominent theme, especially within Judaism and Islam. Jerusalem is a city long leavened by divine decrees.[429] Perhaps no other place on the planet has drawn more attention, captivated more religious pilgrims throughout history, or so uniquely influenced the world's thought and literature.

THE NAME

It is a little surprising, then, that the meaning of the city's name has eluded certainty, thereby inviting a veritable kaleidoscope of etymological speculation, ranging from "sacred rock" to "complete cloudburst." Perhaps one reason is the astonishing realization that the word "Jerusalem" is attested only rarely in high antiquity. We might expect the city to have appeared in the Mari tablets—a vast Middle Bronze Age archive of nearly 25,000 documents envisioning a broad geographical horizon stretching from the edge of Iran (Susa) as far west as Crete, and spanning virtually all of the Fertile Crescent. [**See map 23.**] And we know of numerous annals, papyri, and wall panels that describe dozens of Egyptian military campaigns through Canaan, in which the names of at least 250 cities are listed.[430] But "Jerusalem" never explicitly appears in any of this literature.[431]



Temple Mount of Jerusalem looking northeast, which features the Dome of the Rock (gold dome) and the el-Aqsa mosque (silver-domed edifice just inside the southern wall). Beyond its rectangular design lie the Mount of Olives and Gethsemane (right side of picture), the Kidron valley (between the Mt. of Olives and the Temple Mount), an archaeological park (between the southern wall and the street), and the Western/Wailing Wall (large open space just outside the south-central portion of the western wall).

No less striking, the Babylonian Chronicle of Nebuchadnezzar II,[432] which officially documented the fall of Jerusalem to the Babylonians, supplies extended chronological detail and precision but only geographical ambiguity. This Chronicle merely recorded that Nebuchadnezzar seized "the city of Judah" (*āl Yaḥudi*), but it does not mention "Jerusalem."

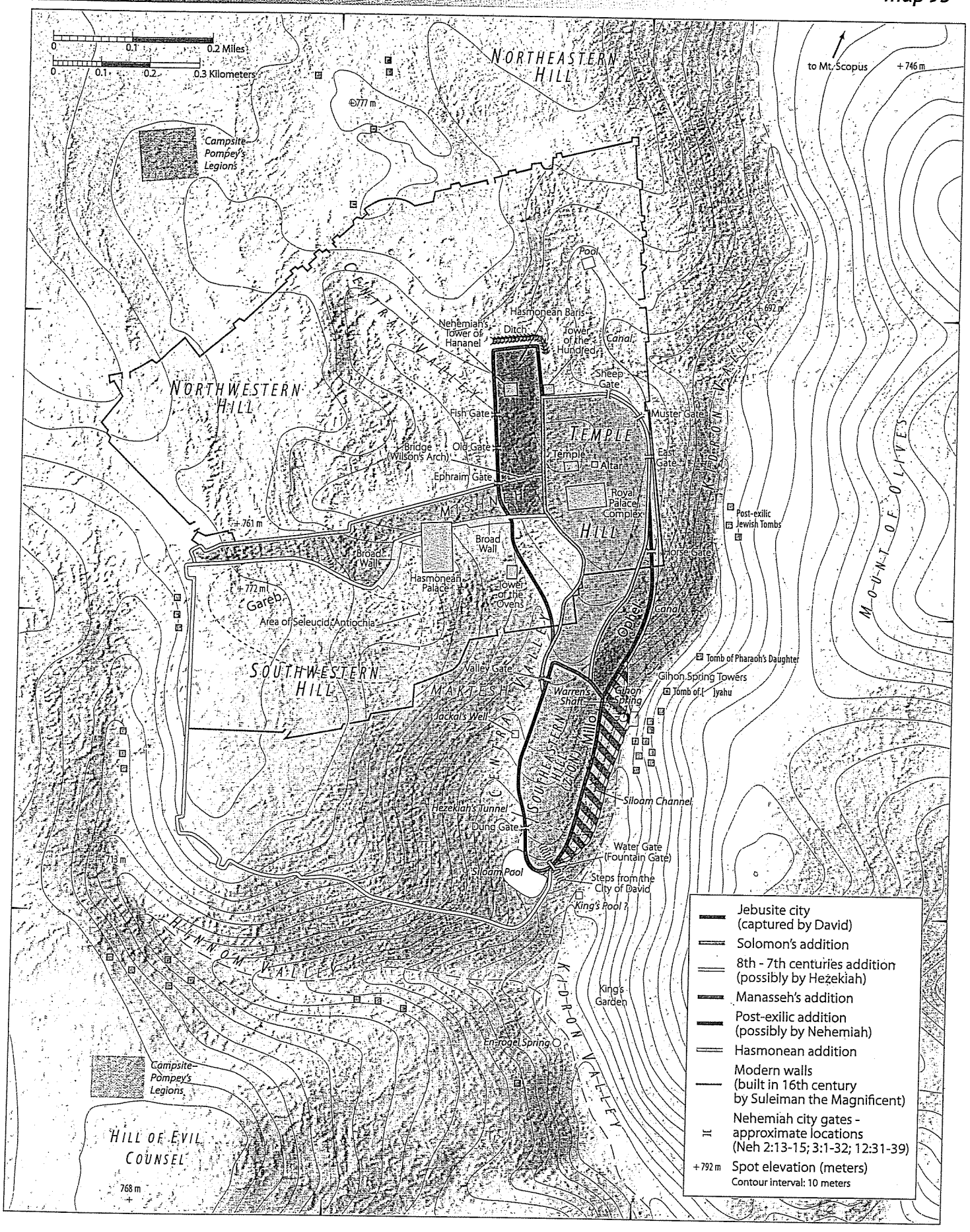
The earliest known citations of Jerusalem[433] date to around the 19th or 18th centuries B.C. under an Egyptian form probably transliterated *[U]rušalimum*, *[Yu]rušalimum*, or even *Rušalimum*.[434] In the 14th century B.C., the name of the city appears some seven times in three letters from T. el-Amarna, normally written ^{URU}*Urusalim*^{ki}.[435] Still later, the city is attested in the two late-eighth-century B.C. Sennacherib/Hezekiah inscriptions under the form ^{URU}*Ursalimmu*.[436]

This somewhat limited and linguistically diverse evidence suggests that "Jerusalem" may be comprised of two Semitic elements—*uru* ("city") and *šalem* (a divine name). Hyphenating place names by incorporating divine elements was a common phenomenon in the ancient Near Eastern world, and the god Shalem is known to have been a member of the Canaanite pantheon.[437] Moreover, the Old Testament makes clear that Jerusalem was not originally an Israelite city (2 Sam. 5:6–10). Accordingly, it seems plausible to postulate that the name Jerusalem was originally understood to mean "the city of [the god] Shalem."[438]

In the Hebrew Old Testament, Jerusalem is normally written *yᵉrûšālayim* (e.g., Josh. 10:1), whereas in the Aramaic portions the name is rendered *yᵉrûšᵉlēm* (e.g., Dan. 5:2). Here the word seems to combine the elements *yārâ* ("to found") with *šālēm* (a divine name), thus yielding "the foundation of [the god] Shalem" or "Shalem has founded." The eloquence of this alteration is reflected in the word "found[ation]," perhaps indicating the permanent home of Shalem. From this, one may surmise that

Old Testament Jerusalem

map 93



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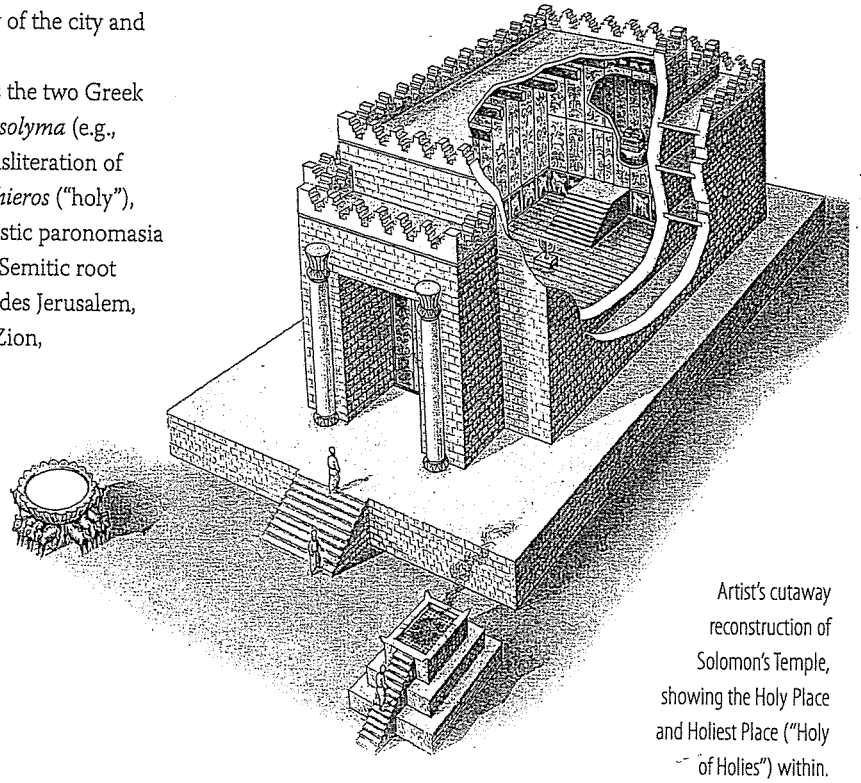
Shalem had probably become the patron deity of the city and had given his name to it.

In the New Testament, Jerusalem translates the two Greek words *'Ierousalēm* (e.g., Rom. 15:19) and *Hierosolyma* (e.g., Matt. 2:1). The former is simply the Greek transliteration of the Aramaic form; the latter reflects the word *hieros* ("holy"), which represents a classic instance of a Hellenistic paronomasia (pun),[439] but which corresponds neither to the Semitic root meaning nor to the city's historical reality. Besides Jerusalem, the city has been called Salem/Solyma, Jebus, Zion, Moriah, Ariel, the City, Aelia Capitolina, El-Quds, and Bait el-Makdis.



Artist's cutaway reconstruction of Solomon's Temple, showing the Holy Place and Holiest Place ("Holy of Holies") within.

TOPOGRAPHY

Like Rome, Jerusalem is a city set on hills. A cluster of five hills comprises its denuded quadrilateral landmass roughly one mile long and one-half mile wide. It is bordered on all sides except the north by deep ravines. Skirting the city on the west and south is the Hinnom valley (Greek *Gehenna*), and hedging Jerusalem on the east is the Kidron valley (the valley of Jehoshaphat [Joel 3:2, 12]).[440] A third (Central) valley—known since the days of Josephus as the Tyropoeon ("cheesemakers") valley—stretches from the modern Damascus Gate in the north to the vicinity of the Siloam Pool in the south, where it converges with the Kidron. These three ravines are connected by a number of lateral valleys, originally segmenting the configuration of the terrain and creating discreet hills.

Three hills lie east of the Central valley:

- Historically known as the Southeastern hill, this southernmost of the three was the site of earliest occupation, undoubtedly because of its direct and more convenient water access, the Gihon spring. This was the Jebusite city conquered by David, also known in the Old Testament as Zion (not to be confused with modern Mt. Zion). [**See map 97.**] The narrow ridge of Old Testament Zion is no more than 60 yards across at the top and encompasses only about eight acres. Today this area lies completely outside the modern (16th-century) walls of the city.
- The Temple hill lies immediately north of Zion, dominated today by the sacred spot on which rests the Muslim Dome of the Rock. Some scholars associate this hill with the site of Araunah's threshing floor (2 Sam. 24:18–19)[441] and others aver it to be the location of Moriah (Gen. 22:2; 2 Chron. 3:1).[442] (Jerusalem does lie some 50 miles from Beersheba, which makes possible the arrival of Abraham there on the third day [Gen. 22:4], but it is a curiosity that someone should have carried wood from the desert environs of Beersheba to the more wooded country around Jerusalem.) The Temple hill is separated from the third crest on the east of the Central valley by "St. Anne's valley," a lateral depression that extends east to St. Stephen's Gate. [**See map 97.**]
- North of this depression is the Northeastern hill, which was occupied and named Bezetha ("the new city") during the Roman period when practical necessity dictated that a third northern wall be constructed to accommodate a growing population. [**See map 94.**]

To the west of the Tyropoeon (Central) valley stand the two remaining hills:

- What is historically known as the Southwestern hill was called by Josephus the "Upper City,"[443] a reference to its higher elevation. Today the Southwestern hill roughly corresponds to the Armenian Quarter. It is occupied by the citadel of David (constructed upon the foundations of Herod's towers), the Church of St. James, the traditional (though clearly mistaken!) site of David's tomb, the traditional site of the "Upper Room," and the Dormitian Abbey. [**See maps 95 and 97.**] Part of this hill in Old Testament times included the Gareb (cf. Jer. 31:39), commonly regarded by Protestants until near the end of the 19th century as the place of Calvary.[444]
- The remaining hill to the west is known as the Northwestern hill, which generally corresponds to the Christian quarter today. It is dominated by the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and the Church of the Redeemer. [**See map 97.**]

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Jerusalem is a city not only *set on* hills, but also *surrounded by* hills. East of the city rises the lofty summit of the Mount of Olives; south lies the heights of the Mount of Offense and the Hill of Evil Counsel. Mount Shalmon, Givat Ram, and Mount Menuhot rise in the west, while the northern horizon is dominated by the summit of Mount Scopus and French Hill. The reality of Jerusalem's hills nestled among even higher surroundings is meaningfully reflected in the words of the Psalmist: "as the mountains surround Jerusalem, so the Lord surrounds his people, from now and for evermore" (Ps. 125:2).

Jerusalem lay geographically central to the land. It was astride the summit of the central mountain spine and adjacent to the central ridge road that connects Beersheba, Hebron, and Bethlehem with Shechem and points north. [**See map 27.**] The lateral roadway through the Judean mountains eastward (Jericho road) could not pass south of the city, being blocked by the Dead Sea and the sheer cliffs of the Judean wilderness. The only natural possibility for this route was through the saddle of land from Jericho in the direction of Jerusalem, westward from there through the Aijalon pass, and out into the plains. Thus, Jerusalem was positioned immediately adjacent to the natural crossroads of Judea.[445]

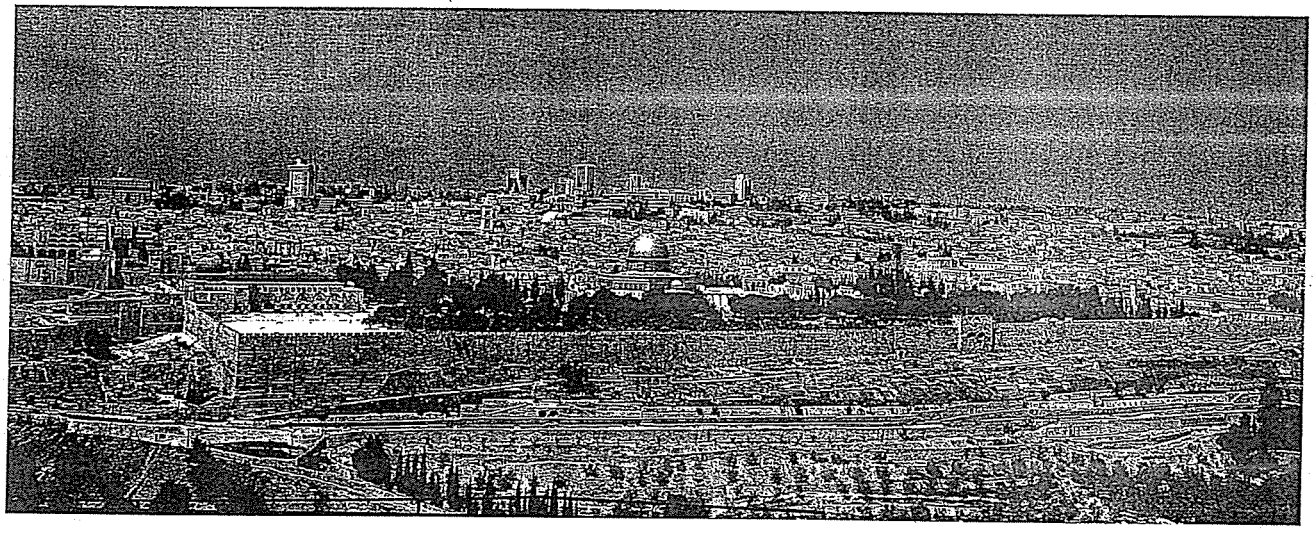
Water has always been in meager supply at Jerusalem. The only natural source of permanent water was the Gihon spring, located along the Kidron valley near the Jebusite fortress conquered by David. Hezekiah's tunnel was cut through nearly 1,800 feet of hard limestone, allowing the waters of the Gihon to pass through the interior of the hill of Zion to the Siloam pool, inside the city walls (2 Kings 20:20; 2 Chron. 32:3, 30; cf. Isa. 22:9–11).[446] An "upper pool" (2 Kings 18:17; Isa. 36:2), presumably on the north side of the Temple complex, may also have been a source of water. Another small spring (En-rogel) once lay farther south where the Kidron and Hinnom valleys converge (Josh. 15:7). Due to the lowering of the water table, however, this spring ceased to percolate and was subsequently converted into a well. These three sources were clearly insufficient to sustain a sizeable population, so an entire network of cisterns, reservoirs, and water conduits for supplemental supply had to be devised. During the New Testament period, a number of aqueducts, constructed by Herod and others, carried substantial supplies of water to Jerusalem from points south and west.[447]

EXPLORATIONS AND EXCAVATIONS

No Palestinian city can boast of more excavations, yet most of Jerusalem's archaeological returns have been substantially fragmentary and chronologically incoherent.[448] Contributing factors include the city's dense contemporary population, its sacral character, and the surprisingly late arrival of modern archaeological technology. While an impressive number of explorations and excavations have been undertaken *at* Jerusalem, never has there been a systematic excavation *of* Jerusalem. Nevertheless, a history of the city's excavations revolves primarily around the axes of five creative periods, accompanied by a host of other very commendable efforts.

Modern exploration at Jerusalem appears to date from the surveying of Johann Van Kootwijck (1598–1599),[449] but it was the research of Edward Robinson that inaugurated Jerusalem's first creative epoch.[450] Robinson made a series of topographic surveys that have profound significance even today, and his activities mark the advent of a flood of new literature. This American scholar dared to challenge the time-honored axiom that ecclesiastical traditions provided the primary source for reconstructing the city's history. Instead, he sought to reconstruct Jerusalem's history on the basis of the unsuspecting evidence of the stones, thereby signaling for the holy city the advent of the archaeological method.[451]

The old city of Jerusalem viewed from the Mount of Olives.



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A second creative period commenced in 1865 when the Palestine Exploration Fund launched its first archaeological mission to Jerusalem thanks to the philanthropic contribution of Lady Burdett-Coutts of London, who wished to improve the sanitary conditions and water supply of the city. Between 1867 and 1870, this modest venture was expanded as Captain (later "Sir") Charles Warren carried out extensive excavations around the Temple area, on the Southeastern hill, and in the Tyropoeon valley. Of special interest was his unearthing of a section of an ancient wall near the southeastern sector of the Temple. While conducting more extensive research within Hezekiah's tunnel, Warren discovered an alternate, archaic shaft connecting the Gihon with a plateau of the Southeastern hill. The cartographic materials amassed by Warren and his predecessor, Charles Wilson, remain an invaluable source of much contemporary topographic research.

In the wake of the much-publicized discoveries of Wilson and Warren came the discovery of the now famous late-eighth-century B.C. Siloam Inscription,[452] which describes how the Hezekiah channel was dug simultaneously from either end (2 Chron. 32:30).[453] At the same time, elaborate excavations of the southern wall isolated for the first time a wall stretching across the mouth of the Tyropoeon, connecting the Southeastern and Southwestern hills.[454]

Perhaps it could be said that the third creative period began with the work of Raymond Weill. Although the area Weill excavated on the Southeastern hill was comparatively small, he first employed the stratigraphic excavation method at Jerusalem and provided penetrating new insights into Jerusalem's history before the time of David. His labors forever dispelled all doubt that the Southeastern hill exercised historical supremacy in earliest times. Following World War I, various teams explored north of the city,[455] discovering sections of the "third [northern] wall" of Josephus, begun by Herod Agrippa I and completed by the Zealots just prior to the siege of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. Subsequent excavations through the 1950s unearthed a cemetery, walls, and towers from the pre-Christian era, and the citadel at the Jaffa Gate was further explored.[456]

The fourth creative period was initiated with the protracted archaeological expedition under the capable leadership of Kathleen Kenyon. Between 1961 and 1967, this British School of Archaeology project explored several regions of Jerusalem, focusing principally upon the Southeastern hill near the Gihon, the mouth of the Tyropoeon, the territory immediately south of the Temple area, and the Armenian Gardens just inside the west section of the 16th-century walls. Since 1968, the Hebrew University has intermittently undertaken archaeological research in and near the city, especially on the east side. During those same years, Israel's Department of Antiquities has engaged in excavations of what was known prior to the 1948 war as the Jewish Quarter. As part of this latter work, the discovery of the so-called "broad wall" proved beyond cavil that the period of "first temple" Jerusalem had spread west of the Tyropoeon valley.

The fifth creative period is represented by a mélange of more recent noteworthy efforts at a variety of locations within Jerusalem's landscape. Included in these ventures is work among tombs, at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, on the so-called "Warren's shaft," on the tunnel northwest of the Temple mount, on the towers and wall enclosing the Gihon spring, and perhaps above all on the area in and around the Siloam pool and in the Hinnom.[457]

HISTORY

Ancient flint implements found in the plain of the Rephaim, just west of Jerusalem, constitute the earliest evidence of existence of humankind in the area of Jerusalem. Near the beginning of the fourth millennium B.C., a sedentary group apparently first occupied the Southeastern hill, based on artifactual remains recovered from graves built on bedrock.[458] By 1800 B.C., the crest of the Southeastern hill was walled in rudimentary form, massive towers were erected around the Gihon complex, and the Siloam Channel apparently conveyed water from the Gihon spring southward into the Siloam pool.

In the 15th century B.C. or thereabouts, extensive building activities were initiated and measurably improved fortification methods were introduced at Jerusalem. Beginning some 160 feet down the eastern slope of the Southeastern hill, the city's occupants undertook to construct platform terraces, engineered to be filled up to the level of the top of the hill and reinforced by a series of ribs designed to hold and retain the immense fill that would have been required. The residents also erected a strong masonry rampart near the bottom of the slope, below a spot where some natural sinkholes existed that perhaps provided internal access to the waters of the Gihon. This enterprise procured an enlarged land area on the summit, a much stronger and more permanent city wall, and perhaps even some sort of water access during times of siege. Apparently the northern perimeter of this fortress extended to just south of the modern (16th-century) south wall.

Jerusalem could not be taken and held by the Israelites at the point of their first entry into the land (Josh. 15:63; Judg. 1:21); it didn't fall into Israelite hands until David's band wrested the city from Jebusite control (2 Sam. 5:6–9; 1 Chron. 11:4–8). How the capture was effected logistically has been debated in recent times. It had earlier been believed that Joab surreptitiously climbed through some sort of shaft from the Gihon and took the Jebusites by surprise, based on the biblical reference to the "water shaft" (*ṣinnôr*, 2 Sam. 5:8). Yet subsequent research has rendered this view untenable.[459] Whether David's men fought their way up the slopes by the use of scaling hooks (another possible meaning of *ṣinnôr*)[460] or in other ways, the incorporation of Jerusalem into David's kingdom and its transformation into some sort of a royal city

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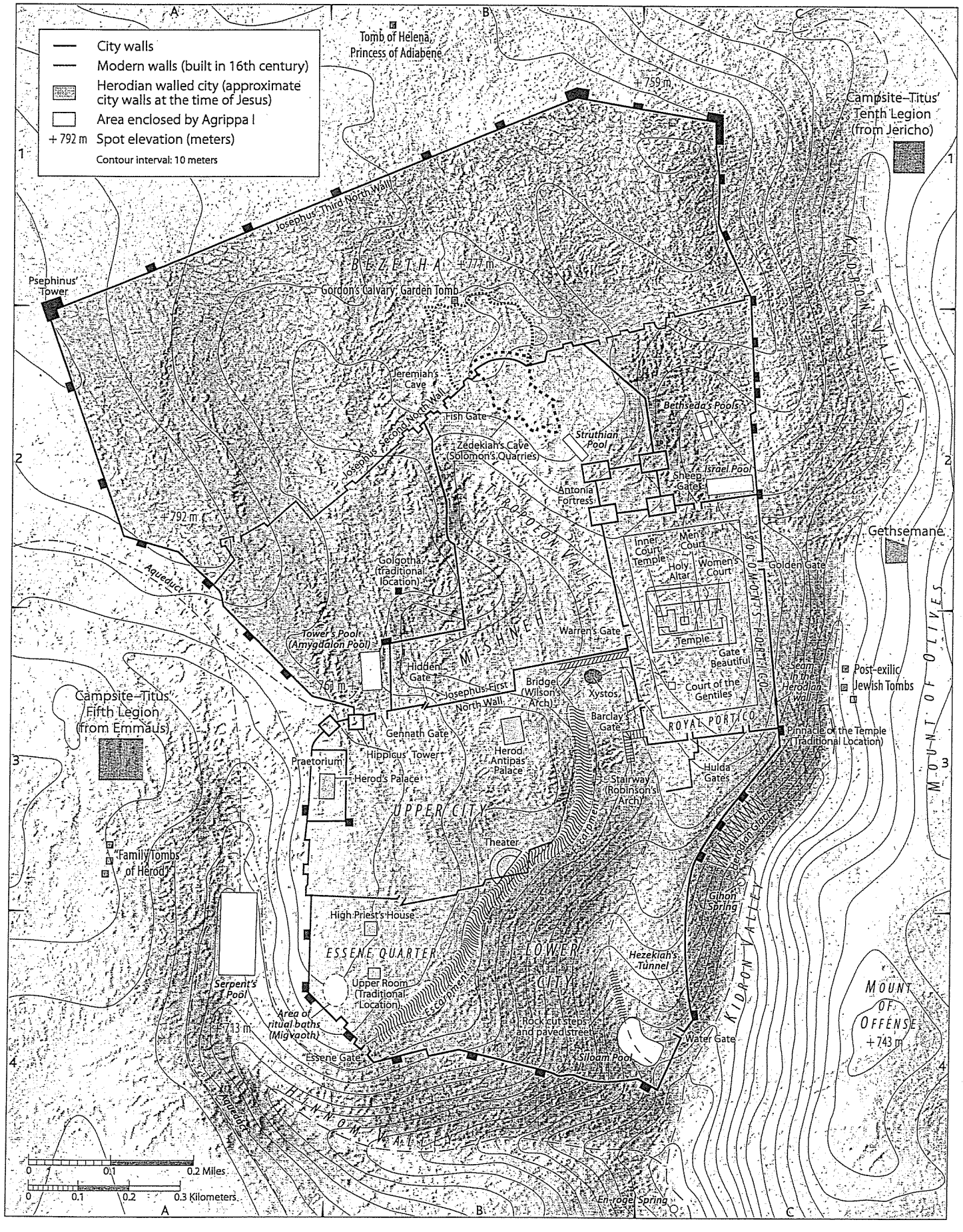
New Testament Jerusalem

map 94



Jerusalem Through the Ages

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would have required substantial construction. The king is said to have fortified the city walls and to have prepared an extension of the city (2 Sam. 5:9; 1 Chron. 11:8).

David is said also to have constructed a royal residence in Jerusalem (2 Sam. 5:11). A text from Nehemiah (12:37) suggests that this edifice may have lain near the east side of the Southeastern hill. It was apparently from a window of this house that Michal peered out and saw her husband behaving in what she perceived as an undignified manner (2 Sam. 6:16). It was also from the roof of this palace that David gazed out upon Bathsheba as she bathed (2 Sam. 11:2–5), and later that his son Absalom publicly engaged in sexual intercourse with his father's concubines (2 Sam. 16:21–22).

By bringing the ark of the covenant into Jerusalem (2 Sam. 6:12–19; 1 Chron. 15:25–29), implying that Yahweh would also be residing there, David displayed perhaps his most profound leadership. In this perceptive act, he merged for the first time in Israel's history its political and religious centers. Henceforth, Jerusalem would take on the character of a "royal city" as well as a "holy city," and would be known as the "city of David" (2 Sam. 5:9) as well as the "city of God" (Ps. 46:4). From then on, adult healthy male Jews would be making their pilgrimages *to Jerusalem* to participate in festival seasons. It remained only for David to make permanent this arrangement, to enshrine Yahweh in Jerusalem forever by building him a temple (2 Sam. 7:1–17), but the execution of his dream was reserved for one of David's sons (2 Sam. 7:12–13; 1 Chron. 28:3).

Solomon inherited a kingdom from his father that was extensive and basically secure. Nevertheless, new and additional military measures had to be introduced into Jerusalem and the surrounding terrain. He is said to have fortified certain key cities, including Jerusalem,[461] and to have transformed some of them into military bases where a standing army was deployed (1 Kings 9:15–23). [**See map 64.**] And although his reign was not entirely peaceful, history records no significant military campaigns that he was obliged to undertake. All of Israel, from Dan to Beersheba, was said to have enjoyed peace and prosperity during Solomon's tenure (1 Kings 4:25), and he is remembered more for wisdom and architecture than for war.

Solomon was the great Old Testament builder of Jerusalem. His most significant building enterprise was undoubtedly the first Temple. Erected on the summit of the Temple hill, the edifice required some seven years to construct. With a suggested tripartite floor plan, the Temple faced east, the direction of the rising sun, and was a magnificent building (1 Kings 6:1–38; 7:13–51). Following the completion of the Temple, Solomon had the furniture of the Tabernacle, including the ark, moved from Zion (2 Chron. 5). The event was crowned by a manifestation of God's presence (1 Kings 8:10).

At the center of the Muslim sacred enclosure, known today as the Haram esh-Sherif ("the noble sanctuary"), stands the Dome of the Rock. [**See map 97.**] Embedded under this shrine is a large rock long venerated as the spot over which stood the courtyard of the Solomonic Temple. Though such a tradition may be based on fact, nothing definitively dating from that era has yet been exhumed from the sacred precinct.

Solomon also built Jerusalem's city walls (1 Kings 3:1; 9:15). This probably means that he extended the Canaanite walls to enclose the enlarged area of his own city. Though it is unlikely that Solomon expanded his city to the south or east, to encompass the Temple required constructing an extension wall to the north.[462] The position of the city walls depicted on **map 93** is largely speculative, based on a modicum of archaeological discovery.

Jerusalem and Judea were repeatedly assaulted throughout the period of the divided monarchy [**map 68**], but it was only with the onslaught of Nebuchadnezzar's Babylonian forces that the city capitulated and fell. [**See map 80.**] In 539 B.C., in the immediate aftermath of the fall of Babylon to the Persians [**map 86**], king Cyrus issued his now-famous proclamation allowing dispossessed peoples to be repatriated (2 Chron. 36:22–23; Ezra 1:1–4). Thereupon, a humble company returned to Jerusalem under the direction of Sheshbazzar. Referred to as the "prince" of Judah (Ezra 1:8), the term is commonly assumed to mark Sheshbazzar as a person of Davidic descent. Apparently not long thereafter a group of some 50,000 returnees arrived in Jerusalem under the able leadership of Zerubbabel, also of Davidic descent and designated as "governor" of Judah (Ezra 3:8–13; 5:16). Later, in the days of Artaxerxes I, Ezra the priest led a smaller company back to Jerusalem (Ezra 7:1–26).

Although these returnees had been permitted to rebuild, adorn, and enrich the Temple, the city itself remained almost empty (Neh. 11:1). Its walls and gates remained broken and dilapidated (Neh. 1:3). Moved by reports of these miserable conditions, Nehemiah decided to leave his esteemed post as cupbearer to king Artaxerxes I and travel to Jerusalem (Neh. 1:1—2:8). Earlier returnees had focused on the Temple itself; Nehemiah's concern was the city walls. His is the most comprehensive description of Jerusalem's post-exilic city walls and topography (Neh. 2:11–16). And spurred on by his energetic enthusiasm, various groups of people in and around Jerusalem undertook the rebuilding task. Their work may have included incorporating into Jerusalem the Tower of Hananel (Jer. 31:38; Neh. 3:1; 12:39; Zech. 14:10), which became known during the Hasmonean period as the Baris.

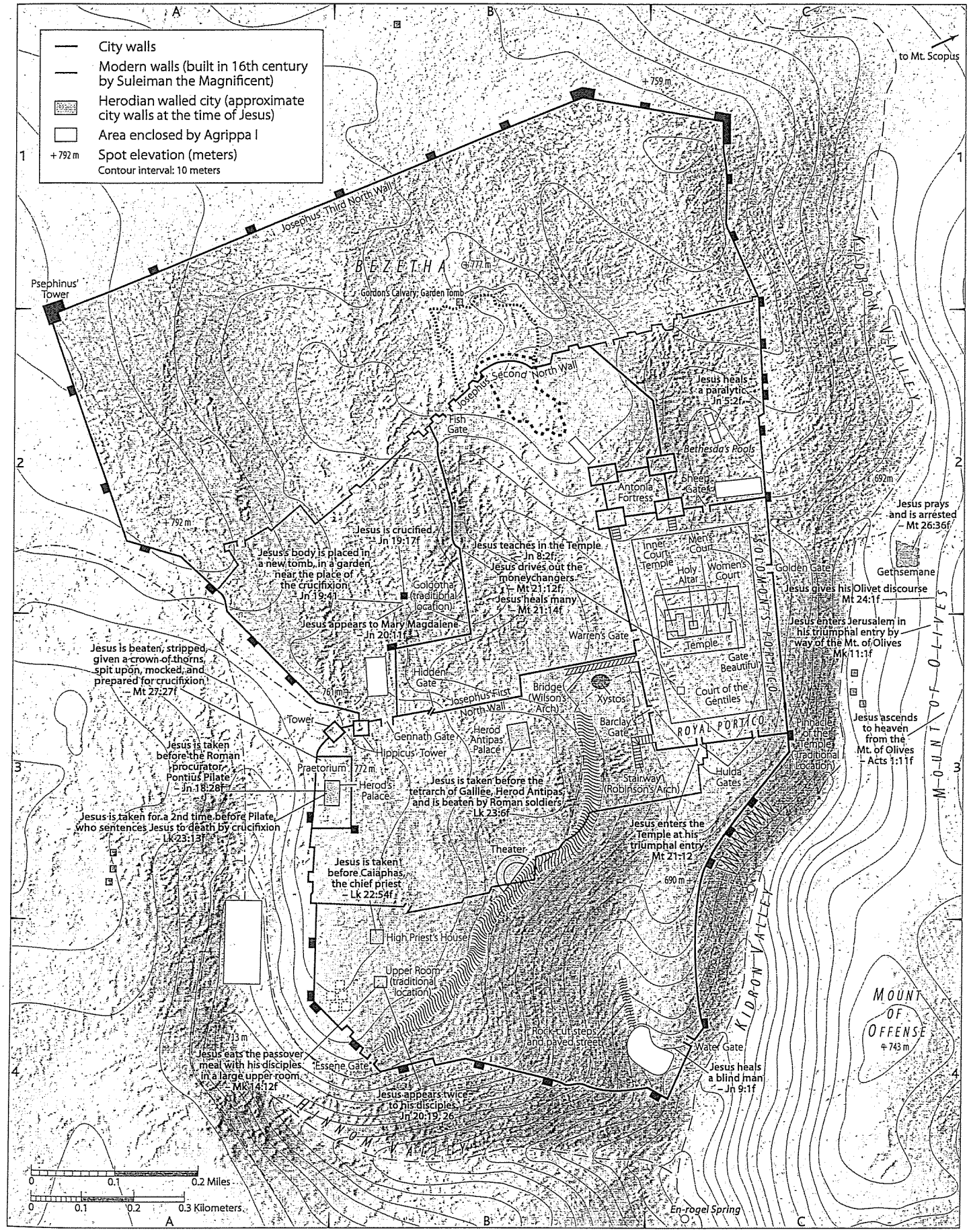
In 332 B.C., Jerusalem and the remainder of Judea peacefully submitted to the army of Alexander the Great. [**See map 88.**] But peace was soon thoroughly shattered as the Ptolemy and Seleucid dynasties sparred for control of the region [**map 87**], and as the latter dynasty in particular sought to legislate Hellenism in Jerusalem. [**See maps 91 and 92.**] A call for national autonomy that had fanned the flames

Jerusalem Through the Ages

Barry J. Beitzel, *The New Moody Atlas of Bible Lands*, 2d ed. (Chicago: Moody, 2009), 220-231 (8 of 12)

Jesus and Jerusalem

map 95



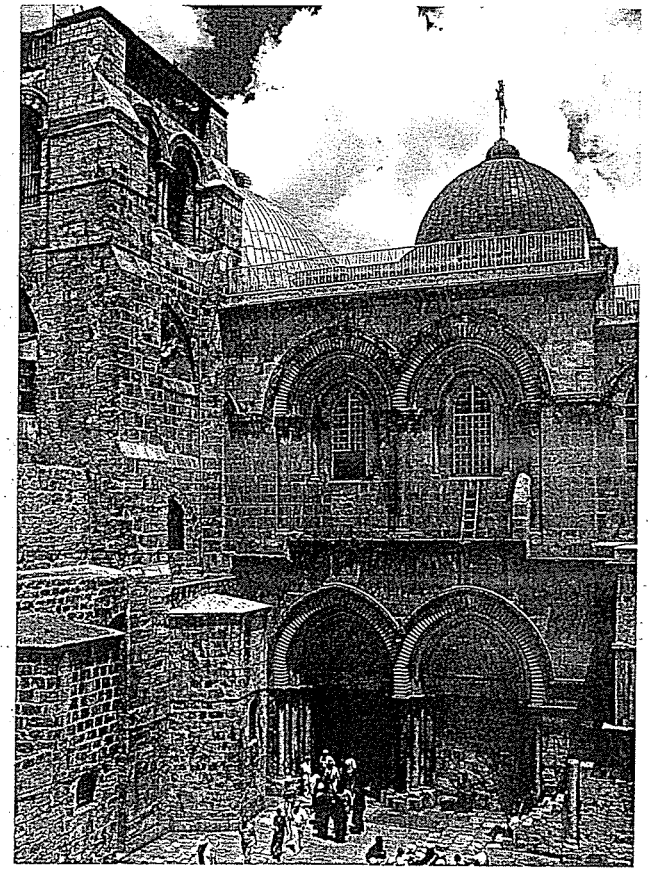
Jerusalem Through the Ages

Barry J. Beitzel, *The New Moody Atlas of Bible Lands*, 2d ed. (Chicago: Moody, 2009), 220-231 (9 of 12)

of a Maccabean revolt eventually gave way to pleas for "law and order" upon the death of Alexander Janneus in 76 B.C. and the temporary ascension of his wife Salome Alexandra. Many grudgingly accepted her assumption of his political duties, but considered it unthinkable that she should also assume his role as high priest. So at her death, sectarian strife ensued concerning who should become the bona fide high priest. The Pharisees backed Salome's son John Hyrcanus II. The Sadducees supported Aristobulus II.

The civil war that resulted profited only the Romans. When citizens from both groups appealed to Rome, Pompey decided in favor of Hyrcanus. In response, the partisans of Aristobulus isolated themselves inside the Temple and defied his order, so Pompey laid siege to Jerusalem. In 63 B.C., the wall was breached and the Romans broke into the Temple. Pompey simply dissolved the Hasmonean syncretism and added Jerusalem to the Roman province of Syria.[463] But the rivalry between the two groups continued after the death of Pompey and even after the assassination of Julius Caesar, eventually resulting in the Roman Senate's appointment of Herod as "king of the Jews."[464] [**See further discussion at map 99**; cf. Matt. 2:1–4; Luke 1:5.]

During his 33-year reign in Jerusalem (37–4 B.C.), Herod dramatically transformed the external aspect of the city. He transferred the seat of government to the Southwestern hill and, according to Josephus, either erected or refurbished many architectural monuments, including a lavish palace, a hippodrome, a xystos (arena for athletic contests), a theater and an amphitheater, and a vast aqueduct network.[465] He transformed the Maccabean fortress (Baris) into a much larger structure and renamed it Antonia, in honor of the triumvir Mark Antony.[466]



The church of the Holy Sepulchre, Jerusalem, traditionally believed to cover the site of the crucifixion.

In the Temple area proper, he enlarged the esplanade on the north and especially on the south side, giving it a rectangular shape.[467] The Temple's construction began in 20 B.C., but was not completed until around A.D. 64, just six years prior to its complete demolition by Titus (cf. John 2:20).[468]

The New Testament gospels contain much information about Jesus and Jerusalem, particularly during his passion week. An examination of **map 95** shows that, in the days leading up to his crucifixion, Jesus came into contact with all five of Jerusalem's hills, as well as some surrounding areas.

The location of Jesus' crucifixion, in particular, has generated a fair amount of discussion and interest. What are the specifications of the New Testament in this regard? First, Jesus was crucified outside the city walls but near the city and in the vicinity of a city gate (John 19:17–20; Matt 27:32; Heb. 13:12–13). [**See map 95.**] Second, Jesus was crucified near a busy, well-traveled street—not on a "hill far away" (Matt. 27:39; implied in Mark 15:21; Luke 23:26). Roman writer Quintilian stated: "Whenever we crucify the guilty, the most crowded roads are chosen, where the most people can see and be moved by this fear."[469] Thousands of prisoners were crucified along the Appian Way, between Rome and Capua. It is pertinent to recall, in this regard, that all four gospels mention an inscription containing the charge against Jesus that was affixed to his gallows or hung around his neck (Matt. 27:37; Mark 15:26; Luke 23:38; John 19:19–20). One can only surmise that such an inscription, written in three different languages, was designed *to be read* by all (John 19:20a). And third, the crucifixion site was near a garden that contained at least one recently hewn but unused tomb (John 19:41; Matt. 27:60).

Christians today commonly identify one of two locations for Christ's crucifixion: either the site of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, or the site of the so-called "Gordon's Calvary." Knowledgeable authorities have demonstrated that the site of Gordon's Calvary is problematic for a number of reasons: (1) the site can only trace back its roots as far as the second half of the 19th century and no further;[470] (2) a site to the

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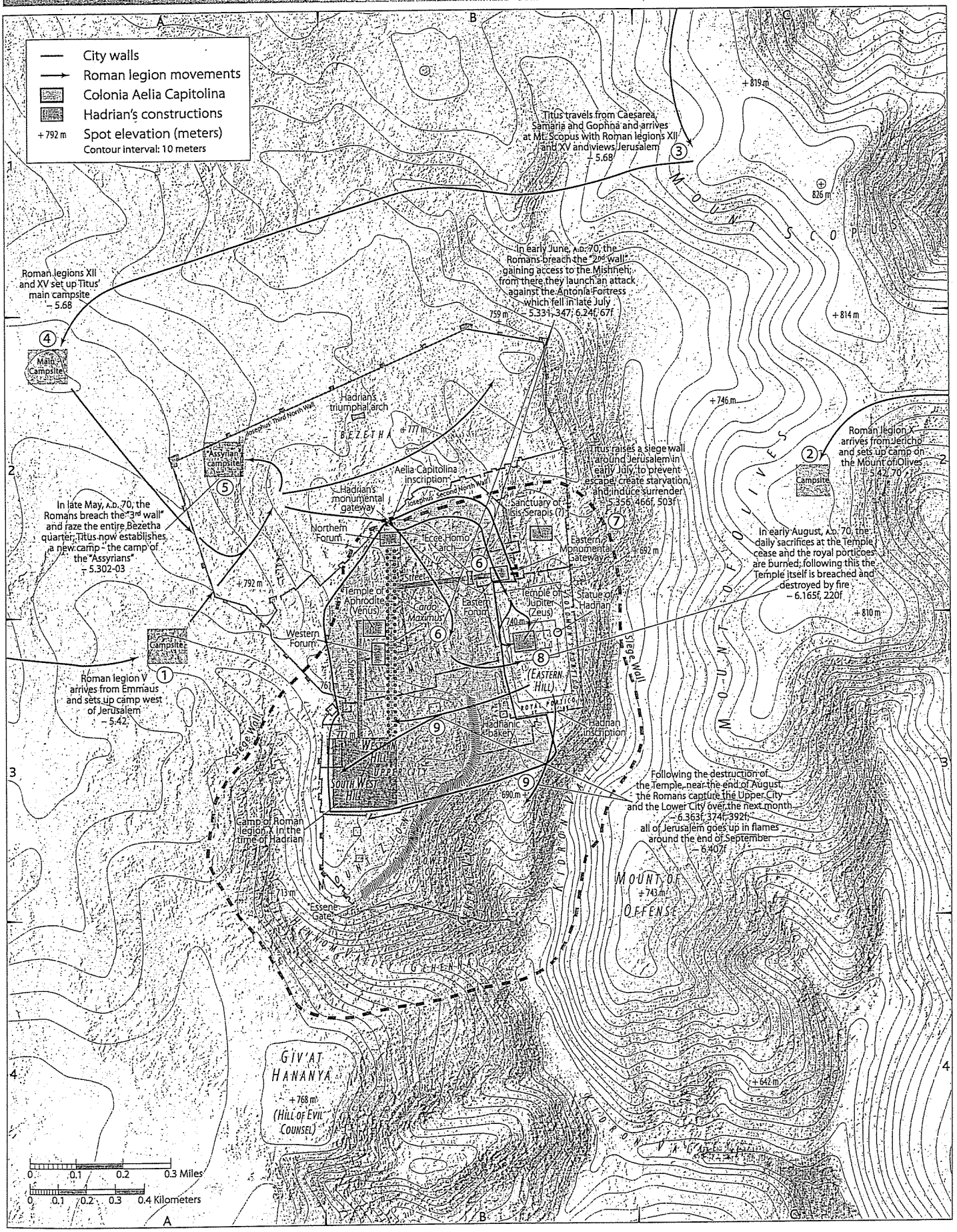
The Roman Destruction of Jerusalem

map 96



Jerusalem Through the Ages

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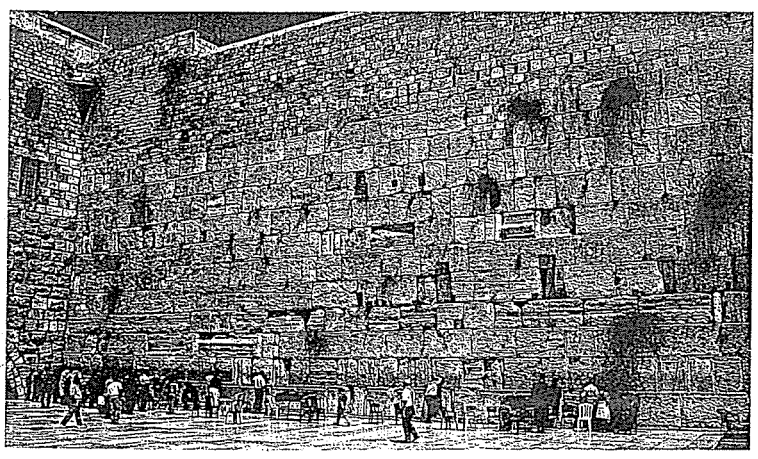
north of Jerusalem was part of Gordon's larger, fanciful, and almost mystical scheme in which the city of Jerusalem was laid out in the shape of a human skeleton, with the skull on the north side; and (3) the tombs that are part of the complex of the Gordon's Calvary and the Garden Tomb are reliably dated to the eighth to seventh centuries B.C., based on distinctive tomb architecture (*arcosolium* architecture: two side-by-side chambers or multi-chambers, with flat ceilings, where side chambers contain chiseled benches—sometimes with headrests) and pottery found inside.[471]

On the other hand, the site of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre manifests a garden containing at least four tombs dating to the early Roman period (*kokh* architecture, with one main chamber, vaulted ceilings, and multiple narrow recesses normally extending outward on a perpendicular axis). It can trace its roots back at least as far the fourth Christian century, and probably earlier.[472]

In A.D. 129 or 130, the emperor Hadrian became preoccupied with his eastern front and visited Jerusalem.[473] He sought to desecrate the location being venerated by Christians as the place of Jesus' burial and resurrection, so he constructed there a statue and temple to Aphrodite (Venus).[474] According to Jerome,[475] between the time of Hadrian and Constantine—about 180 years—the place that had witnessed the resurrection was occupied by a statue of Aphrodite/Venus. Emperor Constantine later dismantled that building used for idolatrous worship in order that "the world's most miraculous place should be worthily embellished,"[476] and on that same spot was later built the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. Furthermore, there had been an unbroken succession of Christian bishops in Jerusalem between the time of Jesus until after the time of Constantine.[477] It is implausible almost beyond belief to think that the site of such a preeminent local Christian tradition continuously honored during the fewer than 100 intermediate years between Jesus and Hadrian could somehow have been mislocated or fallen into oblivion. As a result of all these facts, one should have great confidence that the site of Christ's crucifixion is known today, thanks in large measure to the nefarious intentions of an arrogant, pagan emperor.

The Western Wall (often known as the Wailing Wall) in the Old City of Jerusalem consists in part of masonry surviving from the outer wall of Herod's Temple, which was destroyed by the Romans during the Jewish Revolt in A.D. 70.



In A.D. 66, some 35 to 40 years after the life of Christ, full-scale war erupted between Jews and Romans. [**See map 115 and accompanying text.**] Nero dispatched Vespasian, one of his outstanding generals, to crush the revolt, but Nero's eventual suicide triggered a chain of events that brought Vespasian himself to the imperial throne only two years later. With Vespasian involved in the affairs of state, his son Titus—an effective fighter with substantial battlefield experience—was given command of the Judean operations. In early spring, Titus promptly set out from Alexandria and marched as far as Caesarea, where he assembled his forces to full strength.[478] Altogether, Titus's troop strength probably numbered between 40,000 and 45,000 men.[479]

Titus and his forces marched from Caesarea across Samaria, past Gophna, thus approaching Jerusalem from the north. [**See map 96.**] The 5th Legion moved up from Emmaus and established its camp west of Jerusalem [1] as the 10th Legion maneuvered from Jericho and took up a position atop the Mount of Olives [2]. Titus himself advanced with his army as far as Mount Scopus, where he could gain an overview of the battlefield from the higher ground in the north [3]. Having surveyed the situation, Titus decided to move his forces and set up his main campsite on the Northwestern hill, not far beyond the third north wall [4], where he was joined by the 10th Legion. By late May, Titus's troops succeeded in breaching the third wall and capturing the entire area between the second and third walls (Bezetha), where he established another campsite (called by Josephus the "Assyrian campsite" because it was thought to be where Sennacherib had camped; 2 Kings 19:35) [5]. And then in early June, the Romans breached the second wall and gained access to the Mishneh quarter of the city. They also launched at attack against the Antonia Fortress, which fell to them in late July [6].

With victory now well within view, Titus raised a siege wall around the perimeter of what remained of Jerusalem in order to prevent escape, create starvation, and induce surrender [7]. In early August, the Temple precinct was breached, daily sacrifices ceased, the royal porticoes were burned, and the Temple edifice itself was soon breached and destroyed by fire [8]. By the end of August, Roman forces occupied both the Upper City and the Lower City, and then near the end of September all of Jerusalem went up in flames (Matt. 24:1–2; Mark 13:1–2; Luke 19:41–44)[480] [9]. With his mission accomplished, Titus withdrew from Jerusalem with most of his troops. He left the 10th Legion with custody of the city, and they were still there at the time of Hadrian.[481] [**See map 96.**]

Jerusalem Through the Ages

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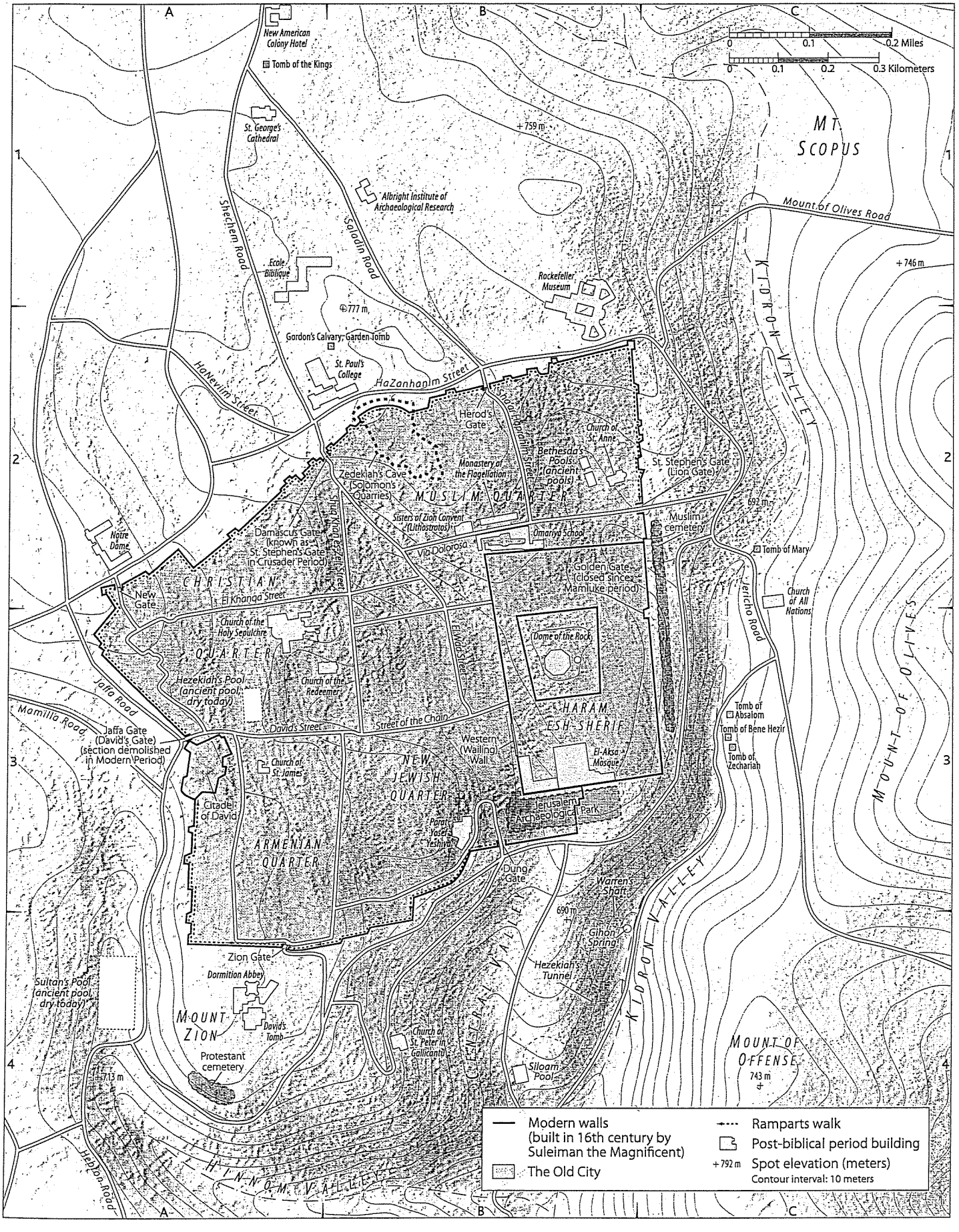
Modern Jerusalem

map 97



Zuck, Biblical Theology of OT
ix – 16.

Biblical – trace development
– // truths
– inductive, progressive

Systematic – categories from Scripture
– extract all data about salvation
– integration
– conform to philosophical grid work
– consistent

Merrill, "A Theology of the Pentateuch"
in Zuck, Biblical Theology of the OT

FOREWORD

This volume on Old Testament biblical theology is the best book I have read in a long while—if for no other reason than because it made me think, and because it delves deeply into one of my favorite fields of study, biblical theology. This kind of theology builds directly on biblical exegesis and leads—or should lead—to systematic theology.

What this ultimately means is that the church must be prepared to modify its traditions, creeds, and confessions if such biblically based exegesis and theology clearly dictate it should. Such modification should not be needed in the case of universally acknowledged doctrines of the historic Christian faith, but it could happen from time to time with the church's understanding of other doctrines and certain passages of Scripture. If this means that systematic theology must to some extent always be in a state of flux, so be it. In the final analysis, Scripture itself, when interpreted properly through the process of biblical exegesis and when synthesized legitmately through the process of biblical theology, must stand in judgment on all our humanly devised systems of theology. All of us need to be more careful in biblical interpretation lest we become unduly influenced by the preunderstandings we bring to the text from a philosophically based systematic theology (as opposed to a biblically based theology).

I am in essential agreement with the authors' stated center of biblical theology—basically the kingdom principle of Genesis 1:26-28. Most statements of a theological center are too limited (e.g., promise or covenant), too broad (e.g., God), or too man-centered (e.g., redemption or salvation-history). It seems clear that, although there are several great theological themes in Scripture, the central focus of biblical theology is the rule of God, the kingdom of God, or the interlocking concepts of kingdom and covenant (but not covenant alone). This theocratic kingdom is realized and consummated primarily through the mediatorial work of God's (and David's) messianic Son. Significantly, Ephesians 1:9-10 appears to indicate that God's ultimate purpose in creation was to establish His Son—the "Christ"—as the supreme Ruler of the universe.

For many years I have longed for a revival of solid biblical exegesis and sound biblical theology, particularly among evangelical scholars. Moody Press's 55-volume *Wycliffe Exegetical Commentary* series is a giant leap forward in biblical exegesis, and now this volume is a significant step forward in biblical theology. For such substantial ventures Moody is to be congratulated and thanked.

One does not need to agree with all points of interpretation in this book to profit from it and to recommend it to others (I myself do not agree with all views expressed). But such differences of opinion about difficult passages are mere trifles compared with the overriding excellence of this work as a whole. Indeed, in my estimation it is the best evangelical volume to appear on the subject of biblical theology in my lifetime, and I hope it will be widely welcomed and used, as it deserves to be.

KENNETH L. BARKER

PREFACE

The Old Testament is rich in a variety of ways—in its several kinds of literature (narrative, law, poetry, prophecy), in its historical span (from creation to the restoration of Israel from the Exile), in its prophetic details regarding the first and second comings of Christ, and in its multifaceted subject matter. Anyone reading the Old Testament is struck with the range of subjects, which include, broadly speaking, God; man; sin; God's convenantal, redemptive relationship to man; and the future messianic rule of God's Son, the Messiah. How various segments of Scripture relate to these themes is the concern of biblical theology: what the *Bible* teaches *theologically*.

This volume takes the reader progressively through the Old Testament from the Pentateuch to prophecy, from hymns of praise to words for wise living, and examines the books for their theological content and emphases. One cannot help but be impressed with the consistency of Scripture in its doctrinal teachings.

Through its varied literary genre and in its sweeping historical content, a handful of subjects consistently thread their way through the Old Testament. God created man to be blessed and to have dominion over creation; man fell into sin, thereby forfeiting those blessings; God chose Abraham to be the progenitor of a nation through whom He would mediate His kingdom rule; and God's Son, a descendant of Abraham, will rule over mankind and the universe. The downward path of man's rebellion against God is met at times with mercy (God is merciful to sinners) and other times with judgment (God judges sin). Individuals are wise to the extent that they accept God's forgiving grace, follow the path of righteous living, stand in praise of their loving Redeemer and awesome Sovereign, and anticipate with eagerness the coming establishment of the Sovereign's rule over the earth.

The authors of this volume, colleagues of mine in the ministry of Dallas Theological Seminary, have taught the Old Testament for many years. With unusual insight into the theological content of the Old Testament Scriptures, they have enunciated these great themes clearly and cogently. My hope is that this volume will assist many readers in acquiring a better and deeper understanding of what the Old Testament is all about, and how its great theological truths impinge on their relationship to God.

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INTRODUCTION

The terms *biblical* and *theology* by themselves conjure up a host of connotations and associations. What, then, may be said of the combination *biblical theology*? Is not their use together tautological? Is it not self-evident that *biblical* and *theological* are virtually synonymous and that, in any case, theology is inconceivable apart from the Bible?

These and similar questions have surfaced since Old Testament times and throughout the course of church history and have demanded fresh responses in each generation. Never has this been more true than now, in the last decade of the twentieth century, for never have the twin disciplines of theology and biblical scholarship been in such disarray, and seldom has the church been less sure about their interrelationships.[1]

Its Distinctions from Systematic Theology

The traditional understanding of biblical theology manifests itself in one of two forms: (1) it is the body of truth contained in the Bible, whether systematized at some point or not; or (2) it is truth that originates in the Bible, but which finds expression in logical and philosophical categories.[2] The latter form, more properly defined as systematic theology, is essentially deductive in its method and articulation, whereas the first form, biblical theology in the narrow and technical sense, is inductive. In other words, biblical theology seeks to find its theological categories and emphases within the Bible itself and not from rational or classical patterns derived from without and imposed upon Scripture.

Another difference between biblical theology and systematic theology is in terms of development and dynamicism on the one hand and completion and stati-

1. James Barr, "The Theological Case against Biblical Theology," in *Canon, Theology, and Old Testament Interpretation*, ed. Gene M. Tucker, David L. Petersen, and Robert R. Wilson (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988), pp. 3-19.
2. Gerhard Ebeling, "The Meaning of 'Biblical Theology,'" *Journal of Theological Studies* 6 (1955): 210.

cism on the other. To put it theologically, one is diachronic in outlook and the other synchronic.[3] Systematic theology is concerned to view and articulate biblical truth in terms of the complete canonical witness without particular concern for the developmental process at work to create its final shape. It is the more synthetic of the disciplines and aims at a unified result. Biblical theology is concerned to discern, trace, and describe the progress of divine revelation throughout the canon from its earliest to its latest expression. It logically precedes systematics and is the bridge between exegesis and systematics.

These two approaches to theology, if understood and defined correctly, are by no means mutually exclusive. A genuinely Christian systematic theology will find its doctrine in Scripture alone and will be concerned to limit its organizational categories to those inherent in Scripture. However, it still employs an essentially synthetic method in assessing the theological raw material with which it works. For example, its soteriology, sensitive as it is to Old Testament and New Testament differences, will search the Scriptures from beginning to end for data that together compose the doctrines of salvation. A Christian biblical theology, on the other hand, will trace the history of salvation a step at a time throughout the Bible, allowing the history to take whatever form appropriate at any given stage of revelation, recognizing how the doctrine developed as revelation progressed. Then and only then will biblical theology seek to organize and synthesize the results of its inquiry.

In an effort to distinguish between biblical and systematic theology, it is fallacious to pit the one against the other as though they were at odds, with one or the other being superior. They are simply two ways of viewing and expressing the same body of revelation. Yet much harm has been done by an inability to perceive their respective natures, priorities, and relationships. Those who practice only biblical theology sometimes fail to understand the proper integration of the strands of truth they discover in their longitudinal quest. They see the development of divine revelation but come short of understanding the fullness to which the process leads. They frequently end up with parallel strands of truth that are never systematized into a coherent pattern. Systematic theologians, however, are sometimes guilty of bringing epistemological frameworks to the biblical revelation that are either alien or extraneous to that revelation. They then force the material into conformity with their philosophical gridwork without considering the possibility that God's truth is intractable and must therefore yield its own categories.[4]

Good theologians of both approaches will recognize their indebtedness to each other. The systematician understands that the material with which he works must be mined by the exegete and biblical theologian, and the biblical theologian knows

3. Gerhard Hasel. *Old Testament Theology: Basic Issues in the Current Debate*, 3d ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), pp. 42-43, 69-70.

4. For an early but still important treatise on this matter of the relationship of biblical and systematic theology, see the Altdorf Address of Johann Gabler in J. Sandys-Wunsch and L. Eldredge, "J. P. Gabler and the Distinction between Biblical and Dogmatic Theology: Translation, Commentary, and Discussion of His Originality," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 33 (1980): 133-58.

that his work is not complete if he has merely located and traced the major theological themes of given portions of the Bible. Those themes must be integrated and woven together in such a way as to produce a self-consistent, harmonious, and balanced arrangement of divine revelation. This task, he concedes, is that of the systematic theologian.

Logically and methodologically, then, there must be a cooperative enterprise in doing God-honoring theology. The biblical theologian must work his way through the biblical test, inductively and progressively discovering its theological truth. In the process he may or may not discern patterns and paradigms, but he must make the effort to extract principles that provide the hard data for synthesis. That is, he must be diachronic, sensitive to the gradual but progressive revelation of God's self-disclosure. The systematic theologian must provide the capstone of the theological enterprise. He ideally refuses to read into any given text what is not there, builds off the principles by which the biblical theologian works (if not his product), and refuses to manufacture a philosophical strait jacket into which the data derived inductively must be squeezed.

Its Application in These Volumes

The contributions to these volumes[5] are deliberately and self-consciously limited to biblical theology in the sense in which it has just been described. They are an effort to survey the Bible as a whole from an analytical and inductive stance and to extract from it those themes and emphases that are inherent to it and that recur with such regularity and in such evident patterns as to generate their own theological rubrics. There is no pretense here, then, to a fully integrated and comprehensive systemization of biblical doctrine. That is the task of the systematic theologican who, it is hoped, will use these and similar studies in undertaking his own work. Nor is there total uniformity of viewpoint within these chapters, for each student of Scripture comes to it with certain biases and usually reads these biases into and out of the text. The best efforts at objectivity are often not successful. Moreover, Scripture itself is not uniform in its presentation of the revelation of God. That is, in the very nature of progressive revelation and the multiformity of the literature and literary genres, there are bound to be different themes and emphases. The major theological concepts of Joshua, for example, are not likely to be those of Romans. Therefore, the biblical theology that emerges from these respective books is bound to be different in both content and expression.

At the same time, one would expect ideally that these different aspects and phases are harmonious and complementary to one another (certainly not contradictory). Furthermore, they should have the potential at least to contribute to a common theological core or center that is sufficiently narrow to serve as a single statement of divine intention and sufficiently broad to encompass the great variety

5. *Biblical Theology of the New Testament* is projected as the second of two volumes in this series.

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of its expression in Scripture. If the Bible in its totality is God's Word, a reflection of His mind and purpose, it is only reasonable to expect that it is organized around a central core no matter how elusive that truth might be in certain parts of Scripture and how variegated it might be in other parts.[6] The following essays have been written with this conviction in view, and it is quite evident that a broad consensus has emerged despite the lack of any attempt at theological editorship. What this core is and how it is manifest throughout the canon will be clear to the careful reader of these volumes.

Its Development in Recent Centuries

Though the distinctions between biblical theology and systematic theology should be clear by now, it is important to remember that this distinction is of rather recent vintage.[7] Until about two hundred years ago theology was theology, namely, the study of God, His attributes, and His ways in the world. The adjective *biblical* was considered superfluous, for theology obviously derived from the Bible and had biblical contents as the proper object of study. In earliest times, including the era of the New Testament writings, theology was not even systematized. It consisted only of the appropriation of Old Testament truth as foundation and support for God's revelation in Jesus Christ. In a real sense it was true to the concept and principles of biblical theology because no effort was made either by Judaism or primitive Christianity to create logical and mutually exclusive rubrics according to which biblical (i.e., Old Testament) revelation was to be understood. On the other hand, such theological endeavor was not truly biblical theology in the modern sense, for neither the New Testament nor other early Jewish and Christian writings undertook the kind of analytical and synthetic investigation of the biblical record as these volumes are attempting. Thus theology, as the term is understood in the twentieth century, was a foreign notion in earliest times.

The rise of systematic theology, sometimes known as dogmatic theology, accompanied the rise of neoclassical studies in the Western church, especially the study of Platonic and Aristotelian philosophy. This came about in two ways: (1) as a response to and polemic against the paganism associated with such philosophical thought and (2) by the appropriation of the metaphysical and epistemological arguments employed by those philosophers themselves. There were thus both negative and positive aspects of the Christian use of classical philosophy.

Unfortunately it was not long before the formal nature of philosophical analysis and reconstruction became confused with its material nature. That is, theology, in an attempt at systemization, began to imbibe not only philosophical categories of organization but extrabiblical and even antibiblical content derived from

6. Though Hasel rejects the possibility of such a center, his discussion of various ideas and options is illuminating. See his "The Problem of the Center in the OT Theology Debate," *Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 86 (1974): 65-82.

7. For a history of the earlier biblical theology movement, see John H. Hayes and F. C. Prussner, *Old Testament Theology: Its History and Development* (Atlanta: John Knox, 1985), pp. 1-

philosophical rationalism. The result was the imposition of extrabiblical structures and thought on the theological data of the Bible. It was in reaction to this that the modern biblical theology movement of the mid-eighteenth century was born. The cry became "back to the Bible" for both the substance of theology and the methodology to be employed in ascertaining that substance. So strong was the reaction that the very concepts of systematic or dogmatic theology were in jeopardy until it was at last realized that the two, far from being inherently antithetical, could be complementary and that both disciplines were necessary. Biblical theology took its rightful place as the storehouse from which systematic theology drew its resources and systematic theology recognized that it could speak with biblical authority only as it drew both its categories and its substance from Scripture mediated through biblical theology.

The foregoing analysis primarily reflects the work and attitude of traditional, orthodox theologians, but with the dawning of modern higher criticism, approximately contemporary with this new distinction between biblical and systematic theology, there developed a skeptical rationalism toward the Bible that often eviscerated it of scientific, historical, and even theological authority. The result was that Old Testament biblical theology became nothing more or less than the history of Israel's religion while systematic theology became an objective and no longer normative attempt to organize the content of a discredited Scripture. The shift from the Bible as the ground and focus of theology resulted in such new approaches as philosophical theology or the history of doctrine.

The devastating implications of this for the life and even survival of the church became clear to many Christian thinkers both inside and outside the evangelical community. There thus came to be the initial stirrings of the "new biblical theology" movement immediately after World War I, a movement that stressed the centrality of the Bible for theological resource apart from or even in spite of its deficiencies as defined by historical criticism. This was an effort undertaken primarily by scholars committed to modern critical method. Those of an orthodox persuasion had never abandoned either a proper biblical or systematic theology, though the former was sadly neglected as a method in favor of the latter.

The "new biblical theology" movement has now become old, but there is no sign of any flagging interest in the enterprise. Protestant, Roman Catholic, and even Jewish scholars are busily engaged in a variety of approaches to the matter, approaches that range from theology as a statement of the unfolding revelation of God in a timeless and inerrant Bible to theology as a prism through which one can understand ancient Israel as a religious and sociological phenomenon. Whether the momentum of the movement, with all its novel and creative features, can be sustained much longer is impossible to foresee.[8]

The present volumes attest to the significance of biblical theology in the per-

8. For the state of contemporary Old Testament theology and projections as to its future, see Gerhard Hasel, "Old Testament Theology from 1978-1987," *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 26 (1988): 133-57; and Marvin E. Tate, "Promising Paths toward Biblical Theology," *Review and Expositor* 78 (1981): 169-85.

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ception of most of the evangelical community. Some excellent individual works have been done in the past half century[9] but this is perhaps the first of this kind, a collaborative effort by a team committed to a high view of the authority of the Bible and to the proposition that sound systematic theology must find its roots and substance in a properly undertaken biblical theology. The contributors are the first to recognize the tentativeness of what they have done but they are convinced that such a step, preliminary as it might be, is necessary if evangelicalism is to have any credible input into contemporary theology.

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9. See, for example, Geerhardus Vos, *Biblical Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1954); J. Barton Payne, *The Theology of the Older Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1962); C. K. Lehman, *Biblical Theology*, 2 vols. (Scottdale, Pa.: Herald, 1971-72); Walter C. Kaiser, *Toward an Old Testament Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978); William Dyrness, *Themes in Old Testament Theology* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 1979); Walter C. Kaiser, *Toward an Exegetical Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1981); Elmer Martens, *God's Design* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1981); W. J. Dumbrell, *Covenant and Creation* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1984); Thomas McComiskey, *The Covenants of Promise* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1985); Willem Van Gemeren, *The Progress of Redemption* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1988); L. D. Hurst, "New Testament Theological Analysis," in *Introducing New Testament Interpretation*, ed. Scot McKnight (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1989): 133-61.

1

A THEOLOGY OF THE PENTATEUCH

EUGENE H. MERRILL

INTRODUCTION

A theology of the Bible, or of any of its parts, must give careful consideration to the setting of the original composition—time, place, situation, and author—and to the matter of final canonical form and function.[1] This is especially true of a theology of the Pentateuch, for it is universally regarded by both the Jewish and Christian traditions as being foundational to whatever else the Old and New Testaments say theologically. Attention to the background of the Pentateuch, in which such elements of setting are addressed, is of utmost importance.

The position of the Pentateuch at the beginning of every known arrangement of the biblical canon is in itself a confirmation of the premise that these five books

1. For a careful argumentation connecting the genesis, transmission, and creative synthesis of the biblical texts and the theological relevance of each of these stages, see Gerhard Hasel, *Old Testament Theology: Basic Issues in the Current Debate*, 3d ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), pp. 169-83.

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are the fountainhead of theological inquiry.[2] The very order of the books—Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy—is, according to every tradition, intrinsic to original Mosaic composition as well as final canonical shape.

A theology of the Pentateuch must, then, take cognizance of the historical circumstances in which it was created and, more important, the theological concerns that motivated both its divine and human origination, and its precise form and function. Until such prolegomena are understood, it is impossible to understand and correctly articulate the theological message of the writing of Moses.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Bible affirms (e.g., Ex. 17:14; 24:4; Num. 33:1-2; Deut. 31:9; Josh. 1:8; 2 Kings 21:8) that the Pentateuch was the creation of Moses, the great Exodus liberator, who communicated to his fellow Israelites the revelation of God concerning Himself and His purposes for His recently redeemed people. This took place on the plains of Moab, forty years after the Exodus, on the eve of Israel's conquest of Canaan and establishment as a national entity in fulfillment of the promises to the patriarchal ancestors.[3] Though there no doubt had been an unbroken oral (and perhaps written) tradition about their origins, history, and purpose, it was not until Moses gathered these traditions and integrated them into the corpus now known as the Torah that a comprehensive and authoritative synthesis emerged. The significance of the Exodus and of the Sinaitic Covenant in light of the ancient patriarchal promises became clear. Beyond this, the role of Israel against the backdrop of creation and the whole world of nations took on meaning. In short, the setting of the Pentateuch was theological as much as it was geographical and historical. It became the written expression of God's will for Israel in terms of His larger purposes in creation and redemption.

