



# The Berean Voice

Hope of Israel Ministries (Church of YEHOVAH)

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## Daniel's "70 Weeks" -- *When Do They Begin and End?*

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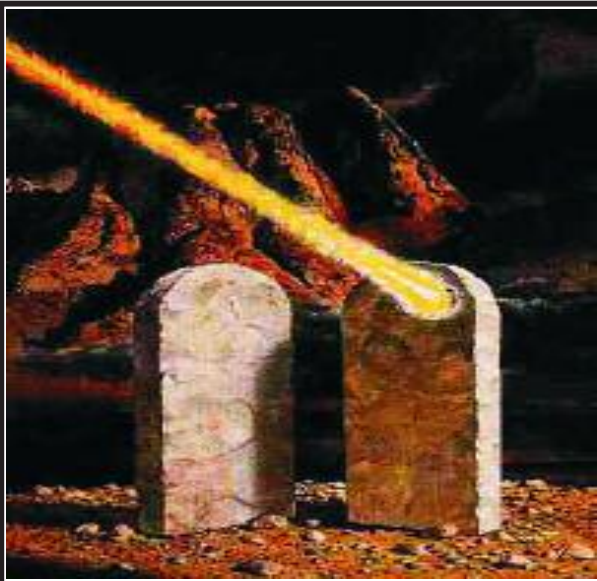
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***Hope of Israel Ministries --***  
**Preparing the Way for the**  
**Return of YEHOUAH God**  
**and His Messiah!**

## **Daniel the Prophet**

In the Old Testament, Daniel the prophet was given *the exact measure of time* from an event clearly marked in his own day to *the coming of the Messiah*, and to *his being "cut off."* Moreover, in this connection, YEHOUAH God revealed to Daniel the marvellous things that were to be accomplished through the death of the Messiah — and the overwhelming judgments that were to fall upon the city of Jerusalem, the Temple and the people.

The decree, which was to bring the captivity of the Jews to an end and authorize them to rebuild Jerusalem and the Temple, was to be the starting point of the "determined" period of seventy sevens of years. The epoch-making decree of Cyrus, in the first year of his reign as sole king, was both the termination of the 70 years captivity and also the starting point for the prophetic period of 70 sevens.

Unfortunately, the expositors and chronologers have turned aside from YEHOUAH's Word and have accepted a defective chronology based on pagan traditions — claiming the decree was issued by Artaxerxes instead of Cyrus.

Some claim that the building of Jerusalem is not expressly mentioned in Ezra 1:1-4 — however Ezra does not quote the entire decree, and the city is not specifically mentioned. Nonetheless, he makes it perfectly clear that this was the "word to restore and to build Jerusalem."

The most important feature of the revelation to Daniel was the precise measure of time (69 sevens, or 483 years) "to Messiah, the Prince; and the time when the Messiah was to be "cut off and have nothing." This course of time was to run from Cyrus' decree until the Messiah's anointing and baptism in the Jordan river.

— John D. Keyser

# The *Mount of Olives* in YEHOVAH God's Plan

For some strange reason the Christian Church of the first few centuries after the Messiah held a location on the Mount of Olives in special regard. Christians visiting Jerusalem always gravitated to this site. Also, when the Jewish authorities of the early Islamic period returned to Jerusalem, they went directly to the Mount of Olives. What was it that drew these diverse peoples to this spot? What about the strange tradition of Adam's skull being associated with this mountain to the east of Jerusalem?

**John D. Keyser**

A study of the Bible will quickly reveal that the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem is a key site in both the Old and New Testaments. From the time of our first ancestor Adam, the summit of this mount to the east of the old city was ordained as a place of worship of the Most High God YEHOVAH. While the Israelites themselves desecrated this holy place with idols of false gods down through their history, YEHOVAH never forgot His promise of a Messiah. And, as we shall see, the Mount of Olives is the FOCAL POINT in the fulfillment of YEHOVAH's redemptive plan for all humankind.

## *The First Sacrificial Altar*

According to *The Torah Anthology*, translated by Rabbi Aryeh Kaplan, Adam constructed the first sacrificial altar to YEHOVAH God. Following this, the same altar was successively rebuilt by Abel, Noah and Abraham (*ibid.*, Vol. 1, pp. 287, 375; Vol 2, p. 332). In the passages in Genesis (4:4; 8:20; 22:9) that deal with this subject, the Hebrew word, *banah*, has been translated "built" in most of the English versions of the Bible. However, *The New Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible* (#1129) indicates that this word may also be translated as "rebuilt" or "restored" -- which, in fact, more accurately describes what really took place.

Now WHERE was this sacrificial altar located and WHY was it so important to YEHOVAH that it be maintained as the site of sin sacrifice? It's only when we understand the significance of this altar in regard to YEHOVAH's Master Plan that we can hope to answer these questions. This understanding will also help lead us to an even DEEPER knowledge and appreciation for the extraordinary precision and beauty of YEHOVAH's redemptive plan for each and every one of us.

The majority of Jewish scholars believe that this particular altar was situated on Mount Moriah from the time of Adam down to Abraham. However, it is quite apparent that TWO

SEPARATE ALTARS existed and must be clearly differentiated. One altar is mentioned in Genesis 12 –

And he [Abram] moved from there to the mountain *east of Bethel*, and he pitched his tent with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east; there HE BUILT AN ALTAR to the LORD [YEHOVAH] and called on the name of YEHOVAH (verse 8).

In order to accurately determine the location of these two altars, we must first locate the “Bethel” mentioned in this passage. Complicating the issue is the fact that the name “Bethel” was attached to *two* separate sites mentioned in the Bible. The later Bethel -- 12 miles north of Jerusalem -- was the site of a rival sanctuary established at time of the divided kingdom -- see I Kings 12:27-29. However, *The Encyclopedia of Jewish Symbols*, by Ellen Frankel and Betty Teutsch, shows that the original Bethel should be identified with Mount Moriah in Jerusalem.

Mount Moriah is profoundly significant in YEHOVAH's plan. Here, YEHOVAH God's Shekinah Glory fellowshipped with Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. Here, too, the Temple was built that housed YEHOVAH's Shekinah Glory in the Holy of Holies. Without a doubt, Mount Moriah is of primary importance in YEHOVAH's prophetic work.

And, as we shall see, the Mount of Olives is equally important. From the scripture just mentioned, it can be seen that Abram built an altar EAST OF MOUNT MORIAH (Bethel). The mountain opposite Moriah is the Mount of Olives -- and it was here that Adam built an altar of sin sacrifice. This line of reasoning is consistent with the fact that the Mount of Olives became the permanent site for the burning of all sin sacrifices and the spot where the most holy sin sacrifice of all, the RED HEIFER, was offered up. And here, too, the Messiah will be a king and priest to his Father YEHOVAH God during the Millennial Kingdom!

It also fits the pattern of the Garden of Eden in that the Tree of Life was on Mount Moriah and Adam was expelled EAST of the garden. Therefore, the sacrificial altar must have been constructed on the Mount of Olives. *The Torah Anthology* confirms that the altar of sin sacrifice was located in Jerusalem opposite the “Throne of Glory” (Vol. 2, p. 332). The “Throne of Glory,” of course, refers to the Holy of Holies in the Temple where YEHOVAH's Shekinah Glory resided. Since the Temple entrance was located on its EASTERN SIDE, “opposite the Holy of Holies,” this clearly indicates the Mount of Olives. Mark 13:3 also shows this -- “Now as He [the Messiah] sat on the Mount of Olives OPPOSITE THE TEMPLE....”

### *The Two Altar Sites*

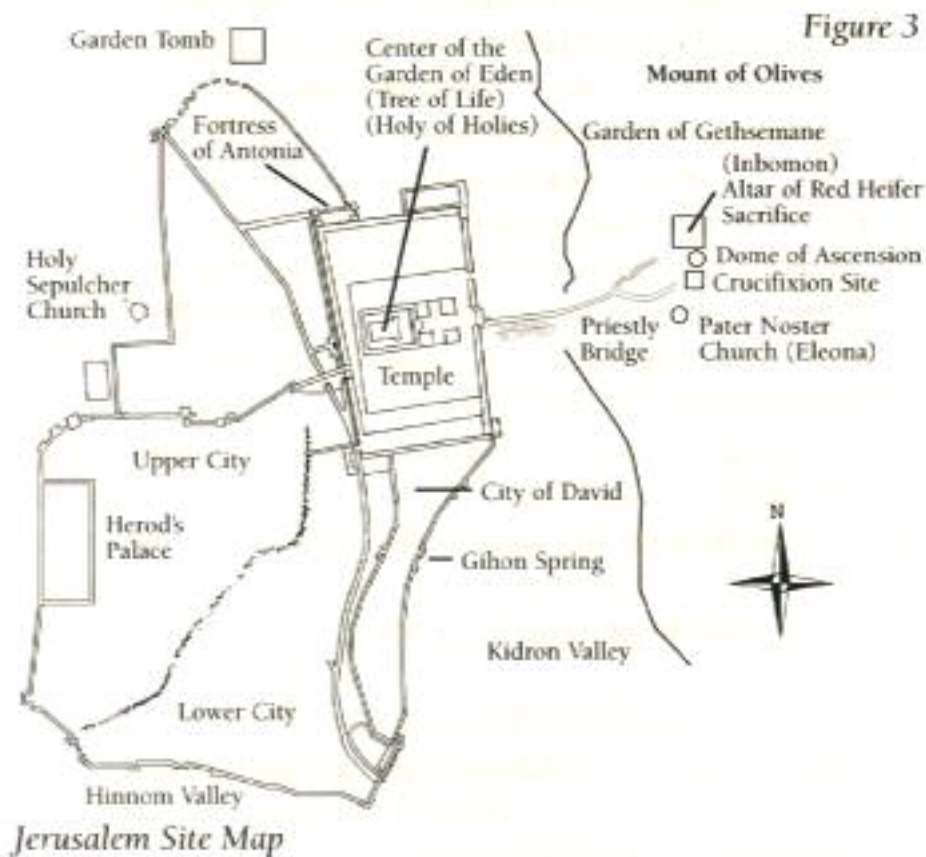
In I Chronicles and II Samuel we find evidence to support the idea that there was *two* separate and distinct -- yet closely associated -- altars. Notice I Chronicles 21, where David is instructed by “the angel of YEHOVAH” to build an altar to YEHOVAH on the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite –

Then the angel of YEHOVAH commanded Gad to say to David that David should go and erect an ALTAR to YEHOVAH on the THRESHING FLOOR OF ORNAN THE JEBUSITE....(Verse 18)

Then David said to Ornan, “Grant me the place of this threshing floor, that I may build an ALTAR on it to YEHOVAH. You shall grant it to me at the full price, that the plague may be withdrawn from the people....(Verse 22)

So David gave ORNAN *six hundred shekels of gold* by weight for the place (Verse 25).

And David built there an ALTAR to YEHOVAH, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings, and called on YEHOVAH; and He answered him from heaven by fire on the *altar of burnt offering*.



This threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite, purchased by David for *600 shekels of gold* became the site for the Tabernacle; and eventually David’s son, Solomon, would replace the portable Tabernacle with the more permanent Temple on Mount Moriah -- see II Chronicles 3:1. Writes Peter A. Michas: “It is highly significant that gold was used to purchase this particular site because gold represents deity in the Bible. Indeed, the Divine Presence, as manifested by the Shekinah (Glory Cloud), dwelled in the Holy of Holies on top of Mount Moriah” (*The Rod of an Almond Tree in God’s Master Plan*, p.82).

However, as we will see, this was not the ONLY site that David was instructed to purchase for the express purpose of erecting an altar to YEHOVAH. According to II Samuel 24:

And Gad came that day to David and said to him, "Go up, erect an altar to YEHOVAH on THE THRESHING FLOOR OF ARAUNAH the Jebusite" (Verse 18).

Then Araunah said, "Why has my lord the king come to his servant?" And David said, "To buy the threshing floor from you, to build an altar to YEHOVAH, that the plague may be withdrawn from the people" (Verse 21).

Then the king said to Araunah, "No, but I will surely buy it from you for a price; nor will I offer burnt offerings to YEHOVAH my God with that which costs me nothing." So David bought the threshing floor and the oxen FOR FIFTY SHEKELS OF SILVER (Verse 24).

And David BUILT THERE AN ALTAR to YEHOVAH, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings. So YEHOVAH heeded the prayers for the land, and the plague was withdrawn from Israel (Verse 25).

It is clearly evident from these verses that the threshing floor of ARAUNAH (purchased for *50 shekels of silver*) is separate and distinct from the threshing floor of ORNAN, purchased for *600 shekels of gold*. The threshing floor of Araunah was located on the Mount of Olives; and the altar built by David was built on the same site where Abraham had offered his son Isaac.

This threshing floor on the Mount of Olives also became the site of the RED HEIFER SACRIFICE and the place where all sin sacrifices were burnt. Once again, there is a symbolic meaning to be found in the purchase price -- with regard to the Tabernacle, silver symbolized redemption. This was to become the site of the future redemption of all mankind in the sacrifice of the Messiah.

### *The Covenant with Abraham*

It is evident that Abraham returned to this altar on the Mount of Olives at the time YEHOVAH God made a covenant with him in Genesis 15. Notes Peter Michas: "This covenant (promise) was sealed by the blood sacrifice of animals and was symbolic of the greater covenant to come -- the covenant sealed by the blood sacrifice of Yeshua the Messiah that is available to all who put their trust in him. In making His covenant with Abraham, God [YEHOVAH] revealed significant details of His redemptive plan for humankind, including the PLACE where the ultimate sacrifice would take place" (*The Rod of an Almond Tree in God's Master Plan*, p. 83).

YEHOVAH God promised Abram that he would have a multitude of descendants and re-named him "Abraham" ("father of multitudes") to reflect this promise. To his elderly parents, Isaac was born in fulfillment of that promise. Years later, when Isaac was a young man, YEHOVAH called upon Abraham to return with Isaac to the place where He had made a covenant with Abraham. We read about this in Genesis 22:

And he [YEHOVAH] said, "Take now your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to THE LAND OF MORIAH, and offer him [Isaac] there as a burnt offering on **one of the mountains** of which I shall tell you."

Most scholars assume that Mount Moriah was the location YEHOVAH chose for this sacrifice. However, a close scrutiny of the passage above reveals that YEHOVAH instructed Abraham to go to the "land of Moriah" and that once there YEHOVAH would direct him to the appropriate mountain for the burnt sacrifice. YEHOVAH God first directed Abraham to the *land of Moriah* and then specifically guided him to the summit of the mountain to the east of Jerusalem that would later be known as the Mount of Olives.

In Genesis 22:4 we read that Abraham "saw the place from a distance" after a journey of three days. He and Isaac left behind the two young men who had accompanied them to this point and took the wood, fire and knife for the sacrifice. As they were walking to the sacrifice spot –

...Isaac spoke to Abraham his father and said, "My father!" And he said, "Here I am, my son." And he said, "Look, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?"

And Abraham said, "My son, YEHOVAH will provide for Himself the lamb for a burnt offering." And the two of them went together.

We see that Abraham showed total trust in YEHOVAH God. YEHOVAH had done the seemingly impossible and fulfilled His promise of a son when Abraham was 100 years old. YEHOVAH had also promised that Abraham's descendants would be as numerous as the stars in the sky. It is clearly evident that Abraham trusted YEHOVAH to fulfill this promise as well -- not necessarily knowing how. Perhaps he thought that YEHOVAH would resurrect Isaac -- or perhaps he trusted YEHOVAH to make another provision in this special circumstance.

At this time, according to *The Torah Anthology*, Isaac was no longer a child as is often depicted by theologians, but rather a young man in his thirties. Therefore, it is clear that he voluntarily allowed his father Abraham to bind him for the sacrifice. Isaac must have trusted YEHOVAH as much as Abraham. This scenario, in YEHOVAH's plan, foreshadowed the willing sacrifice of Yeshua the Messiah in accordance with his Father's will. It seems that even his approximate age was indicated.

Just at the time Abraham was about to plunge the knife into Isaac's chest, the angel of YEHOVAH called to him from heaven –

"Abraham, Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am" (Verse 11).

And He said, "Do not lay your hand on the lad, or do anything to him; for now I know that you fear YEHOVAH, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me" (Verse 12).

### ***The Place of Worship***

The first mention of the Mount of Olives by name in the Bible appears in the Old Testament where David escapes from Jerusalem when his son Absalom attempts to seize the throne. David had to flee the city for his life. The account in II Samuel 15:23 states that he "passed over" the brook

Kidron during his escape. Then, after crossing the Kidron Valley, David climbed the Mount of Olives.

It is interesting to realize that the only way David could “pass over” the Kidron Valley was by way of an arched stone bridge which connected the Temple Mount to the Mount of Olives. The *Mishna*, in Parah 3:6, mentions this bridge. A thousand years later the Messiah, the descendant of David, would also walk this same route “over” the Kidron Valley on a single bridge that was part of the Temple complex built by Herod. This arched stone bridge -- and the later one -- provided the only ritually clean path by which the priests could take sin offerings from the Tabernacle or Temple to the summit of the Mount of Olives -- the site of the sin sacrifice altar. According to Peter Michas, “the stone arch-over arch design of the bridge ensued that the priests were protected from ritual uncleanness, such as the remains of dead bodies [below].”



Marble plaque at the Monastery of St. Paul in Greece.  
Note skull at foot of cross

After crossing the Kidron bridge, David followed this pathway which ascended the Mount of Olives “to the summit where YEHOVAH was worshiped.” In II Samuel 15:32 the Hebrew words *ha rosh* translate in most Bibles as “the summit.” However, these words can also be translated as “the head” or “the skull” -- for a very good reason! Notice that the verses in question call this site “the Place of THE Head [or THE Skull] -- not “the Place of A Head [or A Skull] -- or heads or skulls plural! It is very definitely referring to a particular head or skull. While many people have conjectured, over the centuries, that this phrase indicates a geographical feature that *looks* like a skull or the top of a skull, the fact remains that it refers to a LITERAL and PARTICULAR skull!

We find in the book *The Cross in Tradition, History, and Art*, by William Wood Seymour, that “it was an early tradition that Christ was crucified IN THE SAME PLACE WHERE ADAM WAS BURIED. S. Chrysostom alludes to it: ‘Some say that Adam died there, and there lieth, and that Jesus, in that place where death had reigned, there also set up the trophy’” (P. 99).

Tentzelius’ “Numial Treatise,” quoted in Southey’s *Omniana* (Vol. I, p. 281) records this amazing episode in ancient history: “The tree [of life], with the bones of Adam, was preserved in the ark by Noah, who divided the relics among his sons. The SKULL fell to the share of SHEM [Noah’s son], who buried it in a MOUNT OF JUDEA called from this circumstance CALVARY and GOLGOTHA [the Place of the Skull].” The Aramaic word *Golgotha*, found in Matthew 27:33; Mark 15:22; Luke 23:33 and John 19:17 literally means the “Place of THE Skull.” Note the similarity of its meaning to that of the Hebrew *ha rosh*, “the skull.” In Latin the name is CALVARY.

In early art Adam is frequently shown as rising up (from the grave) at the very foot of the cross, holding a chalice or cup to catch the blood of the Messiah as it fell from the tortured body. Many paintings or drawings of the crucifixion scene show Adam's SKULL beneath the stauros or cross of the Messiah.

This belief that Adam's skull was buried at Golgotha on the Mount of Olives was common in the early church. Origen speaks of it as a well known fact in his time; and St. Augustine wrote: "The ancients hold that because Adam was the first man, and was buried there [at Golgotha], it was called Calvary, because it holds the HEAD of the human race" (*De Civitate Dei*, cap. 32).

St. Basil said, "probably Noah was not ignorant of the sepulchre of our forefather [Adam] and that of the first born of all mortals, and in that place, CALVARY, the Lord suffered, the origin of death there being destroyed" (*Isa.* Cap. 5).

Clearly, the phrase "the skull" refers to the literal skull of Adam. In fact, Golgotha is named from Adam's skull, is the summit of the Mount of Olives, the site of the Red Heifer altar, "the place where God was worshiped"! Even Hebrew translations of the New Testament use the words *harosh* to refer directly to the crucifixion site.

### ***The Place "Outside the Camp"***

In the Old Testament there are many references to a location called "outside the camp." This is where sin sacrifices took place: "But the flesh of the bull...you shall burn with fire OUTSIDE THE CAMP; it is a sin offering" (Exodus 29:14). Then, in Leviticus –

Then he shall carry the bull OUTSIDE THE CAMP, and burn it as he burned the first bull. It is a sin offering for the assembly (4:21).

The bull for the sin offering and the goat for the sin offering, whose blood was brought in to make atonement in the Holy Place [Temple], shall be carried OUTSIDE THE CAMP. And they shall burn in the fire their skins, their flesh, and their offal (16:27).

Here we see that the place "OUTSIDE THE CAMP" points to a specific location ordained by YEHOVAH God. During the years the Israelites wandered in the wilderness, "outside the camp" was located directly EAST of the entrance to the Tabernacle -- at a distance of 2,000 cubits (see the *Mishna*, Tractate Parah). It was here that all the sin sacrifices were burned -- including those animals sacrificed inside the Tabernacle. And, note this, it was also the place where the Red Heifer was sacrificed and burned, its ashes then used in purification rites.

Writes Peter Michas –

Once the Israelites settled in Jerusalem, the Temple was built as a permanent sanctuary to replace the portable Tabernacle. The place called "outside the camp" retained the same specific designation in reference to the location of the sanctuary -- 2000 cubits east of the Temple. Marking the distance (3000 feet, a little over one-half mile), one comes to the summit of

the Mount of Olives, at the site of the Red Heifer altar (*The Rod of an Almond Tree in God's Master Plan*, p. 90).

Not only that, but the location "outside the camp" was closely associated with a location referred to as "a clean place" –

Then he shall take off his garments, put on other garments, and carry the ashes outside the camp to A CLEAN PLACE (Leviticus 6:11).

Then a man who is clean shall gather up the ashes of the heifer, and store them outside the camp in A CLEAN PLACE; and they shall be kept for the congregation of the children of Israel for the water of purification; it is for purifying from sin (Numbers 19:9).

Both of these passages refer to the area of the altar on the Mount of Olives. Now, in the New Testament, there are also references to this location on the Mount of Olives:

For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned OUTSIDE THE CAMP (Hebrews 13:11).

Therefore, let us go forth to Him [the Messiah], OUTSIDE THE CAMP, bearing His reproach (Hebrews 13:13).

These New Testament verses make it clear that the place where sin sacrifices were burned was exactly the same during the time of the Messiah as it was during Old Testament times. Also, verse 13 makes a direct reference to the place where the Messiah himself suffered -- the summit of the Mount of Olives. When we read the entire passage in Hebrews (from verse 11 to 13) this fact is clearly underscored –

For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned *outside the camp* (Verse 11).

Therefore Jesus ALSO, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, *suffered outside the [eastern] gate* (Verse 12).

Therefore, let us go forth to Him [the Messiah], *outside the camp*, bearing His reproach (Verse 13).

In these verses Paul is referring to a particular place -- well known to all Jews at the time -- as "outside the camp." Additional proof that the Mount of Olives is indicated here can also be found in the descriptive phrase "outside the gate" in verse 12. It, of course, refers to the EASTERN GATE of the Temple Mount which was directly EAST of the Temple entrance and opposite the Mount of Olives. Clearly, then, the crucifixion of the Messiah took place on the summit of the Mount of Olives -- close to the altar used to burn all sin sacrifices!

### *When YEHOVAH God Became Angry*

When Moses became angry with the Israelites over the Golden Calf incident, he took his own tent (to which the people had come to receive instructions from Moses) and moved it "outside the camp" in order to remove himself from the rebellious camp of Israel -- see Exodus 33:7. Unfortunately, this verse in the King James Version says that Moses took "the *tabernacle* and pitched it *without the camp,*" when in fact this was NOT the later Tabernacle called the "Tent of Appointment" -- which was only set up in the first month of the second year of the Exodus (Exodus 40). This particular "Tent of Appointment" -- or sometimes translated as "Tabernacle of the Congregation" or the "Tent of Meeting" -- was simply Moses' own headquarters tent which he temporarily set up "outside the camp" of Israel when he and YEHOVAH God became angry with the conduct of the Israelites. Later, Moses moved this tent (his own tent) back into the camp after he came down from Mount Sinai with the Law the second time. Moses then had the new Tabernacle built which became known as "God's House," and he made it the new "Tent of Meeting" on the first day of Nisan (the first month) in the second year of the Exodus.

Now there is something we should understand regarding the place for the temporary "Tent of Appointment" -- Moses set it up "outside the camp." Even though the King James Version of the Bible shows that it was set up "afar off" from the camp, all Jewish commentators know that it was positioned just 2,000 cubits from the central part of the camp.

When all of Israel observed Moses approaching the entrance to this temporary "Tent of Appointment" located "outside the camp," they also saw the Shekinah Glory of YEHOVAH God -- like a pillar of fire at night and a bright cloud in the day -- hover over that entrance to this "Tent of Appointment" (Exodus 33:9-10). Now realize this important point: When YEHOVAH God got angry with Israel this first time, He had Moses, Joshua and the "Tent of Appointment" leave the camp of Israel and place themselves on the EAST side of the camp in full view of all the Israelites who remained in the camp. In fact, before the official "Tent of Appointment" (which later became the Tabernacle -- called the Temple or House of YEHOVAH God) was set up, YEHOVAH God already set up the "Temple" or "House of God" EAST of Israel and "*outside the camp.*" This was the first sign to the Israelites that when YEHOVAH God became angry with them, He would withdraw from the camp and position His headquarters "outside the camp" on its EAST side.

When YEHOVAH became angry in the time of Ezekiel, He had His Shekinah Glory withdraw from the Temple and the camp of Israel and position itself just "outside the camp" on the Mount of Olives -- see Ezekiel 11:22-23. And then, when YEHOVAH became angry with Israel in 66 A.D., He also had His Shekinah Glory retreat to the summit of the Mount of Olives just to the *east* of Jerusalem and just "outside the camp," in order to show his displeasure at what the Israelites were doing at the time. This was witnessed by one Rabbi Jonathan, as recorded in Midrash *Rabba Lamentations* (Soncino Edition, p.51), and also recorded by the first Christian historian Eusebius in his *Proof of the Gospel* (VI, xviii.288).

Notes Ernest Martin --

The symbolism in these matters is unmistakable. When God is angry with Israel for their ways, he pulls up stakes and leaves their camp. But he does not go too far away. He sets up

his abode (as God did in the time of Moses, in the time of Ezekiel, and in the year of A.D.66) just to the east of the camp of Israel, but in full view of Israelites still within the camp. This means that the only area surrounding the camp of Israel to which God would retreat as having any semblance of holiness (in his periods of anger with them) was just to the east of the camp of Israel. And in the time of Ezekiel and that of the apostles, that meant near the summit of the Mount of Olives, and in full view of the camp of Israel to the west. God moved out of the camp on three different occasions: in the time of Moses, in the time of Ezekiel, and in the year A.D.66 (*An A.S.K. Research Update #2*, p. 3).

YEHOVAH God abandoned Israel three times and set up His tent (His House) just "outside the camp" east of Israel's encampment. In these historical illustrations, YEHOVAH is surely pointing out the importance of this very strategic *eastern region* just "outside the camp."

Significantly, this is the exact location where Yeshua the Messiah was crucified for all Israel and the world. This, therefore, is one of the main reasons why Eusebius mentioned, in his book *Proof of the Gospel*, that early Christians considered this region, at the summit of the Mount of Olives, as the new Temple (or House of YEHOVAH God) once the Temple on Mount Moriah was destroyed as predicted by the Messiah and the prophets. The Jewish authorities have tried, on three different occasions, to rebuild the Temple on Mount Moriah -- in the times of the emperors Hadrian, Constantine and Julian. And, on all three occasions, they have been thwarted from doing so. As long as YEHOVAH God is angry with Israel for their evil ways, the only place He will position Himself in the Jerusalem area is just to the EAST of the camp of Israel (but still "outside the camp") as He did in the time of Moses, Ezekiel and in 66 A.D. And -- even more important than that -- it is a fact that Isaiah and Ezekiel show that Zion will be moved from Mount Moriah to the highest mountain in the Jerusalem area (Mount of Olives) when Yeshua the Messiah builds a new House of YEHOVAH God, upon his return, to house YEHOVAH God's returning Shekinah Glory! It is time that Jews, as well as Christians, begin to realize these important Biblical and historical points. The simple truth is that the only place that YEHOVAH God now holds as having any semblance of holiness in the Jerusalem area (or anywhere else in the world, for that matter) is THE WESTERN SUMMIT OF THE MOUNT OF OLIVES -- WHERE YESHUA THE MESSIAH WAS CRUCIFIED FOR THE SINS OF ISRAEL AND FOR ALL HUMAN-KIND!

### *In the Presence of YEHOVAH God*

The place where the Jews executed criminals (blasphemers -- which Yeshua was judged to be by the Sanhedrin) was also "outside the camp." Notice --

Take OUTSIDE THE CAMP him who has cursed; then let all who heard him lay their hands on his head, and let all the congregation stone him (Leviticus 24:14).

Then YEHOVAH said to Moses, "The man must surely be put to death; all the congregation shall stone him with stones OUTSIDE THE CAMP" (Numbers 15:35).

Now since, in Jewish Law, a person accused of the sin of blasphemy had to be tried, convicted, and killed in the presence of YEHOVAH God, the only appropriate execution place was the summit of the Mount of Olives. Since YEHOVAH's presence (Shekinah Glory) resided in the Holy

of Holies of the Temple, the condemned man had a clear, unobstructed view of the ONLY entrance to the Temple on its EASTERN side. Therefore, the Messiah died on the Mount of Olives facing the Temple and "in the presence of YEHOVAH."

There is no doubt that Yeshua was led, like the Red Heifer (Israel's holiest sin sacrifice), from the Temple through the Eastern gate, across the Kidron bridge and up the ascent of the Mount of Olives to the summit. Writes Peter Michas –

This was the only path from the Temple to the summit that afforded ritual purity necessary for an acceptable sacrifice. And, just as the Red Heifer's face was turned toward the entrance of the Temple as it was sacrificed, so too Yeshua died -- the ultimate holy sacrifice -- His face turned toward the Temple! (*The Rod of an Almond Tree in God's Master Plan*, p. 92).

There is other evidence from the New Testament to show that the death of the Messiah occurred on the Mount of Olives. It is recorded that at the exact moment of the Messiah's death the huge veil of the Temple was torn in two from TOP to bottom. Matthew writes that this event was witnessed by the Roman centurion (and others) -- who were so convicted by it that they exclaimed that the Messiah was the "Son of God [YEHOVAH]." Since this veil was attached to the front of the Temple, the *only place* the witnesses could see it from was the Mount of Olives -- the *only place* in Jerusalem that afforded the crucial vantage point required to see this event.

### *The Garden Site*

The New Testament identifies the place of crucifixion as a garden -- see John 19:

Now in the place where He was crucified there was a *garden*, and in the garden a new tomb in which no one had yet been laid (Verse 41).

So there they laid Jesus, because of the Jew's Preparation Day, for the tomb was nearby (Verse 42).



**Pater Noster Church (on the Mount of Olives) which sits on the burial tomb of the Messiah**

The Greek word translated "garden" in verse 41 does not refer to a garden in our Western sense. Rather, it describes a "tree orchard." During the time of Yeshua the Messiah -- and up to the destruction of the Temple in 70 A.D. -- olive tree orchards covered a large area of the Mount of Olives. This included the place called Gethsemane, where an olive press was located. Therefore, as we have seen, the Mount of Olives fits the actual New Testament description of the place where the Messiah was both put to death and buried.

### *The "Footstool of YEHOVAH"*

The Jewish authorities came to believe that the area on the Mount of Olives, where YEHOVAH's Shekinah Glory moved just prior to the fall of Jerusalem in 70 A.D., was "the footstool of YEHOVAH God" because it stated in Zechariah 14 that YEHOVAH God would certainly stand on the Mount of Olives. A rock outcropping was even shown on the summit area that was supposed to represent this "footstool of YEHOVAH." The Jews came to believe that this was "the footstool of YEHOVAH" mentioned in Isaiah 60:13 and 66:1. Notice –

The glory of Lebanon shall come to you, the cypress, the pine, and the box tree together, to beautify the place of My sanctuary; and I will make *the place of My feet glorious*.

Thus says the LORD: "Heaven is My throne, and *earth is My footstool*. Where is the house that you will build Me? And where is the place of My rest?"

Then, in Acts 7:49, we read:

"Heaven is My throne," says Adonai, "and the *earth is My footstool*. What kind of house could you build for Me? What kind of place could you devise for My rest?"

This indicates that the Mount of Olives was the spot where YEHOVAH God would teach His people His laws and His ways. But it meant more than that -- it also meant YEHOVAH God's "Temple." Writes Ernest L. Martin –

The symbol of the "footstool" for God's feet meant nothing less than this spot was where God figuratively dwelt on earth and where God's people were to gather to worship him. In other words, the phrase "footstool" represented God's holy residence on earth (his Tabernacle and later his Temple). It meant the official place to worship God (*An ASK Research Update #3*, p. 6).

Notice what Psalm 132:7 says: "We will go into his tabernacle [the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies]: *we will worship at his footstool.*"

Then, in Psalm 99:5: "Exalt ye the Lord our God, and *worship at his footstool*; for he is holy."

Also, Lamentations 2:1: "How hath the Lord covered the daughter of Zion with a cloud in his anger, and cast down from heaven unto the earth the beauty of Israel, *and remembered not his footstool [His Temple]* in the day of his anger." It was called "the place of my sanctuary; and I will make the place of my feet glorious" (Isaiah 60:13).

As we can see, these passages from the Bible clearly indicate that "the footstool of God" was considered to be the holiest place on earth, and the place where people were officially required to worship YEHOVAH God. Therefore, it is no accident that the Jewish authorities of the early Islamic period returned to Jerusalem and went DIRECTLY TO THE MOUNT OF OLIVES. They consistently called that mount "God's footstool." They seemed to understand that YEHOVAH God

had abandoned the Temple mount as the place of His "footstool" and was now choosing the Mount of Olives as the proper "footstool of God."

This was the place where YEHOVAH's people could gather around "his feet" to worship Him and to learn His ways. This is why Zechariah 14:4 said that YEHOVAH God would one day *stand* on the Mount of Olives at the end of the age (Olivet represented His "footstool"). This is more than likely the reason why the Jewish authorities placed the second site of the Sanhedrin at Bethphage on the Mount of Olives during the time of the Second Temple. They came to this area to worship at YEHOVAH God's "feet." In Acts 22:3 the apostle Paul gave a symbolic teaching of learning when he stated that he was trained at Gamaliel's *feet*.

Notes Ernest L. Martin –

The Christian community at Jerusalem after the destruction of the city and Temple in A.D. 70, also came to see this region on the Mount of Olives as being the official "footstool" of God (until God would restore Shiloh to that position in the Millennium). In fact, it can now be shown that Christians established their top headquarters after A.D. 70 (and in one way of looking at it, until the time of Constantine) at this spot on the Mount of Olives (*ibid.*, page 7).

In fact, the Christian authorities became so influential in this area on the Mount of Olives that the Jewish authorities felt it better to move their Sanhedrin away from the "Christian" region of Jerusalem after 70 A.D. They relocated to Jabneh (Jamnia) on the coast of Palestine and remained there until 135 A.D. From there they moved into other regions of Galilee until 429 A.D. when the Romans disbanded the Sanhedrin. It was only later, with the arrival of Islam, that the Jewish authorities raised up another Sanhedrin (which they eventually called the "Great Sanhedrin") -- and they did this by *returning to the summit of the Mount of Olives* (the place of "God's footstool") so that they could be in close association with YEHOVAH God. (See the *Encyclopedia Judaica*, Vol. XII, pp. 481-485).

The Christian authorities continued to be powerful on the Mount of Olives until Constantine built the Church of the Holy Sepulcher on the western side of Jerusalem. Both Christians and Jews, after the fall of Jerusalem in 70 A.D., saw the significance of the Mount of Olives in YEHOVAH's eyes. They recognized the symbolic holiness of the area -- not only because (as Christians saw it) the Messiah was crucified in that area, but also because Ezekiel saw, with his own eyes, the Shekinah Glory leave the Temple on the other side of the Kidron Valley and ascend directly to the top of the Mount of Olives. This is just as Isaiah and Micah said it would happen at a future date. (Read Ezekiel 11:22-23, Isaiah 2:1-4 and 40:9, and Micah 4:1-2).

The early Jerusalem church clearly knew that the fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy meant that Zion would be transferred to the top of the Mount of Olives -- to the place of "God's footstool." This was exactly where Yeshua the Messiah was crucified, and near where he was buried and resurrected. This, of course, was brought to pass when YEHOVAH's Shekinah Glory left the Temple in the period of the Jewish/Roman War, which saw the Temple Herod built destroyed and reduced to rubble (Eusebius, *Proof of the Gospel*, Book One, Chapter 4, Section 8, 9 [d]).

### *Historical Evidence*

Church records reveal that the early church knew that the Mount of Olives was the site of Yeshua's crucifixion and resurrection. Eusebius (264-340 A.D.) corroborated historical records, penned some 100 years before his time, that made this claim. And, in his commentary on Isaiah, Eusebius makes the statement that the new Zion -- which he called the Mount of Olives -- was the place where Yeshua the Messiah was crucified and resurrected -- see *Holy City, Holy Places* by P.W.L. Walker, pages 301-305.

In fact, the Mount of Olives was *the only place* the early Church considered to be holy. The summit of the mount (its highest point) became known as *Inbomon*. This word was clearly derived from the Greek *en bommo* -- meaning "high place" or "altar." The crucifixion site is located very close to this place on the Mount of Olives.

The Early Christians saw great significance in the fact that the Messiah was crucified, buried and resurrected from the dead near the summit of the Mount of Olives. They also saw clear indications of these facts in the prophecies of Isaiah, Micah and Ezekiel, and gave clear and concise statements (showing YEHOVAH God's signs) that the Mount of Olives was to become a new Mount Zion for the world.

Before the time of Emperor Constantine, Christian pilgrims from all over the known world congregated by a cave-crypt near the site of the crucifixion. They recognized this crypt as the tomb where the Messiah was buried and resurrected. Because of its significance to the early Christians, the Eleona Church was erected on top of this cave-crypt some 300 years after the Messiah's death.

Then, following its destruction by the Neo-Persians (614 A.D.), a chapel was rebuilt during the Middle Ages. Also, according to tradition, this site marks the spot where the Messiah taught his disciples the so-called "Lord's Prayer." In commemoration, a church was built in 1868 and named Pater Noster -- Latin for "Our Father."

### *Alternate Sites*

All the evidence we have seen supports the Mount of Olives as the *actual* site of the Messiah's crucifixion and resurrection. However, Catholic and Protestant traditions point to other sites -- the Church of the Holy Sepulcher and Gordon's Tomb respectively. Let us, then, undertake a comparative analysis of the Biblical, historical and archaeological evidence to assess the veracity of these competing claims for the true site of the Messiah's death and resurrection.