THE PENTATEUCH AS LITERATURE

The name *Pentateuch* reflects the size of the composition—it consists of five scrolls. A more accurate and informative term is used in the Jewish tradition itself, namely the *Torah*, which means "instruction." This name suggests that the purpose of the Mosaic writings was to educate Israel regarding the general meaning of creation and history and regarding its specific function within that cosmic framework.[4] Where did the people originate? Why were they called by Yahweh? What was the meaning of the covenant? What were God's requirements for His redeemed people in civil, moral, and cultic regulations? What were (and are) His purposes for

2. Roger Beckwith, *The Old Testament Canon of the New Testament Church* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985), pp. 128, 359.
3. For detailed support of this milieu, see Eugene H. Merrill, *Kingdom of Priests: A History of Old Testament Israel* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1987), pp. 21-25.
4. Michael Fishbane, "Torah and Tradition," in *Tradition and Theology in the Old Testament*, ed. Douglas A. Knight (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1977), pp. 275-76.

them in the future as related to the nations of the earth?

The unfortunate translation of "law" for *tôrāh* gives the impression that the Mosaic writings are essentially legal texts. Such texts in the corpus are well recognized, but they by no means predominate. Genesis is narrative and genealogical for the most part. Exodus 1-19 is mainly narrative, with the remainder divided between "legal" prescription and its implementation. Leviticus is basically cultic instruction, legal in the sense of prescribing regulations for worship. Numbers is of mixed genre, most of it clearly narrative with only a few chapters devoted to law. Deuteronomy is cast in the form of major Mosaic addresses delivered to Israel as a farewell speech just before Moses' death and Israel's conquest of Canaan. Form-critically Deuteronomy has come to be seen as a long covenant text including parenetic comments on various elements of its constituent documents.[5] The "law" in Deuteronomy is, then, the stipulation section of a treaty text that regulates the behavior of the vassal Israel toward Yahweh the Sovereign.

Thus the Pentateuch is a collection of diverse writings. But this does not vitiate the traditional understanding of the collection as Torah, or instruction. By story, poem, genealogy, narrative, prescription, and exhortation the theological message is communicated with one single objective: that Israel might be instructed as to her meaning and purpose. Literary form, as helpful as it might be in specific instances, has little to say about the fundamental character of the Pentateuch as theological literature.

ASSUMPTIONS IN A THEOLOGY OF THE PENTATEUCH

Though one might wish for a totally objective, unpredetermined approach to biblical theology, this is an impossibility, as all theologians freely confess.[6] One can never come to his task with no preconceptions as to the shape and conclusions of his endeavor. Yet the goal is to engage in an inductive study of the literature so that it may yield its own categories and results. Even granting this as an indispensable methodological principle one still must make certain assumptions about the raw material under his purview and the stance from which he will examine it. The following assumptions undergird the present approach to the theology of the Pentateuch.

Assumptions about God. God exists and is unified; self-consistent, and ordered. It is clearly impossible to do anything other than a "history of Israel's religion," or "descriptive theology," unless one concedes the existence of God. One must also concede that God's purposes are noncontradictory and comprehensible at some level of human understanding.

God has revealed Himself in Scripture. This revelation is unified, consistent

5. J. A. Thompson, *Deuteronomy: An Introduction and Commentary* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 1974), pp. 17-21.
6. John Goldingay, "The Study of Old Testament Theology: Its Aims and Purpose," *Tyndale Bulletin* 26 (1975): 37-39.

with Himself, and systematic. If theology is to be done, it must be done with data revealed by God for it to claim any authenticity and authority. God's self-revelation, moreover, was given in human terms, that is, it was communicated in such a way as to conform to human thought processes and verbal formulations.

God has a purpose for all He does and that purpose, granting its divine origination, must be noncontradictory, self-consistent, systematic, and knowable. This is not to say that all God's purposes are intelligible to human beings or even are communicated to them but that those purposes incumbent on them must be so.[7]

Assumptions about revelation. The purpose of revelation is to reveal God and His purposes. The need or desire to communicate obviously presupposes the mechanism for communicating as far as God's objectives are concerned. It is unthinkable that God has requirements for His creation that He would not reveal in meaningful terms.

Revelation must express the purpose of God propositionally. If all that is in view is the noun (i.e., God), it may be that one could glean something by general revelation alone, for "the heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands" (Ps. 19:1; Rom. 1:18-23). If, however, verbs (i.e., God's purposes) are to be revealed, they must be clarified in verbal statements, for mere isolated acts and events—or even patterns of events in a historical continuum—are at worst meaningless and at best ambiguous. "Event" must be accompanied and interpreted by "word" if it is to be revelatory.[8]

The revelation of purpose may be derived either inductively from the text (by abstraction of a principle or a theme) or deductively (from a purpose statement) or both. In fact, the two are mutually informing and must continually be held in tension. A purpose statement that cannot be sustained in light of the total biblical witness is of course an invalid theological starting point.

Assumptions about purpose. Creation must from the outset be conceded as integral to the purposes of God, for though He could have existed forever independently and yet with purpose, creation has taken place and with it an implied purpose. If purpose, then, is bound up with creation (or vice versa), the statement(s) of creation's purpose should be in chronological and canonical proximity to the creation event itself. This naturally leads to the Pentateuch and specifically to the earliest portion of Genesis.

The statement(s) of purpose should be such that it can be validated by subsequent revelation as a whole, is adequate to accommodate the variety of biblical revelation, and is specific or restricted enough to make a meaningful statement

7. This is what Brueggemann means by a theology of "coherence and rationality" (Walter Brueggemann, "A Shape for Old Testament Theology, I: Structure Legitimation," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 47 [1985]: 41).

8. John Goldingay, *Approaches to Old Testament Interpretation* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 1981), pp. 74-77; James Barr, "Revelation through History in the Old Testament and in Modern Theology," *Interpretation* 17 (1963): 197.

about God (subject) and His purposes (predicate).

The statement(s) of purpose must suit the canonical structure of the entire Bible. Regardless of one's view of inspiration and revelation, the present canonical shape of the Bible clearly reflects the theological stance of the communities that received and molded it under the direction of the Spirit of God.[9] Again, therefore, because it stands at the head and source of the canonical tradition, one would expect Genesis to yield the fundamental statements of purpose.

Assumptions about theological method: Within the present canon, whose arrangement reflects broad theological method and concerns (namely, the Torah, the Prophets, the Writings, and the New Testament), one must attempt to discover chronological order so that the progress of revelation might be discerned and brought to the service of more narrow theological interests. In the case of the Pentateuch this is an easy matter because universal tradition attests to the priority of the Pentateuch and the canonical form places Genesis first.

Once the purpose statement (also now to be construed as the center) has been determined, one must read the biblical revelation in that light, a reading based on proper attention to (1) well-established principles of hermeneutics, (2) literary/rhetorical criticism, (3) form criticism, (4) historical/cultural background, and (5) detailed exegesis.

The purpose statement must then be reevaluated to see if it still meets the criteria listed in the above purpose section.

Proper method for the Christian requires that the New Testament be viewed in continuity with the Old Testament and that both Testaments be seen as mutually informing. This does not mean that one can read the New Testament back into the Old, but that one must recognize that the two Testaments are indivisibly parts of the same revelation of the one God and that nothing in the Old Testament can in any way contradict the revelation of the New.[10]

THE SEARCH FOR A CENTER

The foregoing discussion suggests that the revelation of Scripture is a unified, purposeful, self-consistent phenomenon reflecting the purposes of a self-consistent God who wishes to disclose His intentions to His creation. It has been argued that these intentions can be reduced to a statement to be expected at the beginning of the historical and canonical process. Unfortunately it is impossible here to trace that statement and its implications throughout the entire Bible because this chapter is concerned with the theology of the Pentateuch alone. But it is precisely in the

9. Brevard S. Childs, *Old Testament Theology in a Canonical Context* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985), pp. 15-16.

10. See the excellent discussions by T. C. Vriezen, *An Outline of Old Testament Theology* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1958), pp. 79-93; A. A. Anderson, "Old Testament Theology and Its Methods," in *Promise and Fulfillment*, ed. F. F. Bruce (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1963), pp. 12-13.

Pentateuch that such a statement must first appear if the foregoing set of assumptions is to have any validity at all.

Though there may be an overarching, comprehensive statement of divine purpose (hereafter, center), there may be minor, secondary statements that are essential to the achieving of the one grand objective.[11] The very occasion of the composition of the Pentateuch is a case in point. Clearly Moses prepared the written Torah as instruction on the origin, purpose, and destiny of the people Israel. The Exodus and the covenant relationship certified at Sinai were sufficient to prove beyond any doubt that whatever purposes God had for creation and all the peoples of the earth, these purposes somehow were to be served by the election of Israel to a position of special responsibility.

Exodus 19 and the theological center. The Sinai Covenant, made possible historically and practically by the miracle of the Exodus, is of central concern to the Old Testament. The text of that covenant is introduced in Exodus 20:1 and continues through 23:33, but its purpose is outlined in 19:4-6, a passage that is crucial to the understanding of the function of Israel and of the Sinaitic Covenant in biblical theology. It is so important that it could well be considered the central purpose statement concerning God's election and redemption of Israel.[12]

After rehearsing His chastening of Egypt (Ex. 19:4*a*), His mighty act of Exodus deliverance (v. 4*b*), and His bringing of His people to Himself in covenant fellowship (v. 4*c*), Yahweh challenged them to be obedient to His covenant requirements so they could be His own special possession (v. 5), a kingdom of priests (v. 6). The redemptive prerequisite to covenant relationship is unconditional—God delivered them and brought them to Himself at His own initiative. What was conditional was their success in achieving His purpose for them, that they be a priestly kingdom, a holy nation.

Many theologians view this complex of events itself as the primary focus of Old Testament theology.[13] Because the bulk of the Old Testament revelation is concerned with Israel and with Yahweh's relationship with Israel, it is argued that that must be the central concern of God's revelation. But theological significance cannot be measured by lines of text alone. There must be careful attention to exegesis, to literary and theological context. Granting that Exodus 19:4-6 is a fundamental statement about the divine plan for Israel, is there anything in this passage to suggest that God's purposes are limited to Israel? Or is there any suggestion as to the role Israel was to play, a role that in itself would lead to a far more comprehensive understanding of God's objectives?

The answer is to be found in the very nature of priesthood. Whatever else might be said of the office, the fundamental notion that comes to mind in considering the ministry of the priest is that of mediation and intercession. A priest stands between God and a person (or persons) who is in need of making contact with God. So Israel must be viewed as bearing a mediatorial responsibility, of serving as an intercessor between a holy God and all the peoples of the earth. But this suggests that Israel itself and its covenant relationship to Yahweh cannot be the focal point of biblical theology. Israel's role is not an ultimate objective but merely a means of facilitating that objective—that God and the peoples of earth might have unbroken communion. Israel's importance, then, is functional. For just as the priest did not serve for his own sake but only as a means of bridging the gap between the worshiper and the worshiped, so Israel was made a priestly nation to achieve communion between man and God. As will be emphasized later, even the form of the Sinaitic Covenant—a sovereign-vassal treaty—points to this functional meaning of Israel's existence.

11. For various approaches to the search for a center, see Hasel, *Old Testament Theology*, pp. 117-43.
12. W. J. Dumbrell, *Covenant and Creation* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1984), pp. 80-81, 90.
13. Jakob Jocz, *The Covenant* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1968), pp. 31-32.

If Exodus 19 is not a statement of *ultimate* theological purpose but only one outlining the *role* of Israel, is there a statement elsewhere that would satisfactorily explain the reason for the election and covenant responsibility of Israel in the first place? In line with the previous discussion of chronological and canonical indicators, it is proposed that the search for such a statement of center must begin precisely at the beginning—in the earliest parts of Genesis.

Genesis 1:26-28 as the theological center. Unquestionably the underlying purposes of God for man are bound up in His creation of the heavens and the earth, which provide the arena of His activity.[14] One would naturally expect the Bible, as a historical and theological treatise, to commence its story with creation, the earliest possible event. If, however, there were theological concerns that transcended creation and its purposes, one could have every right to expect the inspired record to begin with these because the canonical shape is not always exclusively sensitive to chronological concerns. Therefore, the very priority of creation *both historiographically and canonically* should point to its theological centrality.

There are two complementary accounts of creation; Genesis 1, which is cosmic and universal in its scope; and Genesis 2, which is decidedly anthropocentric. This canonical structure alone suggests the climactic way the creation of man is viewed. He is the crowning glory of the creative process. This is clearly seen even in Genesis 1, for man is created last, on the sixth day of creation.

A mere description of the divine creative activity is not sufficient, however, to communicate the theological message involved, for there must be statements of motive to give the act intelligent and intelligible meaning. The fundamental question that must be asked of the creation accounts is, "So what?" Answers to this question are not long in coming. Following the creation of light, God said that it was good (Gen. 1:4). Similarly He endorsed the appearance of the dry land (v. 10), the

14. Eugene H. Merrill, "Covenant and the Kingdom: Genesis 1-3 as Foundation for Biblical Theology," *Criswell Theological Review* 1 (1987): 295-308.

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emergence of plant life (v. 12), the placement of the heavenly bodies (v. 18), and the creation of marine and aerial life (v. 21) and of earthbound creatures (v. 25). The whole is summarized in verse 31: "God saw all that he had made, and it was very good."

The judgment that all these things were "good" is of course a statement of purpose. It suggests that creation serves aesthetic ends at least.[15] But aesthetics alone is an insufficient basis on which to build the eternal, divine objective. To see that objective in more concrete and specific terms one must ascertain the particular purposes attached to the creation of man, because it is man who is the image of God and for whom the rest of creation provides a setting.

This leads to Genesis 1:26-28, the first and foundational text to articulate the functional aspect of the creation of man. The formal, anthropological aspect is found in Genesis 2.

The first part of the statement of purpose is that man is made in the image and likeness of God (1:26*a*), a purpose reiterated as having been accomplished with the added nuance of gender distinction (v. 27). In line with recent scholarship, it is argued here that the translation of *bᵉṣalmēnū* ("in our image") and *kidmūtēnū* ("according to our likeness") ought to be "as our image" and "according to our likeness" respectively.[16] That is, man is not *in* the image of God, he *is* the image of God. The text speaks not of what man is like but of what he is to be and do. It is a functional statement and not one of essence.[17] Just as images or statues represented deities and kings in the ancient Near East, so much so that they were virtually interchangeable,[18] so man as the image of God was created to represent God Himself as the sovereign over all creation.

This bold metaphor is spelled out beyond question in Genesis 1:26*b*, which explains what it means for man to be the image of God: "Let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all creatures that move along the ground." The mandate to accomplish this follows in verse 28: "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground."

The key words in this statement of purpose are the verbs "rule" (1:26, 28) and "subdue" (v. 28). The first verb appears in the jussive ("let them rule") and imperative ("rule ye") of the Hebrew *rādāh* ("have dominion, rule, dominate").[19] The second occurs also in the imperative plural, the Hebrew verb being *kābaš* ("subdue, bring into bondage").[20] Both verbs carry the idea of dominion. Both may be traced back to the verbal root meaning "to tread down." Hence, man is created to reign in a manner that demonstrates his lordship, his domination (by force if necessary) over all creation.

15. Von Rad suggests that the word "good" contains "less an aesthetic judgment than the designation of purpose, correspondence" (Gerhard von Rad, *Genesis: A Commentary* [London: SCM, 1961], p. 50).
16. Ibid., p. 56.
17. Only Christ is the image of God in an ontological sense. Man is such representationally or functionally. See Peter T. O'Brien, *Colossians, Philemon*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 44 (Waco, Tex.: Word, 1982), pp. 43-44.
18. For a full discussion of this view (which he does not accept), see Claus Westermann, *Genesis 1-11: A Commentary* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1984), pp. 151-54.

Two principal passages in the Old Testament provide glimpses of what human domination under God entails. The first is Genesis 2:15 (cf. v. 5), 19-20, and the second is Psalm 8.

As noted earlier, Genesis 2 gives the account of the creation of man in which he appears as the climax of the creative process, almost its raison d'être. In this account, described in highly anthropomorphic terms, the Lord formed man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, making him a living being (v. 7). He then placed man in the garden "to work it and take care of it" (v. 15). This must be seen in light of verse 5, which points out that before the creation of man no shrub or plant had sprung up because there was as yet no rain and, more significantly, no man to "work the ground." Clearly, then, a major purpose for the creation of man was that he should "work the ground."[21] Work by itself was not a curse; indeed it was the very essence of what it meant to be the image of God. To work the ground is one definition of what it means to have dominion.

A second definition may be found in Genesis 2:19-20, which states that man was given the responsibility of naming the animals. As is now well known, in the ancient Near East to name could be tantamount to exercising dominion.[22] When Yahweh brought the animals to Adam "to see what he would name them," He was in effect transferring from Himself to Adam the dominion for which man was created. This of course is perfectly in line with the objects of human dominion listed in the pivotal text of Genesis 1:26: fish, birds, livestock, and "all the creatures that move along the ground."

The second major Old Testament passage that clarifies the meaning of man's function as sovereign is Psalm 8. The entire hymn deserves detailed discussion but only two points can be made here. First, a clear reference to the *imago dei* is conveyed by verse 5: "You made Him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned Him with glory and honor." As the NIV suggests in the footnote, "heavenly beings" may be translated "God" (Heb. *'ĕlōhîm*). This in fact is the better

19. Francis Brown, S. R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs, *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1962), p. 921.
20. Ibid., p. 461.
21. Manfred Hutter, "Adam als Gärtner und König," *Biblische Zeitschrift* 30 (1986): 258-62.
22. Von Rad, *Genesis*, p. 81. For a careful nuancing of this, however, see George W. Ramsey, "Is Name-Giving an Act of Domination in Genesis 2:23 and Elsewhere?" *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 50 (1988): 24-35.

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translation in view of the well-established fact that this psalm is a commentary of Genesis 1:26-28. As God's image and viceroy, man himself is a king crowned with glory and honor.

What that kingship means is clear from Psalm 8:6-7, where man has been appointed ruler (causative of *māšal*) over all creation, with everything "under his feet." This image is reminiscent of the fundamental meaning of "have dominion" (*rādāh*) and "subdue" (*kābaš*) in Genesis 1:28, namely, to tread upon. The objects of the dominion are exactly the same (though in different order) as those of the Genesis mandate: flocks and herds, beasts of the field, birds of the air, and fish of the sea (Ps. 8:7).

A Theology of Genesis

THE COVENANT MANDATE AND ESCHATOLOGY

If the purposes of God are bound up in His act of creation and dominion, one would expect these twin themes to prevail throughout the biblical revelation, and indeed they do. The devastating interdiction of sin necessitated adjustment of the implementation of those purposes, however, so that the ability of man to fulfill the terms of the mandate was seriously impaired and required modification. But what became submerged in the course of human history will reemerge in the eschaton when man's full covenant-keeping capacity will be restored. This is crystal clear from an examination of several passages in the prophets.

Nowhere is the restoration to the pristine conditions of the original covenant statement more brilliantly unfolded than in Isaiah. In Isaiah 11:6-9, a messianic passage especially oriented to the millennial age, the prophet predicts the following:

> The wolf will live with the lamb,
> the leopard will lie down with the goat,
> The calf and the lion and the yearling together;
> and a little child will lead them.
> The cow will feed with the bear,
> their young will lie down together,
> and the lion will eat straw like the ox.
> The infant will play near the hole of the cobra,
> and the young child put his hand into the viper's nest.
> They will neither harm nor destroy
> on all my holy mountain,
> For the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord
> as the waters cover the sea.

The docility of the animals, particularly their noncarnivorous nature, clearly speaks of the paradisaical conditions before man's Fall (cf. Gen. 9:2-3). Moreover, the verb used to describe the leading of animals by a child in Isaiah 11:6 (*nāhag*) is

one that speaks of leadership or headship,[23] a most appropriate synonym for dominion.

Another remarkable passage is Hosea 2:18. There the prophet speaks of a day when Yahweh "will make a covenant for them [i.e., Israel] with the beasts of the field and the birds of the air and the creatures that move along the ground." There is an unmistakable allusion here to the covenant mandate of Genesis 1:26-28 although, to be sure, it is Israel specifically that will be involved in its implementation.[24]

THE COVENANT MANDATE AND THE LIFE OF JESUS

The apostle Paul described Jesus as the Second Adam, an epithet associated with His salvific and redemptive work and with His role as the "first Man" of a regenerate community. "For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive" (1 Cor. 15:22; cf. 15:45; Rom. 5:12-17). Although this redemptive aspect of Jesus as the Second Adam cannot be emphasized too much, it may be instructive also to view the *life* of Jesus as the life of the Second Adam, and to note that Jesus came not only to die but also to live. And the life He lived demonstrated by its power and perfection all that God created Adam and all men to be. In other words, Jesus fulfilled in His life the potentialities of unfallen Adam just as by His death He restored all mankind to those potentialities.

A few examples from the gospels must suffice. On one occasion Jesus and His disciples were crossing the Sea of Galilee when a furious storm overtook the boat and threatened to swamp it. Jesus, awakened by the disciples, rebuked the winds and waves, and so startling were the results that His friends asked, "What kind of man is this? Even the winds and the waves obey him!" (Matt. 8:23-27). Although one could easily argue that Jesus worked this miracle because of His deity, that does not seem to be the conclusion of those who witnessed the event. Of particular interest in the account (see also Mark 4:36-41; Luke 8:22-25) is the disciples' sense of Jesus' sovereignty over creation. Jesus spoke to the elements as their lord and they obeyed Him. Is this not akin to the dominion to which Adam was appointed?

A similar incident may suggest even closer affinities to the domination over creation enjoined by the Adamic Covenant. Matthew 14:22-23 (cf. Mark 6:45-51; John 6:16-21) relates the story of the disciples who again were in the grip of the angry sea when suddenly they saw Jesus walking on the water. Emboldened by this, Peter asked Jesus to allow him to walk on the waves as well. Successful at first, Peter lost his confidence and began to sink and only the strong arm of the Lord preserved him.

Certain features stand out and give evidence of theological themes and antecedents that provide a rationale for the event. First, there is the concept of the chaotic waters that must be dominated, a concept seen in the narrative of Matthew

23. Brown, Driver, and Briggs, p. 694.
24. Hans Walter Wolff, *Hosea* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1974), p. 51.

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Archaeology and the Bible

Randall Price, World of the Bible Ministries (http://www.worldofthebible.com/Bible%20Studies/biblearch.pdf)

At the beginning of the Easter week Jesus rode a donkey down from the Mount of Olives toward the great rock-built walls of the city of Jerusalem. His journey that day had been long ago predicted by the prophet Zechariah who had told the Jewish People to expect their Messiah to come to them in this humble way (Zechariah 9:9). While crowds of palm-waving Jews rejoiced at His "triumphal entry," the religious establishment demanded that he silence these newfound disciples. But Jesus responded, "I tell you, if these become silent, the stones will cry out!" (Luke 19:40). Jesus' words perhaps referenced the huge stone blocks that surrounded Him at every turn in the Holy City. Today, even though disciples multiplied by millions still rejoice over Him, the stones have also added their voice. In fact, the very stones of which Jesus spoke today have been unearthed at the foot of the Temple Mount in Jerusalem. Fulfilling Jesus own prophecy that they would fall (Luke 19:43-44), they still cry out to our age that the triumph of that first Easter continues still. Such stones are part of the historic witness of archaeology, a science that has come to the service of Scripture at a time when other sciences have sought to subvert it.

We live in an exciting time! New discoveries are being unearthed throughout the world often faster than our newspapers can report them. They open a new window on the ancient world that permits us to view the stories of the Bible with an accuracy never known before. The first generation of Jewish-Christians who were bequeathed the Gospels no doubt had such a first-hand experience of the history and places they describe. Until the advent of archaeology, Christians were left to reconstruct the world of the Bible and the drama of the events of Easter as best they could. Masterpieces of religious art from previous centuries pictured the crucifixion, entombment and resurrection of Christ with the only reference point they had - their own world. Even if they included Oriental models, the look was still more that of seventeenth-century turbaned Turks rather than first-century Jews and Romans. While not detracting from the drama, and certainly with every good intention toward history, such scenes nevertheless portrayed an unrealistic image that was more faith than fact. Today, archaeology has restored much of the first-century world, enabling us to experience the reality of Easter in a way not available to previous centuries of Christians.

In the late 18th century, no one could have dreamed what wonders archaeology was to reveal. The world of the past was itself a dream, forgotten except for the Bible's parade of ancient names and places. However, the Bible stood as the only surviving testimony to itself. The reader was the blessed by its truths, yet often left baffled by the sites and subjects it recorded. Archaeology has reclaimed mankind's lost heritage, chasing away the spiders of time whose webs of ruin have hidden our past from us. It has resurrected the faded glory of forgotten eras so that future generations can approach their faith with greater facts than any other in history. In many cases it has also chased away skeptical views of the Bible introduced to our Christian culture by the invasion of biblical higher criticism over a century ago. No longer can the Bible be thought to have been the late product of fanciful Hebrew editors seeking to create a religious history for a race without origins. Rather, as Professor William Foxwell Albright, the renown Dean of American biblical archaeology professed decades ago: "Discovery after discovery has established the accuracy of innumerable details, and has brought increased recognition of the value of the Bible as a source of history." As a result, archaeology has been of special importance to those who seek to capture the original context of scripture. In this regard, Joseph Callaway once observed: "The real business of archaeology is to establish factual benchmarks in the world of the Bible to guide interpreters."

The Purposes of Archaeology

Archaeology has revealed the cities, the palaces, the temples, the houses of those who lived shoulder to shoulder with those whose names were inscribed in scripture. It makes possible for us what the apostle John once voiced to authenticity his message: "What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have beheld and our hands handled, concerning the Word of Life" (1 John 1:1). Tangible things assist faith in its growth toward God. Archaeology brings forth the tangible things of history so that faith can have a reasonable context in which to develop. It also keep faith in balance with facts, confirming the reality of the people and events of the Bible so that skeptics and saints alike might clearly perceive its spiritual message within an historical context. Many people wrongly assume that the purpose of archaeology is to "prove" the Bible. However, since the Bible describes itself as the "Word of God," it cannot be proved or disproved by archaeology anymore than God Himself is subject to the limited evidence of this world. The proper use of archaeology in relation to the Bible is to confirm, correct, clarify, and complement its theological message.

Confirming the Word of the Bible

According to Webster's English Dictionary one of the meanings of the word "confirm" is "to give new assurance of the validity" of something. Archaeology provides us new assurance from the stones to accompany the assurance we already have from the Spirit. For instance, a little more than 100 years ago higher critical scholars doubted the existence of the Hittites, a people mentioned 47 times in the Old Testament and among whose ranks were Ephron the Hittite, who sold Abraham his burial cave (Genesis 23:10-20), and Uriah the Hittite, the husband of Bathsheba, the mother of Solomon (2 Samuel 11). Then in 1876 the ruins of the Hittite empire was discovered at Boghaz-Koy with more than 10,000 clay tablets chronicling their history. Archaeology has produced the same confirmation of the historical sites of Nineveh, Babylon, and countless lost cities in Israel and Jordan. Such confirmation is constantly occurring with new archaeological excavations. Until recently there was no material evidence from the archaeological record to confirm the biblical account of the existence of a biblical King David. That changed in 1993-1994 when Professor Avraham Biran unearthed a monumental inscription in the northern Israelite city of Dan. The inscription, written by one of Israel's ancient enemies (so no Israelite can be accused of fabricating it) recorded the name of one of Judah's kings "of the house of David." These tell-tale words give new assurance of scripture's most famous warrior and psalmist, since if there was a "house of David" there had to be a David to have a house! In like manner, only a few years ago a startling confirmation of one of the biblical prophets was discovered. The Bible tells us that the Prophet Jeremiah, who stood against an ungodly empire in the last days of Judah's history, had an associate named Baruch who served as his scribe. The biblical book of Jeremiah, once burned by a rebellious king, was personally written by the hand of this Baruch. In excavations in the ancient City of David more than 50 clay seals were discovered, preserved by the fire that had destroyed the city according to Jeremiah's prophecy. One of the seals from this site, once used to seal an ancient papyrus document, contained the name of Jeremiah's scribe Baruch. More astonishing, on the upper left corner of the seal is the imprint of Baruch's own finger, made in the soft clay the day his letter was sealed and baked by the fire to a hardness that protected it against time. Here, then, is the very fingerprint of a man who wrote one of the books of the Bible and served at the side of one of Israel's great prophetic figures.

Correcting our Wording of the Bible

One of the first steps in the understanding of the scriptures is to discern the text as originally written by its authors. While it is unlikely that archaeologists will ever dig up one of the autographs (original texts of the Bible), the ancient copies that have come to us have been preserved and passed down to us in such a manner as to give us confidence that we have the

very "Word of God" in our hands. From the sands of Egypt to the caves of Qumran, archaeology has unearthed hundreds of copies of Old Testament books and thousands of copies of the New Testament books. In the first category are hundreds of Hebrew, Aramaic inscriptions which contain vocabulary familiar to the Old Testament. Our oldest copy of a biblical text comes from an inscription discovered only in 1979 by Israeli archaeologist Gabriel Barcay in a tomb in Jerusalem's Hinnom Valley. Among the more than 1,000 objects taken from the tomb were several tiny silver scrolls dating from before the Judean exile of 586 B.C. One contained the complete text of the Aaronic benediction in Numbers 6:24-26. This text showed scholars how well our later versions of the Bible preserved this important biblical blessing as well as forced a re-evaluation of the old higher critical theory that the authorship of most of the Pentateuch had only taken place after the Judeans return from exile. One of the greatest manuscript discoveries of all time has been the fabulous Dead Sea Scrolls. Included in this collection of 1,100 documents are 233 whole or fragmentary copies of every book of the Old Testament (except the book of Esther), most written at least a hundred years before the birth of Christ. Yet, even greater than our discovery of these Old Testament documents are those for the New Testament. Some 14,000 whole or partial copies are now available to scholars. To this we can add the sensational discoveries of ancient manuscripts in Nag Hammadi which contain Gnostic gospels and texts as well as thousands of newly recovered texts long lost in Saint Catherine's monastery at the foot of traditional Mt. Sinai. These ancient manuscripts provide the basis for restoring the precise form, grammar, and syntax of Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek words of the Bible, as well as their exact meaning in the time in which they were written. Such archaeological literary treasures have given us a far greater collection of biblical manuscripts than that possessed by the Church in previous centuries and have enabled scholars to make better translations from the ancient languages, thus improving our own English language versions of the Bible.

Clarifying the World of the Bible

Since the "Word" was announced to people in this world, at particular places and times, the historical, cultural, and religious context of those addressed must be understood. However, we in the United States are 8,000 miles and some 4,000 years removed from such times and places. Therefore, the better we are able to understand the original meaning of the message, as first communicated in the ancient world of the Bible, the better we will be able to apply its timeless truths to our lives in the modern world. Professor Amihai Mazar, director of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem's Institute of Archaeology explains the importance of this when he says: "archaeology is our only source of information that comes directly from the biblical period itself ... a whole picture of daily life from this period... which is the only ... evidence that we have from the biblical period except the Bible itself ... We can now imagine the size and type of settlements people lived in, what type of town plan there was, what kind of vessels they used in every day life, what kind of enemies they had and what kind of weapons they used against these enemies - everything related to the material aspect of life in the Old Testament period can be described by archeological finds from this particular period." All of these archaeological details assists us in our reconstructing this original context of the Bible so that the theological truth it contains will not be misinterpreted and misapplied. The monumental excavations in Egypt, Mesopotamia, and Israel have now revealed much of the shape and substance of these long buried empires. Based on paintings from Egyptian tombs and reliefs on their temples we know what the biblical patriarchs may have looked like as well as many of the foreign armies that attacked both Egypt and ancient Israel throughout its history. We even have in some instances stone "snapshots" of actual biblical personalities. From the high cliffs of Behistun we have the portrait of the Persian monarch Darius the Great, from an Assyrian obelisk a picture of the Judean King Jehu, and from Israel a painted image of an enthroned King Hezekiah. Such archaeological trivia has made possible the wonderfully accurate recreations of these ancient civilizations in television documentaries and feature films.

Complementing the Witness of the Bible

The 66 books of the Bible were written on at least five continents over 4,000 years of history by prophets, poets and peasants as well as by shepherds and statesmen. While a vast and diverse witness, the scriptures only mention certain people and record specific events that were necessary to their larger theological purpose. As a consequence, much of significance is deliberately excluded that truths of a greater importance might be included. However, such necessary deletions cause some to question the historical accuracy of the biblical authors. Archaeology through its revelation of the context and culture of the lands and civilizations in which the biblical drama was enacted, adds a complementary witness as fills out the outline drawn by the biblical authors verifying that the particulars they present they faithful to the facts. For example, although the Israelite King Omri who built up Samaria and made it the capital of the Northern Kingdom, was one of the most important rulers of his time (885-874 B.C.), the biblical text gives him only a passing reference (1 Kings 16:21-28). This was most likely because he was one of the most wicked of the Israelite kings and his prideful accomplishments did not deserve recognition. Archaeology complements the biblical notice of King Omri by providing the historical background for his extra-biblical exploits from the recovered records of his foreign foes. It reveals that the biblical authors are correct in their assessment of his character and command. This complementary witness has been especially helpful in understanding the time of Jesus and the correctness and context of His commentary on and extensive dialogues with the various Jewish religious sects. The problem for interpreters until recent times was that while such groups as the Pharisees and Sadducees were well known from the Gospels, no contemporary witness to them was known to have been preserved. However, when the Dead Sea Scrolls were discovered and studied it was found that they were filled with numerous descriptions and accounts of these Jewish sects, with whom the Community that hid the scrolls also had controversy. Students of the Gospels now have the advantage of reading complementary commentary on these groups from before the birth of Christ, yet employing the similar strong statements reminiscent of Jesus. In this light, archaeology has also given us countless complementary texts, such as accounts of Creation and Flood which parallel the scriptural stories, demonstrating the trustworthiness of Bible. These not only reveal the Bible's historical character, but emphasize its uniqueness when compared with other ancient Near Eastern documents. In this regard the discoveries of the religious literatures of the Sumerians, Egyptians, Hittites, Assyrians, Babylonians and Canaanites have all highlighted the originality and theological distinctiveness of the Bible.

Archaeology and Easter

When we come to the life-changing message of Easter, with its account of the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus, archaeology again confirms that even though miracles are involved they are being enacted in the arena of actual history. This is important for Christians on two counts. First, our stories of the season, preached with passion in Easter services and performed with pageantry in Easter productions, may connote an air of unreality. As with any truth that has become tradition we can lose the sense of its original setting in this world and feel it belongs to some other. Such a loss of connection with the real world context of Christianity - and especially of the defining facts of our faith - imperils our practice of the real significance of the season, namely our personal salvation provided at the cross and of resurrection life and the future hope of our own bodily resurrection. Archaeology transforms our flannelgraph conceptions of Jesus in pressed linen walking on carpet grass and it replaces it with a real figure from a real world that calls for real faith. As archaeology rightly informs our understanding of the events of Easter, it does not diminish the miracle of the message but increases our faith in its historical fulfillment.

A second concern for archaeology's importance to Easter grows out the first and relates to the problem of the present postmodern concept of Christianity as an experience transcending history. This is well expressed by Marcus Borg, Oregon State University professor and Chairman of the Jesus Seminar: "The truth of Easter does not depend on whether there really was an empty tomb ... It is because Jesus is known as a living reality that we take Easter stories seriously, not the other way around. And taking them seriously need not mean taking them literally." However, archaeological excavations (see sidebars) have given sufficient evidence that there is every reason to take the Easter stories both seriously and literally.

Touching the Tomb of Jesus

The most serious events of the Easter story are centered around the burial and resurrection of Jesus. Archaeology has revealed many first-century Judean tombs which correspond in type to the Gospels' description of the tomb of Jesus. However, is it possible to identify the actual tomb in Jerusalem recorded in these accounts? Christian tourists most favor the Protestant site known as "the Garden Tomb" discovered in 1883 by the British officer Charles Gordon. Here in a serene setting outside the present -day walls of Jerusalem can be found a weathered tomb situated next to a deeply eroded limestone hill which Gordon identified as "Skull Hill" (now known as "Gordon's Calvary"). However, archaeological examination of the site by Jerusalem archaeologists Gabriel Barkay and Amos Kloner have shown that the Garden Tomb is part of a system of Iron Age II type tombs in the area all dating from the First Temple period (8th-7th centuries B.C.). The most prominent of these tombs are located next door to the Garden Tomb on the property of the French School of Archaeology, the École Biblique. Since the New Testament says that Jesus was buried in "a new tomb, in which no one had yet been laid" (John 19:41), the Garden Tomb, already some 800 years in the time of Jesus, cannot meet the Gospel's explicit criteria.

However, the traditional site of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, which has a history going back at least to the fourth century A.D., based on its description in Byzantine sources and the existence of columns still in use today from the church of Constantine the Great, has significant archaeological support. Although today it is located within the present walls of the Old City, and the Gospels specify that Jesus was crucified "outside the walls" (John 19:20; Hebrews 13:11-12), the modern walls do not follow the ancient course. This was proven in the late 1960's when British archaeologist Kathleen Kenyon discovered that the wall now enclosing the Church of the Holy Sepulchre was a "Second Wall" constructed after the time of Jesus (about A.D. 41). Therefore, when Jesus was crucified the site would have been outside the earlier "First Wall." Furthermore, in 1976 Israeli archaeologist Magen Broshi uncovered a portion of the original Herodian wall in the northeast section of the church. This revealed that the area upon which the church is built was just outside the western wall of the city on the line of the First Wall. In addition, other archaeologists have discovered that a "Garden Gate" was on this wall, a fact which agrees with the Gospel's mention of a garden in this area. Examination of the tombs in the vicinity of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre confirm that they are from the late Second Temple period (first century A.D.), the very time in which Jesus would have lived. The type of tomb also matches the precise type of tomb in which Jesus was laid. In the first century two types of tombs were in use. One was the more common kokim tomb which employed long narrow niches cut into the chamber of the burial cave walls at right angles. The other known as thearcosolia tomb had shallow benches cut parallel to the wall of the chamber with an arch-shaped top over the recess. These type of tombs were reserved for those of wealth and high rank. This seems to be the type of tomb in which Jesus was laid because Jesus tomb was said to be a wealthy man's tomb (Matthew 27:57; cf. Isaiah 53:9), the body could be seen by the disciples as laid out (something only possible with a bench cut tomb), John 20:5, 11, and the angels were seen sitting at both His head and feet (John 20:12). The "Tomb of Jesus" at the

traditional site, though deformed by centuries of devoted pilgrims, is clearly composed of an antechamber and a rock-cut arcosolium.

The Church of the Holy Sepulchre also encloses a portion of a hill thought to be the true site of Calvary. Excavations to expose more of this rock have revealed that it was a rejected portion of a pre-exilic white stone quarry, as evidenced by Iron Age II pottery at the site. In this light, if this is the actual site it has been suggested that Peter's citation of Psalm 118:22: "The stone which the builders rejected ..." may have a double meaning (see Acts 4:11; 1 Peter 2:7). By the first century B.C. this rejected quarry had made the transition from a refuse dump to a burial site. It also gives evidence that it was located near a public road in Jesus' time, another factor which helps to qualify it as the authentic site since the Gospels record that those passing by the place where Jesus' cross was situated were able to mock Him (see Matthew 27:39).The nature of the rock site fits both the Jewish and Roman requirements as an execution site and it may be because of its association with a place of death that it was called in Jesus' time the "place of the skull." This rock upon which the Church was built can still be seen in part today through a section preserved for viewing which bears evidence of earthquake activity, a fact which accords with the Gospel story (Matthew 27:51).

Excavations conducted in the late 1970's at the site revealed further evidence for this being the place where the original Easter drama was performed. In the lower sections of the Church were discovered the foundations of the Roman emperor Hadrian's "Forum," in which his Temple of Aphrodite had been erected around A.D.135. Hadrian followed Roman custom in building pagan temples and shrines to supercede earlier religious structures. This was done at the site of the Jewish Temple, located not far from the Holy Sepulchre Church, and the fourth century church historian and Bishop of Caesarea Eseubius confirms that it was also done in this case: "Hadrian built a huge rectangular platform over this quarry, concealing the holy cave beneath this massive mound." If the Church of the Holy Sepulchre is the actual site venerated by Christians as the tomb of Jesus, it would explain this location for the Roman building.

Final Thoughts

When the disciples first came to the tomb on that first Easter morning, the Gospels record: "the body of Jesus they did not find." In the same manner down through the ages skeptics and critics have also come, whether literally or figuratively, and the verdict of history has remained the same as in ancient times - "His body they did not find." In the final analysis, archaeology may bring us to the tomb, but only faith - informed by the facts - can bring us to Christ. Yet, because archaeology has shown us that the facts that support faith are accurate - an identifiable tomb attesting to literal events - our faith in the Christ of history does depend upon an historically empty tomb for its reality. Archaeology has revealed the persons (Caiaphas, Pilate) and events (crucifixion, entombment) which make up the story of Easter. The resurrection is interwoven with these facts so as to command the same consideration. And when considered along with the historical, social and psychological facts of the first century that surround the claim that Christ arose, the stones still cry out concerning Him Who was and is and is to come!

Side Bar #1: Caiaphas - No Bones of Contention

One of the prominent figures in the Easter story is the Jewish High Priest Caiaphas. From A.D. 18-36 he served as the leader of the Sandhedrin, the supreme Jewish counsel responsible for legal affairs in Jesus' day. It was Caiaphas who prophesied that Jesus would die for the Nation and set in motion the plan to kill Him (John 11:49-53; 18:14). And it was Caiaphas who presided over the late night trial at which Jesus confessed Himself to be the Messiah and was subsequently condemned (Matthew 26:57-68). It was also in the courtyard of Caiaphus' house that Peter waited for word about Jesus, but instead betrayed Him three times as the cock crowed (Matthew 26:69-75). Today, thanks to archaeology, almost 2,000 after his death,

Caiaphus has made a reappearance in Jerusalem. His physical remains were discovered accidentally in November of 1990 by construction workers who were beginning construction for a new park in Jerusalem's Peace Forest just south of the Temple Mount. As the work crew was digging, the ground suddenly collapsed exposing a first-century burial chamber with 12 limestone ossuaries (burial boxes). One exquisitely ornate ossuary, decorated with incised rosettes, obviously belonged to a wealthy or high-ranking patron who could afford such a box. On this box, however, was also an inscription. It read in two places: Qafa and Yehosef bar Qayafa ("Caiaphas," "Joseph, son of Caiaphas"). The New Testament refers to him only as Caiaphas, but the first-century Jewish historian Flavius Josephus gives his full name as "Joseph who was called Caiaphas of the high priesthood." Inside were the bones of six different people, including those of a 60-year old man. At the time of the discovery Steven Feldman, associate editor of the Biblical Archaeology Review observed: "the find should be particularly exciting to some believing Christians because to them it may bolster the Bible's accuracy ..." Indeed it does.

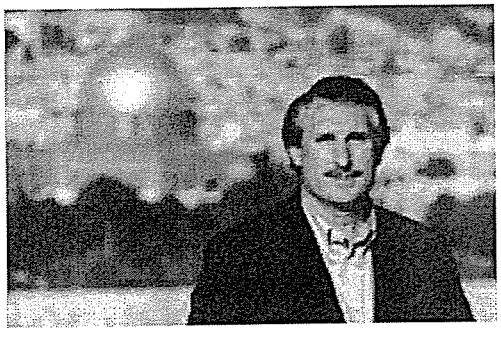
Side Bar #2: Pontius Pilate - Evidence that Demands a Verdict

During the Easter Passion perhaps no person is more memorable than the troubled figure of Pontius Pilate who uttered the immortal words "What is truth?" For ten years from A.D. 26-36 Pilate was the Roman officer in charge of Judea and therefore destined to confront Jesus of Nazareth. That day arrived when the High Priest Caiaphas turned Jesus over to Roman authority for official trial and punishment. Pilate has the distinction of being the only person during Jesus' trials that He chose to talk with. He refused to answer the Judean king Herod Antipas and only under oath did so for Caiaphas. Pilate alone was given the much sought explanation for Jesus' messianic claims, namely that He was a King sent from beyond this world to bring truth to the world (John 18:36-37). Based on his interrogation of Jesus, Pilate found insufficient evidence for a verdict, and would have apparently released Jesus had it not been for the political pressure brought by the Jewish Sandhedrin (John 19:12-15). Perhaps it was for this reason that Pilate, defying the Sandhedrin's protest, placed a placard (known as a titulus) in public display above Jesus on the cross which read in Hebrew, Latin and Greek: "Jesus the Nazarene, the King of the Jews" (John 19:19-22). Today, Pilate has spoken again to bring evidence to our age that demands an historical verdict to the Gospel's account. From Pilate's official residence at the Mediterranean seaboard city of Caesarea Maritima in excavations at Caesarea's Roman theater came a stone plaque bearing the name of Pilate. The two-foot by three-foot slab, now known as the Pilate Inscription, was found re-used as a building block in a fourth century remodeling project, but it was an authentic first-century monument, apparently written to commemorate Pilate's erection and dedication of a Tiberium, a temple for the worship of Tiberias Caesar, the Roman emperor during Pilate's term over Judea. The Latin inscription of four lines gives his title as "Pontius Pilate, Prefect of Judea," a title very similar to that used of him in the Gospels (see Luke 3:1). This archaeological evidence of Pilate again testifies to the accuracy of the Gospel writers. Their understanding of such official terms indicate they lived during the time of their use and not a century or two thereafter when such usage would have been forgotten.

Side Bar #3: A Witness of Crucifixion

One of the central events of the Easter story is Jesus' death by Roman crucifixion. When Jesus and the two criminals were crucified it was on both the afternoon of the greatest festival in Judaism and the Sabbath. Therefore, the Jewish rulers had demanded a quick crucifixion so as to not desecrate the approaching holy day (John 19:31-32). Such archaeological details reveal that the Gospel writers had been historical eyewitness of the crucifixion, just as they said (John 19:35). Nevertheless, because no material evidence of any crucified victim had ever been uncovered in the holy land skeptics and scholars dismissed the Gospels accounts as either imagined or inaccurate. They argued that nails could not have been used to fasten a crucified

victim to a cross, because the anatomy of hands and feet could not support them. They were rather bound by ropes. This directly contracted Jesus' own testimony when after His resurrection He showed His crucified body to His disciples and said "See My hands and My feet ..." (Luke 24:39). In like manner, these same critics contended that Jesus' body, as the body of most criminals and insurrectionists, would not have received a proper burial, but instead would have been dumped into a common grave set aside for the corpses of those defiled by crucifixion. Therefore, the narrative concerning Jesus' burial in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea (Luke 23:51-56), from which He was resurrected, was nothing more than a fictitious tale. However, archaeology has since produced a witness to the contrary. In 1968 the remains of a crucified man from Giv'at ha-Mivtar, a northern suburb of Jerusalem, was discovered in an ossuary from near the time of Jesus. The name of the man, from an Aramaic inscription on the ossuary, was Yohanan ben Ha'galgol, and from an analysis of his skeletal remains he was in his thirties, approximately the same age as Jesus at the time of His crucifixion. His ankle bone was still pierced with a 7 inch-long crucifixion nail and attached to a piece of wood from a cross. Apparently the nail had hit a knot in the olive wood patibulum (the upright section of a cross) and become so lodged that the victim could not be removed without retaining both the nail and a fragment of the cross. In addition, according to one anthropological analyst, there were marks of nails also on the wrist bones and of a board had been used to support the feet. This find reveals afresh the horrors of the Roman punishment as recorded in the Gospels. They indicate that the position the body assumed on the cross was with the legs nailed on either side of the upright stake. Therefore, rather than the body being straight, it was pushed up and twisted, causing terribly painful muscle spasms and eventually death by the excruciating process of asphyxiation. The discovery refutes the theory that crucified victims were simply tied to the cross. The fact that the bones of Yohanan were found in secondary burial within a tomb also disproves the second hypothesis, for this crucified victim, like Jesus, had received a proper Jewish burial.



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great Mediterranean coastal route. They were certain to encounter Philistines if they continued on that route, however, so Yahweh led them south, apparently after they crossed the Reed Sea.

The Route of the Exodus

The precise point at which Israel crossed the Reed Sea cannot now be determined, but clearly it was not at the Red Sea, the modern-day Gulf of Suez. That was too far south to fit the biblical itinerary. Moreover, the Hebrew term to describe the water crossed, *yam sûp* ("reed sea"), is totally inappropriate to the Red Sea. The translation "Red Sea" of many English versions is based on the Septuagint, which evidently assumed that the Sea of Reeds was the ancient name of the Red Sea.[21] The Mosaic record states that Israel found itself at a point near Pi Hahiroth (site unknown), between Migdol (unknown) and the sea. More specifically, they were "directly opposite Baal Zephon" (Exod. 14:2), a place identified with Tell Dafanneh, just west of Lake Menzaleh, a southern bay of the Mediterranean Sea.[22] The evidence available today suggests that this is the Sea of Reeds through which Israel passed. Though some dredging has been done there in the course of building and maintaining the Suez Canal, Lake Menzaleh was always deep enough to preclude crossing on foot under any normal circumstances. The crossing of Israel, which immediately preceded the drowning of the Egyptian chariotry, cannot be explained as a wading through a swamp. It required a mighty act of God, an act so significant in both scope and meaning that forever after in Israel's history it was the paradigm against which all of his redemptive and saving work was measured. If there was no actual miracle of the proportions described, all subsequent reference to the exodus as the archetype of the sovereign power and salvific grace of God is hollow and empty.[23]

The Date of the Exodus

Before the wilderness journey is recounted, it is appropriate that the vexing but crucially important question of the date of the exodus

21. For the view that *yam sûp* means "distant sea" or "sea of extinction"—thus referring to the Red Sea in a mythopoeic way—see Bernard F. Batto, "The Reed Sea: *Requiescat in Pace*," *JBL* 102 (1983): 27–35.

22. Tell Dafannch may be the same place as Tahpanhes (Jer. 2:16; 43:7–8; 44:1). See *Oxford Bible Atlas*, ed. Herbert G. May, 2d ed. (London: Oxford University Press, 1974), p. 58. The third edition (1984) does not identify Baal Zephon with Tell Dafanneh, however.

23. For an example of an approach which attempts to maintain a historical core for the event while denying the details recounted in the biblical text, see Brevard S. Childs, "A Traditio-Historical Study of the Reed Sea Tradition," *VT* 20 (1970): 406–18.

be examined. The question is crucial not only because the exodus is itself a central historical and theological event, but also because our interpretation of both antecedent and subsequent history will be greatly affected by the date we assign to the exodus.

Internal Biblical Evidence

The year 1446 has already been proposed as the date of the exodus. On this basis proceeded our discussion of the Hyksos and New Kingdom periods as well as the setting of the Joseph narratives. Since the integrity of what has been said up to this point is dependent on an early date rather than the later one to which most scholarship subscribes, it is vital that a careful case be made for the early date.

There are two principal biblical data which directly touch on the problem. The first is the statement of 1 Kings 6:1 that the exodus preceded the founding of Solomon's temple by 480 years. Granting for now that Solomon began to build in 966,[24] we calculate that the exodus took place in 1446. But for a variety of reasons this date is almost universally rejected in favor of a date sometime in the thirteenth century, generally about 1260.[25] To accommodate this desire for a later date, the figure 480 is not taken at face value, but is thought to be a cryptic way of describing twelve generations (forty years, it is said, being an ideal generation). Since, however, an actual generation is closer to twenty-five years, the time between the exodus and the initial work on the temple is held to be really 300 (25×12) years, and so the exodus is held to have occurred in about 1266.[26] If it could be demonstrated that ancient Israelite (or any other) chronological computation took this approach and that 1 Kings 6:1 is an example of the application of such a method, the case would appear to be settled.[27] Unfortunately there is no proof. The inescapable conclusion is that to

24. Edwin R. Thiele, *The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965), p. 28; see also pp. 29, 55. We are accepting as our basic starting point Thiele's authoritative reconstruction of the chronology of the divided monarchy.

25. John Bright, *A History of Israel*, 3d ed. (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1981), pp. 123–24.

26. Ibid., p. 123; John Gray, *I & II Kings* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1970), pp. 159–60.

27. Kenneth A. Kitchen compares the 480-year datum to the misleading totals which ancient Near Eastern scribes arrived at by excerpting selected figures from fuller records. The 480 years, then, would be an aggregate total which, in actuality, should be only about 300 years. Unfortunately, Kitchen provides no solid evidence that such a practice is at work in 1 Kings 6:1 (*Ancient Orient and Old Testament* [London: Tyndale, 1966], pp. 74–75).

factor 480 in such a way as to reduce it to 300 and thus satisfy subjective requirements is an example of special pleading unworthy of any historian or Bible scholar. Surely the burden of proof is on the critic who would view the biblical historian's chronological information in any but a literal way.

The second unambiguous support for the 1446 date appears in a communication of Jephthah the judge to his Ammonite enemies. He argues that they have no grounds for their hostility against Israel since for the three hundred years following Israel's defeat of Sihon the Ammonites have never contested Israel's rights to the Transjordan. Even a casual reading of this lengthy memorandum (Judg. 11:15–27) makes it clear that Jephthah is referring to that period of Israel's history just prior to the conquest, which began forty years after the exodus. Jephthah's defeat of the Ammonites occurred at the end of the twelfth century (i.e., ca. 1100 B.C.), a date which is widely acknowledged. So, then, he is referring to events which came to pass around 1400 B.C.

It is obvious that the figure three hundred cannot be factored into ideal generations with satisfying results (i.e., 300 is not exactly divisible by 40), so proponents of a late date for the exodus are forced to other measures. Typically they postulate a divided conquest, maintaining that Jephthah is referring not to the Israelite conquest as a twelve-tribe confederation, but to an earlier, preexodus occupation of the Transjordan by a tribe or tribes which only later associated themselves with those few tribes of Israel which had an exodus tradition.[28] The conquest of the Transjordan, by this re-creation of Old Testament history, preceded the conquest of Canaan by well over a century. All this despite the fact that the message of Jephthah unequivocally connects the conquerors of Sihon with the Israel that came out of Egypt (Judg. 11:13, 16). Again, only a drastic resort can explain away the self-evident case for 1446 as the date of the exodus.

In addition to specific chronological data, the Old Testament provides sufficient description of the preexodus and exodus milieus as to make an early date most acceptable. It has already been shown that the account of Moses best suits the dates and circumstances of Dynasty 18 of Egypt. To the contrary, the late date, which is always associated with Rameses II, is impossible if any credibility at all be granted to the biblical witness. Moses did not return to Egypt from Midian until the pharaoh who had sought to slay him was dead. Moses' return was delayed for nearly forty years, so the king in question must be one who reigned at least that long. In Dynasty 19 only Rameses II, who reigned from 1304 to 1236, satisfies that requirement, but he

28. T. J. Meek, *Hebrew Origins* (New York: Harper and Row, 1960), pp. 30–31, 34–35.

cannot be the pharaoh of the exodus since the point precisely is that that particular pharaoh followed one who had a lengthy tenure.

The late date requires Merneptah (1236–1223) to be the ruler during the humiliation of the exodus. But even if it occurred in his first year, a forty-year sojourn in the wilderness would mean the conquest began in 1196. The judges of Israel would then have to be compressed into the period between the beginning of their administration (ca. forty years after the beginning of the conquest or 1156) and the death of Samson, the last judge (except for Samuel, who lived under the monarchy as well), in about 1084. No manipulation of the evidence can squeeze the obviously long period of the judges into seventy or even one hundred years. Besides, Merneptah himself led a campaign into upper Canaan in his fifth year (1231) in the course of which he claims to have met and defeated Israel.[29] It is obviously impossible for Israel in the course of but five years to have escaped Egypt, spent time at Mount Sinai, wandered in the wilderness, conquered Sihon and Og, and entered and established herself in Canaan! Advocates of the late date must disregard all normal and accepted historiographical method and rearrange and reinterpret the only available documentation—the Old Testament itself—if their case is to be made.[30]

The Evidence for a Late Date

Lack of sedentary settlement of Transjordan

There are three major arguments advanced in support of the late date for the exodus, two of which are substantial and the third of dubious value even to those scholars who seek to maintain it. This argument will be considered first. For many years Nelson Glueck, the eminent explorer and archaeologist, argued on the basis of pottery finds on the surface and on the slopes of mounds throughout the Transjordan and the Negev that these areas had no sedentary populations between 1900 and 1300 B.C.[31] Practically all Old Testament authorities accepted this judgment and therefore concluded that references to settled peoples encountered by Moses and Joshua necessitated a date after 1300 for the wilderness journeys. It follows that the exodus also could not have been much earlier than that date. Glueck's surface

29. For the text of the so-called Israel stela, see Pritchard, *Ancient Near Eastern Texts*, pp. 376–78.

30. This is precisely what is done by critical scholars. For a detailed example of this approach see H. H. Rowley, *From Joseph to Joshua* (London: Oxford University Press, 1950), esp. pp. 129–44.

31. Nelson Glueck, "Explorations in Eastern Palestine and the Negev," *BASOR* 55 (1934): 3–21; *BASOR* 86 (1942): 14–24.

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explorations have been followed up by scientific excavation of many of the allegedly late sites with the findings that many of them were settled throughout the Late Bronze Age and even earlier.[32] Some of the very places integral to the Moses-Joshua stories were asserting themselves powerfully in 1400.

Israelite construction of the city of Rameses

A second basis for the late date is found in the biblical text itself. Exodus 1:11 points out that the Israelites, when they were reduced to slavery, constructed certain cities for Pharaoh, including Pithom and Rameses (or Raamses). These cities were originally known as Pi-Atum and Per-Ramesse respectively, and in any case were not built but rebuilt by the Israelites.[33] The contention that this verse is relevant to the date of the exodus rests on the assumption that the city Rameses was named for Rameses II, the famous king of Dynasty 19. That he did build or rebuild a city by this name (Per-Ramesse) and that he did so with the use of 'apiru slave labor may be conceded (though the papyrus to which appeal is always made does not expressly make this assertion).[34] It is nonetheless tenuous to try to prove by this that the city of Exodus 1:11 is the same as the Per-Ramesse of Rameses II or that the 'apiru are the Israelites. William Albright showed years ago that the Ramessides did not originate in Dynasty 19 and that, in fact, they could be traced back to Hyksos ancestry.[35] Could it not be that the Israelites rebuilt a city called Rameses long before the kingship of Rameses II?

It has recently been proposed by certain conservative scholars that Exodus 1:11 is an anachronism. That is, the Israelites rebuilt a city known at the time perhaps as Tanis, and sometime later an inspired editor

32. John J. Bimson, *Redating the Exodus and Conquest* (Sheffield: JSOT, 1978), pp. 67–74; James R. Kautz, "Tracking the Ancient Moabites," *BA* 44 (1981): 27–35; Gerald L. Mattingly, "The Exodus-Conquest and the Archaeology of Transjordan: New Light on an Old Problem," *GTJ* 4 (1983): 245–62.

33. See E. P. Uphill, "Pithom and Raamses: Their Location and Significance," *JNES* 27 (1968): 291–316; *JNES* 28 (1969): 15–39.

34. For the text (Leiden 348) see Moshe Greenberg, *The Hab/piru* (New Haven: American Oriental Society, 1955), p. 56, no. 162.

35. William F. Albright, *From the Stone Age to Christianity* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1957), pp. 223–24. Gleason L. Archer, Jr., cites a wall painting of the period of Amenhotep III (1417–1379) in which the name of Ramose, the famous vizier, appears. As Archer points out, this shows that names like Rameses antedate Dynasty 19 and that the city name of Exodus 1:11 need not be dated as late as Rameses II ("An Eighteenth-Dynasty Rameses," *JETS* 17 [1974]: 49–50). Archer is incorrect in saying that this painting has not been cited in the literature, however, for it appears in Hayes, "Internal Affairs," in *CAH* 2.1, pp. 342, 405.

changed the name in the text to Rameses since the original name was no longer used and was therefore meaningless to later readers.[36] While this is a distinct possibility and other examples may be cited, it seems unnecessary if the name *Rameses* can be shown (and it can) to have been in use before the early date proposed for the exodus.

Another factor strangely overlooked by those who maintain that the city Rameses was named after Rameses II is the very evident passing of much time between the building of the cities and the exodus itself. The passage says that the Israelites were forced to work on the project, but that the more the Egyptians mistreated them, the more they multiplied and filled the land. There is clearly the impression of generation following generation. Furthermore, when all else failed, the pharaoh initiated his policy of infanticide, an event which must be dated at the time of Moses' birth. Unless one is prepared to disregard the biblical information concerning Moses' age at the time of the exodus, another eighty years passed before the exodus. If Rameses II was the pharaoh of the exodus and the city of Rameses was named for him, his reign included the years of construction, the years between the building of the cities and the infanticide decree, and the first eighty years of Moses' life. A total of well over one hundred years is clearly in view. Even if Moses had been only forty at the time of the exodus, Rameses' reign of sixty-eight years would still be inadequate. But, of course, no biblical tradition allows Moses to have been that young at that time. If the Old Testament witness has any credibility at all, then, the city Rameses cannot possibly have been named for Rameses II previous to the exodus.

Evidence of thirteenth-century conquest

The third and by far most commonly adduced argument in support of a thirteenth-century date for the exodus is archaeological evidence of a massive and widespread devastation of the cities and towns of central Canaan during that period. Since there appears to be incontrovertible attestation of such destruction and since, so the argument goes, the only known historical event anywhere near that time which could account for it is the Israelite conquest, the conclusion is drawn

36. So, for example, Charles F. Aling, "The Biblical City of Ramses," *JETS* 25 (1982): 136–37. Aling himself points out, however, that the name *Ramses* or a variant is attested as early as Dynasty 12 (p. 133). To assume that the name in Exodus 1:11 must point to Rameses II is extremely gratuitous, though admittedly the city most likely was named after some royal person of that name. The assumption of an anachronism here requires one also in Genesis 47:11. There Jacob and his family are allotted "the district of Rameses" as their dwelling-place. A theory which entails a double updating seems somewhat tenuous.

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that the conquest was in fact the cause of the destruction and that the exodus therefore must have been only slightly earlier.[37]

There are major problems with this interpretation of the archaeological data, however. First of all, there is not a scrap of extrabiblical inscriptional evidence from any Canaanite sites of the mid-thirteenth century, to say nothing of any which might identify the invaders. The alleged signs of cultural transition are greatly debated and in any case do not and cannot identify the new elements as Israelite.[38] One should note, in fact, that the only extant texts which describe political upheaval and military conflicts even remotely similar to the biblical account of the conquest are the Tell el-Amarna Letters. These relate in a graphic eyewitness manner the intercity strife of the Canaanite states and also refer repeatedly to the 'apiru who take different sides at different times.[39] The era described by these letters to the Egyptian pharaohs Amenhotep III and Amenhotep IV (Ikhnaton) is approximately 1380 to 1358, precisely the time of the traditional date of the conquest! Though one should not hastily equate 'apiru with Hebrew, the case is persuasive enough that some advocates of a late date for the exodus suggest that the Amarna Letters reflect an early conquest by certain tribes, perhaps the so-called Joseph tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh, in approximately 1375, and that the conquest by the exodus tribes occurred more than a century later.[40] Requiring Joshua to antedate Moses by a century or more, a view that obviously disregards strong and consistent biblical tradition, this reconstruction fails to make any kind of a convincing case as it tries to accommodate both archaeological data and extrabiblical inscriptional evidence to the biblical record.

This raises the question of the meaning of the thirteenth-century destruction layers and the lack of such evidence from the early fourteenth century.[41] We will begin with the latter. First, though all scholars agree that the Amarna Letters are genuine and present a realistic view of the tumultuous conditions in Canaan in the early fourteenth century, they concede that all this civil war and mistreatment at the hands of the 'apiru and others have left few visible marks of invasion

37. This is the view of liberal and conservative scholars alike. See, for example, Harry T. Frank, *Bible, Archaeology, and Faith* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1971), p. 95; Kitchen, *Ancient Orient*, pp. 61–69; Roland K. Harrison, *Old Testament Times* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970), pp. 175–76.

38. Kathleen Kenyon, *Archaeology in the Holy Land* (New York: Praeger, 1960), pp. 208–10.

39. For the most important letters see Pritchard, *Ancient Near Eastern Texts*, pp. 483–90.

40. Meek, *Hebrew Origins*, pp. 23–25. Meek dates the exodus and conquest as late as 1200 B.C.

41. For the whole problem see Eugene H. Merrill, "Palestinian Archaeology and

or conquest which are susceptible to archaeological research.[42] Is it not possible, then, that the Israelite conquest also is unattested archaeologically? Second, and far more important, there is no archaeological sign of an early-fourteenth-century conquest precisely because the Canaanite cities and towns, with few exceptions, were spared material destruction as a matter of policy initiated by Moses and implemented by Joshua. In other words, signs of major devastation in the period from 1400 to 1375 would be an acute embarrassment to the traditional view because the biblical witness is univocal that Israel was commanded to annihilate the Canaanite populations, but to spare the cities and towns in which they lived. And the record explicitly testifies that this mandate was faithfully carried out. The only exceptions were Jericho, Ai, and Hazor. Jericho has so suffered the ravages of weathering and unscientific excavation that scholars are completely divided as to the chronology involved, a fact which tends to cause one to discount the site as having any relevance to the debate at all.[43] The very location of Ai is in question, and until that can be established the date of its destruction is a moot point.[44] As for Hazor, Yigael Yadin, excavator and principal publisher of the site, at first argued that it suffered a terrible conflagration around 1400—a calamity he associated with the conquest—but he later lowered the date to the thirteenth century.[45] Regardless of what may have prompted his reevaluation, many scholars are convinced that his original date must be accepted.[46]

The reason fourteenth-century conquests lack archaeological con-

42. Kenyon, *Archaeology*, pp. 209–12; George E. Mendenhall, "The Hebrew Conquest of Palestine," *BA* 25 (1962): 72–73. Shemuel Ahituv cites evidence of destruction at Egyptian hands but gives no examples from interior Canaan later than Thutmose III (1504–1450) and earlier than Seti I (1318–1304). Moreover, not one city or town conquered by Joshua is cited by Ahituv as having been destroyed by either internal 'apiru attack or Egyptian campaigning! Thus the Canaanite hill country remained virtually unscathed in the Amarna period, the very period of the biblical conquest ("Economic Factors in the Egyptian Conquest of Canaan," *IEJ* 28 [1978]: 93–96, 104–5). Thutmose IV, who was pharaoh at the time of the wilderness wandering (1425–1417), made only one campaign to Canaan, in which he took Gezer; and neither Amenhotep III (1417–1379) nor Amenhotep IV (1379–1362)—the rulers during the conquest era—made a single foray into Canaan. See James M. Weinstein, "The Egyptian Empire in Palestine: A Reassessment," *BASOR* 241 (1981): 13–16. Michael W. Several goes as far as to argue that the Amarna age was a time of unparalleled peace, a condition he attributes to solid Egyptian control ("Reconsidering the Egyptian Empire in Palestine During the Amarna Period," *PEQ* 104 [1972]: 128–29). The Amarna Letters attest anything but peace, however.

43. Roger Moorey, *Excavation in Palestine* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983), pp. 116–17.

44. Bimson, *Redating*, pp. 215–25.

45. Yigael Yadin, "The Rise and Fall of Hazor," in *Archaeological Discoveries in the Holy Land*, Archaeological Institute of America (New York: Crowell, 1967), pp. 62–63; "Excavations at Hazor, 1955–1958," in *The Biblical Archaeologist Reader*, ed. Edward F. Campbell, Jr., and David Noel Freedman (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1964), vol. 2, p. 224; "The Fifth Season of Excavations at Hazor, 1968–69," *BA* 32 (1969): 55.

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firmation, then, is that there is nothing to confirm in this manner. Moses had said that the Lord would give Israel cities they had not built, houses full of good things which they had not gathered, cisterns they had not dug, and vineyards and olive trees they had not planted (Deut. 6:10–11). And Joshua was able to say, after the conquest, that the Lord indeed had given them a land on which they had not labored, cities which they had not built, and vineyards and olive trees which they had not planted (Josh. 24:13). Thus the assumption by many scholars that there was violent overthrow in the land simply flies in the face of the biblical tradition itself. The silence of archaeology vis-à-vis an early-fourteenth-century conquest is itself a powerful witness in support of such a date.

What, then, may one make of the obvious destruction of the Canaanite cities of the thirteenth century? First, it should be noted that if, as we have argued, the Israelite conquest occurred in the early fourteenth century, these cities would for the most part not be Canaanite any longer but Israelite. There is no way presently available to distinguish Late Bronze Canaanite from Late Bronze Israelite cultural phenomena. Second, there may be ways other than the Israelite conquest to account for the destruction. The Book of Judges makes it very clear that Israel was overrun time and time again by enemy peoples from both within and outside the land. At no time was this more devastating to Israelite life than in the thirteenth century, that is, at precisely the time in which advocates of a late date for the exodus set the conquest. Traditional chronology requires the judgeship of Deborah during this period and that of Gideon shortly thereafter. Though details concerning the extent of damage caused by the respective foes, the Canaanites and Midianites, are lacking in the narratives, the facts that Jabin of Hazor "cruelly oppressed" Israel for twenty years (Judg. 4:3) and that many of the tribes were rallied under Deborah and Barak in order to break the Canaanite stranglehold (Judg. 5:12–18) suggest widespread military engagement which could have inflicted tremendous physical damage on Israel's cities.[47] The Midianite oppression does not appear to have affected Israel in quite the same way, consisting mainly in overrunning agricultural lands, but warfare can hardly have been avoided in the seven-year period of Midianite harassment. Moreover, the civil strife which followed Gideon's expulsion of the Midianites involved material destruction: Gideon's son Abimelech, who had proclaimed himself king, reduced the city of Shechem to rubble (Judg. 9:45) before he was slain in an unsuccessful siege of Thebez.[48]

There is nothing by which to determine the agent of the thirteenth-

47. Bright, *History*, p. 176; Kenyon, *Archaeology*, p. 238.

48. Edward F. Campbell, Jr., and James F. Ross, "The Excavation of Shechem and

century destruction of Palestinian urban sites except the Old Testament record itself. Only it is unambiguous. A carefully constructed chronology based on a legitimate hermeneutic requires that this destruction be explained on the basis of something other than the conquest. The best alternative is the oppression of Israel by Canaanites and Midianites and the redressing of that oppression by the heroic efforts of the judges.

It should be evident that the arguments usually marshaled in support of a late date for the exodus and conquest are individually and collectively unconvincing and, in fact, run counter to every objective analysis of the biblical data. The Old Testament insists on 1446; denial of that fact is special pleading based on insubstantial evidence.

The Dates and Length of the Egyptian Sojourn

The Problem

The establishment of 1446 as the date of the exodus now permits a reconstruction of the earlier chronologies. We will consider first the question of the length of the Egyptian sojourn and then the major dates of patriarchal history. As was intimated in chapter 1, the length of the sojourn of Israel in Egypt has crucial ramifications for a proper understanding of the patriarchal and Joseph narratives. A 215-year sojourn, for example, places Joseph in a Hyksos milieu whereas a 430-year sojourn places him in a native Egyptian dynasty. The implications are profound. Similarly, a 215-year sojourn sets the dates of Abraham and his immediate successors 215 years later than the traditional chronology, thus requiring a rethinking of their relationship to what are presented in the narratives as contemporaneous events, for instance, the destruction of the cities of the plain.

The Revelation to Abraham

The beginning point of our discussion is the revelation by Yahweh to Abraham that his seed would be sojourners in a foreign land for four hundred years and that there they would endure affliction (Gen. 15:13). In the fourth generation, however, they would be brought out of that bondage by Yahweh and resettled in Canaan (Gen. 15:16). The juxtaposition of "four hundred years" and "fourth generation" strongly suggests that generation here is to be understood as a century.[49] A

49. William F. Albright argues the Hebrew word *dôr* ("generation") meant "lifetime" in early Hebrew, and so Gen. 15:16 is referring to four lifetimes of one hundred years each (*The Biblical Period from Abraham to Ezra* [New York: Harper, 1963], p. 9). The cognate Akkadian *dāru* also has the meaning "lifetime." See *CAD*, *D*, p. 115. For the view that the sojourn was in fact four hundred years long see Harold Hoehner,

greater difficulty is the characterization of the sojourn as a time of affliction generally, when in fact only the latter part of that period, following the appearance of the "new king, who did not know about Joseph," was actually unpleasant.[50] The resolution, no doubt, lies in the fact that subsequent generations of Israelites who reflected on the Egyptian experience would have remembered it on the whole not as a place of gracious incubation, but as one of oppression and slavery. The exodus, after all, followed on the heels of unbearable persecution.

Evidence for a Long Sojourn

In support of a long sojourn is the explicit statement of Moses that Israel remained in Egypt 430 years: "at the end of the 430 years, to the very day, all the LORD's divisions left Egypt" (Exod. 12:40–41). This would place the descent of Jacob and his sons to Egypt in 1876 (the exodus in 1446 + a 430-year sojourn), a date which would appear to be certain on biblical grounds. A problem arises, however, in both the Septuagint reading of Exodus 12:40–41 and Paul's apparent use of that reading in Galatians 3:17. The Septuagint says that the length of time the Israelites lived "in Egypt and Canaan" was 430 years; Paul seems to support this understanding when he speaks of the Mosaic law as having come to Moses 430 years after the promise made to Abraham concerning a seed. It indeed is true that the period from the call of Abraham to leave Haran to the descent of Jacob to Egypt is 215 years. This would leave 215 years for the sojourn if Paul (and the Septuagint) intends to say that the 430 years refers to the entire era from Abraham's call to the exodus.

The chronology of the Septuagint is difficult to sustain, however. Besides the clear statement of a 430-year sojourn, there is the obviously Egyptian (rather than Hyksos) background to the Joseph stories (pp. 49–53). Moreover, Paul's reference to the period between the Abrahamic promise and the Mosaic covenant does not unequivocally point to the first time the promise was made. It was in fact affirmed and reaffirmed several times to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the last occasion being precisely on the eve of Jacob's departure for Egypt (Gen. 46:3–4). Paul may be speaking not of Abraham per se, but of that Abrahamic promise, the last expression of which was to Jacob exactly 430 years before the exodus.

50. This is why Leon J. Wood, for example, maintains that the "new king, who did not know about Joseph," must be a Hyksos rather than Egyptian ruler. The Hyksos' rise to power around 1720 would allow nearly 280 years of oppression until the exodus of 1446 (*A Survey of Israel's History* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1970], p. 37). Two hundred eighty is not four hundred, however, and so the problem of four hundred years of oppression is not solved.

Evidence for a Short Sojourn

The theory of a 215-year sojourn is attractive to many scholars because it accommodates more easily the "fourth generation" of Genesis 15:16 and the apparent total of four generations from Levi to Moses (Exod. 6:16–20). One can understand how the span from Levi to Moses might occupy 215 years, but how could only four generations fill 430 years?[51] The meaning of the "fourth generation" in Genesis 15:16 has already been addressed—generation, in effect, is synonymous with century. The answer to the genealogy question is a little more complex.

Levi was about 44 years old when he personally descended to Egypt with his father Jacob.[52] Exodus 6:16 records that Levi was 137 when he died; so he lived in Egypt for about 93 years. His son Kohath lived all (or almost all) his life in Egypt and died at 133. Amram, who spent all his days in Egypt, lived to be 137. Moses, his son, left Egypt at the age of 80. The total that all four spent in Egypt (including Moses' years in Midian) is 443, a figure not greatly in excess of 430. The four generations—Levi, Kohath, Amram, Moses—thus represent an artificial total of approximately 430 years, artificial because the overlapping of generations is not taken into account. This way of calculation is obviously at variance with modern notions of chronology, but one cannot on that account deny that such a method may have been used for literary purposes.[53]

Moreover, Kenneth Kitchen has suggested that the structure of Exodus 6:16–20 reflects not immediately successive generations, but tribe (Levi), clan (Kohath), family (Amram), and individual (Moses).[54] A parallel structure is found in Joshua 7:16–18, where tribe (Judah), clan (Zerah), family (Zimri), and individual (Achan) appear. There Achan, though in the family of Zimri, is specifically identified as the son of Carmi. Moses, therefore, may not have been the son of Amram directly, though Exodus 6:20 seems to suggest that he was.

In support of the idea that the genealogy of Exodus 6:16–20 is se-

51. Rowley, *From Joseph to Joshua*, pp. 70–73.

52. See Eugene H. Merrill, "Fixed Dates in Patriarchal Chronology," *Bib Sac* 137 (1980): 244.

53. A well-known example of a chronology which appears to be diachronic but in fact is largely synchronic is the Sumerian King List. The dynasties listed therein are apparently in succession, but contemporary records show that they are frequently parallel. See Thorkild Jacobsen, *The Sumerian King List*, Assyriological Studies 11 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1939), pp. 161–64. The same method appears to be involved in the chronology of the judges (see pp. 150–51). Perhaps, then, the four generations of Levi through Moses were selected because the total years involved approximate 430.

54. Kitchen, *Ancient Orient*, pp. 54–55

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lective—and therefore the sojourn was of long duration—are the following considerations. Bezalel, one of the artisans who oversaw the construction of the tabernacle (Exod. 31:2–5), was a contemporary of Moses and yet was the seventh generation from Jacob (1 Chron. 2:1, 4, 5, 9, 18–20) while Moses was only the fourth. Elishama, the leader of the tribe of Ephraim at the time of Israel's journey from Sinai (Num. 1:10), was the ninth generation from Jacob though still contemporary with Moses (1 Chron. 7:22–26). Even more remarkable, Joshua, Moses' assistant, was the eleventh generation from Jacob (1 Chron. 7:27). Though these eleven generations can conceivably be contained within the limits necessitated by a sojourn of 215 years, the point being made here is that one cannot then use the four generations of the Levi-Moses genealogy to argue for a short sojourn, since it is almost certain that the names in the Levi-Moses genealogy would be only representative and not comprehensive.

A final objection to the theory of a short sojourn lies in the difficulty of understanding how the seventy (or seventy-five) persons of Jacob's family at the time of the descent to Egypt multiplied in only 215 years to six hundred thousand men, to say nothing of women and children (Exod. 12:37). Even 430 years is too short a time in normal circumstances. The biblical narrative expressly declares, however, that this remarkable growth occurred as a result of providential blessing and protection. Mathematically one can show how, over ten or twelve generations, 430 years would be adequate for this explosive population boom, but 215 years is clearly staggering to the imagination.[55]

We conclude that the notion of a longer sojourn is to be preferred. It best accommodates the biblical chronological requirements, and it suits the Egyptian historical background in a much more satisfactory way as well.

Patriarchal Chronology

The establishment of dates for the exodus and sojourn leads to considerable precision in determining the dates of the patriarchal period. And yet these dates will be accepted only if one is prepared to accept the facticity of the information contained in the Genesis account itself. If one argues, on whatever grounds, that the long life-spans of the patriarchs are impossible or that the narratives themselves report nonhistorical, legendary episodes, then clearly one cannot say anything

55. For the mathematical evidence see Carl F. Keil and Franz Delitzsch, *Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament*, vol. 2, *The Pentateuch* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1951), pp. 28–29.

very meaningful about either the chronology or history. To reject the only data available is to reject any realistic hope of reconstructing early Hebrew history. In line with the historiographical principles followed in this book, the biblical record stands on its own merits unless there are unassailable external factors which militate against it.

According to Genesis 47:9 Jacob was 130 years old when he first arrived in Egypt and appeared before the king. His date of arrival, as has been demonstrated, was 1876, and so Jacob was born in 2006. His father Isaac was 60 years old at that time, an indication that he was born in 2066 (Gen. 25:26). Abraham, of course, was 100 when Isaac was born (Gen. 21:5), and so was himself born in 2166. However one chooses to view these facts and figures, it is increasingly recognized that the patriarchal stories fit best the Early Bronze–Middle Bronze period of the ancient Near East. It may never be possible to prove to everyone's satisfaction that the patriarchs were flesh-and-blood persons, but it is becoming more and more difficult to remain skeptical about the essential compatibility between the Genesis account of the patriarchs and what is known about the times and places in which the Bible locates them.

The Wilderness Wandering

From the Reed Sea to Sinai

With this larger historical matrix in view, let us now retrace the steps of Moses and Israel after leaving Egypt. Having crossed the Reed Sea the tribes, in almost military formation (Exod. 12:51), traveled for three days through the Desert of Shur and arrived at Marah, where the bitter waters were made sweet. From there they went on to Elim and entered the Desert of Sin some forty-five days after leaving Egypt (Exod. 16:1). There they were first supplied with manna. Moving on to Rephidim,[56] they were attacked by the Amalekites (Exod. 17:8–16). These warlike, nomadic tribes are of uncertain origin, though the Amalek born to Timna, concubine of Esau's son Eliphaz, may be the

56. These first five place names—Shur, Marah, Elim, Sin, and Rephidim—are mentioned only in the Old Testament and cannot be tied to modern sites. Shur was a desert extending across the west central Negev (Gen. 16:7; 20:1; 25:18; 1 Sam. 15:7; 27:8). Marah appears only in the accounts of the desert itinerary (Exod. 15:23; Num. 33:8–9) as does Elim (Exod. 15:27; 16:1; Num. 33:9–10). Sin is the desert between Elim and Rephidim (Exod. 16:1; 17:1; Num. 33:11–12). Rephidim lay between Alush (Num. 33:14) and Mount Sinai (Exod. 17:1, 8; 19:2). For possible locations of these places see the map on p. 61.

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Numbers

The Book of Numbers describes the migration of Israel from Sinai to the plains of Moab, a journey fraught with a succession of rebellions against the Lord and his theocratic administrators and climaxed by the death of the adults of the exodus generation. There was a consequent need for at least a partial restatement of the covenant legislation appropriate to the new generation anticipating settlement in Canaan. Much of Numbers, like Exodus and Leviticus, is therefore prescriptive in nature and technically not historical narrative. By and large, however, Numbers recites the significant historical events of the period between the giving of the covenant at Sinai and the arrival of Israel at the plains of Moab, a period of about thirty-eight years. It thus qualifies as history writing and makes its own special contribution to an understanding of preconquest Israel.

Deuteronomy

Deuteronomy is the least overtly historiographical of the books of the Pentateuch, for in its entirety it is an address by Moses to the covenant community on the eve of the conquest. From a literary standpoint this address is largely a massive covenant text with all the elements that are characteristic of such documents attested elsewhere in the ancient Near East.[5] The purpose of the book is to repeat, with amendment and clarification, the basic covenant message of Exodus 20–23, a repetition necessary in light of the historical circumstances which had transpired in the nearly forty years since the Sinai revelation. The adult generation with whom the Sinaitic covenant had been made was dead or dying, so the younger generation needed to hear for themselves and to respond to Yahweh's covenant claims. In other words, there had to be a covenant reaffirmation, as was the custom throughout the eastern Mediterranean world with the passing of a generation of a vassal people.[6] Furthermore, the Sinaitic covenant—as well as its adumbrations in Numbers—was particularly designed for the temporary needs of a nomadic society moving toward permanent sedentary life in Canaan. At last the tribes had arrived at the very threshold of Canaan, and so a modification of the covenant was necessary in anticipation of the greatly altered conditions in which Israel would soon find herself. Deuteronomy is Moses' farewell covenant address in which he reminds his people of who they are, whence

5. Meredith G. Kline, *The Structure of Biblical Authority* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1972), pp. 9–14.

6. Peter C. Craigie, *The Book of Deuteronomy*, New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976), pp. 28, 30–32.

they have come, and what their mission must be from that day forward as they claim the land of promise and work out their mediatorial role among the nations.

The Story of the Patriarchs

The history of Israel does not begin with Moses and the events of exodus and covenant, but the first comprehensive and systematic account of Israel's origins, task, and destiny was certainly prepared on the plains of Moab where Moses the prophet demonstrated his consummate skills of historiography. As both eyewitness and researcher, he had collected and organized raw materials documenting the past, and thus he created the literary masterpiece now known as Torah. It is a history book, yes, but it is far more—it is a theological treatise whose purpose is to show that God the Creator will, through an elect nation Israel, sovereignly achieve his creative and redemptive purposes for all humankind.[7]

Abraham: Ancestor of the Nation

The origins of Abram

A history of Israel must properly begin with the call of Abram to be the father of the chosen nation. At the end of the genealogical list commencing with Shem, son of Noah (Gen. 11:10–26), appears the name of Terah, father of Abram, Nahor, and Haran. Terah lived in Ur of the Chaldees (v. 28), the famous Sumerian city located by the Euphrates River, about 150 miles northwest of the present coast of the Persian Gulf.[8] The most satisfactory reconstruction of biblical chronology places the birth of Abram at 2166 B.C.,[9] a time when Ur had fallen under the control of a barbaric mountain people known as the Guti.[10] As just suggested, Ur was a Sumerian city, the central hub of

7. For the patriarchal stories as nuanced historiography see, *inter alia*, John T. Luke, "Abraham and the Iron Age: Reflections on the New Patriarchal Studies," *JSOT* 4 (1977): 35–47, esp. p. 47.

8. For the excavation of Ur see C. Leonard Woolley, *Ur of the Chaldees* (New York: Norton, 1965).

9. This chronology will be elaborated on pp. 66–79. That the patriarchal era falls roughly in the Middle Bronze I–II period (ca. 2000–1800) is shown by John J. Bimson, "Archaeological Data and the Dating of the Patriarchs," in *Essays on the Patriarchal Narratives*, ed. A. R. Millard and D. J. Wiseman (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1983), pp. 53–89; see also John Bright, *A History of Israel*, 3d ed. (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1981), p. 85.

10. C. J. Gadd, "The Dynasty of Agade and the Gutian Invasion," in *Cambridge Ancient History* (*CAH*), 3d ed., ed. I. E. S. Edwards et al. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), vol. 1, part 2, pp. 454–61. Gutian control extended from around 2240 to 2115.

one of a great number of city-states populated by the highly cultured Sumerians from at least as early as the mid-fourth millennium. The Ur of Terah and Abram was, however, quite cosmopolitan, for non-Sumerians such as Abram's own Semitic ancestors lived there and mingled their intellectual and cultural traditions with those of the Sumerians.[11] Since by that time Sargon (2371–2316)[12] had created the Semite-dominated Akkadian Empire at Agade, nearly 200 miles northwest of Ur, Abram was almost certainly bilingual, commanding both the Sumerian and Akkadian languages. Where Abram's ancestors originated and how they happened to settle in Ur are not addressed in the historical account. The intermingling of Semitic and Sumerian ethnic elements in the third millennium is well attested in lower Mesopotamia, however, so there is no need to seek for an Ur other than the one traditionally associated with Abram.[13]

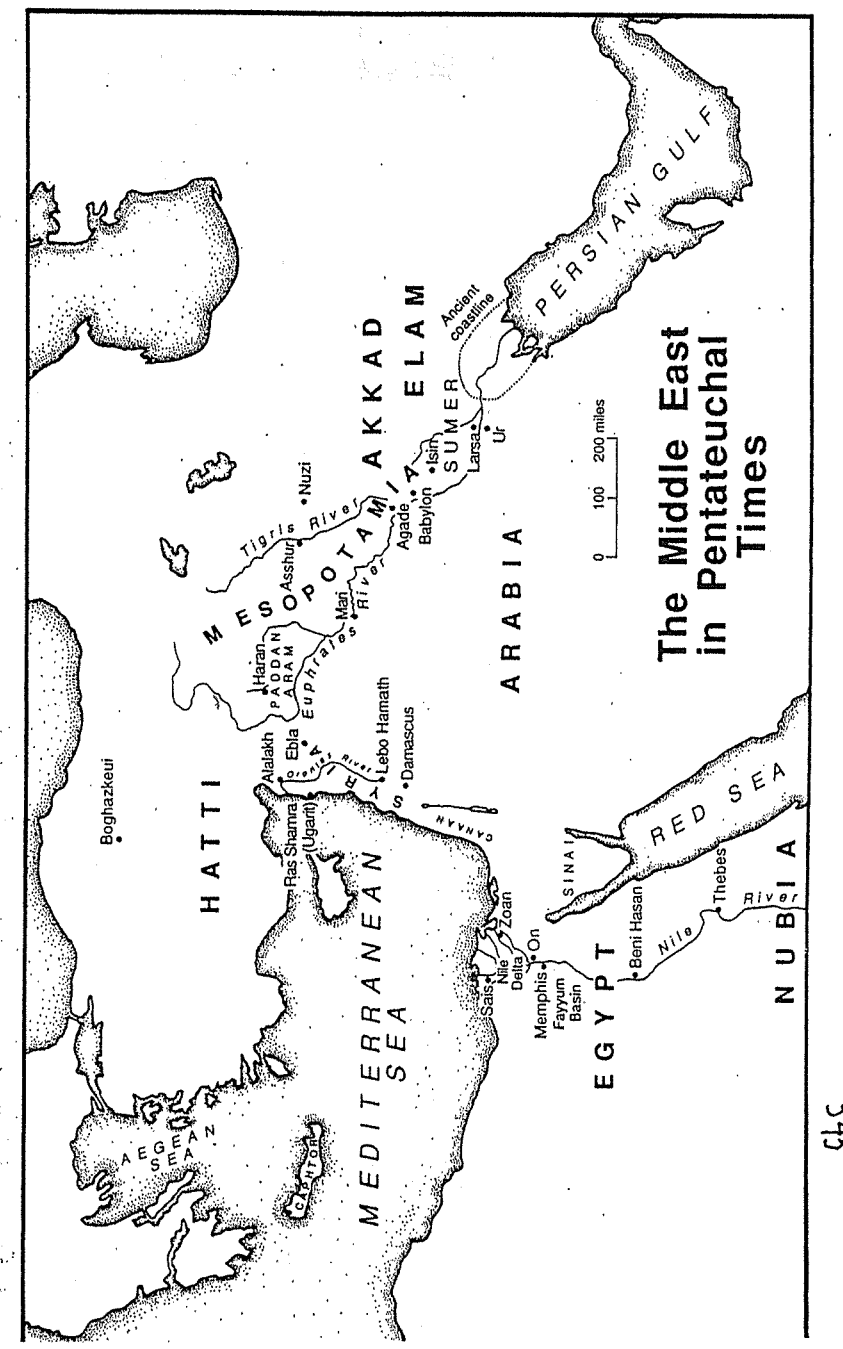
The principal deity worshiped at Ur was the Sumerian moon god Nannar, known in Akkadian as Sin. It is certain that Abram and his family were faithful devotees of Sin and his coterie of fellow deities, for Joshua 24:2 speaks of them as having served other gods beyond the river (i.e., the Euphrates). Moreover, some scholars identify the name *Terah* as a form of the Hebrew word *yārēaḥ* ("moon"), so that his very name may testify to his religious orientation.[14] When Terah and his family left Ur, they resettled in Haran, another major center of the worship of Sin.

11. Dietz Otto Edzard, "The Early Dynastic Period," in *The Near East: The Early Civilizations*, ed. Jean Bottéro et al. (New York: Delacorte, 1967), pp. 86–87; Thorkild Jacobsen, "The Assumed Conflict Between Sumerians and Semites in Early Mesopotamian History," *JAOS* 59 (1939): 485–95.

12. The extrabiblical dates for this chapter are those of the *Cambridge Ancient History*, 3d ed.

13. Cyrus H. Gordon has proposed that Abram be connected not with Ur of the Chaldees, but with an Ura' in Syria, a location much closer to Haran and, in his view, more compatible with the stories of Isaac and Jacob, whose wives came from Abram's kinfolk in Aram or upper Syria. See his "Abraham of Ur," in *Hebrew and Semitic Studies*, ed. D. Winton Thomas and W. D. McHardy (Oxford: Clarendon, 1963), pp. 77–84. More recently it has been alleged that a northern Ur is attested in the Ebla texts, but, as Paul C. Maloney points out, the cuneiform signs for that Ur are different from those used to spell the name of the Sumerian Ur ("The Raw Material," *BAR* 6.3 [1980]: 59). For a strong defense of the view that Ur of the Chaldees refers to the southern city see H. W. F. Saggs, "Ur of the Chaldees," *Iraq* 22 (1960): 200–9. The descriptive phrase "of the Chaldees" is without doubt a late explanatory gloss since the Chaldeans and Kaldu (i.e., Chaldea) are not known until the ninth century B.C. Its purpose, of course, is to distinguish the southern Ur from many other cities of the same name.

14. William G. Dever and W. Malcolm Clark, "The Patriarchal Traditions," in *Israelite and Judaean History*, ed. John H. Hayes and J. Maxwell Miller (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1977), p. 127. The name more likely is to be traced to the Akkadian *tarḫu* ("ibex"). See Claus Westermann, *Genesis 1–11: A Commentary*, trans. John J. Scullion (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1984), p. 564.



The matter of Abram's birth into paganism in light of his direct descent from the chosen line of Shem is of interest but cannot be considered here in detail. It is clear, however, that the genealogy which connects Shem and Abram must not be viewed as comprehensive but as selective only. That is, those names which do appear are representative of perhaps a great many others which, for reasons that cannot now be determined, were not retained in the record.[15] If Shem and Abram were contemporary, as a strict interpretation of the genealogy would require,[16] it is difficult to understand how Abram's immediate ancestors could have become paganized or indeed why Abram would have been called at all to his sacred mission since believers were already available for the purpose God had in view. Moreover, if Shem and Abram were contemporary, the fact that Abram died at 175 years, "at a good old age, an old man and full of years" (Gen. 25:8), is difficult to reconcile with the statement that Shem died at the age of 600, an age even considerably younger than that of his father Noah (950 years). Clearly, Shem preceded Abram by many more years than a strict reading will permit, and thus there was sufficient time for the knowledge of Yahweh to have disappeared from the line of Shem and for a need to have arisen for Yahweh to reveal himself to pagan Abram.

The journey to Canaan

It is impossible to know precisely when Abram left Ur for Haran. He was old enough to have been married and yet young enough to be under the patriarchal authority of his father. Despite the fact that his name is mentioned first in the genealogy, he was the youngest of Terah's three sons.[17] Haran died in Ur, and so only Nahor and Abram

15. For the form and function of genealogies in the Old Testament and the ancient Near East, see Robert R. Wilson, *Genealogy and History in the Biblical World* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977); Jack M. Sasson, "A Genealogical 'Convention' in Biblical Chronography," *ZAW* 90 (1978): 171–85; Gerhard F. Hasel, "The Meaning of the Chronogenealogies of Genesis 5 and 11," *Origins* 7 (1981): 53–70.

16. A strict interpretation, that is, one which holds that the genealogical lists omit no generations, would require that Noah died in 2168, a mere 2 years before Abram's birth, and that Shem died in 2016, predeceasing Abram by only 25 years! See Genesis 9:28; 11:10–11; 25:7. (We are assuming here that Terah was 130 when Abram was born. See note 17.)

17. This is clear from the fact that Abram was 75 when he left Haran (Gen. 12:4), a departure which took place only after Terah's death (Acts 7:4) at the age of 205 (Gen. 11:32). Abram was, therefore, born no earlier than Terah's 130th year. That Terah was 70 when he begot Abram, Nahor, and Haran (Gen. 11:26) means only that his first son was born then. Abram is listed first because he is most important in the narrative to follow.

One cannot a priori reject the great ages of the patriarchs simply because they have no modern parallels. Objective analysis of the only data we have requires that the figures be taken at face value unless contradictory historical evidence is found. It might be helpful to note that Sargon of Akkad is credited with a reign of fifty-five years, Rim-Sin of Larsa with sixty, Rameses II of Egypt with sixty-eight, and Phiops II of Egypt with ninety-four! See, respectively, William W. Hallo and William K. Simpson, *The Ancient Near East* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1971), p. 55; *CAH* 1.2, p. 641; 2.2, p. 232; 1.2, p. 195. All but Rameses were roughly contemporary with the period of the patriarchs. In addition, the Sumerian King List, while greatly exaggerating, speaks of ancient kings who reigned for hundreds or even thousands of years. Surely this longevity rests on some genuine historical basis. See Thorkild Jacobsen, *The Sumerian King List*, Assyriological Studies 11 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1939).

and Haran's son Lot left with their wives and children to follow Terah to the great city of Haran, six hundred long miles northwest of Ur. Why Terah and his family abandoned Ur cannot be determined, but it might well be that the political and cultural upheavals in Sumer caused by the Guti conquest played a major role. There would have been no way for Terah to know that the barbaric Guti would be expelled by 2115 and that the glorious Ur III dynasty would be established under Ur-Nammu. By then, in fact, Terah and his family must have been in Haran, and within twenty-five years thereafter Abram departed from Haran for Canaan (Gen. 12:4; cf. Acts 7:4).

In the years in and around Haran, a commercial and business center populated mainly by a race known to the Sumerians as MAR.TU and to the Akkadians as Amurru (biblical Amorites), Abram must have become conversant in the Amorite Semitic dialects spoken there and must have imbibed the more nomadic lifestyle with which he would become intimately familiar in Canaan.[18] The Amorites by this time not only occupied the major cities of northwest Mesopotamia but had begun to expand, primarily for commercial reasons, to the southeast and southwest.[19] There eventually was a sufficient population in central Mesopotamia to give rise to Amorite city-states such as Isin, Larsa, and most importantly Babylon. Hammurabi himself (1792–1750), the most illustrious ruler of the Old Babylonian Empire, was a descendant of these Amorites. The southwesterly movement of the Amorites is of more importance to biblical history, however, for it involved the penetration and occupation of Syria and Canaan and extended even to the northeastern borders of Egypt. These Amorites, though erroneously characterized at one time as pure nomads, were technically seminomads at most and were more often than not thoroughly urbanized.[20] Archaeological research at numerous sites in Syria and Canaan

18. For the MAR.TU or Amurru of upper Mesopotamia in the early second millennium see Jean Bottéro, "Syria During the Third Dynasty of Ur," in *CAH* 1.2, pp. 562–64.

19. Ignace J. Gelb, "An Old Babylonian List of Amorites," *JAOS* 88 (1968): 39–46.

20. For the "dimorphic" character of the Amorite lifestyle see Michael B. Rowton, "Urban Autonomy in a Nomadic Environment," *JNES* 32 (1973): 201–15; M. Liverani, "The Amorites," in *Peoples of Old Testament Times*, ed. D. J. Wiseman (Oxford: Clarendon, 1973), p. 114.

has, in the view of many scholars, yielded conclusive evidence that the indigenous populations were supplanted in the latter part of the Early Bronze Age (2200–2000) by peoples usually described as Amorites.[21]

Table 1 **The Sequence of the Bronze Age**

Early Bronze	3000–2000
Early Bronze I	3000–2800
Early Bronze II	2800–2500
Early Bronze III	2500–2200
Early Bronze IV	2200–2000
Middle Bronze	2000–1550
Middle Bronze I	2000–1900
Middle Bronze II	1900–1550
Late Bronze	1550–1200
Late Bronze I	1550–1400
Late Bronze II	1400–1200

The biblical historian relates that Yahweh told Abram to leave his country (Haran by then) and to go to a place that he would progressively reveal to him. It is tempting to suppose that Abram did not move in isolation but that he became part of the Amorite migration that was under way at that very time.[22] It is true, of course, that Abram is never called an Amorite in the Bible, though the designation "Abram the Hebrew" might indicate that he was thought to be associated with certain migratory peoples.[23]

21. This so-called Amorite hypothesis was popularized by and found major support in the work of Kathleen Kenyon, *Amorites and Canaanites* (London: Oxford University Press, 1966), esp. pp. 76–77. There has lately developed a strong reaction against this hypothesis, however. Representative of this reaction is C. H. J. de Geus, "The Amorites in the Archaeology of Palestine," *UF* 3 (1971): 41–60. It is still safe to say that many scholars accept the hypothesis and that it provides the best explanation for the free movement of the patriarchs in Canaan in precisely this period and best reflects the settlement patterns described by the Old Testament itself. See Eugene H. Merrill, "Ebla and Biblical Historical Inerrancy," *Bib Sac* 140 (1983): 302–21, esp. pp. 306–8; Benjamin Mazar, "Canaan in the Patriarchal Age," in *World History of the Jewish People*, vol. 2, *Patriarchs*, ed. Benjamin Mazar (Tel Aviv: Massada, 1970), pp. 169–87, 276–78.

22. J. Kaplan, "Mesopotamian Elements in the Middle Bronze II Culture of Palestine," *JNES* 30 (1971): 293–307, esp. 305–6. The Amorite hypothesis is, of course, not essential to the historicity of the patriarchal narratives in any way. Abram could well have moved independently from upper Mesopotamia to Canaan.

23. William F. Albright has pointed out that Abram must be seen not so much as a nomadic shepherd but as a caravaner or merchant, that is, as a seminomad at most ("From the Patriarchs to Moses: I. From Abraham to Joseph," *BA* 36 [1973]: 11–15). On the designation *Hebrew* see pp. 100–2.

Table 2 **The Patriarchs**

Birth of Terah	2296
Birth of Abram	2166
Abram's departure from Haran	2091
Abram's marriage to Hagar	2081
Birth of Ishmael	2080
Reaffirmation of the covenant	2067
Destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah	2067
Birth of Isaac	2066
Death of Sarah	2029
Marriage of Isaac	2026
Birth of Jacob and Esau	2006
Death of Abraham	1991
Marriage of Esau	1966
Death of Ishmael	1943
Jacob's journey to Haran	1930
Jacob's marriages	1923
Birth of Judah	1919
End of Jacob's fourteen-year labor for his wives	1916
Birth of Joseph	1916
End of Jacob's stay with Laban	1910
Jacob's arrival at Shechem	1910
Rape of Dinah	1902
Marriage of Judah	1900
Selling of Joseph	1899
Joseph imprisoned	1889
Joseph released	1886
Death of Isaac	1886
Beginning of famine	1879
Brothers' first visit to Egypt	1878
Judah's incest with Tamar	1877
Brothers' second visit to Egypt	1877
Jacob's descent to Egypt	1876
Death of Jacob	1859
Death of Joseph	1806

The settlement in Canaan

When Abram arrived in Canaan, he found himself in a land which had undergone clearly perceivable changes because of the cultural adjustments just described. For more than a thousand years the major ethnic element of the land had been Canaanite.[24] Who the Canaanites

24. Though until recently one could not find the term *Canaan* or *Canaanite* in extrabiblical texts earlier than the mid-second millennium (see Sidney Smith, *The Statue of Idri-Mi* [London: British Institute of Archaeology in Ankara, 1949], p. 15; Michael C. Astour, "The Origins of the Terms 'Canaan,' 'Phoenician,' and 'Purple,' " *JNES* 24 [1965]: 346–47), there is no reason to doubt that the indigenous population of Palestine in the Early Bronze Age was Canaanite. As Roland de Vaux says, "Since there was no change of race or of culture in the course of the third millennium, the 'Canaanites' may be regarded as the founders of the Early Bronze Age" ("Palestine in the Early Bronze Age," in *CAH* 1.2, p. 234). Moreover, it is now pointed out that an Ebla text a thousand years older than the reference from Idri-Mi (Alalakh) refers to "the lord of Canaan" (*^{d}be ka-na-na-im*). See Giovanni Pettinato, *The Archives of Ebla* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1981), p. 253.

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of Abram's time were is unclear, though the Old Testament links Canaan originally with Ham, son of Noah. Whether or not they were ethnically Semitic, they spoke a Semitic language roughly comparable to what Abram must have known from Haran.[25] Recent excavations at Tell Mardikh (ancient Ebla), less than 150 miles southwest of Haran, have yielded thousands of clay tablets written in a language so similar to Canaanite that most scholars designate it Proto-Canaanite.[26] Most significantly, these inscriptions were composed as early as 2500 B.C. Even before Abram's time, then, there was a remarkable affinity amongst the languages of northwest Mesopotamia and Syria (and presumably Canaan).[27] Being conversant in Amorite, Abram would easily have assimilated the Canaanite dialects of his new homeland.

One of the effects of the Amorite occupation of Canaan was the restriction of the Canaanites primarily to the Mediterranean coastal plain, the Valley of Jezreel, and the Jordan valley (see Num. 13:29). The Amorites tended to settle in the great central hill country, undertaking a largely pastoral and agricultural way of life.[28] Abram, too, limited his areas of settlement to the hills and to the northern borders of the Negev Desert to the south. The first place in which he encamped in Canaan was Shechem (Gen. 12:6), a name no doubt later given to the site since there was no town there in Abram's day.[29] There he built an altar and settled down, apparently with no opposition whatsoever. The land was open before him and was his for the taking. The enig-

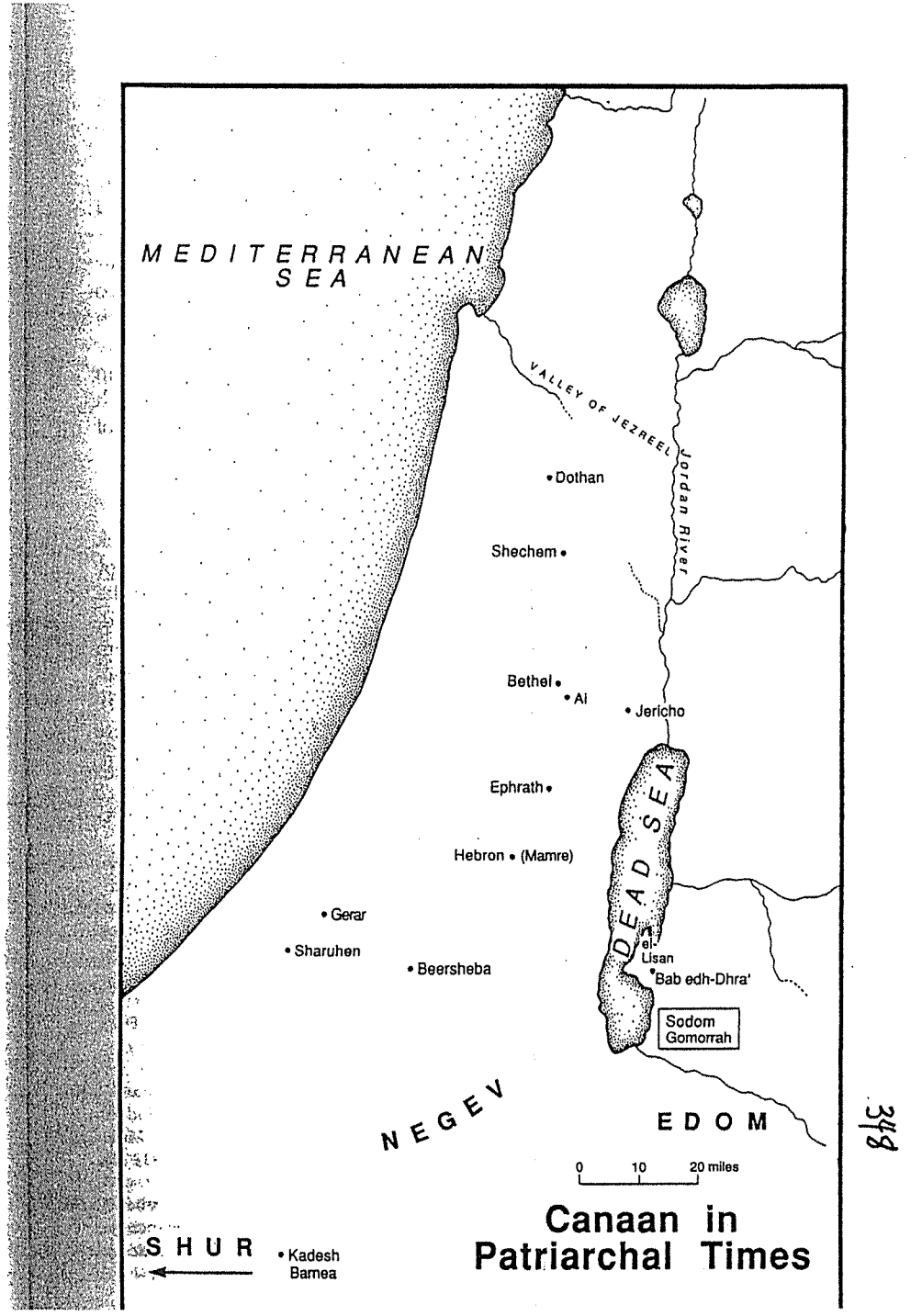
25. Sabatino Moscati, *An Introduction to the Comparative Grammar of the Semitic Languages* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1964), pp. 3–8; William L. Moran, "The Hebrew Language in Its Northwest Semitic Background," in *The Bible and the Ancient Near East*, ed. G. Ernest Wright (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1965), pp. 59–64.

26. Pettinato, *Archives*, p. 56; for the excavations and other archaeological data see Paolo Matthiae, *Ebla: An Empire Rediscovered*, trans. Christopher Holme (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1981).

27. For a cautious but informative overview of the relevance of Ebla to questions about the history, social life, religion, and language of ancient Syria, especially as it forms a cultural bridge, see Lorenzo Vigano and Dennis Pardee, "Literary Sources for the History of Palestine and Syria: The Ebla Tablets," *BA* 47 (1984): 6–16.

28. Kenyon, *Amorites*, pp. 76–77; William F. Albright, "The Jordan Valley in the Bronze Age," *AASOR* 6 (1926): 68; Norman K. Gottwald, *The Tribes of Yahweh* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 1979), p. 452. This need not imply nomadism or tent dwelling, however, as D. J. Wiseman shows in respect to the patriarchs ("They Lived in Tents," in *Biblical and Near Eastern Studies*, ed. Gary A. Tuttle [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978], pp. 195–200).

29. William G. Dever, "Palestine in the Second Millennium BCE: The Archaeological Picture," in Hayes and Miller, *History*, p. 99; Joe D. Seger, "The Middle Bronze II C Date of the East Gate of Shechem," *Levant* 6 (1974): 117. Shechem was established as an urban center by about 1900, almost two hundred years after Abram's arrival in Canaan (ca. 2100). The narrative does not even hint that there was a town in Abram's time. To the contrary, he appears to have built his altar at an unoccupied site which later became Shechem.



matic references to the Canaanites being then in the land (Gen. 12:6; 13:7) do not contradict this general picture, but may be merely notations of Moses to the effect that whereas in his own day the Canaanites were urbanized (i.e., lived in city-states), in Abram's time they had become dispossessed and were "in the land" in the sense of being forced to a more agrarian life.[30]

Moving on to a hill between Bethel and Ai, both of which only later received these names,[31] Abram and his clan again encountered no resistance. And so the pattern continued on their journey south through the entire length of the hill country. With the Canaanites effectively contained in the plains and valleys and the Amorites (among whom Abram lived) pursuing at least a form of nomadism, the patriarch moved about and settled down as he chose, unimpeded by claims of priority or threat from indigenous populations.

The journey to Egypt

Sometime after Abram's arrival in the Negev the land was struck by drought, and he and his family were forced to turn to Egypt for relief. Because of the unfailing overflow of the Nile which irrigated the rich farmlands, Egypt from most remote antiquity was the breadbasket of the eastern Mediterranean world. The easy access of Abram to Egypt was by no means unique to him, for the Egyptians had regularly shown the most courteous hospitality to Semitic peoples.[32] There were, to be sure, certain prejudices and warnings concerning these bearded foreigners, but for the most part the welcome mat was out, particularly if the Semites were bent on merchandising.[33] Abram's visit to Egypt occurred toward the end of the First Intermediate Period, probably during Dynasty 10 or 11. By the time he arrived to gaze upon the great pyramids near Memphis, these monuments of the Old Kingdom era had been in place for more than four centuries. But that glorious age had ended with Dynasty 5, and for three hundred years Egypt had been in decline, primarily because of the rising power of the nomarchs or rulers of local districts. Since Abram arrived in Canaan in 2091 B.C. and must have gone to Egypt not much later, the king to whom he lied about Sarai his wife was most likely Wahkare Achthoes III (ca. 2120–2070) of Dynasty 10, the probable composer of the famous "Instruction for King Meri-ka-Re."[34] This piece of advice for his son concerning the treachery of the "Asiatics" may well be related in some way to Abram's duplicity.

30. This seems particularly the case in Genesis 13:7, which speaks of tension between Abram and Lot over pastureland. Because the Canaanites were "in the land," there was little room for Abram and Lot.

31. See, respectively, Genesis 28:19 and Joshua 8:28 (since the name *Ai* means "ruin," it undoubtedly was given to the site only after the Israelite conquest). The former name for the site of Bethel, Luz, is otherwise unattested, but it is clear that it was established as early as Early Bronze times. See J. L. Kelso, *The Excavation of Bethel 1934–1960, AASOR* 39 (1968). Ai cannot be located today with certainty. For a complete review of the problem see John J. Bimson, *Redating the Exodus and Conquest* (Sheffield: JSOT, 1978), pp. 215–25.

32. Cyril Aldred, *The Egyptians* (New York: Praeger, 1961), pp. 103–4. This state of affairs continued throughout the First Intermediate and Middle Kingdom periods as shown by O. Tufnell and W. A. Ward, "Relations Between Byblos, Egypt and Mesopotamia at the End of the Third Millennium B.C.," *Syria* 43 (1966): 165–241, esp. pp. 221–23.

33. See the interesting text, "The Instruction for King Meri-ka-Re," in James B. Pritchard, *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament*, 2d ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1955), pp. 414–18, esp. ll. 91ff.: "Lo, the wretched Asiatic. . . . He does not dwell in a single place, (but) his legs are made to go astray."

The separation of Abram and Lot

Despite Abram's treachery in Egypt the Lord blessed him there, and the patriarch returned eventually to the Negev and then on with great riches to the vicinity of Bethel and Ai. So affluent in flocks and herds had he and Lot become that they found it impossible to coexist in the same pasturelands. In addition, of course, there was the likelihood of nonsedentary Canaanite elements that were also competing for the open space. To alleviate the increasing tensions that such crowding was beginning to create, Abram proposed that he and Lot separate. Again, the impression is clear that the land was freely available to them, that there were no landowners whose properties had to be purchased or from whom permission to settle had to be obtained. All this comports remarkably with what is known of settlement patterns in Canaan at this period.

Looking with covetous eyes to the east, Lot decided to seek his fortune in the verdant plain of the Jordan, probably the lower Jordan valley from east of Bethel to the Dead Sea.[35] Cultural history indicates that this region had been occupied by indigenous Canaanite peoples who suffered the same depredations at the hands of the Amorites which their brethren in the hill country had experienced.[36] Some scholars argue that the infamous cities of the plain, including Sodom, are to be located in this region north of the Dead Sea.[37] More likely,

34. William C. Hayes, "The Middle Kingdom in Egypt," in *CAH* 1.2, pp. 466–68. See also note 33.

35. Yohanan Aharoni, *The Land of the Bible* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1979), pp. 133–34.

36. Jericho, the leading city of the area, had, according to Kenyon (*Amorites*, p. 9), been destroyed around 2300 and resettled by "a numerous but nomadic" population (p. 38). This Early Bronze–Middle Bronze culture survived until about 1900 (p. 35). The nonurban nature of the area would explain why Lot (ca. 2090 B.C.) was able to choose the "plain of the Jordan" as his allotment.

37. Willem C. Van Hatten, "Once Again: Sodom and Gomorrah," *BA* 44 (1981): 87.

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Peoples of the OT world - Hoerth

Sumerians

Walter R. Bodine

Listen to me, you who pursue righteousness
and who seek the LORD*:*
Look to the rock from which you were cut
and to the quarry from which you were hewn.
—Isaiah 51:1

Study of the Sumerians

The Sumerians are the only one of the thirteen groups to which a chapter of this volume is devoted who are not mentioned in the Bible.[1] Yet

Author's note: This essay has benefited from the critical comments of John Huehnergard, Thorkild Jacobsen, Stephen Lieberman, Piotr Steinkeller, and Edwin Yamauchi.

1. Perhaps for this reason the Sumerians were not given separate treatment in *Peoples of Old Testament Times*, ed. Donald J. Wiseman (Oxford: Clarendon, 1973). Yet my statement must be qualified. Hebrew *šin'ār*, which occurs eight times in the Hebrew Bible (Gen. 10:10; 11:2; 14:1, 9; Josh. 7:21; Isa. 11:11; Dan. 1:2; Zech. 5:11), appears to represent the Sumerian term for "Sumer-Akkad" and thus refers to the area that includes the homeland of the Sumerians. While the proposal to identify Hebrew *šēm* (the ancestor of Israel via Abraham [Gen. 10:21; 11:10–26]) etymologically with Sumer ("Shumer" in cuneiform) is doubtful (Arno Poebel, "The Name of Elam in Sumerian, Akkadian, and Hebrew," *American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures* 48 [1931–32]: 25–26; followed by Samuel N. Kramer, *The Sumerians: Their History, Culture, and Character* [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963], 297–99, who errantly cites Poebel's article as appearing in vol. 58 [1941] of *AJSL*), Sumerian influence in Israel's backgrounds is a foregone conclusion because of the pervasive influence of Sumerian culture on all of the ancient Near East, as will be stressed below. More pointedly, the biblical text traces Abraham's origins to the city of Ur (Gen. 11:28, 31; 15:7), a prominent urban center of the Sumerians. It has been argued that the Ur in question (i.e., "Ur of the Chaldeans") is not the Sumerian city, but a northern Ur, perhaps in the vicinity of Haran on the upper Euphrates, e.g., Cyrus H. Gordon, "Abraham and the Merchants of Ura," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 17 (1958): 28–31; idem, "Abraham of Ur," in *Hebrew and Semitic Studies Presented to Godfrey Rolles Driver*, ed. D. Winton Thomas and William D. McHardy (Oxford: Clarendon, 1963), 81–83. For a response to the earlier article by Gordon, see Harry W. F. Saggs, "Ur of the Chaldees: A Problem of Identification," *Iraq* 22 (1960): 200–209.

their influence on ancient Israel, as well as the rest of the ancient Near East, is as fundamental as that of most of the other peoples discussed here.

That the Sumerians have not been as well known is due to several factors. One is the lack of attention given them in the Bible. While virtually every field of ancient Near Eastern studies has by now established its autonomy as a discipline worthy of inquiry in its own right, and this is preeminently true of Assyriology (a term still used for the study of the Sumerian and Semitic peoples of ancient Mesopotamia), it remains true that one of the primary attractions to graduate study in ancient Near Eastern civilizations is the Hebrew Bible. Another factor in the relative obscurity of the Sumerians is the linguistic unrelatedness of their language to any other known language of the ancient world (or of any period). Comparative linguistic work in Semitic, in the broader field of Afroasiatic, and even in Indo-European in the case of Hittite and Old Persian, draws one into the study of the other languages of the ancient Near East, but not of Sumerian, except as it illuminates Akkadian.[2] Perhaps most significant is the high degree of uncertainty that yet surrounds the study of the Sumerian language itself. The earliest texts are still largely unintelligible, as are some features of the language throughout its history. Added to all of this, the very existence of the Sumerians as a people was only established toward the end of the nineteenth century.

Great strides have been taken toward the recovery of Sumerian civilization. Through roughly the first half of our century, excavations were carried out at most of the major occupation sites of the Sumerians, and a wealth of clay tablets inscribed in Sumerian were recovered. These texts are still in the process of being copied and published, and pioneering studies continue to clarify the Sumerian language. Especially in the latter part of the century, Assyriologists have produced definitive editions of Sumerian texts.[3]

2. "Akkadian" is a cover term that includes the Semitic languages or, perhaps better, dialects of ancient Mesopotamia: Old Akkadian, Assyrian, Babylonian, and various peripheral dialects from outlying areas.

3. Of all the civilizations of the ancient Near East, Mesopotamia is the best documented. It has been conservatively estimated that a quarter million clay tablets recovered through excavation are inscribed in Sumerian. Most of these tablets are fragmentary, and they are separated in different museums and private collections around the world. The great majority are business documents recording economic, legal, and other administrative matters. Fortunately, multiple copies of literary works were commonly made, so that lost portions of given compositions can often be filled out by duplicates. Kramer estimates that tablets containing literary compositions amount to about 5,000, making up close to 300 compositions with some 30,000 lines; Samuel N. Kramer, *From the Poetry of Sumer: Creation, Glorification, Adoration*, Una's Lectures 2 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979), 11–12. His estimate is probably low, depending on what one means by literature and how compositions are identified. Only a fraction of the Sumerian tablets that lie buried in the Middle East have been dug up, as is evidenced by the compositions that are known thus far only in part or from literary catalogs that list numerous compositions not yet recovered; Kramer, *From the Poetry of Sumer*, 12–13.

In the course of this century's investigations, it has become clear that the other civilizations that developed in the ancient Near East were deeply influenced by that of the Sumerians, the earliest to achieve its apex of cultural development. Some of the many influences that emanated from early Sumer include writing,[4] the city-state, the accumulation of capital, the wheel, the potter's wheel, monumental architecture (including various architectural features such as the arch, dome, and vault), the sexagesimal number system,[5] written legal documents, schools, and the cylinder seal.[6]

The extent of Sumerian influence on the rest of the ancient Near East was highlighted in the mid-1970s by the discovery at Ebla, an ancient Syrian site, of a large archive of clay tablets written in Sumerian and in Semitic (Eblaite, now believed to be either an early dialect of Akkadian or another form of East Semitic alongside Akkadian) and dating from the mid-third millennium. Until the discovery of the Ebla archive, it was assumed that third-millennium Syria was culturally insignificant. The tablets reveal a city-state that rivaled the major centers of Mesopotamia and was deeply influenced by Sumerian culture. The Sumerian language suddenly became indispensable for the study of the early history of Syria-Palestine, and the early diffusion of Sumerian culture was made even more evident.

Protoliterate Period

Most of the features of civilization mentioned above emerged in Mesopotamia before the beginning of written records. In fact, many aspects of Sumerian civilization appear to have reached their height around the time that writing first appeared and shortly thereafter, during what is often called

4. Writing also arose early in Egypt, and direct links with Mesopotamia cannot be established with certainty. A plausible explanation of how writing developed in Mesopotamia is that of Denise Schmandt-Besserat, "An Archaic Recording System and the Origin of Writing," *Syro-Mesopotamian Studies* 1/2 (1977): 31–70. Her proposal, however, is disputed by, e.g., Roy Harris, *The Origin of Writing* (LaSalle, Ill.: Open Court, 1986), 73; and Stephen J. Lieberman, "Of Clay Pebbles, Hollow Clay Balls, and Writing: A Sumerian View," *American Journal of Archaeology* 84 (1980): 339.

5. The Sumerians employed a primarily sexagesimal system, i.e., one having the number sixty as its basic unit. Such a system is reflected today in our measurement of time, circles, and angles.

6. A number of features of civilization that emerged first in Sumer are discussed in the popular book by Samuel N. Kramer, *History Begins at Sumer: Thirty-nine Firsts in Man's Recorded History*, 3d ed. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1981).

the Protoliterate period (ca. 3400–2900).[7] The earliest written tablets come from the sites of ancient Uruk and Jemdet Nasr (with a scattering from other places, especially in the Diyala region) and date from as early as 3100. The language of these texts appears to be Sumerian, suggesting that the Sumerians invented writing. Some scholars argue for a non-Sumerian substratum in the Sumerian language, which would point to another and possibly an earlier ethnic group that was incorporated into the Sumerian population, but cannot be otherwise identified. This posited substratum is usually referred to as Proto-Euphratean or Ubaidian, but the linguistic evidence used to support its existence is still in question.

The home of the Sumerians was in Mesopotamia, the land between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers above the Persian Gulf. Their population was concentrated in the lower part of the alluvial plain that constitutes southern Mesopotamia and is generally referred to as Babylonia. Prominent among their cities were Eridu, Ur, Larsa, Uruk (biblical Erech), Bad-tibira, Lagash, Nina, Girsu, Umma, Shuruppak, Isin, and Nippur. Although walled settlements were known from earlier, Neolithic times in Mesopotamia, it appears that the cities of Sumer were unwalled in the fourth millennium, suggesting a relatively peaceful period.

In search of the earliest detectable form of government in Mesopotamia, Assyriologists have found evidence of an assembly of free adult citizens that convened on an ad hoc basis to make decisions for the good of the community. The assembly was bicameral, consisting of a council of elders and an assembly of all able-bodied men. The gathering of the assembly could be occasioned, for example, by offensive behavior of individuals that called for punitive action, large-scale projects such as canal digging that necessitated communal organization, or the threat of aggression by another city-state and the consequent need of leadership in armed resistance. In order to deal with such emergencies the assembly would choose a leader to carry out its decisions.[8]

7. For Mesopotamian chronology before the Dynasty of Akkad, I follow Edith Porada, "The Relative Chronology of Mesopotamia, part 1: Seals and Trade (6000–1600 B.C.)," in *Chronologies in Old World Archaeology*, ed. Robert W. Ehrich (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965), 133–200; for Akkad and thereafter, John A. Brinkman, "Mesopotamian Chronology of the Historical Period," in A. Leo Oppenheim, *Ancient Mesopotamia: Portrait of a Dead Civilization*, rev. ed. completed by Erica Reiner (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977), 335–48.

8. This reconstruction derives from the research of Thorkild Jacobsen, especially two essays in *Toward the Image of Tammuz and Other Essays on Mesopotamian History and Culture*, ed. William L. Moran, Harvard Semitic Series 21 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1970): "Primitive Democracy in Ancient Mesopotamia" (pp. 157–70; reprinted from *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 2 [1943]: 159–72) and "Early Political Development in Mesopotamia" (pp. 132–56; reprinted from *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie* 52 [1957]: 91–140). Additional references to these essays are cited according to the pagination of *Toward the Image of Tammuz*.

Several Sumerian words are employed for offices of leadership at this early period. While at first the office of *en* may have included political power, it soon came to be primarily associated with the cult; and the term came to mean "high priest" or "high priestess," that is, the spiritual head of the temple, whose residence was within the temple precincts. The *lugal* ("big man") was from the outset more of a political office, though not exclusively so. The *lugal* resided in his own dwelling, separate from the temple, known as the *é-gal* ("big house"), which became the palace, as the *lugal* became the equivalent of the Mesopotamian king. Perhaps from his role as war leader, his position grew in importance until he was the most powerful person in his city-state; and his office became hereditary. A third term, *ensí*, is not entirely clear, but may refer to a more limited position, perhaps that of an administrator of a city under the wider authority of a *lugal* when a larger sphere of authority was operative. Some believe that another term, *nin*, referred at first to the female counterpart of both the *en* and the *lugal*; but, like *en*, it may have originally been used of either sex, since it appears in the names of male gods (e.g., Ningirsu, Ninurta).

If one were to think in terms of the modern distinction between secular and sacred, then the early Sumerian homeland should be viewed as a sacred milieu. The center of the city was the temple, the home of the chief deity of the city, often with smaller temples dedicated to the spouse or children of the city deity. The ruler and the people alike viewed themselves as servants of this deity. Temple property and, indeed, the entire city were seen as the property of the deity; a highly organized bureaucracy administered the temple cult, land, industry, and commerce. In older scholarship a picture was drawn of a temple economy in which in very early times the temple owned all the land.[9] This was an exaggeration, since evidence of private ownership of land appears in Early Dynastic texts.[10] It may be that the larger part of the land was owned by the temples in the early periods in southern Babylonia, where the Sumerians were dominant, while private property was more extensive in northern Babylonia, which was dominated by Semites.[11]

9. For a clear statement see Adam Falkenstein, "The Sumerian Temple City," intro. and trans. by Maria deJ. Ellis, *Monographs of the Ancient Near East* 1/1 (1974): 1–21. The theory was first developed by Anton Deimel in a 1920s series of articles in *Orientalia*. A critique that includes a survey of much of the literature may be found in Benjamin Foster, "A New Look at the Sumerian Temple State," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 24 (1981): 225–41.

10. A large part of this research is published in Russian. An English summary of some of it may be found in Igor M. Diakonoff, "Structure of Society and State in Early Dynastic Sumer," *Monographs of the Ancient Near East* 1/3 (1974): 1–16.

11. This is the proposal of Dietz O. Edzard, "The Early Dynastic Period," in *The Near East: The Early Civilizations*, ed. Jean Bottéro, Elena Cassin, and Jean Vercoutter (New York: Delacorte, 1967), 74–77.

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In the south, with the Sumerian system of city-states, the leading deity of the capital of a city-state held authority over the entire region, while the deities of lesser cities and towns within it were honored locally in their own areas.[12] The religious capital of Sumer was the city of Nippur, the home of Enlil. According to Sumerian texts, the assembly of the gods met at Nippur to receive the nomination of a king by his city deity and to confer upon him the kingship. It may be that an assembly of free citizens of all Sumer met in Nippur to make decisions, perhaps from the late Protoliterate period through the first phase of the Early Dynastic period that followed.[13] Indications of this are found in the observations that Nippur remained aloof when warfare raged among other cities of Sumer, that no ruling dynasty claimed it as their capital, and yet that control of Nippur gave a ruler claim to control over all of Sumer and Akkad.

The Sumerians worshiped a number of important deities. An (or Anu), whose home was at Uruk, was regarded as the highest god of the pantheon, though by the time of the known texts he had receded to a rather inactive role. His name is also the word for "sky." Royal authority was his, and the institution of kingship was first granted by him. The actual ruler of the Sumerian pantheon was Enlil ("lord wind"), who lived in his temple, Ekur, in Nippur. Enlil was viewed both as the powerful provider for his people and the fearful executor of the judgmental decrees of the divine council. Also prestigious among the deities was Enki, the god of wisdom and cunning. He was also the god of the watery deep, the Abzu, and had his home at Eridu. The goddess Ninhursag (also known as Ninmah or Nintur) was more prominent than Enki at first, though her prominence later waned. Sometimes considered the spouse of Enlil, she was viewed as a divine mother by early Sumerian kings, who spoke of themselves as being nourished by her milk. Nanna, the moon god, resided at Ur; and Utu, the sun god, at Larsa (and at Sippar in the north). Enlil's son, Ninurta, god of victorious warfare and plant and animal fertility, had his temple, Eshumesha, at Nippur and was virtually identified with Ningirsu, whose temple, Eninnu, was at Girsu.[14] Nanshe was the goddess of fish and birds and the interpreter of dreams. The goddess Inanna had her temple, Eanna, at Uruk. This multifaceted goddess represented the productivity of the storehouse, thunderstorms, war, and the morning and evening stars. Identified early with Akkadian Ishtar, she finally became the most important goddess in all of western Asia.

12. Piotr Steinkeller, "Mesopotamia, History of (Third Millennium)," in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, ed. David N. Freedman et al., 6 vols. (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 4:725. I am grateful to Prof. Steinkeller for providing me with a prepublication copy of this essay.

13. Jacobsen, "Early Political Development," 139–41.

14. Jerrold S. Cooper, *The Return of Ninurta to Nippur*, Analecta Orientalia 52 (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute Press, 1978), 10–11.

Of the published Sumerian literary compositions, there are about twenty that feature gods and goddesses and have been classified in modern terms as myths. These compositions are vital for the modern effort to reconstruct the understanding of reality of the ancient Sumerians, for the stories a people tell are a primary avenue to the core concepts of their culture.[15] Yet this avenue, in the case of the Sumerians, is not well lighted for several reasons: the uncertainties that persist about the translation of the texts, the settings in which the stories were delivered, and their sociological function. Above and beyond these difficulties, some of which are gradually being ameliorated, stands the awesome gap that separates our modern Western worldview from that of the ancient Mesopotamians.

For these reasons, caution is needed lest we draw interpretive conclusions too quickly from the Sumerian texts. For example, the myth usually entitled "Enlil and Ninlil" tells of the young goddess Ninlil bathing in a canal of Nippur, against her mother's counsel. Enlil, upon seeing her, propositions her and carries out his intention, overriding her mild demur. Through the union Ninlil is impregnated with the moon god Nanna. Subsequently Enlil is banished from Nippur by the assembly of gods because of his deed. En route to the netherworld, Ninlil follows him and allows him (under the guise of three other individuals) to impregnate her three more times with three netherworld deities. The tale concludes with a declaration of praise to Enlil. How is this myth to be understood? From the section recounting Enlil's banishment, one scholar finds evidence of Sumer's high moral standards;[16] but this stands in tension with the conclusion to the myth where Enlil is extolled as the sovereign one who promotes fertility. In a deeper reading of the text, another scholar perceives a "strange undertone of inevitability."[17] Yet such levels of meaning are still largely elusive. Still another scholar writes more recently of this myth: "It does not yet seem possible to understand the composition's more profound mythological meanings."[18]

One of the myths in which the god Enki is central, "Enki and the World

15. Livia Polanyi, "What Stories Can Tell Us about Their Teller's World," *Poetics Today* 2 (1981): 98–99.

16. Kramer, *From the Poetry of Sumer*, 40.

17. Thorkild Jacobsen, "*Sumerian Mythology*: A Review Article," in *Toward the Image of Tammuz and Other Essays on Mesopotamian History and Culture*, ed. William L. Moran, Harvard Semitic Series 21 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1970), 127 (reprinted from *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 5 [1946]: 128–52).

18. Jerrold S. Cooper, "Review of *Enlil und Ninlil: Ein sumerischer Mythos aus Nippur* by Hermann Behrens," *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* 32 (1980): 180.

Order," opens with praise and self-praise to Enki. Then the god pronounces blessing on Sumer, the city of Ur, and the lands of Meluhha and Dilmun. Elam and Marhashi are dealt with severely, but a gift is given to the Martu. Essential aspects of human life and the natural environment are then set in place. At this point the goddess Inanna comes before Enki to complain that she has been slighted in the distribution of divine prerogatives, in comparison with her sister deities. Enki replies by calling Inanna's attention back to the prerogatives that she has already received. Unfortunately the ending of the text is too fragmentary to allow for a meaningful translation, so that Inanna's response is uncertain.

In one of the myths of Inanna, "Inanna and Enki," the theme of the goddess's desire for increased prerogatives is also central. Such prerogatives are viewed as the possession of divinely ordained decrees covering over one hundred aspects of civilization and human life. The Sumerian term for these is *me*.[19] In order to obtain the *me*, Inanna journeys by boat to the Abzu, the watery dwelling of Enki, who has the decrees in his care. She is received and dined by Enki and, during the banquet, while he is drunk, he gives her all of the divine *me*. She promptly loads them on her boat and sets out for her home, Uruk. Upon regaining his sobriety, Enki realizes what he has done and dispatches his messenger and a group of sea monsters to overtake Inanna and recover the *me*. While they do overtake her at several stops, each time she is successful, with the help of the god Ninshubur, in retaining her prized cargo, which she finally brings safely to Uruk amid celebration.

In "Enki and the World Order," the aspiration of Inanna for a wider dominion seems to be focal to the story. In "Inanna and Enki," the goddess obtains all of the *me* and transports them to Uruk, likely reflecting the elevation of Uruk or Inanna or both at some historical point. In another composition, a hymn known as "The Exaltation of Inanna," the goddess is extolled as the possessor of all of the *me*. She is the "Lady of all the me's . . . the guardian of all the great me's!"[20] In still another hymn, "the holy crown of An has been placed upon (her) head . . . the holy scepter of An has been placed in her hand."[21] In these several myths and hymns there seem to be glimpses into the

19. There have been many studies of the meaning of Sumerian *me*. A recent discussion is Gertrud Farber-Flügge, *Der Mythos "Inanna und Enki" unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Liste der me*, Studia Pohl 10 (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute Press, 1973), with references to previous literature on p. 116 n. 121, to which should be added William W. Hallo and Johannes J. A. van Dijk, *The Exaltation of Inanna*, Yale Near Eastern Researches 3 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968), 49–50 (Hallo's view).

20. Hallo and van Dijk, *Exaltation of Inanna*, 15 (lines 1, 6).

21. Åke W. Sjöberg, "A Hymn to Inanna and Her Self-Praise," *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* 40 (1988): 169 (1:6, 8).

rise of Inanna in the Mesopotamian pantheon, a process that can be traced in later texts about her Semitic counterpart, Ishtar.[22]

Early Dynastic Period

The first period for which written records can be employed to any extent is known as Early Dynastic. By this time the basic shape of Sumerian culture had been determined, and there are indications that its high point had already been reached and decline had set in. The continuity of the civilization of the Early Dynastic age with the earlier period is shown by the persistence of styles in pottery and cylinder-seal manufacturing and the ongoing function of the scribal schools. New departures in government are indicated by the establishment of the institution of kingship and the erection of palaces later in Early Dynastic times (at Kish, Mari, and possibly Eridu). Increased warfare among city-states is attested by the appearance of city walls. While the Sumerians were dominant during this period, at least in the southern area, there is evidence that suggests a strong Semitic influence in northern Babylonia (in the vicinity of Kish and Shuruppak [modern Fara]).[23] As far back as evidence allows one to trace the presence of Semites alongside Sumerians in Mesopotamia, it seems that the military conflicts that occurred between them were not motivated primarily by ethnic differences, but by other factors.[24]

The Early Dynastic period is usually divided into three parts: Early Dynastic I (2900–2750), Early Dynastic II (2750–2600), and Early Dynastic III (subdivided into IIIA [2600–2500] and IIIB [2500–2335]). Textual evidence for centers of political influence during the early phases of the Early Dynastic age comes primarily from the Sumerian King List, which contains a listing of political centers and rulers with incredibly long reigns, followed by a reference to the flood, and then a resumption of political centers and their successive kings, written in a different style, with lengths of reigns that decrease until they are realistic by our standards. In addition to the inflated reigns of earlier kings, the king list pictures a unified Sumer and Akkad with one ruler following another, a picture that is not historical. Even more significant for the use of this text for historical reconstruction is the question

22. Hallo and van Dijk, *Exaltation of Inanna*, 48–49, 60–61.

23. Robert D. Biggs, "Semitic Names in the Fara Period," *Orientalia* 36 (1967): 55–66.

24. Thorkild Jacobsen, "The Assumed Conflict between the Sumerians and Semites in Early Mesopotamian History," in *Toward the Image of Tammuz and Other Essays on Mesopotamian History and Culture*, ed. William L. Moran, Harvard Semitic Series 21 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1970), 187–92 (reprinted from *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 59 [1939]: 485–95).

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of its literary genre and especially its purpose.[25] It is a literary text and not a historical one—but, then, neither is any Sumerian text, at least in any sense in which we would use the term. Yet none of these qualifications amounts to saying that the individuals named in the text were not historical persons who did, in fact, occupy a position of authority in their given cities. The opposite can be demonstrated in some cases, apart from the king list. Nevertheless, the Early Dynastic centers of authority and individual rulers known primarily from the Sumerian King List must be viewed with the understanding that the boundary between literary fiction and historical reality is ambiguous.

The first seat of Mesopotamian kingship after the flood was at Kish according to the king list, which may be reflected in the usage of the title "King of Kish" by later Mesopotamian monarchs. Etana, an early king of Kish (many feel the earliest, though he does not occupy the first position in the king list), is described as "the one who consolidated all lands,"[26] seemingly an allusion to a unifying of the country under his rule. He is also spoken of as "the one who to heaven ascended,"[27] a reference to the myth, known from Akkadian sources, of Etana's flight to heaven with the aid of an eagle to obtain a plant that would remedy his childlessness. The ending of the myth is lost.[28] A later successor of Etana in the king list, Enmebaraggesi, is named in two inscriptions that confirm the historicity of his reign.

The city succeeding Kish as the center of power was Uruk, to the south. The second ruler in the First Dynasty of Uruk, Enmerkar, is said in the king list to have built Uruk. Since the capital of his father, the founder of the dynasty, is said to have been located in Eanna, the temple of Inanna, this could suggest a site with a holy place that was later expanded into an urban center, though other interpretations are possible. Enmerkar is the first of four successive kings who are celebrated in later heroic literature. In several tales he is found in conflict with the ruler of Aratta (a power far to the east), emerging victorious and establishing a trade relationship whereby he provides for the needs of his people. Lugalbanda, Enmerkar's successor, is a brave and swift messenger who assists Enmerkar in confrontations with Aratta and also negotiates his own adventures.

25. Piotr Michalowski, "History as Charter: Some Observations on the Sumerian King List," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 103 (1983): 237–48.

26. Thorkild Jacobsen, *The Sumerian King List*, Assyriological Studies 11 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1939), 81 (2:18).

27. Ibid. (2:16–17).

28. Translations of texts referred to in the essay, when such are not cited, can be located through the list of suggested readings appended to this essay, in many cases most conveniently in the volumes by Jacobsen (*Harps*), Kramer (*Sumerians*), and Pritchard (*ANET*).

The next king of Uruk, Dumuzi (Babylonian Tammuz), is elevated to the level of deity as he becomes the husband of the goddess Inanna, their love, courtship, and marriage being extolled in the literature. Their fortunes turn, however, when Inanna is put to death upon her visit to the underworld. Allowed to return and find a substitute, she finally comes upon her husband Dumuzi, who is not lamenting for her. Enraged, she designates him; and, after twice eluding his captors, he is taken off in her place. Alternately, in another myth, Dumuzi is killed by outsiders upon whom Inanna takes revenge. The Dumuzi/Tammuz cult was practiced widely and long throughout the ancient Near East. It is referred to in the Bible in Ezekiel 8:14.

The best known of the kings of the First Dynasty of Uruk was Gilgamesh (originally Bilgamesh in Sumerian), whose exploits were rehearsed in several literary compositions. In "Gilgamesh and Agga," Gilgamesh and his servant Enkidu, together with the army of Uruk, face a siege against their city by the forces of Kish, led by Agga (or Akka), their king. Uruk triumphs as Agga is captured in the midst of his army by a successful sortie led by Enkidu.[29] Gilgamesh, apparently in response to an earlier kindness of Agga, then releases Agga to return to his own city. "Gilgamesh and Huwawa" tells of Gilgamesh (together with Enkidu, seven spirits appointed by Utu, and fifty chosen men) setting out to the Cedar Forest to establish his enduring fame. Upon arriving after a dangerous journey, Gilgamesh immediately cuts down a cedar, which wakes the monster Huwawa, guardian of the forest. The latter dons his radiance and goes forth to momentarily overwhelm Gilgamesh. Being restored, Gilgamesh tricks Huwawa into giving up his protective auras by a ruse (which varies among the versions of the story). Gilgamesh then pities the creature and would spare him, but Enkidu is opposed and slays Huwawa, an action that incurs Enlil's disapproval.

Other Sumerian stories of Gilgamesh include the following. The poorly preserved "Gilgamesh and the Bull of Heaven" tells how the Bull of Heaven is sent by Inanna against Uruk after she obtains permission to do so from An by threatening to appeal to the other gods if he refuses. "The Death of Gilgamesh" relates Enlil's address to Gilgamesh to the effect that he is not destined for immortality (though he has been granted dominion and heroism); it then tells of Gilgamesh's death, lists Gilgamesh's family and servants, and recounts how Gilgamesh made offerings to the gods for them. "Gilgamesh, Enkidu, and the Netherworld" tells of Inanna bringing a *huluppu* tree to her city and planting it. After it was taken over by three creatures whom she could

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29. Jacob Klein, "The Capture of Agga by Gilgameš (GA 81 and 99)," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 103 (1983): 201–4, amplifying the interpretation of Jacobsen, "Early Political Development," 381–82 n. 55.

not deal with, Gilgamesh delivered the tree back to her and then had two implements (*pukku* and *mekkū*) made for himself from it. With these he in some way (how is not clear) oppressed the people of Uruk. When the implements fell into the netherworld, Gilgamesh was unable to retrieve them; so Enkidu volunteered to do so. Because he failed to heed Gilgamesh's warnings, he was held fast. Gilgamesh obtained help from Enki and (through Enki) from Utu, so that Enkidu's spirit was permitted to return and converse with Gilgamesh. Enkidu described the netherworld as he had experienced it.

Stories of Gilgamesh are best known from an Akkadian version of twelve tablets with copies dating to the seventh century.[30] The final half of the last Sumerian story mentioned above was the direct source of the twelfth tablet of this Akkadian version, which is a literal translation of the Sumerian that fits only awkwardly with the eleven tablets that precede it in the Akkadian. Those eleven tablets constitute an integrated composition of considerable literary artistry, which has been shown to derive from a creative development of earlier sources tracing back, in part, to some of the Sumerian tales outlined above.[31]

Probably the best known section of the Akkadian epic, because of its similarity to the biblical account in Genesis 6–9, is the flood story in the eleventh tablet. The flood story can be traced back to Sumerian through a fragmentary tablet only one-third of which has been preserved.[32] In this Sumerian text, Gilgamesh is not mentioned, suggesting that the flood story was later combined with the Gilgamesh traditions. The text tells of the creation of humans and animals, the institution of kingship in five antediluvian cities under the care of the tutelary deities, the decision of the divine council to send the flood, communication about the flood to the man Ziusudra, the coming of the flood, Ziusudra's survival in a boat, his offering of sacrifice, and his endowment with eternal life and settlement in the land of Dilmun.[33]

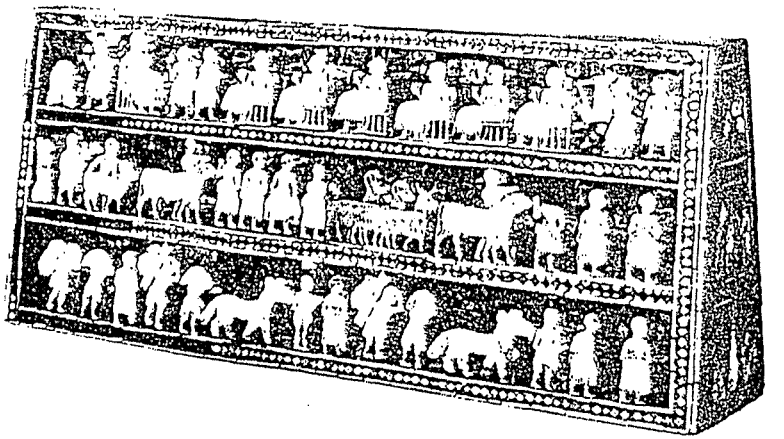
In the king list Uruk was succeeded by Ur, whose kings, unlike those of Uruk and Etana of Kish, are not known from later literary works. The first

30. A recent, accessible translation of the first eleven tablets of this version is Maureen G. Kovacs, *The Epic of Gilgamesh* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1989).

31. Samuel N. Kramer, "The Epic of Gilgameš and Its Sumerian Sources: A Study in Literary Evolution," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 64 (1944): 7–23, 83; Jeffrey H. Tigay, *The Evolution of the Gilgamesh Epic* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1982).

32. Samuel N. Kramer, "The Sumerian Deluge Myth: Reviewed and Revised," *Anatolian Studies* 33 (1983): 115–21, interacting extensively with Miguel Civil, "The Sumerian Flood Story," in Wilfred G. Lambert and Alan R. Millard, *Atra-ḫasīs: The Babylonian Story of the Flood* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1969), 138–45, 167–72; and Thorkild Jacobsen, "The Eridu Genesis," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 100 (1981): 513–29.

33. Usually identified with the island of Bahrain in the Persian Gulf, though this is disputed for the period before the late third millennium; Theresa Howard-Carter, "The Tangible Evidence for the Earliest Dilmun," *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* 33 (1981): 210–23.



"Peace" panel of the sounding box of a harp (the "Standard of Ur"). 2500 B.C. (height: 8"; length: 19")
Courtesy of the British Museum

two, Mesannepada and Annepada, however, have been attested on a marble temple inscription. The names of two other rulers, Akalamdug and Meskalamdug (not known from the Sumerian King List, perhaps because they ruled before Ur gained wide hegemony), have been found in Ur's royal burial ground.