For the purpose of this exercise, we should be aware that the sites of the crucifixion and burial are in *close proximity* to each other -- based upon the Biblical record (John 19:41).

#### **1/. The Church of the Holy Sepulcher.**

In 326 A.D., the site of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher was "picked" by the Roman Emperor Constantine "the Great" as the place where Yeshua the Messiah was crucified. This selection was based on *visions* and *dreams* the emperor had experienced.

The location of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher is *west* of the Temple area -- facing the BACK of the Temple building as it was in the Messiah's time. Not only that, but a *wall* was located between this area and the Temple at the time of the Messiah's death. If the crucifixion had taken place at this particular spot, it would have been IMPOSSIBLE for the centurion, and others, to have seen the veil at the Temple's entrance tear -- as described in Matthew 27:51-54.

For the very same reason, the Messiah would not have been "in the presence" of YEHOVAH God as his sentence was carried out. In other words, he would not have been facing the entrance to the Temple, in line with the Holy of Holies where YEHOVAH's Shekinah Glory resided.

Another big problem with this particular site is the fact that it lies *well within* the 2,000-cubit distance from the Temple area. Remember, the crucifixion occurred OUTSIDE the 2,000-cubit perimeter at the place called "outside the camp" -- a SPECIFIC site just outside the city on the Mount of Olives. Also, we should realize that no *new tombs* or gardens were allowed inside the 2,000-cubit area, referred to as "within the camp" at the time of the Messiah.

## 2/. Gordon's Tomb.

To be different, the Protestants have their particular site for the crucifixion -- called Gordon's Tomb! This area was proposed in 1883 by the British General Gordon of Khartoum fame, and based upon the strange idea that by superimposing an imaginary skeleton on the city of Jerusalem, the place where the skull fell indicated the crucifixion site!! So, with this flawed reasoning, Gordon selected a hill in the area with eye-like openings, asserting that this fit the meaning of "place of the skull." It is interesting to note that these eye-like features in the hill area are the result of erosion that has taken place *since the death of the Messiah*, and simply DID NOT exist 2,000 years ago!

Just like the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, Gordon's Tomb does not satisfy the basic scriptural requirement of providing a vantage point of the Temple so that observers could see the huge veil tear from top to bottom. This is because Gordon's Tomb is located NORTH of the Temple -- away from the eastern entrance where the veil hung.



Tomb under Pater Noster Church

Be this as it may, the final blow to the authenticity of this site came in the pages of the *Biblical Archaeology Review* magazine. An article in this magazine points out the fact that Gordon's Tomb

is located among others that were hewn during the First Temple period -- some 800 to 900 years before the Messiah. Yet John's Gospel clearly states that Yeshua's body was placed in a "new tomb in which no one had yet been laid" -- see John 19:41.

First Temple tombs or burial chambers can easily be differentiated from Second Temple period burial chambers based upon the basic layout of the chambers and distinctive architectural features -- including the type of chisel marks. In addition to this, certain archaeological artifacts closely associated with the original tombs are clearly from the First Temple period. Furthermore, "not a single tomb from Second Temple times has been found in this area" (Barkay, *The Garden Tomb: Was Jesus Buried Here?*, p. 51). Finally, this area was located within the city limits during the time of the Second Temple, where, according to legal restrictions, no cemeteries were allowed. The following table provides a comparative summary of the three sites -- clearly demonstrating that the Mount of Olives is the ONLY SITE which satisfies *all* Biblical, historical and archaeological criteria:

| <b>Comparison Chart of Three Sites</b>    |  |  |   |
|---|--|--|---|
| <b>BASIS &amp; CRITERIA</b>               | <b>HOLY SEPULCHER</b>  | <b>GORDON'S CALVARY</b>                                      | <b>MOUNT OF OLIVES</b>  |
| Basis of site selection                   | Constantine's visions & dreams                               | Gordon's imaginary skeleton                                  | Biblical, historical & archaeological data  |
| Fits "ha rosh"                            | No   | No, skull-like appearance due to much later erosion          | Yes, "skull" meaning Adam's skull that was buried on the Mount of Olives by Shem. |
| Could veil be seen?                       | No   | No   | Yes   |
| In "the presence of God"?                 | No   | No   | Yes   |
| Near the place called "outside the camp"? | No   | No   | Yes   |
| In a "garden" (tree orchard)?             | Gardens not allowed within city limits at the time of Yeshua | Gardens not allowed within city limits at the time of Yeshua | Yes   |
| New tombs nearby?                         | No   | No   | Yes (only location where new tombs allowed at this time)                          |

|   |    |    |  |
|---|----|----|--|
| Possible to witness opening of tombs?   | No | No | Yes (tombs nearby and clearly visible) |
| Satisfies all sacrificial requirements? | No | No | Yes                                    |

One of the major keys for understanding the geography of the city of Jerusalem is realizing just where Yeshua the Messiah was crucified, buried and resurrected from the dead. The place where that occurred was the spot where Abraham built his altar for Israel -- the Mount of Olives. Once this is clearly understood, a whole new way of looking at prophetic and doctrinal geography presents itself. Whole sections of the Bible that were previously difficult to understand (and which many so-called ministers of YEHOVAH God simply allegorized because of the obscurities of the language) now begin to make perfect sense. Prophetic statements that have been hidden from our understanding for so long, now become crystal clear in meaning. The glory that was given to Yeshua -- our Elder Brother -- takes on new meaning and a role that is infinitely more grand and important than what most people have formerly come to believe. Sections of the Bible that used to make little sense, now take on deeper meanings within a theme or framework of complete simplicity.

## How Is This *Work of YEHOVAH* Supported?

**Y**EHOVAH God *does* have a work on the face of this earth! That work is far beyond the mind and ability of men to understand. YEHOVAH is working in many different areas, in many directions, with many different people to accomplish that which He intends to do before He returns to this earth in His Shekinah Glory at the End of this age. Hope of Israel Ministries is a “work” which YEHOVAH God raised to proclaim His truth to a dying, corrupt, rebellious end-time generation! An important part of our witness is to the present and former members of the Worldwide Church of God, who are presently being victimized by numerous “wolves in sheep’s clothing.” Part of this work is also to bear witness to the truth of YEHOVAH God to modern Israel (the nations of the U.S., Britain, North-western Europe, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and, of course, to modern Judah who is erroneously named “Israel”), and to warn all these nations where their evil deeds are leading.

If you would like to have a part in this “Work,” then we would be more than happy to welcome you on board as a fellow co-worker and contributor to Hope of Israel Ministries. You can have a part in this ministry by your prayers, tithes and/or offerings -- and by sharing the things you learn from us with your friends and relatives. Thank you for your help and concern.

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**Yes, I would like to help support Hope of Israel Ministries. Enclosed is** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Address:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**City:** \_\_\_\_\_ **State:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Zip:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Country:** \_\_\_\_\_

## Letters from Our Readers...

### The Hope of Israel Mail Bag



Dear Sirs:

I came across your web site at the library and I downloaded some of your articles. I don't have a computer myself and at 10 cents a page it's getting expensive.

Could you please enter my subscription to *The Berean Voice*. Also please send me a copy of your Aztec and Maya Indian articles and the one on Odin's throne? I can't remember the exact name. Thank you very much.

H.S.  
Ohio

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Dear Sir/Madam:

I am an incarcerated inmate in the Arizona Prison System, and unable to get money to purchase information from your organization. It is my sincere hope that you will be able to donate to me any new or used (book/lets) dealing with the Messiah and the question of his preexistence; I would like to receive information dealing with the correct 7th day Sabbath commandment, if you can.

I am truly hopeful that you can grant my request.

Most sincerely,  
M.C.  
Arizona

**COMMENT:** You should have received the information you requested by now.

\*\*\*

Dear beloved Brother in the name of our Redeemer Joshua the Messiah!

I am glad to introduce myself that I am the preacher of Yahweh serving at Siddantham and Mulaparru surrounding villages preaching and teaching the Living Word of Almighty Yahweh and Joshua and keeping the Sabbath on every seventh day and remaining days I and co-workers are conducting the Gospel camps, distributing the Gospel literature among Christian, the Athens Idolatry worship people and contrary to the Yahweh. Many people are listening, finding and recognizing the facts, truth of Yahweh and Joshua the Messiah and accepting the Yahweh as their Heavenly Father and Joshua the Messiah as redeemer and savior and attending to the Sabbath worship and living spiritually in the name of Joshua.

The believers are very poor depending on labour works and some time they are suffering much and starving due to lack of daily bread, clothing etc. So pray for them. They are unable to give offerings by their penury situation. By our economic, financial and due to lack of offering from poor and needy congregations members we are facing many problems and turnings and also the service of Yahweh layment and handicapped. So pray for this reason to carry forward to keep the Sabbath on seventh day and conduct the Gospel camps and bring more souls for coming Joshua the Messiah.

Please send me more literature of books, booklets and tracts for our need of Gospel camps, distribution and win souls for Joshua the Messiah. We are praying for you, your nice family and your excellent service. Pray for us all our needs why because my motto is to win souls at any cost like as St. Paul 1 Cor. 9:16-17. Give cooperation like as Mark 16:15; Heb. 13:16; Prov. 19:17. We are praying for you, family and service.

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <p>Awaiting your blessings in the name of our Joshua the Messiah.</p>   | <p>ing a pre-existence and growth. Also in the “Ascension of Isaiah,” we read of the right hand of G-d coming out of the 7th Heaven, walking amongst men, going to “Hades,” then working his way all the way back up to the “Right Hand of the Father (Yehovah). Thus, Christ is the embodiment of the Father, and the true Word of G-d, from which the world would not be fashioned without...</p>  |
| <p>Your Loving Brother in Yahweh,<br/>P.S.R.<br/>South India</p>  | <p>I would like to hear your angle on this. Thanks, and blessings.</p>   |
| <p>***</p>  | <p>Your brother in Christ,<br/>J.</p>  |
| <p>Hi,</p>  | <p><b>COMMENT:</b> The Bible (both Old and New Testaments) clearly supports the concept of the ONE True God. The idea of a biune godhead is foreign to the Bible -- as is the physical pre-existence of the Messiah. I would suggest that you read all of our articles dealing with this subject. The Old Testament rejects the idea of a pre-existent Messiah -- as does the New Testament when the errors and perversions of the translators are corrected. The Being walking around in the Garden of Eden was YEHOVAH God -- not the Messiah!</p> |
| <p>I’ve been seeking God’s Truth for such a long time (I happened upon Herbert Armstrong’s writings in the early 1980s), but because there is such division among the Churches of God, it’s been frustrating trying to sift through the differences to find the “True Church.” After much study at the Christian Churches of God website, I felt that their unitarian perspective seemed logical and scriptural, so I very much wanted to be a part of their church. But after only minimal contact with one of their representatives, I sensed an arrogance and a lack of love that left me feeling unwanted and hurt...and then angry! It doesn’t seem like the kind of message Christ wished to convey to those honestly seeking his Father’s Kingdom.</p> | <p>You should not go to extra-biblical sources (such as the “Ascension of Isaiah”) to establish YEHOVAH’s doctrine. These publications were written by people well versed in the pagan doctrines of the day.</p>   |
| <p>I’ve been reading the articles on your website with enthusiasm and renewed hope. Thank you. I need to be with my people and to do my Father’s will.</p>  | <p>Also, I am not sure what you mean by “I pray in tongues sometimes,” but I sincerely hope it is not some sort of unknown tongue or gibberish such as the “Tongues Movement” people use in their services. This is a device of Satan. The word “tongues” in the New Testament refers to other known languages of the day. You should send for our article dealing with this vital subject.</p>  |
| <p>Sincerely,<br/>M. G. B.<br/>New York</p>   | <p>***</p>   |
| <p>***</p>  | <p>Hola John,<br/><br/>Shalom y saludos de Espana soleada.</p>   |
| <p>Hello again John.</p>  |  |
| <p>I have read a few more articles, and came across one in the Yehovah “Sahakan” about the Garden of Eden, and the non-pre-existence of Christ. As many believe that this was the Christ walking around the garden and not the Father, and having read the two articles on this (I pray in tongues sometimes, and I use Shakan A LOT!), I would personally question this, as “The Son of Man” also appears in the “Book of Enoch,” and was born of the Holy Spirit, indicat-</p>  |  |

Hope things are well with you and yours. A few days ago I received the Sept/Oct. Issue of the BV and it was a pleasure to read myself. Yes, I am well aware of the Original Bible Project, in fact I have written these people repeatedly and also sent a donation but so far I have not received one page of their first book of the Bible Genesis. They keep sending me envelopes and informing those interested about their progress. I was surprised to read that according to you he, James Tabor, has almost completed his translation. Well, I would not want to call it "his translation" because there are many people involved though I am sure he pushes the project, but as far as I know it was Ernest L. Martin, who is no longer of this world, started the project. But who started or will finish the project is not important but that it gets finished at all and about that I am not so sure. Repeatedly asking that a copy of the first book of Genesis be sent did not result in any response whatsoever and as the attached letter proves the end of this project is not in sight, not even Genesis is complete. Well, I know I sometimes have too big a mouth for my own good but I smell a rat, I am rather inclined to believe that it is all a big hoax. All these progress reports sound the same but I see little progress. If letters do not get answered and donations do not get acknowledged then I am becoming more and more skeptical.

So much for this Bible project, may be one day we should start a project of our own after all because I am convinced that there is a lot of knowledge amongst many brethren who are interested in the truth of the Bible, like you are and MM and I myself, who are willing to study the Bible "to see whether this were so." If, as the churches claim, we all have His spirit then how come there is so much division, with His spirit we would all think along similar lines but it does not happen and I do not see it happen ever, not until Yashua comes back on the clouds. There cannot be different spirits, there is One only and it emanates from the Father and the Son.

I also read your comment on what Myron Martin wrote and you and Myron have much in common as far as family, job and bringing out the truth of the Bible is concerned. I hope you have others to help you as otherwise your family would see little of you. Quite frankly I do not know how you manage and unless the Father is with you could

not accomplish as much as you do. Yours is my favourite magazine, there are a few others which have merit but the BV and Myron's *Disciples of Truth* outshine them all. However, though I am no follower of either Armstrong or Flurry, as far as analyzing current world events is concerned there is nothing like the *Philadelphia Trumpet*, credit to whom credit is due.

One final question: do you have many readers in Spain and in the affirmative anyone near to where I live, Benidorm, a seaside resort between Alicante and Valencia on the coast of Spain? O yes, before I forget, your contributor Ernest Martin, is he the same as Ernest L. Martin or a relative? EM's article "Is Judaism the Religion of Moses" is extremely interesting, I can now understand why Yashua ranted against the Jewish establishment and also have a reply to those who believe that the Jews are right in every respect and that Yashua followed the same calendar as they did. Would it be possible to bring all these articles together in one book for further study, you can count me in and I will be pleased to pay for it. Enclosed is a donation, I hope Euros are acceptable since it is and will be one of the more if not most important currencies of the present and the future. May the Holy One of Israel bless you and yours and support you all the way to the end of time.

Yours sincerely,  
J. Ben Y.  
Spain

**COMMENT:** As far as the Original Bible Project goes, I have personally received their binder and the Book of Genesis of what they call *The Transparent English Version* (TEV). According to the letters I have received from Tabor, he/they have almost finished the translation -- however I have not received anything beyond the Book of Genesis. Time will tell if you indeed "smell a rat"!

Unfortunately, we do not have many readers in Spain, but I will let you know if the readership increases in that part of the world.

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <p>The author of the series, "Is Judaism the Religion of Moses" is indeed Ernest L. Martin, who unfortunately passed away some months ago. Before his death we were able to obtain a number a number of his writings for inclusion in the BV magazine.</p>   | <p>free magazine as learning material to see more light in the truth of God. Please also kindly advise me which Bible version is to be used, because it is another problem. My mailing address is...</p>  |
| <p>Regarding donations, the Euros are fine, but we take quite a "hit" for converting them to US dollars. If possible, US dollars are preferable due to the conversion fee we have to pay for other currencies.</p>   | <p>Best regards,<br/>C. L. L.<br/>China</p>   |
| <p>***</p>   | <p><b>COMMENT:</b> While many claim that the King James Version of the Bible is the most accurate, it has been corrupted (especially in the New Testament) by translators with preconceived doctrinal views. With this in mind, some of the more modern versions, such as (strangely enough) <i>The New American Bible</i>, are more accurate overall. Also, the <i>Complete Jewish Bible</i> by David H. Stern is good. A good check for the Old Testament is <i>The Dead Sea Scrolls Bible</i> -- which clearly shows if any changes etc. have taken place over the centuries. We should keep in mind that any translation, whether it be from the original Hebrew or Greek, contains translation errors due to a lack of understanding of the idiom of the day, or due to preconceived ideas of the translators.</p> |
| <p>Dear John,</p>  | <p>***</p>  |
| <p>I just want to say thank you for your website!!!! I have been looking for a calendar that would line up the High Sabbaths on the actual Sabbath Day. I had a problem with the Saturday sabbaths falling in the middle of the "week long feast." It didn't sit right with me. There really are not many followers of the lunar sabbath, and your calendar I think nails it as close as it comes.</p> | <p>Dear John:</p>   |
| <p>Thank you for your diligent work! May YHVH Bless you!!!!</p>  | <p>Just read your piece and as usual your analysis is masterful but the conclusion.....</p>   |
| <p>Also, I would like to ask permission to send you an article I read on the words "Dusk" and "Dawn." It has nothing to do with going against your site's beliefs or trying to prove anyone wrong, it is just an area that may have been overlooked by many seeking truth.</p>   | <p>You show conclusively that Mt. Sinai/Horeb was a volcano and yet opt for Jebel al Lauz which isn't???????????</p>  |
| <p>Sincerely, S.</p>   | <p>Please see our new discoveries on the site which shows conclusively that Moses walked from Yemen to Mecca. ALL the Torah names of the way stations are found on that direct route..... It is NOT sufficient to find Mt. Sinai, you have also to find the 42 names mentioned in the Torah where the Israelites stopped or passed.</p>   |
| <p><b>COMMENT:</b> Yes, feel free to send the article to us -- we will read it with an open mind and compare it to YEHOUAH's Word.</p>   | <p>Ever, M.</p>   |
| <p>***</p>   |   |
| <p>Dear brothers and sisters,</p>  |   |
| <p>I am a Christian from Shanghai, China where the resources to learn about the truth of God are very rare. English is my second language. I hope that I can receive your</p>  |   |

California

P.S. Ernest is still on your masthead??????

**COMMENT:** I guess you didn't read the article very well -- I plainly point out that Jebel al Lauz is indeed volcanic in origin. "Moses walked from Yemen to Mecca"????? You must be kidding! All the "way stations" can be found on the route from Egypt through the center of the Sinai peninsula to the ancient land of Midian (in the northwest part of modern Saudi Arabia). Your "Yemen to Mecca" theory goes completely against all Biblical and traditional understanding!

Yes, Ernest L. Martin is still on our masthead. We obtained some of his articles before his death, and will continue to feature appropriate ones in the magazine.

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Dear Sir or Madam,

Greetings in the Lord's Name which is above every other name!

Have been waiting for my good Wellsford friend on your mailing list, Mr. P. S., to write but it is of such immediate importance that "needs must!"