The burial ground, excavated by Sir Leonard Woolley, was a remarkable discovery. The finds include a golden replica of a man's hairstyle from King Meskalamdug's grave; the golden head of a bull with eyes, beard, and horn tips made of lapis lazuli attached to the sounding box of a lyre; two male goats standing upright, each with its front legs in a small tree; mosaic inlays of war and celebration scenes in an artifact that has come to be called the "Standard of Ur"; the elaborate headdress of Queen Puabi (earlier read as Shubad); and other magnificent objects.[34] Also stirring, in a gruesome way, is Woolley's discovery of the burial of a retinue of royal servants with the royal family upon the death of their king. Upward of eighty persons were found buried in one chamber. It is uncertain whether this was an authentic Sumerian custom, for it was apparently rare and cannot be attested after this time.

34. Color prints of some of the most noteworthy of these may be found in Peter R. S. Moorey, *Ur "of the Chaldees": A Revised and Updated Edition of Sir Leonard Woolley's Excavations at Ur* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1982), 51–103.

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In Early Dynastic III the institution of kingship with dynastic succession was firmly established. Pressure from the Elamites to the east, already reflected in stories of earlier rulers, mounted. Significant for the historian is the increase in contemporary documents that can be relatively well understood and whose contents can be expected to yield more historical information, especially royal inscriptions. The bulk of these documents comes from the city-state of Lagash. In the shifting balance of power, there was a union of Uruk and Ur, which later included Umma, and perhaps an alliance between Kish and Akshak to the north, with Lagash apparently standing alone.[35] The inscriptions repeatedly draw attention to conflict between Lagash and Umma over the territory between them, known as the *guedinna* ("the edge of the plain"), land that was productive for agriculture. The sources indicate that this dispute was arbitrated earlier by Mesalim (often spelled Mesilim), a ruler who bore the title "King of Kish." Rulers of Lagash and Umma entered into the ongoing dispute throughout the remainder of the Early Dynastic age and beyond.

Ur-Nanshe, the founder of the First Dynasty of Lagash, left numerous short inscriptions on stone recounting his temple building and other activities. Eannatum (also spelled Eanatum), his grandson, briefly assumed the title "King of Kish" early in his reign. His best known monument is the "Stele of Vultures," named for the birds of prey that are depicted feasting on his conquered enemies. One side of the sculpture portrays the king and the phalanx of his army, and the other has the king's god, Ningirsu, holding the king's enemies in a net. Eannatum fought the armies of Kish, Akshak, and Mari within his own state of Lagash; thus, his warfare was defensive.

UruKAgina[36] followed the last of Ur-Nanshe's dynasty to the rulership of Lagash. The fortunes of Lagash had been in decline since the reign of Eannatum, and it is likely that many social abuses had come in the wake of waning military power. UruKAgina moved to counter these abuses and is remembered for his reforms (preserved in two copies). He reversed abuses of royal authority, encroachments on temple lands and personnel, oppression of workers, excessive collection of revenue, mistreatment of the poor and defenseless, and undesirable family practices. All of these reforms he claims he carried out on behalf of Ningirsu, whose prerogatives he was restoring.

The final defeat of Lagash and its ruler, UruKAgina, in the Early Dynastic period came at the hands of Lugalzagesi, *ensi* of Umma. Lugalzagesi achieved

35. This follows Jerrold S. Cooper, "Reconstructing History from Ancient Inscriptions: The Lagash-Umma Border Conflict," *Sources from the Ancient Near East* 2/1 (1983): 8–9.

36. The earlier reading of this ruler's name, Urukagina, has been revised to Uruinimgina; but the revision is in dispute. The transcription employed here acknowledges this difference of opinion.

further success, to the extent that he proclaimed himself "King of Uruk"[37] and "King of Sumer," identified himself with the chief deities of all of Sumer, and claimed recognition by peoples from the Persian Gulf to the Mediterranean. He expressed imperial aspirations that at least became reality in the following period, though likely not during his reign.

Kingdom of Akkad

During the next period Semites were politically dominant in Mesopotamia. Their presence is discernible from the earliest documentable times, with greater concentration in the north. Early rulers of Kish were Semitic. Yet in the present period, not only were the rulers Semitic, they installed a network of Semitic authorities under them (though also allowing native rulers to remain); their language was used in official inscriptions alongside Sumerian; and their capital city, Akkad (often spelled Agade, in distinction from the region of Akkad), came to dominate all of Mesopotamia.

The founder of the Dynasty of Akkad was Sargon, also known as Sargon the Great (2334–2279). According to later tradition, he was born in secret and cast adrift on the Euphrates in a reed basket from which he was taken up and reared as a gardener until he was favored by the goddess Ishtar and given a place in the court of King Ur-Zababa of Kish. From this position, he established himself as ruler at a new capital, Akkad, the location of which has not been determined, though it may have been in the vicinity of Babylon. The sequence of his conquests is not clear. Certainly his victory over Lugalzagesi was pivotal. Records entered in Enlil's temple at Nippur and faithfully copied there picture campaigns from the Persian Gulf to the Mediterranean and beyond this to the east and north.

While vigorously pursuing military dominance, Sargon showed respect for Sumerian cultural and religious traditions. For example, he installed his own daughter Enheduanna in the office of high priestess of the moon god Nanna at Ur. (This practice was subsequently followed by Babylonian rulers to the time of Nabonidus [555–539].) Possessed of extraordinary literary ability, Enheduanna left two collections of hymns that she authored, extolling in one case the goddess Inanna and in the other the temples of Sumer and Akkad. It may be that certain literary features of these hymns reflect a deliberate movement of Sargon carried forth by his daughter to equate Sumerian Inanna and Semitic Ishtar.[38] This syncretism of Sumerian and Semitic traditions was to become characteristic of ancient Mesopotamian civilization to the extent that

37. Lugalzagesi may have ruled Uruk by virtue of its close ties with Umma, rather than by conquest; Cooper, "Reconstructing History," 34.

38. Hallo and van Dijk, *Exaltation of Inanna*, 11.

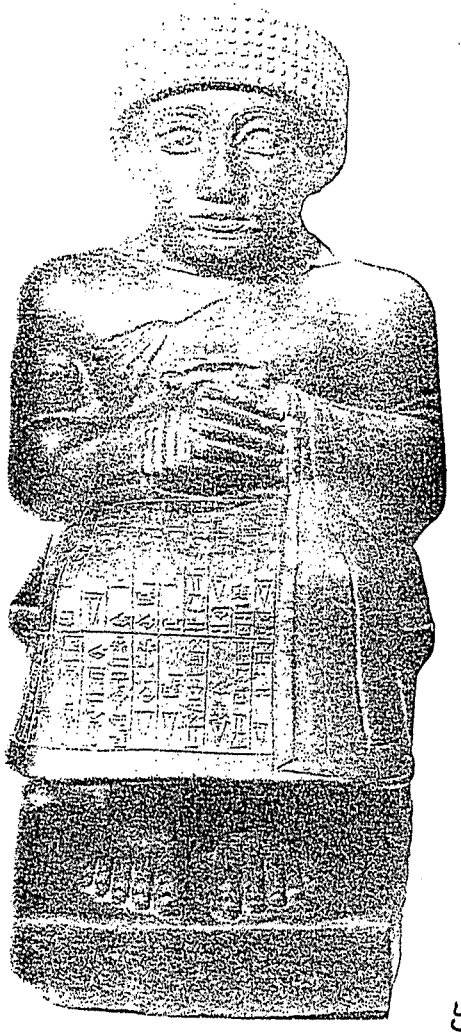
in later times, when the Sumerians had ceased to exist as a distinct people and their language had passed from living usage, the two streams are virtually impossible to separate, so that Assyriologists are accustomed to speaking of the symbiosis of the two.

Sargon's successors had to deal with repeated revolts, which are attested already in the later years of his own reign. The third ruler to follow Sargon, Naram-Sin (2254–2218), was compared to his forebear in greatness. In addition to the titles of Sargon ("King of Akkad," "King of Kish," "King of the Land" [i.e., Sumer]), Naram-Sin styled himself "King of the Four Quarters" (i.e., universal ruler); and then, most significantly, he placed before his name the cuneiform sign for divinity. This practice was continued by a few later rulers in Mesopotamia, but a concept of divine kingship never developed in any full sense of the term, as it did, for example, in Egypt. Nor is its significance well understood. While Naram-Sin campaigned in all directions and could boast of many triumphs, his dominion was an uneasy one. Extensive traditions grew up around his reign, as with Sargon, that treated his success with ambivalence. His successor, Shar-kali-sharri, saw the kingdom of Akkad disintegrating.

After several decades during which general anarchy seems to have prevailed, the final destruction came in the reign of Naram-Sin according to a Sumerian composition known as the "Curse of Akkad." This text describes the earlier favor of Enlil and the prosperity of Akkad, and then sacrilege on the part of Naram-Sin in invading Nippur and desecrating Enlil's sanctuary, the Ekur. In his rage Enlil is said to have brought in the foreign Gutians as his instrument of judgment. (In actual fact, in addition to the Gutian invasion, internal disruption and the opposition of the Elamites, Hurrians, and Lullubi were also involved in the fall of Akkad.) The devastation the Gutians effected is portrayed in the "Curse of Akkad." In order to calm Enlil, eight of the leading deities pronounced a curse on Akkad, which was immediately carried out. In the worldview of the ancient Mesopotamian, the events of history were understood to be a playing out on the human level of the decisions made on the divine plane. Noteworthy in this composition is the attribution of the fall of Akkad to the act of Naram-Sin. The direct linking of human action with divine action as cause and consequence is not without parallel in Mesopotamian literature, especially later in the first millennium; but such a connection is not typical earlier, for example, in the Sumerian King List, in city laments (to be discussed below), or in Ur III royal correspondence.[39] There, divine action, as when gods or goddesses pronounce destruction, appears to be unrelated to human responsibility and arbitrary, perhaps inevitable.[40]

39. Jerrold S. Cooper, *The Curse of Agade* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1983), 29–30.

The Gutians continued to make periodic raids into Mesopotamia from the Zagros Mountains for about half a century and exerted their power primarily in northern Babylonia. Continuity with the Sumerian past was maintained in the south, for example, in the Lagash region, where a succession of governors (*ensi*) retained autonomy.[41] The best known of these is Gudea, who engaged in many building activities at home and far-reaching foreign trade. Gudea's inscriptions include two large clay cylinders that have preserved the most extensive Sumerian literary composition recovered to date, containing close to fourteen hundred lines. The text commemorates Gudea's rebuilding of the Eninnu temple of Ningirsu at Girsu, which was at that time the capital of the city-state of La-



Statue of Gudea, ca. 2150 B.C. (height: 17.25")
Courtesy of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 1959

40. Cf. n. 17 above for Jacobsen's observation of the notion of inevitability in a mythological text.

41. It is generally believed that these rulers, the Second Dynasty of Lagash, were defeated and their dynasty brought to an end by the new Third Dynasty of Ur, which will be discussed shortly. There is evidence, however, that suggests that two of these governors, Gudea and Nammahni (also spelled Nammahani and Namhani), were contemporaries of the first king of the new Ur Dynasty, Ur-Nammu, indicating that Lagash lost its independence only during Ur-Nammu's reign; Piotr Steinkeller, "The Date of Gudea and His Dynasty," *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* 40 (1988): 47–53.

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gash.[42] Having been commissioned by Ningirsu in two dreams to build his temple, Gudea goes about his task carefully: he unites his people, obtains necessary materials and workers, completes the temple, and introduces the god and his consort to their new home.

The expulsion of the Gutians was accomplished by Utuhegal of Uruk. Their defeat opened the way for the resumption of Sumerian rule. It was not Utuhegal or his city-state of Uruk that was to exercise this rule, however. After seven years Utuhegal was overcome by one of his subordinates, Ur-Nammu (sometimes spelled Ur-Namma) of Ur.

Ur III Dynasty

The dominance of the city-state of Ur under the dynasty (2112–2004) founded by Ur-Nammu was a period of Sumerian renaissance. Ur's dominion encompassed southern and central Mesopotamia as far north as Sippar, extended further northward along the Tigris to a point slightly beyond Ashur and eastward into Elam (apparently at one point well beyond the capital of Susa), and included vassal states even further removed whose degree of dependence varied from one reign to another.[43] The kingdom was administered from Ur and, secondarily, from Uruk and Nippur. A highly organized bureaucracy made for a tight and effective administration that produced prosperity and security throughout a good two-thirds of the century-long reign of the dynasty. Building programs were extensive, and arts, literature, and education flourished.

The kingship of Ur-Nammu was acknowledged by the priesthood of Enlil at Nippur, and he took the new title of "King of Sumer and Akkad," indicating his rule over southern and central Mesopotamia as far as the Lower Diyala region. His coronation was celebrated in a literary genre, the royal hymn, which extolled the choice of the king by the gods.

Ur-Nammu has been credited with a collection of laws, but the author may have been his son Shulgi.[44] Several collections such as this have been

42. Earlier scholarship identified Tello as Lagash (which is modern al-Hiba); rather, Girsu is to be identified with the site of Tello; see Vaughn E. Crawford, "Lagash," *Iraq* 36 (1974): 29–35.

43. Piotr Steinkeller, "The Administrative and Economic Organization of the Ur III State: The Core and the Periphery," in *The Organization of Power: Aspects of Bureaucracy in the Ancient Near East*, ed. McGuire Gibson and Robert D. Biggs, 2d ed., Studies in Ancient Oriental Civilization 46 (Chicago: Oriental Institute, 1991), 30–41.

44. Johannes J. A. van Dijk, *apud* Fatma Yildiz, "A Tablet of Codex Ur-Nammu from Sippar," *Orientalia* 50 (1981): 93–94 n. 20a; Samuel N. Kramer, "The Ur-Nammu Law Code: Who Was Its Author?" *Orientalia* 52 (1983): 453–56; Steinkeller, "Administrative and Economic Organization," 21 n. 10.

recovered from Mesopotamia. They are usually called "codes," though they do not appear to have been documents that were referred to in the courts while actual cases were being decided. They were more likely what we would call scientific treatises on the law, which originated in the schools.[45] This is the earliest of these collections, of which the most famous is that of Hammurapi (often spelled Hammurabi) of Babylon. The "Ur-Nammu" laws, preserved only in small part, deal with situations similar to those of later times, but differ in that they impose financial penalties for bodily harm against other people, in contrast to death or mutilation comparable to the crime (the "eye for an eye" principle of talion) known from later Semitic collections.

Ur-Nammu's reign was filled with building activities. Royal residences, wharves, irrigation works, and temples that had fallen into disrepair under the Gutian domination were renewed. It was the prerogative of the king to rebuild the temples of the land, and this would customarily be done on the site of the previous temple complex, producing a layered structure as destruction levels were built upon. By the reign of Ur-Nammu, if not before (earlier evidence is lacking), renovation levels were deliberately constructed in this manner; and the ziggurat was born, a layered tower with a shrine presumed to have been on the top level. The ziggurat of the temple complex of Nanna at Ur is the best preserved, but Ur-Nammu also constructed ziggurats at Nippur, Uruk, Eridu, and other cities.

The reign of Ur-Nammu's son Shulgi was an illustrious one. That there were military campaigns is shown by year-date formulas,[46] and it appears that these were largely successful. Trade routes were reopened, and trade and industry prospered; so did literature and the scribal schools. Although most copies of Sumerian literature come from the later Old Babylonian period, it is clear that much of it was created at this time. The schools of Nippur and Ur are accredited to Shulgi, and the king claimed to have been trained as a scribe, a rare boast even for a Mesopotamian king. Shulgi resumed the title "King of the Four Quarters" alongside his father's "King of Sumer and

45. Fritz R. Kraus, "Ein zentrales Problem des altmesopotamischen Rechtes: Was ist der Codex Hammu-rabi?" *Genava* 8 (1960): 283–96; Jean Bottéro, "Le 'Code' de Hammurabi," *Annali della Scuola normale superiore de Pisa* 12 (1982): 409–44 (now available in English as "The 'Code' of Hammurabi," in *Mesopotamia: Writing, Reasoning, and the Gods*, trans. Zainab Bahrani and Marc Van De Mieroop [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992], 156–84); Raymond Westbrook, "Cuneiform Law Codes and the Origins of Legislation," *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie* 79 (1989): 200–222.

46. In Sumer from the Akkad period through the Old Babylonian period, years, instead of being numbered as in our modern designations, derived their names from noteworthy events that took place in the preceding years, a practice that Sumerologists refer to as "year-date formula" or "year-name."

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Akkad" and had himself treated as divine, like Naram-Sin. Shrines were established for him, and more royal hymns were written in his honor than for any other Mesopotamian monarch.

Two of Shulgi's sons, Amar-Sin and Shu-Sin, succeeded him to the throne; and both were deified. Little is known of Amar-Sin's reign; he died of a "shoebite," presumably a foot disease. A people who had been mentioned in earlier periods appear during the reign of Shu-Sin as a serious threat. They are the Semites from west of the Euphrates, known generally as the Amorites (*Martu* in Sumerian, *Amurrum* in Akkadian). Shu-Sin's inscriptions tell of his building an extensive wall somewhere between Ur and Mari, "which keeps away the Tidnum" (one of the Amorite tribes). His efforts were less than effective, so much so that his successor, Ibbi-Sin, was forced to build walls and fortifications around even the districts of Ur and Nippur. Gradually one after another of Ur's provinces withdrew their loyalty, and the kingdom was lost. It was an army from the east, from Elam and Shimashki,[47] that sacked Ur and led Ibbi-Sin away as a captive.

Isin-Larsa Period

The fall of the Ur III kingdom was not yet the end of Sumerian dominance, at least in the south; but it was the beginning of the end. With the fall of Ur, northern and central Mesopotamia were fragmented into competing kingdoms. In the south, where Sumerian culture was most deeply entrenched, a unity of sorts was maintained for about the next century by the city of Isin. Its first king, Ishbi-Erra (often spelled Ishbi-Irra) from Mari, had been a subordinate of Ibbi-Sin until he proclaimed himself ruler of Isin. Gaining control of Nippur, Uruk, Eridu, and, later in his reign, Ur itself, Ishbi-Erra took over the administrative system of Ur. He and his successors employed the Sumerian language in their official correspondence, though they themselves were Semites. Some of the Sumerian literature composed during this period has been recovered in excavations at Nippur, though there was undoubtedly much more than has been retrieved.

There are several compositions that can be classified as "city laments" that come from this period. One of these, the "Lamentation over the Destruction of Sumer and Ur," most clearly appears to have been written to legitimize the

47. The allies of the Elamites in the overthrow of Ur are generally referred to in the literature as the "Su people" (which has been understood in several different ways). For their identification as the people of Shimashki (a state that arose in southwestern Iran about the time of the Ur III Dynasty), see Piotr Steinkeller, "On the Identity of the Toponym LÚ.SU(.A)," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 108 (1988): 197–202.

Isin Dynasty by establishing its continuity with the Ur III kings.[48] Another that also has the city of Ur as its subject and likely had the same general purpose is the "Lamentation over the Destruction of Ur." It depicts devastation overtaking the cities of Sumer, including Ur itself: the goddess Ningal (consort of Nanna) poignantly lamenting her inability to turn An, Enlil, and the divine council from their decree of destruction; the judgment falling like a mighty storm; Ur lying in ruins in the aftermath; Ningal bewailing her loss; and an appeal to Ningal and Nanna to return to their city and let it be rebuilt. Two other city laments can be precisely dated during the First Isin Dynasty, for they both contain a reference to a later ruler of that dynasty, Ishme-Dagan. These are the "Uruk Lament" and the "Nippur Lament."[49] The "Eridu Lament" may also date to the same reign, though this is not demonstrable.[50] Each of the city laments concludes with a prayer for the return of the city deity or deities and, thus, for restored favor on the city. Since they all probably date to the First Isin Dynasty, it would seem that they all had the same underlying purpose. As the restoration of the cities of Sumer was called for and the deities of these cities invoked, the rulers of the city of Isin who were promoting this restoration would be affirmed as the legitimate successors to kingship over Sumer.

Under Ishme-Dagan, the fourth ruler in the Dynasty of Ishbi-Erra, there appear again the efforts of the king to abolish social grievances, as with Uru-KAgina of Lagash in earlier times. That this should be necessary may speak of growing unrest in the kingdom of Isin; this is supported by references in texts from the reign of Ishme-Dagan to the raids of the Amorites and to a defeat of that king at the gates of Kish.

Lipit-Ishtar (sometimes spelled Lipit-Eshtar), son of Ishme-Dagan and last member of the Dynasty of Ishbi-Erra, left a collection of laws set between a prologue and an epilogue, a pattern seen in the later and better known laws of Hammurapi. Lipit-Ishtar is presented in the prologue as "the wise shepherd" (a common figure for Mesopotamian kings) who is commissioned "to establish justice in the land" (a phrase that may refer to debt an-

48. Piotr Michalowski, *The Lamentation over the Destruction of Sumer and Ur*, Mesopotamian Civilizations 1 (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1989), 6–8; idem, "History as Charter," 242.

49. M. W. Green, "The Uruk Lament," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 104 (1984): 275–76 (12:9, 14); an edition of the "Nippur Lament" is being prepared by H. L. J. Vanstiphout. I know of the mention of Ishme-Dagan in the latter through Michalowski, *Lamentation over the Destruction of Sumer and Ur*, 6.

50. M. W. Green, "The Eridu Lament," *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* 30 (1978): 127–67. Other, more fragmentary compositions may also belong to this category; but these are the main extant city laments.

nulment). As with the earlier laws of Ur-Nammu, financial penalties are imposed for damages.

The measure of centralization in the Sumerian south that Isin had been able to maintain ended when Gungunum, an Amorite ruler of Larsa, took control of Ur and then Uruk. Later, Nippur, which had passed back and forth between Isin and Larsa, came under the control of Larsa; and finally Isin itself fell to Rim-Sin, the third of a series of Elamite rulers and the last king of Larsa. Rim-Sin attached great importance to the event, dating documents from the last thirty years of his reign by it. It did not prove to be so significant, however. The end of Isin's dominance, actually signaled by the transfer of Ur to Larsa under Gungunum, inaugurated a period of fragmentation among competing cities that would end only with the ascendancy of Babylon under Hammurapi (1792–1750).

Sumer's Legacy

Although the Sumerians no longer existed as a distinct political entity after the conquest of Mesopotamia by Hammurapi of Babylon, their influence lived on. The vast bulk of literature composed in Sumerian that has been excavated so far derives from the Old Babylonian period. The Sumerian language, although it died out as a living language at least by this time, if not earlier, continued in use as a religious and literary language for more than a millennium. The civilization of the Semites who succeeded the Sumerians as the rulers of Mesopotamia was indelibly marked by that which was Sumerian. As it is put in an analysis of the Semitic side of ancient Mesopotamia: "The Sumerians left their imprint in varying degrees on all things Mesopotamian."[51]

In the introduction to this essay, I listed some of the specific items in world civilization that probably derive from Sumerian origins. Yet such a listing can in no way adequately portray the debt of later civilizations to the Sumerians, for "to reckon only with those Mesopotamian relics that have survived up to now is like counting the pieces of furniture inherited from remote ancestors, forgetting that the ancestors have shaped the lives of our forefathers and, indirectly, our own life."[52]

The Western world owes a debt to the Sumerians that has not yet been calculated. The classical civilizations of Greece and Rome, out of which Western civilization sprang most directly, were engaged in cultural interaction with the ancient Near East from their beginnings; and all of the ancient Near East was

51. A. Leo Oppenheim, *Ancient Mesopotamia: Portrait of a Dead Civilization*, rev. ed. completed by Erica Reiner (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977), 4.

52. Georges Roux, *Ancient Iraq*, 3d ed. (Baltimore: Penguin, 1992), 425.

influenced, in varying degrees, by the Sumerians.[53] Although the Sumerians were conquered by the Semites, in a deeper sense, "the conquered conquered the conquerors," for the Babylonians "took over Sumerian culture and civilization lock, stock, and barrel," "exercised no little influence on their less cultured neighbors," and "as much as the Sumerians themselves, helped to plant the Sumerian cultural seed everywhere in the ancient Near East."[54]

One line for the influence of the Sumerians on the West is through the Bible, which was produced in the ancient Near East and which has had such a formative role in the development of Western civilization. In a time, at least in the United States, when emphasis is being placed on multiculturalism, that is, on the varied sources of an increasingly pluralistic society, it is urgent, for the sake of an informed historical perspective, that the origins of Western civilization be traced backward beyond Greece and Rome, where the search usually ends, to the ancient Near East and, in this process, that the Sumerians be given their due.[55]

Recommended Reading

For the student who wants to read more about the Sumerians, I recommend the following, limited to sources in English. The liveliest and most current research most often appears in technical journals, and the following books (especially Hallo, Oppenheim, Postgate, and Roux) cite relevant journals up to the time of their writing. I have arranged the titles in a preferred order of reading for the ambitious student who will undertake them all, and I have annotated them for the student who must be selective.

Hallo, William W., and William K. Simpson. *The Ancient Near East: A History*. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1971. One of the two best books to begin with. Hallo's part through page 97 treats the Sumerians.

Roux, Georges. *Ancient Iraq*. 3d edition. Baltimore: Penguin, 1992. One of the two best books to begin with. Chapters 5–11 are especially relevant for the Sumerians.

Bottéro, Jean, Elena Cassin, and Jean Vercoutter (eds.). *The Near East: The Early Civilizations*. Translated by R. F. Tannenbaum. New York: Dela-

53. Because of this influence, even though the Sumerians are not mentioned explicitly in the Hebrew Bible, the reference from Isa. 51:1, cited at the beginning of this essay, can be read as a call to ponder the legacy of ancient Sumer.

54. Kramer, *Sumerians*, 288–89.

55. If this is done well, I believe that it will result in an appreciation of aspects of the Bible that have been lost to our Western perspective and a discovery of continuities that we share with

Larsen, Mogens T. *The Old Assyrian City-state and Its Colonies.* Copenhagen: Akademisk Forlag, 1976.
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Oppenheim, A. Leo. *Ancient Mesopotamia: Portrait of a Dead Civilization.* Revised edition completed by Erica Reiner. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977.
Ringgren, Helmer. *Religions of the Ancient Near East.* Translated by John Sturdy. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1973.
Roaf, Michael. *Cultural Atlas of Mesopotamia and the Ancient Near East.* New York: Facts on File, 1990.
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Saggs, Harry W. F. "The Assyrians." Pp. 156–78 in *Peoples of Old Testament Times.* Edited by Donald J. Wiseman. Oxford: Clarendon, 1973.
———. *Everyday Life in Babylon and Assyria.* New York: Dorset, 1987.
———. *The Might That Was Assyria.* London: Sidgwick & Jackson, 1984.
Thiele, Edwin R. *The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings.* 3d edition. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1983 (esp. chap. 4).
Van Driel, Govert. *The Cult of Aššur.* Assen: Van Gorcum, 1969.
Yadin, Yigael. *The Art of Warfare in Biblical Lands in the Light of Archaeological Study.* 2 vols. New York: McGraw-Hill/London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1963.
Yamauchi, Edwin M. *Foes from the Northern Frontier.* Grand Rapids: Baker, 1982.

Persians

Edwin M. Yamauchi

The LORD moved the heart of Cyrus king of Persia to make a proclamation throughout his realm . . . : "The LORD, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth and he has appointed me to build a temple for him at Jerusalem in Judah."
—Ezra 1:1–2

Medes

The Medes and Persians were closely related Indo-European tribes who entered the Iranian plateau sometime after the middle of the second millennium according to the archeological evidence. They followed the route either east or west of the Caspian Sea and gradually infiltrated into the area of the northern Zagros Mountains in western Iran.

Important discoveries of early Iron Age settlements have been made at Marlik (south of the Caspian Sea) and Tepe Sialk (south of Tehran on the western edge of the vast interior desert). The widespread appearance of Iron Age III culture (800–550) in the Zagros has been associated with the rise of the Medes to power.

The capital of the Medes was Ecbatana (modern Hamadan) in the Zagros, located on the major route from Mesopotamia to the Iranian plateau. The northern frontier of the Medes was the territory of Mannea (biblical Minni; cf. Jer. 51:27), just south of Lake Urmia. Their southern border was the region of Ellipi in the southern Zagros. The eastern border is associated with a Mount Bikni, which may be Mount Elvend near Hamadan or Mount Demavand east of Tehran.

Only a few Median sites have been excavated. These sites, uncovered in the 1960s and 1970s, include Baba Jan Tepe excavated by Clare L. Goff, Godin Tepe excavated by T. Cuyler Young Jr., and Tepe Nush-i Jan excavated by David Stronach. The four structures found at the latter site include the

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oldest Iranian fire temple yet discovered. When the site was abandoned circa 600, it was carefully filled in with shale and mud. The excavator found some jewelry and other artifacts, which may possibly include booty taken from the Assyrians.[1]

The *Mādāia* ("Medes") are first mentioned in a text of the Assyrian king Shalmaneser III in 836. The name *Parsua* also occurs first in this monarch's reign in 844. The Medes are mentioned in the texts of every Assyrian king thereafter until the time of Ashurbanipal, sometimes being called "the mighty Medes," "the distant Medes," or "the Medes by the Salt Desert."[2]

The Assyrians were especially interested in obtaining horses from the Medes. A text of Tiglath-pileser III lists a total of at least 1,615 horses received as tribute from the Medes.[3] Tiglath-pileser III (744–727) invaded the Zagros region twice and Sargon II (721–705) six times. A stele of Sargon was found at Najafābād deep in Median territory.[4] There are eighteen references to Assyrian deportations from the area of Media.[5] What is of interest to students of the Bible is that Sargon replaced some of these deportees with newcomers from the land of Hatti, that is, Palestine (2 Kings 17:6).[6]

Sargon's texts, which list some fifty Median chieftains, indicate the highly decentralized situation of the Medes in the late eighth century, a situation indirectly corroborated by the Old Testament (Jer. 25:25; 51:11, 28 refer to Median "kings"). According to Herodotus (1:96–99) it was Deioces who united the Medes and established his capital at Ecbatana. Deioces has been dated according to the data given by Herodotus between 700 and 647.

Esarhaddon (680–669) in 672 imposed vassal treaties on Median princes, which pledged them to support his son Ashurbanipal.[7] Among the treaty tablets found at Nimrud by Max Mallowan are some of the largest cuneiform tablets discovered. The tablets were found smashed to smithereens in the throne room, no doubt by the Medes when they helped to sack Nimrud in 612.

1. Interim excavation reports by David Stronach and others may be found in the journal *Iran*: 7 (1969): 1–20; 11 (1973): 129–40; 13 (1975): 187–88; 16 (1978): 1–28.

2. Simo Parpola, *Neo-Assyrian Toponyms*, Alter Orient und Altes Testament 6 (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag/Kevelaer: Butzon & Bercker, 1970), 130–31.

3. See Stuart C. Brown, "Media and Secondary State Formation in the Neo-Assyrian Zagros: An Anthropological Approach to an Assyrian Problem," *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* 38 (1986): 112 n. 14.

4. Louis D. Levine, "Prelude to Monarchy," in *Iranian Civilization and Culture*, ed. C. J. Adams (Montreal: McGill University Press, 1972), 42; idem, *Two Neo-Assyrian Stelae from Iran* (Toronto: Royal Ontario Museum, 1972).

5. Bustenay Oded, *Mass Deportations and Deportees in the Neo-Assyrian Empire* (Wiesbaden: Reichert, 1979), 26.

6. Daniel D. Luckenbill, *Ancient Records of Assyria and Babylonia* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1927), 2:183; *ANET* 284–85.

7. Esarhaddon's brothers killed their father Sennacherib in 681 (2 Kings 19:37; Isa. 37:38).

The rise of a united Median state in the early seventh century is attested in Assyrian texts.[8] During the last years of Esarhaddon's reign, liver-omen texts refer to his concern about Kashtariti, a chief of the central Zagros who united the Medes, Manneans, and Cimmerians in an anti-Assyrian coalition. Kashtariti is identified by many scholars with the Median king whom Herodotus (1:102) named Phraortes, though this has been contested.

According to Herodotus, Phraortes died while fighting in a battle against the Assyrians. But there is no record of such a conflict in texts of Ashurbanipal (668–627) for the usual date proposed for Phraortes' death (653). A related question is the date of the twenty-eight-year domination of "Asia" by the Scythians, an invading nomadic tribe from the Russian steppes (Herodotus 1:103; 4:1).[9] Most scholars place the Scythian interregnum after Phraortes and before Cyaxares, that is, between 653 and 625.[10]

René Labat lowers the dates of Phraortes to 647–625 and subsumes the Scythian period (625–597) wholly within the reign of Cyaxares.[11] Alan R. Millard divides the Scythian interregnum into two phases: (1) twenty years dominating Asia (645–625), that is, eastern Turkey, and (2) eight years of dominance in Media during the first years of Cyaxares.[12] The Medes finally expelled the Scythians, who resettled in the Ukraine north of the Black Sea. It is possible that the threat of foes from the northern frontier mentioned by Jeremiah may refer to Scythian horsemen.[13]

Scholars agree upon the dates of Cyaxares (625–585), whose long forty-year reign saw the ascendancy of the Medes to their greatest heights (Herodotus 1:106). In alliance with the Chaldeans, he helped overthrow the Assyrians and extended the Median kingdom westward through Urartu to eastern Anatolia.[14] In 614 the Medes took the great city of Ashur. Two years later the Medes and Chaldeans launched a joint attack upon the Assyrian capital of

8. Igor M. Diakonoff, "Media," in *The Cambridge History of Iran*, vol. 2: *The Median and Achaemenian Periods*, ed. Ilya Gershevitch (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 110.

9. On the Scythians, see Tamara T. Rice, *The Scythians*, 3d ed. (New York: Praeger, 1961); Edwin M. Yamauchi, *Foes from the Northern Frontiers: Invading Hordes from the Russian Steppes* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1982), chap. 4; idem, "The Scythians: Invading Hordes from the Russian Steppes," *Biblical Archaeologist* 46 (1983): 90–99; Renate Rolle, *The World of the Scythians* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989).

10. For the traditional chronology of Median kings derived from Herodotus see Diakonoff, "Media," 112–13.

11. René Labat, "Kaštariti, Phraorte et les Débuts de l'Histoire Mède," *Journal Asiatique* 249 (1961): 2–4.

12. Alan R. Millard, "The Scythian Problem," in *Glimpses of Ancient Egypt*, ed. J. Ruffle et al. (Warminster: Aris & Phillips, 1979), 119–22.

13. Yamauchi, *Foes from the Northern Frontiers*, chap. 5.

14. Ibid., chap. 2.

Nineveh. A remnant of the Assyrians fled to Haran, where they were overcome in 609. During the last five years of his reign Cyaxares fought with Alyattes of Lydia (Herodotus 1:73–74), a conflict ended by the mediation of Labynetus (Herodotus 1:74), whom some identify with Nabonidus.

The last king of an independent Median kingdom was Astyages (585–550). His daughter Mandana married a Persian, Cambyses I, and gave birth to the famous Cyrus the Great. Cyrus led the Persians in a successful revolt against his grandfather Astyages and the Medes in 550.[15] Thereafter the Medes were to play a subordinate though an important role under the Persians in the Achemenid period (550 to 330).

Persians

Cyrus II (559–530)

The kings of the Persian Empire were known as Achemenians after an eponymous ancestor, Achemenes (ca. 700). Achaemenes' grandson was Cyrus I (640–600?), who had a son serve as a hostage at Ashurbanipal's court in Nineveh. His successor was Cambyses I (600–559), the father of Cyrus II, the founder of the Persian Empire. From the reign of Cyrus II until their conquest by Alexander (ca. 330), the Persians developed one of the largest of all ancient empires, at its greatest extent stretching from the Hellespont in the northwest and the Nile in the southwest to the Indus in the east.

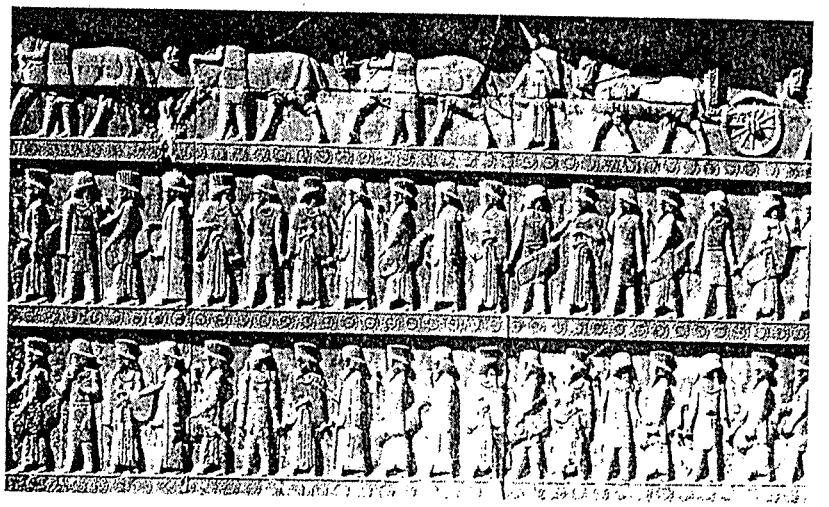
Cyrus II (the Great) began his thirty-year reign over the Persians circa 559. In 550 Cyrus decisively defeated Astyages' army probably in the plain of Pasargadae, where he later built his capital. The Nabonidus Chronicle confirms Herodotus's account (1:127) that Cyrus was aided in his victory by the defection of some of the Medes.

Cyrus next turned his forces against the Lydians in western Anatolia. After an indecisive battle, the Lydian king Croesus retired to his capital at Sardis under the mistaken belief that Cyrus would not pursue as winter was approaching. Cyrus's conquest of Lydia in 546 soon paved the way for the takeover of the Ionian Greek settlements on the west coast of Asia Minor.

The Persians then attacked their erstwhile allies the Babylonians, whose last king was Nabonidus (555–539). The Book of Daniel depicts Belshazzar, the son of Nabonidus, as the de facto king, since Nabonidus had spent ten years in self-imposed exile in Arabia.[16] Apparently in anticipation of the

15. H. A. Storck, "The Lydian Campaign of Cyrus the Great in Classical and Cuneiform Sources," *Ancient World* 19 (1989): 69–76.

16. Paul-Alain Beaulieu, *The Reign of Nabonidus, King of Babylon 556–539 B.C.*, Yale Near Eastern Researches 10 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989).



Alternating Persians and Medes from the Apadana at Persepolis, 521–486 B.C. (height of each panel: 3') *Courtesy of Edwin M. Yamauchi*

growing Persian threat, Nabonidus returned to Babylon in 543 and in a desperate measure gathered all the gods from the neighboring cities into Babylon.

In order to attack Babylon, Cyrus had to outflank the Median Wall, which stretched from Sippar on the Euphrates to Opis on the Tigris. In September 539, according to the Nabonidus Chronicle, Cyrus battled the army of Akkad at Opis. By October 10 the Persians were able to capture Sippar without a fight. Herodotus (1:191) indicates that the Persians gained entrance into Babylon by diverting the Euphrates River, which ran through the city.[17]

The Nabonidus Chronicle confirms that the defector Gubaru and his troops entered Babylon "without a battle" on 12 October 539.[18] The inhab-

17. On Babylon, see Donald J. Wiseman, *Nebuchadrezzar and Babylon*, Schweich Lectures 1983 (London: Oxford University Press for the British Academy, 1985).

18. Gubaru is identified by some scholars with the enigmatic "Darius the Mede" of Daniel. On this issue see Lester L. Grabbe, "Another Look at the *Gestalt* of 'Darius the Mede,'" *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 50 (1988): 198–213. Both William H. Shea ("Darius the Mede in His Persian-Babylonian Setting," *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 29 [1991]: 235–57) and Brian E. Colless ("Cyrus the Persian as Darius the Mede in the Book of Daniel," *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 56 [1992]: 113–26) support Donald J. Wiseman's proposal that "Darius the Mede" was another designation for Cyrus.

itants of Babylon greeted Cyrus not as a conqueror but as a liberator according to an important propaganda text now called the "Cyrus Cylinder."[19] This cylinder claims that Cyrus showed his concern for the people of Babylon, who resembled skeletons, and restored their "dilapidated dwellings." A fragment that has recently been identified as coming from the cylinder informs us that Cyrus restored the city's inner wall and moats.[20]

Cyrus instituted the enlightened policy of placating the gods of his subject peoples instead of carrying off their cult statues and peoples as most rulers had done. His generosity to the Jews was not unique but was paralleled by his benevolence to the Babylonians and to others. A Hebrew copy of his edict permitting the Jews to return to the Holy Land is found in Ezra 1:2–4 and an Aramaic memorandum of the same in Ezra 6:3–5.[21] Though earlier scholars questioned the authenticity of the decree, documents from the Persian period provide convincing evidence of its authenticity.[22]

In 530, though nearly seventy years old, Cyrus campaigned in the distant northeastern part of his realm against the nomadic Massagetae (Herodotus 1:201–4), where he was killed in battle toward the end of July. The body of the great monarch was transported a thousand miles to be placed in his splendid tomb at Pasargadae.[23]

Cambyses II (529–522)

Cambyses II succeeded his father Cyrus. His main achievement was the conquest of Egypt in 525. In this feat he was aided by an important Egyptian defector, Udjahorresnet. Under the Persians the latter was able to restore the temple of Neith in Sais as well as the medical colleges throughout Egypt. The role of Udjahorresnet parallels in some respects the roles of Ezra and Nehemiah.[24]

19. See Amélie Kuhrt, "The Cyrus Cylinder and Achaemenid Imperial Policy," *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 25 (1983): 83–94.

20. Christopher B. F. Walker, "A Recently Identified Fragment of the Cyrus Cylinder," *Iran* 10 (1972): 158–59.

21. See Edwin M. Yamauchi, "Ezra–Nehemiah," in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelein (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1988), 4:601–2, 605, 641–42.

22. See Elias J. Bickerman, "The Edict of Cyrus in Ezra 1," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 65 (1946): 249–75; Roland de Vaux, "The Decrees of Cyrus and Darius on the Rebuilding of the Temple," in *The Bible and the Ancient Near East*, trans. Damian McHugh (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1971), 63–96; C. Hensley, *The Official Persian Documents in the Book of Ezra* (Ph.D. diss., University of Liverpool, 1977).

23. See David Stronach, *Pasargadae* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978).

24. Alan B. Lloyd, "The Inscription of Udjahorresnet: A Collaborator's Testament," *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 68 (1982): 166–80; Joseph Blenkinsopp, "The Mission of Udjahorresnet and Those of Ezra and Nehemiah," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 106 (1987): 409–21.

Herodotus ascribed all kinds of fiascoes to Cambyses, including an army that got lost in a sandstorm in the Sahara and a failed expedition to Nubia (the Sudan). His supposed killing of the Apis bull has been disproved by the evidence of a sarcophagus dedicated to the Apis by Cambyses. Although the Persians may have destroyed some temples as indicated by the Elephantine papyri and may have curtailed some donations to the temples, Cambyses favored others, such as the temple to Neith.[25]

In 522 Cambyses learned of a coup d'état and hastened home. On his way he accidentally stabbed himself in the thigh and died three weeks later. We have reason to believe that Cambyses had begun to prepare a tomb for himself prior to his departure for Egypt. Some ruins north of Persepolis, today called Takht-i Rustam, were identified by Ernst Herzfeld as the unfinished grave of Cambyses.[26] About 650 feet to the east, foundation slabs of limestone for column bases in two parallel rows were discovered in 1973. This building may have been part of an audience hall built by Cambyses.[27]

Darius I (522–486)

According to Darius's Behistun inscription, Cambyses had secretly murdered his brother before he invaded Egypt in 525. While Cambyses was away, an impostor named Gaumata (called Smerdis by Herodotus) seized control for seven months. Herodotus's account agrees in general with Darius's inscription. Though some historians doubt that the murder could have been concealed, the official account is far more credible than the proposed alternatives.[28]

Once it was discovered that the new king was not Cambyses' brother but his look-alike Gaumata, Darius and six other nobles banded together in a conspiracy to overthrow the usurper. Since Darius came from a collateral line and was not the obvious heir to the throne he had first to extinguish a fire storm of rebellions that broke out in almost every part of the empire. Darius's Behistun inscription is principally concerned with detailing the nine defeated rebels and the nineteen battles that ensued over the course of a year.

One of the areas that rebelled was Egypt. Darius himself arrived in Egypt late in 519 and stayed for six months. During a later visit (497–496) Darius

25. J. D. Ray, "Egypt 525–404 B.C.," in *CAH* 4:254–61.

26. Ernst Herzfeld, *The Persian Empire*, ed. Gerold Walser (Wiesbaden: Steiner, 1968), 36; W. Kleiss and P. Calmeyer, "Das unvollendete achaemenidische Felsgrab bei Persepolis," *Archäologische Mitteilungen aus Iran*, n.s. 8 (1975): 81–98.

27. A. B. Tilia, "Discovery of an Achaemenian Palace near Takht-i Rustam to the North of the Terrace of Persepolis," *Iran* 12 (1974): 200–204.

28. For a skeptical view of Darius's account, see J. Balcer, *Herodotus and Bisitun* (Stuttgart: Steiner, 1987).

built a temple to Amon at Hibis in the el-Khargeh oasis.[29] Darius also ordered the codification of the laws of Egypt.[30]

Herodotus's report that Darius completed a canal between the Nile and the Red Sea has been corroborated by the discovery of four steles inscribed in cuneiform and hieroglyphic. In 1972 the French excavators of Susa made a striking discovery, a larger than life-size statue of Darius, which unfortunately was lacking its head. The statue and base were inscribed in Old Persian, Elamite, Akkadian, and Egyptian. The text proclaims, "This is the statue of stone that Darius the King ordered made in Egypt in order that in the future whoever sees it will know that the Persian possesses Egypt."[31]

The Jews, who had returned under Cyrus, laid the foundation of the Second Temple to replace Solomon's Temple, which had been destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar II. But work was soon halted in the face of opposition (Ezra 4:1–5). In the reign of Darius, under the leadership of Zerubbabel and Jeshua the high priest and stirred by the prophets Haggai and Zechariah, the Jews renewed efforts to complete the work. Their enemies challenged their right to do this and complained to the Persian authorities. According to Ezra 6:1–4 Darius responded to the request as follows:

> King Darius then issued an order, and they searched in the archives stored in the treasury at Babylon. A scroll was found in the citadel of Ecbatana in the province of Media, and this was written on it:
>
> Memorandum:
>
> In the first year of King Cyrus, the king issued a decree concerning the temple of God in Jerusalem. (NIV)

Darius then solemnly warned the enemies of the Jews against interfering with the rebuilding of the temple (Ezra 6:11), which was finished in 515 (Ezra 6:14–15), a little over seventy years after its destruction.

The Ionian Greeks, who had been subject to the Persians since the reign of Cyrus, erupted in a revolt against Darius in 499 and were not suppressed until 494. Angered by the aid proffered to the Ionian rebels by Athens and Eretria, Darius determined to punish these city-states. An initial expedition in 492 was shipwrecked in the northern Aegean at Mount Athos. The second expedition led to the capture of Eretria and the famous Battle of Marathon in 490. Led by Miltiades, the Athenians were able to defeat the Persians by

29. E. Cruz-Uribe, "Oasis of the Spirit," *Archaeology* 42.5 (1989): 48–53.
30. Edwin M. Yamauchi, *Persia and the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1990), 149–51.
31. Ibid., 151–52.

the novel tactic of having their armed hoplites advance at a run against the Persian archers.[32]

Darius is credited with establishing the "pony express" courier system on the Royal Road that linked Susa in southwestern Persia to Sardis in western Anatolia (Herodotus 8:98). The route of 1,700 miles was covered by ordinary travelers in ninety days, but the royal couriers covered the same distance in a week.[33] Darius was also responsible for the organization of the empire into districts governed by satraps. Royal inspectors, called by the Greeks "the king's eyes" and "the king's ears," checked up on the satraps periodically.

Six listings of peoples are extant from the reign of Darius and one from the reign of Xerxes.[34] Herodotus (3:89) speaks of the organization of the empire by Darius into twenty satrapies, among whom are mentioned sixty-seven different tribes and nations. George Cameron concludes that all of the Old Persian lists under Darius are not of satrapies but of various groups of peoples.[35] Their purpose was to impress their readers with the great varieties of peoples represented in the Persian Empire.

Darius standardized weights and measures and began the minting of coins: silver coins known as *sigloi* and the famous gold *darics*.[36] Because of his various economic measures, Darius acquired the reputation of a huckster among the Greeks. According to Herodotus (3:89): "It is by reason of this fixing of tribute, and other like ordinances, that the Persians called Darius the huckster, Cambyses the master, and Cyrus the father; for Darius made petty profit out of everything, Cambyses was harsh and arrogant, Cyrus was merciful and ever wrought for their well-being."

Darius died at Persepolis, his new capital, in 486. He was buried in a tomb carved in a rock cliff at Naqsh-i Rustam just north of Persepolis. Like the other three tombs there, Darius's tomb is cut in the form of a large cross. The top section bears a relief, originally painted, which depicts the king standing on a platform upheld by two tiers of representatives from thirty nations whose identities are given in a trilingual inscription.[37]

32. William K. Pritchett, *Marathon* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1960); A. Lloyd, *Marathon* (New York: Mentor, 1973).
33. Yamauchi, *Persia and the Bible*, 174–77.
34. Arnold J. Toynbee, *A Study of History* (London: Oxford University Press, 1954), 7:580–689; O. K. Armayor, "Herodotus' Catalogues of the Persian Empire in the Light of the Monuments and the Greek Literary Tradition," *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 108 (1978): 1–9.
35. George Cameron, "The Persian Satrapies and Related Matters," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 32 (1973): 47–56.
36. E. S. G. Robinson, "The Beginnings of Achaemenid Coinage," *Numismatic Chronicle* 18 (1958): 187–93.
37. See Erich F. Schmidt, *Persepolis*, vol. 3: *The Royal Tombs and Other Monuments*, Oriental Institute Publications 70 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970).



Treasury relief from Persepolis depicting Darius (or Xerxes) on the throne. 6th–5th century B.C. (length: 20')
Courtesy of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago

Xerxes I (485–465)

Xerxes I succeeded his father Darius. His name is rendered as Ahasuerus in the Book of Esther (the only other biblical reference is in Ezra 4:6). The most important source is Herodotus, who is primarily concerned about the Persian invasion of Greece and who therefore offers little information on the period after 479.

Before Darius died, a revolt had broken out in Egypt, and Xerxes went in person in 485 to suppress this revolt. There were also two short-lived revolts in Babylon, which were harshly repressed. As punishment the Persians destroyed the great ziggurat and the temple of Marduk in Babylon according to classical sources, although cuneiform sources indicate that the reprisals may not have been so severe.[38]

After the suppression of these revolts, Xerxes was ready for his massive invasion of Greece. Although there should be little doubt that he was able to amass the largest army and navy ever mustered in antiquity, the enormous numbers listed by Herodotus have aroused the greatest skepticism. He reports that the army contained 1.7 million infantry (7:60). More credible are his figures for the navy: twelve hundred triremes and three thousand penteconters (7:184).

As the huge Persian juggernaut advanced into northern Greece, many key Greek states such as Thessaly and Thebes "Medized," that is, they joined the

38. See Amélie Kuhrt, "Babylonia from Cyrus to Xerxes," in *CAH* 4:135.

Persian side. The gallant stand of the Spartans under Leonidas at the Thermopylae Pass (480) could slow but not stop the Persian advance. Panic stricken, the Athenians abandoned their city. However, under the brilliant leadership of Themistocles, the Greeks were able to lure the Persian fleet into the narrow waters of the Bay of Salamis for a decisive victory.[39] Concerned for his safety, Xerxes fled to Asia Minor, but still left behind a substantial force.

The final battle on the Greek mainland was fought in 479 at Plataea. The Spartans under the leadership of Pausanias won a great victory. Pausanias himself, however, became the victim of hubris, an overweening arrogance that led him into a treasonable correspondence with the Persians. His downfall in turn affected the fortunes of his Athenian friend, Themistocles, who ironically ended his life as a loyal Persian subject.

According to Herodotus (7:61), Xerxes' queen was a very powerful woman named Amestris; according to the Book of Esther her name was Vashti. Stafford Wright suggests that by assuming certain phonetic modifications an identification of Vashti with Amestris can be made—a conclusion accepted also by William H. Shea.[40] Shea works out a detailed synchronism to show how the events of Esther, which has a gap between the third year (Esth. 1:3) and the seventh year (Esth. 2:16), can be harmonized with Xerxes' absence in Greece in 480–479.[41]

Esther's guardian is named Mordecai, a name attested among the roster of Persian officials in the Elamite tablets of Persepolis, which come from the reigns of Darius and Xerxes.[42] Mordecai sat "in the gate" at Susa as an indication of his official status (Esth. 2:19, 21; 5:9, 13). Recently the French excavators have after many years of searching discovered the gate of the Achemenid palace at Susa. They are impressed by the detailed and accurate knowledge of Susa revealed by the author of Esther.[43]

The Book of Esther betrays a thorough knowledge of Persian customs and background; especially striking are thirty or more personal names of Persian and Elamite origin and twelve Persian loanwords in the text of Esther.[44] The

39. See Peter Green, *Xerxes at Salamis* (New York: Praeger, 1970).

40. J. Stafford Wright, "The Historicity of the Book of Esther," in *New Perspectives on the Old Testament*, ed. J. Barton Payne (Waco, Tex.: Word, 1970), 40–41; William H. Shea, "Esther and History," *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 14 (1976): 235.

41. Shea, "Esther and History," 231–40.

42. J. A. Delaunay, "Remarques sur Quelques Noms de Personne des Archives Élamites de Persépolis," *Studia Iranica* 5 (1976): 17; Edwin M. Yamauchi, "Mordecai, the Persepolis Tablets, and the Susa Excavations," *Vetus Testamentum* 43 (1992): 272–75.

43. See Yamauchi, *Persia and the Bible*, 298–300.

44. For other discussions of the Persian background of Esther see Henry S. Gehman, "Notes on the Persian Words in the Book of Esther," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 43 (1924): 321–28; Carey A. Moore, "Archaeology and the Book of Esther," *Biblical Archaeologist* 38 (1975): 62–79.

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Hebrew text of Esther preserves the Persian names with remarkable accuracy, as Alan R. Millard demonstrates.[45] Many other parallels to the Persian names in Esther have now been provided by the Elamite Persepolis texts.[46]

After his return from the west, Xerxes was mainly preoccupied with completing the work of his father at Persepolis. After reigning for twenty years, Xerxes was killed in a palace plot in August 465 by Artabanus, the captain of the bodyguard. Xerxes' tomb is believed to be the one on the extreme right of the four tombs at Naqsh-i Rustam.

Artaxerxes I (464–424)

After killing Artabanus, Artaxerxes I began his long reign. Hostilities between the Persians and the Greeks continued, with the Greeks attempting to help liberate Cyprus and Egypt from Persian control. Finally in 449 the Peace of Callias was signed, requiring the Greeks and the Persians to desist from intervening in the other's territories.

It was under Artaxerxes I that first Ezra in 458 (Ezra 7:7) and then Nehemiah in 445 (Neh. 2:1) came to the Holy Land to serve there, the former as a preacher of the Torah and the latter as the governor of Judah. Though some scholars argue for a reversal of the traditional biblical order with Ezra following Nehemiah in the later reign of Artaxerxes II (404–359) in 398,[47] most now reject this revisionism.[48]

That Artaxerxes I commissioned Ezra the Scribe to administer the law to his people troubles some critics. But this fits in perfectly with Persian policy. A close parallel is the similar commission given by Darius to Udjahorresnet, an Egyptian priest and scholar. As Joseph Blenkinsopp observes, "In the light of the preceding, we can now see that the two goals of Ezra's mission correspond to the two phases of Udjahorresnet's activity: the restoration of the cult at the national and dynastic shrine of Sais; the reorganization of judicial institutions, for which the smooth functioning of the Houses of Life was a necessary precondition."[49]

Nehemiah had occupied the prestigious position of cupbearer before Artaxerxes I (Neh. 1:11), which meant that he had to taste the wine to make

45. Alan R. Millard, "The Persian Names in Esther and the Reliability of the Hebrew Text," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 96 (1977): 481–88.

46. Yamauchi, *Persia and the Bible*, 238.

47. William F. Stinespring, "Prolegomenon," to Charles C. Torrey's *Ezra Studies* (New York: Ktav, 1970), xiv.

48. U. Kellermann, "Erwägungen zum Problem der Esradatierung," *Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 80 (1968): 55–87; Edwin M. Yamauchi, "The Reverse Order of Ezra/Nehemiah Reconsidered," *Themelios* 5.3 (1980): 7–13.

49. Blenkinsopp, "Mission of Udjahorresnet," 419.

certain there was no poison in it.[50] The province that Nehemiah came to govern had been greatly reduced in size. The archeological evidence of Yehud (Judah) coins and seals confirms the biblical boundaries.[51] Nahman Avigad uses recently recovered bullas (clay seal impressions) and coins to develop a list of the governors who preceded Nehemiah.[52]

Inscriptional evidence confirms the historicity of Nehemiah's various opponents: Sanballat the Samaritan, Tobiah the Ammonite, and Geshem the Arab.[53] Excavations reveal the situation in Jerusalem at the time that Nehemiah rallied the people to rebuild the walls about the city.[54] About 900 feet to the west of the temple area, Avigad discovered a 23-foot-thick wall, which he identified with "the broad wall" (Neh. 3:8) repaired by Nehemiah.[55] The diminished circuit of the city wall in his day helps to explain the rapidity in which the reconstruction was accomplished, once Nehemiah had aroused the people with his inspired leadership.[56]

The economic distress of the people of Judah, including inflation and indebtedness, caused in part by Persian taxation, is vividly illustrated by the fifth chapter of Nehemiah.[57] Though taxation did not produce a scarcity of

50. Edwin M. Yamauchi, "Was Nehemiah the Cupbearer a Eunuch?" *Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 92 (1980): 132–42.

51. Ephraim Stern, *Material Culture of the Land of the Bible in the Persian Period, 538–332 B.C.* (Warminster: Aris & Phillips, 1982), chaps. 7–8.

52. Nahman Avigad, *Bullae and Seals from a Post-Exilic Judean Archive* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1976). See also Hugh G. M. Williamson, "The Governors of Judah under the Persians," *Tyndale Bulletin* 39 (1988): 59–82.

53. On Sanballat, see Frank M. Cross, "The Discovery of the Samaria Papyri," *Biblical Archaeologist* 26 (1963): 110–21; idem, "A Reconstruction of the Judean Restoration," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 94 (1975): 4–18; idem, "The Historical Importance of the Samaria Papyri," *Biblical Archaeology Review* 4.1 (1978): 25–27. On Tobiah, see Benjamin Mazar, "The Tobiads," *Israel Exploration Journal* 7 (1957): 137–45, 229–38; C. C. McCown, "The 'Araq el-Emir and the Tobiads," *Biblical Archaeologist* 20 (1957): 63–76. On Geshem, see Frank M. Cross, "Geshem the Arabian, Enemy of Nehemiah," *Biblical Archaeologist* 18 (1955): 46–47; I. Rabinowitz, "Aramaic Inscriptions of the Fifth Century BCE," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 15 (1956): 1–9; William J. Dumbrell, "The Tell el-Maskhuta Bowls and the 'Kingdom' of Qedar in the Persian Period," *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 203 (1971): 33–44.

54. Kathleen Kenyon, *Jerusalem: Excavating Three Thousand Years of History* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1967), 107–11; idem, *Digging up Jerusalem* (New York: Praeger/London: Benn, 1974), 183–84; Yigal Shiloh, "City of David: Excavation 1978," *Biblical Archaeologist* 42 (1979): 168.

55. Nahman Avigad, "Excavations in the Jewish Quarter of the Old City, Jerusalem, 1970," *Israel Exploration Journal* 20 (1970): 129–40.

56. Hugh G. M. Williamson, "Nehemiah's Walls Revisited," *Palestine Exploration Quarterly* 116 (1984): 81–88.

57. Edwin M. Yamauchi, "Two Reformers Compared: Solon of Athens and Nehemiah of Jerusalem," in *The Bible World: Essays in Honor of Cyrus H. Gordon*, ed. Gary A. Rendsburg et al. (New York: Ktav, 1980), 269–92; Muhammad A. Dandamaev and Vladimir G. Lukonin,

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cash, it did concentrate wealth in the hand of entrepreneurs who could take advantage of the situation.[58]

Aramaic papyri from Elephantine and Hermopolis in Egypt, dated to the fifth century, illuminate the linguistic, political, and cultural background of the Jews in the Persian Empire.[59] In Elephantine in Upper Egypt the Jews had built a temple of Yaho (Yahweh), which was destroyed in 411 by fanatical Egyptians. The Jews then asked for permission to rebuild the temple. The papyri reveal the incidence of mixed marriages, which led to syncretistic practices. Ostraca (inscribed potsherds) from Elephantine mention the Sabbath and the Passover.[60] Letters of Arsames, the satrap of Egypt, reveal him as an all too typical governor, greedy for wealth and power—a striking contrast to the selflessness of Nehemiah.[61]

Persian Architecture and Art

As the Persian Empire expanded under the Achemenian kings, Persian art developed a very cosmopolitan and eclectic style, infused by traits from many cultures and executed by skilled workers from many lands. With the exception of the frozen Persian rug at Pazarcik,[62] brilliantly colored and decorated textiles have perished. But some magnificent gems, all kinds of jewelry, and silver and gold vessels have survived to illustrate the Persian luxury that dazzled the Greeks.[63]

Only one statue in the round, that of Darius, has survived. But splendid reliefs, all originally colored, may still be seen at Pasargadae and Persepolis.[64] At the former site the most striking monument is the famous tomb of Cyrus, made of white limestone, which rests upon a six-level base for a total

The Culture and Social Institutions of Ancient Iran (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 177–95.

58. Matthew W. Stolper, *Entrepreneurs and Empire: The Murašû Firm and Persian Rule in Babylonia* (Leiden: Nederlands Historisch-Archaeologisch Instituut te Istanbul, 1985), 151, 154.

59. Bezalel Porten, *Archives from Elephantine: The Life of an Ancient Jewish Military Colony* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968).

60. André Dupont-Sommer, "L'Ostracon Araméen du Sabbat," *Semitica* 2 (1949): 29–39.

61. Godfrey R. Driver, *Aramaic Documents of the Fifth Century B.C.* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1954).

62. E. D. Phillips, *The Royal Hordes* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1965), 85.

63. See Roman Ghirshman, *The Art of Ancient Iran* (New York: Golden, 1964).

64. J. A. Lerner, "A Painted Relief from Persepolis," *Archaeology* 26 (1973): 116–22; Erich F. Schmidt, *Persepolis*, vols. 1–2, Oriental Institute Publications 68–69 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953–57); A. Farkas, *Achaemenid Sculpture* (Istanbul: Nederlands Historisch-Archaeologisch Instituut in het Nabije Oosten, 1974); D. Wilber, *Persepolis: The Archaeology of Parsa, Seat of the Persian Kings*, rev. ed. (Princeton: Darwin, 1989).

height of about thirty-six feet. It was originally surrounded by a "paradise" or park.[65]

Persepolis was begun by Darius sometime after 520. The buildings were completed after sixty years of labor during the reigns of Xerxes and Artaxerxes I. A few additions were made by later Achemenid kings. Darius was responsible for building the fortifications, platform, monumental stairway, central building, his palace, the Apadana (audience hall), and part of the treasury. Xerxes completed the Apadana, the Gate of All Nations, his palace, harem, and treasury. He began the throne hall, which was completed by Artaxerxes I. Alexander the Great destroyed the site by fire in 330, according to some classical sources as an act of vengeance for the destruction of Athens by Xerxes in 480.[66]

The widely held view that Persepolis functioned primarily as a ritual city for the celebration of the Persian New Year has fallen into disfavor; it is now recognized that—like all monumental art—the reliefs and buildings at Persepolis were primarily expressions of kingship and empire.[67] Among the most important reliefs at the site are those on the eastern stairway of the Apadana, which pictures twenty-three delegations from all parts of the empire bearing gifts or tribute. Though these are not accompanied by texts, scholars are in general agreement about the identification of most of these delegations.[68]

Among the many groups who contributed to the execution of the Achemenid art and architecture were Greeks, especially from Ionia. Greek influence and artistic skill are quite evident at Pasargadae, the capital of Cyrus.[69] The Persepolis tablets explicitly refer to Ionians among the workers, and one tablet was written in Greek. Several Greek graffiti were incised in the quarries near Persepolis.[70] The overwhelming evidence of Greeks and Greek objects and influence in the Near East long before Alexander should end attempts to date Daniel to the Hellenistic era on the basis of the Greek words that occur in its text.[71]

Persian Religion

Early Iranian religion was very similar to the Indo-Aryan religion reflected in the Hindu Rig-Veda scriptures. The earliest written attestation of the

65. On Persian "paradises," see Yamauchi, *Persia and the Bible*, 332–34.

66. M. Wheeler, *Flames over Persepolis* (New York: Reynal, 1968).

67. See M. C. Root, *The King and Kingship in Achaemenid Art* (Leiden: Brill, 1979).

68. See Yamauchi, *Persia and the Bible*, 355.

69. Carl Nylander, *Ionians in Pasargadae* (Lund: Universitetsbiblioteke Uppsala, 1970).

70. G. P. Carratelli, "Greek Inscriptions of the Middle East," *East and West*, n.s. 16 (1966): 31–36.

71. Yamauchi, *Persia and the Bible*, chap. 11.

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Indo-Aryan gods is found in a fourteenth-century treaty between the Hittite king Shuppiluliuma and Mattiwaza of Mitanni. Mitra (Iranian Mithra), who appears in this text, was worshiped by both the ancient Iranians and Indians.

The great founder of a new Persian religion was Zoroaster (Zarathushtra). As the only certainly contemporary source on Zoroaster is his Gathas, we have very little trustworthy data on the life of Zoroaster.[72] Scholars differ greatly on their estimates of the date of Zoroaster. Many place Zoroaster in the seventh or sixth century on the basis of late Iranian and Arabic traditions; at the other extreme Mary Boyce argues for a date prior to 1200; and other scholars favor an intermediate date, placing Zoroaster in the tenth or ninth century.[73] The evidence of the Gathas places the prophet in the area of northeastern Iran.

According to the Gathas, Zoroaster came from a background of cattle herders, who were menaced by nomads who stole and slaughtered cattle. He was a priest who preached the message of the worship of Ahura Mazda in spite of opposition from the nobles. When he was forty-two he gained his most notable convert, the ruler Vishtaspa and his queen Hutaosa. Those who favor the "late" date of Zoroaster identify the former with Hystaspes, the father of Darius I.

Zoroaster preached an ethical dualism, teaching that each person must choose between Righteousness and the Lie. He protested the violent, bloody sacrifices of the cattle by the "daeva" (demon) worshipers—probably not a proscription of animal sacrifices altogether, but of their abuse. In a similar fashion, Zoroaster condemned the use of the intoxicating haoma plant, which became the focus of the central ceremony of later Zoroastrianism. Boyce, who believes in the continuity of the major elements of the prophet and the later community rather than in a process of devolution, argues that Zoroaster simply attacked abuses in the cult rather than the haoma plant itself.[74]

Scholars disagree about whether the Achemenids were Zoroastrians. Though some scholars such as Boyce believe that all the Achemenians, including Cyrus II, were Zoroastrians, the evidence is quite inconclusive for Cyrus II and Cambyses II.[75] The strongest case for a Zoroastrian background can be made in the case of Darius I, who mentions the god Ahura Mazda repeatedly in his Behistun inscription. Though the king focused on Ahura Mazda, Persepolis texts from Darius's reign indicate that the court also rec-

72. M. Molé, *La Légende de Zoroastre selon les Textes Pehlevis* (Paris: Klincksieck, 1967).
73. Yamauchi, *Persia and the Bible*, 413–15.
74. Mary Boyce, *A History of Zoroastrianism* (Leiden: Brill, 1975), 1:216–17.
75. Dandamaev and Lukonin, *Culture and Social Institutions*, 34–48; T. Cuyler Young Jr., "The Consolidation of the Empire and Its Limits of Growth under Darius and Xerxes," in *CAH* 4:100–101.

ognized numerous other gods as well.[76] Both biblical and nonbiblical texts indicate that in general the Achemenian kings not only tolerated other religions but actively sought their prayers and devotions by granting subsidies.[77]

Zoroaster's message does not seem to have been an unqualified monotheism. One of the most original doctrines of Zoroaster was the association with Ahura Mazda of six Amesha Spentas ("Bounteous Immortals"), who are conceived of as semipersonal manifestations of this supreme god. They were more than personified abstractions, as they were separately venerated by Zoroaster.[78]

Many scholars believe that Zoroaster taught not a monotheism, but a dualism, with two primordial uncreated Spirits, a Good Spirit (i.e., Ahura Mazda) and an Evil Spirit (Angra Mainyu, later spelled Ahriman). The dualism implicit in the Gathas was made quite explicit in the later Sasanian period (A.D. 224–651). According to an important cosmological text, the *Bundahishn*, all things in creation belong either to one sphere or another: aligned with the Good Spirit are light, fire, summer, water, fertile land, health, growth, and domestic animals, especially the dog. Aligned with the Evil Spirit are darkness, night, winter, drought, infertile land, vermin, sickness, and death.

Numerous scholars assume that during the exilic period Zoroastrianism influenced Judaism's teachings on Satan, demonology, angelology, and especially eschatological beliefs such as judgment, resurrection, apocalypticism, a fiery trial, heaven, and hell. To sustain such claims one must assume (1) the chronological priority of the Iranian beliefs, (2) late dates for the Old Testament texts, (3) a close parallelism between the beliefs, and (4) reasons for dependence.

Critical analyses of these matters reveal that many of the parallels are drawn from late (ninth century A.D.) Pahlavi cosmological and eschatological Zoroastrian texts. Moreover many of the parallels are less than exact. There is therefore reason to believe that these doctrines can be better explained on the basis of an inner Jewish development without recourse to Persian influence.[79]

76. Richard N. Frye, "Religion in Fars under the Achaemenids," in *Orientalia J. Duchesne-Guillemin Emerito Oblata* (Leiden: Brill, 1984), 172.
77. H. Koch, *Die religiösen Verhältnisse der Dareiozeit* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1977); idem, "Götter und ihre Verehrung im achämenidischen Persien," *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie* 77 (1987): 239–78.
78. Boyce, *History of Zoroastrianism*, 1:202.
79. Yamauchi, *Persia and the Bible*, 458–66; James Barr, "The Question of Religious Influence: The Case of Zoroastrianism, Judaism, and Christianity," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 53 (1985): 201–33.

Now look at your Bible

Salt under foot

Matthew 5:13. When salt was collected from the Dead Sea area, some of it was good for salting and cooking, but other salt had lost its saltiness. This salt was not thrown away, however. It was stored in the Jerusalem Temple, and when the winter rains made the marble courtyards slippery, it was spread on them to reduce the slipperiness. Hence salt that has lost its saltiness is trodden under foot of men.

Locusts — or locust beans?

Matthew 3:4. It was perfectly all right under the food laws to eat locusts (Leviticus 11:22). It is much more likely, however, as locusts were not readily available all the time, and John the Baptist had to eat daily, that locust beans are being referred to. These beans (carob pods) are sweet and sticky. The prodigal son was also glad to eat the same food (Luke 15:16).

Meat without blood

Acts 15:29. The first-century Christians were encouraged to follow the Jewish food laws concerning the draining of the blood from the animal. It is difficult to know for sure why the Jews were forbidden to eat blood. It might have been purely ritual because life and blood are identified and the life belongs to God (Leviticus 17:14); the blood was therefore used as a means of atonement with God.

The prohibition against eating blood might have been based on an earlier practice that was intensely cruel. Because meat would not keep, some tribespeople cut parts from an animal and then kept the animal alive until more meat was required. The draining of blood prevented such practices. The prohibition might have been a health law to prevent blood-borne infections and diseases.

The Family

Family units in the West in the twentieth century are called *nuclear* because they are small — mother, father, and one or two children. Family units in Old Testament times were large and included every member of the family — aunts, uncles, cousins, and servants. We would call them *extended* families. The leader of the family was the *father*, and the head of a group of families was the *sheikh*.

Abraham and his heirs were sheikhs, and on one occasion Abraham was able to raise 318 fighting men "born in his household" (Genesis 14:14). Mary and Joseph seem to have travelled in such a family when they went with Jesus to Jerusalem, when he was twelve years old. They were travelling with "relatives and friends" (Luke 2:44). There were sufficient of them not to spot Jesus for a whole day, and Mary and Joseph were close enough in family ties to the extended family for them not to worry about it.

The father

The family was therefore a "little kingdom" that was ruled by the father. He ruled over wife, children, grandchildren, and servants — everyone in the household. Children were brought up to accept this authority (Exodus 20:12), and if they refused to accept it, thereby threatening the security of the family unit, they could be punished by death (Deuteronomy 21:18–21).

On the death of the father, succession normally passed to his eldest son. Isaac was a special case. According to family law practiced in Abraham's time, it was possible for a man to have a child by a secondary wife. Ishmael was born to Abraham and Hagar in this way (Genesis 16:1–2). But if any child was born subsequently to the first wife, then that child, in this case Isaac, became head of the family. The

same law was followed in Jacob's case. Rachel was always intended to be his first wife. Therefore it was *her* elder son, Joseph, who became Jacob's heir and was given the distinctive coat to show it (Genesis 37:3–4), even though he was born long after his stepbrothers.