Some months back you spoke of the Sabbath being geared to the moon -- i.e. 7th, 14th, 21st and 28th day of the moon, the proper commemoration. If this be true, it has very serious connotations in judging who is keeping the right day! I had joined the S.D.A. Church almost 12 years ago but felt a warning to stay on the perimeter. At a mission in this town 3 years ago the first few meetings were fine and the populace in general were impressed -- "Salvation through the finished work of Christ on the tree of suffering etc." But toward the end the sternness of saying those who had been warned that keeping Sunday (introduced by Constantine the Roman Caesar early 4th century A.D. To standardize the day of rest) was the wrong day and persisted were in grave danger of developing the Mark of the Beast 666.

At the end of Isaiah's book it says of last day events "From one New Moon to another and from one Sabbath to another shall they go up to worship the Lord!" This could well infer the link-up of the Sabbath to the moon -- that is roughly 28 ½ days, I believe, so each 2nd lunar month would have an extra day to compensate. It says in John's Gospel that "That Sabbath was an high Sabbath" which I think means a double Sabbath, making it simpler to denote "as with Jonah 3 days and 3 nights" in the tomb.

It could shake the foundations to admit that the Sunday Keepers are no less right than the Saturday Keepers. I find people blessed of the Lord on a far wider spectrum than any petty outlook would admit. Romans 14th Chapter has a wide scope.

Our local S.D.A. is extending its building and I would so like to see a right attitude in a day when Christendom needs cohesion. Please can you throw light on this vital truth lest "they labour in vain that build it!"

B.V. S.  
New Zealand

**P.S.** Not so urgent but also a question. Is it Isaiah 65th Chapter in the midst of obviously Millennial prophecy is the insert "And the sinner though he be an hundred, yet shall he be accursed" -- Jesus said 2 and 2 and 2 shall be together, one shall be taken and the other left. It sounds like the bad one is cut off for he answered the questioning disciple "where the carcass is there will the eagles be gathered together." Also he said "He will send His angels, first to gather the tares into bundles." Of course the critical warning is "Don't be numbered among the transgressors" no matter what our theology. I feel so upset that the dogmatic self-confidence of the exclusiveness of those who say "we are the remnant Church" would so shrink the saved to almost oblivion!

**COMMENT:** We have published a number of articles regarding the lunar Sabbath -- you should have received them by now. Be sure to contact us if you have any more questions.

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| <p>Dear Hope of Israel Ministries:</p> <p>I discovered the article "From the Mississippi to Mexico" while I was viewing images of Chaco Canyon on the net. I read through it with much delight. Since I'm gathering/researching information for a book I'm just happy, so happy to find other bold and truthful or truth-searching writers out there. Could you please send me "Awesome New Truth About Yom Kippur"; I'm curious about "Azazel" myself. I also would like to know anything about the history -- anthropology -- origin of the Olmec -- Toltec -- Mayan genealogies. What have you dug up? Might they be the lost realms of Cain? Did they come from Lemuria or/and Atlantis? And what about the Iroquois and Algonquin and Passamaquodi and Penobscot and Abanaki and tribes from Maine 3,000 plus years ago, 5,000 years ago, 10,000? Where did they originate?</p> <p>Thank you for further articles, I'm sure everybody has lots of questions for you!</p> <p>At-one!</p> <p>G. K.<br/>Colorado</p> <p><b>COMMENT:</b> As much as these questions you pose are fascinating in themselves, the thrust of this ministry is to reveal the truths of YEHOVAH God's word, the Bible. The origins of peoples, such as you mention, are secondary in importance to doctrine and prophecy. As much as I, personally, would like to spend more time researching the origins of peoples descended from the Canaanites and Israelites for that matter, there just are not enough hours in the day to cover it all. As time allows, new articles in the areas you mention will be published.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">***</p> <p>Dear John,</p> <p>I received your publication "The Trojan Origins of European Royalty" today in the mail. I haven't had time to read the entire piece but it did answer many questions I had about where your research took you. It also brought back</p> | <p>memories of the Humanities class in college where I read many of the books mentioned in your writing. Again, thank you for sharing with me.</p> <p>Sincerely,<br/>P. S.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">***</p> <p>Dear Mr. Keyser:</p> <p>I hope this letter finds you happy and in good health.</p> <p>I received the book you ordered for me, "Behind the Veil: Unmasking Islam." I'm hoping that this book will give me what I need to turn my nephew from the Muslim faith. My sister and her family have been Baptist and then turned to the Catholic faith and whenever I try to show them the truth about the Catholic Church she would stop writing for a time. Then her son went to college and there converted to this Satan's religion. I've written him and we are at least talking about our ideas of faith. I am a Sacred Name, Hebrew Holy Day believer. I've also read many of the teachings of Herbert W. Armstrong and I agree on who Israel is and the 10 tribes of Israel. I've also read many books on the migration west that the 10 tribes took.</p> <p>I wanted to thank you for your kindness and for caring and wanting to help me. It is very hard to find people that will help inmates.</p> <p>Texas does not pay their inmates like many states do so it is really hard to get books of study or good study Bibles without help from the outside. Yahweh has blessed me with a Sacred Name Bible called "The Scriptures" out of South Africa. It is a good translation using the Hebrew names for people, places, and it helps to put you in a Hebrew mind-set as you read. I also have a New American Standard Bible I like to read. The N.A.S.B. Is a very good translation also.</p> <p>It's a hard life here as a Believer because we do not fit into the Christian teachings and the few Jews we have</p> |
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on the farm make no bones about not wanting us in their services. But I do get to lay in for the High Holy Days and two of the Fasting Days. You have to register your faith at the Chaplain's office and they do acknowledge Mr. Armstrong's teachings here in Texas so I'm registered as my Church being "The United Church of God" out of Cincinnati, Ohio.

I'm 56 years old, Irish-English. The only family I have is my sister and her family. She always keeps me informed on how her children are doing. She lives in South Bend, IN. So she never has the money to come a 1,000 miles to see me. I haven't seen her or my family in 10 years now.

I hope that Yahweh let's me live long enough to get out and participate in the keeping of the Holy Days in the right way with others. I do the best I can in here but of course it is nothing like the way they are kept in the free world.

I believe the last days are getting very close so if I'm not able to keep the Sacred Days now I'll be able to in the future....one way or the other.

I love to study history of our Hebrew roots and have had a few really good books on these studies. But we are very limited in space to keep things. Everything we own has to fit in a locker that is 1' by 1' by 2' feet. So what I get I have to study and then in time pass it on to others that have our beliefs. There's not too many on this farm but I'm blessed again because in my dorm I have two other men that have the same doctrine of beliefs.

I've had pen pals in the past and when we started talking about our religious beliefs it wouldn't be long before I would not hear from them for long periods of time then they would stop writing. So it is really nice to meet someone in the free world with the same beliefs.

I want to thank you once again for helping me with the book. If you would like a pen pal, I'm always here.

May Yahweh watch over you and your family always and keep you all safe in the mad, mad world we live in today.

Your Brother in Yahshua our Messiah, F. Texas

P.S: This the month for new beginnings and of renewing our lives with our Heavenly Father. So it is a great time to meet you. I hope we can become good friends, if not now then in our Father's Kingdom some day.

Shalom my Brother.

**COMMENT:** If anyone out there would like to write this gentleman, please contact me for his address.

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Dear Brother John,

Finally! The most important of all subjects today -- and astutely condensed into 3 pages. I refer to "The Name 'Jew' -- How and When Did It Originate?," p. 25 of *The Berean Voice*, July-Aug. 2002 issue. This brief article, I dare suggest, in a sense contains more vital information than all other BV articles combined -- most of which are highly laudable and edifying. If your members are enlightened by all the other truth you've expounded and miss this, they are still fatally asleep. Understanding this little 3-page gem, will begin to unravel the cataclysms, intrigues and deceptions in everything else going on in the fulfillment of prophecy today, and for generations, with these imposters at the bottom of it all. These "destroyers" -- a label their own leaders boastfully apply to themselves in secret -- are on the brink of dragging mankind into WW-III, through their self-serving treachery and ownership and manipulation of every high office and official of the U.S. Government, under the guise of "God's Chosen." (The question is: which "god"? -- See II Cor. 4:4, I Cor. 8:5, Matt. 4:8).

Certain details may be subject to debate among the biblically astute (e.g., are the Canaanites descendants of Cain?), but exposing the main truthful theme is of the highest imperative for our time, and I urge you to publish more on this subject (by this author and others), and that readers who may have breezed by it, thoughtfully digest it again.

Might I suggest reducing the text and margins slightly and fitting the article onto a single page, 2-sided reprint. I would enclose a copy with all of my outgoing mail to help spread this vital truth. I urge others to follow suit, but only those willing to risk extreme persecution. No other subject on earth brings such persecution for the mere free speech exercise of exposing it, nor has in place such crushing persecution machinery protected by laws of the many countries they've come to usurp and manage behind the scenes. (What better proof of its truth could there be, than such intense efforts to silence it?).

Glance at these few Scriptures, and the picture should begin to emerge: Rev. 2:9 (Counterfeit Jews); Rev. 3:9 (Satan's liars); II Tim. 3:13 (imposters); John 8:44 (sons of Satan); Hos. 12:7 (Oppressors with scales of deceit); and countless others).

-- Anon  
(I must be anon, due to my place/situation)  
California

**COMMENT:** While it is true that a certain percentage of what is known as the Jewish people today is not descended from Judah or Benjamin (or any of the tribes of Israel, for that matter), does that mean they are not entitled to live in the land of Israel today?

Does the fact that a certain percentage of the people living in the United States today are descended from non-Israelite stock (German, Japanese, various Asians, etc) mean they have no right to live here amongst us -- and expect to do so in peace and security?

Does the fact that I am not a pure Israelite (German on my father's side; Welsh/English on my mother's) mean that I have no right to live in the United States (or any other Israelite nation) in peace and security?

Throughout her generations Israel always harbored a foreign or non-Israelite element in her midst -- and YEHOVAH God, in the Bible, makes allowance for this. Notice Exodus 22:21; 23:9; Leviticus 17:8; 17:10; 17:13; 19:34; Deuteronomy 10:19 and 24:14. Your

viewpoint is unbalanced and perhaps even hateful. Since you obviously believe that all those who call themselves Jews are the seed of Satan, do you consider the holocaust of WWII, when millions were put to death by the Nazis, was of no consequence -- or maybe didn't even happen?

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First I would like to say we find your website very interesting. We certainly are enjoying it. We do a lot of studying and find you do a lot of studying before you put out your articles. We may not agree with everything. We have learned never to take anything at face value. We study God's word, study ancient texts, study history, study culture of the times and pray the Eternal will give us the correct enlightenment.

We were reading one of your articles about *Should You Wish People Happy Birthday?* and I have a question about something in the text. You have that Shem killed Nimrod. In the Book of Jasher (Chapter 27) it says that Esau killed Nimrod. Where did you get your information from? I'm just curious because I like to get my facts straight before I repeat a story. I really use the Book of Jasher a lot to fill in blanks left out of Genesis and Exodus. For instance Isaac being 37 years old when he was to become an offering. It really bothers me when I hear and see pictures of this pre-teen innocent child following Abraham up the mountain. Isaac was a willing sacrifice.

We appreciate your website and hope you can give us insight into some of your study materials.

Shalom  
K. G.

**COMMENT:** It must be remembered that extra-biblical sources such as the Book of Jasher are not always accurate and must be used with caution. The truth about Nimrod's death can be found in Hyslop's book *The Two Babylons* and also in Hoeh's *Compendium of World History*. Nimrod was the Osiris of Egyptian tradition, which also mentions his death at the hands of Shem or Sem.

## Daniel's "Seventy Weeks" -- *When Do They Begin and End?*

Because many have relied on the chronology of Archbishop Ussher, a date in the reign of the Persian King Artaxerxes has been chosen as the starting point for Daniel's 70 Weeks Prophecy. However, when we realize that Ussher's chronology is based on the erroneous chronology of Ptolemy -- which in turn is based on the guesses of Erathosthenes -- the commandment to restore and build Jerusalem can be placed in its correct time-frame -- that of the decree of *Cyrus the Great!*

**John D. Keyser**

**A**lmost all commentaries are agreed that the message given to Daniel by the Archangel Gabriel gives the measure of years, from the going forth of the commandment to restore and build Jerusalem unto Messiah the Prince, as sixty-nine sevens of years -- that is, 483 years. However, there is a tremendous amount of disagreement as to:

- 1/. What decree it was from which the time began to run, and
- 2/. What event it was in the lifetime of Yeshua the Messiah to which the 483 years brings us.

It is clear that, unless these two points in time (the beginning and the ending of the 483 years) can be established with absolute certainty, we simply cannot determine with accuracy the chronology down to the death and resurrection of the Messiah.

A careful study of the Bible will, however, reveal that both events are marked and dated with unusual exactitude. Furthermore, as we progress in this article, we will realize that the differences in opinion are a result of the fact that some of the expositors and chronologers have adopted the mistaken estimates of Ptolemy as the foundation of their systems of dating -- instead of grounding themselves in the chronology of the Bible. So, having committed themselves to a chronological scheme which makes the era of the Persian Empire about 80 years too long, they have been compelled to force the statements of the Bible into the framework of this erroneous chronology. As a result, the measure of 483 years from the first year of Cyrus comes short -- by many years -- of any event in the lifetime of the Messiah. This results in only two possible options -- either abandon Ptolemy's table or search for a decree of a Persian king -- many years nearer the Messiah -- to serve as the starting point of the seventy weeks.

The fact is, therefore, that there is not any uncertainty in the Bible -- the problem is that the expositors and chronologers have turned aside from YEHOVAH's Word and have accepted (for the 500 years immediately preceding the time of the Messiah) a defective chronology based on pagan traditions.

Our main conclusions -- of which we will provide ample proof -- are:

- 1/. The canon of Ptolemy is untrustworthy as a basis for a system of chronology since its statements have not been authenticated in any way. Therefore, we should reject it in determining the beginning of the 483 years.
- 2/. "The commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem," from which the prophetic period of 70 weeks began to run (Daniel 9:25), was *the decree of Cyrus the Great* -- referred to in Ezra 1:1-4.
- 3/. The 483-year period of Daniel 9:25 -- reaching "unto the Messiah, the Prince" -- ended at the baptism of the Messiah in the 15th year of Tiberius Caesar, when he was 30 years of age.

### ***1. The Canon of Ptolemy***

Ptolemy was not contemporary to the events of the Persian Empire, whose chronology he attempted to construct -- but flourished *more than six centuries* after that Empire began. Therefore, we cannot accept him as an authority for the events of that period. As a matter of fact, he never claimed that he had access to any of the records of the Persian period. Not only are the chronological statements of Ptolemy entirely without corroboration, but they are flatly contradicted by authorities that can be corroborated and are more reliable than he. He is contradicted by the Persian traditions preserved by Fidusi and by the Jewish National traditions preserved in the *Sedar Olam*. Whereas Ptolemy estimates that there were TEN Persian kings in all, Josephus (an earlier writer and a reliable historian of the late first century A.D.) gives only SIX. What's interesting about this is the fact that it agrees much better with the statement of the angel to Daniel in the 3rd year of Cyrus. The angel said there were yet four kings of Persia to stand up, the fourth being clearly identified as the great and wealthy Xerxes -- whose expedition against "the realm of Grecia" is known from secular history to have ended in disaster.

Those who accept the canon of Ptolemy must believe there were *eight* kings between Cyrus and Xerxes, who was the last of the Persian kings, and must accept the length of years which Ptolemy assigns to their respective reigns. This he figures to be a total 205 years. In contrast with Ptolemy's estimates, both the Jewish and Persian traditions make the period of the Persian Empire a period of only 52 years (Anstey, *The Romance of Bible Chronology*, p. 232). While we do not accept the estimates of Josephus any more than those of Ptolemy -- and have no need of either since we are using the chronology found in the Bible -- the statements of the former do serve to show that the latter are not to be relied upon.

Author Martin Anstey states --

There are no contemporary chronological records whatever to fix the dates of any of the Persian monarchs after Darius Hystaspes. The clay tablets of Babylon fix the chronology, for the reigns of Cyrus, Cambyses, Pseudo-Smerdis, and Darius Hystaspes; but they do not determine the date of any subsequent Persian king. The dates which have reached us, and which are now generally received as historical, are a late compilation made in the 2nd century A.D. and found in Ptolemy's canon. They rest upon the calculations or guesses made by

Eratosthenes, and certain vague, floating traditions, in accordance with which the period of the Persian empire was mapped out as a period of 205 years.

Further proof that Ptolemy's cannon is bogus can be found in a rather unusual way. There is considerable research data now available that supports the fact that Xerxes AND Artaxerxes were *one and the same king!* In the ruins of Persepolis can be found reliefs of the "three" kings of the Persian dynasty who were involved with building the city -- Darius I, Xerxes and Artaxerxes. While the faces on the reliefs have been chiseled off, other parts of the reliefs can be used to make our point. It's very subtle, but nonetheless conclusive -- it's the famous hand of Artaxerxes! Artaxerxes right hand was LONGER than his left one, and this was so unusual it became his trademark and hence the name "Artaxerxes LONGIMANUS (longimanus is Latin for "long hand").

A very famous relief at Persepolis showing Darius seated on the throne followed by his son "Xerxes" shows Xerxes with his right hand turned vertically in order to show off his hand for all to see. The hand was carved with great detail showing all the palm creases, etc. You will notice, by comparison, that it is clearly LONGER THAN HIS LEFT! It is because of this unusual hand that *Xerxes later became known as "Artaxerxes Longimanus"* -- after changing his name locally to Artaxerxes upon becoming king of Persia. This was a common practice among the Persian kings.

Now WHY did Xerxes try to become two kings -- and how? Briefly, it commenced with a conspiracy by the Persian Magi who put an imposter on the throne in place of Smerdis -- a son of Cyrus and brother to Cambyses II. Following Cambyses death, this imposter was exposed and removed from the throne by Darius I, who usurped the Persian throne. Darius *was not* a direct descendant of Cyrus, but his younger son Xerxes (by way of his wife, Atossa, the daughter of Cyrus) was. It took Darius two years to bring the empire under control -- but not without making Xerxes, the legitimate heir to Cyrus, his own appointed successor and co-ruler.

One way Darius pulled this off was through massive building campaigns which prominently displayed Xerxes in an EQUAL POSITION next to himself -- with some buildings specifically named after Xerxes. Darius apparently began building at Persepolis some four years after he came to the throne -- displaying Xerxes prominently beside himself as usual -- but in his sixth year was killed and beheaded by the Athenians in the Battle of Marathon (a fact the Greeks later tried to suppress historically). Because of this insult, Xerxes invaded Greece with a vengeance and sacked Athens, destroying many of their temples, but suffered an embarrassing defeat at the hands of the Athenians in the Battle of Salamis. After this he fled back to Persia, a king despised and in shame. He conspired to evade this international shame and possible assassination attempts by the Greeks by faking his death and assuming THE NEW IDENTITY OF "ARTAXERXES"!

Because of his untimely death, Darius was unable to finish his building work at Persepolis -- which was completed by his son Xerxes. However, because of the Persian custom of the Persian kings assuming a new name upon becoming king, the city was finished under *Xerxes' new name: Artaxerxes*. Since Xerxes had already appeared in reliefs as "Xerxes" with Darius, it now appeared that there were THREE KINGS at Persepolis -- when, in fact, there were *only two*. Xerxes' dual identity and those confusing reliefs (after cleverly changing some building inscriptions) helped Xerxes/Artaxerxes pull off this conspiracy of claiming he was a different king.

The conspiracy -- which was designed to fool the Greeks -- was masterminded by Themistocles (an influential Greek statesman who had defected to Persia) who circulated the now-famous letter stating that he was defecting to Artaxerxes the "son" of Xerxes, now presumed by all to have recently died. At the same time, propaganda was circulated by the Persian Court to the effect that Xerxes was killed by his oldest son and heir, Darius, who in turn was killed by his "younger brother" Artaxerxes who, after avenging his father's death, was now on the throne as king legitimately. This was very clever, but very superficial in hindsight. Of course, this Darius was not killed and still followed his father (Xerxes/Artaxerxes) on the throne as Darius II. Needless to say, the Greeks never really caught on though there was lots of confusion.