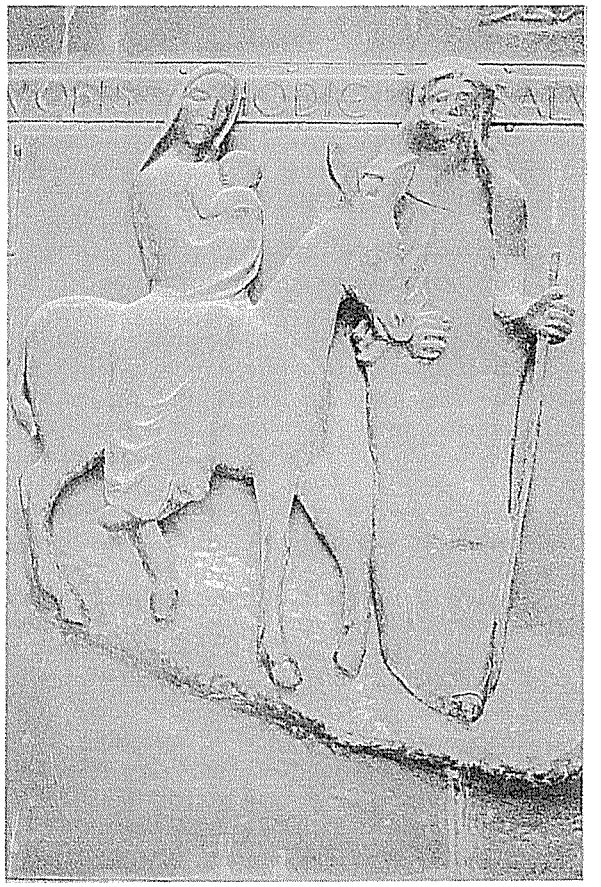
Women

The role of a woman always appeared to be subservient to men. She kept out of sight when visitors were present (Genesis 18:9), served the men in the family before eating herself, fetched the water, made the clothes, cooked the food, and walked while the men rode. Even when Lot and his wife were in full flight from Sodom, she walked behind him (Genesis 19:26, KJV). If Joseph had taken the position ascribed to him by many artists, of walking beside a donkey that was carrying Mary, he would have been the laughingstock of his contemporaries. This is clearly reflected in Paul's writings where "the head of the woman is man" (1 Corinthians 11:3). Paul gives theological reasons for this. He tells Timothy that man was first created, but that woman was first tempted into breaking God's law (1 Timothy 2:13–14).

The traditional role did not mean that a woman was unloved or subject to disrespect when she fulfilled her role (Proverbs 31). She was the only one who could have children, and so important was this aspect of the family that if she was unfaithful to her husband and family, she paid with the death penalty (Leviticus 20:10). But when a husband was unfaithful to his wife with an unmarried girl, the girl became a member of his family (Deuteronomy 22:13–30; compare v. 22 with vv. 28 and 29).

So important was motherhood that a woman's position was literally saved through childbirth (1 Timothy 2:15). With her husband the wife was looked upon as a representative of God to teach his laws (Exodus 20:12; Deuteronomy 6:7). This was to grow into a kind of equality.

In New Testament times wives were still to submit to their husbands, but the love that the husbands were to have for their wives (Ephesians 5:25) was itself to be a kind of submission (v. 21). (This is true because when you love someone you submit to what you know he or she wants, by positively putting the



Relief of Mary and Joseph fleeing Herod's slaughter of the infants. In Bible times no man would walk beside a donkey carrying a woman.

other first.) It was possible for a man to have more than one wife (Deuteronomy 22:28–29), but one wife seems to have been the ideal. The Jewish rabbis noted that God had produced only one wife for Adam, and Paul expected the church leaders of his day to conform to that pattern (1 Timothy 3:2). The family unit itself was the key thing.

Slaves

In settled times it was possible for the wealthier families to increase their size by the acquisition of slaves. Most had been captured in wartime (Numbers 31:26; Deuteronomy 21:10) or purchased from slave markets (Leviticus 25:44). Hosea bought his wife back again from a slave market. Although

such slaves were regarded as property (Leviticus 25:45) they were carefully protected by the law. They could not be oppressed (Deuteronomy 23:15–16), and they had the right to Sabbath rest (Exodus 20:10) and to attend national festivals (Deuteronomy 16:10–11).

Slaves were often very well treated, as if members of the family. If they were circumcised they enjoyed most of the privileges of Jewish society except that they could not acquire property or marry foreign slaves. Good treatment was not solely a Jewish characteristic. Naaman's wife's slave was well treated (2 Kings 5:2–3), and so apparently was the Roman slave Onesimus, even at a time when Roman law made escape by a slave to be a capital offense (Philemon 17).

It was possible for a Jew to become a slave so as to repay money owed through debt or theft, or even because he found greater security in another man's house than in his own. Families and children could be sold in this way (Exodus 21:7; 2 Kings 4:1; Matthew 18:25). Such a person would normally sell his labour for seven years (Deuteronomy 15:12–18) unless he wanted to stay as one of the family (v. 16), in which case his ear was ceremonially pinned to the doorpost (v. 17).

Some slaves were entrusted with great authority by their masters. Eliezer was responsible for finding a wife for his master's son (Genesis 24). A master's daughter could marry a slave (1 Chronicles 2:34–35), but if the son-in-law decided that he wanted to leave the family after all, he had to leave his wife and children behind (Exodus 21:4). Normally slaves were set free in the year of Jubilee to return to their inheritance, which was freed at the same time (Leviticus 25:39–41). Slaves could be freed at any time if the debt they owed was paid by another member of their family, or even themselves (Leviticus 25:48–49); only girls sold as maidservants remained bound for life.

The generous Israelite rules toward slaves contrasted strongly with the harsh laws toward slaves in other areas of the Middle East. The economies of the Greek and Roman empires were largely built upon slavery. The New Testament accepted slavery as a fact of life (Ephesians 6:8; Colossians 3:22; Philemon 16) but it laid down the doctrinal foundations

that would finally bring slavery to an end (Galatians 3:28).

A different form of slavery was known in Israel — "servitude" or "taxation by labour." Levies were taken by the authorities for so many months of the year for public works purposes. The original Canaanite population that survived the conquest was put to work in this way (1 Kings 9:21), but the Israelites had to work for three months of the year, too (1 Kings 5:13–14).

Rites of passage

Within the family there were four great occasions that marked the progress of life — birth, maturity, marriage, and death. Because of the importance of such occasions they were often marked with special social customs. However, when people believe that God is involved in the process of life, the important events take on a religious significance and religious rites are performed alongside the social ones. These are known as *rites of passage*.

Children

Because parents believed that they lived on in their children, children were looked upon as a great blessing (Deuteronomy 28:4; Psalm 128:3). The more children a person could have, the better it was. "Blessed is the man whose quiver is full of them" (Psalm 127:5*a*).

If a woman could not have children, that was therefore seen as a curse from God because it was as good as extinction. Rachel told Jacob that if she had no children she would die (Genesis 30:1). Hannah believed her childlessness was God's punishment (1 Samuel 1:16), and Elizabeth knew the reproachful looks she received from people because they believed she had done something to upset God. When John was born she knew that the Lord had "taken away my disgrace" (Luke 1:25).

A cause for joy though all babies were, boys were the real blessing. Men stayed with the family and so increased its size and wealth with wives and more children. Girls, on the other hand, were valuable only for the work they could do while they were young and for the bride-price that would be paid as a form of compensation when they moved to another family.

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Birth

The expectant mother was not to take a hot bath in case it led to a miscarriage, and there were certain things she could not eat — green vegetables, salt food, and fat — in case they affected the unborn child. The local midwife assisted in the birth, which normally took place at home (Exodus 1:15–19; Jeremiah 20:14–15). The newborn baby was washed and then had salt rubbed over the skin in the belief that this hardened it. The Jewish mother believed that the limbs would grow straight and firm if they were bound tightly to the sides by what were called "swaddling clothes." These were bandages four or five inches (100–120 mm) wide and five or six yards (five or six metres) long (see Ezekiel 16:4; Luke 2:12).

Circumcision

Eight days after the birth the male baby was circumcised either by the head of the family or by a physician. The blessing was said, "Blessed be the Lord our God who has sanctified us by his precepts and has given us circumcision." There was normally some kind of family celebration during the eight days between birth and circumcision. It is difficult to know what circumcision first meant. Before it was taken on by the Jews it was probably some kind of initiation rite in which a young man's vigour and sexuality were dedicated to his god. God then took this celebration and gave it to the Jews as a sign that the whole nation was dedicated to him from the outset (Genesis 17:10).

Naming

The naming of the child frequently accompanied the act of circumcision. This happened in Jesus' case (Luke 2:21). Names normally had some kind of significance in the family, and it is interesting to follow through the meanings where they are given in the margin of a Bible. So important was the birth and the naming that parents' names were often changed. Father became "father of x," and mother became "mother of y."

After the birth the mother stayed at home — seven days for a boy and fourteen for a girl. Thirty-three days later (sixty-six in the case of a girl baby) she was ready to make the customary offerings.

Normally a lamb with a pigeon or dove were offered as a sin offering to restore a woman's fellowship with God (Leviticus 12). In case of poverty another pigeon or dove could be substituted for the lamb. The sin offering seems to have indicated that the woman had been ritually unclean, as she was during menstruation (Leviticus 15:19–24). The ritual uncleanness was not actual defilement through childbirth, but it was a means of protecting a woman from sexual relations in times of weakness and possible embarrassment. In the case of a firstborn child, redemption money of five shekels had to be paid because, since the preservation of the Jewish firstborn at the original Passover, all firstborn children belonged to God (Numbers 18:15–16).

Babies were normally breastfed by the mother (or, if necessary, by a wet nurse), and this often went on for several years (see 1 Samuel 1:24; Psalm 131:2; 2 Maccabees 7:27). The day the child was weaned called for a celebration (Genesis 21:8).

Entering manhood

The Jewish boy was recognized as entering manhood at thirteen years of age, but it is not certain when this practice began. By New Testament times a boy of thirteen became a "son of the law." The significance of the account of Jesus' being left behind at the Temple is that it showed he was leaving his childhood (Luke 2:41–49). It was the last time he would attend Passover as a child. Only after age thirteen did the child qualify to become one of the ten men who could constitute a synagogue.

Polygamy

Although marriage was allowed with more than one woman simultaneously, as when Jacob married Leah and Rachel, and had sexual relationships with their servants, polygamy was not common in Israel in biblical times. One reason was that a husband had to be quite wealthy to be able to afford more than one wife. Therefore it tended to be royalty who had many wives. David had many, including Michal, Abigail, and Bathsheba, and Solomon had still more during the wealthiest part of his kingship.

The high priest could have only one wife (Leviticus 21:13–14), and other leading figures of

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the Old Testament were monogamous — Noah, Isaac, Joseph, and Moses. It was often pointed out by the rabbis that more than one wife led to problems (Leah and Rachel, Genesis 30; Hannah and Peninnah, 1 Samuel 1).

Arranged marriage

Young people did not normally decide whom they would marry. It was marriage first and love afterwards. Although there was therefore a great deal more "will" than "romance," it tended to produce a stable pattern of marriages (Genesis 24:67). Esau was in trouble because he married contrary to the wishes of his parents (Genesis 26:34–35). The practice of arranging marriages did not mean that parents did not consider the feelings of their children (Genesis 24:58), or that love did not sometimes happen before marriage (Genesis 29:10–20).

A "friend who attends the bridegroom" (John 3:29) negotiated on behalf of the prospective bridegroom and his father with a representative of the bride's father. Arrangements had to be made for work compensation (the mohar) to be paid to the woman's family, and a dowry had to be paid to the bride's father. He could use the interest from the dowry but could not spend it (see Genesis 31:15) because it was to be kept in trust for the wife in case she was ever widowed or divorced. Where such sums of money could not be paid because of the poverty of the suitor, other means were found instead, such as service (Genesis 29:18) or elimination of enemies (1 Samuel 18:25).

It became a custom that part of the dowry should form a circlet of coins that were attached to the woman's head dress. They became a symbol like a wedding ring, and therefore the loss of such a coin (Luke 15:8–10) would be the cause of a great deal of anxiety. As part of the marriage agreement, the bride's father would make a marriage gift (dowry) to his daughter (Genesis 24:59–61; Judges 1:12–15).

Marriages were arranged, if possible, with members of one's own kin. Abraham sent a servant to find a bride for Isaac from his own people (Genesis 24:3–4), and Jacob was sent to the same place to find a wife (Genesis 28:2; 29:19). Samson's parents were upset because Samson had not chosen a wife from his own clan (Judges 14:3). Marriages sometimes took place outside the clan (Genesis 41:45; Ruth 1:4), and this usually happened for political reasons (1 Kings 11:1; 16:31). It was never approved, however, because people from other clans worshipped different deities and this affected the whole religious life of the people (1 Kings 11:4). Close marriages within the family were forbidden. The laws forbidding marriages between close relatives are set out in Leviticus 18:6–18.

Betrothal

Once the arrangement to marry was entered into, there was a betrothal that was more binding than the engagement in contemporary society. A man who was betrothed to a woman, even though not yet married, was exempted from military service (Deuteronomy 20:7). If a girl was already betrothed and was raped by another man she could not become that other man's wife, as would normally be the case (Deuteronomy 22:28–29), because she already belonged to her husband-to-be. Such violation involved the death penalty (Deuteronomy 22:23–27).

The formal words of the betrothal were probably those spoken by Saul when Michal and David were betrothed, "You shall be my son-in-law" (see 1 Samuel 18:22). The betrothal could be broken only by a legal transaction (in effect, a divorce), and the ground for such termination was adultery (see Deuteronomy 22:24). Betrothal lasted for about twelve months, during which the home was to be prepared by the groom, and the wedding clothes would be prepared by the bride. The bride's family would prepare for the wedding festivities.

Mary and Joseph were betrothed when it was found that she was pregnant. Joseph did not want to expose her publicly, because, as a supposed adulteress, Mary would have been stoned to death. It must have taken a great deal of love for Mary and a great deal of trust in God speaking through his dream that enabled Joseph to marry her. Maybe this is a reflection of the character God looked for in the man who was to bring up Jesus (Matthew 1:18–20). In New Testament times a man such as Joseph became formally betrothed when he gave a present to the girl and said, "By this, thou art set apart for me according to the laws of Moses and of Israel."

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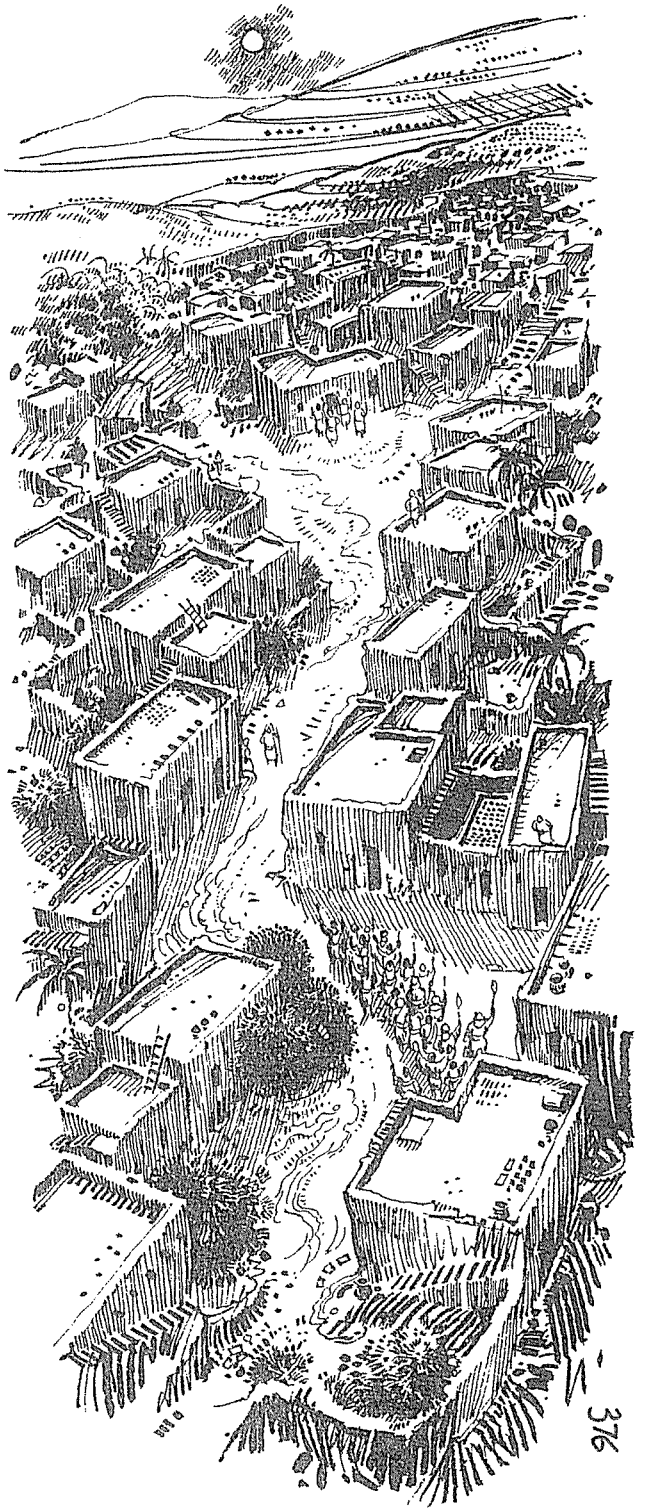
The wedding

There were several important parts to the wedding itself. The wedding was essentially nonreligious, apart from a blessing that was pronounced over the couple ("Our sister, may you increase to thousands upon thousands; may your offspring possess the gates of their enemies," Genesis 24:60). The marriage involved the drawing up of, and the acceptance of, a legal contract. This is still true of a Jewish wedding today. It may shock some Christians to realize that it was not until comparatively recent times that a rabbi or priest was required to be present at a wedding.

The wedding also involved dressing up. The bride was literally adorned like a queen (see Revelation 21:2). She was bathed, and her hair braided with as many precious stones as the family possessed or could borrow (Psalm 45:14–15; Isaiah 61:10; Ezekiel 16:11–12). The girls who had dressed her accompanied her as "companions." The bridegroom too was dressed in finery and jewelry (Isaiah 61:10) and was accompanied by the "friend of the bridegroom" (John 3:29). The dressing up for the wedding was so important that it was unforgettable (Jeremiah 2:32). The bride and groom looked like and acted like a king and queen.

Another important element of the wedding was the procession at the end of the day. The bridegroom set out from his home to fetch his bride from her parents' home. At this point the bride was wearing a veil. At some point the veil was taken off and laid on the shoulder of the bridegroom, and the declaration was made, "The government shall be upon his shoulder." A procession then set out from the bride's home to the couple's new home, and the dark roadway would be lit with oil lamps held by wedding guests. In the story told by Jesus, the bride and groom were later than expected so the oil in the lamps began to run low. Only those who had brought a reserve flask of oil were able to refill their lamps and welcome the bride and groom (see Matthew 25:1–13, esp. vv. 8–9). There was singing and music along the way (Jeremiah 16:9), and sometimes the bride herself would join in the dance (Song of Songs 6:13).

The procession sets out from the bride's house to the couple's new home. The guests hold oil lamps to light the way.





The bride and groom sit like king and queen under a decorated canopy at their wedding feast.

The wedding feast

Bride and groom entered under a canopy when they arrived at the house. There they presided over the wedding feast at which a great deal of time was spent in eating and drinking (Song of Songs 2:4 may allude to the canopy). At the wedding in Cana, Jesus provided one hundred twenty gallons of wine for the guests, but they had already drunk so much that the person in charge (the "ruler of the feast") thought it was a pity that the excellent new wine should have been left to the end when the people could not appreciate it (John 2:6–10).

Festivities often lasted for seven days (Judges 14:12), or perhaps even longer. The guests were there to witness that the marriage had been consummated (Genesis 29:22–23); the blood-stained bedcoverings were shown to demonstrate that the bride had been a virgin (Deuteronomy 22:13–21). (The veil does not seem to have been removed from Leah's face until after the marriage was consummated; Jacob did not know it was Leah until the light of day, Genesis 29:23.) During the festivities, God's blessing was asked upon the couple, and it may well have been for this reason that Jesus was invited to the wedding at Cana (John 2:2). In very wealthy families guests were actually provided with "wedding clothes" (Matthew 22:12).

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Divorce

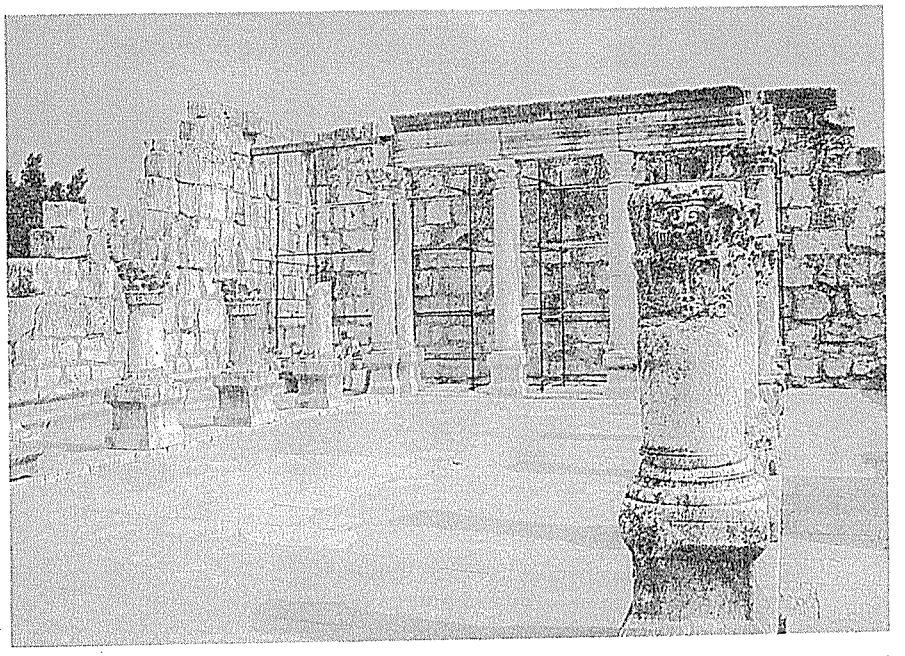
Marriages could and did break up, and it was possible for a man to divorce his wife if he could find "something indecent about her" (Deuteronomy 24:1). Jewish lawyers interpreted this phrase in different ways. In the time of Jesus the followers of Shammai believed it referred to adultery or sexual misconduct. The followers of Hill'el believed that the phrase could include even the spoiling of a dinner. In society of that time, it was possible for a man simply to tell a woman that she was divorced, but the Jews were required to give a written "bill of divorcement" that contradicted the original marriage contract.

Part of the bill (or writ) of divorcement allowed the woman to remarry (Deuteronomy 24:1–2), but a girl who had married a man because she had previously been raped by the man could not be divorced at all (Deuteronomy 22:28–29). A man who had falsely accused his wife of not being a virgin when they were married also could not divorce her (Deuteronomy 22:13–19). If a divorced wife remarried, and her new husband died or divorced her, the original husband could not remarry her (Deuteronomy 24:3–4), but if she had not remarried, her first husband could remarry her (Hosea 3). God's people were left in no doubt that divorce was unacceptable to God (Malachi 2:16), and Jesus reiterated that whom God had joined together, no one was to separate (Matthew 5:31–32; 19:6). Women were not allowed to initiate divorce.

Death

A man's life was complete when he was seventy (Psalm 90:10). Most people died before this, but there were some notable exceptions. Death was the final event for which there were rites of passage. There was no assurance of life after death in early Israelite history. Parents were believed to be able to live on in their children so that the writer to the Hebrews is able to say that when Abraham paid tithes to Melchizedek, Levi was already in Abraham; Levi therefore paid tithes to the Jerusalem king, and his priesthood was thereby judged to be inferior (Hebrews 7:9–10).

People believed that they were gathered to an underworld (Sheol), where people were shades (or



The remains of a synagogue at Capernaum dating from several centuries after the time of Christ. Relics of an earlier synagogue, possibly the one of which Jairus was ruler, have been discovered underneath.

shadows) of their past. Not until the time of Daniel was there revelation that a resurrection would occur — some to eternal life and some to eternal punishment (Daniel 12:2). Nothing became entirely clear until Jesus had opened the Kingdom of Heaven to all believers and become the "firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep" (1 Corinthians 15:20). Not only does the New Testament have to explain this to contemporary Christians, but those outside the Christian faith were "of all men most miserable" because their hopes were limited to this life alone.

Immediately when a person died, there was a time of wailing and lamentation. The wail was an announcement to the neighbourhood that a death had taken place. The Egyptians had so many dead on the occasion of the first Passover that the wail could be heard through the whole country. The family then gathered for lamentation — a time for a great show of weeping, almost as if those who were still alive wanted to impress the shade of the dead person that they were really sorry. Micah says that it sounded like jackals and owls (Micah 1:8), and Jesus was aware of it when he went to raise Jairus's daughter at the Capernaum synagogue (Mark 5:38). David's

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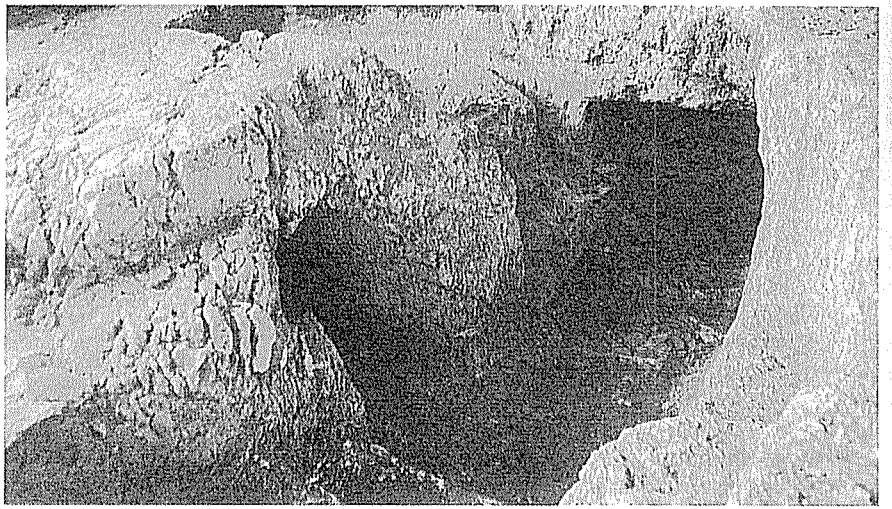


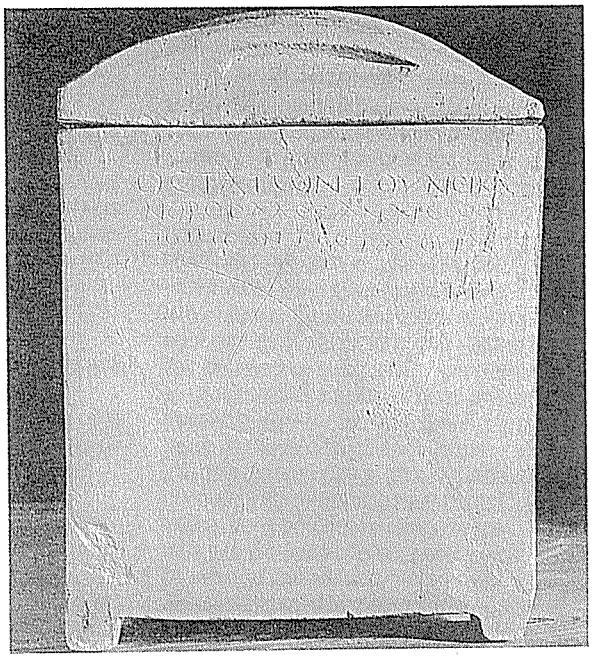
The entrance to these rock-cut tombs could be sealed with a circular stone. These tombs in Jerusalem are known as the Tombs of the Kings.

expressions of grief for Absalom were typical. Wealthy families would hire groups of professional mourners who would add to the noise (Jeremiah 9:17–18; Amos 5:16). Goat's hair cloth garments (sackcloth) were worn so as to cause discomfort; the breast was beaten (Luke 23:48) and clothes were torn to demonstrate how grief-stricken people were (2 Samuel 3:31).

Burial

Burial had to take place quickly because the hot climate led to rapid decomposition. However, a burial never took place on a Sabbath or holy day (John 11:39; 19:31). The body was normally washed, wrapped loosely in a linen cloth, and carried to the burial place on a wooden stretcher (Luke 7:14, where the stretcher or coffin was used for a sick man). Burial could take place in a natural cave or in an artificially-made one (sepulchre) (Genesis 49:29–32; Judges 8:32). Natural caves were widened and provided with niches or shelves where the bodies could be laid to rest. Because there were limited numbers of caves, when the bodies had decomposed the bones were removed and put into stone jars called ossuaries. These jars were stored in a corner, and the niches made available for further burials. The mouth of the tomb was sealed either with a disc-shaped stone that ran in an inclined groove in front of the cave or with a boulder that fell

This ossuary, or bone-box, was found in Jerusalem. It has the inscription: "Bones of the family of Nicanor the Alexandrian who made the gates."



into the access hole beneath it. Either way, the stone was extremely difficult to move once it was in place. Burial caves and sepulchres were painted white as a warning to the living that the dead were there (Matthew 23:27). A living person could not always worship God after having had contact with the dead.

Alternatively, burial was effected by laying the stretcher on the ground and surrounding the body with boulders about eighteen inches (fifty centimetres) in diameter in a rough oblong. The body was then covered by earth, the boulders forming a boundary to the grave. (Burial as such was not common because of the hardness of the ground.) The simple graveyards were always kept outside a village or town (Luke 7:12); only royalty were buried within the city (1 Kings 2:10).

Exceptionally, a body was covered in spices and in paste, and these were tied to the body by layers of white "roller bandage." The paste hardened and impregnated the bandages until a hard preservative mould or cocoon was formed about the body. A cap was put on the head, and often the jaw was held in position by a bandage under the chin. This was done

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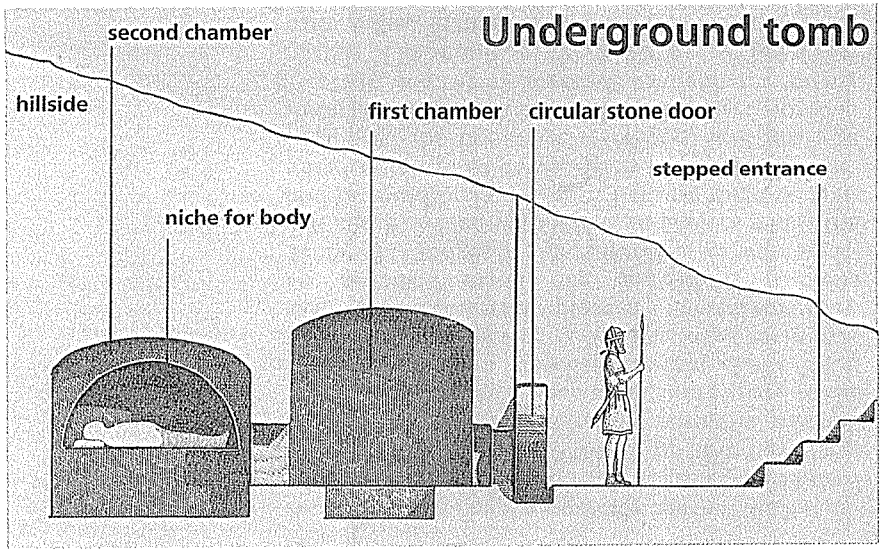


Diagram showing an underground tomb cut into the hillside. Only the wealthy could afford such an elaborate burial.

for Jesus by two wealthy men, following the initial burial in the simple sheet (John 19:40). In Lazarus's case, his hands and feet seem to have been tied together before he was covered with a sheet. His jaw was tied by a bandage (John 11:44). Proper embalming was carried out in Egypt, where the removal of the internal organs took place. The body was filled with paste and the organs kept in a jar (see Genesis 50:2, 26). In Israel, following the burial there was a funeral meal to conclude the period of mourning (Jeremiah 16:7), often for a week or longer (Deuteronomy 34:8).

A woman who survived her husband was in a very difficult position. She could not inherit from her husband. She could remain in her husband's family if the next of kin would take her in marriage. More often the widow was without any financial support. The law therefore said that widows were to be protected (Deuteronomy 10:18; 24:17–21). In the early church, money was set aside to care for widows (Acts 6:1), because in the society of the day, prostitution was about the only way for women to obtain money to live. Paul expected widows to be supported by their families (1 Timothy 5:3–4, 8). The local church was to put the names of widows who had lived good lives and were over age sixty on a charity list (1 Timothy 5:9–11).

Now look at your Bible

Names
The name of God (*Yahweh* or *Jah*) was often incorporated into personal names. *Abijah* means "God is his father"; *Elijah* means "my God is Yahweh"; *Jonathan* means "gift of Yahweh." Other names remind people of birth. *Moses* means "drawn forth" because he was taken from the river Nile.

Jesus' childhood
Luke 2:21–39. Mary and Joseph had Jesus circumcised on the eighth day. At the end of forty days they went up to Jerusalem (about four miles from Bethlehem) to offer the required sacrifices and to pay the redemption money (vv. 22–24). It is clear that Mary and Joseph were extremely poor because they could afford only two birds. Immediately after this they returned to Nazareth with Jesus (v. 39). If the wise men arrived at the time when Jesus was approximately two years old (Matthew 2:16), then the wise men could have gone to Nazareth. The richness of the gifts (which had great symbolic value) must have been a fortune to Mary and Joseph. The gifts might have enabled them to set up a carpentry business and to look after Jesus and later a larger family.

Breaking the laws
Leviticus 18. The laws of Leviticus 18 were not always kept during Bible times. Sarah was Abraham's half sister (Genesis 20:12), and Amnon wanted to marry his half sister Tamar in 2 Samuel 13 (cf. Leviticus 18:11). Moses' parents were nephew and aunt (Exodus 6:20; cf. Leviticus 18:12–13). Jacob married two sisters (Genesis 29:16–30; cf. Leviticus 18:18).

Fidelity
Proverbs 5. A man was exhorted to be faithful, and he was put to death if he violated a married woman (Leviticus 20:10). He was not punished if he violated an unmarried girl: he had to marry her (Deuteronomy 22:28). The married woman on the other hand was put to death if she had sexual relations with any man other than her husband, unless her husband forgave her. This was called the "great sin." This was because the woman was the fundamental centre of the family, and for her to be unfaithful would be for her to destroy the family. This was not considered true of the man.

The burial of Jesus
John 20. Because Jesus was wrapped in a cocoon, one can understand why it was that the disciples saw and *then* believed in the resurrection, and why it was that the body had not been stolen. Jesus' body had passed through the cocoon of spice-impregnated bandages, just as it did through the door of the upper room. Looking quickly through the doorway of the tomb, John thought that the body was still there because he could see the cocoon, and therefore he would not enter. Only when John and Peter went in and saw that there was a gap where the face should have been (the cap was separated) did they realize what had happened.

Bereavement
Psalm 119:136; Jeremiah 9:1. These verses reflect an extreme kind of grief, which was much the same as that felt at time of death. The psalmist wept rivers of water because he knew what would follow the breaking of the law.

Towns and Villages

When people moved away from caves and began to cultivate the land, they settled in places where the land was fertile and where there was a ready supply of water. This sometimes led to conflict with nomadic groups who wanted to share the water. This conflict made it necessary for the new farmers to live near one another for mutual protection, and it was for this reason that the village came into being.

If the village was vulnerable, it would sometimes be built so that the blank walls of the houses formed a defensive village wall, with access only through one gap or gate. If the village was on an easily-defended site and if it was on a trade route, then at the time when the invention of the bronze ploughshare made it possible to cultivate the land more intensively and so brought more wealth, the village was ringed with a defensive rampart. It was this, rather than sheer size, that turned the village into a town (see Leviticus 25:29–31, "But houses in villages without walls round them are to be considered as open country..."). Even cities as important as Jerusalem and Megiddo were only about thirteen acres in extent in Old Testament times. If the rampart was replaced by a wall of solid construction, it became known as a "fortified city" (Jeremiah 34:7).

There was a two-way link between towns and villages. In times of warfare, the villagers would flock to the town for the protection of its walls. In the summertime, people from the town and city were glad to leave for the country, where they would get involved in the harvest and so have a "working holiday." Towns and villages were therefore clustered together (Joshua 15:32, 36, 41).

The centre of the village

The "centre" of the village was the water supply. People went to the well to get their water, taking their own leather buckets and pitchers (see John 4:11), and as they did so they met others from the village for conversation and relaxation at the beginning and end of the day. The well was not always a deep hole with a wellhead. The well was quite often in a dried-up river bed. About four feet (a metre) square and four feet (a metre) deep, it filled up with water and was known as a pit (literal meaning of Jeremiah 14:3). Winter rains always filled the dry bed. When there were quarrels, the pits were sometimes filled in (Genesis 25:15).

Town walls

The most important feature of the town was its wall. Initially, the walls of important towns appear to have been made of stone. The ancient walls of Jericho were six-and-one-half feet (two metres) thick and had towers of thirty feet (ten metres) in height — and that was in 5000 BC. In the bronze age, when building became more extensive and agriculture more intensive, the foundation stones of the

The ancient well at Beer Sheba.

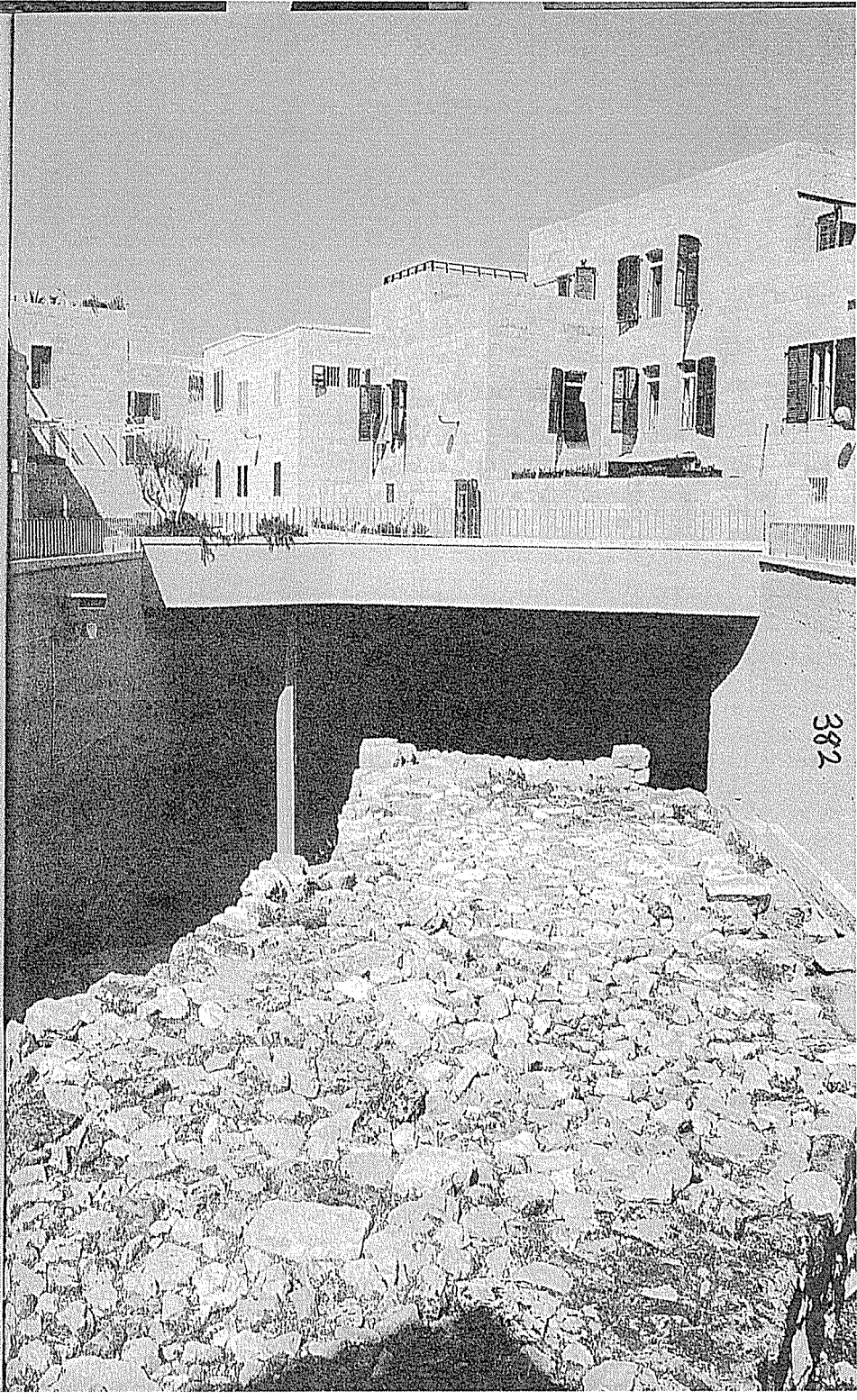


walls were made of stone, but the walls themselves were made of bricks. The walls tended to follow a particular contour, so that, although the town had an irregular shape, it always had to be approached uphill.

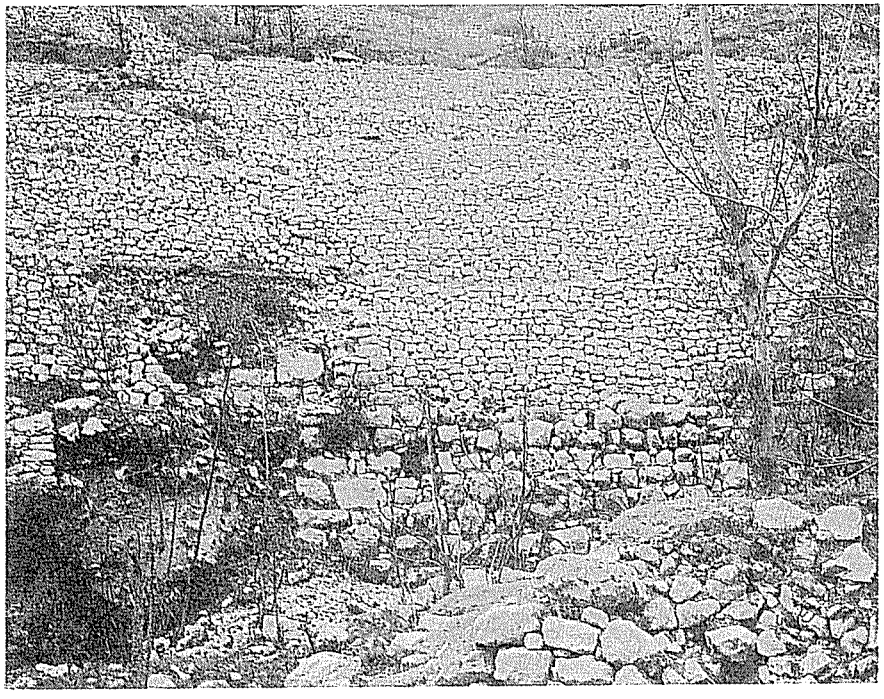
Walls varied in type. Some walls sloped from bottom to top, with bases up to twenty-six feet (nine metres) in thickness. Some were casemate walls — two parallel walls with rooms built in the space between. Others were double walls, filled with rubble. The walls did not always keep the invaders out. Therefore, after cities were taken and destroyed, it was necessary to rebuild on the ruins of the old, because inevitably the old one was built on the best site in the area. This happened so many times in some towns that when archaeologists dig into a site, they find successive levels like layers of a cake, corresponding to the times of destruction and rebuilding. Such a site is called a tell, and by accurately dating each layer, the archaeologist can often write the history of the city.

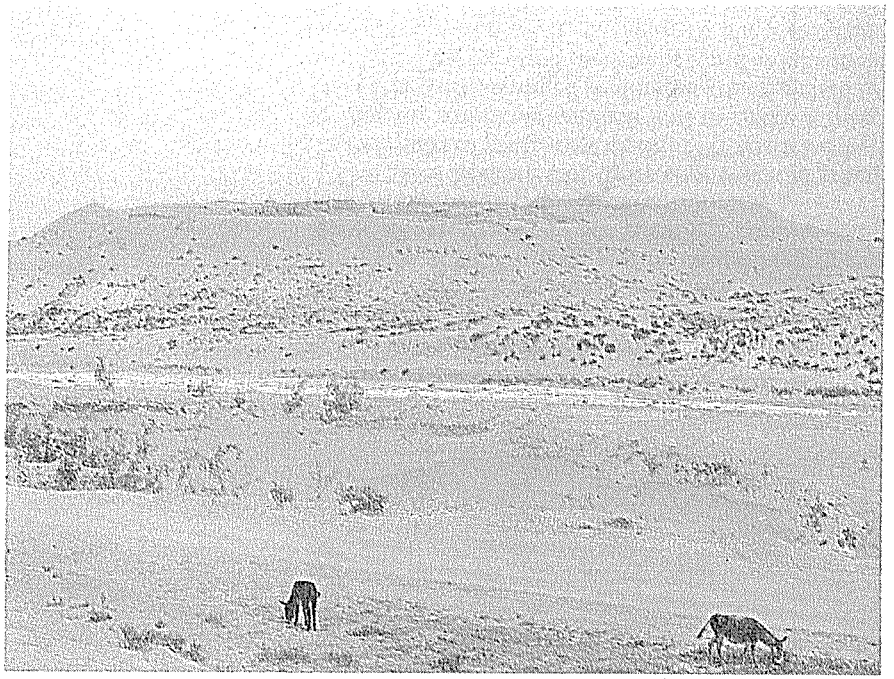
In practical building terms the development of a tell meant that the lower part of the defensive wall

Opposite: Part of the seven metre wide wall dating from eighth century B.C. Jerusalem. This is the wall referred to by Isaiah in his words to King Hezekiah: "you broke down the houses to fortify the wall" (Isaiah 22:10).



Remains of the wall of the Jebusite city of Jerusalem, dating to the eighteenth century B.C.





Tel Beer Sheba. This area was occupied from the fourth millennium B.C.

had to be built as a retaining wall to hold in the higher level inside. The *glacis* was therefore developed — a steep slope of beaten earth and rock, up to the level of the new building line. The glacis was often prefaced by a wide ditch, which had the additional advantage of supplying more soil to make the glacis even higher. The wall was then erected on top of the glacis.

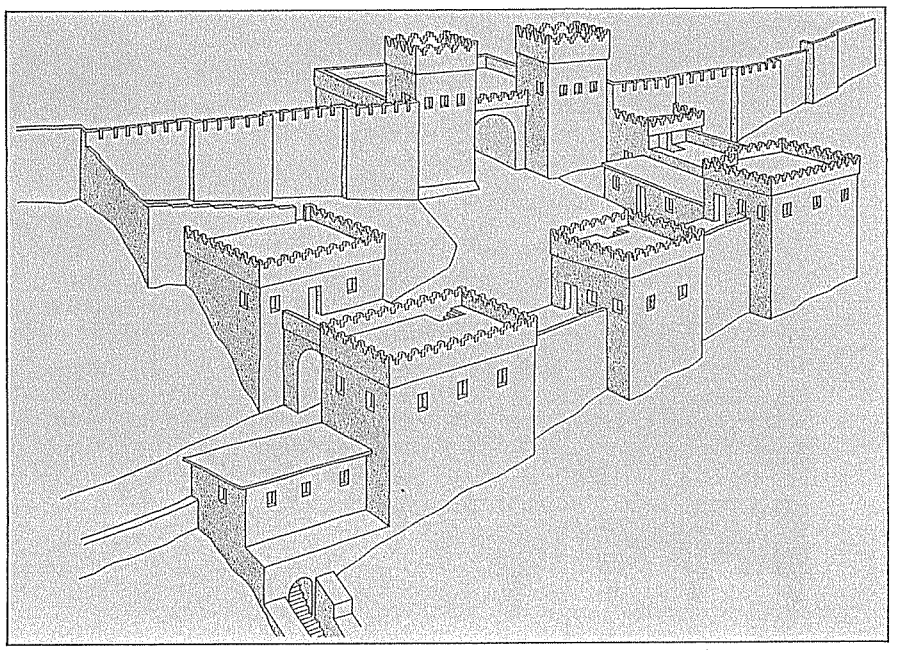
As techniques of siege warfare advanced, casemate walls had to be replaced by solid walls — normally effected by infill. Systems of salients and recesses were built into the walls, and towers provided for defense (2 Chronicles 26:15). The defenders could then shoot at those who were attacking the walls. In some cases, such as at Lachish, two separate walls were built, one inside the other, to give a double line of defenses. We cannot be sure how the walls were finished on the top. Rahab's house may have been built on the top, because the spies hid on the roof, but it may have been the top dwelling in a casemate wall (Joshua 2:15). There are some indications that the tops of the walls were hung with shields (Song of Songs 4:4; Ezekiel 27:11).

The gate

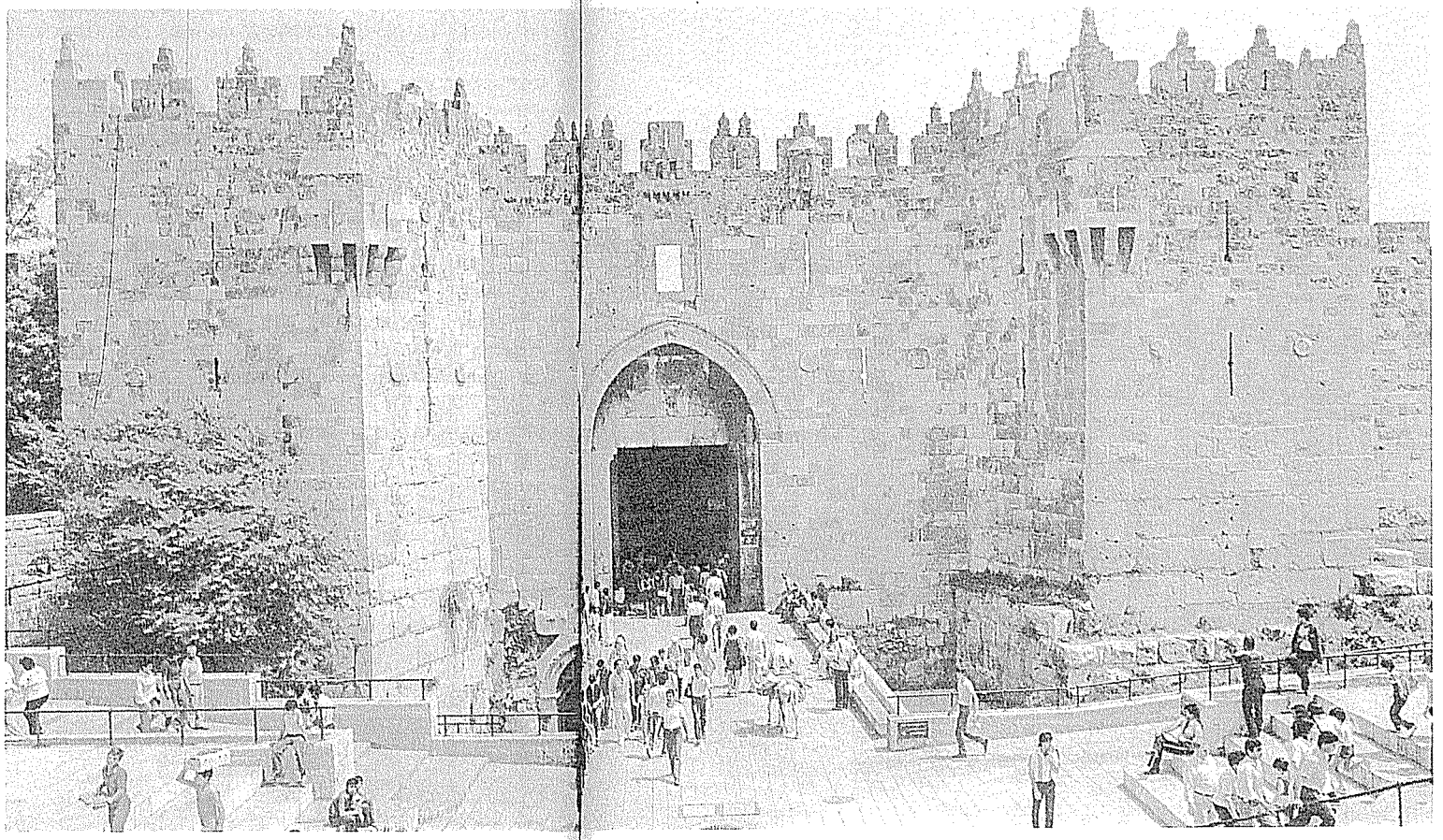
In the early days the gate was the potential weak point in the defenses, and it therefore became a matter of particular concern. To possess the gate was to possess the city (Genesis 22:17). It was therefore common practice for the Canaanites to offer a human sacrifice when setting up a gate. There seems to be a reference to this in 1 Kings 16:34 when Hiel's son Segub died when his father rebuilt Jericho; God had said that anyone who rebuilt the city would lose his son.

The doors of a gate were made of wood covered with metal (Psalm 107:16). Iron bars held the doors in place (1 Samuel 23:7; Isaiah 45:2). As warfare became more sophisticated, such gates did not offer enough protection. One early design for providing that protection called for building overlapping walls with two gates, forming a courtyard between. Another was to build walls at right angles to the main walls, again forming a courtyard. If the outer gate was penetrated there was still another, and in the meantime the defenders could pour down liquids and shoot down things on the attackers in the courtyard below. Both forms of gate made it

The strongly protected gate to the stronghold of Megiddo.



The busy Damascus Gate into the city of Jerusalem.



possible for the defenders to sally forth in sudden sorties against the enemy.

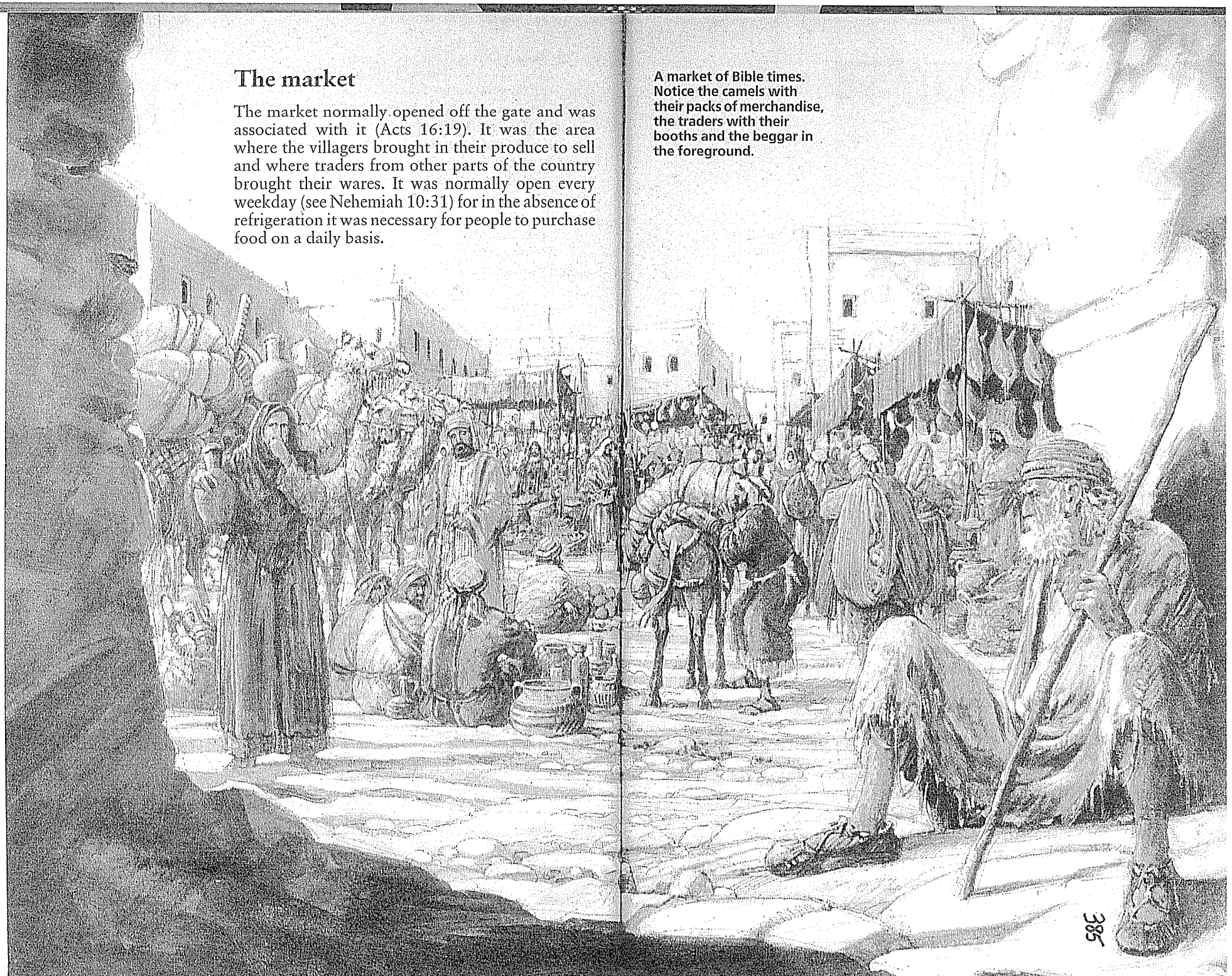
The gates were heavily defended and were provided with towers to serve as lookout posts. In 2 Samuel 18:24–26 David is sitting between the two gates at Mahanaim, and the watchman in the tower above is able to see a runner coming with news of the battle with Absalom's forces.

The gates became still more sophisticated when the two pairs of gates were made at 90° to each other so that the attacking soldiers had to make a turn. The gates were arranged so that the attackers had to turn left. This exposed their right-hand side, which was not covered with a shield, to the defenders above. More complex designs of zig-zag entry and of three gates instead of two were also developed.

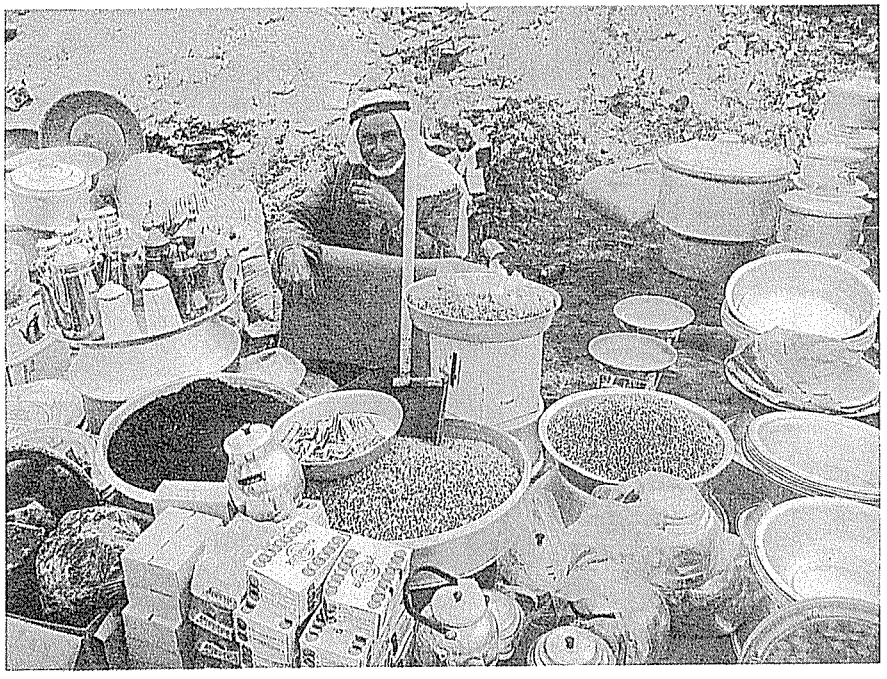
The elaborate construction of the gate was useful in peacetime. Rooms were provided in the walls for merchants to stay, and the shade provided by the high walls made it a good place for meetings. The gate was therefore a place for public speaking, the listeners sitting on stone benches (Proverbs 1:21; 2 Chronicles 32:6; Jeremiah 17:19), and for conversation (Psalm 69:12). It was useful for resting (Esther 2:21), and was the place where local justice was dispensed (Ruth 4:1–2), or should have been (Amos 5:15). Gates were always shut at night, which gives rise to the joy that in the New Jerusalem there will be no night — the gates will always be open (Revelation 21:25).

The market

The market normally opened off the gate and was associated with it (Acts 16:19). It was the area where the villagers brought in their produce to sell and where traders from other parts of the country brought their wares. It was normally open every weekday (see Nehemiah 10:31) for in the absence of refrigeration it was necessary for people to purchase food on a daily basis.



A market of Bible times. Notice the camels with their packs of merchandise, the traders with their booths and the beggar in the foreground.



An Arab merchant on market day in Beer Sheba.

There were other special "market days," and almost festive occasions when a caravan arrived. It was not possible to bring trucks or even camels through many gateways, and therefore the porter was engaged to carry the wares into the marketplace. Jesus used the great loads carried by the porters as a picture of the burden of legalism the lawyers put on the people of his day without lifting a finger to help (Luke 11:46). Paul may have had the same practice in view when he told us to bear one another's burdens (Galatians 6:2).

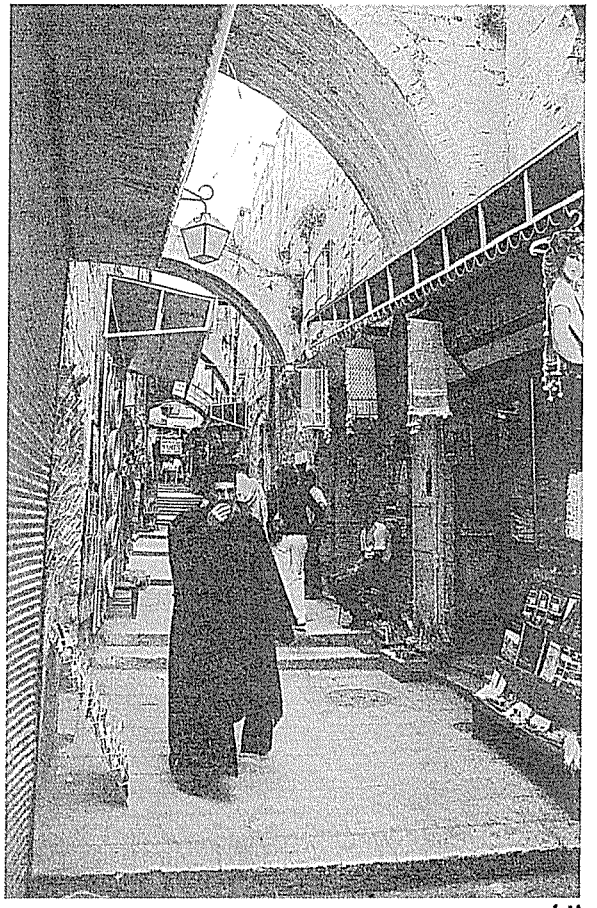
The marketplace was generally a busy and happy place, as there were many people about. It was therefore a place where public speaking and teaching could be done (Acts 17:17), where children played games of "weddings" and "funerals" (Matthew 11:16–17), and where the unemployed would go in hope that someone would give them work (Matthew 20:3). Houses surrounding the marketplace might provide a place to call out the news (Luke 12:3) and places where craftsmen could work and sell their wares. Somewhere in this area, the public oven would be sited.

Town streets

In Old Testament times, streets ran off the market. They were so narrow that it was possible only for people to walk in single file. The houses were built hard up against each other and the "street" was the space left between. From the street led equally narrow alleys to gain access to areas behind (Proverbs 7:8). This system created a network so complex it was almost impossible for a newcomer to know so that he could find his way about. The streets were unpaved and were full of rubbish — mud bricks, broken pottery, and refuse — often higher than the floor level of the houses themselves.

During the wintertime the whole system turned into a quagmire and in the summer the smells made

Narrow street in the old city of Jerusalem.

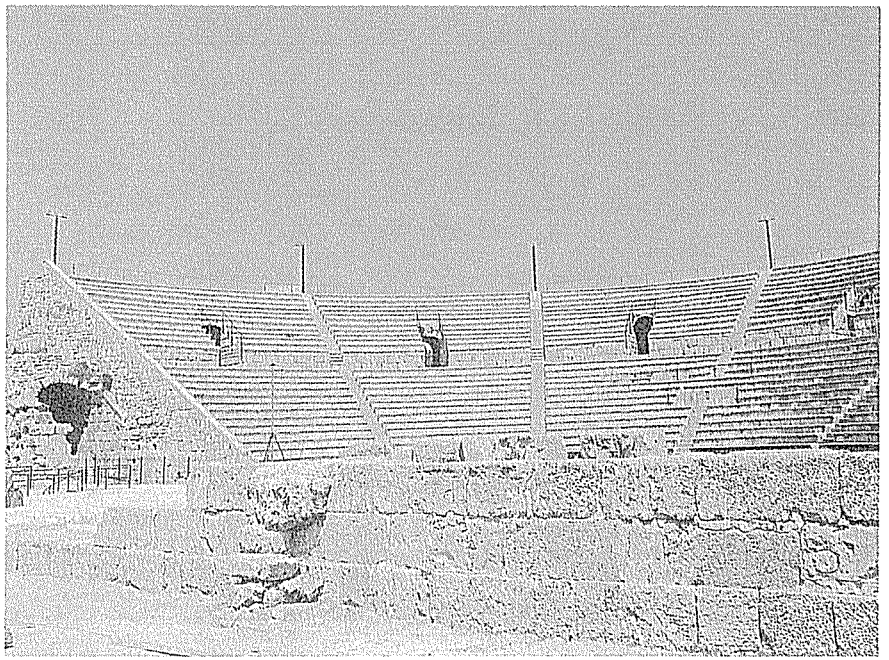


it necessary for people to work out of the city (see Psalm 18:42; Isaiah 10:6). It was no wonder that one of the delights of the city of New Jerusalem is that it will be paved (Revelation 21:21).

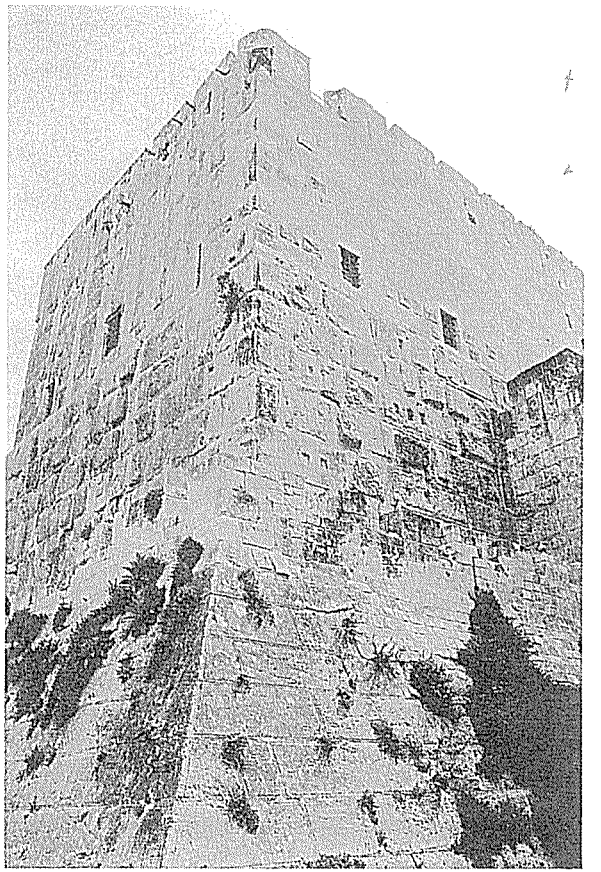
The narrowness and darkness of the streets, together with the odd corners, made the cities centres of violence (Psalm 10:8), and dogs, wolf-like and savage, roamed the area. David could hear the dogs barking in the night (Psalm 59:6), and Jesus knew they would come for the scraps under the table (Matthew 15:27; Luke 16:1). Dogs were not popular. The price of a dog could never constitute a monetary offering (Deuteronomy 23:18), and to call a person a dog was an insult (Revelation 23:15).

Towns built by the Greeks and Romans tended, by contrast, to be well-planned and with paved streets. Squares were formed where major streets crossed one another, and there were many open squares before public buildings. Caesarea, the port Herod built to bring the Romans to Judaea, had a main street, with shops on either side, and baths and theatres. Houses were built in blocks of four, and there were major buildings of administration and entertainment. Antioch, which Paul used as his

The Roman theatre at Caesarea Maritima. In its ruins was found an inscription with Pontius Pilate's name.



The Citadel, Jerusalem. The lower portion of this tower dates back to Herod's time, and formed part of his palace.



base, even had street lighting. The question arises as to why there was so great a contrast. Basically it was that when the Jews began to build, they did so on the foundations of the Canaanite cities and there were few master builders of the type of Solomon, Omri, and Ahab.

Central fortress

In some towns a central castle was built as a royal residence and as a means of last defense for the remainder of the population if the outer walls were breached. Omri seems to have done this in the city of Samaria (1 Kings 16:24). The Akkra, Herod's palace, and Castle Antonia were all castles of this type in Jerusalem. A temple could also be used for defense. The "tower" of Shechem seems to

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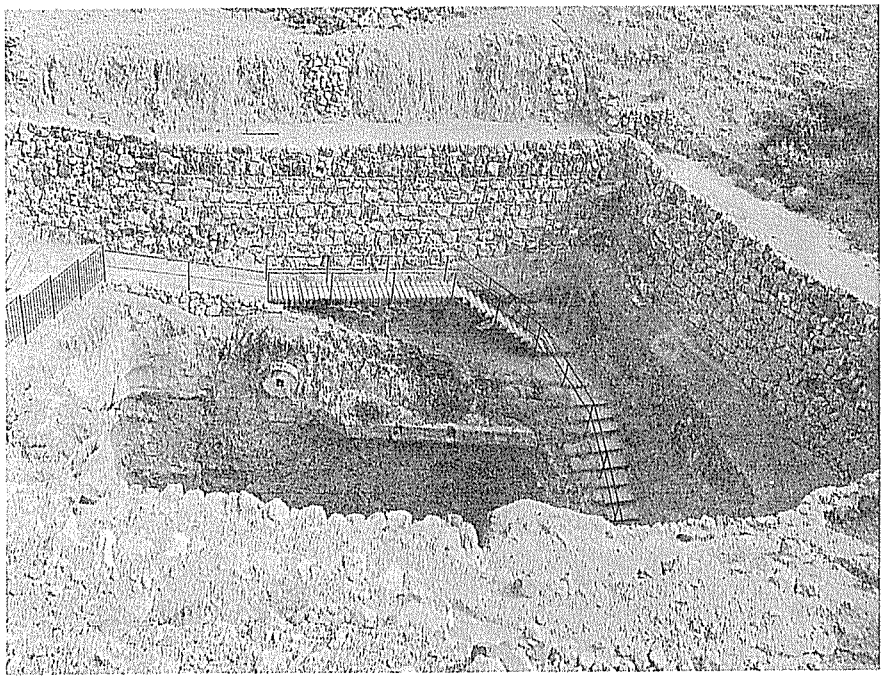


The entrance to the water supply system at Hazor, which dates from the reign of King Ahab.

have been of this type (Judges 9:46). When Jerusalem fell to the Roman armies in AD 70 the final stand was made at the Temple. It became the practice to build additional walls in the castle area so constituting an "upper city" and a "lower city."

Water supply

Water provision was a necessity if a city was to withstand a siege. Some cities had easy access to water. Jericho had a spring, and the water used by Mary at Nazareth is still flowing in the city today. Other places had some difficulty in providing an adequate, secure water supply. In some cases provision was made by digging down to water level. This was done to begin with in Jerusalem. In Megiddo and Hazor, huge pits that went down to water level were dug inside the city. Then a tunnel was built out to the source of the water beyond the city walls.

Cisterns supplied much of the domestic water needs. There is still a huge one in use in the garden tomb in Jerusalem, which in the time of Jesus was in the northern suburb of the city. It still supplies all the water needed for the garden throughout the dry

season. The water cisterns of Bethlehem were well-known for their cool water. When lime plaster was developed, the water was retained for even longer.

But cisterns and pools were also provided publicly too. The pools of Gibeon (2 Samuel 2:13) have been excavated. One is rectangular, thirty-five by fifty-five feet (twelve by eighteen metres), and another is thirty feet (ten metres) in diameter and sixty feet (twenty metres) deep. There was a pool in Samaria (1 Kings 22:38), and there were others in Jerusalem (2 Kings 18:17; Isaiah 22:11). One of the most remarkable water works is the tunnel Hezekiah constructed to bring water from an underground spring through a ridge to a pool inside the city walls, the pool of Siloam. As the standards of water engineering were improved, aqueducts and clay pipes were used to bring water from Solomon's Pools, near Bethlehem, into Jerusalem. Similarly two aqueducts were built to bring water into Caesarea.

Solomon's Pools, near Bethlehem, served as reservoirs for the city of Jerusalem.

The development of the city of Jerusalem

Jerusalem provides a good example of the development of a city, and because it is so important in the



GOWER, 234-49
Travel + Hospitality

Accommodation

Another reason people did not like traveling — both in Old and in New Testament times — was that travelers were in danger from bandits (Judges 9:25; Luke 10:30). Another, similar, reason was that travelers were completely at the mercy of the local people (Judges 19:15; Job 31:32). Staging posts for the ordinary traveler did not develop until Persian times, and they were often dubious places. The inn, khan, or caravanserai was built around a central courtyard. Stabling for animals was provided at courtyard level, and other accommodation was above. It was the ancient equivalent of a motel.

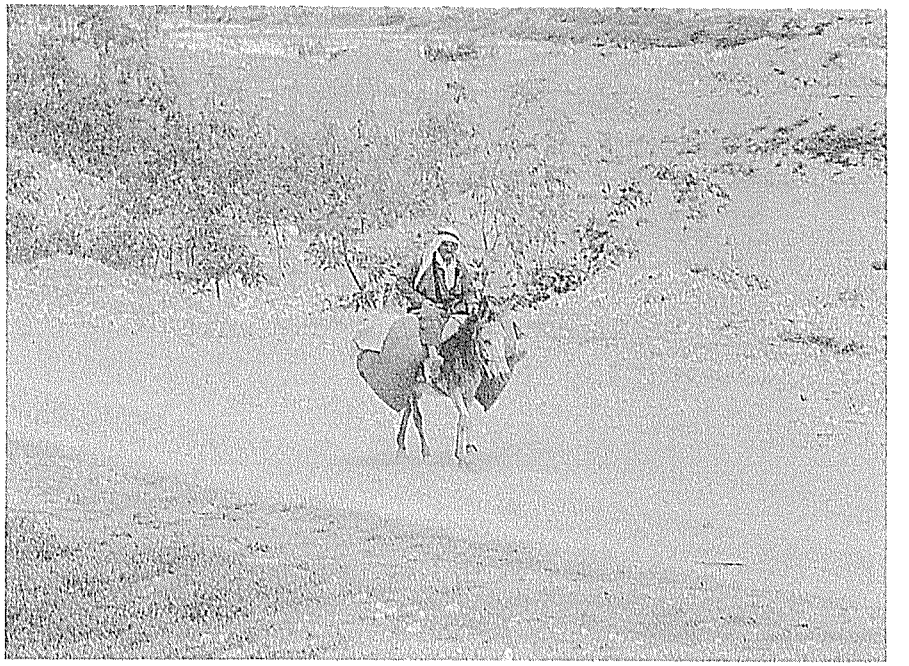
Although in theory the staging posts provided free accommodation, food, provender, and other services were paid for (Luke 10:35), and it was a feature of most of the inns that prostitution was part of the system. This explains why Jesus told his disciples to seek accommodation in private homes (Matthew 10:11), and why it was so important that first-century Christians be given to hospitality (Romans 12:13; 1 Timothy 3:2; 1 Peter 4:9).

Since services were so doubtful it was necessary to take food for the journey (Joshua 9:4–6; Judges 19:19). Normally this would be bread, parched grain, and dried fruit for about two days. It was therefore unusual for Jesus to send his disciples out on a journey without such provision (Matthew 10:10). On the other hand, when he was aware that crowds had been following him for three days, he knew that the people had nothing to eat (Matthew 15:32).

Taxes

Yet another problem was that taxes had to be paid on a journey. There may have been one language for communication (Greek) and no frontiers to cross, but payment on goods, wheels, axles, and persons all had to be made as one passed through successive tax districts.

Another problem was heat. Summer temperatures were extremely high, so that it was unusual to travel at midday (Acts 26:13). Travel was most comfortable in the morning and the evening, and the wise men from the East took advantage of their knowledge of the stars to travel at night (Matthew 2:9).



The basic pack animal of Bible times was the donkey.

Another, surprising, problem was the time taken in greetings. The actual salutations on a journey took an inordinate amount of time. It was not considered polite simply to pass the time of day. It was necessary to ask and receive answers to questions such as "Where are you going? ... Where are you from? ... What is your name? ... How many children have you?" and so on. Jesus considered these salutations to be so great a problem that he told his disciples "do not greet anyone on the road" (Luke 10:4). He was equally scathing about the time some of the religious leaders of his day took in such greetings (Luke 11:43; 20:46). He would have had little patience with the small talk of conventional social gatherings today.

The donkey

The final, and perhaps the biggest, problem was that animals had to be cared for on the journey. The basic pack animal was the ass or donkey. This was the first animal used by nomadic people and ensured that in the early days travelers were never far from centres of population. The pack animal was used to

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carry people as well as goods. The saddle was made of three layers — felt, straw, and haircloth. Sacks were either roped together and slung over the saddle, being tied together underneath for security (Genesis 42:25–28), or else they were hung from a cradle that had been put across the saddle. Boxes or baskets were also hung from the cradle (1 Samuel 16:20; 25:18), and children were sometimes carried in the boxes.

Donkeys were even used for pulling a plough (Isaiah 32:20), but they could never be paired with a larger animal such as an ox (Deuteronomy 22:10). Donkeys were also harnessed to corn mills and to water wheels. Although some breeds of donkey were marked out for royal usage (Judges 5:10) and though they were used by important people for transport (Genesis 22:3; 1 Samuel 25:23), donkeys were replaced by mules as the status symbol, and the horse later became the mount for going to war. The donkey gradually became a symbol of labour and peace, although always the mount of ordinary people (Zechariah 9:9; John 12:15).

The camel

The camel was domesticated about 2000 BC and gave the nomadic tribes independence of settlements. It enabled them to live in the desert far from scattered oases, because the camel was able to store enough water for several days. Abraham lived at a time when there was a transition from the use of donkeys to camels (Genesis 12:16; 24:35; 30:43), Abraham used the camels only for long journeys (Genesis 24:3, 64), and so did Jacob (Genesis 31:17). Camels were frequently in use in later times by nomadic tribes such as the Midianites (Judges 6:5) and the Amalekites (1 Samuel 15:3). It became the animal for long distance travel.

Not only could the camel travel great distances, but it was the means of bringing international news from place to place (Proverbs 25:25), and it was an excellent beast of burden. The donkey load, or ephah, was the largest unit of volume, but the camel could take more, and there was an informal measurement known as a *camel load* (cf. 2 Kings 8:9). Camels traveled in caravans of up to fifteen hundred beasts, groups being roped together and led by a rider on a donkey at about three miles (five

kilometres) per hour. The use of the donkey was not simply to reserve carrying space on the camel — the camel was not at all comfortable to ride. It is easy enough to mount when it is in a kneeling (resting) position, but when one rides it the swaying movement induces travel sickness.

A camel was a considerable investment, and it was cared for appropriately. The camel furniture — saddle, saddle bags, and bridles — were of considerable value and were kept in the tents (Genesis 31:43). The decorations of the bridle were valuable enough to be taken as spoil in war (Judges 8:21). In return for the crushed straw from the threshing floor, which constituted its staple food, the camel gave meat (although the Jews were not allowed to eat it, Leviticus 11:4); milk (Genesis 32:15); and hair, which was woven into coarse but soft camelhair cloth and was then used for clothes such as those worn by John the Baptist (Matthew 3:4). The skin was useful too. When it was tanned it could be made into bags and trousers.

The most common type of camel was the single humped camel, sometimes known as the *dromedary*. It had long wiry legs and little fat to store



The camel was an important beast of burden in Bible times.

water. What it lacked in endurance it made up in speed. It could travel at nearly ten miles (sixteen kilometres) an hour.

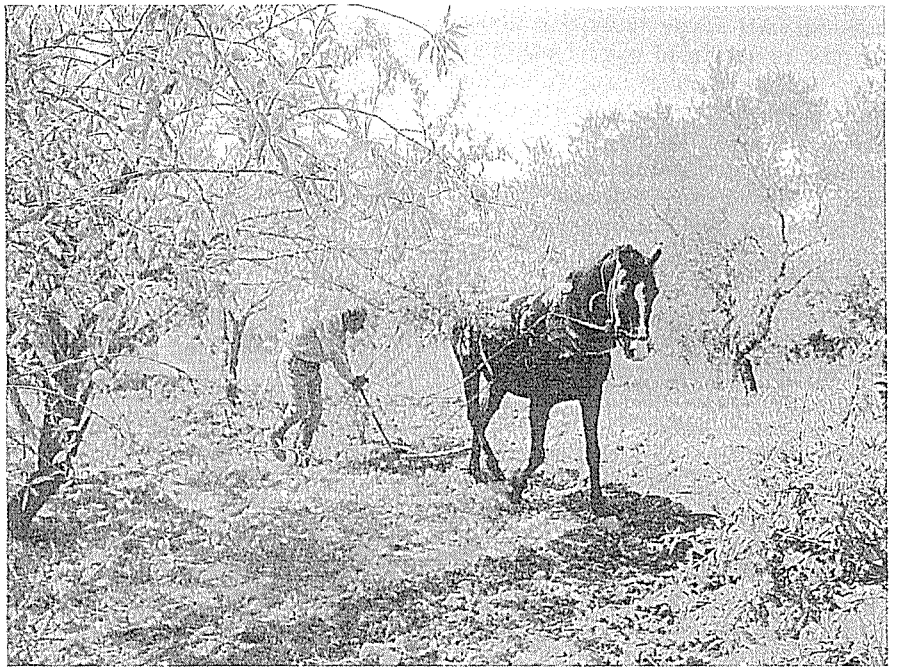
The mule

Mules were not much used until David's time, because an animal bred from mixed parentage was contrary to the law (Leviticus 19:19). Presumably the Jews of the time believed that so long as they were not doing the breeding themselves it was allowable to purchase the animals. The mule was initially rare enough to be a royal mount. The king's sons have them in 2 Samuel 13:29, and when Solomon rode David's mule it was a sign that he was the heir apparent (1 Kings 1:33, 44). Mules were brought as presents to Solomon when he became king (2 Chronicles 9:24), and Ahab was worried about his mules when there was a period of drought (1 Kings 18:5), but by the time of Isaiah they had become much more common (Isaiah 66:20).

The horse

The horses of the Bible were similar to the Arabian horses of today. They were used for war (see Revelation 19:11, 19), though not so much to provide a mounted cavalry as to provide a means of pulling chariots (Genesis 41:43; Exodus 14:9). Horses were not above working on a farm, however, when the need arose (Isaiah 28:28). The Jews were warned against the acquisition of horses (Deuteronomy 17:16). Their neighbours had chariots, however, and although God helped the Jews to overcome those neighbours, the Jews were anxious to have chariots of their own (Joshua 11:6, 9; Judges 4:3). David therefore used horses and chariots (2 Samuel 8:4), but it was Solomon who really developed their usage (1 Kings 4:28; 2 Chronicles 1:14; 9:25). Their possession tended to make people trust more in the chariots than in God (Isaiah 31:1).

A chariot was a semicircular box on wheels, open at the back. The floor was made of rope to give a degree of spring, and two people stood in it — the driver and the soldier. But horses had a place in peacetime too. It became a status symbol to have a horse, particularly if one had a chariot to go with it. By Roman times chariots were raced against one another in the games. Horses therefore became



An Arab farmer ploughs using a horse.

symbols of power (Psalm 147:10). For all the value of the chariot and horse, the charioteer was greatly dependent upon good roads. It was easy for the narrow chariot wheels to get stuck in mud (Exodus 14:28; Judges 5:21–22), and this explains why Ahab was so anxious to get back to Jezreel (1 Kings 18:44).

Now look at your Bible

The woman of Shunem

2 Kings 4:24. That the great woman of Shunem saddled a donkey and went to visit Elisha, was unusual, because it was normal for a man to ride and a woman to walk. It gives us some idea of her status that she was able to do this. If Mary rode the donkey and Joseph walked alongside, which is traditional in Christian art, then Joseph would have been a laughingstock to fellow travelers.

The eye of the needle

Matthew 19:24; 23:24. Many stories have been told to indicate that the "eye of the needle" is a small postern gate that was opened at night when the city gate had been shut, and that a camel could get through it provided it had been fully unloaded. It is a nice story but not true in biblical terms. The eye of a needle is a surgeon's needle. In both Matthew 19 and Matthew 23, the point was that the camel was the largest animal with which people of the day were familiar. Jesus was using the term much as we would use the word *elephant* as the largest creature in our experience. Jesus may also have used the camel as an illustration because it was ritually unclean.

The room in the inn

Luke 2:7. The "inn" where there was no room for Mary and Joseph was not a *khan*. The Greek word is *kataluma*, which means a "temporary shelter." The Romans erected large marquees for shelter when there was insufficient accommodation for people and shelter was needed. They were erected around Jerusalem, for instance, at Passover time. The *kataluma* was a noisy place, bustling with animals and people, and sometimes the odd cooking fire. No "innkeepers" were at hand. Since there was no room there for Mary and Joseph, then it is more than likely that Jesus was born either outside (the idea of the writer of the carol "Away in a Manger" — "The stars in the bright sky look down where he lay") or in a shepherd's cave. This last is more likely. Such a cave has been shown from antiquity as the birthplace of Jesus. It is now under the Church of Nativity in Bethlehem.

The eyes of a ship

Acts 27:15. Ships were often personified, and eyes were painted on each side of the bow. This seems to have been done to the ship Paul was on, because the literal meaning of the original is "when we could not look the wind in the face."

Hospitality

Entertaining others to eat and to stay was important for the people of the Bible; the urge to give hospitality seems to have been rooted in their experience of nomadic life. Nomadic people are conscious of the loneliness of the desert and that the provision of food is often a matter of life and death. Because Esau was too weak to prepare a meal for himself after he had been hunting, his brother, Jacob, was able to extract the birthright from him (Genesis 25:29–34). Even an enemy could not be allowed to die of hunger. Paul wrote, "If your enemy is hungry, feed him" (Romans 12:20), and he was repeating what was always done among nomadic people.

If a person came within one's tent or home, he was absolutely safe under the protection of the family (Genesis 19:8). When David wrote, "You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies," he was referring to this kind of safety and protection (Psalm 23:5). The custom was taken up by God in the giving of the law so that it was reinforced by divine sanction. Because the Jewish people had received protection from God, they were to give protection to others. It was therefore a sin to eat alone (Job 31:17) or to refuse to share one's food with the poor and needy (Isaiah 58:7). The Ammonites and Moabites were condemned for such a lack of hospitality (Deuteronomy 23:4).

Angels unaware

The Jews believed that God sometimes sent angels in disguise to test whether people were obeying the law of hospitality. They knew that this had happened to Abraham (Genesis 18:2–13) and to Gideon (Judges 6:17–22), and they believed therefore that the same thing might happen to them (Hebrews 13:2). This style of thinking gave rise to problems as well as opened the way for revelation. Many Jews thought

that if they were in the house of God then they would be under God's protection, and as a result tended to be careless in their daily living (Jeremiah 7:14). They did not realize that the glory of God had departed from the Temple and that it was no longer, therefore, the house of God (Ezekiel 11:23).

So important was hospitality that Jews looked upon the final blessing as a great banquet held by God himself (Zephaniah 1:7) and the same theme was taken up by Jesus in the parable, "The kingdom of heaven is like a king who prepared a wedding banquet for his son" (Matthew 22:2–14).

In New Testament times, refusal to give hospitality amounted to rejection (Matthew 10:14), and it was therefore essential for Christians to give hospitality (Galatians 6:10; 1 Peter 4:9). Although such a practice gave moral protection in view of the character of many inns (see p. 234) and in view of the fact that many Christians had to leave their own homes because of persecution, it was more than this: "hospitality" is *philoxenia*, a "love for others." It was particularly important for preachers of the time who had given up their livelihood so that they could preach the gospel (3 John 5–8). They were to be given hospitality for several days, and then encouraged to move on to another place (e.g. Acts 9:43; 16:15; Romans 16:2). One could not be recognized as a leader in the church unless one was hospitable (1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:8).

Greetings

Greetings have changed little over the centuries. Then, as now, there were three types of greeting, which corresponded to the closeness of the other person. First there was a face-to-face greeting, which could be, but need not be, verbal, and which involved a gesture with the hand, without physical contact. Sometimes the word used was "Rejoice!" or "Greetings" (Matthew 28:9) and at other times "Peace be with you" (John 20:21). This word was used in mockery by the soldiers when they put on the crown of thorns (Mark 15:18). "Peace be to this house" was the first greeting the Seventy made when they went to the home of a stranger (Luke 10:5).

Second, there was a formal kiss given much as we might give a kiss to a friend or a guest. It involved the laying on of hands on each other's shoulders

then a pulling together and the giving of a kiss, first on the right cheek and then on the left. Samuel kissed Saul when he anointed him (1 Samuel 10:1), Simon the Pharisee failed to greet Jesus in such a way when he came as a guest to his home (Luke 7:45), and Paul wrote, "Greet one another with a holy kiss" (Romans 16:16).

There was also the mouth-to-mouth kiss of greeting to demonstrate affection (Genesis 29:11). This appears to have been the kind of kiss Judas gave to Jesus, because the Greek words indicate that Judas kissed Jesus several times. It was this greeting that prompted Jesus' question in Luke 22:48.

Another form of greeting was the bow, which was given to a particularly honoured person or guest (Genesis 18:2–3; 23:12). It might be an inflection of the head forwards or a movement from the waist; it could even become an act of prostration at the guest's feet (Matthew 18:26). There were dangers in this — it could look like worship. In one sense such obeisance was proper because it was acknowledging someone to be of great worth (or giving them worthship), and we use the word *worship* in this sense when we say, "He worships the ground she walks upon." But if our thinking goes beyond this conventional use of the term, we are giving to man what rightly belongs to God (Revelation 19:10). When Cornelius fell down before Peter to give him such a greeting, Peter was anxious to stop him in case it should be any kind of worship (Acts 10:25–26). In Revelation 3:9, the expression "bow down" is used, but it refers to the prostration of respect.

Guest accommodation

There were a number of kinds of accommodation where one could stay in New Testament times, apart from the inn. A stranger would normally go to the gate or wait by the well until an invitation to stay had been given by someone locally (Genesis 19:1–2; 24:13–14; Judges 19:15). When a person was invited to sleep it was not normally alone. Other members of the family slept with him because it was believed to be discourteous if a person lacked company through the night. In the simple, one-roomed peasant house, there was only one place to sleep, and the guest would sleep on the raised platform with the family or upon the roof if the weather was

good (1 Samuel 9:26). In the case of the bedouin tent, the visitor was invited to sleep in the open tent entrance with the men. The visitor was never allowed into the inner, closed-off part of the tent, which was the women's quarters.

In a larger house and in later times, a guest room would be provided, sometimes at the quiet end of the inner courtyard or in a room near the entrance. When householders with smaller rooms could not provide a guest room but wanted to entertain, several families might join together to maintain a guest room and employ a servant to keep it prepared. A family's guest would sleep in and be fed in that guest room. But such rooms were available only for men; anyone traveling with a family had to sleep in a family house (Judges 19:4). This is probably because, when not used for guests, the guest house became the men's social centre. Elisha's experience was unusual. He was given a well-furnished room on the roof away from the rest of the family, although there were a number of unusual things associated with the "great woman" of Shunem (see p. 240 and 2 Kings 4:20, KJV).

Feasting

Provision of meals was an important part of hospitality. Almost any excuse was given for a party — a weaning, the arrival of a guest, and, almost certainly, birthdays. That was because life and food was often tedious and monotonous, and it may explain why the Hebrew word for "feasting" is the same as the word for "drinking" — they wanted a merry time!

When a friend arrived at midnight and the host had no food to meet the needs, the host would be persistent in waking his neighbour and asking him for food, not simply because the neighbour was a friend but because the obligation to offer a meal to a guest was so great in that culture (Luke 11:8). Meals were an important aspect of friendship. To eat a meal with someone was to be at peace with him (Genesis 26:28–30). Salt had a particular function as part of the meal. To "eat salt" was to be at peace — perhaps because it healed wounds (Mark 9:50; when Jesus tells us to be "salty," he is therefore

telling us to be at peace with others).

If the guest was coming to carry out an errand that might not be approved by the host, it was necessary to speak about the errand before the meal was begun (Genesis 24:33). A covenant of peace made at such a meal was binding (Joshua 9:14, 15), and thus a meal was a means of reconciliation (Genesis 31:53–54). That is probably why Jesus appeared to his disciples after the crucifixion and ate with them: it was a means of reassuring them that if they had failed him, there was no loss of relationship between them (Luke 24:30; 24:41–43; John 21:9).

Religious festivals were also great social occasions. After a sacrifice had been made, the family sat down to eat part of the sacrifice that was being burned on the altar. The family was literally having a meal with God as a sign of peace (Deuteronomy 12:5–7).

An invitation to a formal meal in New Testament times followed an established procedure. Double invitations were always given. Initially a formal invitation was refused as a matter of course. ("I could not possibly come: I am not worthy.") Then the guests would be urged to come until the invitation was accepted (Luke 7:36; 14:23; Acts 16:15). Later, the message would come that the meal was prepared (Esther 5:8; 6:14).

When a guest arriving for the meal had been greeted, a slave would remove the guest's sandals in preparation for washing his feet and so that the sandals would not bring in dirt that had been picked up along the way. Then the feet were washed by a servant, water being poured over them, which were then rubbed with hands and dried with a towel (Genesis 18:4; 19:2; 24:32; 1 Samuel 25:41; John 13:3–5; 1 Timothy 5:10). Next the guest's head was anointed with olive oil scented with spices. David refers to this custom in Psalm 23:5. It was another of the courtesies Simon the Pharisee neglected when Jesus arrived at Simon's house for the banquet (Luke 7:46). Water was then produced for a drink. It indicated that the guest was worthy of peaceful reception; to ask for a drink of water was to be received (Genesis 24:17). The Samaritan woman found it incomprehensible that Jesus, a Jew, had asked for water when there was generally such animosity between Jews and Samaritans (John 4:9).

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A formal meal in New Testament times. Notice the couches arranged on three sides of an open square.

The formal meal

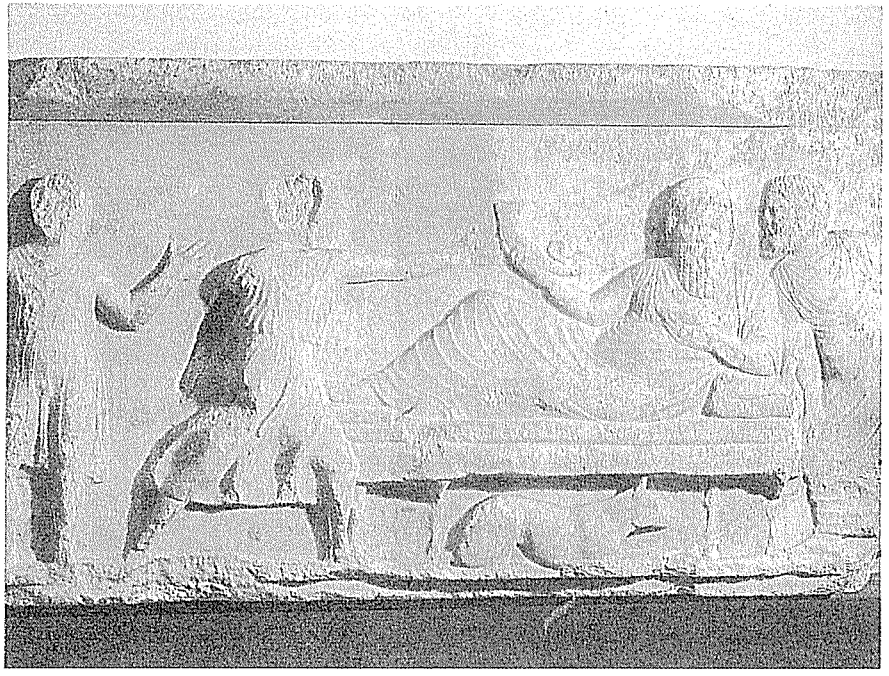
The placings at table were extremely important. In large houses there was a raised platform for the "top table" where honoured guests would be received (Matthew 23:6; Luke 14:8–10). The chief guest sat on the right-hand-side of the host and the second guest on the left-hand-side (see Mark 10:35–37). The largest and best plates of food were always given to such guests.

In early Old Testament times guests usually sat on their feet, cross-legged on a carpet, but by the time the kingdoms of Israel and Judah were established, guests sat at tables on chairs or even on couches. By New Testament times the triclinium was beginning to come into use. This was an arrangement of three tables set around a square, with access to the middle gained through the open side of the square so that servants could come and go to bring in food and to take away the left-overs. Couches were arranged on the outside of the three tables, close to one another, so that the guest could recline to eat. The guest was given a cushion and lay on his left arm with his head towards the table, leaving his right arm free to take what he wished. This made it possible for servants to rinse the feet while the guests continued the banquet. Jesus was therefore probably using a couch at a triclinium when his feet were washed (Luke 7:46).

The arrangement of the triclinium meant that, although it was relaxed, it was not necessarily easy to make conversation. If one wished to speak to the person on one's left it was necessary to lean back and nearly lie on him in order to talk. One would therefore "recline" on someone's "breast" (John 13:23–25; see also Luke 16:22).

At a formal meal there was a "starter" of wine diluted with honey to drink. The main dinner, called the *cena*, followed. It was of three courses arranged on trays and often beautifully decorated. Guests ate with their fingers, except when soup, eggs, or shellfish were included, in which case they used spoons. There were no forks. Finally there was a dessert of pastry and fruit. We can now begin to understand what Martha was trying to do, and why Jesus said that "only one" thing was "necessary" (Luke 10:42). The most honoured guest was given a





Relief of a Roman banquet.

"token" meal by the host. A piece of bread was dipped into the food and was used as a spoon. The "bread spoon" and contents were put into the mouth of the favoured guest. This was known as the "morsel" and was given by Jesus to Judas during the Last Supper (John 13:26), providing a final, loving appeal to him.

Entertainment

During and after the courses of the meal entertainment was provided in which readings of poetry and prose were given and in which there was music and dancing (Amos 6:4–6). Dancing was normally individual — men and women dancing together had not arrived by this period — and occasionally a display as in a cabaret act was performed (Mark 6:22). It may have been for this reason that it was possible for local people to look in at what was happening. It was probably in this way that the woman who poured ointment on Jesus' feet was able to gain access (Luke 7:37). The occasions were brilliantly lit so that they could be seen from the darkness outside. To be put out of the lighted room into the darkness

could lead to despair (and so, "gnashing of teeth" Matthew 8:12; 22:13; 25:30).

When the entertainment was finished and the meal had been cleared away, there was a long period for conversation. Traditional stories were told from memory. Local gossip was another feature of the conversation, and there are sufficient warnings in the Bible against gossip (Matthew 12:36; Ephesians 5:4) for us to recognize that it was a frequent occurrence. Proverbial sayings were also shared. Departure was delayed as long as possible, for once a person had accepted such hospitality it was looked upon as insulting to leave it early as if it were not good enough (see Judges 19:5–10).

Education

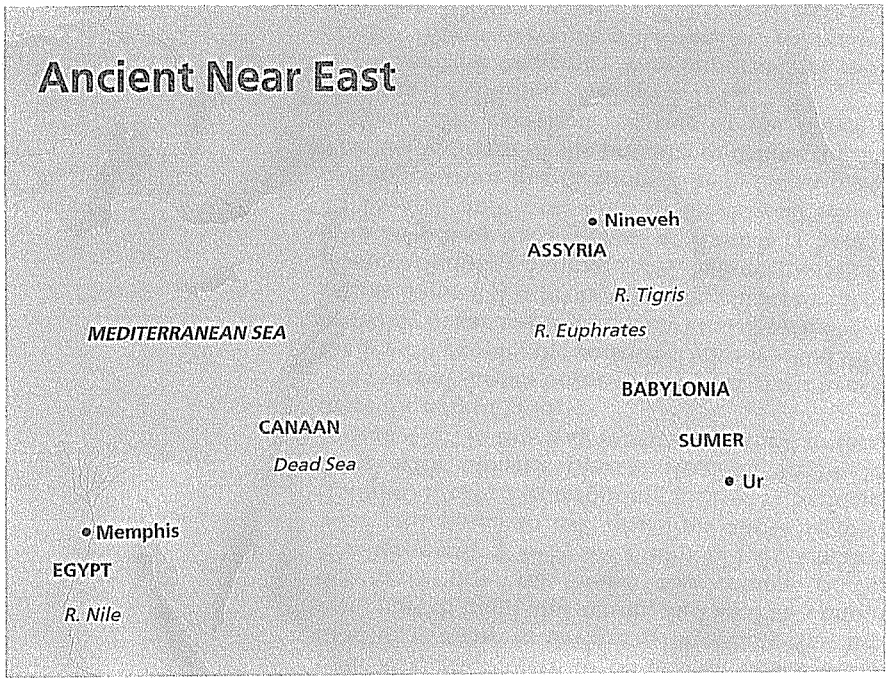
Education is necessary so that the skills and understanding acquired by one generation can be passed on to the next. Such education always goes on in families, but as the skills and understanding become more developed, and as money becomes available in the economy to pay for it, a broader education can be given to more and more people. Reflections of this process can be seen in the Bible.

Sumerian education

When Abraham was called by God to leave the city of Ur in Sumer to "go to the land I will show you" (Genesis 11:31—12:5), his going was an act of faith. Ur was a highly civilized city, and Abraham was called to leave it for the unknown. Schools in Ur were used to train people for religious, commercial, and governmental work. The curriculum included mathematics, language, geography, botany, and drawing.

Writing was done by means of a wedge-shaped stylus that was impressed in soft clay tablets. Tablets from the city of Mari have been found with the children's exercises and the teachers' corrections in the clay. A "school father" ran the school with an assistant who prepared the exercises. There were also specialist subject teachers. One recovered tablet tells what a boy did in school: "I read my tablet, ate my lunch, prepared my tablet, wrote it, finished it." Trouble was corrected by the use of the cane. Education had to be paid for by parents.

There is no evidence that Abraham ever went to one of the "tablet houses," as the schools were called, but he certainly followed the laws of the Sumerians. The custom that a childless wife might have children by proxy through a servant girl (Genesis 16:1–2) was a Sumerian custom. But it was a law that, when the child was born, the girl should not be

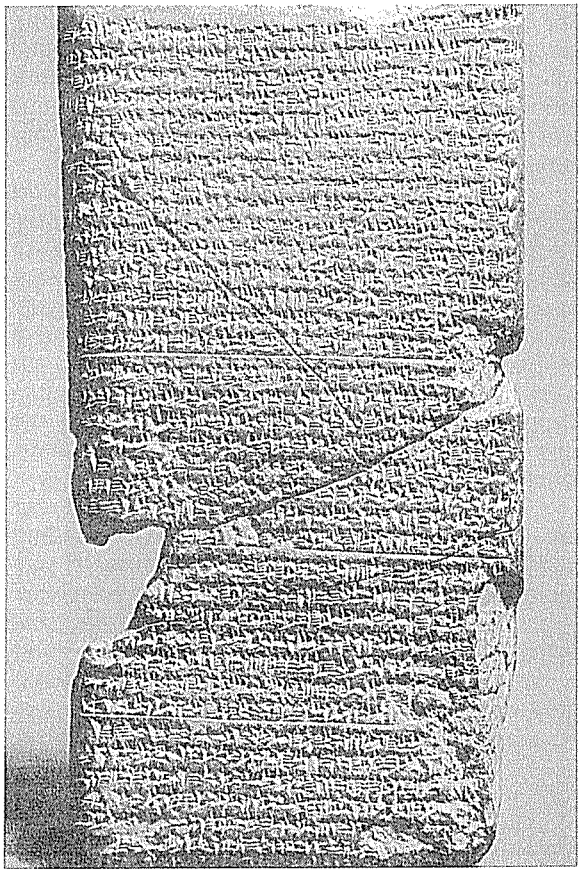


ill-treated by the wife (Genesis 16:6). When Sarah wanted Hagar and Ishmael to be sent away from the family home, Abraham was very uneasy, and he needed God's assurance that they were to go (Genesis 21:10–12).

Egyptian education

Because he was brought up by Pharaoh's daughter, "Moses was instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians" (Acts 7:22), and according to Jewish tradition this included arithmetic, geometry, poetry, music, astronomy, and many other subjects. Schools in Egypt were associated with the temples and were controlled by the priests. Medicine and religion were key subjects if the child was to become a priest.

Moses would have been brought up by the "teacher of the king's children" at the royal court and would have learned how to write Egyptian hieroglyphics with ink on papyrus. He most probably also learned the Canaanite script, because Canaan was linked with Egypt at the time. When Moses was told to teach the law to the people, it was



This clay tablet is typical of those used for writing in ancient times. It contains part of the Babylonian Chronicle, covering the fall of Nineveh.

effected by repetition and example (Deuteronomy 11:19), public reading (Deuteronomy 31:10–13), and the use of song writing (Deuteronomy 31:19). Since it was common in Egypt to sing lessons, this probably reflects the way that Moses was taught. It may be important to note that God called Moses to leadership from a strong educational background, just as Paul was called centuries later to lead the church.

Jewish education

When the Jewish people moved from the desert into Canaan, they did not have a sophisticated educational system. Such a system developed as their civilization developed, and it was influenced by the practices of the surrounding nations. Initially therefore, education was centred on the home. Education of both boys and girls was the mother's responsibility for the first three years (probably until weaning took place). She taught the girls their domestic duties throughout their childhood.

Boys were taught the law by their father from three years of age, and fathers were also responsible for teaching their sons a trade. A rabbi once said, "He who does not teach his son a useful trade is bringing him up to be a thief." Jesus was not just the carpenter's son (Matthew 13:55) but was also the carpenter (Mark 6:3). This explains why there were groups of linen workers and potters living in the same place (1 Chronicles 4:21–23). Girls were able to take on professional jobs such as midwifery (Exodus 1:15–21) and singing (Ecclesiastes 2:8).

Education was basically a religious education enabling children to understand the nature of God through what he had done and what he required in the law. Deuteronomy 6 is a key passage: the words of the shema (creed), "Hear O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength," were to be taught, talked about, used in worship to declare symbolically that they were part of mind and action, and used as a reminder every time the house was entered or left (Deuteronomy 6:4–9; see Psalm 121:8). Children were stimulated to ask questions about festivals (Exodus 12:26; Deuteronomy 6:20–25) by facing them with unusual objects (Exodus 13:14–15; Joshua 4:6). In this way it became natural to teach them the acts of God.

As sacred shrines began to be a part of the lives of the Jewish people, the personnel who worked there probably began to provide some kind of formal education. Samuel was probably being taught by Eli the priest at Shiloh (1 Samuel 1:24). Samuel himself set up a school of the prophets at Ramah (1 Samuel 19:18–21), and some kind of theological schools developed from this (2 Kings 2:5–7; Isaiah 8:16). This is the origin of the practice of calling a priest "father." He exercised the role of the father in teaching the children (2 Kings 2:3, 12).

The writing of history was important at those centres. Although people still listened to the reading of the law (Deuteronomy 31:9–13) there were now

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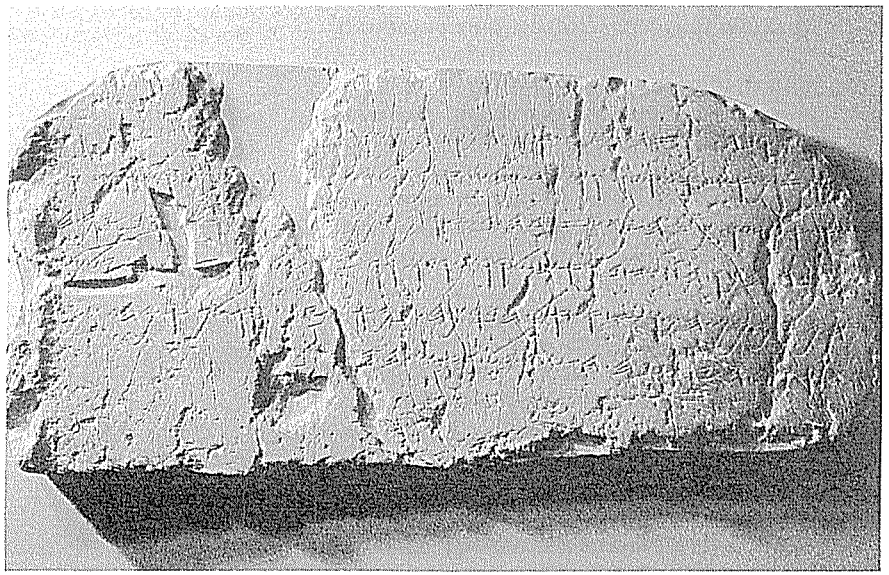


This inscription was found on the wall of Hezekiah's tunnel, at the point where the workmen tunneling from opposite directions met. It reads: "Behold the tunnel. This is the story of its cutting. While the miners swung their picks, one towards the other, and when there remained only three cubits to cut, the voice of one man calling was heard..."

a considerable number of people who could read and write. Judges 8:14 tells how a young man was able to write a list of names for Gideon. When Hezekiah had a water tunnel built under the city of Jerusalem, the workmen involved were able to write an inscription on the wall at the place where the tunnelers met. Writing was often done in ink on broken pieces of pottery (ostraca). Pens were made of hard cane, sharpened to a point (Jeremiah 17:1). The ink that was used was made from soot, resin, olive oil, and water.

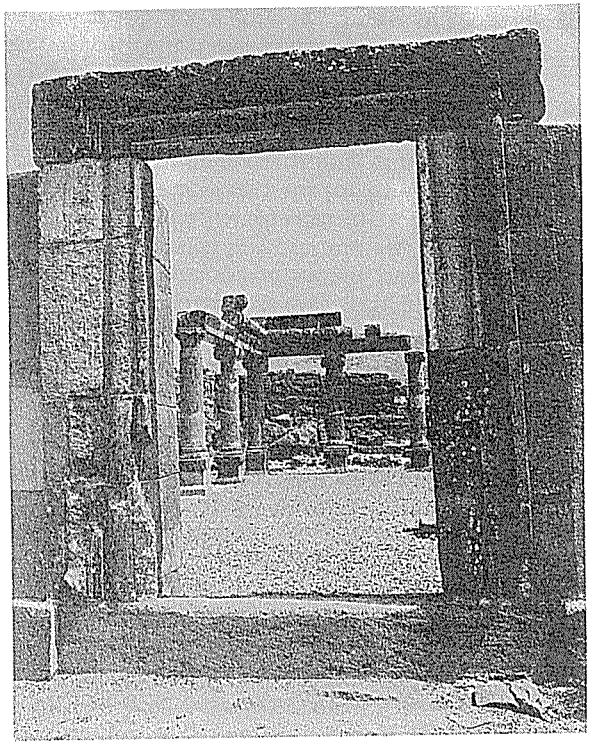
Assyrian and Babylonian influences

It was the exile of the Jews into Assyria and Babylon that led to further developments in education. When they returned and their land became part of the Greek empire, there were still further developments. The Assyrian kings collected thousands of clay tablets into a library at Nineveh. They contain every kind of knowledge — botany, geometry, chemistry, astronomy, medicine, mathematics, law, religion — and give an indication of how far the Assyrian education system had developed. Daniel 1 tells how members of the Israelite hierarchy were educated in the Babylonian court. They were to learn the language for three years and then undertake an oral examination set by the king (Daniel 1:3–9, 19–20).

In order to preserve their identity as a nation it was necessary for the Jews in exile to become fully familiar with their own law. Therefore priestly and prophetic teachers seem to have taken this education in hand, and it continued when the Jews returned to their own land.

The scribes

When they returned, Ezra, a priest and a scribe (an interpreter of the law), had a commission from the Persian emperor to teach the Jewish people the law (Ezra 7:12–26). Everyone who returned stood to listen to the law all one morning (Nehemiah 8:1–8). The teachers then moved among the crowd explaining it to them. As a result the scribes became important in the community as teachers of the law. A scribe also wrote letters for people and could be recognized by the inkpot that was stuck into his belt (Ezekiel 9:2). These men were looked upon like the earlier prophets and were called "men of the great synagogue."



Entrance to the partially reconstructed synagogue at Chorazin, probably dating from the fourth century A.D.

The synagogue itself seems to have come into being during the Exile as people gathered together (literally, "synagogued") to learn the Torah and other sacred writings. When the Jews returned to their homeland they continued the practice of listening to the Scriptures being read and interpreted (see Luke 4:16–22). The buildings where this took place became centres of worship as well.

Some of the scribes differed in their interpretations of the law. The school of Hill'el tended to adopt a lenient interpretation of the law (a woman could be divorced for a minor fault, for example), but the school of Shammai took a stricter line. The teachings of the scribes were built up into large collections and were eventually written down in the Mishnah.

Greek culture

It was not long before the returned exiles came under the influence of Greek thought and culture under the alternate rule of their country by the Seleucids (in Syria) and the Egyptians. The wealthy and priestly families accepted the culture, using Greek language and literature and even allowing Greek games in Jerusalem. Like the Greeks they rejected traditional beliefs in angels, resurrection, and the providence of God, and they became known as Hellenists. There was a strong reaction against such views, particularly when the Greek games were introduced into the city. Some reacted so as to bring about a sense of national pride, but others, known as the Hasidim, were much more concerned to build a strong Jewish faith. Things climaxed when the Hellenists agreed to set up a Greek gymnasium (school) in Jerusalem in 175 BC, and many wealthy Jews sent their sons to receive a Greek form of education.

The Greek child went to school at the age of seven if his parents could afford to pay the fees. He studied basic skills (reading, writing, counting), music (poetry, dance, musical instrument), and physical skills (wrestling, boxing, running, throwing the javelin and discus; see 1 Corinthians 9:24–27). At sixteen, he went on to the gymnasium to study literature, philosophy, and politics.

Interested adults who lived locally were invited to the classes for discussion. Outstanding teachers set

up their own schools in the city of Athens, and those who wished to do so went to the city to learn from them. This was under the general supervision of an education committee called the *Areopagus*. Paul used the Athenian system, setting up his own school in the city (Acts 17:16–34). He therefore had to give an account of himself to the Areopagus (Acts 17:22). In Ephesus he used the lecture hall of a teacher called Tyrannus as a preaching base (Acts 19:9–10).

The Pharisees

The Seleucid king responsible for the Greek school in Jerusalem was defeated in battle in 164 BC. The Hasidim, or Pharisees as they were beginning to be called, led by Simeon ben Shetah, insisted that from that time all Jewish boys should attend the "house of the book" for a Jewish education. It was to be led by a teacher who was paid for by the synagogue. Teachers had to be married men of good character. Higher education was available at a "house of study." Such a school was attached to the Jerusalem Temple, and it was here that Jesus was found when twelve years old (Luke 2:41–52).

Jesus would have gone to a house of the book at Nazareth when he was about six years old, sitting as part of a semicircle on the floor, facing the teacher. Much of the teaching was done by repetition, and the memorizing led to the common practice of reading aloud (see Acts 8:30). Writing was done in wax on a wooden tablet (Luke 1:63) or even on the ground (John 8:6). The only textbook was the Taanach: the Law, Prophets, and Writings that became the Christian Old Testament (2 Timothy 3:15).

The traditional law was taught from the age of ten to the age of fifteen, and Jewish law beyond that. The brightest of the boys, such as Paul, could go to Jerusalem to one of the law schools. They would sit at the feet of the great teachers (Acts 22:3) when they attended meetings of the Sanhedrin, the ruling council of the Jews. Not until A.D. 65 was school made compulsory for all boys. The high priest Gamala ordered that boys six years old and above in every town should attend school; too many boys had been engaging in truancy under the voluntary system. The early Christian community was too poor to provide schools for its children.

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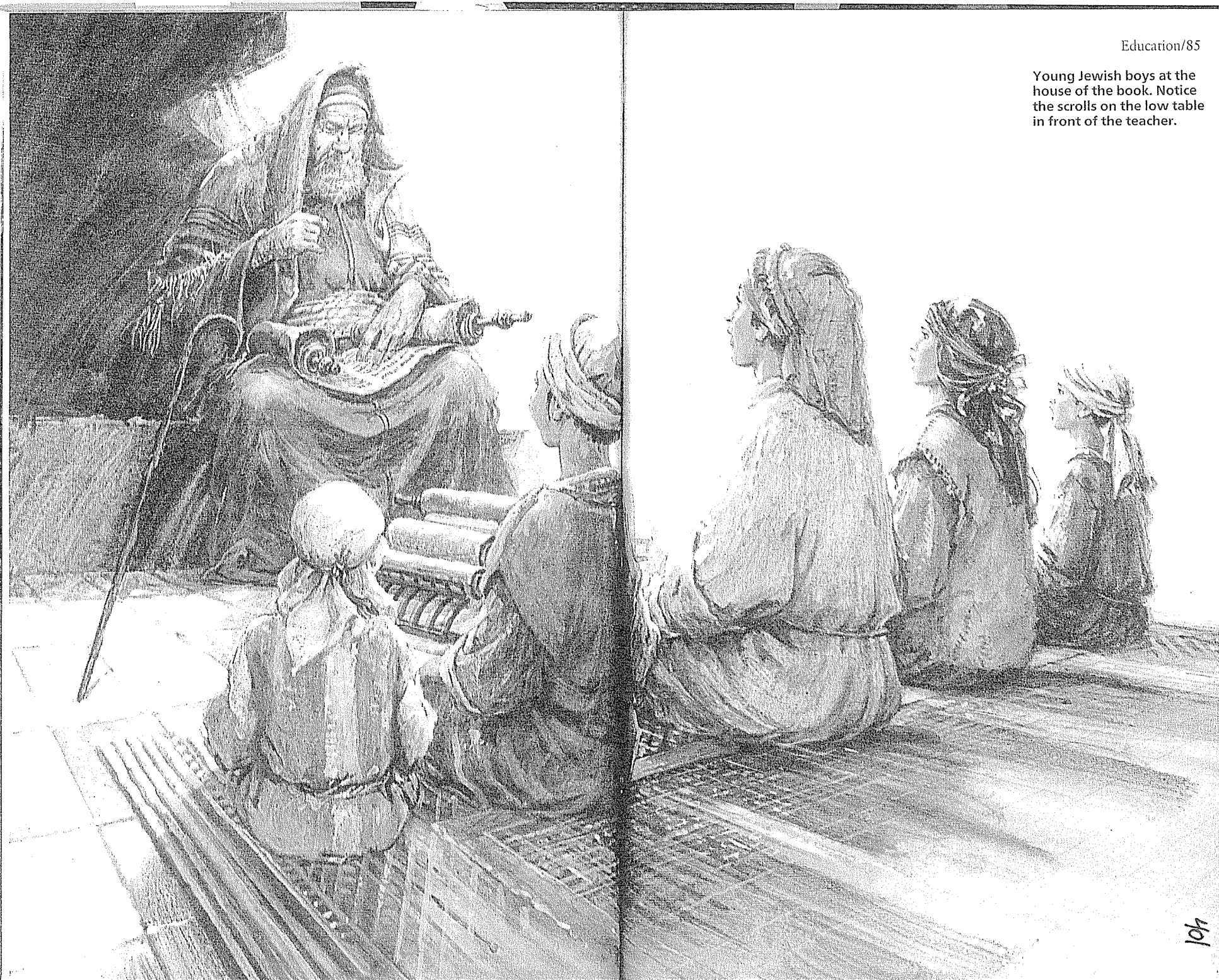

Young Jewish boys at the house of the book. Notice the scrolls on the low table in front of the teacher.

Now look at your Bible

Sweeter than honey

Psalm 19:9–10. When a boy first went to school in New Testament times, he went down to the synagogue while it was still dark to listen to the story of how Moses received the law. Then he was taken to the teacher's house for breakfast, where he received cakes with letters of the law written on them. In school, the boy received a slate with passages from the Scriptures written on it. The slate was smeared with honey. He had to trace the letters through the honey with his pen, and it was natural to lick the nib of the pen as he proceeded. The idea was that he would realize that the purpose of his going to school was to absorb the Scriptures. This learning practice seems to have been based on an old custom that David refers to in the psalm.

Teaching by rote

Isaiah 28:9–10. Here the people are complaining about the way the prophet is teaching them, for it is "do and do ... rule on rule ... a little here, a little there." It literally means, "s after s, q after q" and refers to the method of teaching by repetition. The master would say an *s*, and the scholars would have to repeat it.

"Schoolmaster"?

Galatians 3:24 (KJV). The "schoolmaster" of this passage is not the teacher, but the slave whose job it was to take his master's sons to school and to stop them from getting into mischief. Paul says that Jesus is the real teacher; the Jewish law was simply the slave that took the pupils safely to school.

Earning a Living:

Agriculture

When the Jewish people entered Canaan and took up agriculture after the seminomadic life of forty years in the wilderness, they were entering into work that went back in their own history for hundreds of years and into a country that was extremely rich in plants. Ur of the Chaldees, where Abraham had come from, was sustained by a healthy agricultural system based on irrigation ditches from the river bank, stone ploughshares, and flint sickles. With this technology the Chaldeans grew two crops each season.

Agriculture was also a feature of Egypt. Each year the river Nile overflowed its banks, and the land was



Even today farmers irrigate their lands by lifting water from the Nile by means of a shadoof or sweep device.

Gower
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Holy occasions

Sabbath

At a time when a person could hardly escape from the tyranny of work, the *Sabbath*, or "rest," was a physical relief and a spiritual blessing (Isaiah 56:2, 4–7; 58:13–14). It was too valuable an occasion to allow it to be eroded by working and trading. In Nehemiah's day, the gates of Jerusalem were shut against traders, and he drove them away from outside the walls (Nehemiah 13:15–22).

Although the Sabbath became law at the time of the Exodus (Exodus 20:8–11), and the Jews had got used to the idea on the way to Mount Sinai (Exodus 16:4–5, 22–27), the idea of a twenty-eight-day month was already in existence, involving a seven-day cycle. Noah had sent out the dove at seven-day intervals (Genesis 8:10), and Jacob had to wait seven days before he could marry Rachel (Genesis 29:27–28). The idea of a *sabbata* probably had its origin in Babylon, but they were days of fear when people kept indoors because of terror of the gods, and there was actually no regular cessation of work.

The character of the Jewish Sabbath was completely different. Even so a Sabbath-breaker was put to death after God had revealed himself (Numbers 15:32–36), and the Jewish people may have been motivated to keep the Sabbath because of fear rather than enjoyment. In Amos' time their only thought was when it would be over so that they could make money (Amos 8:5; cf. Jeremiah 17:18–27), and for this attitude they were condemned.

By the time of Jesus, the Sabbath had become a burden. It was still a time for the wearing of one's best clothes and for going to synagogue in the evening to return to the best meal of the week, but there were detailed laws in operation that legislated for every aspect of the day. They determined how far a person could walk (a "Sabbath day's journey" was 2,000 paces) and what a person could do. If a house fell on someone, for example, the unfortunate person could be left inside if he could live through the ordeal until the next day; a scribe could not carry his pen in his belt.

Jesus perceived that the whole purpose of the Sabbath, which should be a joy for man, had been changed (Matthew 12:1–4; Mark 2:23–26; Luke 6:1–11). Jesus taught that he was Lord of the Sabbath (Mark 2:28), and because his resurrection took place on the first day of the week, Christians began to keep this day as a day of rest rather than the seventh day (Acts 20:7).

Other festivals

In addition to the sabbaths, there were a number of festivals that were originally kept in the dry part of the year because the males were expected to travel to the central shrine to celebrate together. God promised that when they did this, he would ensure that their lands were never attacked by an enemy (Exodus 34:23). The three "pilgrimage feasts" were all harvest festivals for thanksgiving, for the barley harvest, the wheat harvest, and the grape harvest that concluded the agricultural year. They were not, however, to be mere harvest festivals that would have been celebrated by the Canaanites, too.

God deliberately linked the harvest festivals with religious events so that the Jews would remember his mighty acts on their behalf. The festival of Unleavened Bread was joined with the Passover, and people remembered the departure from Egypt; the giving of the law on Mount Sinai was linked to the wheat harvest at the festival of Weeks; and the forty years of living in tents was commemorated during the grape harvest.

Such festivals were no burden. At a time when people were isolated by geography and the intensity of their work, the festivals gave an opportunity not only to cease from work but to be able to meet one's friends in God's presence. The men discovered that such times were so good that they took their wives with them (1 Samuel 1:9, 21), and the festivals became major family occasions (Luke 2:41–44). At Passover contemporary writers estimated that some two-and-one-half million people moved toward Jerusalem in the days of the New Testament.

The festivals of Passover and Unleavened Bread (14th–21st Nisan)

(Notes about the Jewish calendar will be found in the "Now Look at Your Bible" section at the end of this chapter.) Religiously, the Passover was a remembrance of the time God released the Jews from

The Jewish Calendar

Month	Day	Festivals	Meaning of word	Our equivalent months
1. Abib or Nisan	14th	Passover	Sprouting	March/April
	15th – 21st	Unleavened Bread		
2. Iyyar or Ziv			Flowering	April/May
3. Sivan	6th	Weeks or Pentecost		May/June
4. Tammuz				June/July
5. Ab				July/August
6. Elul				August/September
7. Tishri or Ethanim	1st	Trumpets	Flowing rivers	September/October
	10th	Day of Atonement		
	15th–21st	Tabernacles		
8. Marchesvan			Rain	October/November
9. Chislev	25th	Lights or Dedication		November/December
10. Tebeth				December/January
11. Shebat				January/February
12. Adar	13th–15th	Purim		February/March

Egypt. A lamb had been killed for each Jewish family, resulting in the angel of death's "passing over" their homes (see Hebrews 11:28). Unleavened Bread was a reminder of the same time, when there had been no time to leaven the dough because of the haste (Exodus 12:7; 13:3–10). It was also a harvest festival when the firstfruits of the barley were offered (Leviticus 23:11).

By New Testament times these festivals had become a major spring festival time. Before the festival itself, roads were repaired and tombs whitened so that people might avoid accidental defilement that occurred when a place of the dead was touched (Matthew 23:27). In homes, too, there was busy preparation. All cooking utensils had to be thoroughly cleansed or new ones purchased.

On the 13th Nisan, the house was searched by the father of the household to ensure that there was no leavened bread in it. Homes in Jerusalem were prepared for visitors, because each household was expected to take in guests. Lambs or goats were purchased on the 14th and taken to the Temple for sacrifice, about one animal for every ten to twelve people. The fat was burned and the blood offered on the altar before the carcasses were hung up for collection, at which time they would be taken home and roasted on a spit of pomegranate wood. People wore their best clothes, but they were ready as if to depart on a journey. However, they reclined, on couches if possible, because God had given them rest.

Led by the father of the family, a standard ritual was followed in which everyone remembered the events of the departure from Egypt, prompted by the youngest member of the family, who asked the leading set of questions. The unleavened bread, bitter herbs, and savoury chutney (*charoseth*), which symbolized the haste, the bitterness, and the work (the *charoseth* was like mortar) their ancestors had done, all reminded them of the past. Thanksgiving was made to God with cups of red wine. The four cups that were used had to be purchased even if it meant pawning one's possessions. Only unleavened bread could then be eaten for the week that followed, and, during the period, public offerings and additional sacrifices were made.

The festival of Weeks, or Pentecost

This was a one-day festival held on the 6th Sivan in the middle of the wheat harvest and the end of the barley harvest to give thanks. Only one day could be spared for the festival at a time when the wheat harvest was in full swing. The thanksgiving centred upon two loaves. A small field was reaped, and the grain separated and ground. The flour was then made into two huge loaves, and when baked they were waved to the sky in thanksgiving to the God who was watching over all (Leviticus 23:15–21). Freewill offerings were brought, and the Temple treasury was opened.

At the same time the giving of the law on Mount Sinai was central to people's thinking (Deuteronomy 16:12). The festival was to be held a week of weeks (seven weeks, or fifty days) after the festival of unleavened bread (Leviticus 23:16), hence the name. This was approximately the same length of time it took the Jews to reach Mount Sinai after their

departure from Egypt (Exodus 19:1), and in the Hasmonean period, the remembrance of the giving of the law assumed great importance (Jubilees 1:1; 6:17). The Greek translation of the Bible in the time of the New Testament translated the "fifty days" of Leviticus 23:16 as *pentekosta hemeras* and so gave rise to the name *Pentecost*, which is the term used in the New Testament (Acts 2:1; 20:16; 1 Corinthians 16:8).

The festival of Tabernacles or Ingathering (Exodus 23:16; 34:22)

This was another week-long festival from the 15th to 21st Tishri, which marked the completion of the whole harvest by the ingathering of the grapes. Because this was the time when everyone went out into the vineyards for their "communal working holiday" (see p. 106) and lived in tents, it was an excellent time to remember the religious lessons of the forty years when the whole nation had been living in tents between Egypt and Canaan (Leviticus 23:34–36; 39–44; Deuteronomy 16:13–15). At the end of the agricultural year in the land to which God had brought them, thanksgiving was appropriate.

By New Testament times there was a spectacular ritual. Tents made of palm leaves were placed on rooftops, in courtyards, and in gardens, and people lived in them for the week unless there was exceptionally heavy rain (a rarity) or there was a case of severe illness. Two priestly processions left the Temple each morning; one went to collect leafy boughs, and the other went to the Pool of Siloam. When the priests returned there was a procession round the altar (once around for the first six days of the festival and seven times on the last day — a reminder of the ritual at Jericho, Joshua 6:3–4) — and a tabernacle, or booth, was made for the altar itself. The water was poured out on the Temple steps so that it would flow down and out through the Temple to the world outside, and so indicate the way that the Jewish faith would satisfy the world.

During the festival four large candelabra were set up in the Court of the Women, their large bowls full of oil, and their wicks made of garments the priests had been wearing during the preceding year. Everyone in Jerusalem could see the light, and there was music and dancing beneath with flaming torches.

The light symbolized the revelation and truth of the Jewish faith.

The festival of Trumpets

In addition to the three pilgrimage festivals, two other special days were kept during the month of Tishri. On the first day of the month, a festival that became known as the festival of Trumpets was held. Trumpets were blown at the beginning of every month (Numbers 10:10), but Tishri was a special occasion because the month came to be the beginning of the civil new year, and therefore special ceremonies were held.

Ram's horn trumpets were blown throughout the day, no work was to be done, and additional sacrifices were offered. Sometimes the festival was held for two days in case there was some mistake about the arrival of the new moon. It was a day of self-examination in asking how God saw each person, and it was for this that the trumpets were blown — to cause God to hear and to remember his covenant, to frighten away Satan the accuser, and to awaken sin-sleepy Israelites to repentance.

The Day of Atonement

Tishri 10th marked the Day of Atonement (Leviticus 16). In many ways the day was a climax to the Jewish religious year. All year the priests had been offering sacrifices to God to make the people acceptable to him; but the priests and their equipment became ceremonially affected by sin, and the Day of Atonement was instituted to bring about a "spiritual spring cleaning" so that, for another year, the way of approaching God through sacrifice would remain open. The high priest was the only person who could be involved, and in New Testament times, so that there could be no mistake, he was carefully groomed by the elders and practised the ritual daily during the preceding week.

On the Day of Atonement the high priest was kept awake through the hours of darkness, and when morning came he was dressed in simple white robes to begin the ceremonies. He first confessed the sins of the people with his hand resting on the neck of a sacrificial bull that was killed and the blood collected. Two goats then stood before him, and lots were cast to see which goat should be God's and

which should be the people's. God's goat was killed and its blood mixed with that of the bull. Then, quite alone, the high priest went with incense and coals from the altar into the Most Holy Place. The incense was burned, and when it filled the place it was believed that the high priest was acceptable to God.

In Old Testament times this was followed by the sprinkling of the mercy seat — the top of the box of the Ark of the Covenant — with the recovered blood; in New Testament times there was no Ark, so the Holy Place and everyone and everything connected with sacrifice was sprinkled with blood. Consciences were cleared by the remaining goat, which received the sins of the people by the laying on of hands. It was taken to the desert where it was released to symbolize the taking away of sin. This goat was known as the scapegoat. The carcasses of the sacrificial animals were then burned, away from the area. The writer to the Hebrews saw the ceremony as an imperfect picture of what Jesus did for us (Hebrews 9:7–14; 10:19–22; 13:11–12).

Purim

Two other festivals were added at later times to celebrate national victories that the Jews had gained over their enemies. *Purim* was celebrated during the 13th–15th of Adar to commemorate the time when Esther had been used to save her people from genocide during the reign of a Persian king called Ahasuerus. During the festival the book of Esther, which tells the whole story, was read. When the name of Haman, the villain, occurred, it would be drowned by shouts and boos; when the name of Mordecai, the hero, was read, it was greeted with cheers.

The 13th was a day of fasting, but the 14th and 15th were occasions for merrymaking. Second Maccabees 15:36 mentions the festival in connection with another. A decree was made after the defeat of a Syrian general named Nicanor that his defeat was to be celebrated on the 13th of Adar, the "day before Mordecai's Day." This day would have been kept in New Testament times, but is no longer remembered.

The festival of Lights

The festival of Dedication, or Lights, celebrated

another victory from Maccabaean times — when Judas Maccabaeus entered the Temple in Jerusalem after the Syrians had been driven out in 164 BC and the Temple purified. Palm branches were carried, and the Temple was illuminated. In many ways Lights was similar to the festival of Tabernacles (see 2 Maccabees 10:6). Every household had its own candle to bring to remembrance the legend that when the Temple was entered there was only one day's supply of oil for the golden lampstand, but the oil lasted for eight days. The festival began on the 25th of Chislev, and because that month corresponds to December, there is some link between the festival and the celebration of Jesus' "official birthday" in the West. The festival coincided with a number of winter festivals, which relieved the darker times of the season.

Holy ritual

The ritual of Jewish religion involved sacrifice (in common with that of other religions founded in the same area and time). It was used at all the major festivals, in private use as well as for public usage, and was of many different kinds; indeed there is no proper, general word for *sacrifice* in the Old Testament. *Corban* (see Mark 7:11) is used as often as not. Details of the whole sacrificial system will be given in a larger work of reference (see the select bibliography), but it is useful and interesting to understand the *types* of sacrifice as they are laid down in the opening chapters of Leviticus.

The *Olah*, or burnt offering, seems to have been a means of consecration and dedication of the worshiper to God. Such consecration cannot take place without a recognition that the worshiper is imperfect for such dedication. Therefore confession must be made and removal of sin must take place by the laying on of hands in identification with a sacrificial animal. The animal's blood was sprinkled on the altar. Large animal offerings were cut up, and everything was burned on the altar. In human terms, God took pleasure in such acts of sacrifice (Leviticus 1:3–17; 6:9–13).

The *Minha*, the meal or cereal offering, was a voluntary offering made from grain or flour and was normally accompanied by other forms of sacrifice (see Numbers 15:1–16). Part of the sacrifice was

sprinkled with frankincense and burned upon the altar, but the remainder was given to the priests for food. It seems to have been a gift to God, but a gift made in order to maintain God's favour (Leviticus 2:1–16; 6:14–18).

The *Selamim*, or peace offering, was a fellowship meal in which the worshiper and his friends sat down to a meal with God in peace. After confession and sacrifice, God's portion of the meal — the fat — was burned upon the altar. The remainder was eaten by the worshiper, his family, and friends (Leviticus 3; 7:11–21, 28, 34). This offering could be used to express thanks, to accompany a vow, or to be a freewill offering.

The *Assam* (guilt offering) and *Hattath* (sin offering) were offerings that had to be made when a person had upset God or someone else. They were made when a person had become ceremonially defiled (Leviticus 5:2–3), such as through childbirth or leprosy (Leviticus 12; 14:1–32; Mark 1:44; Luke 2:22), when a civil offense had been committed against a neighbor (Leviticus 6:1–7), offenses committed when a person was overwrought through emotion (Leviticus 19:20–22), or perhaps through error (Leviticus 4:1).

The scale of sacrifice was related to rank, and after the blood had been poured out at the altar and the fat burned, the rest of the carcass was taken away and burned. If the offense involved damage to a neighbour then restitution had to be made, too (Leviticus 6:4). (See also Leviticus 6:25—7:10.) It is important to remember that there was no sacrifice that dealt with deliberate sin and defiance of God's laws.

The sacrificial system

When human beings enter into a covenant relationship with God and keep their side of the bargain by avoiding all known sin, there is a desire to enter into a deeper relationship with God — to give themselves to his service, to express thanksgiving, to support his servants, to have fellowship, and to say "sorry" for wrong accidentally done. The sacrificial system demonstrated that a deeper relationship with God was possible, but that in order for it to take place there was a need for continual cleansing from sin.

At the same time the system demonstrated its own inadequacies and so pointed to the need for another means to be found not only to establish a deeper relationship with God, but to deal with the whole problem of deliberate sin. This other means was all made possible through Jesus (Hebrews 10:1–8).

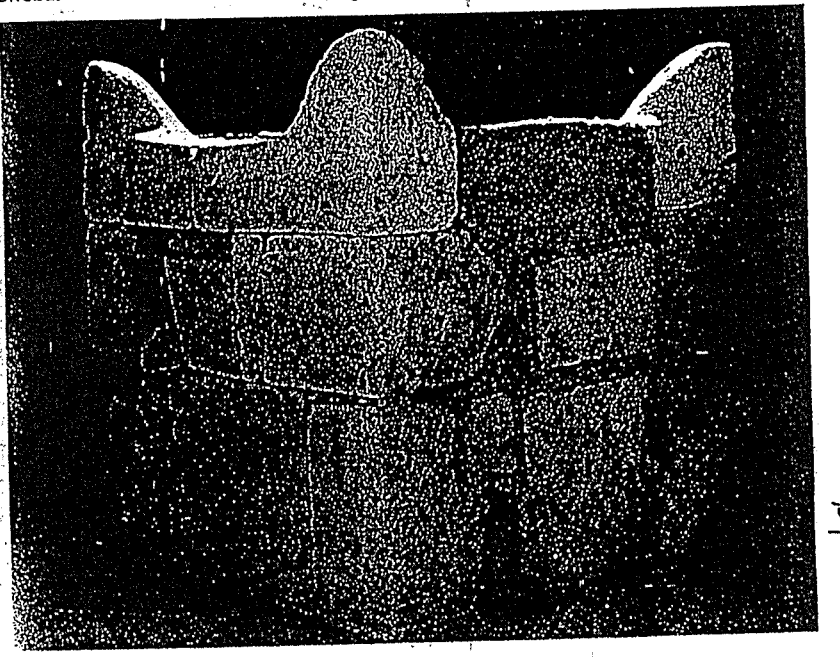
Holy People

The Levites

Levi, one of the twelve sons of Jacob, had three sons: Gershon, Kohath, and Merari (Genesis 46:8, 11). When the family grew during the stay in Egypt, the family of Levi grew into a tribe, and the families of the three sons into tribal divisions. Aaron, Miriam, and Moses were born into the Kohathite division of the tribe (Exodus 2:4; 6:16–20; 15:20). When the Jews worshiped the golden calf at the foot of Mount Sinai, it was the Levites who stood with Moses against the idolatry and in consecrating themselves to God. In so doing they destroyed many of the idolators (Exodus 32:26–29).

Their consecration resulted in involvement in the building of the Tabernacle (Exodus 28:1–30) and in

Stone altar with four "horns" discovered at Beer Sheba.





The high priest. Notice his special clothing, and his breastplate inlaid with twelve different precious stones.

caring for it. When the Tabernacle was moved the Kohathites carried the furniture (Numbers 3:30–32), the Gershonites carried the curtains and hangings (Numbers 3:24–26), and the Merari-ites carried and set up the Tabernacle itself (Numbers 3:35–37; 4:29–33). According to Numbers 3:40–51 the Levites acted as substitutes for the firstborn of every Jewish household.

Because God had saved the lives of the Jewish firstborn at the time of the first Passover (Exodus 11:5; 12:12–13), the firstborn technically belonged to God, but the Levites were to act in the service of God instead (Numbers 3:12–13, 40–51). As those set apart to the service of God, they were not expected to go to war (Numbers 1:3; cf. v. 49) or to have to grow their own food within a tribal area. They were to be scattered throughout the Promised Land to live among the people (Numbers 35:1–8), and they were to be supported by the people's tithes (Numbers 18:21).

The high priest

Within the division of the Kohathites, Amram's own family became priests. On the one hand this put them in charge of the Levites. Ithamar supervised the Gershonites (Numbers 4:28) and the Merari-ites (v. 33); Eleazar supervised the Kohathites (v. 16.) On the other hand the priests were distinct from the Levites because the priests alone were able to touch the holy things — anything to do with the actual altar, the lamp, or the table of showbread (Numbers 4:5–15).

The priest did not always make the actual sacrifice, but he did take the blood to the altar (e.g., Leviticus 3:2). Aaron himself became the high priest (sometimes called the chief priest). He wore special clothes (Exodus 28), and he alone went in to the Most Holy Place on the Day of Atonement (Leviticus 16:2). Aaron interpreted the fall of the sacred lots that were held within his breastplate.

Aaron had four sons: Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar. Nadab and Abihu died because they committed sacrilege in their religious duties as priests (Leviticus 10:1–3), and the high priesthood then passed over to Eleazar and was held within his family (Numbers 20:25–29). Eli was a priest of Eleazar's family. The high priesthood seems to have

been lost from Eleazar's family to that of Ithamar (see 1 Kings 2:27; cf. 1 Chronicles 24:3).

It was Solomon who put the line back to Eleazar's family by placing Zadok in the high priestly position, and this position was held in the family until his descendant was deposed by Antiochus Epiphanes in the time of the Maccabees. Not only were high priests appointed by the ruling power in this later period (Annas was deposed by the Romans and replaced by Caiaphas — see Luke 3:2; John 18:13–24), but when they became strong enough to resist the rulers, they adopted their own style of kingship.

The dearth of priests

When the Jews entered Canaan and a central sanctuary was set up, there was no work for the Levites as porters, and because of the deaths of Nadab and Abihu, there were very few priests. The Jews were entering a country where worship was enacted at local shrines, and the demand for priests was greater than the supply, while there was at the same time a surplus of Levites.

The story of Judges 17–18 indicates the way that the institution of Levites and priests broke down. Micah, a Levite who had settled in Judah, became a priest, first to his family (17:10–12) and then to a group of Danites (18:19). He was not only involved in the priestly work of giving oracles (18:5) but was breaking the basic commandments (18:18).

The monarchy itself seems to have caused further deterioration in God's intention. The king often virtually replaced the high priest, and the Temple became a royal shrine. Very little is heard about the high priest throughout the period of the monarchy. During this period the Levites were involved in the music of the Temple (1 Chronicles 15:16), and they began to work before some of the holy furniture, which was forbidden in the days of the Tabernacle (1 Chronicles 9:26–29; 23:28–32). When the Jews were exiled to Babylon, and there was no temple or sacrifice, the distinction between priests and Levites was reduced still further.

It was Ezekiel, in looking forward to a restored Israel, who demanded a sharp distinction between priests and Levites again (Ezekiel 40:46; 43:19). He said that the priests had been faithful to God through the period of the monarchy (Ezekiel 44:15–16; he called them "descendants of Zadok") in comparison with the Levites (48:11). This demand for separation may have been the reason many Levites appeared to be anxious to return to Jerusalem after the Exile (Ezra 2:36–40; 8:15–20). Once they were back, they became involved in the teaching of the law (Nehemiah 8:7–9) and in normal religious duties (Nehemiah 11:3; 12:27–31).

Priests and Levites

The priests and Levites were about their work in New Testament times. They are familiar in the story of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:31). Zacharias, father of John the Baptist, was the priest on duty in the Holy Place when he was told about the forthcoming birth of John (Luke 1:8–9). Jesus told the leper who had been healed to go and show himself to the priest (Matthew 8:4; see Leviticus 14:2). In New Testament times, the members of the high priestly families were all called high priests or chief priests and were constantly in conflict with Jesus and the early Christians.

As the Jewish people became familiar with the work of the high priest, priests, and Levites, they would have grasped the idea that lay behind it all — *representation*. On the one hand the priests and Levites represented the people before God as they led in worship and at the altar, and, on the other, they represented God before the people as they taught and explained his laws.

The prophets

Alongside the priests and Levites was another group called to a representative work. The prophets, like the priests, represented people before God. Samuel prayed for the people at Mizpah (1 Samuel 7:5); Elisha prayed that his servant would see God's protecting armies (2 Kings 6:17); Jeremiah was told that he should not pray for the people since God would not hear him because their sins were too great (Jeremiah 7:16).

The prophets' real importance however was that they represented God and spoke for him to the people. Abraham (Genesis 20:7) and Moses were both regarded as prophets (Deuteronomy 18:15–19). In the Deuteronomy passage it is clear that a

prophet is always called by God (v. 18), has God's authority (v. 19), and what he says will be proved true (v. 22). The prophet therefore was known as God's servant (2 Kings 17:13, 23; Ezra 9:11; Jeremiah 7:25). The prophet always stood for God's standards and called people to him (Deuteronomy 13, esp. v. 4), and it was this that distinguished a true prophet from a false prophet (for example, 1 Kings 13:18–22; 22; Jeremiah 28).

Prophets were not simply people who were politically or socially aware. They were people who by revelation from God had been made aware of the significance of historical events and of the needs of common people. There were two elements to their work, which may be described as *foretelling* and *forthtelling*. They spoke about future events so as to warn about the consequences of present action (e.g., Amos 1:2), and they often spoke out against the society in which they lived.

In the early period of Israel's history there seem to have been two distinct kinds of prophet. One was known as a *roeh* or see-er (seer); he was a solitary, impressive person who is typified by Samuel (1 Samuel 9:11, 18–19; 1 Chronicles 9:22). The other was known as a *nabi*, who was a member of a group who prophesied ecstatically (1 Samuel 10:5–6, 10–13; 19:20–24). At a later period the words became interchangeable with another general word, *hozeh*. Different characteristics could be seen in different prophets. Some prophets therefore spoke through divination (Zechariah 10:2), analysis of political events (Isaiah 5:12), assessment of character (1 Samuel 16:1), visions (Isaiah 6:5), telepathy (2 Kings 6:12), and the ability to see details in the future (1 Kings 13:2; Isaiah 44:28).

A person became a prophet by becoming aware that God was speaking to him and having to transmit the message. The consciousness came in different ways and was then transmitted through the prophet's own unique personality. Jeremiah says simply that the hand of the Lord touched him and words were put into his mouth (Jeremiah 1:9). Other prophets had visions and dreams (1 Samuel 28:6, 15; Zechariah 1:8). Sometimes the prophetic message was given by recounting the vision (Isaiah 6), at other times by telling parables or stories (Isaiah 5:1–7), by acting an oracle (2 Kings 13:14–19; Jeremiah 19; Ezekiel 4:1–3), or by writing (Isaiah 30:8).

Some of the prophets had groups of followers or disciples who were known as "sons of prophets" (2 Kings 4:38). They would repeat the prophet's message and sometimes write it down. There were many more prophets than just the ones we know of through their recorded prophecies or through historical events. Groups of prophets worked at centres of worship (1 Samuel 10:5) and were therefore associated with priests and Levites (2 Kings 23:2; Isaiah 28:7). Because they were therefore aware of the abuses of the sacrificial system and realized that the moral lives of the worshipers did not square with their ceremonial, the prophets tended to attack the ceremonial. They did what Jesus did centuries later with the woman of Samaria when he pointed out that true worship acceptable to God is in "spirit and in truth" (John 4:24).