Because of all the reliefs at Persepolis which generally exposed the conspiracy on close examination, the city was kept a secret from the Greeks until Alexander the Great discovered it when he conquered Persia. In the meantime, a series of involved schemes to change Greek, Persian, Babylonian and Biblical history to cover up for the phantom 21-year reign of Xerxes prevailed, and as a result the chronology of the Persian period has been distorted by 82 years. Ptolemy, being Greek himself and relying on Eratosthenes (who was also Greek), reflects this distortion in his canon.

The fact is, Ptolemy had no means of determining the chronology of this period, so he made the best use of the materials at his disposal -- and contrived to *make* a chronology. However, it is clearly contradicted by --

- 1/. The national traditions of Persia
- 2/. The national traditions of the Jews
- 3/. The testimony of Josephus
- 4/. The conflicting evidence of well-authenticated events
- 5/. The Persian reliefs at Persepolis and
- 6/. YEHOVAH God's Word -- the Bible!

### ***Eclipses and Other Astronomical Events as Aids to Chronology***

The attempt of some to supply missing links in the chain of chronology, by means of eclipses and astronomical calculations, is utterly futile! It is easy for astronomers to make a perfect chart of all solar and lunar eclipses and to fix the time of their occurrences with great accuracy. But that doesn't help us in the least because when a historical reference is found which contains mention of an eclipse, it is impossible to tell which of the charted eclipses -- within say a century -- is the one referred to! And even if that could be done, it would only fix the date on ONE event.

We must remember that chronology (biblical or otherwise) is not merely or chiefly a matter of intervals of time -- it is primarily a matter of *historical events*, their sequence and the number of years **from one known event to another**. Astronomers can indeed give us the precise order and dates of all eclipses which occurred between the days of Cyrus and those of Alexander the Great --

or any other period. But eclipses are events that occur in the heavens, and chronology has to do with events on earth. There is *no way* the astronomers can tell us the succession of the Persian kings or calculate the length of their reigns. And it is that information that is needed to make a viable chronology. Without it, a perfect chart of all the eclipses is of about as much use to us as a map of Pluto!

The bottom line is -- regarding the events of sacred history prior to the conquest of Asia by Alexander the Great -- there are NO SOURCES OF INFORMATION APART FROM THE BIBLE ITSELF to determine a true chronology. However, none are needed because the chronology of YEHOVAH's Word is complete in itself. We must realize that it was no more a part of YEHOVAH's plan of revelation that we should be dependent upon human sources for the completion of biblical chronology, than that we should be dependent upon such sources for the understanding of any part of essential truth or doctrine.



**Relief of Cyrus the Great**

## ***2. The Command to Restore and to Build Jerusalem -- Daniel 9:25***

The going forth of the commandment (lit. *word*) to restore and to build Jerusalem is one of the most important of the chronological landmarks in the Bible because it stretches the measuring line of 483 years "unto the Messiah, the Prince." This was a matter that Daniel the prophet was specially charged by the angel to "know" and to "understand." Now, unless the exact time of the going forth of that word be *known*, and unless its relation with the *entire* chronological scheme of the Bible be *understood*, the YEHOVAH-given measuring line will be of no avail for the very purpose that YEHOVAH gave it! The Bible shows, with an utmost clarity, both the decree referred to, and also the DATE of its "going forth." In fact, the biblical time-line would never have come into question had not some "learned men" gone to the Bible with a ready-made chronology based on Ptolemy's miscalculations, and tried to *force scripture* into its framework. Rather than going to YEHOVAH's Word and determining the beginning and the end of the prophetic period, and then

letting the scripture itself show them the number of years (483) between these terminal events, these men have simply relied on false chronologies based on pagan traditions and superstition.

Let us realize that the time specified by the angel was to begin -- *not* at the restoring and building of the city of Jerusalem -- but at the *going forth* of the "word" (or decree) to restore and to build. That "word" *went forth* "in the first year of Cyrus, king of Persia," and, moreover, its going forth was for the express purpose "that the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled" (Ezra 1:1). To accomplish His purpose, YEHOVAH God "stirred up the spirit of Cyrus, king of Persia, that he *made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom.*" Here we see a royal "word" or proclamation going forth with the objective of releasing the captives of Judah so that they could "go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and build the house of the Lord God of Israel (He is the God) which is in Jerusalem" (Ezra 1:2-3).

The immediate effect of this proclamation was that a large contingent of Israelites (42,370 plus 7,337 servants and maids) "went up out of the captivity and came again *unto Jerusalem and Judah*" (Ezra 2:1, 64-65). Other groups came later. This was exactly what Daniel the prophet was praying for -- it was the ending of the captivity of his people and the beginning of a new period of existence for the nation of Judah and the city of Jerusalem (see Daniel 9:19).

To "restore" means (wherever the word is used in the Old Testament) to "turn back" and therefore to replace what had been taken away. In this case it clearly meant to restore the people to the city, thereby reestablishing it. That was the thrust and the effect of the decree of Cyrus, and the Bible records the accomplishment of it. We find written that the captives released by the decree of Cyrus "came again unto Jerusalem and Judah, every one *unto his city*" (Ezra 2:1). And again that they "*dwelt in their cities, and all Israel in their cities (2:70).*" This includes, of course, the chief city of Jerusalem.

### *Isaiah's Prophecy About Cyrus*

In the Book of Ezra the decree of Cyrus is stated *historically* with utmost clarity. But, to put it beyond all doubt and to show, however, how vitally important this action of Cyrus was in the eyes and purposes of YEHOVAH God, we need to understand the remarkable fact that YEHOVAH had also declared it *prophetically* through His prophet Isaiah. This occurred more than 150 years prior to the actual decree, and the prophecy even *calls by name* the very king who was to fulfill YEHOVAH's plan. For Isaiah had prophesied about Cyrus, saying: "Thus says the LORD...Who confirms the word of His servant, and performs the counsel of His messengers; Who *says to Jerusalem, 'You shall be inhabited, ' and to the cities of Judah, 'You shall be built, ' and I will raise up her waste places;...Who says of Cyrus, 'He is My shepherd, and he shall perform all My pleasure, even saying to Jerusalem, "You shall be built," and to the temple, "Your foundation shall be laid" ' "*" (Isaiah 44:24-28).

Therefore, we have YEHOVAH God's own word that Cyrus -- and *none other* -- was to speak the "word" to restore and to build Jerusalem -- even saying, "Thou shalt be built."

And furthermore, Cyrus was made fully aware of Isaiah's prophecy by Daniel; for in his decree Cyrus said, "The God of heaven hath charged me to build Him an house at Jerusalem" (Ezra 1:2). It should be observed that the same "charge" included both the building of the temple AND the building of *the city* (Isaiah 44:28).

We read of this in the *Antiquities of the Jews* by the Jewish historian Josephus, who states –

This was known to Cyrus by his reading the book which Isaiah left behind him of his prophecies; for this prophet said that God had spoken thus to him in a secret vision:-- "My will is, that Cyrus, whom I have appointed to be king over many and great nations, send back my people to their own land, and build my temple." This was foretold by Isaiah one hundred and forty years before the temple was demolished. Accordingly, when Cyrus read this, and admired the divine power, an earnest desire and ambition seized upon him to fulfill what was so written; so he called for the most eminent Jews that were in Babylon, and said to them, that he gave them leave to go back to their own country, and to **rebuild their city Jerusalem, and the temple of God**...(Book XI, Chapter I, Section 2).

Not only that, but in the next chapter (Isaiah 45:13) YEHOVAH God speaks of Cyrus in this way: "*He shall build My city, and he shall let go My captives, not for price nor reward, saith the Lord of hosts.*" Here we clearly see that the letting go, or *restoring*, of the captives is coupled with the building of the city.

We can also see that it was Cyrus who issued the word to restore and to build the city. Those who try to make the statements of the Bible conform to the erroneous chronology of Ptolemy inevitably point to the fact that the building of the *city* is not expressly mentioned in Ezra 1:1-4, however Ezra does not quote the entire decree and, therefore, the city is not specifically mentioned in the part he quoted. But, nonetheless, he does make it perfectly clear that this was the "word to restore and to build Jerusalem." Jerusalem was the focal



**The tomb of Cyrus the Great**

point of the decree and its former inhabitants were permitted (and even *commanded*) to return to it -- *which they did*. And that command -- coupled with the command to "build the house of the Lord" -- would obviously involve restoring or building homes for the inhabitants of the city.

### ***The Building of Jerusalem***

It is also recorded that in the 7th month of the first year of Cyrus, "the people gathered themselves together as one man *to Jerusalem*" (Ezra 2:1). This would naturally mean that they would have to erect houses for themselves; and this would also explain why it was not until "the second year of the coming to the house of God at Jerusalem, in the second month" that Zerubbabel and Joshua, and "all they that were come out of the captivity into Jerusalem" began "to set forward the work of the house of the Lord" (Ezra 3:8). Clearly, that interval of seven months was needed to build homes for the people and defenses for the city.

From that point forward, in both the historical books of Ezra and Nehemiah and in the prophecy of Zechariah, Jerusalem is spoken of as an EXISTING CITY. The Temple was completed "in the sixth year of the reign of Darius the king" (Ezra 6:15), and the former captives kept the Feast of Unleavened Bread for seven days (Ezra 6:21-22) -- definitely implying that Jerusalem was capable of accommodating large numbers of people.

In Ezra 7 and 8 we read of the coming of Ezra himself, with a large company of people that included women and children, *to Jerusalem* (8:32).

In chapter 9 we find Ezra praying to YEHOVAH God and praising Him for giving them favor in the eyes of the Persian kings "to set up the house of our God, and to repair the desolations thereof, and *to give us a wall* in Judah and *in Jerusalem*" (Ezra 9:9).

Then, in chapter 10, it is recorded that Ezra and the leaders of the people "made proclamation throughout Judah *and Jerusalem* unto all the children of the captivity, that they should gather themselves together *unto Jerusalem*" (verse 7) -- which they did. Yet there are those so-called ministers out there who would have us believe that not only was there no rebuilding of the city up to that time, but that the **word** for the restoring and rebuilding of Jerusalem did not go out until the 7th or 20th year of Artaxerxes -- referred to in the second chapter of Nehemiah!

### *Nehemiah's Work*

One such man who promulgates this erroneous chronology is William F. Dankenbring of Triumph Prophetic ministries. In his book *The Last Days of Planet Earth* he claims --

Cyrus made a decree in 536-535 regarding the rebuilding of the Temple in Jerusalem (see Ezra 1:1-2). This particular decree was specifically to build the Temple -- the city is not mentioned. This decree, therefore, is not the one spoken of by Daniel in chapter 9:25 (p. 193).

On the following page he writes:

The Jews had never been given authority from the Persian kings to rebuild Jerusalem and the city wall. However, early in the reign of Artaxerxes, the Samaritans had accused the Jews of building the city once again (Ezra 4:7, 11-12). The king issued an order for the Jews to stop all such activity until further notice (Vs. 17-21). After a thorough investigation, Artaxerxes issued another decree -- the decree mentioned in Ezra 7!

This must be the decree Daniel had reference to since it was the first one that clearly involved the city of Jerusalem as well as the temple.

Those who are gullible enough to accept the chronology of Ptolemy, based as it is on nothing but the guesses of Eratosthenes, try to date "the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem" from either the seventh year or "the twentieth year of Artaxerxes the king," basing their erroneous conclusion on Ezra's decree or Nehemiah's petition to the king "that thou wouldest send me unto the city of my fathers sepulchres, that I may *build it*" (Nehemiah 2:5). From

this it is assumed that the city had not been rebuilt up to that time, and that there was no previous *word* to rebuild it. This "Artaxerxes" is assumed, by those who insist on a late date for the decree of Daniel 9:25, to be Longimanus -- who was, as we have already seen, none other than Xerxes and not a separate ruler as most have imagined! This blows the whole theory right out of the water! It is supposed (in order to substantiate this theory) that during all of this time no permission was given to build the city, even though permission to rebuild the Temple had been granted and acted upon, and although the inhabitants of Jerusalem had been commanded to return to it.

Many, including Dankenbring, have relied on the chronology of James Ussher (Archbishop of Armagh, Ireland), who was born in Dublin in 1581 A.D. Although Ussher was a man of conspicuous ability and a profound scholar, his system of chronology has been revised and amended by others -- including Bishop Lloyd who published, in 1701, an edition of the Bible which was the first to have marginal dates. Then, in 1850, Henry Fynes Clinton made further revisions. Although an able scholar and chronologist he, like all his predecessors (including Ussher) adopted the erroneous figures of the canon of Ptolemy instead of the sure word of YEHOVAH God in the Bible.

The very first chapter of Nehemiah records that tidings were brought to Nehemiah by Hanani and certain men of Judah about the Jews which had returned from captivity, and *concerning Jerusalem* (Nehemiah 1:2). These brethren reported to Nehemiah that the returned captives were in great distress, and that "the *wall* of Jerusalem also is broken down, and the *gates thereof* are burned with fire" (verse 3). This message was clearly the result of FRESH DAMAGE, recently inflicted by the "adversaries" of the Jews, to the *walls* and *gates* of the REBUILT city. This was *news* to Nehemiah because it caused him to weep, to mourn, to fast and to pray (verse 4). The wording of the record makes it impossible to believe that the damage reported by the messengers (who had just arrived from Judah) was that which had been inflicted by Nebuchadnezzar *more than one hundred years previously!* Nehemiah had not been sad in the king's presence before, but now his grief could not be controlled or concealed (2:1-2). This makes it absolutely certain that it was a NEW and unexpected calamity that had befallen the Jews' beloved city. Also, this agrees perfectly with Nehemiah's petition to the king that he might return to Jerusalem and "build" the city -- this word is of broad significance, one of its more common meanings is to REPAIR (see *Strong's Concordance*). This is obviously its meaning here, as is evident from the detailed account of the work performed in chapter 3, where the only *building* spoken of is the *repairing* of the walls and gates -- the very parts reported by Hanani as having been damaged. Please note that the word "repaired" is used over 30 times in that chapter, being used interchangeably with "builted." Also note that the existence of *houses* is referred to incidently in the same chapter -- verses 10, 16, 20 &c. It is evident that the work was a comparatively small one since it was completed within the short space of 52 days (6:15).



**The Cyrus Cylinder**

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There is, however, a statement in chapter 7 that needs to be explained: "Now the city was large and great (broad in spaces, see margin, Cambridge Bible) and the houses not builted." This is easily explained. The passage describes a state of affairs that existed AFTER Nehemiah's work was

completed, and therefore it cannot, in any way you look at it, be seriously taken to mean that the city had not been rebuilt. The meaning clearly indicates that there were still some wide unoccupied spaces wherein the houses had not yet been erected.

At this point we should reiterate that the Seventy Weeks were to start -- NOT from the *building* of the city (much less from its completion) but -- from the *going forth of the word* to restore and to build it. In Ezra 1:1-4 we have the record of the word *going forth*, which perfectly fulfilled both Isaiah's and Jeremiah's prophecies, which also perfectly answered Daniel's prayer, and which perfectly corresponds to the words of Gabriel. Also, we should realize, the Bible gives GREAT PROMINENCE to this decree of Cyrus, and the date of it is given in two passages -- 2 Chronicles 36:22 and Ezra 1:1.

On the other side of the coin, we find that there is absolutely nothing in Nehemiah 2 that answers to the words of the angel -- no commandment or decree going forth -- but merely *letters* given to Nehemiah granting him safe conduct as far as Jerusalem, and letters to the keeper of the king's forest ordering him to supply timber for the *gates*, for the *wall* of the city and for Nehemiah's house.

Finally, the epoch-making decree of Cyrus is related to the entire scheme of Bible chronology because it was 70 years from the beginning of the captivity in Babylon -- whereas the 7th year of Artaxerxes and the 20th year of Artaxerxes (mentioned in Nehemiah 2) is, at best, an uncertainty! In fact, the word "Artaxerxes" is a TITLE meaning *chief-ruler* given to all the Persian kings. Some are of the opinion that the ruler mentioned in Nehemiah is Darius (Hystaspes), and the same person as the Ahasuerus of Esther. Others think he was Longimanus, who supposedly followed Xerxes and Artabanus but, as we have seen, was none other than Xerxes! With the present state of knowledge we have at our disposal, this question cannot be settled. However, as to Cyrus -- THERE IS NO UNCERTAINTY AT ALL!

### 3. "Unto the Messiah"

The words "unto the Messiah the Prince" define the goal toward which the long chronological line of the Bible had been steadily moving. In the time of Daniel the voice of prophecy was about to be quieted, and the inspired history of YEHOVAH God's ancient people was about to come to an end. But, before the Biblical record was about to close, the final stage of the Old Testament chronology was made known to "Daniel the Prophet" -- and was recorded by him in the Bible. From the going forth of the decree of Cyrus unto the Deliverer -- of whom Cyrus was a remarkable type -- was to be a period of 69 "sevens" of years.

The words "unto the Messiah" reveal to us with absolute clarity and certainty to *what point* in the life-time of Yeshua the Messiah the measure of 69 sevens (483 years) must reach. The very word Messiah -- which is equivalent to the Greek *Christos* -- means "the Anointed." Now when, during the Messiah's life-time, was he *anointed* and presented to Israel? The answer is clearly given in the Gospels and in the Book of Acts. It was at HIS BAPTISM IN THE JORDAN RIVER -- for it was at this time that the holy spirit descended upon him in the shape of a dove. And it was at this time that John the Baptist bore witness to him as the Son of YEHOVAH God and the Lamb of YEHOVAH God. As the apostle Peter declared in Acts 10:38: "God *anointed* Jesus of Nazareth

with the holy spirit and with power." And from this time on Yeshua gave himself to his public Messianic ministry as a "minister of the circumcision."

The Messiah himself testified to this after his return to Galilee in the power of the spirit where, according to Isaiah 9:1-2, the "Great Light" was to arise -- see also Matthew 3:12-16. On the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue in Nazareth and read these remarkable words from the Book of Isaiah: "The spirit of the LORD is upon me, because He hath *anointed* me to preach the Gospel to the poor"; and then, having sat down, and the eyes of all being fastened intently upon him, he said, "This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears" (Luke 4:16-21). Therefore, Yeshua declared himself to be the "Anointed" one -- the *Messiah* -- at that time.

John the Baptist was sent to "bear witness" of the Messiah, and "that he should be made manifest to Israel" (John 1:6-7, 31). This special ministry of John was discharged by him at the time of the Messiah's baptism. Therefore, when Yeshua had been "anointed" with the holy spirit, and



**Mosaic of the Messiah's baptism, found the Arian Baptistery in Ravenna.**

had been "made manifest to Israel" by John's witness, the words of the prophecy "unto the Anointed one" were then *completely fulfilled*. From the time of this remarkable event, down to the day of his death, the Messiah was constantly before the people of Israel in his new Messianic role, and was continuously devoting himself to fulfilling his Messianic service in doing good, speaking YEHOVAH's words, healing the sick, restoring sight to the blind, cleansing the lepers, raising the dead, and preaching the good news of the Kingdom of YEHOVAH God!

As a matter of fact, even before he announced himself in the synagogue in Nazareth as YEHOVAH God's "Anointed One," Yeshua plainly said to the woman of Samaria "I *that speak unto thee am He*" (John 4:25-26) when she spoke of "*Messiah, Who is called Christ.*" Moreover, when the Samaritans came to see him after hearing the woman's report, he fully revealed himself so that they were constrained to confess him, saying, "We have heard him ourselves, and KNOW that this is indeed *the Christ (the Anointed One)*, the Saviour of the world" (verse 42).

The very purpose, as well as the outcome of John the Baptist's public testimony to the Messiah, is clearly revealed by the words of those who followed him after hearing that testimony. We find mentioned that "One of the two who heard John speak and followed him (Yeshua) was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. He first findeth his own brother and saith unto him, We have found the *Messias*, which is, being interpreted, the *Christ*" (John 1:40-41).

In these scriptures we find stated in both Hebrew and Greek, through the agency of the holy spirit, the important fact that Yeshua was the Anointed One. The significance of this should not be lost. That "this Jesus *is the Christ*" is the great point of apostolic testimony (Acts 17:3) -- and it is the substance of "our faith," for "whosoever believeth that *Jesus is the Christ* is born of God" (I John 5:1, 4-5). It is also the rock (foundation) upon which he builds his church -- see Matthew 16:18 and 1 Corinthians 3:11.

YEHOVAH God's spirit has given us proof upon proof that, from Yeshua's baptism and manifestation to Israel, he was, in the fullest sense, the MESSIAH or the Anointed of YEHOVAH God. Obviously there was no *previous* event in the lifetime of the Messiah that could, in any way, be taken as fulfilling the words of Gabriel. And it is equally as clear that no *subsequent* event could be taken as the fulfillment of those words. There could be no subsequent occasion when the Messiah was any more the "Anointed One" than when the spirit descended upon him at his baptism in the Jordan. Thus the scriptures themselves exclude all other possibilities and lock squarely onto the occasion when he was *Anointed* and presented to Israel in his Messianic role. HIS BAPTISM THEREFORE MARKED THE TERMINATION OF THE 69 WEEKS OF DANIEL 9:25 AND THE BEGINNING OF THE LAST OF THE 70 WEEKS.

In addition to the above evidence, we have the culminating proof that the epoch of his baptism -- and *this alone* -- is *formally dated in the Bible*, and his age at the time is stated. For in Luke 3:1-3 the time of the preaching and baptism of John is given with extraordinary accuracy -- which certifies to us that that era has a place of special importance in connection with Bible chronology as a whole. It is an impressive fact that both Cyrus' decree and John's baptism -- that is, both the BEGINNING and the ENDING of the 69 weeks -- are set before us with the greatest detail, and that they are given with reference to the reigns of *Gentile rulers*. One is given as occurring "in the first year of Cyrus, king of Persia," and the other "in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar." Writes Philip Mauro --

This is a clear indication that the things which were to be consummated within the "determined" period of seventy weeks were matters which concerned, not the Jews only, but all mankind, having to do with the salvation of Gentiles as well as Jews. God's dealings therefore had been matters of Jewish history; but now, beginning with the voice of one crying in the wilderness, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord," a new era was beginning, one in which God's dealings were to be matters of *world-history*. It is appropriate, therefore, that we should have at this precise point a change from terms of Jewish to terms of Gentile chronology.

### *The One Week*

We have seen that 69 of the 70 prophetic weeks were completed at the baptism of Yeshua the Messiah and his manifestation to Israel through the testimony of John the Baptist. This leaves but "one week" (Daniel 9:27) of the prophetic period. In the prophecy that week is set apart from the other 69. The reason for this is the fact that in that particular "week" there occurred the most fantastic and transcendent events of all time -- and of all creation! For this is the period wherein the Messiah was made known to Israel and began his ministry; and the period wherein he made atonement for the sins of the people and wherein the holy spirit came down from heaven and the Kingdom of YEHOVAH God was opened to all believers.

There are many out there, including some in the Churches of God, that erroneously teach that the 70th week of the prophecy of Daniel 9 is disconnected from the other 69 and thrust way into the future. These false teachers claim that Daniel 9:27 has nothing to do the Messiah -- but with a future Antichrist. It is not the purpose of this article to cover this deceptive doctrine, but suffice it to point out that the expression "seventy weeks" -- as a measure of time -- can only mean

CONTINUOUS, or CONSECUTIVE, weeks. And, understand this, if this measure of time be broken off at the end of the 69th week, then the great events with which the prophecy is concerned -- namely the "cutting off" of the Messiah (thus finishing the transgression, making an end of sin, making reconciliation for iniquity, etc.) -- would be left OUTSIDE THE SEVENTY WEEKS ALTOGETHER!! It is sufficient to say at this time that this viewpoint is totally destitute of support in the Bible -- and contrary to the terms of the prophecy itself. It should be pointed out, however, that the words "for one week" in Daniel 9:27 of the Authorized Version do not give the true sense of the original -- there being no "for" in the text, nor anything to imply it. The true sense of the passage, as revealed in the Septuagint, is that the "one week" (the last of the 70, of which 69 had previously been accounted for) would witness the confirming of the New Covenant with many whereby the sacrifices and oblations of the Old Covenant were caused to cease -- and the things predicted in verse 24 were fulfilled. For more details read Matthew 26:28 (noting the words "covenant" and "many"), and Hebrews 10:9.

As Daniel states in 9:27, it was "in the midst of the week" that the Messiah was crucified, because his ministry lasted three and a half years according to the Book of John. The last verse is entirely appropriate -- in fact, necessary -- to complete the prophecy of the Messiah. To assign that verse to some future Antichrist is to insert into the prophecy an element that is utterly foreign to it -- and which destroys its unity! It also destroys the effect of the marvelous fulfillment -- through the death and resurrection of Yeshua the Messiah -- of this amazing prophecy.

### *"The Time" Fulfilled*

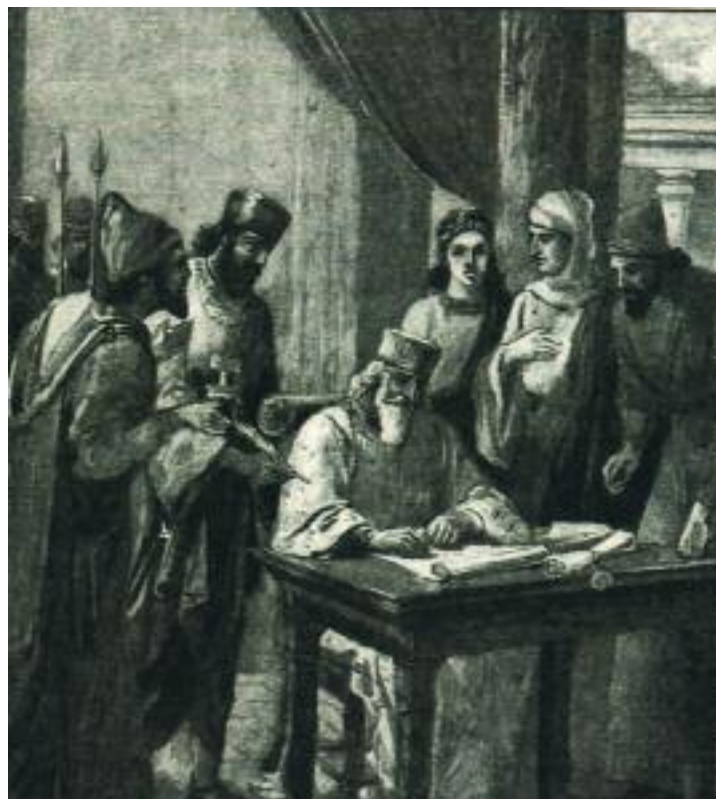
The first proclamation of the Messiah, recorded in Mark 1:14-15, had reference to this amazing "time" -- the 70th week of the prophecy. There can be little doubt about it because it was right at the beginning of that 70th week that the Messiah "came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the Kingdom of God, and saying, *The time is fulfilled, and the Kingdom of God is at hand; repent ye and believe the gospel.*" Clearly, the 70th week had now come, for the 69th week had only brought us "unto the Messiah." That week is the only "time" whose measure had been given in the unfulfilled prophetic scriptures. It was THE TIME OF ALL TIMES -- the time of Immanuel -- when Yeshua fulfilled his role as the Messiah, preaching, healing, blessing and dying for the sins of the people, to rise from the dead and enter into his ministry as High Priest in heaven. It is the "time" when the holy spirit came down to abide with men, and the gospel of the Kingdom of YEHOVAH God went out to first Israel and then the world.

The Messiah was born in 5 B.C., therefore the Messiah's 30th year, corresponding to the 15th year of Tiberius Caesar, would be 26 A.D. -- and his death, resurrection and ascension -- and the coming of the holy spirit -- was in 30 A.D. When dying on the tree, the Messiah prayed for his murderers, saying "Father forgive them," and the answer is seen in the fact that YEHOVAH God withheld the judgment -- the destruction of Jerusalem, foretold by Daniel and by the Messiah in Matthew 24 and Luke 21 -- for just 40 years when the city was destroyed by the armies of Titus, "the people of the prince that shall come," in 70 A.D. During this period of time the gospel of the Kingdom of YEHOVAH God was diligently preached "to the Jew first," and tens of thousands were converted.

As we can see, the history of the children of Israel began and ended with a probationary period of 40 years. The first period of 40 years' probation began with the sacrifice of the Passover lamb in Egypt; the second began with the antitype, the sacrifice of Yeshua the Messiah -- the true Passover Lamb. At the close of the first of those periods YEHOVAH God brought the children of Israel into the land He had promised to their fathers. At the close of the second He drove them out of that land and scattered them among all the nations of the world.

There is one -- and only one -- continuous line of dated events in the Bible. It extends from the creation of Adam to the resurrection of the Messiah, and includes in it the prophecies of Daniel and the period of the Persian kings. Without this Divine historical guideline important events in the Bible narrative can be misconstrued and placed in the wrong context. Instead of relying on man-made chronologies we should look to YEHOVAH God's Word for the TRUE time line that correctly unravels the prophecies of His servants.

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**King Cyrus signs the decree permitting the Jews to return from Babylon and rebuild Jerusalem.**

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# Is *JUDAISM* the Religion of Moses?

This tenth installment reveals the truth about the Jewish sects in Palestine in the days of the Messiah.

**Ernest Martin**  
**Part Ten**

**A**LL the sects of Judaism in the New Testament period had their roots within the time of religious anarchy after the death of Alexander the Great. That was the time the Egyptians and then the Syrians dominated Palestine.

When these foreign elements came into Palestine, they brought with them their respective cultures -- their forms of Hellenism. Every phase of life was affected by Hellenism. Nothing escaped its influence. That attractiveness of the new culture was overwhelming. The Jews accepted it almost as readily as any of the countries of the East which had been conquered by Alexander the Great.

Now let's continue this series.

## *Sects of Judaism*

"Because the Jews represent the major non-Greek element in the eventual fusion it is important to observe that their reaction to Hellenism was INITIALLY NO DIFFERENT from that of other non-Greek peoples" (Goodspeed, *The Apocrypha*, p. xiv).

The Jews, after the peaceful introduction of Hellenism by the Egyptians, accepted it almost totally. And not the least affected by this acceptance of Hellenism were former religious beliefs of the Jews. Changes were made in the Jewish religious services. The foreign influence was so strong and the religious inclination so weak that the period had been called, as we have before mentioned, a time of religious anarchy.

The very basis of Hellenism was the philosophy of "free-thinking"; the right of the individual to think and reason for himself. This philosophy of individualism was accepted by the Jews. The Jews, like their Egyptian rulers, began to think on their own in regard to the arts, sciences, religion, etc.

As with Hellenism in Greece, Syria and Egypt, so in Palestine, the INDIVIDUAL and HIS OPINION became important to the educated. The study of Scripture, when indulged, became more of a private matter and of individual interpretation, as it is commonly done today, rather than of col-

lective interpretation from an authoritative body, like the Sopherim were. In most cases the Scripture became interpreted according to the prevailing custom of viewing everything in the light of Hellenistic "enlightenment."

We find that during the period of religious anarchy there arose a number of individuals endeavoring to teach the Scriptures. These men were almost wholly laymen -- the priests, on the whole, thought it not necessary to bother themselves with teaching or studying the Scriptures of their forefathers. At the end of the anarchy, we find these individual laymen establishing themselves, with a few of the faithful priests, into a body of religious authority among the Jews. However, when these men came together they brought with them many varying opinions of the Scriptures they had learned in independent study. Some of the laymen and priests had accepted much of the Hellenistic ways of teaching as well as many Hellenistic customs and practices. There were some teachers, however, who were less inclined towards Hellenism. Yet all these teachers in one way or another were influenced with Hellenism. There is no doubt of this (Herford, *Talmud and Apocrypha*, p. 77).

The differences of opinion among these various teachers finally evolved into the real beginning of the sects of Judaism. All of the sects can be shown to have had their origins within or immediately after the period of religious anarchy. And it is also important to indicate that ALL the sects which came out of that anarchy had some form of Hellenism attached to their beliefs. In fact, the various sects of Judaism can be categorized according to the amount of apparent Hellenization that each sect absorbed. There were some sects which embodied much of the Hellenistic spirit; others a moderate amount; but hardly one which absorbed little.

It will be profitable to briefly survey the sects of Judaism which existed in the days of Christ. It will be obvious that none of them were keeping the true and unblemished Law of Moses.

### *The Truth About the Essenes*

The first sect to be dealt with will be the Essenes. This group is placed first because they represent the sect which consumed the greatest amount of foreign doctrine.

"Greek culture must have had a POWERFUL INFLUENCE upon Palestine since the time of Alexander the Great -- it was not repressed until the Maccabean rising -- it is only natural, if we find ACTUAL PROOF OF THIS INFLUENCE OF HELLENISM IN THE CIRCLE OF THE ESSENES" (Schurer, *The Jewish People in the Time of Jesus Christ*, sec. ii, vol. ii, p. 218).

There were certain religious customs and beliefs of the Jewish sect of the Essenes which were totally Hellenistic in origin. For one, Josephus tells us they accepted the doctrine of the immortality of the soul (*Antiquities of the Jews*, xviii, 1, 5). He mentions this foreign belief of the Essenes in several places. Notice:

"For their doctrine is this: That bodies are corruptible, and that the matter they are made of is not permanent; but THAT THE SOULS ARE IMMORTAL, AND CONTINUE FOR EVER ... And IS LIKE THE OPINIONS OF THE GREEKS, that good souls have their souls beyond the oceans, etc." (*Wars of the Jews*, II, p. 11).

Josephus goes on to say, speaking of the doctrine of the immortality of the soul: "And indeed the Greeks seem to me TO HAVE FOLLOWED THE SAME NOTION" (*ibid.*).

Notice that Josephus says that these Essenes taught their doctrine as did the Greeks. This doctrine is certainly of foreign origin, for no such doctrine is found in the Scriptures.

"According to him [Josephus], the Essenes had always professed the PUREST DOCTRINES OF GREEK PHILOSOPHY concerning THE IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL" (Renan, *History of the People of Israel*, vol. v, p. 56).

This particular teaching IS OF ITSELF PROOF OF THE INFLUENCE OF FOREIGN PHILOSOPHIES (Schurer, *The Jewish People in the Time of Jesus Christ*, sec. ii, vol. ii, p. 214). And further, he says:

"If then only one sentence which he (Josephus) says concerning the anthropology of the Essenes is true, IT IS CERTAIN THAT THEIR DOCTRINE OF MAN IS DUALISTIC, i.e. NON-JEWISH" (*ibid.*).

There is absolutely no doubt that the Essenes had accepted the doctrine of the immortality of the soul directly from Hellenism. This doctrine is completely foreign to Scripture.

### ***Other Heathen Doctrines***

The Essenes also adhered to the doctrine of asceticism -- the doctrine of perennial self-denial of even the good things of life. This belief as a continuing custom is entirely alien to the teachings of the Scriptures. However, such practices were common among certain Greek sects and Egyptian philosophies (*Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 11th ed., vol. ii, pp. 717, 720).

Because of this peculiar belief (which was condemned by the Apostle Paul in Colossians 2:23), the Essenes developed themselves into monastic orders and repudiated marriage (*Wars of the Jews*, II, 8, 2). In no place does the Scripture command an individual to withdraw into a monastery or nunnery and live a life of celibatic asceticism. In fact, the New Testament commands a person NOT to deliberately withdraw himself from society (I Cor. 5:9-10) and it teaches that marriage is entirely honorable and holy (Heb. 13:4).

### ***Essenes Worshiped Toward Sun***

While the Temple was on earth, the worshipers of God prayed facing the Temple in Jerusalem (I Kings 8:28, 29). Daniel prayed three times a day in this manner (Dan. 6:10). The Temple in Jerusalem was designed symbolically, from its origin, to be the residence of God, and the people were to sacrifice at the Temple and pray toward it.

The Essenes, however, omitted two requirements of God which were obvious violations of Scripture. They refused to sacrifice at the Temple, or anywhere for that matter; and they did not face the Temple when they prayed. They worshiped and prayed TOWARDS THE SUN! (*Wars of*

*the Jews*, ii, 8, 9.) This act was strictly forbidden in the Scriptures (Ezekiel 8:15, 16), but nevertheless, the Essenes turned their backs on the Temple and prayed towards the sun.

Relative to this esteem of the sun by the Essenes, Schurer writes that this clearly "leads to the conclusion, that they were in real earnest IN THEIR RELIGIOUS ESTIMATION OF THE SUN. However this may be, the very turning to the sun in prayer WAS CONTRARY to Jewish customs and notions, which REQUIRED THE TURNING TO THE TEMPLE and expressly repudiated THE DIRECTION TOWARDS THE SUN AS HEATHENISH" (*The Jewish People in the Time of Jesus Christ*, sec ii, vol. ii, p. 213).

To this, Schurer adds:

"Thus are we more and more driven to the view, THAT FOREIGN INFLUENCE COOPERATED IN THE FORMATION OF ESSENISM" (*ibid.*, p. 214).

### *Essenism Was Extreme Pharisaicism*

It must not be supposed that Essenism, or any of the sects of Judaism, were completely heathen in doctrines in all respects. This was not the case! What existed was a combining or a blending of pagan doctrines with certain teachings of the Scripture. The Essenes kept the Sabbath, circumcision, and many of the other customs common to the Jews. They also kept many of the traditional laws of the Pharisees. We are told expressly by Schurer (*ibid.*, p. 209) that the rigid religious legalism of the Essenes and their punctilious care for ceremonial cleanness, were genuinely Pharisaic in origin.

The Essenes were, however, not a part of the popular Pharisee sect. They were entirely separate and on their own. They may, however, have represented a group that began as a division of the Pharisaic sect and broke away early after the religious anarchy ended. For even though there were many doctrinal differences between the two sects, there were certain similarities. Schurer again tells us: "Essenism then is in the first place MERELY PHARISAICISM IN THE SUPERLATIVE DEGREE" (*ibid.*).

The sect of the Essenes were actually more rigorous and exacting (if that were possible) than the Pharisees as a whole. They even went beyond the Pharisaic commandments in regard to being ritualistically clean.

"The Essene completely separated himself from the multitude and formed exclusive societies, in which similarity of disposition and endeavour afforded the possibility of realizing the ideal of a life of absolute ceremonial cleanness" (*ibid.*, pp. 210, 211).

Thus, this extreme Pharisaicism led to asceticism and their other peculiar customs that most Jews completely disavowed. The Essenes went quite a bit farther than the Pharisees in accepting, outright, many of the customs of the heathen they learned while under Hellenistic influences.

"The doctrines of the Essenes were, however, tinged by FOREIGN INFLUENCE. In their neglect of the Temple sacrifices, and in their condemnation of wedlock, THEY

DEPARTED from the full observance of the Law ... THEY ALSO APPROACHED THE EGYPTIAN SCHOOL in their allegorical interpretation of many parts of Scripture" (Conder, *Judas Maccabaeus*, p. 210).