Holy objects

In the Jewish religion there were special objects that were holy in the sense that they belonged to God and must not be touched by ordinary people. When Uzzah touched the Ark of the Covenant, he died (2 Samuel 6:7), and when Nadab and Abihu offered "unauthorized fire" or improper incense, they too were struck down (Leviticus 10:1–2). There were several objects that had this kind of sacredness. They were involved in the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place in the central place of worship.

The Ark of the Covenant was, in many respects, the most important object of all. It is described in Exodus 25:10–22. It consisted of a box surmounted by two figures of cherubim. Provision was made for staves to be inserted through rings so that it could be carried. The box measured about four feet by two feet by two feet (120 centimetres by 60 centimetres by 60 centimetres) and contained the two stone tablets of the Ten Commandments (Exodus 25:16; Deuteronomy 10:1–5), a pot of manna, and Aaron's rod (Hebrews 9:4–5). The Ark was a throne for the invisible God who was seated on the wings of the cherubim and whose voice came from above it (Exodus 25:22). The golden calf that Aaron made was probably intended as a throne, and the two bull calves that Jeroboam made at Bethel and

Dan would have served the same purpose.

In the Holy Place were three objects: a **table**, a **lampstand**, and an **altar**. The table was known as the **table of showbread** and was of standard form with a top of about three feet by one foot six inches (90 centimetres by 45 centimetres). It is described in Exodus 25:23–30. Twelve baked cakes were placed on the table in two rows of six.

Showbread was actually called "bread of the presence," because it was in the presence of God (1 Samuel 21:6). It was renewed every Sabbath by one of the priests, and the old showbread was then removed to be eaten by the priests (Leviticus 24:5–9; 1 Samuel 21:6).

The Holy Place was illuminated by a **golden lampstand**. Three branches ending in flower-shaped holders projected from each side of a main stem, which also supported a lampholder (Exodus 25:31–36).

In between the table of showbread and the lampstand was an **altar** on which incense was to be burned. It was only three feet (90 centimetres) high, with a top one foot six inches (45 centimetres) square, made of acacia wood, and overlaid with gold (Exodus 30:1–10). The incense itself was also sacred and could not be made for any other purpose than for worship. It consisted of frankincense, the resin from beneath the bark of boswellia trees; galbanum, which was probably the gum of a Persian plant; and two ingredients that are as yet unknown, stacte and onycha (Exodus 30:34–38).

The Jews were also familiar with the sacred lots, known as the Urim and Thummim, by which the will of God was sometimes divined by the high priest. The high priest wore a canvas bag on his chest. On the outside was a golden breastplate, studded with precious stones. Inside were the two lots. They were probably discs, coloured black on one side and white on the other. When the stones were cast from the bag, two whites meant Yes; two blacks meant No; and a black and a white meant Wait (see Exodus 28:30; Leviticus 8:8; Numbers 27:21; 1 Samuel 28:6; Ezra 2:63).

There were other sacred objects that were special to the ordinary people. In Deuteronomy 6 is the basic creed of Israelite religion: "Hear O Israel: The

God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength" (vv. 4–5). It goes on to say that the Jews were to bind these instructions as a sign on their hands and between their eyes, and that they should be written upon the doorposts of the house (vv. 8–9).

Many Jews took the commandments quite literally and placed the creed in small boxes. Those tied to the wrist and forehead were known as *tephillim* (*phylacteries* in the New Testament), and the box fixed to the doorpost was called a *mezuzah*. The present form of phylactery was not made final until after the time of Christ, although they were worn by the Pharisees of his day (Matthew 23:5). They were hollow boxes about one and one-half inches



A Jewish boy celebrating his bar mitzvah at the Western Wall, Jerusalem. Notice the tephillim (phylacteries) on the wrist and forehead of both man and boy.



A Jew at prayer, with tephillim bound to his wrist and forehead.

(38 millimetres) square, made of the skin of ritually clean animals. Inside were the words of Exodus 13:1–10; 13:11–16; Deuteronomy 6:4–9; and Deuteronomy 11:13–21, written by hand on parchment. They were fastened to the wrist or to the forehead by long leather thongs. The mezuzah did not come into existence before the times of the Hasidim (see p. 254). The mezuzah seems to have been used to try to make the Jews more thoughtful about their own faith at the time of competing Greek thought.

Greek and Roman religion

As a result of their experiences throughout their long history, most Jews were unaffected by Greek and Roman religion. Those affected by Greek religion were known as the Sadducees (see p. 255). Those most affected by Roman religion were those who were prepared to make some kind of political affinity with the ruling power.

The old Minoan Greeks had followed a fertility religion not unlike that of the Canaanites, but by the time of the New Testament this had developed into a sophisticated polytheism. It was believed that the gods were just like human beings (although they were more powerful) and lived on Mount Olympus.

The Romans largely took over the Greek religion so that Zeus (Greek) is the same as Jupiter (Roman), and similarly Poseidon is the same as Neptune, Hermes as Mercury. Religion was largely bound up with culture; games, meals, arts, and all forms of celebration were always in honour of the gods.

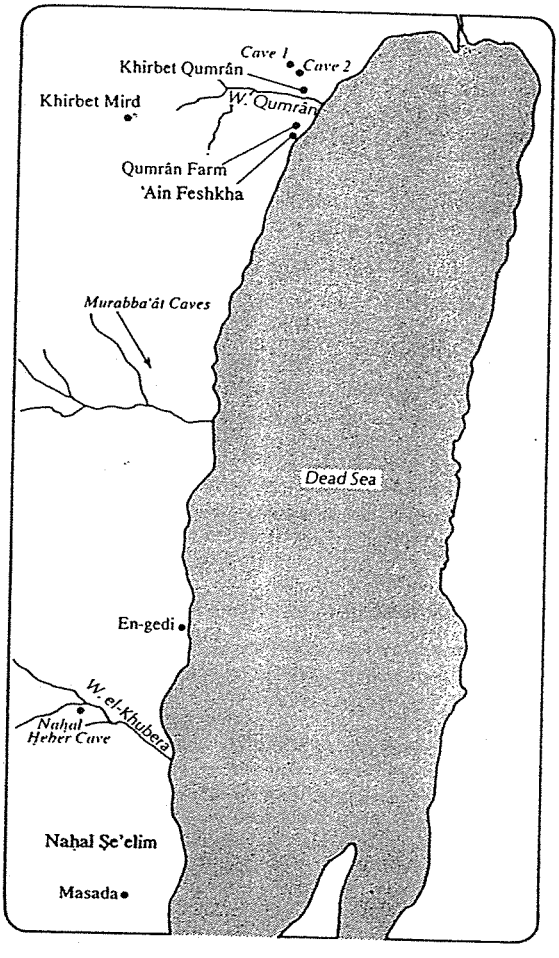
But there were many people who were dissatisfied with this form of religion. Emperor worship developed at Rome, philosophy took its place alongside religion in Greece so that a form of atheism developed, and in Athens people were beginning to consider the possibility of an unknown god (Acts 17:23). Mystery religions began to develop in which people were admitted to successive degrees of understanding as they undertook rites that brought them into closer communion with the god or gods.

5. Dead Sea Scrolls (DSS)

a. History

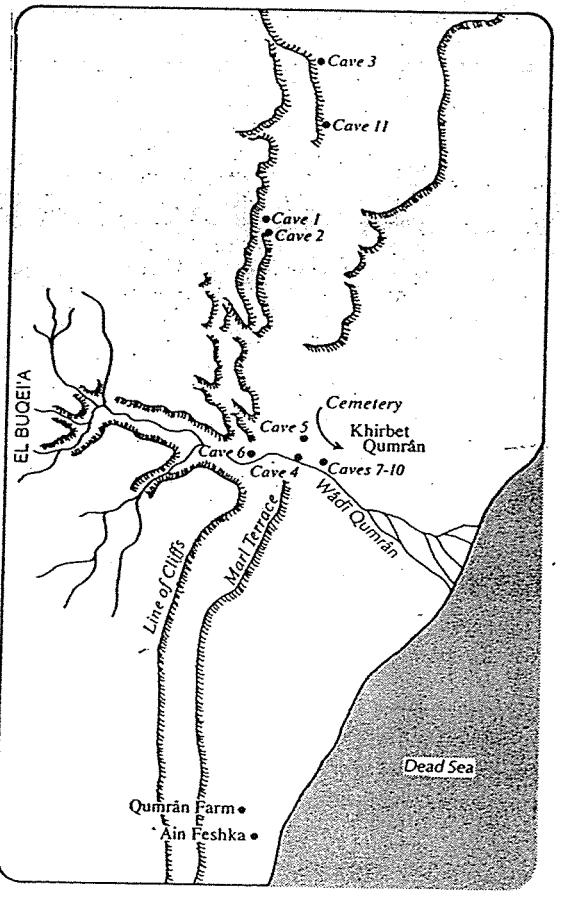
1) The Discovery

a) In 1947 some Bedouin shepherds were looking for a lost sheep in the Wadi Qumran (seasonal stream) in the very arid, deserted NW shoreline of the Dead Sea. One threw a stone into a cave hoping to scare a sheep out, but then heard the sound of shattered pottery. Climbing into this cave the next day, they discovered seven ancient scrolls, which they took to Bethlehem. The scrolls went through a series of episodes until finally they came into the hands of a distinguished team of scholars (none Jews by Arab edict) who published most of them.



b) Second century letters of Bar Kochba revolt (AD 132-35) were also found in caves at Wadi Murabaat (excavated in 1952) and Nahal Hever (1960-61). These are on display at the Shrine of the Book museum in Jerusalem.

c) From 1947-1956 numerous scrolls were discovered in ten other caves in the area, each one being labeled by number. Cave 4 had the largest find —over 15,000 fragments from over 500 different documents! These had to be brought out, however, from 2000 years of bat dung and dust two meters deep! The most significant of the 11 caves were caves 1, 4, and 11.

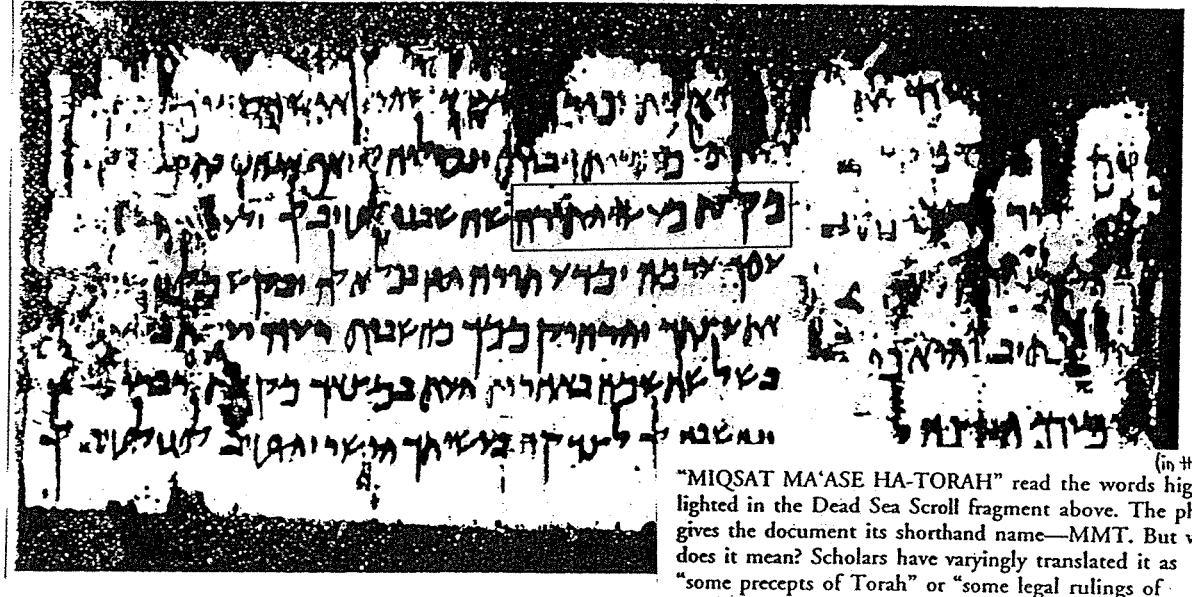


d) Only about ten of the hundreds of documents are well preserved (such as the scrolls of the Book of Isaiah). Most are fragments which have had to be put together like pieces of a jigsaw puzzle. The complexity of the task and the desire of the DSS team to publish them first caused the team to have a very tight grip on the material. This brought much criticism in recent years in particular. Hundreds of scholars waited nearly a half century for their release. Critical articles from *BAR* (*Biblical Archaeology Review*) magazine particularly exposed and embarrassed the team led by John Strugnell. Problems with Strugnell climaxed in November 1990 when he denounced Judaism and the State of Israel in an interview. He was sacked after this.

e) Finally, in August 1991, Jewish scholar Ben Zion Wacholder at Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati, Ohio and especially his evangelical graduate student named Martin Abegg constructed the remaining unpublished fragments on a Macintosh (yeah!) computer. The Huntington Library of San Marino, California then released these to all qualified scholars in September. The "cat was out of the bag," breaking a 40-year monopoly in only two weeks. Since then access has been granted to the documents (see the whole story in Edward M. Cook, *Solving the Mysteries of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 71-76).

f) However, an unpublished letter yet remained called MMT (Hebrew abbreviation usually translated "some rulings pertaining to the Torah"). Strugnell had this document in his possession for 25 years but never let anyone know about it. What makes this unique is that none of the DSS documents is a letter, so MMT is the only one. In fact, it is so important that at least six copies of it were kept at Qumran and have survived at least in part. Strugnell enlisted help from Elisha Qimron to write a 600 page commentary on this 120-line text, but Strugnell has since died. Finally, *BAR* caused quite a storm by printing the entire letter with the title "For This You Waited 35 Years" (November/December 1994, 56-61). With lawsuits following, the end of the story hasn't yet been told...

g) One significant victory for evangelicals recently emerged due to MMT. Although Paul insisted that salvation is not by "works of the law" (*ergon nomou* ἐργον νομου; Rom. 3:20, 28; Gal. 2:16; 3:2, 5, 10), the "works of the law" for salvation concept has never appeared in any rabbinic writings. For years liberals have accused Paul of either misunderstanding Jewish teachings of his day or else inventing opponents who taught works-righteousness to bolster his claim of justification by faith. But now Abegg suggests a better translation of MMT (*Miqsat Ma'ase Ha-Torah*) is "pertinent works of the law." The letter thus contains practices Qumran thought necessary for salvation.[6] This is the first evidence of salvation by law in NT times, showing Paul to be responding to a genuine belief of his day. Abegg includes this picture (note that the MMT clause appears in the box):



(in the box)
"MIQSAT MA'ASE HA-TORAH" read the words highlighted in the Dead Sea Scroll fragment above. The phrase gives the document its shorthand name—MMT. But what does it mean? Scholars have varyingly translated it as "some precepts of Torah" or "some legal rulings of Torah." Both translations miss the mark, writes Martin Abegg, who suggests the proper rendering is "pertinent works of the law." If Abegg is right, MMT casts important new light on the thinking of Paul, who uses the expression "works of the law" in his letters to the Galatians and the Romans.

[6] Martin Abegg, "Paul, 'Works of the Law' and MMT" *Biblical Archaeology Review* 20 [Nov/Dec 1994]: 52-55. Abegg later changed his view to practices enabling Qumranites to remain in the covenant ("4QMMT C 27, 31 and 'Work's Righteousness,'" *Dead Sea Discoveries* 6 (1999): 139-47; reviewed in *BibSac* (Jan-Mar 2000): 101.

The Story of the Dead Sea Scrolls

The Story of the Dead Sea Scrolls

Three shepherds were looking after their goats near the edge of the Dead Sea. Behind them were the crags of the desert cliffs. One of the Arabs saw a small hole in the cliff, and threw a stone into it. He was surprised to hear a sharp clattering noise. It was too late to explore that day, but he told the others about it. After a while, the youngest of them went off on his own and wriggled through a hole next to the first one. He dropped into a small cave, and saw what the stone had hit. An old pot was lying smashed on the floor. More pots stood in the cave. Lifting the lid off one, he found it full of red earth. In another were two small bundles wrapped in cloth, and one not wrapped. Each was a long roll of leather with small black letters all over the inside. The leather was thin and crumbly, not much use for anything. It was the winter of 1946–47 when they found the scrolls. During March 1947 they decided they might be worth some money. They took them to Bethlehem, to a carpenter who also bought and sold antiquities. He kept them for a while, then the shepherds came back.

'How much will you pay for them?'

'Nothing, they're not old!'

They took the scrolls away and arranged with another dealer to try to sell them. They agreed he could take a third of the price as his commission. A few weeks later he was able to give them their money: the three scrolls brought them £16—$65 at that time.

One of the shepherds had gone back to the cave meanwhile, and found some more scrolls buried under stones fallen from the roof. A different dealer bought these, for £7 ($28). For the effort of throwing a stone into a cave, the shepherds found themselves with more money in their pockets than they'd ever had from breeding sheep and goats. Yet that was not the end of the story for them: they had struck a gold mine, without knowing it!

Mar Samuel

An archbishop belonging to the Syrian Jacobite Church in Jerusalem had bought the first group of scrolls. Fighting in Jerusalem caused him to move to America. There he exhibited the scrolls at museums and universities, trying to find a buyer for them. Seven years after he had obtained them, he advertised them in *The Wall Street Journal*. They were for sale at a price to be agreed.

Someone showed the advertisement to Yigael Yadin, a leading archaeologist from Jerusalem who was visiting New York. He contacted a rich American friend who put up the money to buy them—a quarter of a million dollars. So it was that these scrolls returned to Jerusalem in 1954. There they were reunited with the second group, which Yadin's father, Professor Sukenik, had bought for £80/$324.

By the end of 1948 newspaper reports had told the world about the discovery and its importance—Hebrew books from the time of Christ had never been found in Palestine before. News that the scrolls were very valuable reached the shepherds and their friends. They went hunting for more caves with scrolls in them until, by 1956, they had located eleven with the same sorts of books in them. One cave, Cave 4, had had about 400 scrolls in it. Falling stones, wind-blown dust, insects, and possibly enemies, had torn them into 40,000 fragments. Each one had to be bought from the Arabs who found them, at an average price of £1/$4 per square centimetre.

Museum funds were soon exhausted in Jordanian Jerusalem. The government of Jordan produced a considerable sum of money, and more was raised from museums and academies and wealthy benefactors abroad. In 1967 the last of the scrolls to come to light was confiscated from the shepherds' Bethlehem agent by Israeli authorities. Afterwards they paid him compensation of $105,000. He and the tribesmen for whom he acted had grown rich because of one idly thrown stone!

– source unknown

The scrolls recovered in modern times fall into three categories. About 220 scrolls are books of the OT in Hebrew; all the OT books are represented except Esther. These biblical MSS are 1,000 years older than the oldest copies previously available, and their discovery has greatly increased our knowledge.

See 'Shrine of the Book'

The oldest manuscript of a complete book of the Old Testament dates from c. 100 BC and was found at Qumran (Cave 1) in 1947. It is the scroll of Isaiah (1Q Is^a) and measures 27 cm × 7.26 m (c. 10½ ins × 23 ft 10 ins).

With the secrecy over the Dead Sea Scrolls lifted, scholars are locked in mortal combat over the me

Debate rages over hol

– The Sunday Times, Jan. 3, 1993

THE "freeing" of the Dead Sea Scrolls a year ago from the restrictive control of a few scholars has unleashed a storm of new controversy among the warring factions of biblical researchers.

As more scholars have access to the ancient texts, they are challenging some of the reigning assumptions about who wrote them, when and how they fit into the volatile history of Judaism from about 250 BC to AD 70.

"Everything about the scrolls is being re-examined and rethought," Dr Michael Wise, a scrolls scholar at the University of Chicago, said in an interview last month at a conference on the manuscripts at the New York Blood Center in Manhattan.

One of the conference organisers, Dr Norman Golb, professor of Near East Languages at Chicago, said: "We are back to square one with regard to the scrolls – who wrote them, where and why? They're all open for debate in a way they have not been for years."

Although the new debates are largely over interpretations of the substance of the texts, echoes of old disputes still reverberate among the scholars over the publication of a book, The Dead Sea Scrolls Uncovered (Element Books), by Dr Wise and Dr Robert Eisenman of California State University at Long Beach.

Last month, leading scholars accused the authors of using the research of others without proper credit. The authors and their allies contended that their accusers were merely trying to maintain the old monopoly in which the scrolls were held by a few international editors whose tight control since 1947 had stifled independent research and publication.

The two sides appeared to settle their differences at the conference, but only after hours of acrimony. Then it was back to the scrolls themselves, and a resumption of many early arguments fueled by new findings. There was also a widening division among scholars over scrolls interpretations, especially regarding their significance for the history of Judaism and early Christianity.

A major dispute involves the authorship of the scrolls. Among the first documents found in caves near the Dead Sea was a Manual Of Discipline, which outlined rules governing the group of scribes who presumably wrote the scrolls.

These rules were remarkably similar to those of a Jewish separatist sect known as the Essenes, as recorded by Josephus, the Jewish historian of 1 AD. The Roman geographer Pliny described an Essene "city" in the wilderness near the shore of the Dead Sea.

Since the caves are near the site of Qumran, crumbling ruins from that period, scholars generally agreed that members of the Essene sect had a monastery at Qumran, where they lived celibate lives, wrote their precious scrolls and stored them in the nearby caves.

Dr James Charlesworth, editor of the Dead Sea Scrolls Project at Princeton Theological Seminary, has noted "the vast amount of commonality" between the ideas and practices of Jesus and the Essenes. The scrolls, many scholars say, underscore the Jewishness of Jesus.

At the centre of controversy over the Eisenman-Wise book was the publication of texts known at MMT, for the Hebrew words meaning "Some rulings pertaining to the Torah".

The text contains about 22 religious laws and a defence of the sect's action in breaking away from the Jewish establishment, the Pharisees and Saducees in Jerusalem, because of differences involving these laws. Scholars believe the MMT text should shed new light on the identity of the sect. An examination of this text and other manuscript and archeological evidence has led several scholars to challenge the Essene hypothesis.

Dr Lawrence Schiffman, a professor of Judaic studies at New York University, said a close reading of MMT showed "beyond question that either the sect was not Essene, but was Sadducean, or that the Essene movement must be totally redefined as having emerged out of Sadducean beginnings".

As the two principal branches of Judaism of the period, the Sadducees were a sect dominated by a priestly aristocracy that opposed the Pharisees, a conservative sect led by lay teachers with strict views of religious laws.

Dr Eisenman has made a more radical proposal. He said the newly available scrolls from Qumran support his thesis that the sect's writings coincide in many ways with life and teachings of James, known in the New Testament as the brother of Jesus.

James headed the Jerusalem Jesus Movement, a proto-Christian organisation that eventually subsided in history and was replaced by the followers of St Paul, whose more Hellenised version of Christianity was to prevail. Dr Eisenman's hypothesis has gained few adherents.

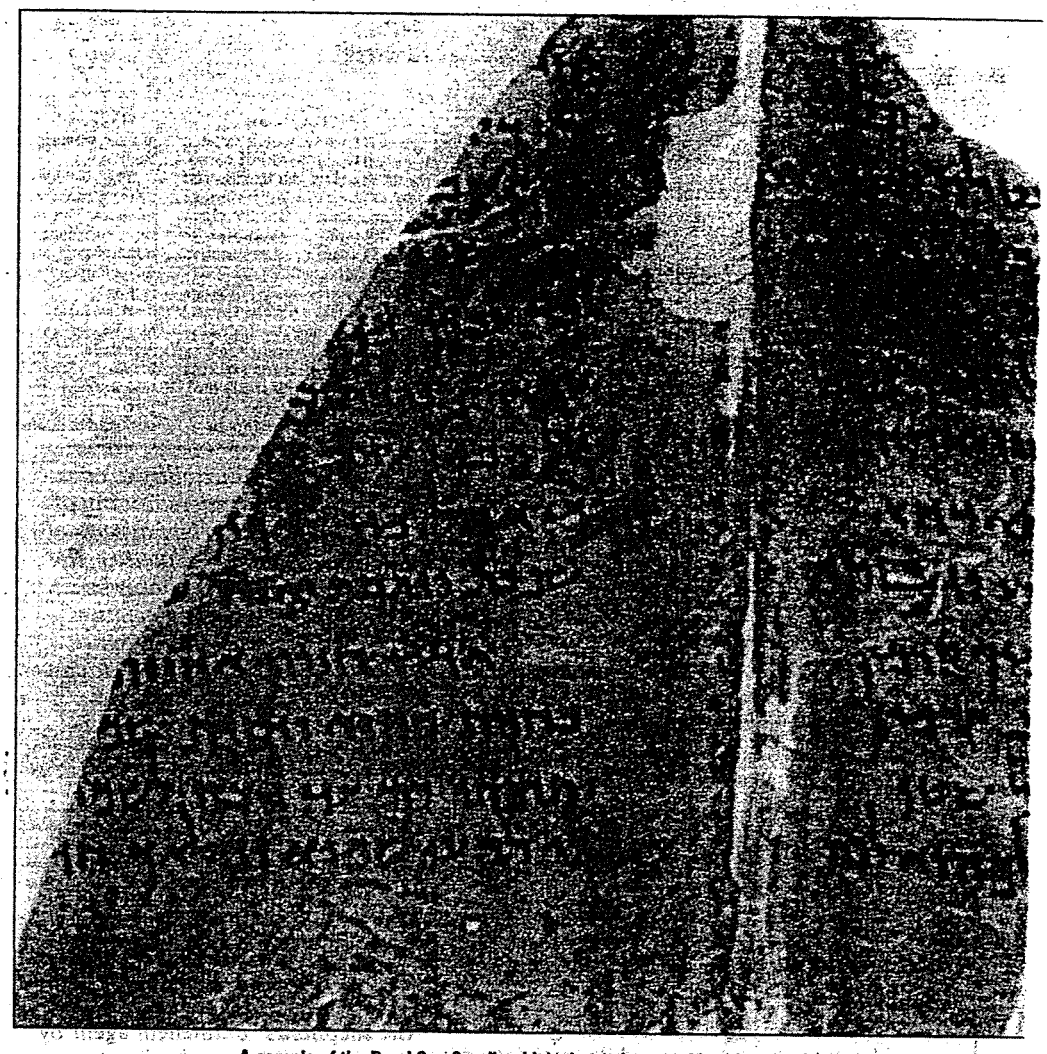
Dr Golb, on the other hand, doubts that the scrolls can be attributed to any one sect, but reflect the thinking of a wide spectrum of Palestinian Jews in those turbulent times. He had hypothesised that the Qumran ruins are of a fortress, not a monastery, and that the scrolls came from the libraries of Jerusalem, stored in the caves for safekeeping during the Jewish revolt against Rome between AD 66 and 70.

The Qumran buildings were presumably destroyed during that war. Archeologists may learn more about its occupants and fate by expanding their excavations of the cemetery at the site. What, for example, were the skeletons of women doing there, if this was the monastery of a celibate sect? Why is the cemetery placed so close to the buildings, contrary to Jewish laws of purity?

In one of the opening reports at the conference, Dr Pauline Donceel-Voute, an archeologist at the Catholic University of Louvain in Belgium, said a more detailed study of ceramics, glassware and other artifacts found in the Qumran ruins disclosed that the inhabitants did not seem to lead lives of "monastic simplicity".

But Dr Donceel-Voute said further analysis of the ruins cast doubt on the assumption that one of the large rooms was the "scriptorium", but suggest that it could have been a dining or meeting hall for soldiers.

Dr Golb called her findings "a breath



A sample of the Dead Sea Scrolls which shows the text of Leviticus scriptures of the Old Testament

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But Dr Donceel-Voute said further analysis of the ruins cast doubt on the assumption that one of the large rooms was the "scriptorium", but suggest that it could have been a dining or meeting hall for soldiers.

Dr Golb called her findings "a breath of fresh wind" supporting his fortress hypothesis, but adherents of the Essene theory subjected her to tough questioning in accusatory tones.

"I am upset by the atmosphere of aggression throughout scrolls research," Dr Donceel-Voute said in an interview recently. "I went in with an open mind to look at the archeology of the site. It shows that Qumran was part of the general society."

Dr George Brooke of the University of Manchester in England said: "We are still a long way from firm historical knowledge of the origin of the scrolls."

Yet traditional scholars like Dr James VanderKam of the University of Notre Dame insisted that the old consensus around the Essene hypothesis, though not as rock solid as before, was in no danger of crumbling.

In the immediate future, debate may focus on the recurring issue of publication rights.

Can the original editors and their assigned scholars continue to maintain control over certain documents? Can they claim copyright protection on documents they have worked on? The questions will be central in two court cases, one in Israel and the other in the United States.

Earlier this year, Dr Elisha Qimron, a professor at the University of the Negev in Beersheba, Israel, who is currently a visiting scholar at the Annenberg Research Institute in Philadelphia, brought a US$250,000 damage suit against the editors of A Facsimile Edition Of The Dead Sea Scrolls, a complete set of photographs of the scrolls. An appendix of the book included a 120-line portion of the reconstructed text of MMT.

Dr Qimron contended that this was his original work and an infringement of his copyright on the document. Mr Hershel Shanks, president of the Biblical Archeology Society, which published the two volumes, said the case had broad implications for all scholarship of ancient documents.

Such texts, he argued, cannot be copyrighted. Moreover, he said that other scholars besides Dr Qimron had helped prepare the text and it had already been widely circulated among scholars.

The lawsuit is scheduled to be tried in Jerusalem on Feb 1. A countersuit by Mr Shanks has been filed in the US District Court in Philadelphia.

Mr Shanks said the statements issued mid-December in settling the controversy over The Dead Sea Scrolls Uncovered appeared to support his position. One statement, issued by a group of scholars who have long had access to the scrolls, affirmed the right "of all scholars to publish Qumran texts and make properly acknowledged use of the work of others".

"Here the scholarly community is saying you can use it," Mr Shanks said of his publication of the MMT document. Dr Qimron was one of the scholars who approved the statement, some of his associates said.

Nothing has divided and inflamed the field more than the issue of open access to the scrolls. Until a year ago, when a library in California opened its collection of scrolls photographs to all scholars and a book of the photographs was published, an international editing team had exercised autocratic control over the research.

The team has now been expanded from a dozen to 50, headed by Dr Emanuel Tov of Hebrew University in Jerusalem, and has promised to complete publication of the remaining texts in 1996.

Only the well-preserved texts were prepared and published soon after discovery. Although the editors who exert primary control over research of the scrolls occasionally published interpretations of other texts, including MMT, most of the documents themselves were withheld from publication.

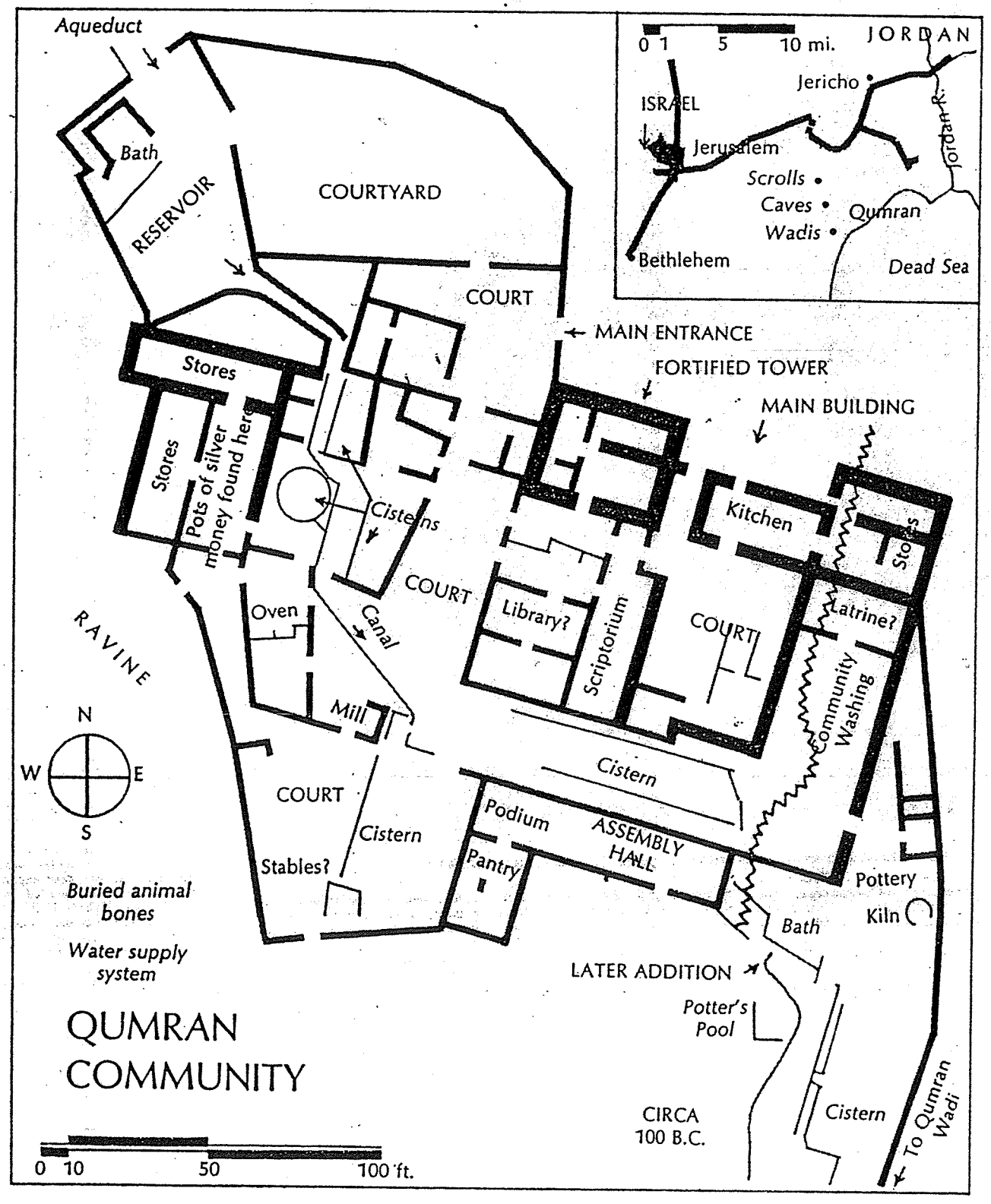
Scholars who were outsiders before last year's opening of the scrolls still suspect the former insiders of trying to rule the roost, and the incident over the Eisenman-Wise book was not reassuring.

Dr Golb questioned the motives behind the protest, noting that the 19 scholars who complained "were either themselves involved in the lengthy and unsuccessful effort to prevent release of the scrolls, or beneficiaries of that policy".

One of the complaints against the book was that it contained errors of interpretation. "What they would like us to believe," Dr Golb said, "is that they have 'true' interpretations of the Qumran manuscripts in contrast with those they collectively label false, and by this assertion they degrade the scholarship that they claim to represent." – NYT

Map of the Qumran Community

R. K. Harrison, "Dead Sea Scrolls," *Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*, 2:60



2) The Qumran Community: The findings of the scrolls motivated the excavation of the ruins next to the caves by Roland de Vaux, a Dominican monk in Jerusalem. A big problem here concerns the identity of the people who lived in this remote place.

a) Essenes were a Jewish monastic group in this area during the time of the scrolls (200 BC—AD 68). Most scholars have held that Essenes copied the scrolls at Qumran and then deposited them into the caves when the Jewish revolt against Rome began in AD 66 (e.g., James VanderKam, E. L. Sukenik, John Allegro, André Dupont-Sommer). Within two years the Essene community itself was wiped out. Several lines of evidence support this theory:

1] *Pliny the Elder* was a Roman scholar who apparently had visited this area and described the Essenes in these words:

> On the west side of the Dead Sea, but out of the range of the noxious exhalation of the coast, is the solitary tribe of the Essenes, which is remarkable beyond all the other tribes in the whole world, as it has no women and has renounced all sexual desire, has no money, and has only palm trees for company. Day by day the throng of refugees is recruited to an equal number by numerous [additions] of persons tired of life and driven thither by the waves of fortune to adopt their manners. Thus through thousands of ages (incredible to relate), a race in which no one is born lives on forever; so prolific for their advantage is other men's weariness of life! Lying below them [Essenes] was formerly the town of Engedi (Pliny, *Natural History* 2, trans. H. Rackham, Loeb Classical Library [London: Heinemann/Cambridge, MA: Harvard Univ. Press, 1969], 5.15, 73).

Thus Pliny describes Essenes in this spot and with the same characteristics depicted in the ruins (see below). Qumran is the only archaeological site in this area north of Engedi with buildings large enough for a community.

2] *Josephus* says the Essenes did not marry (*Ant.* 18.1.5; *War* 2.8.2), which is consistent with the burial findings in the area. All corpses dug up were of men, except two women and one child. (Some believe the women were cooks.) In any event, if marriage was practiced in the community, the ratio of women to men would certainly have been much higher and the skeletons of more children would seem to be more prominent in the burial plots.

3] *Excavations* of the site revealed a long room which the excavators dubbed the "scriptorium," believing that the long tables there enabled Essene scribes to copy manuscripts. In fact, two ink wells were dug up in this room.

4] *Sectarian writings* at the site indicate a religious community. These include the Manual of Discipline (describing their strict beliefs, initiation practices, and rules of daily life) and a newly discovered deed from a new community member who gave his property to the sect (*BAR* [Mar/Apr 98]: 48-53, 69).

b) Sadducees have also been considered to have occupied the ruins. Dr. Pauline Donceel-Voute, an archaeologist at the Catholic University of Louvin in Belgium, holds this view. She teaches that the long room long believed to have been the "Scriptorium" where scrolls were copied was actually a banqueting table! Dr. Lawrence Schiffman, professor of Judaic Studies at New York University, says that a close reading of MMT showed "beyond question that either the sect was not Essene, but was Sadducean, or that the Essene movement must be totally redefined as having emerged out of Sadducean beginnings." Clearly there are some parallels between the Sadducees and those at Qumran, but since Sadducees did not believe in angels or predestination, these major emphases in the ruins are convincingly against this hypothesis.

c) Pharisees are also suggested to have lived at Qumran by scholars such as Saul Lieberman, Louis Ginzberg, and Chaim Rabin (cf. Edward M. Cook, *Solving the Mysteries of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 124, n. 1). This is a minority view.

d) The Roman fortress hypothesis has been advanced with little following.

e) Zealots also have been supported as Qumran's inhabitants. This terrorist, fringe group of Jews who sought to overthrow Rome's rule has some similarities to the *War Scroll* contents found within the ruins. Arrowheads found within the ash layer of Qumran indicate a fiery end to the settlement. Would the peace-loving Essenes have fought the Romans with such fury? Scholars like Cecil Roth and G. R. Driver believe that the ruins resulted from a Roman attack of Qumran as a Zealot outpost. This view which attaches monastic tendencies to Zealots has not gained much of a following.

f) The Christian hypothesis has also been put forth. This focuses on James the brother of Jesus as the Qumran sect's leader. This more radical theory, proposed by Dr. Robert Eisenman of California State University at Long Beach, has few adherents. That Christians wrote the scrolls is ludicrous in that the entire library makes not one mention of Jesus!

g) The Jerusalem theory says that the Qumran writings cannot be attributed entirely to one sect. Dr. Norman Golb, professor of Near East Languages at the Univ. of Chicago, believes that Qumran was not a monastery but a fortress. His view claims that the scrolls came from the libraries at Jerusalem and were deposited in these caves in anticipation of the fall of Jerusalem between AD 66-70.

h) Conclusion: While the identity of the sect still remains a mystery, it seems to me that the Essene view has not been sufficiently defeated to change from this traditional view. Therefore, I continue to hold to the Essene theory, especially considering the evidence of Pliny and Josephus.

b. Contents of the Qumran Library (DSS manuscripts)

The 870 different scrolls and 100,000 fragments comprise many types of documents:

1) OT Books (220 scrolls, as opposed to the 650 non-biblical scrolls)

a) At least a fragment has been found of every OT book except Esther (which only later was considered authoritative). The most common were Deuteronomy, Psalms, and Isaiah (two entire scrolls of Isaiah were discovered).

b) Finds have been labeled by the cave number and name of book. For example, 11QPs denotes the Psalms scroll in cave 11 at Qumran and 1QIsa^a designates the first Isaiah scroll found in cave 1.

c) The DSS even include Targum fragments (Aramaic paraphrases of the OT; Evans, 98; cf. p. 97 of these notes).

2) Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha texts

a) Finds include Wisdom of Solomon, Tobit, 1 Enoch, Jubilees, Testimony of the Twelve Patriarchs.

b) The abbreviation for these is similar to that of OT books: 4QTobit means the Tobit scroll found in Qumran cave 4.

3) Commentaries on OT books

a) The most complete commentary is on Habakkuk, with Genesis, 2 Samuel, Isaiah, Hosea, Nahum, and Zechariah also prominent.

b) A small letter "p" for *pesher* ("commentary") identifies these manuscripts. So 1QpHab designates the commentary on Habakkuk found in cave 1.

4) Collections of OT passages on a theme

a) Messianic passages were collected by Essenes in a volume called "Testimonia."

b) The sect struggled to reconcile seemingly contradictory OT messianic texts on the Messiah's lineage. Was he a priest (Ps. 110:4) who descended from Levi, or a king who descended from Judah via David (Ps. 89:3-4, 35-37)? The result was an expectation of *two* messiahs: a priestly Messiah and a Davidic Messiah.

5) Sectarian writings of the Qumran Community (designated with "S")

a) The Manual of Discipline (1QS), Community Rule (1QSa), and Damascus Document (CD) outline very strict rules of behaviour for the monastic community, including death for sabbath-breaking. (As an example of referring to this scroll, 1QS3.5-7 indicates column 3, lines 5-7 of the scroll.)

b) The Temple Scroll (11QTemple) contains an elaborate plan how to make a new temple, anticipating that Herod's temple would soon be judged by God. (They were right, but little did they realize that they too would be destroyed.)

c) The War Scroll (1QM) was originally published under the title "The War of the Sons of Light with the Sons of Darkness." It is an eschatological text depicting the community's instructions and prayers to be offered at different times in battle. It is unknown whether the community had in mind an actual military battle or an apocalyptic Armageddon.

6) Note that no NT manuscripts or fragments have been found in Qumran (nor does the NT ever mention Qumran or the Essenes). Some articles try to connect Jesus and Qumran (or Christianity and Qumran), but this is very speculative; these were contemporaneous yet independent movements with similar goals at some points.

c. Beliefs and Characteristics of the Qumran (Essene) Community

1) Commitment to intense study of the Torah and a devout life: extensive water cisterns and baths were used for ritual cleansing

2) Sovereignty of God: strict predestinarian views similar to Pharisees

3) Eschatological Emphases: believed they were living in the end times and held strong messianic expectations that God would judge the impure priesthood

4) Communal life: Josephus is probably right that Qumran inhabitants were all men (except possibly a few women cooks?)

5) Legalism: possible given that Essenes separated from the normal pressures of everyday life (e.g., *War* 2.8.2 says no defecation was allowed on the sabbath!)

d. Significance of the DSS

1) Information on the life, customs, history, and beliefs of the Qumran community.

2) Knowledge the Pseudepigrapha (Jewish writings from 200 BC to AD 100) has been enhanced significantly. This has aided our understanding of Jewish history, religion, and culture in the NT era and afterwards.

3) Greatly advanced the study of Hebrew manuscripts, script, and orthography (system of spelling correctly) from the 3rd century BC to the 2nd century AD. Prior to this discovery these years were represented by only one scrap of papyrus!

4) Extended our knowledge of the Masoretic (Hebrew) text back by 1000 years: 4QSam dates to 225 BC, but before this discovery the oldest extant Hebrew MSS of an OT book was from the AD 800's.

Before 1948, the earliest complete extant copies of the Hebrew Bible were dated around AD 1000! Finding copies of books of the Hebrew Bible in whole or in part, to be dated around the

time of Christ, was indeed phenomenal. In addition new light was cast on the religious situation of this time, since the Scrolls contain much extrabiblical material related to the beliefs and conduct of a Jewish sect (Homer Heater, *Bibliotheca Sacra* 145 [Oct.-Dec. 1988]: 454).

5) Proves the accuracy of conservative dating of OT books: Liberals have long held that Daniel was written in Babylon around 164 BC whereas conservatives date it in Daniel's lifetime (c. 560 BC). The discovery of a second century BC Daniel scroll at Qumran defeats this erroneous liberal teaching, for copies of Daniel would not have traveled to a fringe sect in the desert of Palestine so quickly.

6) Proves the accuracy of transmission of the OT text: Comparing the DSS Isaiah scroll with one copied in AD 800's shows minimal differences. The Jewish scribes over the centuries showed extreme care to produce reliable copies of their sources.

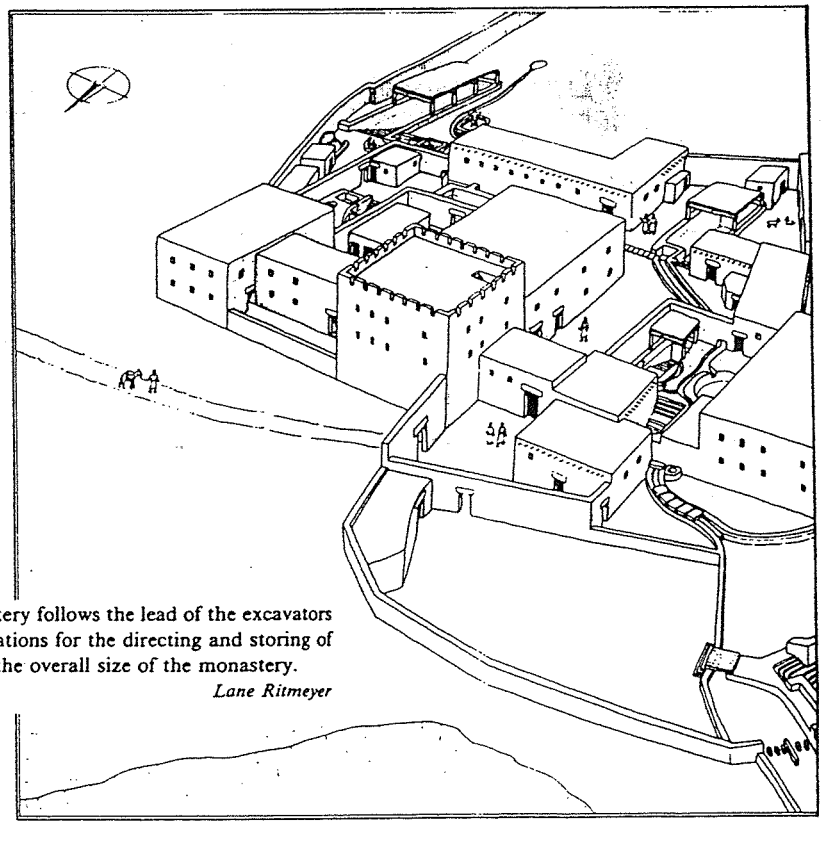
7) MMT shows that Paul's opponents who taught salvation by the law were indeed real people (Rom. 3:20, 28; Gal. 2:16; 3:2, 5, 10; see page 175).

e. Sources

1) The best older introductions to Qumran are Frank Moore Cross, Jr., *The Ancient Library of Qumran and Biblical Studies* (New York: Doubleday, 1961; reprint, Grand Rapids: Baker, 1980) and especially the standard DSS text: Geza Vermes, *The Dead Sea Scrolls in English* (Baltimore: Penguine, 1962, 4th ed. 1995). But recently Martin Abegg, Edward Cook, and Michael Wise edited *The Dead Sea Scrolls: A New Translation* (HarperCollins, 1996) which includes all but the most minute of the previously unknown nonbiblical DSS texts. Its 300 texts are 200 more than the previous standard by Geza Vermes.

2) See also an older but brief symposium at the Smithsonian Institute by Hershel Shanks, James C. VanderKam, P. Kyle McCarter, Jr., and James A. Sanders, *The Dead Sea Scrolls After Forty Years* (Washington: Biblical Archaeology Society, 1991 in SBC library 220.93 SHA). Also see Edward M. Cook, *Solving the Mysteries of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994).

3) The best way to stay current on the DSS is in *BAR* (*Biblical Archaeology Review*), a magazine published since 1975. It is edited by Hershel Shanks, a Harvard Law School graduate who turned his interest in Israel into a new profession (though the "BAR" acronym and controversial nature of the publication which continues to get sued for publishing sensitive material shows that Shanks hasn't yet given up law!).



This artist's rendering of the Qumran monastery follows the lead of the excavators of the Qumran ruins. Note the extensive installations for the directing and storing of water, the entrance by the massive tower, and the overall size of the monastery.
Lane Ritmeyer

Were John and Jesus with the Essenes at Qumran?

Craig A. Evans, *Noncanonical Writings and New Testament Interpretation*, 67-68

John the Baptist and Qumran. The discovery of the Qumran scrolls has raised again the question of John's possible relationship with the Essenes. There are at least six important parallels between the Baptist and Qumran: (1) Both John and Qumran appealed to Isaiah 40:3 ("The voice of one crying the wilderness, 'Prepare the way of the Lord' ") for their rationale for retreating to the wilderness (cf. 1QS 8:12–16; 9:19–20; Matt 3:1–3; Mark 1:2–4; Luke 3:2–6; John 1:23). John's upbringing in the wilderness (cf. Luke 1:80) allows for the possibility of his association with the wilderness community (cf. Josephus *J.W.* 2.8.2 §120: "The Essenes . . . adopt the children of others at a tender age in order to instruct them"). Essenes and Christians may have called their respective faiths "the Way" (1QS 9:17–18; Luke 20:21; Acts 9:2; 16:17; 18:26; cf. John 14:6) because of Isa 40:3. (2) Both John and Qumran called for repentance and practiced baptism (cf. 1QS 5:7–15; Pliny the Elder *Natural History* 5.17.4; Matt 3:5; Mark 1:4–5; Luke 3:7; John 1:25). (3) Both John and Qumran anticipated the imminent appearance of the kingdom of God (1QS 8:13–14; Matt 3:2; Mark 1:7). (4) John and Qumran employ similarly the words "water, spirit, and fire" (cf. 1QS 4:11–21; Matt 3:11–12; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16; John 1:26; Isa 5:24). (5) John's strange diet may reflect the strict *kashruth* observed by the Essenes (cf. Josephus *J.W.* 2.8.8 §143 ["he cannot share the food of others . . . he eats grass"]; 2.8.10 §152; CD 6:17; Matt 3:4 ["locusts and wild honey"]; 11:18 ["John came neither eating nor drinking"]; Mark 1:6; Luke 1:15). (6) John's harsh criticism of the religious leaders (Matt 3:7–9; "You brood of vipers . . .") coheres with harsh epithets frequently found in the writings of Qumran (1QpHab 2:1–2 ["Man of Lies"]; 8:8 ["Wicked Priest"]; 10:9 ["Preacher of Lies"]; 1QS 9:16 ["men of the Pit"]; 9:17 ["men of perversity"]; 1QM 1:1 ["sons of darkness"]; 15:2–3 ["host of Belial"]).

The possibility that John was at one time an Essene is important, since Jesus in all likelihood had himself been a disciple or an associate of John. The writings of Qumran, therefore, in all probability are vital for understanding the ministry of John and perhaps aspects of the ministry of Jesus.

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Jesus and Qumran. There are five suggestive similarities between the teachings and ministry of Jesus and those of Qumran. (1) Jesus was critical of an avaricious and oppressive temple establishment (Mark 12:38–13:2). So were the members of Qumran (1QpHab 8:11–12; 9:4–5; 10:1). (2) Both Jesus and Qumran apparently opposed the annual half-shekel temple tax (Matt 17:24–27; 4QOrd[a] 2:6–8), which, much to the consternation of some rabbis, the priests themselves did not pay (*m. Šeqal.* 1:4). Jesus may also have questioned the temple establishment's role in assisting Rome in the collection of imperial taxes (Mark 12:13–17; Luke 23:2). (3) Both Jesus and Qumran interpreted Gen 1:27 in such a way as to forbid divorce and remarriage (Matt 19:4; Mark 10:6; CD 4:20–5:2). (4) Both Jesus and Qumran spoke in terms of spiritual offerings, as opposed to literal animal offerings (Matt 9:13; 12:7 [cf. Hos 6:6]; Mark 12:28–34; 4QFlor 1:6–7; cf. Philo *Quod Omnis Probus Liber sit* 12 §75; Josephus *Ant.* 18.1.5 §19). Compare also Paul's statement in Rom 12:1: "present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship." (5) Both Jesus and Qumran thought of God's people as constituting a "spiritual temple" (Matt 12:6; Mark 14:58; John 2:19–21). Jesus' teaching probably underlies Paul's description of Christians as the "temple of the Holy Spirit" (2 Cor 6:16; cf. 1 Pet 2:4–5; 4QFlor 1:6).

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WHY THE QUMRAN INHABITANTS WERE NOT ESSENES

Essene Characteristics		Qumranite Characteristics	
Evidence from Ancient Texts		**Evidence from the Dead Sea Scrolls**	**Archaeological Evidence from Qumran**
Peace-loving	**vs.**	**War-like**	
"The Essenes hate war and love peace. They will not fight." Epidorus, *Historia Palestina* 6.7.		"When you approach a city to fight it, [first] offer it peace.... If it does not make peace but is ready to fight a war against you, besiege it and I will deliver it into your hands." Temple Scroll (11QT) 62.6-9.	Partial destruction of the fortified tower. Suggests that Qumran residents fiercely resisted attack.
Celibate	**vs.**	**Married**	
"[They live]...without women, renouncing love entirely." Pliny, *Natural History* 5.15.73.		"A man may marry a beautiful captive woman, but he must first let her mourn a month for her parents." Temple Scroll (11QT) 63.11-15.	Women's and children's skeletons in the Qumran cemeteries.
Opposed to Slavery	**vs.**	**Owned Slaves**	
"They acquire no slaves;...they consider slavery an injustice." Flavius Josephus, *Antiquities* 18.21.		"[H]e shall not sell them [the Gentiles] his manservant or his maidservant." Damascus Rule (CD) 12.10.	
Scorned Wealth	**vs.**	**Wealthy**	
"They despise riches." Josephus, *War* 2.122.			High-quality stoneware from Jerusalem, luxurious glassware and a hoard of coins were found.
Refused to Swear Oaths	**vs.**	**Oath-takers**	
"They refrain from swearing, considering it worse than perjury." Josephus, *War* 2.135.		"When a man makes a vow to me or swears an oath to take upon himself a binding obligation, he must not break his word." Temple Scroll (11QT) 53.14-16.	
Held No Private Property	**vs.**	**Private-Property Holders**	
"It is the law that those who enter the sect shall surrender their property to the order." Josephus, *War* 2.122.		"They shall place the earnings of at least two days out of every month into the hands of the guardian...and from it they shall succour the poor and the needy...." Damascus Rule (CD) 14.13.	
Agricultural	**vs.**	**Failed to Farm**	
"There are farmers among them, experts in the art of sowing and cultivating plants, shepherds leading every sort of flock, and beekeepers." Philo, *Apologia pro Judaeis* 8.			Qumran residents did not farm nearby lands.
Isolated Community	**vs.**	**Busy Commercial Center**	
"[The Essenes] have only palm-trees for company." *Pliny, Natural History* 5.15.73.			Community located on major trade route. Hoards of coins at Qumran indicate participation in commerce.

cation of Qumran as an Essene settlement. And it is true that we find a general similarity between the doctrines preached by the Essenes as recorded by Philo, Josephus, Solinus, Hippolytus, Porphyry and Epiphanius, on the one hand, and the traditions described in the scrolls found in the 11 Qumran caves, on the other. But it is not the similarities between Essene ideas and the ideas in the scrolls that matter; it is the differences that are significant. Everything we know from the ancient sources tells us that there must have been basic similarities between all the "philosophies" of Judaism at the time, because they were all branches of a common trunk, the Biblical precursor of Judaism. Thus, the similarities between the scrolls and the teachings of any of the philosophies are meaningless because they show only that they relate to the common trunk. It is the *details in which the "philosophies" differ* from each other that matter. And in these details we find that Essene and Qumran traditions differ significantly, as a result of which we must conclude that the scrolls are not the products of the Essenes.

If we were to consider only similarities, we might conclude that the scrolls were produced by the Rechabites, Samaritans, Ebionites or Sadducees. The name Essenes, incidentally, never appears in any of the scrolls.

Let us look at some of the Essene characteristics as reflected in the ancient literature about them, on the one hand, and what we find in the scrolls and in their alleged settlement at Qumran, on the other:

▶ The Essenes are depicted as peace-loving[11] and are said not to have manufactured weapons. The ruins of Qumran, however, include a fortified tower, burnt, mined and partially destroyed in what must have been a siege, fiercely resisted by fighting men.[12] Moreover, the Qumran scrolls do not reflect peace-loving traits, but warlike characteristics,[13] with their many references to war (albeit at a future date), the particulars of army organization and detailed descriptions of weapons.[14] From the accounts in the scrolls, it can be inferred that their writers included skilled tradesmen and

RICHARD NOWITZ

THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS
250 B.C. – A.D. 70

Dead Sea Scrolls (abbrev.: DSS). The name given to mainly parchment and papyrus scrolls written in Hebrew, Aramaic, or Greek, and discovered in eleven caves along the northwestern coast of the Dead Sea between 1947 and 1956, generally dating from 250 B.C. to A.D. 68 and assigned to an Essene community located at the archaeological site known as Khirbet Qumran. The term is also used more broadly for texts found during the same and more recent years at Masada, Naḥal Ḥever, Wadi Murabba'ât, Naḥel Ṣe'elim, Khirbet Mird, Naḥal Mishmar, and, occasionally, includes texts from the Cairo Genizah. These MSS are of inestimable value in understanding sectarian Judaism and Christianity of the 1st cent. In addition to the books of the OT (excepting Esther) and portions of the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha, the principal scrolls discovered (here listed with their present *sigla* followed by the older abbreviations) were the Manual of Discipline (1QS = DSD), the Rule of the Congregation (1QSa), and the Manual of Benedictions (1QSb) (together constituting one scroll); The War of the Sons of Light Against the Sons of Darkness (1QM = DSW); Commentaries *(pesherim)* on portions of Habakkuk (1QpH = DSH), Nahum (4QpNah), Micah (1QpMi), also on small sections of Isaiah (4QpIsa^{a-e}), Psalm 37 (4QpPs37), Hosea (4QpHos) and Zephaniah (4QpZeph); The Vision of the New Jerusalem (also called The Temple Scroll, since it describes the ideal temple; 1–5QJN); The Damascus Document (closely related to 1QS, it was previously known from fragments found in a Cairo synagogue in 1896 and called the Zadokite Document; CD = CDC); The Copper Scroll (3QTreasure or 3Q15—thought to be unrelated to Qumran); The Thanksgiving Psalms (also known by the modern Hebrew term *Hodayot*, meaning thanksgiving; hence the *siglum* 1QH = DST); and, The Genesis Apocryphon (written in Aramaic; 1QapGen = DSL); and the *Florilegia* consisting of The Eschatological Midrashim (4QEschMidr), The Patriarchal Blessings (4QPBless), and The Testimonia (4QTestim). Early translations of the major, non-canonical scrolls are available in paperback: Theodore H. Gaster, *The Dead Sea Scriptures* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Co., 1956; revised and enlarged 1964); Géza Vermès, *The Dead Sea Scrolls in English* (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1962; rev. ed., 1970; London: Penguin, 1970). Countless additional fragments remain to be assembled and published, e. g., about 95 percent of the texts from Cave #4 at Qumran alone are presently unpublished.

Note: Each *siglum* above contains ① the number of the cave in which the scroll was found (1–11), ② the location of the cave (Qumran), and an initial(s) for ③ the name of the document (p meaning *pesher* or commentary); superscribed letters indicate the copy of the work at a given site (e.g., 4QpIsa^{a-e}). In some listings the *siglum* has prefixed to it an abbreviation of the material from which the text is made (papyrus [p, pap], copper [cu], ostracon [o, os, ostr], wood [lign], parchment [perg], or skin [no abb.]); and an appended abbreviation indicating the language in which the text is written (Hebrew, Aramaic, Arabic, Christian Palestinian Aramaic, Greek, Latin, or Nabatean). For advanced study see: Joseph A. Fitzmyer, S. J., *The Dead Sea Scrolls: Major Publications and Tools for Study* (Missoula, Montana: The Scholar's Press, 1975).

Khirbet Qumran is the name given to the ruins of an Essene community (fanatic Jewish monastics) on the northwestern coast of the Dead Sea, first occupied around 150 B.C. and destroyed in A.D. 68–70 during the suppression of the First Jewish Revolt (A.D. 66–70) by Rome. In its vicinity the Dead Sea Scrolls were found in 1947–56.

— R. N. Soulen, Handbook, pp. 44-45, 88

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(John Grassmick, Dallas Seminary)

The DSS include:

1. Portions of all the OT books except Esther. The three favorite books are Deuteronomy, Psalms, and Isaiah — the three OT books most often cited by NT author
2. Portions of the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha.
3. Commentaries on OT books. The largest, most complete one is on Habakkuk.
4. Collections of passages on given themes, such as:
   The Testimonia – passages relating to the Messiah.
   Florilegium – passages portraying a Davidic Messiah and an interpretation of the Law.
5. Sectarian writings of the Qumran community, such as:
   The Manual of Discipline
   The Rule of the Congregation
   The War Scroll
   The Damascus Document (the Zadokite Fragments)

Similarities Between Essenes and Christianity

1. ***Communal life (at least early in the church in Acts 2:42)***
2. ***Messianic expectation***
3. ***Emphasis on purity***
4. ***Orthodox beliefs***

Differences Between Essenes and Christianity

Essenes	Christianity
Monastic	In Society
Jewish	Jew and Gentile
Anti-temple	No position
Men only	Men and women
Washings (repeated)	Baptism (one-time)
Copied scrolls	Not an emphasis

3

Salvation in the Old Testament

John S. Feinberg

in Tradition & Testament: Essays in Honor of Charles Lee Feinberg
eds. John S. Feinberg & Paul D. Feinberg (Chicago: Moody, 1981)

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What does the Bible teach about salvation? Ask this question of most people, and they will respond with their understanding of the New Testament's teaching on salvation. One can search for hours and find little written about salvation in the Old Testament. Biblical theologians tend to discuss it more often than systematic theologians, but neither group devotes much attention to it. Moreover, if one were to peruse course outlines for most classes taught in seminaries or Bible colleges in soteriology, he would find that the question of salvation in the Old Testament receives little or no treatment whatsoever.

If it is difficult to find discussions on the Old Testament's approach to the broad theme of salvation, it is even harder to find treatments of the Old Testament's perspective on the specific matter of salvation of the individual. Although there are studies of such topics as corporate election and national salvation (especially when the topic is physical deliverance from some kind of bondage or evil),[1] it seems that theologians and exegetes have tended to shy away from a consideration of the Old Testament teaching about how an individual was to acquire spiritual salvation. Why this should be so is not entirely clear. Perhaps it has stemmed at least partially from a feeling, on the one hand, that the Old Testament really says nothing different than the New on the matter of personal salvation.

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Or perhaps it stems from a fear that what the Old Testament teaches about salvation is so radically different from the teaching of the New Testament that close attention to it would only serve to confuse us about God's manner of dealing with personal salvation, and might even lead us to the theologically damaging conclusion that God has been inconsistent in regard to the matter of salvation.

In view of these considerations, I suggest that the study of salvation in the Old Testament is more urgently needed, and it is my intention to consider several issues related to the Old Testament's teaching about the spiritual salvation of the individual. Obviously, it would be impossible in a study of this length to cover every relevant aspect of Old Testament teaching, but I should like to address three main topics. First, I want to consider the method of salvation. Does Scripture teach more than one way of salvation—an Old Testament and a New Testament way? This matter is of interest not only from the standpoint of coming to a proper understanding of scriptural teaching, but also because many have thought that dispensationalism involves or even necessitates a commitment to multiple ways of salvation. What I shall argue in regard to the first issue is that neither the approach of Scripture nor that of dispensationalism *necessitates* holding to multiple methods of salvation. Second, I want to discuss the implementation of salvation. To say that Scripture teaches only one way of salvation is not to specify what it is or how it has been implemented at various times in history, especially during Old Testament times. Third, I want to consider the relationship of Old Testament sacrifices to Christ's sacrifice and to discuss as well the exact *soteriological* function of sacrifices in the Old Testament system. Involved in the discussion of the function of the sacrifices will be a treatment of their efficacy, especially in view of the statement in Hebrews 10:4 that "not all the blood of bulls and goats could take away sin."*

THE METHOD OF SALVATION

How many ways of salvation does Scripture teach? Reading various theologians, one might initially assume that the question is a waste of time, for all seem to assert that Scripture teaches only one way of salvation operative in all economies and at all times. For example, after presenting opposing viewpoints, Hodge emphatically argues:

*In the process of preparing this study I have been greatly aided by discussions and interaction with Duane Dunham, Paul Feinberg, Robert Hughes, and Bruce Ware. I want to express my appreciation for their help.

> In opposition to these different views the common doctrine of the Church has ever been, that the plan of salvation has been the same from the beginning. There is the same promise of deliverance from the evils of the apostasy, the same Reedeemer, the same condition required for participation in the blessings of redemption, and the same complete salvation for all who embrace the offers of divine mercy.[2]

Likewise, Payne argues that in spite of some difference, the doctrine of regeneration is taught in the Old Testament as well as in the New. He explains:

> This definition of regeneration as being "in Christ" by no means, however, eliminates the doctrine of the new birth from the Old Testament. There is but one, unified testament, God's sole plan of salvation, through which Christ offers a redemption that is equally effective for the saints of both dispensations. Christ states that Abraham, in the patriarchal period, rejoiced to see His day, "And he saw it, and was glad" (John 8:56). Jesus was the Mediator of the older testament, as well as the newer (Heb. 9:15); and, since it is true that no man cometh unto the Father but by Him (John 14:6) and yet, since the saints of the older dispensation did indeed come to the father (Ps. 73:24), they must have been made perfect *in Him* (Heb. 11:40).[3]

Examples such as the preceding could be proliferated seemingly ad in finitum, but of course, if that is the case, is it even worthwhile to ask the question about how many ways Scripture teaches? The question is important because there are many who *think* there is much disagreement over the issue. Many nondispensational writers (such as Hodge and Payne, quoted above), who hold to one method of salvation, have accused dispensationalists of teaching multiple ways of salvation. They assume that since the dispensationalist consistently differentiates between God's program for Israel and His program for the church, since he emphasizes that God institutes different economies with men at various times, and especially since the dispensationalist claims there are significant differences between the dispensation called law and the dispensation called grace (even the labels of the dispensations supposedly tip us off to different methods of salvation), the dispensationalist must hold that Scripture teaches multiple ways of salvation. For example, Daniel Fuller, after quoting the old Scofield Reference Bible, concludes:

> Hence Dispensationalism, as expounded by one of its foremost systematizers, teaches two ways of salvation: that during the era of law,

obedience to it was a condition of salvation, whereas during the age of grace, salvation comes simply through faith in Christ.[4]

Payne does not put the matter quite so bluntly as Fuller, but as he reasserts the unity of God's redemptive plan throughout Scripture, the message in regard to dispensationalism is the same as Fuller's. Payne writes:

> More serious, however, than its misapplication of particular prophecies, is what amounts to dispensationalism's repudiation of the whole, unified redemptive plan of God in human history. Indeed, the normative truthfulness of the older testament of the past is dependent upon its essential identity with, and fulfillment in, the newer testament of the present and the future. Correspondingly, the blessing for the modern Church, as this is contained in the Old Testament, can be appropriated by today's saints only when they accept their own equation, as the Israel of God, with that ancient Israel to whom God extended His testamental promises. It thus becomes apparent that a comprehensive understanding of God's gracious purpose—which has been one and the same from Genesis 3:15, right on through to the closing chapters of Revelation—lies contingent upon the Christian's recognition of one cross, one testament, one faith, and one Church throughout all history.[5]

These citations level devastating attacks at dispensationalism, especially if dispensationalists in fact hold multiple methods of salvation, whereas Scripture teaches one method. As a matter of fact, dispensationalists (older and contemporary) do hold that Scripture teaches only one way of salvation. In all honesty, however, it must be admitted that statements made by certain dispensationalists in the past appeared to teach multiple ways of salvation. That such careless statements did not reflect the full thinking of those theologians (as can be seen from other statements they made) seems to have escaped many critics of dispensationalism. One such unguarded statement, however, appeared in the old Scofield Reference Bible:

> As a dispensation, grace begins with the death and resurrection of Christ (Rom. 3:24-26; 4:24, 25). The point of testing is no longer legal obedience as the condition of salvation, but acceptance or rejection of Christ, with good works as a fruit of salvation.[6]

Fuller (see above) cites this as evidence that Scofield taught multiple ways of salvation, one by law and one by grace. Certainly, such a statement would appear to be problematic. What seems to be equally problematic, however, is that Fuller never quotes the Scofield Reference Bible when it states that "law neither justifies a sinner nor sanctifies a believer."[7] Fuller went on to claim that although some dispensationalists hold to the view that Scripture teaches only one way of salvation, he claimed that it was a new trend in dispensationalism and not really consistent with its basic line of thought.[8] Fuller was at least willing to admit that dispensationalists make statements contrary to the multiple methods position. But he still thought that this was merely a new development in dispensationalism. Many critics of dispensationalism have not even bothered to mention such statements as those cited by Fuller. Charles Ryrie in *Dispensationalism Today* has presented ample evidence that older as well as more recent dispensationalists in fact hold to only one way of salvation being taught in Scripture.[9] It is truly unfortunate that in spite of all the ink that has been spilled on the subject, the commonly held caricature of dispensationalism (perhaps even held by some uninformed who claim to be dispensationalists themselves) is that it is committed to and even necessitates the notion that Scripture teaches multiple ways of salvation. The old *Scofield Reference Bible* is cited as proof, and that is supposed to settle the matter. Of course, it is equally important to note what the *New Scofield Reference Bible* (the work of many dispensationalists) says. Writers such as Payne (*Theology of the Older Testament*) and Fuller (*The Hermeneutics of Dispensationalism*) can hardly be faulted for not taking it into account in their works, since the *New Scofield Reference Bible* was published after their works were completed. However, some changes have been made. The comment concerning the inability of law to justify has not been removed from the notes on Galatians 3. Moreover, the objectionable comments on law and grace have been totally removed from the notes on John 1. In their place we read the following:

> In its fullness, grace began with the ministry of Christ involving His death and resurrection, for He came to die for sinners (Jn. 1:17; Mt. 11:28-30; 16:21; 20:28; Rom. 3:24-26; 4:24-25). Under the former dispensation, law was shown to be powerless to secure righteousness and life for a sinful race (Gal. 3:21-22). Prior to the cross man's salvation was through faith (Gen. 15:6; Rom. 4:3), being grounded on Christ's atoning sacrifice, viewed anticipatively by God . . .; now it is clearly revealed that salvation and righteousness are received by faith in the

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> crucified and resurrected Savior . . ., with holiness of life and good works following as the fruit of salvation. . . .[10]

Certainly, the above statement reflects dispensational thinking, but it also clearly speaks of a unified method of salvation—by grace through faith.

Though this discussion of what dispensationalists claim is interesting (especially to a dispensationalist who holds to only one method of salvation), it would seem that there is a much more important question to be asked and answered. The question of greater significance is whether dispensationalism as a system necessitates holding a view of multiple ways of salvation. A description of what dispensationalists hold is one thing, but a much more important question is whether the system is consistent with a single method of salvation view, a multiple method of salvation view, or both. In other words, what position could a dispensationalist hold without contradicting his system on the matter of the ways of salvation? This is a significant question because the underlying assumption in the attacks of Fuller, Payne, and others, is not just that dispensationalists hold multiple ways of salvation, but that the system demands such a view. The complaint, then, is not so much against what dispensationalists are thought to believe as what the logic of the system purportedly demands.

Does dispensationalism as a system demand adherence to multiple ways of salvation? In order to understand the logic of dispensationalism, it is necessary first to specify its essence. The next task is to determine what sort of position(s) on the method of salvation would fit such a system. Specifying the essence of dispensationalism is not at all easy. A starting point, however, is Ryrie's suggestion. According to Ryrie, there are three necessary conditions of dispensationalism: (1) the distinction between Israel and the church, (2) the usage of a system of literal hermeneutics, and (3) the belief that the underlying purpose of God in the world is to produce his glory.[11] Ryrie is saying that whatever other views a dispensationalist holds, those three conditions mark him off as a dispensationalist.

Although Ryrie's suggestions are indeed helpful, I am not convinced that they present an accurate picture. It would seem unfair to assume that nondispensationalist theologians never distinguish between Israel and the church, never use literal hermeneutics, and do not recognize the glory of God as His purpose in history. It would be better to say that the dispensationalist *consistently* makes these emphases, whereas the nondispensationalist does not.

PRINCIPLES OF DISPENSATIONALISM

The matter of hermeneutics is the crucial issue for dispensationalism. For example, one who consistently uses literal hermeneutics will be on his way to distinguish consistently between Israel and the church and to focus on God's glory as His underlying purpose. In other words, consistent literal hermeneutics (as the dispensationalist understands such hermemeutics) seems to be foundational to dispensationalism. But many nondispensationalists make two claims that call into question the dispensationalists' claim to being practitioners of sound hermeneutics. (1) They claim that they consistently use literal hermeneutics. (2) They claim that dispensationalists do not consistently interpret literally, for they admit that Scripture contains figures of speech and attempt to interpret such figures. Although a full-scale discourse on hermeneutics is beyond the purpose of this study, I think that these issues are important enough to warrant some consideration.