There is no question that the Essenes were recipients of many pagan doctrines -- and many of them came from Egyptian Hellenism. Schurer again tells us that Essenism represents "a Judaism of quite peculiarly blended ultra-Pharisaic and Alexandrian views [and] appears in alliance with Pythagoreanism [a pagan philosophy] AND WITH MANY RITES OF EGYPTIAN PRIESTS" (*ibid.*, p. 208).

It is clear that Egyptian Hellenism, the Greek philosophies inherited by Egypt, was the primary influence upon the Essene doctrines. Their teachings were certainly far from those of Moses.

"So Essenism can be understood ONLY WHEN REGARDED AS A BLENDING OF JEWISH AND GREEK IDEAS" (*Ency. Biblica*, col. 2011).

### *The Truth About the Pharisees*

Like the Essenes, many of the Pharisees had adopted the pagan belief in the immortality of the soul (*Wars of the Jews*, II, 8, 14). This doctrine is plainly recognized by scholars, as has been shown above, to have come from heathenism, not from Scripture.

However, it seems as if the Pharisees were not willing to go as far as the Essenes in its complete pagan interpretation. Some of the Pharisees seem to have had certain reservations concerning the new doctrine. Josephus, himself a Pharisee and thoroughly acquainted with their doctrines, makes a vague distinction between the Pharisee belief and that of the Essenes. He says the Pharisees believed in an "immortal vigour" to be in the body; while the Essenes believed outright in the "immortality of the soul" (*Antiquities of the Jews*, xviii, 1, 3 & 4).

There seems to have been doubts in the minds of some Pharisees in regard to this doctrine. However, it appears certain that most of them believed in it, but with varying degrees of interpretation.

Of course, the doctrine of the immortality of the soul is not taught in the Scripture. In fact, the Scripture teaches just the opposite. For example, we read in Ezekiel 18:4, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." See also verse 21. Clearly, a soul can die! And also, the New Testament teaches that only Christ has now immortality -- no other man has (I Tim. 6:15, 16).

### *Who Were the Apocalyptists*

In the second installment of this series mention was made of other minor religious sects which have been called by our modern historians by the name Apocalyptists. The name denotes those who supposedly reveal "hidden truths" or "secret doctrines."

There are extant several books written by these minor sects, or perhaps only by individuals, which show their peculiar beliefs or their prophetic expectations. These sects certainly differed

from the major groups of Judaism. And they assuredly do not represent any large religious movements among the Jews. "The Apocalyptic literature certainly represents an element in the Judaism of its time, BUT IT WAS AN ELEMENT OF VERY MINOR IMPORTANCE compared with those [the Pharisees, etc.] in which lay the real vitality and strength of Judaism. It is a fundamental mistake to suppose that the Apocalyptic literature can explain what Judaism really stood for, in that or any other age" (Herford, *Judaism in the New Testament Period*, p. 11).

The writings of these few individuals or religious sects were completely rejected by the Jews. Some of the reasons for their rejection by the other sects is because they were obviously contradictory with one another in many ways; they were at variance with the popular teaching of the Scriptures.

All of the writings of these Apocalyptists were written DURING or sometime after the period of the religious anarchy. Some were written even as late as the First Century A.D. Their teachings on the whole, while having a Jewish basis, reflect men's opinions and ideas which were absorbed from Hellenism. The teachings of the various books are extremely diverse. Strong elements of Hellenism are found in some, and in others to a lesser degree (*Ency. Biblica*, col. 2010, 2011).

There is no question that some of their teachings, even the manner in which some of them wrote, were directly influenced by Egyptian and Syrian Hellenism. Their teachings represent those of some individual teachers who, after the religious anarchy, began to teach their own religious beliefs independent of the Pharisees, but nonetheless, equally as erroneous.

"Traces of Syrian Hellenism, which had been implanted among the less educated masses, endured, and the victorious Judean people [after the successful Maccabean Revolt] harbored a growing semi-Hellenized crowd who had NEITHER GRASPED THE PURE HEBRAIC FAITH nor received the pure Hellenic spirit. This populace [certain leaders among them] FOSTERED THE APOCALYPTIC LITERATURE WITH ITS FANTASTIC AND YET SOMEWHAT MATERIALISTIC SPIRITUALITY, which, while it was largely an expression of the Hebraic mind and a development of the prophetic vision, SHOWS A MARKED IMPRESS OF FOREIGN DOCTRINE" (Bentwich, *Hellenism*, p. 335).

The principles behind the apocalyptic literature are an infusion of certain Jewish beliefs with Hellenism. All of the writings of these minor sects, or perhaps only individual writers, were quite varied and contradictory.

"The aspect that that literature presents is of so diversified a character that it is difficult to combine all the DIFFERENT ELEMENTS into one connected whole" (Schurer, *The Jewish People in the Time of Jesus Christ*, sec. ii, vol. iii, p. 1).

### *Were These Groups Akin to the Essenes?*

Because so many of the doctrines of the writers of these various books seem to show a near kinship to certain Essenistic beliefs, some scholars have endeavored to show that the authors were

undoubtedly part of that group (*International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, vol. i, p. 164). This may well be the case. Josephus mentions that the Essenes were fond of keeping "secret" books that related doctrines only the initiated could know ("Wars of the Jews," ii, 8, 7). At least we are assured that these sects who wrote the various apocalyptic books were closer in doctrine to the Essenes than any other religious group among the Jews. They were not Pharisees; this much is certain!

"Those who really do know the Pharisaic literature, INCLUDING ALL THE GREAT JEWISH SCHOLARS, agree in the view that the Apocryphal and Apocalyptic writings represent a type (or types) of Judaism DIFFERENT from the Pharisaic type" (Herford, *Judaism in the New Testament Period*, p. 123).

### *The Truth About the Sadducees*

The Sadducees completely rejected the traditions of the elders. They maintained that the Scripture alone was sufficient for religious truth (Lauterbach, *Rabbinic Essays*, p. 209). In this connection, the Sadducees were certainly right.

The actions of the Sadducees against the erroneous opinions of the Pharisees seemingly puts them in a good light -- as though they were zealously upholding the Law of God and His divine truth. However, the Sadducean position was not as roseate as it may appear on the surface. There were real reasons behind the Sadducees' apparent stand for the acceptance of only the Scripture, and those reasons were not always out of honor for the Scripture or even God.

Can we say the Sadducees respected the Scripture when many of the plain teachings of the Word of God they openly renounced? They clearly rejected the Scripture teaching of the resurrection; they did not believe in angels nor spirits. Yet the Scriptures taught these truths! (See Job 14:4; Eze. 37:1-14; Dan. 12:1-3; Exo. 14:19; Dan. 6:22; I Sam. 18:10, etc.) To reject such fundamental doctrines as the resurrection and the existence of the spirit world, shows that the Sadducees did not hold the Scripture teaching in very high esteem.

### *Why Sadducees Rejected Traditions of Elders*

It will come as a surprise to many people to realize that the reason the majority of Sadducees rejected the Pharisaic traditions of the elders, so-called, was NOT because of a reverence for the Scripture and an abhorrence for heathen customs. Their motive for rejecting these new religious laws, in reality, was on account OF THEIR LACK OF INTEREST IN RELIGION. They did not care for ANY MORE religious laws than were necessary.

It is clearly known that the majority of Sadducees were not zealous for religion. Their main interest lay in securing for themselves political positions of power among the influential people in Palestine -- they revered the gaining of wealth and power more than anything else. They did not want to subject themselves to any of the religious laws of the Pharisees, nor [even] of the Scripture, as we will soon see. The Sadducees represented the "worldly-minded" sect of the Jews -- not especially interested in religion. (Almost every society has had or presently has such religious sects, and the Jews were no exception -- they had their "Unitarian" sect.)

"They [the Sadducees] saw in the traditions of the elders an excess of legal strictness which they refused to have imposed upon them, while the advanced religious views [of the Pharisees] were, on the one hand SUPERFLUOUS TO THEIR WORLDLY-MINDEDNESS, and on the other, inadmissible by their higher culture and enlightenment" (Schurer, *The Jewish People in the Time of Jesus Christ*, sec. ii, vol. ii, p. 41).

The Sadducees simply did not want to be burdened with more religious laws. They thought the Laws of Scripture were certainly enough, without adding more! And, in fact, sometimes, if the Scripture did not teach what they wanted, they would even disallow it.

"The Sadducees, with the easy indifference of men of the world, finding that THERE WAS QUITE ENOUGH IN THE LAW FOR THEM TO OBEY, denied that there was anything obligatory outside the Books of Moses (Renan, *History of the People of Israel*, vol. 5, pp. 41, 42).

With their rejection of the traditions of the elders and their acceptance of only the Scripture, it is not to be supposed that they were interested in getting the people back to the religion of Moses or in bringing the people to a proper reverence for the Scripture. They were willing to accept just what they had to, in order to retain THEIR political positions among the rich and wealthy of Jerusalem (*Antiquities of the Jews*, xviii, 10, 6).

"Their whole doctrinal position GAVE THEM LIBERTY TO FOLLOW THEIR DESIRES FOR POLITICAL POWER AND WORLDLY SATISFACTION. Hence they had a DEEPER INTEREST IN SUSTAINING THE POWER OF THE REIGNING PRINCE [whether Jewish or Roman] THAN IN MAINTAINING THE OBSERVANCES OF MOSES" (Riggs, *A History of the Jewish People*, p. 111).

While on the surface it may have seemed like the Sadducees were a little closer to the truth, because they maintained that the Scripture was sufficient Law to have, yet the fact is, they were just as far away from the truth -- even farther! While the Sadducees blamed the Pharisees for not adhering to Scripture for their doctrines, they themselves were rejecting doctrine after doctrine of plain Scripture. They were no more following the complete directions of the Scriptures than were the Pharisees.

### ***Sadducees Reject Other Scripture Teaching!***

Throughout the Scriptures we are distinctly shown by prophecies and by examples that God at certain times intervenes in the affairs of individuals and of nations. There are multitudes of prophecies which show that God is very soon going to personally intervene in the affairs of mankind. See, for example, the Books of Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel.

But the Sadducees believed not a word of this! They believed that God did not direct the mind of man in any form or manner -- all things that happened were the result of man's own doing, God never intervened!

"And for the Sadducees, they take away fate [the determination of God], and say there is no such thing, and that the events of human affairs are not at its [God's] disposal; but they suppose that ALL our actions are in our power, so that we are ourselves the cause of what is good, and receive what is evil from our own folly" ("Antiquities of the Jews," xiii, 5, 9; *Wars of the Jews*, ii, 14).

The Sadducees were wrong in this! In the Scripture it shows that God at times directs individuals and nations to do certain duties (Isa. 10:13-15, etc.). Of course, not every single action an individual does is being determined by God (Eccl. 9:11). The Pharisees, in this case, understood correctly that God intervenes in the affairs of mankind when He considers it necessary for the carrying out of His plan, but on the whole, mankind's actions are his own (*Antiquities of the Jews*, xiii, 5, 9).

The Sadducees certainly did not have belief in many truths of the Scripture. By disbelieving in the resurrection, disbelieving in the spirit world and also rejecting the fact that God ever intervenes in the affairs of man, they show clearly that they had little regard for the Word of God.

"They [the Sadducees] were very nearly free-thinkers, and in all cases were men of little religion, mere worldlings. Their wisdom was all worldly. The doctrines attributed to them by Josephus, concerning liberty and divine Providence [that is, the lack of divine Providence], are interpretations or compromises after the Greek fashion. For them all [the Sadducees] this was only an attempt to reduce the supernatural to its minimum, a process for eliminating God" (Renan, *History of the People of Israel*, vol. v, p. 40).

As pointed out by Schurer: "THEIR INTERESTS WERE ENTIRELY IN THIS WORLD, AND THEY HAD NO SUCH INTENSIVELY RELIGIOUS INTEREST AS THE PHARISEES" (*The Jewish People in the Time of Jesus Christ*, sec. ii, vol. ii, p. 39).

### ***Brief History of the Sadducees!***

When religious authority was again established among the Jews after the period of religious anarchy, the Pharisees were anxious for the people to start living a religious life, even though they brought into their religion many of the new customs from Hellenism. However, the majority of Sadducees made no real attempt to return to religion. They certainly saw no reason for accepting the many new customs as extra religious duties to perform.

The majority of Sadducees were priests (*Cycl. of Bib. Thee. and Ecc. Lit.*, vol. ix, p. 238) who had been ordained of God to teach the people the Scriptures. The forefathers of the priests, the Sopherim, were entirely faithful in their appointed task. But the majority of priests after the period of religious anarchy MADE NO ATTEMPT to teach the people the Scriptures. One of the main reasons for their attitude was because most of them had been out-and-out Hellenists! (Herford, *Talmud and Apocrypha*, pp. 77, 78). Among all the Jews in Palestine, the priests had become the most Hellenistic.

After the religious anarchy, when the lay leaders, the Pharisees, began to exert an influence over the people, they "refused to recognize the authority of the priests as a class, and inasmuch as

many of THE PRIESTS HAD PROVEN UNFAITHFUL GUARDIANS OF THE LAW, they would not entrust to them the religious life of the people" (Lauterbach, *Rabbinic Essays*, p. 209).

Thus, many of the priests joined with, or rather comprised the sect of the Sadducees, which, in all principles, rivaled the Pharisees. The origin of the priestly sect of the Sadducees was actually prompted as a reaction to the Pharisees' taking over much of the religious control of the Jewish people. The Sadducean sect was not formed because of any endeavor on the part of the priests to return to the original Law of Moses; nor did the priests attempt to gain the people to accept only the Scriptures as Law. This sect evolved as merely a reaction to the assumption of power by the lay Pharisees.

### *Many Priests Continue in Hellenism*

After assimilating much of the "higher culture and enlightenment" of Hellenism, the priests were not altogether ready to disengage themselves from it. Even after the religious anarchy, many of the priests retained their love for the culture.

The Sadducees actually represented the division of the Jews which continued a reverence for the ETHICAL VIEWS of Hellenism. It is true that they did NOT hold to the many RELIGIOUS DOCTRINES of the pagan cults of Hellenism, but they did retain many of the social aspects of the culture. It was almost imperative that they did, so the Sadducees thought, for they were in constant contact with the political powers in Jerusalem who found it necessary to adhere to much of the Hellenistic beliefs in order to carry on matters of state with the other countries around. Thus, many of the priests did not completely repent of their secular Hellenism, even though on the religious side they acknowledged the Scriptures as the only Law.

"They [the Sadducees] made, however, THE OPEN DOOR THROUGH WHICH GREEK INFLUENCES CAME BACK INTO THE LAND, and, as another has tersely said, 'the antagonism between them and the Pharisees was really A SECONDARY VERSION of the old feud BETWEEN THE HELLENISTS AND THE HASIDEANS'" (Riggs, *A History of the Jewish People*, p. 111). The Hasideans were those Jews of the Maccabean Revolt who maintained a zeal for religion, and, of course, the Hellenists were the Jews, many of them priests, who had no interest in religion.

It is clear that this comparison is correct. The Sadducees were simply the remnants of the Hellenists who cared nothing for religion, while the Pharisees were descendants of the religionists -- the Hasideans.

"Politically, the Sadducees were, as a party, OPEN TO FOREIGN INFLUENCES, and it was through them THAT HELLENIC CULTURE SPREAD IN ISRAEL" (*The Cambridge Companion to the Bible*, p. 134).

In other words, the Sadducees were really secular Hellenists. Their acceptance of the Scripture as the only code of Law, even though they rejected much of its teachings, was really out of spite to the Pharisees who accepted the so-called traditions of the elders. The Sadducees saw no need of being overly religious by the acceptance of burdensome customs and rites.

"THEIR INTERESTS WERE ENTIRELY IN THIS WORLD, AND THEY HAD NO SUCH INTENSIVELY RELIGIOUS INTEREST AS THE PHARISEES" (Schurer, *The Jewish People in the Time of Jesus Christ*, sec. ii, vol. ii, p. 39).

They had no desire to practice real religion, neither did they think it necessary to teach the people the Laws of God. Even though the majority of Sadducees were priests, and were ordained of God to instruct the people in righteousness, they totally renounced their responsibility.

"Such as they were, the Sadducees had little or no direct influence upon the mass of the people, nor did they seek to have. They made no effort to teach the people, presumably because THE THOUGHT OF DOING SO NEVER ENTERED THEIR MINDS" (Herford, *Judaism in the New Testament Period*, p. 122).

"We shall perhaps be not far wrong if we represent the Sadducees as holding the ancestral religion MAINLY AS AN INHERITANCE and NOT AS A LIVING REALITY ... It is in accordance with this view that THEY DID NOTHING TO ENLARGE THE MEANING OR INCREASE THE INFLUENCE OF THE TORAH as the Pharisees did" (*ibid.*, p. 121).

The Sadducees made no attempt whatever, that we have record of, to make the Scriptures known to the people or to carry out their God-given function of instructing the people in the Law. They did not see the importance of it! In fact, they were even willing to sacrifice the Laws of Scripture if they could gain politically from it.

"They were the LESS RESTRAINED BY ANY RELIGIOUS SCRUPLES from engaging in public affairs WHICH INVOLVED SOME AMOUNT OF COMPROMISE WITH GENTILES" (*ibid.*, p. 122).

Thus, Schurer adequately describes the Sadducees as pre-eminently having "A RECESSION OF THE RELIGIOUS MOTIVE" rather than a zealotry for the Scriptures (*The Jewish People in the Time of Jesus Christ*, sec. ii, vol. ii, p. 39).

### ***What You Should Remember About the Sects***

It becomes quite obvious, when the truth is known, that the sects of Judaism were not really teaching the Law of Moses. What all of them had done, in one degree or another, was to blend many pagan customs and beliefs, along with various man-made opinions, with the Law of Moses and then endeavored to teach their contradictory doctrines as the truth of God.

The Pharisees had accepted many customs of the heathen as so-called traditional laws from Moses. They had also enacted many of their own commandments which by-passed the commands of the Scripture and in fact, the Pharisaic commands even annulled, in many cases, the plain commandments of God.

The Sadducees were disinterested in religion! The only reason, in reality, that they had any connection with religion at all was because most of them were priests who had the hereditary right to minister in the Temple and to have an association with the religious life of the people. They

maintained their hereditary religious right mainly for political purposes in order for them to more easily pursue their worldly-minded aspirations, not out of any desire to teach the people the truth of God.

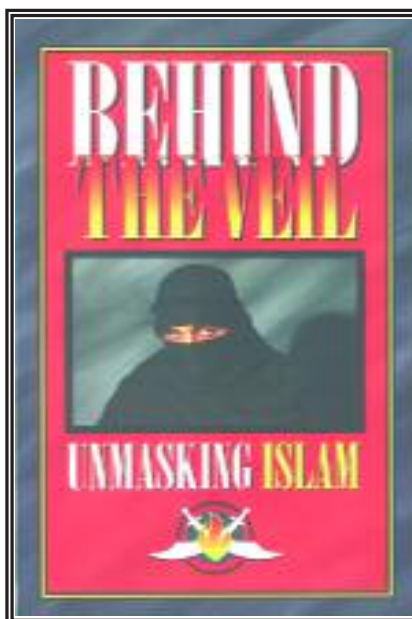
The Essenes had accepted many heathen customs and beliefs without reservation. Almost all their doctrines were antagonistic to the Law of Moses.

The writers of the Apocalyptic books also show, in varying degrees, an impress of foreign doctrines and philosophies. All of the books are different from one another and represent the contradicting opinions of certain individuals or minor sects. The writers of the Apocalyptic books were probably, in one way or another, connected with the Essenes.