Many nondispensationalists claim that they consistently interpret literally. But their understanding of how literal hermeneutics operates is different. In particular, they argue that literal interpretation demands that many of the Old Testament references to Israel are to be understood as typological of the church. Consequently, even on a literal interpretation, given the principle of typology that dispensationalists certainly accept, many of the Old Testament references to Israel are to be interpreted as referring to the church. After all, they argue, this was the method of many a New Testament writer. So how can nondispensationalists be blamed for doing the same? An example of this sort of thing appears in Ladd's work when he writes:

> The fact is that the New Testament frequently interprets Old Testament prophecies in a way *not suggested by the Old Testament context.*
>
> Let us take first a very simple illustration. Matthew 2:15 quotes from Hosea 11:1 to prove from Scripture that Jesus must come from Egypt. This, however, is not what the prophecy means in the Old Testament. Hosea says, "When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son." In Hosea this is not a prophecy at all but a historical affirmation that God had called Israel out of Egypt in the Exodus. However, Matthew recognizes Jesus to be God's greater son and deliberately turns a historical statement into a prophecy. This is a principle which runs throughout biblical prophecy. *The Old Testament is reinterpreted* in light of the Christ event. . . .
>
> The main point in the preceding section is that many Old Testament

passages which applied in their historical setting to literal Israel have in the New Testament been applied to the church. What does all this have to do with the question of the millennium? Just this: The Old Testament did not clearly foresee how its own prophecies were to be fulfilled. They were fulfilled in ways quite unforeseen by the Old Testament itself and unexpected by the Jews. With regard to the first coming of Christ, *the Old Testament is interpreted by the New Testament.*

Here is the basic watershed between a dispensational and a nondispensational theology. Dispensationalism forms its eschatology by a literal interpretation of the Old Testament and then fits the New Testament into it. A nondispensational eschatology forms its theology from the explicit teaching of the New Testament.[12]

The last paragraph of Ladd's statement is crucial to the discussion. If one operates as Ladd suggests for the reasons he suggests, one can, it seems, legitimately claim to be using literal hermeneutics. However, it seems that what ultimately generates such a procedure of interpretation as suggested by Ladd is a misunderstanding of the nature of typology (whether Ladd, in fact, makes such an error is beyond my knowledge, but it would seem that the difficulty I shall mention is reflected in the thinking of many nondispensationalists). Undoubtedly, the cases cited by Ladd and others are Old Testament types of something in the New Testament. The problem stems from thinking that, just because we understand the relation of the Old Testament type to its New Testament antitype, either the Old Testament figure has no meaning other than the meaning of the antitype in the New Testament, or the meaning of the type in its own context is simply to be neglected. The point about typology is that the Old Testament type must retain its own meaning in its own context, even though it simultaneously foreshadows its antitype in the New Testament and even has a different meaning in the New Testament context. For example, Joseph may be seen as a type of Christ, which is not to say that the story of Joseph has no importance on its own apart from its relation to Christ. As a matter of fact, neglecting the integrity of the Old Testament meaning of Joseph undermines the basis for the type/antitype relation between Joseph and Christ. The failure of nondispensational interpretation at this point, then, is that its view of typology (a misunderstanding of typology, that is), ignores or minimizes the meaning of the Old Testament event or person in its own setting, just because it takes on another meaning in a New Testament context.

The fact that a type must retain its distinctive meanings in both the Old Testament and New Testament contexts is perhaps never so clearly seen as in the case of Hosea 11:1/Matthew 2:15, an example Ladd gives to

prove that Old Testament passages are reinterpreted in the New Testament. Ladd is unquestionably right about Hosea 11:1 being given a new meaning in Matthew 2:15. What is problematic is that we are given the impression that the meaning of Hosea 11:1 in Hosea 11:1 either becomes the meaning given it in Matthew 2:15, or the meaning of Hosea 11:1 in its context is to be neglected. This really becomes problematic when one recognizes that Hosea 11:1 refers to a past historical event. In the case of Joel 2/Acts 2, one could argue (though incorrectly) that since Joel 2 was yet future to Joel when he wrote it, it must be understood exclusively in terms of Acts 2. However, Hosea 11 presents a different kind of case in that the event referred to in Hosea 11:1 (the Exodus) was already a historical fact at the time Hosea wrote. Therefore, even though the passage is to be seen as typical of Christ, and even though Matthew makes that typological connection, the meaning of Hosea 11:1 in its own context must not be ignored, for the sake of the type/antitype relation and because the passage had a historical referrent when Hosea wrote it. The matter of typology can be summarized as follows: (1) a type must have meaning in its own context; (2) the meaning of the type in its own context is essential for a type/antitype relationship (otherwise we have an example of a parable or perhaps an allegory, but not an example of typology); and (3) ignoring items 1 and 2 threatens the very integrity of the Old Testament. The problem that arises from nondispensational approaches to typology is that they seem to neglect items 1 and 2, at best, and deny them, at worst. Consequently, whether one begins with the New Testament and goes to the Old Testament, or vice versa, should not make a bit of difference in one's interpretation of the Old Testament as long as one properly understands the implications of typology. The nondispensationalist may indeed be trying to interpret Scripture in a consistently literal way, but as long as he incorporates a faulty approach to typology, his understanding of and application of literal hermeneutics is problematic.

The claim that dispensationalists actually interpret figuratively on occasion is definitely erroneous. The error stems from neglecting to distinguish between figurative language (e.g., figures of speech) and interpreting figuratively. The former refers to certain phenomena of language itself, whereas the latter refers to a method of interpreting those or any phenomena of language. To interpret figuratively means to decide the meaning of a word or sentence without paying close attention to the denotative or connotative meaning of the words involved, without heeding the demands of context, or without paying attention to grammatical considerations. Literal interpretation, on the other hand, seeks to come to the meaning which is demanded by the denotative and/or connotative meaning of the words under consideration, by the context and by grammar. The one

who interprets literally must always be able to justify his interpretation on the grounds of the phenomena within the context. A figurative interpretation is tied only loosely to the context. Consequently, we can say that either figures of speech or nonfigurative language may be interpreted figuratively or literally. Recognizing that language contains figures of speech does not indicate that an exegete interprets figuratively.

The keys to determining whether or not one is a dispensationalist rest in hermeneutical, ecclesiological, and eschatological issues, not soteriology. Obviously, the distinction between Israel and the church is of crucial import for both eschatology and ecclesiology. I do not, however, see any soteriological position that is inherent to and thus necessitated by dispensationalism. Thus, the question of whether dispensationalism necessitates a multiple methods of salvation view, or a single way of salvation position is irrelevant. Soteriology is not the determinative area for dispensationalism. For example, if one consistently distinguishes between Israel and the church and applies that distinction throughout his ecclesiology and eschatology, will he be forced to hold any particular view on the methods of salvation issue? It would seem that distinguishing between Israel and the church could fit either a single or multiple method view. One could, without contradicting his system, claim that God has in general two separate programs for the two distinct groups. But He saves both groups by one method of salvation. On the other hand, one could also claim, without contradicting his own position, that God not only works with two separate groups, but that He saves them in different ways. Concerning the glory of God issue, it would seem that the notion of God's purpose ultimately being His glory fits with either view. One way of salvation for all will bring glory to God. But then multiple ways would not have to bring God disgrace.

Notice that at this point I am not speaking about what Scripture actually teaches. My concern is to focus on the intrinsic ideas of dispensationalism and to ask what a dispensationalist could hold without contradicting his position, even if Scripture does not teach something that he could hold. As for the matter of hermeneutics, it should also be obvious that literal hermeneutics, as I have described them, would lead one to hold multiple ways of salvation, if Scripture, interpreted literally, demanded such. Such hermeneutics would lead one to hold a single way of salvation, if Scripture, interpreted literally, demanded such. As a result, I must reiterate that there is nothing intrinsic to dispensationalism's hermeneutics that necessitates either a single or multiple methods view. I know there are critics of dispensationalism who would disagree, but I think they are reacting to what they think dispensationalists hold, rather than to the logic of the system itself. The point is that neither a dispensationalist's hermeneutics nor any doctrinal views he has gained from exegesis of Scripture commit him to holding a multiple or single method view of salvation. Before the dispensationalist does a detailed study of the text of Scripture, it is not inevitable that he will come to any particular view on the method of salvation.

In the preceding discussion, we demonstrated to be invalid the charge that a dispensationalist must hold one or the other view regarding single or multiple methods of salvation. However, that does not answer the question of what a dispensationalist *should* hold. Obviously, what he should hold is whatever Scripture actually teaches, regardless of what positions could be made to fit with his system. That being the case, what should he hold? Given what Scripture actually says, it would seem that a dispensationalist should hold to multiple methods of salvation if and only if Scripture, when interpreted according to literal hermeneutics as the dispensationalist understands such, teaches such a view. In view of the comments in Galatians 3:11 about the law, and in view of Hebrews 11, which teaches that Old Testament saints were saved by faith, it would seem that a dispensationalist should not hold that more than one method of salvation is taught in Scripture. Of course, the dispensationalist may be inconsistent in his hermeneutics, and in that case a multiple methods view would be understandable (but wrong). However, if he interprets Scripture by the method his system tells him to use, then he will not in fact hold to multiple methods of salvation. Happily, most dispensationalists, for whatever reason, do hold that only one way of salvation is taught in Scripture. To that view I also subscribe.

Having come to this point, we have indeed accomplished much. We have established that (1) it is the consensus of both dispensationalists and nondispensationalists that Scripture teaches only one method of salvation, that (2) dispensationalism as a system, contrary to the views of some, does not necessitate multiple methods of salvation, even though it could fit such a position, that (3) dispensationalism also fits with a single method of salvation view, and that (4) a dispensationalist, to be consistent with his foundational principle, should hold that only one method of salvation is taught in Scripture.

But what is that one method of salvation? There are many differing opinions on that subject. The disagreement does not lie in the matter of whether salvation is by faith or works. Dispensationalists and nondispensationalists agree that it is by faith. Hebrews 11 lists the great Old Testament heroes of the faith and indicates that they were saved by faith. Moreover, as one studies the list, it becomes obvious that those included represent different stages in the progress of God's revelation concerning himself and His plan of salvation. Both dispensational and nondispensa-

tional interpreters agree that in all ages God had graciously required of man faith, not works. Oehler states the matter nicely when he writes:

> The *law,* by always pointing back *to God's electing grace,* and onward to God's just retribution, as the foundation of the righteousness of the law, presupposes *faith, i.e.* such a *trusting submission to the covenant God* as was exhibited in *Abraham's* believing adherence to the Divine promise. This is in conformity with that fundamental declaration, Gen. xv. 6, "He believed in the Lord, and He counted it to him for righteousness". . . . Accordingly the requirement of faith runs through the entire Old Testament. The leading of Israel, from the time of its deliverance out of Egypt, Ex. iv. 31, xiv. 31, comp. especially Deut. i. 32, ix. 23, and many other passages, rests entirely on faith. But in proportion as its Divine election seemed to human apprehension thwarted, and the promise of redemption forfeited, by the apostasy of the nation and the judgments thereby incurred, the more emphatically is it asserted how all-important *faith* was, as the root of all righteousness, and the condition on which the blessing was to be obtained.[13]

Faith, then, is recognized by all as requisite for salvation. But faith in what or whom? At this point opinions diverge. That divergence does not fall neatly along the lines of dispensationalism versus nondispensationalism. Even those working within the same broad system of theology do not entirely agree on this matter. But there is a nondispensational approach that has many affinities to other nondispensational positions (though not identical to all such positions).

The position of Charles Hodge on this issue is most helpful, for he not only claims that faith is the key, but he also explains in detail what the revealed content of faith is at all times. Hodge begins by explaining that in all dispensations, Jesus Christ is the Redeemer. He writes:

> It is no less clear that the Redeemer is the same under all dispensations. He who was predicted as the seed of the woman, as the seed of Abraham, the Son of David, the Branch, the Servant of the Lord, the Prince of Peace, is our Lord, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, God manifest in the flesh. He, therefore, from the beginning has been held up as the hope of the world, the SALVATOR HOMINUM.[14]

Hodge's statement is most interesting. On the one hand, I can agree with parts of it, for in a certain sense which I shall mention, I hold that, indeed, Christ is the Redeemer at all times. On the other hand, it is another thing to say that Jesus Christ is the One who from the beginning "has been held

up as the hope of the world." If Hodge means nothing more than that Christ's work is the ground of redemption for all ages, I have no problems. If, on the other hand, the statement means that Jesus Christ has literally been the revealed content presented to men from the very beginning, I have tremendous problems. It is definitely debatable as to how much understanding there was of the full import of the prophecies about the Messiah or how much the truth about Christ's coming redemptive work was involved in the presentation of the gospel in the Old Testament. What does not seem to be the case is that men consciously believed in *Jesus* Christ, for we do not find until the New Testament the explicitly stated revelation that Jesus of Nazareth is the long-awaited Christ. Although it is always possible that the Holy Spirit could have revealed the truth about *Jesus* to an eager seeker, it seems to overlook the progress of revelation to say that knowledge of Jesus was universally or even widely known in Old Testament times. Consequently, when Hodge specifies the content of faith, he goes too far. He writes:

> As the same promise was made to those who lived before the advent which is now made to us in the gospel, as the same Redeemer was revealed to them who is presented as the object of faith to us, it of necessity follows that the condition, or terms of salvation, was the same then as now. It was not mere faith or trust in God, or simply piety, which was required, but faith in the promised Redeemer, or faith in the promise of redemption through the Messiah.[15]

Although I would not want to deny that God revealed as early as Genesis 3:15 that One would come to take care of the sin problem, I find it very hard to accept the notion that the promise of redemption through Jesus Christ was so clearly understood or so exclusively held to be the sole revealed content of God's method for handling sin, as Hodge seems to think. It seems that those who hold this view are so concerned to uphold the unity of God's redemptive program that they do not entirely do justice to the truth of the progress of revelation. Moreover, if there were no other way to uphold the unity of God's redemptive work, I suspect I would be drawn to this view, but as I shall point out, there seems to be a satisfactory way to uphold the unity of redemption without weakening the truth of progressive revelation.

Some might object that Old Testament believers obviously knew the truth about Christ, in light of passages like 1 Peter 1:11-12 and Hebrews 11:13. At the outset, let me make two points. First, I am not denying that God *could* have revealed the truth about Jesus to Old Testament saints. But I doubt that He did on any widespread basis. The passages in ques-

tion do not state that He did. Second, even if someone like Hodge is correct, and even if the dispensationalist agrees with Hodge, I do not see that such an eventuality would necessitate abandoning dispensationalism. Since dispensationalism is not about whether Christ was the revealed content of faith in the Old Testament, a dispensationalist can certainly hold that He was, without having to surrender his dispensationalism.

Now, what does 1 Peter 1:10-12 actually say? According to verse 11, the Old Testament prophets wanted to know what the Holy Spirit was revealing about the kind of time (*poion kairon*) it would be and the kind of events there would be (*tina*), when the Holy Spirit informed them of the sufferings of the Messiah. What is obvious from this verse is that Old Testament saints did know about a coming suffering Savior. No one disagrees that such information was available. But it seems erroneous to conclude on the basis of this passage that they knew that Jesus of Nazareth would be that suffering Messiah. In verse 12 we are told that in response to their questions, the prophets learned essentially that the time of fulfillment was not their own time. They were prophesying of things that would occur in the lifetime of others. Certainly, there is no statement to the effect that they were or were not informed that the Messiah would be Jesus of Nazareth. They may have been so informed, but 1 Peter 1:10-12 neither proves nor disproves that. Arguments from silence are consistent with everything and consequently prove nothing.

When we turn to Hebrews 11:13, we find a similar case to that of 1 Peter 1:10-12. The verse speaks of many Old Testament saints who, through the time of Abraham, died without seeing the promises of God fulfilled, though they were aware of those promises. Considering the promises made through the time of Abraham, it becomes clear that God had revealed that some day a redeemer would come to put away sin. It is not stated that the redeemer would be Jesus of Nazareth. Consequently, it would be entirely possible for the saint to see the promises, as verse 13 says, and still not know about Jesus. It would also be *possible* that he had been told about Jesus. But Hebrews 11:13 does not say whether these saints in fact did or did not know about Jesus of Nazareth. Again, the argument from silence is inconclusive.

In summarizing this matter, Payne's comments are helpful in gaining a proper perspective of the issue. Payne writes, "Union with Christ is the only way of salvation; and 'Christ in you, the hope of glory,' was a 'mystery' that was hidden to the Old Testament saints (Col. 1:27) only in respect to the exact knowledge of the Savior's Person, and not in respect to its practical efficacy."[16] Though I cannot fully agree with Payne's perspective on the relation of union with Christ to the Old Testament saint, I agree with his comments about knowledge of Jesus in the Old Testament.

The basic objection to a position like Hodge's is that it does not seem to pay adequate attention to the implications of progressive revelation. Consequently, the Old Testament saint seems to be granted more revelation and more understanding of revelation than Scripture seems to indicate he actually had.

THE IMPLEMENTATION OF SALVATION

Is it possible to give proper weight to the progress of revelation without fragmenting the redemptive plan of God to the point of claiming that God operates according to multiple ways of salvation? I should like to argue that a commitment to allowing the truth of progressive revelation to hold its full weight does not necessitate a subscription to multiple methods of salvation. In order to support this claim, I shall present what I take to be God's one method of salvation, operative throughout Scripture. At the outset, it would seem to be crucially important to understand that though God always uses the same method of saving men (the point which preserves unity of redemption and of the redeemed), what He reveals about that method is progressively amplified and necessitates changes in the way the believer expresses the fact that he has appropriated God's one method of salvation (the points that allow for the diversity demanded by progressive revelation). The full import of this statement will be understood as I unfold what I take to be God's method of salvation.

In attempting to set forth God's plan of salvation, it is essential to recognize initially that at all times in history salvation must begin with God's gracious activity. Paul's statement in Ephesians 2:8 that "by grace are ye saved," is true of every believer, regardless of the dispensation in which he lives. The major reason that salvation must be a result of God's gracious activity lies in the condition of man. God demands absolute righteousness of any creature who would be saved. But no one except Christ ever met such standards (Psalm 14:3; Rom. 3:10-12). The problem is complicated by the fact that not only is no one righteous, but that no one even has the ability to live a perfectly righteous life (John. 1:13; 3:5; 6:44; 8:34; Rom. 7:18, 24; 8:7, 8; 2 Cor. 3:5; Eph. 2:1, 8-10; Heb. 11:6). Given man's inability to do right in God's eyes (man's problem ever since the Fall), if God were to deal with men in strict justice alone, no one would be saved. Thus, since God has chosen to save men, He extends divine grace toward them. The ways in which such grace expresses itself may vary at different times, but what is constant is that God's method of salvation is always a grace method, never a works method.

God works, then, in a gracious way to save people. But how does He express that grace? In other words, what specific gracious thing(s) has God done to save men? In order to understand God's gracious dealings in saving men, it would seem helpful to make and explain some key distinctions.[17] I should like to distinguish between the basis, or ground, of salvation, the requirement for salvation, the ultimate content of salvation, the specific revealed content of salvation to be accepted, and the believer's expression of his salvation. The first three are constant throughout all dispensations, whereas the latter two change. This approach, as we shall see, allows for unity of salvation without ignoring the progress of revelation and God's different administering orders for the world. It should also be noted that the first item deals with the objective work of God which provides and pays for salvation so that it is available to be offered, whereas the latter four focus on items involved in the subjective application of salvation to the believer and his life as a believer.

BASIS, OR GROUND, OF SALVATION

God has graciously acted in an objective way so that man can be saved. What He has done constitutes the basis, or ground, of salvation. In other words, because of this act, God can extend salvation to men at all times. The basis of salvation is nothing other than God's gracious provision of the death of Christ. The reason that Christ's death must be the basis is stated in Leviticus 17:11, according to which blood must be shed, if there is to be atonement for sin (cf. Heb. 9:22). But not just any blood fully and finally removes sin. If so, one could argue that the blood of sacrificial animals fully and completely removes sin. However, the writer of Hebrews explicitly states that the blood of bulls and goats could not take away sin, for only the blood of Christ could do that (Heb. 10:4ff.). The implications of this verse for the significance of Old Testament sacrifices will be discussed more fully later. At this point, suffice it to say that the verse implies that animal sacrifices could not in any dispensation be the ultimate basis for God's removal of sin. Moreover, there is no indication whatsoever in Scripture that the blood of a human being would atone for sin. Therefore, since God demands the shedding of blood for removing sin, and since no human or animal blood will suffice to atone for sin fully, the ultimate ground, or basis, upon which God can offer salvation at any time in history has to be the sacrifice of Christ.

Christ's sacrifice is the ground, but what does that involve? First, it does *not* mean that at all times in human history the death of Jesus Christ was already a historical fact. Though God decreed the event prior to history, it still had to be accomplished within history. It did not become a historical fact until it actually occurred. Second, claiming that Christ's death is the ground of salvation does *not* mean that at all times in history God had revealed that the death of Jesus of Nazareth is the sole basis for granting salvation. It is most unlikely that anyone knew that before His advent. Progressive revelation must be given its due. What is meant by saying that Christ's death is the ground of salvation is that from God's perspective, the sacrifice of Christ is the objective act on the grounds of which God offers salvation in any age. In trying to understand how this can be so before the event occurs historically, we must distinguish between God's perspective and man's. God has known about Christ's death from all eternity. Since He decreed it, it was an accomplished fact in His thinking long before it was an accomplished fact in history. Because God knows that the deed will be done (since He decreed it), and because He sees all of history (including the completed work of Christ) at once, God can grant man salvation, even before the sacrifice is performed in history. There could never have been a time in human history when God would learn that He had been mistaken about the fact that Christ would sacrifice Himself for sin. Although there is no past, present, or future for God, He, as an omniscient being, cannot help but know what is past, present, and future for the creatures He has made. Thus, God always sees Christ's work as an accomplished fact. But before it was done within history God knew that the death of Jesus Christ had not been accomplished in history. Man, limited by his human perspective, did not know about the atoning work of Jesus Christ until God revealed it and then accomplished it within human history.

In sum, in order to gain a proper perspective on this matter, one must avoid two mistakes, both of which involve confusing God's perspective with man's. The first error is thinking that God neither knows nor sees any more than we do. The people of the Old Testament era did not know that *Jesus* was the Messiah, that *Jesus* would die, and that His death would be the basis of salvation. But that is not to say that God did not know. God did know at all times that Christ's death was as good as accomplished. Consequently, He could grant salvation on the basis of it. The second error comes from assuming that because God understood the full import of the death of Jesus and granted salvation on the basis of it, everyone in the Old Testament also must have had that information and must have understood it. I see no reason that God's knowledge and man's must have coincided on this issue before Jesus. I see no indication that at all times God's and man's knowledge of these matters totally coincided.

REQUIREMENT OF SALVATION

This refers to what is required of man in order for him to be saved (although God enables man to do what he does). It does not refer to what

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God must do either objectively or in the subjective application process in order for man to be saved. Scripture is very clear that no one is saved by attempting to perform a good act in his own power. In fact, no one on his own is capable of an act that is righteous in God's eyes (Psalm 14:3; Rom. 3:10-12). It is certainly doubtful that even Adam, before the Fall, totally on his own without any divine enablement was capable of performing any act of moral good in God's eyes. When Adam did act on his own, he committed the first sin (Gen. 3). Not only is it futile to attempt to gain salvation by good works in general, but as Scripture teaches clearly even complete adherence to the Mosaic law (difficult as that would be) would not justify anyone (Gal. 2:16; 3:11). Performance of religious rites simply for the sake of the rite will not save anyone, for God desires something else (Psalm 51:16-17). According to Scripture, the sole requirement for salvation is that man exercise faith in the provision that God has revealed. Faith is not to be considered a meritorious work on man's part, for Scripture affirms everywhere that faith, as all of salvation, is God's gift to man (Eph. 2:8; Rom. 6:23; 2 Tim. 2:9). There is no question that faith is clearly taught as the sole requirement for salvation in the New Testament. Equally clear is the message that faith was the only prerequisite during Old Testament times. Even if one were to miss that point from a study of the Old Testament, he could hardly miss the explicit teaching in Hebrews 11 on what men in the Old Testament period did to be saved. God always requires that man respond in faith to whatever He reveals concerning salvation.

ULTIMATE CONTENT OF SALVATION

Scripture is very clear about this matter. The ultimate object of faith in any and every age is God Himself. The ultimate issue at any time in history is whether a man will take God at His word and exercise faith in the provision for salvation which God reveals. The message of Hebrews 11 is again instructive, for it repeatedly emphasizes that each hero of faith did what he did because of his faith in God (cf. Rom. 4:3). Moreover, it is interesting to note that the prophets do not call the backslidden people to return to the sacrificial system or even to a renewed belief in the promises of God. Instead, the plea is to return to God (Jer. 3:1, 12, 14, 22; 4:1; Ezek. 33:11; Hos. 12:6; 14:1; Joel 2:12 are examples of the prevalence of this message in the prophets).[18] Clearly, whatever religious rites, good works, and so on a person might begin or resume, and whatever promises he might reaffirm, the repentant sinner was ultimately turning or returning to God. In all times, He is the ultimate object of faith. Even today when we ask men to believe in Jesus Christ as their personal savior, we are asking for an ultimate commitment to God. He is the one who has

revealed that salvation is available through faith in Christ. Moreover, a rejection of Christ constitutes a refusal to believe God's word about Christ; it is a rejection of God Himself.

SPECIFIC REVEALED CONTENT OF SALVATION

All the items discussed so far have remained constant as the dispensations changed. But not everything in regard to salvation is constant. It seems clear that the specific revealed content to be believed changes at various times in history. One may believe that at all times men have believed in Jesus of Nazareth, the Christ, for salvation. But still he cannot deny that at various times God has given more information than previously specified about that Christ. For the one who does not hold that men at all times have consciously known about and believed in Jesus, the conclusion that the specific revealed content changes is especially clear. There are several key points in connection with this matter.

First, it is important to remember that since in each economy the content is what God has revealed, belief in the content for that age is belief in the ultimate object of faith, God. The believer is ultimately trusting God when he responds positively to the truth for his dispensation: believing in the promises (age of promise), agreeing that God will forgive and cleanse the sin of the one who in faith offers sacrifice (age of law), or placing his faith and trust in Jesus as Savior (age of grace). Thus, it is not, for example, the performance of the sacrifices or a belief in the sacrificial system per se that saved someone living under the Mosaic law. Instead, what saved a person then was a commitment to the God who had revealed that sin was to be expiated through sacrifices made in faith that God would give atonement. Therefore, in agreeing to respond positively to the specific content for any given age, the believer was ultimately responding to the God who revealed the content. Romans 4:3, for example, says that Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness. Of course, someone might respond, "He believed the promises, didn't he?" Certainly, he did, but the point is that in doing so, he was believing the God who gave the promises.

The second point about the content of revealed truth is especially important. The content of faith is cumulative throughout Scripture. This should not seem strange in view of progressive revelation, but nonetheless, it needs explanation. There must be a message at all times (a gospel, so to speak) which tells men about God and His plan for salvation and urges them to respond. From the beginning through the time of the law, the information that God had revealed about salvation (information that could have been put into a message, even if it never was in terms of all it involved) was cumulative as revelation progressed. This means that an

individual was not to ignore whatever God had said about Himself and His method of salvation in previous ages. (The amplification of revelation might require that man express his faith in different ways. However, that is a different matter that I shall discuss shortly.)

Thus whatever God has presented to be believed in one age may be amplified and/or supplemented in another age, but it is not canceled. For example, the person responding in faith for salvation under the Mosaic law is also responding to the God of the promises to Abraham, the God of the Exodus, the God of the Noahic covenant. Consequently, the believer living in the time of the Mosaic law is not to ignore that a reason for believing in God is that he has given certain promises to Abraham that are also applicable to the one under law. He may emphasize in his thinking what God has done for Israel most recently, but whatever God had said and done previously is not unimportant. All are reasons for faith. Even if the believer did not understand that he was committing himself to the God who had done all these things and revealed all these things about Himself in the past, nonetheless, he was making a commitment to such a God. It makes no sense to say that someone living in the time of Abraham, for example, believed the content of the promises, but that nothing else God had ever said was part of the content. Moreover, Galatians 3:12ff. states clearly that the promises that Abraham believed were not and could not be annulled just because God revealed the law to Israel (Gal. 3:16-17). These are just some examples in support of my contention that the content of faith during the Old Testament times was cumulative.

The advent of the age of grace maintains a certain continuity. What the Old Testament pointed toward is fulfilled in Christ. When a person believes in Christ as Savior, he is committing himself (whether or not he recognizes it) to the God who brought Israel out of Egypt and the God who gave the Mosaic law. It is the same God, and thus, the specific content of faith can be seen to be cumulative throughout the whole of Scripture. The emphasis in the age of grace is, of course, on what God has done through Christ. In fact, the gospel message may not even include a comment about what God had done for Israel in the past. However, since what God has done through Christ is the culmination of what He had done and said previously, the believer during the age of grace is committing himself to the God of the promises, the God of the Exodus, the God of the Mosaic law, and the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, even if the believer, when he responds, does not understand that, since the emphasis of the message is on Christ.

An example of a message that included a rehearsal of all God had done in the past is Stephen's speech (Acts 7). Granted, the speech was an indictment against his listeners. But the indictment is so strong because

Stephen appeals over and over to what God had done for Israel throughout history and to Israel's refusal to believe him. Stephen completes his indictment by pointing to the fact that this same God whom Israel had rejected has now sent Christ. Just as they should have trusted God in the past but did not, so they were in Stephen's time rejecting God and His Messiah. Stephen's speech met a negative response. Nonetheless, the cumulative emphasis of his speech seems most instructive in regard to the matter before us.

OLD TESTAMENT SACRIFICES

In order to understand the idea of cumulative content more fully, we must know what that content was. Two broad strands run throughout the Old Testament content presented to man as the reason for placing faith in God.

First, the entire Old Testament (viewed as comprising several dispensations or not viewed dispensationally at all) teaches that blood sacrifice is of utmost importance in order for man to maintain a right standing before God. (The exact soteriological relevance of these sacrifices will be discussed later.) This teaching appears before Leviticus 17:11. As early as Genesis 3:15, it is seen that someone must die in order ultimately to defeat sin. The theme of sacrifice is continued in Genesis 3:21. God covered Adam and Eve with animal skins. Obviously, animals had been killed to provide this covering. In Genesis 4, Abel's blood sacrifice was acceptable to God, whereas Cain's offering was not. It seems that Cain demonstrated disbelief in refusing to bring a blood sacrifice. In view of Genesis 3:21, the information about blood sacrifice would have been available to Cain. He chose to ignore it and thereby expressed his rejection of God and of his method of coming to Himself. During the time of Noah (Gen. 8:20), sacrifices were still important. God did not abrogate that revelation. Certainly, during the time of Abraham, sacrifices were of crucial importance in man's relation to God. We see Abraham sacrificing to God on various occasions (e.g., Gen. 12:7-8; 13:3-4). The Abrahamic covenant itself was ratified with Abraham as God passed among the pieces of the sacrifice on the altar (Gen. 15). In subjecting Abraham to the ultimate test of his faith, God requested him to sacrifice his son Isaac (Gen. 22, a passage that beautifully prefigures Christ's sacrifice). When God redeemed Israel from Egypt, a lamb was slain, and its blood was applied to the doorposts of the houses. Clearly, during the age of promise, sacrifices were significant. With the giving of the Mosaic law, sacrifices were still important. The system of sacrifices became more elaborate, as the kinds of sacrifices to be given and the uses of such sacrifices were

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delineated. Finally, during the time of law it became more clearly evident that a person would have to be sacrificed for sin (Isa. 53; Dan. 9:24-26). God's suffering servant, the promised Messiah, would have to die for the sins of His people (cf. Dan. 9:24-26—commentators generally agree that in order for the things mentioned in verse 24 to be accomplished, Messiah the prince would be cut off, as mentioned in verse 26).

In addition to the theme of sacrifice, there is the theme of promises. Some promises concern salvation from sin and thus overlap the theme of sacrifice. Others are of a national, political, and social nature. Walter Kaiser has argued that the theological center of the Old Testament canon is the notion of promise.[19] One can hardly read Kaiser's work and not be convinced that the concept of promise is crucially important for the whole of Old Testament life.

Thus we see that in each period of the Old Testament economy, the specific content revealed for men to believe involved truths about sacrifices and promises. The change of dispensations did not abrogate existing promises but rather supplemented and amplified them. Passages such as Genesis 3:15-16, Genesis 9 (Noahic covenant), Genesis 12 and 15 (Abrahamic covenant), Deuteronomy 28-30 (Palestinian covenant), 2 Samuel 7 (Davidic covenant), and Jeremiah 31 (New Covenant) show that even though dispensations changed, God did not abrogate His promises. He amplified and clarified them.

Promises were not only important in terms of believing that in the future God would do what He promised. They were also important from the standpoint of past fulfillment. The ways God had demonstrated His faithfulness in the past formed a basis for trust in Him for salvation and for fulfillment of promises in the future. Paul states very clearly that the giving of the law did not nullify the promises made to Abraham (Gal. 3:16-17). God's revelation concerning His promises is cumulative.

The specific content to be believed, then, was cumulative, and it was composed of two major components: sacrifice and promise.[20] The believing Jew, therefore, whether he understood what he was doing or not, was committing himself to the God of the promises, the God who had faithfully formed the nation of Israel and brought her out of Egypt and into the land, and the God who had revealed all along that sin could be atoned for by means of blood sacrifice. This is what it means to say that the content of faith in the Old Testament is cumulative. The person who committed himself in faith to that God, and all that He had revealed about His saving and keeping power, was saved.

But only since the time of Jesus Christ has the revealed content to be believed coincided entirely with the basis, or ground, of faith. During the age of grace, God has revealed the fulness of salvation through the shed

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blood of Jesus Christ (the basis of salvation in any age). Neither God's acts in history nor His revelation concerning His acts had given man the complete content about Christ. We must be careful not to think that during the Old Testament economy it was necessary to accept the content over and over again to be saved. For example, one might think that since during Old Testament times a sacrifice was required for each sin, the person was being saved with each sacrifice. As we shall see, such a view is a misunderstanding of the function of Old Testament sacrifice as well as a confusion of the requirement for salvation with the expression of faith that a saved person would make. Moreover, merely doing sacrifices never justified anyone. What did justify the repentant sinner was a one-time commitment to the God who had revealed that sin was to be atoned for by blood sacrifice (as well as whatever else He revealed for that economy). The Old Testament believer might fall out of fellowship with the Lord and need to return to Him, but there does not seem to be an indication that once a person was saved he could lose that salvation and needed to be saved over again.

BELIEVER'S EXPRESSION OF SALVATION

Just as the specific content of faith changes as revelation progresses (the content is cumulative), so there is an aspect of change in regard to the fifth element of salvation, the believer's expression of his salvation. It is crucially important not to confuse this element with the requirement for salvation. The requirement (faith) confronts a *nonbeliever* as he contemplates God's message of salvation. The specific expression of faith confronts the *believer* as he contemplates how he is to live out the salvation he has already been given. It is his way of responding to God in obedience as evidence that he has already believed.

The believer's expression of faith must take into consideration at any given point in history three kinds of elements. First, elements that are constant, such as the moral law. Since the moral law reflects the nature of an unchanging God, it, too, is always binding. Thus, at all times, a believer is to express the fact that he is saved by adhering to the moral law. Such adherence will not save him, but it will provide evidence that he already has met the requirement of salvation. Second, in any given age, there seem to be elements that conclude with a given age. A good example of this is the bringing of animal sacrifices. Through the time of the Mosaic law, the offering of such sacrifices was important as the believer expressed his trust in God. However, with the advent of the age of grace, the believer no longer expresses his devotion to God through bringing animal sacrifices. There are ways by which he can receive cleansing from sin as a believer and express his devotion to God, but animal sacrifice is not one of

them. Finally, there are items in the believer's expression of his faith that commence in a given age. For example, in the age of grace the believer can express his obedience to the Savior through observance of the Lord's Supper and baptism. Before the age of grace, such expressions of faith were not open to the believer.

A final point in regard to the expression of faith is simply to reiterate that though it may change from one age to another, it does not entail a change in God's one method of saving men. How could it, since it has nothing to do with what God and the nonbeliever do in order to bring the nonbeliever to the point of (in New Testament terms) conversion, regeneration, and justification?

In the previous pages, I have suggested what I take to be God's one method of salvation as taught by all of Scripture. Even the items that vary from one dispensation to the next (specific revealed content of faith and expression of faith) do not necessitate multiple ways of salvation. Moreover, it seems obvious that one could hold the kind of position I have espoused and remain a consistent dispensationalist. Nothing mentioned seems to contradict anything essential to dispensationalism.

Our discussion so far has stressed the unity in God's method of salvation. But is anything different (besides the items mentioned) about being a believer in Old Testament times, as opposed to New Testament times? Certainly the method of salvation is the same, but is everything else equal as well? This question is important for a proper understanding not only of the two testaments, but also for a proper conception of the distinctions between biblical Judaism and biblical Christianity. Moreover, in specifying the differences between the two, we want to be careful not to contradict what has just been presented, that is, we do not want to derive differences that will necessitate multiple ways of salvation, since it has already been argued that God uses only one way. What, then, seem to be the key differences?

The first and obvious difference is that the content of faith presented to the believer and the expression of his faith differ, as has been noted.

Second, the believer's relation to the law has changed (an aspect of the change particularly involved in the expression of his faith). The Mosaic system distinguishes between the moral law, the ceremonial law (rules and regulations regarding clean or unclean, as well as the whole sacrificial system and all the regulations about the Tabernacle, for example), and the civil law (application of the moral law to certain features of Israel's community life).[21] But the New Testament believer in Jesus Christ is no longer under the civil law or the ceremonial law. God's standards of morality do not change. The two testaments take different approaches toward obedience to the law. Put simply (perhaps too simply), the Old Testament approach can be characterized as "do and you shall live," whereas in the New Testament the approach seems to be "you are; therefore, do." But the oft-heard comment that in the New Testament believers keep the law out of love, obviously implying that Old Testament believers kept it out of obligation, is not consistent with passages such as Psalm 119: 16, 35, 47, 70, 77, 92, 143, 174, which speak of delight in the commandments of the Lord.

Third, the New Testament believer receives a much greater enablement for obedience to God in virtue of the indwelling Holy Spirit. The Old Testament speaks of the Holy Spirit coming upon a person for a special enduement of power for a particular task (e.g., the case of Saul as recorded in 1 Sam. 10:6; 11:6; and 18:12; the case of craftsmen working on the Tabernacle as noted in Exod. 31:1-11; Micah as recorded in Mic. 3:8; the seventy elders as recorded in Num. 11:16-17, 24-30; and in the cases of some of Israel's judges as seen in Judg. 3:10; 6:34; 11:29; 13:25; 14:6, 19; 15:14). But there is no mention of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, as found in the New Testament (Rom. 8:9, 11; 1 Cor. 3:16; 2 Tim. 1:14; 1 John 3:24).[22]

Fourth, the ἐν Χριστῷ (*en christō*) relationship, union of the believer with Christ, is part and parcel of the New Testament believer's salvation, whereas that relationship does not pertain to salvation of an Old Testament saint. Such union with Christ is accomplished by means of the ministry of the Holy Spirit whereby He baptizes the believer into the Body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:13). But the Holy Spirit did not begin to perform that ministry until the day of Pentecost (Acts 2).

Finally, though there was forgiveness for sin in both the Old and the New Testaments,[23] sin was only fully and finally paid for when Christ made His sacrifice. This point is fully developed and explained below.

SOTERIOLOGICAL FUNCTION OF OLD TESTAMENT SACRIFICES

At this point, I should like to consider the function of the sacrificial system in the Old Testament. In particular, I am interested in clarifying the soteriological function of Old Testament sacrifices.

The Mosaic system of sacrifices is very complex, and it is not always easy to distinguish the meaning and function of the various sacrifices. Nonetheless, for our purposes it would seem possible to clarify at least some of the different offerings that Scripture mentions. First, there is the עֹלָה (*ʿōlâ*) or burnt offering (Lev. 1; 6:8-13). Payne suggests that this offering was the "continual burnt offering" (mentioned in Exod. 29:38-42) and that it symbolized the idea of complete and continuous atonement and consecration.[25] Second, the מִנְחָה (*minḥâ*) or meal offering (Lev. 2; 6:14-23) symbolized especially the devotion of one's person and property

to the Lord.[26] Third, there is the category of offerings designated as peace offerings (Lev. 3; 7). Three offerings fall under this category, i.e., the thank offering, the vow, and the freewill offering. Oehler distinguishes the three as follows:

> The זֶבַח תּוֹדָה [*zebaḥ tôdâ*] being offered without having been previously promised for some benefit received, and thus referring to a favor not already supplicated . . . , was the highest among the שְׁלָמִים [*shᵉlāmîm*]. The vow, נֶדֶר [*neder*], on the contrary, is a promised offering usually presented *after the reception* of some benefit previously entreated; yet the one making a promise might connect an offering immediately with his prayer, and it would fall under this species; but the נֶדֶר [*neder*] always refers to something distinctly prayed for. And lastly, the נְדָבָה [*nᵉdābâ*] is every free gift for which there was no other occasion than the will of the offerer, whom his heart impelled to show his thankful sense of all the blessings which the goodness of God had bestowed on him.[27]

The final three offerings are the sin, guilt, and trespass offerings. The precise distinction between the three is a matter of debate, a debate that lies beyond the scope and purpose of this study. Suffice it to say, these are the offerings that deal specifically with atoning for sin.[28]

What does the Mosaic system teach about the meaning of these sacrifices? In other words, how are they to be understood? What is their purpose? Unfortunately, there is no unanimity in regard to the meaning of sacrifices. In examining this topic, we shall consider it from two distinct perspectives, (1) that of the idea behind the sacrifice, and (2) that of the relation between the sacrifice and the sacrificer.

The idea behind sacrifice. Here there is indeed no unanimity. Oehler is helpful in speaking of the basic idea of pre-Mosaic sacrifice, although our main concern is with the Mosaic system. He claims the ideas of expiation and atonement are not the most significant ideas behind pre-Mosaic sacrifices (although they are hinted at). Oehler writes:

> The pre-Mosaic offerings had the signification of *thank-offerings and offerings of supplication,* though a propitiatory element is connected with the burnt-offering (first mentioned Gen. viii. 20) lying in the רֵיחַ נִיחֹחַ [*rêaḥ nîḥōḥ*] (literally, odor of satisfaction), through which the sacrifice has an appeasing effect, see ver. 21. Offerings for atonement, in the strict sense, are not mentioned in the Old Testament before the introduction of the Mosaic sacrificial law. The book of Job, too, which brings before us the customs of the age of the patriarchs, represents, in chap. i. 5, xlii. 8, the presenting of burnt-offerings for sin committed, and avoids the term כִּפֶּר [*kipper*], which denotes *expiation* in the terminology of Mosaic sacrifice (giving, instead, the more general term קִדַּשׁ [*qiddash*]).[29]

According to Oehler, the offerings were not expiatory in the strict sense because "an *expiatory offering,* in the strict sense, presupposes the revelation of divine holiness in the law, and the entrance of the people into covenant relation with the holy God."[30] But it would seem that expiation in the strict sense is not part of pre-Mosaic sacrifices. Nonetheless, expiation is present in some sense, as even Oehler's evidence indicates. Of course, he is also correct in pointing out the significance of thanksgiving and supplication in many of the offerings.

J. Barton Payne delineates four different approaches to sacrifice, and rejects the first three. First, some of a liberal persuasion have suggested that sacrifice was intended to be a meal, nourishing the deity (cf. Gen. 8:20). As Payne suggests, this theory does not square with Old Testament teachings, for among other things, Psalm 50:9-13 and Isaiah 40:16 indicate that God has no need of sacrifices for any purposes.[31] Second, there are those who understand Old Testament sacrifices as gifts. Payne points, for example, to Vos's claim that the two main ends served by sacrifice are expiation and consecration.[32] Payne claims that although there is an element of truth in this conception, it does not explain the necessity for blood. It is estrangement from God that necessitates blood, not the desire to consecrate oneself.[33] It is interesting that Payne does not focus on the fact that Vos specifies both expiation and consecration. He restricts his comments solely to the matter of consecration. Third, the Canaanites viewed sacrifice as a means of communion with deity. Such communion was specifically physical, i.e., they considered themselves to be eating the blood of the deity, for example. As Payne accurately responds, "Though Scripture surely believes in communion with God (Exod. 24:11), this blessed communion transpires in a moral and spiritual sphere only. It arises, moreover, as a result of the sacrifice, not as the explanation by which to account for the sacrifice."[34] Finally, Payne argues that the correct explanation of the matter is that sacrifices were propitiatory, or atoning.[35] It seems to me that all of the notions of expiation, propitiation, and consecration are involved in sacrifices. That the sacrifices were atoning can hardly be denied. The kinds of sacrifices required necessitate that atonement for sin was one of the ideas behind sacrifices. Reflection on the kinds of sacrifices (peace offerings, for example) suggests that the ideas of consecration and worship are involved as well.

But why could such sacrifices atone? As Elliott notes, sacrifices per se, apart from underlying spiritual motivation, could not bring atonement.

Jeremiah's complaints against sacrifice (Jer. 7:21-26) are to be interpreted not as teaching that sacrifice and the sacrificial system have no value, but that without a repentant and obedient heart, the offering of a sacrifice is worthless from the standpoint of atonement.[36] God never has been and never will be satisfied with mere ritual.

The relation between the sacrifice and the sacrificer. Again, we find varying interpretations. This is especially true in the case of those sacrifices given in order to make atonement for sin. Vos outlines three basic theories in relation to the matter of the offerer's relation to the offering. First, he outlines what might be called the "no theory" theory. According to this view, held by many of the Wellhausen school of criticism, neither the Old Testament in general nor the law in particular present any coherent, consistent theory of sacrifice.[37] The second view is what Vos calls the purely symbolical theory. According to this theory, the process of sacrifice portrays certain things that must be done to the offerer and will be done. Consequently, this view holds that what must take place is entirely internal or subjective to man. As Vos states, this interpretation of the sacrifices sees them much along the same lines as do the moral and governmental theories of the atonement in relation to Christ's sacrifice.[38] The final theory is the symbolico-vicarious theory. In comparing it to the purely symbolic theory, Vos writes:

> If the latter assumes that the further steps continue to portray what will be done within man to modify this, the symbolico-vicarious theory presupposes the recognition by ritual itself that nothing can be done in man himself with the proper effect, and that, therefore, a substitute must take his place. All the successive acts of the ritual apply to this substitute, not to the offerer. It becomes something done, to be sure, for the benefit of the offerer, but done outside of him. It will thus be seen, that the objectivity and the vicariousness of the process go together. On the same principle adoption of the purely symbolical theory carries with itself exclusion of the vicarious element and of the objectivity.[39]

The third of these theories is clearly supported by such passages as Genesis 22:13; Leviticus 1:4; 16:21-22; 17:11; 19:20, 21; and Numbers 6:11. In spite of such evidence, however, Gerrish claims that the substitution theory cannot be upheld. What is clear, according to Gerrish, is that "the offering is one with which the worshipper can by faith *identify himself*, not so much an offering which bears his punishment *in his stead*."[40] Thus, Gerrish holds that the theory presented is representative, not substitutionary. Although it is true that the offerer is identifying himself with the sacrifice, it would also seem clear that the sacrifice is given in his place. Such passages as those mentioned above would seem to confirm this point.

The Old Testament teaching on sacrifices seems to indicate that the sacrifices included four basic functions or usages.

First, the sacrifices served a governmental or theocratic function. (Obviously, before the time of Moses no such function was served.) This function corresponds to the civil part of the law. Under the Mosaic system, the Israelite was related to God by physical birth as a Jew through the theocracy. God was the ruler in Israel. Even when Israel had kings or judges, God was still the ultimate ruler. Consequently, when a person sinned, such sin affected not only his relation to the one who saved him (God), but also to the one who was the ruler in Israel (God). Thus, sin was a governmental as well as a spiritual matter. As a result, the purpose of offering was not merely to restore one's relationship with his God, but to insure his right standing within the theocracy. The kinds of sacrifices that were most relevant to this were the sin, guilt, and trespass offerings. In addition, sacrifices seem on at least two occasions to have played a "political function" in that they were offered as the country prepared for or was in the midst of a war (1 Sam. 7:9ff.; 13:8ff.). The type of sacrifices most relevant to this were those not used specifically for atoning for sin (the broad category of sacrifices that Payne calls sweet savor sacrifices). If someone committed a sin that became a civil issue, he could be restored to his rightful place theocratically or governmentally by bringing sacrifices. However, by bringing such sacrifices, he did not automatically give indication of spiritual salvation or restoration at all. His sacrifice, if done without repentance toward God, might meet the external requirements for restoration to the community, but it need not be anything more. It might serve a purely civil function. Consequently, the theocratic or governmental use of the sacrifices carried no particular soteriological implications and no particular relationship to the sacrifice of Christ, other than a typological one.

A second function of the sacrifices in the Old Testament was a typological function. Sacrifices at all times during the Old Testament had this function. Hebrews 10:1, speaking of the Mosaic law and its sacrifices, says that the law is not the image (εἰκων, *eikōn*), that is, the exact representation, of what was to come, but it was a shadow (σκιά, *skia*) of it. In contrasting the meaning of the two words Wescott writes:

> The words contain one of the very few illustrations which are taken from art in the N.T. The 'shadow' is the dark outlined figure cast by the

> object—as in the legend of the origin of the bas-relief—contrasted with the complete representation [εἰκων, *eikōn*] produced by the help of colour and solid mass.[41]

Bringing meaning of the words out of the realm of art and into the context of our discussion, we can see how the figure of the Old Testament sacrifices being a shadow actually carries the idea of their being a foreshadowing of something to come. Given this kind of language, the writer of Hebrews seems to be stating that the Old Testament sacrifices were a type of what was to come in Christ's sacrifice.

It is important to distinguish between the typological truth present in the Old Testament sacrifices and the degree of understanding of the typological truth possessed by the Old Testament believer. Even though it must be granted that sacrifices from the time of Adam prefigured the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, it is moot as to how many people during Old Testament times understood all of this. As revelation progressed, more information was given so that in the sacrifices one could discern a prefiguring of a Messiah who would be sacrificed, even if no one (unlikely) in fact ever did fully understand that typology. The point is that although the Old Testament sacrifices were invested with typological significance, there is no warrant to say that the individual by bringing such sacrifices was showing that he placed his faith and trust in Jesus Christ, or even necessarily in a coming Messiah, for salvation. He may have understood that they pointed to a Messiah. However, from the standpoint of what God had revealed, as I have argued throughout, it seems most difficult to accept the notion that the Old Testament believer perceived that the sacrifices pointed to Jesus of Nazareth. The second point in regard to the typological function of the sacrifices is that even though they foreshadowed Christ's sacrifice by type, the typological nature per se of the sacrifices neither saved nor cleansed anyone. In other words, the typological function of the sacrifices was just that, typological; it was not soteriological.

A third function of the sacrifices was their role in worship. Obviously, by bringing a sacrifice for atonement (a non-sweet-savor sacrifice) and thereby agreeing with God's revealed means for handling sin, the believer was performing an act that brought glory to God. However, those sacrifices (sweet-savor sacrifices) that were not brought in order to secure atonement for sin, seem to be involved in the act of simply worshiping one's God (Lev. 2:2, 9—grain offering; Lev. 3—peace offering; 1 Sam. 1:3—example of an occasion on which worship and sacrifice are connected). Obviously, such sacrifices did not necessarily have any soteriological function. As to their relationship to Christ's sacrifice, Payne has sketched some of the ways in which these sacrifices have foreshadowed Christ and the believer's relation to Him.[42]

A fourth function of the sacrifices was their role in soteriology, or their soteriological function. In regard to this matter, there are many pitfalls to be avoided. First, the sacrificial system in the Old Testament has a relation to the initial reception of salvation (what in New Testament terminology would be referred to as the point of justification), but it is not what many might think it is. It is clear that merely performing sacrifices never saved anyone. In fact, even if the sacrifices were offered in faith with a repentant heart, the public offering aspect of the sacrifice itself did not give the offerer salvation. As we have already seen, the sacrifices were part of the ceremonial aspect of the law. As Paul says in Romans 3:20, no one is justified by doing the works of the law. If the sacrifices *qua* sacrifices did not justify (whether given with a repentant heart or not), what, then, was their relation to a person coming to salvation? In accepting the God of Israel for personal salvation, the believer was not committing himself to the sacrifices for salvation, but to the God who had revealed that such sacrifices were to be the means of handling sin. The natural *outworking* of such saving faith in God was the performance of the sacrifices in believing faith, since God had said that He would cleanse the sin of the one who brought such sacrifices.

Although the Old Testament sacrifices had a relation to justification, their main function, soteriologically speaking, was in the sanctification process. Certainly, the sacrifices that were brought in worship of God or in consecration of the individual (sweet-savor sacrifices) would strengthen the believer's relationship with God. However, offering sacrifices in believing faith also brought cleansing from sin and the restoration of fellowship with God. Performing substitutionary and expiatory sacrifices seems to be more involved with cleansing the sin of a believer than with bringing a person to salvation. Job, when he offered a sacrifice for cleansing (Job 42:7-9), was obviously saved at the time he gave the sacrifice (the Old Testament abounds with such examples). The expiatory sacrifices, then, seem to be primarily involved with the sanctification process rather than having a soteriological function.

Again, we must recognize that merely giving sacrifices, without a repentant heart and a believing attitude that God would forgive, would not suffice to atone (Ps. 40:6-10; 51:10, 16ff.; Isa. 1:11-15; Micah 6:6-8). The case of Job is most helpful in this respect as well. Before Job offered the sacrifice, he had already repented of his sin in dust and ashes. A comparison of sanctification in the Old and New Testaments would show that when the New Testament believer sins, in order to restore fellowship with the Lord he must receive cleansing from the sin. In order to continue

to grow, he must confess his sin in believing faith that on the basis of Christ's sacrifice God will cleanse him from sin (1 John 1:9). The Old Testament believer also confessed his sin, but in addition, he brought in believing faith a sacrifice, since God had revealed that sin would be handled in that way. Before Christ's sacrifice, the public offering had to accompany the repentance of the believer. Once the all-sufficient sacrifice of Christ had been made, the repentant believer need not give another sacrifice in order to have cleansing.

When sacrifices were presented with repentant faith, did the offerer actually receive forgiveness at that time? The Old Testament clearly teaches that sacrifices brought in repentant faith did result in God's forgiveness being granted, as seen in Leviticus 1:4; 4:26-31; 16:20-22; 17:11; Psalms 25, 32, 51, 103, 130; Isaiah 1:18; Ezekiel 18:22 in the Old Testament and Hebrews 9:13 in the New Testament.[43] This stands in clear opposition to the idea that the Old Testament teaches that unintentional sins could be atoned for and forgiven, whereas intentional sins (sins committed "with a high hand") could not be forgiven.[44] Careful study of the Old Testament does not support such a claim. Kaiser put the matter well when he wrote:

> How many sins could be atoned by such a system in Israel? All sins of weakness or rashness were capable of being atoned whether they were done knowingly or unwittingly. Leviticus specifically affirmed that the trespass offering was for sins such as lying, theft, fraud, perjury, or debauchery (Lev. 6:1-7). And on the great day of Atonement (Yom Kippur), "all" the sins of "all" Israel of "all" who had truly repented ("afflicted their souls" [Lev. 16:16, 21, 29, 31]) were forgiven. Indeed the most persistent phrase in the Levitical sacrificial instructions was the assurance: "And he shall be forgiven" (Lev. 1:4; 4:20, 26, 31, 35; 5:10, 16; 16:20-22). Therefore, the old but false distinction between witting, i.e., "sins done with a high hand," and unwitting, i.e., as it was explained, sins done in ignorance of what the law said on the matter, was unwarranted. The unwitting sins בִּשְׁגָגָה (*bish^{e}gāgâh*), or better still, sins "in error," involved all sin which sprang from the weakness of flesh and blood. But the sin of Numbers 15:27-36, the sin of a "high hand," בְּיָד רָמָה (*b^{e}yād rāmâ*), was plainly that of rebellion against God and His Word. . . . This is what the NT calls blasphemy against the Holy Spirit or the unpardonable sin. It was high treason and revolt against God with the upraised, clenched fist: a picket against heaven! But this was not to be put in the same class as sins of murder, adultery, or the like. Treason or blasphemy against God was much more serious. Rather, it attacked God Himself.[45]

Israel repeatedly rebelled against God and went after strange gods. Such sin certainly was not unintentional. Nonetheless, the constant message of the prophets to the people is to return unto the Lord. Why would God urge the people to return to Himself for forgiveness and restoration if atonement for their sin was an impossibility?[46]

Thus we see that the sacrificial system was useful in the sanctification process, and that the one who offered sacrifices in believing faith did receive forgiveness. As a matter of fact, at that time offering sacrifices was crucial to retaining a right relationship with God. As Hobart Freeman has so aptly written:

> . . . sacrifice was not to the Hebrew some crude, temporary, and merely typical institution, nor a substitute for that dispensation until better things were provided by revelation, but as will be shown, *sacrifice was then the only sufficient means of remaining in harmonious relation to God. It was adequate for the period in which God intended it should serve.* This is not the same as saying Levitical sacrifice was on an equal with the sacrifice of Christ, nor that the blood of bulls and goats could, from God's side, take away sins: but it is recognizing the reality of the divine institution of Mosaic worship, and looking, as too often Old Testament interpreters fail to do, at sacrifice from the viewpoint of the Hebrew in the Old Testament dispensation. Sacrifice, to the pious Hebrew, was not something unimportant, or simply a perfunctory ritual, but it was an important element in his *moral obedience to the revealed will of God.*[47]

So, it can be demonstrated that Old Testament sacrifices did result in forgiveness of sin. Someone might then suggest, "Let's continue the sacrificial system now. It would suffice for sin, wouldn't it? In fact, it's as efficacious as Christ's sacrifice, isn't it?" The answer is that although sacrifices were once the means for maintaining a harmonious relation to God, continuing such sacrifices would mistake the relation of those sacrifices to Christ's sacrifice and miss the importance of Christ's sacrifice. The answers to the imagined questions show something of the soteriological relation of Old Testament sacrifices to Christ's sacrifice.

There are several important aspects to the relation of the Old Testament sacrifices to Christ's sacrifice. First, Scripture is very clear that the system of the law, including the sacrifices, is superceded and done away with by the sacrifice of Christ (cf. Gal. 3:24-25; the book of Hebrews). Second, as we have seen, Old Testament sacrifices actually covered sin and assured the believer of cleansing and forgiveness. However, it was the sacrifice of Christ that actually once and for all removed the sin (Heb.

9:13; 10:4, 11-14). If Old Testament sacrifices had actually made a full and final objective payment for sins so as to remove them totally, then it could not be said that Christ's sacrifice paid for such sin. Of course, that would contradict the fact that Scripture teaches that Christ's sacrifice did pay for the sins of all men (Heb. 2:9; 7:27; 10:10; Rom. 6:10; 1 Pet. 3:18). In fact, such a position would even contradict a passage in the Old Testament itself, i.e., Isaiah 53:6. If all sins in the Old Testament economy are completely removed by animal sacrifice, then it makes no sense for an Old Testament prophet to write that the Lord laid on Him (the Messiah) the iniquity of us all. Even if one refused to interpret the passage messianically and chose to see it fulfilled in Israel, for example (that is, one claims that "him" is Israel), the passage still would make no sense if sin in the Old Testament were ultimately being removed by animal sacrifice. Because Christ's sacrifice was not the first act in human history does not mean that its efficacy does not extend to every sinful act of history. Old Testament sacrifices were, so to speak, the down payment for sin, whereas Christ's sacrifice was the full and final payment. Why, once the sacrifice of Christ pays the debt in full owed for sin, continue to make "down payments" on sin? The sacrificial system must be done away with.

The Old Testament sacrifices pointed to (typological function) the sacrifice of Christ, which would fully handle sin (even if the Jew did not understand the typology of the sacrifices). On the ground of His sacrifice to which the Old Testament sacrifices pointed, the Old Testament believer who in repentant faith brought a sacrifice could be assured that God would cover, cleanse, and forgive such sin (soteriological function). But the objective deed, from God's standpoint, that would completely pay for and remove sin was only offered on Calvary.

Another reason that Old Testament sacrifices are not to be continued is that we can see that the scope of the respective sacrifices greatly differs. Under the Old Testament system, the general rule was that when a sacrifice for sin was made, sin was actually forgiven, but only the sin for which the sacrifice was made was expiated. Of course, the sacrifice made on the Day of Atonement covered more than just one sin, but even so, it did not cover all sin of all time. On the contrary, the word of Scripture in regard to Christ's sacrifice is that it is all-inclusive, once for all, never to be repeated (Heb. 10:12, 14). Certainly, if Christ's one sacrifice pays for all sin, there is no need to go back to Old Testament sacrifices. What could they possibly add, since Christ's sacrifice already provides atonement for *all* sin?

There are many misunderstandings and seeming contradictions about the subject of Old Testament sacrifices. Someone might state that everything that has been said is contradicted by Hebrews 10:4: "It is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins." Moreover, the problem seems to become more complicated by Hebrews 9:13, which indicates that the blood of bulls and goats did cleanse from sin. There seems to be a tremendous contradiction between the two passages as well as with the content of the preceding discussion. The seriousness of the problem can be seen in that one could incorrectly assume that Hebrews 10:4 means that no one in the Old Testament period was actually saved, that Old Testament believers had to await the sacrifice of Christ before their faith was actually "validated," when they became saved (even though dead), or that there really was no forgiveness of sin when it was repented of. These problems can be resolved by a proper understanding of the verses and concepts involved.

First, Hebrews 9:13 does not relate to internal cleansing and forgiveness from sin. As Westcott notes, the verse is actually referring to "the ceremonial purity which enabled the Jew to enjoy the full privileges of his covenant worship and fellowship with the external Church of God."[48] With the exception of the comments about the "Church of God" I find myself in full agreement. In fact, verse 14 contrasts Christ's sacrifice with that of bulls and goats and shows that His sacrifice gives internal cleansing, whereas that of bulls and goats is, according to verse 13, relevant to external cleansing (ceremonial cleansing). Of course, Hebrews 10:1-4, refers primarily, if not exclusively, to internal cleansing from sin. Therefore, Hebrews 9:13 and 10:1-4 cannot be in contradiction, because they are not referring to the same kind of cleansing for the same purpose.

Though Hebrews 9:13 does not refer to internal cleansing from sin, it is incorrect to assume that sacrifices in the Old Testament were relevant to ceremonial cleansing only, and thus did not really bring forgiveness of sin. We have already examined many passages from the Old Testament that indicate there was internal cleansing and forgiveness from sin. Moreover, Hebrews 10:4 seems to be talking in its context not about external, ceremonial matters, but internal matters. But, by resolving the apparent contradiction between Hebrews 9:13 and 10:4, we have not removed the problem altogether.

A final resolution to this difficulty seems to be possible only in the light of two crucial distinctions. The first is the distinction between the provision of atonement (the objective work of God) and the application of the atonement (the subjective work of God). The second is the distinction between the forgiveness and the removal of sin. In regard to the first distinction, in order for a person to be saved, two conditions are necessary: (1) someone must provide and pay for the basis of that salvation, and (2) someone must take the salvation that has been purchased and apply it to the sinner in need of salvation. The former aspect, providing and paying

for the salvation is called the objective aspect of God's atoning work. It is what He had to do as a basis for offering and applying salvation to any specific person. It is a work that is performed externally to all subjects (persons), and in that respect it is called "objective." When the objective work has been performed, salvation is potentially available to the sinner. The basis for salvation has been provided, so that it is possible to be saved. However, just because salvation is provided does not mean that anyone is in fact saved. The actualization of that salvation in the life of the individual can only come when God has applied that salvation to the person. Since this aspect of salvation is done within the life of the person (subject), it is called the subjective aspect of salvation.

In regard to the difference between removal of sin and forgiveness of sin, we can say, using the terminology set forth above, that the removal of sin refers to the payment for sin, the objective aspect of salvation. On the other hand, forgiveness comes when God applies salvation to the subject or cleanses him from sin. Thus, it refers to the subjective side of salvation. That there is a genuine distinction should be clear in that one can objectively pay for sin's removal even if no one applies that salvation to himself, whereas no one's sins are actually forgiven until he subjectively applies what has been provided for him objectively. Moreover, it is possible to cover (through partial objective payment via animal sacrifice) and forgive a sin without completely objectively paying for and removing it.

With those two distinctions in mind, we can resolve our problem. In Hebrews 10:4 the writer states that the blood of bulls and goats cannot remove sin; it does not state that when such sacrifices were given, there was no forgiveness. The testimony of the Old Testament is that there was forgiveness when sacrifices were given in faith. The point, then, must be that mere animal sacrifices, though acts external (objective) to the sinner, could never from God's perspective take care of the objective dimensions of the atonement. Only Christ's objective work could provide the full and final payment for salvation from sin and make it potentially available (we can now see better why the sacrifice of Christ had to be at all times the objective basis, or ground, for salvation). Thus, Old Testament sacrifices could only in type foreshadow His sacrifice. They could not pay for sin so as to remove it; only the sacrifice of Christ could do that. However, that did not mean that the sacrifices were totally worthless, for there was still the subjective side of salvation (in addition, the sacrifices gave a "down payment" on sin—objective function), that is, the need for application of the atonement and, in particular, for forgiveness. On the basis of the believer's trust in the revealed content for faith for his particular age, God could and did subjectively apply salvation and forgiveness to the repentant sinner. Thus, the problem can be resolved. When

the objective work of a sacrifice was given, it could not fully and finally pay for sin (the provision of atonement). Hebrews 10:4 is upheld. Nonetheless, since it had been given in faith and obedience to what God had revealed for that age, God could and did grant the sinner forgiveness (subjective side of salvation) on the ultimate grounds of Christ's sacrifice, which would someday be given. All the Old Testament comments about forgiveness of sin can be upheld. In fact, it would seem that this resolution does the most justice to all the verses involved. We do not conclude that Old Testament sacrifices had the same amount or kind of efficacy as did the sacrifice of Christ, but neither do we derive the unwarranted conclusion that during Old Testament times no one was saved or no one's sins were cleansed and forgiven.[49]

This study, then, has investigated some key issues pertaining to the topic of salvation in the Old Testament. As we reflect upon the unity and the diversity within God's gracious plan of salvation for all time, we can only repeat what Paul said as he reflected on the mercy of God, "Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways! . . . For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen" (Rom. 11:33, 36).

NOTES

1. James K. Zink, "Salvation in the Old Testament: A Central Theme," *Encounter* 25 (Autumn 1964):407. Zink explains that the term "salvation" has three basic meanings in the Old Testament: (1) national salvation in the sense of protection from foes and deliverance from exile, (2) individual salvation from the results of sin, deliverance from enemies, disease, and trouble, and (3) eschatological salvation from sin issuing in a richer life in communion with God in the present world and in the afterlife.
2. Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology,* (London: James Clarke, 1960), 2:367.
3. J. Barton Payne, *The Theology of the Older Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1962), p. 241. See also pp. 72-74.
4. Daniel P. Fuller, "The Hermeneutics of Dispensationalism" (Th.D. diss., Northern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1957), pp. 144-45. See also pp. 151 and 144-81.
5. Payne, pp. 467-68. See also J. Barton Payne, *The Imminent Appearing of Christ* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1962), pp. 31-32, for a more blatant statement on this issue.
6. C. I. Scofield, ed., *Scofield Reference Bible* (New York: Oxford U. Press, 1945), p. 1115.
7. Ibid., p. 1245.
8. Fuller, pp. 153ff.
9. Charles C. Ryrie, *Dispensationalism Today* (Chicago: Moody, 1965), pp. 113-16.

10. E. Schuyler English, ed., *New Scofield Reference Bible* (New York: Oxford U. Press, 1967), p. 1124.
11. Ryrie, pp. 44-46.
12. George E. Ladd, "Historic Premillennialism," in *The Meaning of the Millennium: Four Views,* ed. Robert G. Clouse (Downers Grove, Ill.: Inter-Varsity, 1977), pp. 20-21, 27.
13. Gustav F. Oehler, *Theology of the Old Testament,* reprint (Minneapolis: Klock & Klock, 1978) p. 459.
14. Hodge, p. 370.
15. Ibid., pp. 371-72. See also Payne, *Theology of the Older Testament,* p. 241, and Hodge, p. 372, who writes, "The Apostle proves that the specific promise which was the object of the faith of the patriarch was the promise of redemption through Christ. That promise they were required to believe; and that the true people of God did believe."
16. Payne, *Imminent Appearing,* p. 128.
17. The basic format is suggested in Ryrie, pp. 123-26. However, I am modifying and amplifying it. The fifth element in this series and some aspects of its amplification were suggested to me by Paul D. Feinberg.
18. Snaith points out that in the Old Testament God is portrayed as the savior; see Norman H. Snaith, *The Distinctive Ideas of the Old Testament* (New York: Schocken, 1975), pp. 85-86. For the concept of God as the object of faith, see also Henry McKeating, "Divine Forgiveness in the Psalms," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 18 (March 1965):78.
19. Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., *Toward an Old Testament Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978), pp. 20-40. Kaiser elaborates this theme throughout the book.
20. God's ethical standards, of course, run throughout the whole Old Testament, but they give man an awareness of God's standards and man's own failure. They are not per se part of the content to be believed as one trusts God for salvation.
21. Kaiser, pp. 114-18.
22. Oehler, p. 462.
23. I shall elaborate this point in the following portion of the chapter.
24. It would also be appropriate to note that in the New Testament the eternal destiny of the believer is stated much more clearly than in the Old Testament. Redemption of the whole person, including his body, and glorification of the believer indeed are stresses in the New Testament that are seldom mentioned in the Old Testament. This does not mean, though, that Old Testament believers are not to be resurrected and glorified. This is simply to point out a difference in amount and content of information available in the Old Testament as opposed to the New Testament, not a difference in the final status of the Old Testament saint.
25. Payne, *Theology of the Older Testament,* p. 386.
26. Ibid.
27. Oehler, p. 288.
28. For discussions of the distinctions see Oehler, pp. 300-303; Payne, *Theology of the Older Testament,* pp. 386ff.; Norman H. Snaith, "The Sin-Offering and the Guilt-Offering," *Vetus Testamentum* 15 (January 1965); and Geerhardus Vos, *Biblical Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1968), pp. 188-89.
29. Oehler, p. 263.

30. Ibid.
31. Payne, *Theology of the Older Testament,* p. 382.
32. Geerhardus Vos, *Biblical Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1968), p. 173.
33. Payne, *Theology of the Older Testament,* pp. 382-83.
34. Ibid., p. 383.
35. Ibid.
36. Ralph H. Elliott, "Atonement in the Old Testament," *Review and Expositor* 59 (January 1962):15.
37. Vos, p. 177.
38. Ibid., pp. 176-77.
39. Ibid., p. 177.
40. Brian A. Gerrish, "Atonement and 'Saving Faith'," *Theology Today* 17 (July 1960):188.
41. B. F. Westcott, *The Epistle to the Hebrews* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1967), p. 304.
42. Payne, *Theology of the Older Testament,* pp. 385-88.
43. See McKeating article. See also Elliott, p. 25, on the idea of the suffering servant's sacrifice bringing forgiveness.
44. See Hobart Freeman, "The Problem of Efficacy of Old Testament Sacrifices," *Bulletin of Evangelical Theological Society* 5 (1962):74 for explanation of three views concerning the efficacy of Old Testament sacrifices.
45. Kaiser, pp. 117-18.
46. Snaith, "Distinctive Ideas," pp. 84-85. Snaith shows that God forgives in spite of Israel's sin of rebellion.
47. Freeman, p. 73.
48. Westcott, p. 261. See also p. 260.
49. I was greatly aided in coming to my resolution of this problem by the comments of Kaiser, p. 118, and Freeman, pp. 76-77.

Final Exam Study Questions

1. **Format**: The online final exam has various types of questions: multiple-choice, sentence fill-ins, chart completion and analysis, and (probably) essays. You have two hours for it.

2. **Content:** The areas addressed may include the following:

   a) The exam covers only the class notes. It will NOT cover class readings from Arnold/Beyer and other readings as these have already been tested on the quizzes.

   b) Make sure you have a grasp of the overall big picture of OT Backgrounds. Being able to walk yourself through the Table of Contents should help.

   c) Be familiar with the basic biblical theology (kingdom view, pp. 57-59) and tenants/timing of the major covenants (Abrahamic, Mosaic, Land, Davidic, New) on the following summary pages:

37-40	Ancient covenants that parallel biblical covenants
40-46	The Abrahamic Covenant and its fulfillment
50	Contrasting the Abrahamic & Mosaic Covenants
51	Nature & relationship of the Abrahamic to other covenants
52	Kingdom & covenants timeline

   d) Know the following for each of the pagan people groups:

   Location (see p. 15)
   Identity (see p. 17)
   Major deity (pp. 160-61)
   Period when they were prominent and/or influencing Israel
   Significance, especially as they relate to Israel

   e) Know where to put the key ANE geographical locations of pagan peoples (see above), rivers, and bodies of water on pages 15 and 17 on "The Old Testament World" map (p. 16) as well as the location of Israel's tribes (p. 21). The "Travel in Israel" map (p. 20) will also help you grasp the significance of OT events.

   f) Know the geographical stages of Jerusalem (p. 27) and Israel's regions (p. 18)

   g) Know the basic dates of chronology: creation, exodus, division and fall of kingdoms, etc. (pp. 60, 66, 70a-b).

   h) Identify the key pagan literature that parallels Scripture (p. 188).

   i) Know how archaeology has influenced and supported the study of Scripture, including basic periods of archaeology (pp. 200-202, 206-208).

   j) Know the nature of pagan deities (p. 162) and some differences between pagan religion and Judaism (p. 185).

   k) Review your quizzes to refresh your memory on key background issues.

   l) Pray that you will retain your learning to help others into a closer walk with God.