Thus, all the religious sects of the Jews can be adequately shown to be schismatic deviations from the pure and simple Law of Moses. They were all affected by the beliefs that were encountered by the Jews during the period of religious anarchy when Egyptian and Syrian Hellenism were rampant throughout Palestine.

The combined numbers of the Jews who belonged to the religious sects of Judaism, however, numbered less than 5% of the total Jewish population of Palestine in the days of Christ. The great majority, the Common People, were not overly interested in religion. From the time of the religious anarchy, there was never any real collective religious authority among the Jews like the Sopherim. All the people went their own ways. The majority never got back to religion as during the days of the Sopherim. Outside of a nominal adherence to some basic forms of religion, the masses were not zealously concerned. And, there can be no doubt that the confusing and contradictory examples of the various sects were discouraging to the populace. Truly, Christ came to a people who had no shepherd to guide them into the truth of God (Matt. 9:36).

**(To Be Continued Next Issue)**



The time has come to expose the growing worldwide religion of Islam.

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# Murder Demands the *Divine Justice* of Capital Punishment!

While this article was written for a British audience, it applies equally as well to the other nations of modern Israel

Michael A. Clark

There is a large body of law-abiding Christian-thinking people who have an ever growing concern at the horrific amount of violence and bloodshed that is stalking our land -- and the failure of the ruling authority to implement true justice. The value of human life has been cheapened to the point where a person can be brutally murdered and the murderer walk free within a few years, only to repeat the crime.

That the abolition of capital punishment has been the direct cause of the cheapening of human life is not open to question. Whatever prison term the murderer serves reflects the value of the victim's life. If, however, the murderer pays for the crime with his or her own life, the State exacts the maximum penalty and places the highest value possible on the life of the victim. *The age of the victim, whether it is a child or elderly adult, should have no bearing on the seriousness of the crime and the need to exact the maximum penalty.*

Since the abolition of capital punishment in 1965, approaching 100 people have been murdered by previously convicted killers. These are killers who subsequently have been released from prison. In effect, many innocent people have been sentenced to death *by the ruling authority itself*, because it has refused to implement true justice. The consequences of

this abdication of responsibility have produced a multitude of other problems.

The principle that the supreme penalty should be paid for the ultimate crime is *true justice and a highly civilized one*, being instituted by the Almighty. The Divine directive is clear in this matter; the ruling authority should not seek to torture the mind of a murderer by means of a cell-existence, reducing him or her to a vegetable. Nor should it offer release to the murderer so that the crime can be repeated. The death penalty is mandatory: the murderer has knowingly brought it upon him or herself.

In the case of kidnaping of persons for ransom, the Law of the Lord requires that this unspeakable crime shall also be punishable by death. This applies whether the victim is found alive or dead (Exodus 21:16). With this law in operation, those into whose hands the criminal placed the victim of kidnaping, while negotiating the ransom demand, would also be liable for the death penalty. This provision would ensure a restraining effect on all those who might otherwise assist the kidnapper to terrorize the community in committing the crime.

In the specific case of Northern Ireland, it was the terrorist killers who, over the years, retained power through acts of murder, and it was through the failure of the government to apply true justice that caused it to lose its authority, and the power that accompanies it. The failure to execute those convicted of the ultimate crime led to a situation where the government found itself having to consult terrorist murderers in the Maze prison.

**All along the ruling authority has failed to implement true justice through fear; fear of pressure groups and fear of making wrongful conviction. The state that abandons true justice through fear will heap to itself a mountain of injustice and determine a course towards eventual self-destruction.**

The fear of convicting the wrong person can never justify the failure to implement true justice. Furthermore, this danger has now been greatly diminished by the huge advance in scientific and forensic testing. We should also keep in mind the fact that the figure of those murdered by killers, who have been released, is vastly greater than those who have been wrongfully convicted of murder since 1965.

In times past, when a breakdown of law and order threatened in the countries of the Celto-Saxon world, there was an instinctive turning to the code of national and social control which has proved to be infallibly effective -- the Law of the Lord. **It is the Creator of Life Who instigated capital punishment in order to safeguard society and the lives of His children.**

The Abolitionist movement, which has grown so strong in recent decades in Britain, is obviously not based on any truly moral grounds, despite its pious protestations to the contrary. It is mainly those who feel that it is, somehow, the fault of society that men are evil and that they

should not be held fully responsible for their actions who have propagated it. Our Maker will never allow man simply to pass off his sin as the fault of his environment.

It is high time as a nation that we woke up to the reality of evil that is in the world. We have rejected [YEHOVAH] God and His Law and this, more than anything else, has brought destruction upon us; but also, the gentleness of the English nature has been abused by other cultures with their violent criminal patterns. The truth is the peace of the country is under attack by violent people that seem to be able to penetrate our borders at will. Yet the defense of the Realm is the *first* priority of government.

Unlawful killings in Britain reached 850 in 2000, compared with just 282 in 1960. Guns are being increasingly used on an everyday basis despite the most stringent legislation on firearms. Innocent, law-abiding citizens are now in constant danger of being robbed, mugged or brutally murdered by an increasing army of thugs who move about the streets of our cities almost with impunity.

The recently announced measures of Britain's Home Secretary to deal with street crime are to be welcomed, but the over 70,000 inmates of our overflowing prisons demand a far greater rethink of what needs to be done. For example, it is estimated that fifty per cent of prisoners are mentally ill. If we took out at least the seriously ill people and gave them treatment, including *spiritual* treatment, in special units or hospitals, they would free up both prison cells and the money for an area that is desperately needed.

We believe that unless and until our national thinking can recover the reality of the true framework of justice for a God-orientated civilization, there is little hope of a re-

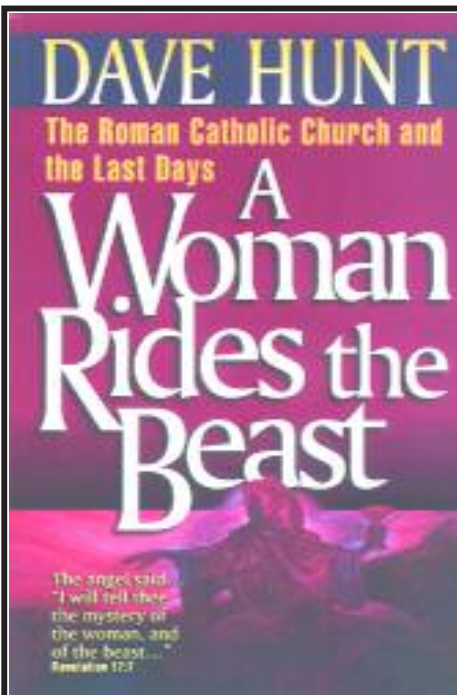
duction of the bestial crimes which are fouling the lives of our people.

While Jesus [Yeshua] taught forgiveness, it was strictly on a person-to-person level. It had nothing whatever to do with the State's responsibility for administering criminal law. *The only person who can forgive the murderer is the victim and that person is dead. The deterrent argument is also completely beside the point: murderers were not executed under the Divine Law merely as examples, but because that is what [YEHOVAH] God's justice demands.*

The lawful and peaceful order of our once great country is passing into the hands of alien powers and criminal hordes. On 2nd May, 2002, Britain yielded up the sovereignty of its courts to the new European human rights rules. Thus, without the approval of the Electorate, Ministers signed a new protocol after a decision by the Lord Chancellor to support the updated charter. This means that those who are supposed to defend the Realm have given away all rights to bring back the death penalty, *even in a time of war.*

It is, therefore, a matter of supreme national importance that the ruling authority in this Realm understands what, over the past three decades, it has increasingly failed to demonstrate it understands. **This is, that Parliament and Government do not have authority from the Electorate to transfer to alien bodies, i.e. the European Union, the Power to govern us and make laws affecting us, on this and other matters.** There can be no question but that the Government should reintroduce capital punishment regardless of what the supranational powers in Europe seek to dictate.

The sculptures over the main entrance of the Central Criminal Court in London, represent the Recording Angel in the center, with Fortitude and Truth. Above this are the words **"Defend the children of the poor and punish the wrongdoer"** being a paraphrase of Psalm 82:3-4. These are words that need to be remembered and acted upon by those who would rule in righteousness if we are to progress at all in the 21st century.



Many are amazed to discover in Revelation 17 that there is a mysterious character at the heart of prophecy -- a woman who *rides* a beast.

Who is this woman? Tradition says she is connected with the church of Rome. But isn't such a view outdated? After all, today's Vatican is eager to join hands with Protestants worldwide. "The Catholic church has changed," is what we hear.

Or has it? In *A Woman Rides the Beast*, the author sifts through biblical truth and global events to present a well-defined portrait of the woman and her powerful place in world events. Eight remarkable clues in Revelation 17 and 18 prove the woman's identity beyond any doubt.

**A Woman Rides the Beast.** \$14.00 postage paid from: Hope of Israel Ministries. (See address inside cover).

# The 144,000 -- Future Or Fulfilled?

Some say the 144,000 are sealed sometime in the future -- after the Great Tribulation and heavenly signs. Some say the 144,000 will become the “kings of the earth” who alone enter the heavenly New Jerusalem. Is this true? How can we know?

**John D. Keyser**

**M**any people in the Churches of God believe that the appearance of the 144,000 in Revelation 14 is something yet to happen in the future. Some individuals feel they were called to train the 144,000 in the “last days,” one having gone so far as purchasing property in the desert for this purpose, while another purchased a large ranch in the mountains! Back in the early 1950s, a Los Angeles preacher claimed the Messiah appeared to him in a vision and commanded him to build a huge church, and that 144,000 manifested sons of YEHOVAH God would be raised up. Millions of dollars poured in for the building, which was never constructed, and the part about the 144,000 was proved to be untrue.

Probably the most popular and widely circulated interpretation about the 144,000 is the so-called futurist-dispensational view. According to this scenario, the 144,000 will not make their appearance until during the last seven years (or three and a half years, as some say) of this age. It is claimed by some that they -- like 144,000 “Jewish Pauls” -- will preach the gospel of the kingdom to all the world -- “after the church is gone”!

There are serious Biblical objections to this scenario. While much of the Book of Revelation is written in highly symbolic language, there are TWO CLEAR POINTS of identification regarding the 144,000 which we should carefully note –

- 1/. The 144,000 are taken out of “all the tribes of the children of ISRAEL” (Revelation 7:14).
- 2/. The 144,000 are “the FIRSTFRUITS unto God and to the Lamb” (Revelation 14:4).

The first point shows their identity -- they are *Israelites*. The term “Israel” is sometimes used in the New Testament in such a way that it includes all believers in the Messiah, regardless of race or national distinction (Galatians 3:29; 6:16). But New Testament verses which mention Israel *in contrast* to Gentiles clearly show a distinction in terms (Romans 1:16; 2:9; Acts 13:45, 46). There is such a contrast in the passage concerning the 144,000.

Revelation 7:4 states that the 144,000 are taken from “all the tribes of the children of ISRAEL.” Then, in verse 9, we read: “After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of ALL NATIONS and kindreds, and people and tongues” who were also re-

deemed by the Lamb (Yeshua the Messiah) -- a huge ingathering from the Gentiles. Note that the words "Gentiles" and "nations" are translated from the *same* word in the Greek -- **Strong's Concordance** #1484. Bottom line: the 144,000 were from Israel; the innumerable multitude from all nations. Because of this comparison -- 144,000 from Israel on the one hand, and an innumerable multitude of converts from among the Gentiles on the other -- it seems very clear that the 144,000 were converts from Israel, Israel in the LITERAL sense of the word!

We agree with the futurist-dispensational interpretation that the 144,000 are from Israel, however we part company when it comes to point 2. According to Revelation 14:4, the 144,000 from the tribes of Israel are "the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb." Note: the FIRSTFRUITS!

In the Old Testament, the term "firstfruits" designated the FIRST gatherings of the crop which were presented to YEHOUAH god -- see Exodus 23:19; Leviticus 2:14 and Nehemiah 10:35. In the New Testament, Yeshua the Messiah, who was "the FIRST that should rise from the dead" to immortality (Acts 26:23), is called "the FIRSTFRUITS of them that slept" (1 Corinthians 15:20). The FIRST converts that the apostle Paul made in Achaia (Greece) were called "the FIRSTFRUITS of Achaia" (1 Corinthians 16:15). And so here, in a similar fashion, the 144,000 -- the *firstfruits* unto the Lamb (the Messiah) -- are the *first* converts to Yeshua the Messiah!

And who were the *first converts*? It is quite clear -- there can be no mistake about it! The gospel first went to Israelites and THE FIRST CONVERTS WERE FROM ISRAEL!

The converts from Israel in the early years of YEHOUAH's church -- back in the first century A.D.! -- were the *firstfruits* unto the Lamb and are *symbolized by the number 144,000*. This is a perfect fit scripturally and historically. But -- and consider this -- if the 144,000 have not yet made their appearance, as futurists teach, HOW in the world could they possibly be "the *firstfruits* unto the Lamb"? If the 144,000 do not appear until the very last years of this age, they would be the LAST FRUITS instead of the first!

Let us now review the scriptural evidence that shows the gospel went *first* to ISRAEL and that the *first* converts to Yeshua the Messiah were ISRAELITES. When John the Baptist introduced the Messiah, he spoke of him as "the Lamb of God" and as he who was to be "made manifest to ISRAEL" (John 1:29-31). When Yeshua originally sent out his disciples, he said: "Go not into the way of the Gentiles...but rather to the lost sheep of the house of ISRAEL" (Matthew 10:5,6). A nucleus of believers from Israel was gathered at the Temple on Pentecost and were filled with the holy spirit. The Bible records that 3,000 ISRAELITES were converted on that day alone -- men from *all the tribes of Israel* being represented on that occasion (Acts 2:5, 36). Now the preaching of the gospel began at JERUSALEM (Acts 1:8; Luke 24:47). The gospel went "to the Jew FIRST" and then also to the Greek (Romans 1:16).

When the apostle Peter spoke to a multitude of Israelites in the Temple, he said: "Men of Israel...so it is to you FIRST that God has sent His servant whom He has raised up, so that He might bless you by turning each one of you from your evil ways" (Acts 3:12, 26). Later this very

same principle was involved in the statement made by the apostles Paul and Barnabas to the Jews at Perga: "It was necessary that God's word be spoken FIRST to you. But since you are rejecting it...we're turning to the Goyim [Gentiles]!" (Acts 13:46).

Nevertheless, there were many thousands of Jews which did accept the Messiah -- so many in fact that we read the following statement in Acts 21:20: "You see, brother, how many TENS OF THOUSANDS of believers there are among the Judeans, and they are all zealots for the Torah."

It should also be noted here that the people of the twelve tribes of Israel were not in unknown parts of the world, inaccessible or lost to the outreach of the early Church of YEHOVAH. Had this been the case, Paul could not have spoken of the "twelve tribes, instantly serving God day and night" (Acts 26:7).

We should realize that converts to the Messiah came from ALL the twelve tribes, though scattered throughout the then known world. It was to such converts that the apostle James addressed the New Testament book which bears his name: "To: The *Twelve Tribes* in the Diaspora: Shalom!" (James 1:1). Also significant is the fact that James refers to these converts as "a kind of FIRSTFRUITS of all that He created" (verse 18) -- *a perfect cross-reference to the passage about the 144,000 from the twelve tribes of Israel!*

In view of the fact that there were "many *tens of thousands* of believers...among the Judeans" alone -- FIRSTFRUITS to the Messiah -- it is not at all inconceivable that the total number from all the tribes could have been 144,000!

In Revelation 14:1 we read: "Then I looked, and there was the Lamb standing on Mount Tziyon [Zion]; and with him were 144,000..." Realize that it is *not* the literal Mount Zion that is here referred to. Rather, the term is applied to the *spiritual experience* of believers. Notice what is said concerning Mount Zion in the epistle addressed "to the Hebrews": "For you have not come to a tangible mountain" -- as in the Old Testament under Moses, to a literal mountain -- "on the contrary, you have come to *Mount Tziyon [Zion]*, that is, the city of the living God, heavenly Yerushalayim [Jerusalem]...to a community of the FIRSTBORN...[and] to the mediator of a new covenant, Yeshua" (Hebrews 12:18-24). So here, the *firstfruits* of Israel had come -- spiritually -- to Zion and were thus described in this vision.

Next we notice that the 144,000 were pictured as having the name of YEHOVAH God "written in their foreheads" (Revelation 14:1). References to a name in the forehead are found several times in the Book of Revelation. Those who serve the "beast" are said to have his name or mark "in their foreheads" (Revelation 13:16, 17). The "harlot" is seen with a name written upon her forehead (Revelation 17:5). In Revelation 22:3-4 we read that those who are servants of YEHOVAH God "shall serve Him: and they shall see His face; and His name shall be on their foreheads."

What is meant by these strange verses about a name in the forehead? Writes Thomas Newton: "It was customary among the ancients for servants to receive the mark of their mas-

ter... These marks were usually impressed on their right hand or on their forehead” (*Dissertations on the Prophecies*, Vol. 2, p. 296). Or, as the noted Biblical expositor Albert Barnes remarks, “Among the Romans, slaves were stigmatized with their master’s name or mark on their foreheads.”

When you understand the literal practice upon which the symbol in the Book of Revelation was based, it is easy to find the meaning intended by the use of this symbol. The mark (as literally used) showed that a person was a SLAVE and TO WHOM he belonged. In order to show that the 144,000 belonged to YEHOVAH God as His servants, they were pictured as having the name of YEHOVAH in their foreheads.

Although a literal branding of people and animals with a hot iron was a common practice of the time, such was used here *symbolically*. There is absolutely *no reason* to believe that the servants of the “beast” were to be literally branded any more than the servants of YEHOVAH God were to be branded in a like fashion. Those seen with the mark of the beast in their foreheads are *slaves* of the “beast” -- and those seen with the name of YEHOVAH God in their foreheads are *slaves* of the “Lamb.” We should be careful not to make any more of this symbol than was intended.

We read in Revelation 14:4 that the 144,000 “were REDEEMED from among men.” The word “redeemed” here has the meaning of purchased, bought. The redeemed are those purchased to YEHOVAH God as slaves. They are His servants (in a servitude of love) and are “bought with a price” (1 Corinthians 7:23).

Being the servants of YEHOVAH God, the 144,000 (and also the innumerable multitude) are spoken of as being “before the throne of God” (Revelation 14:5; 7:9). Since they are His servants they are before the throne to heed His instructions and carry on His work. We should *not* think of this position as referring only to the future -- or to heaven. The servants of YEHOVAH God -- even in this life -- have access to the throne, to which they are told to boldly come (Hebrews 4:16).

We are also told, in Revelation 14:4, that the 144,000 “were not defiled with women; for they are virgins.” Now, it would be a carnal interpretation indeed to claim this means only unmarried people. Even Roman Catholic expositors -- with their desire to exalt celibacy -- do not read this into it. In 2 Corinthians 11:2 all believers are viewed spiritually as chaste virgins, and as having been presented as such to the Messiah. They are “without fault” before YEHOVAH God (Revelation 14:5) and can therefore stand “faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy” (Jude 24), “without blame before Him in love” (Ephesians 1:4), and as “a glorious church...without blemish” (5:27).

Unfortunately, many in the Churches of God have accepted the futurist viewpoint on the Book of Revelation without question. At first glance, it seems correct and true. But a closer study clearly reveals that this viewpoint is full of inconsistencies and problems. For one example, the futurist idea is that the bulk of the Book of Revelation has never been fulfilled. We are told that the events of many of the early chapters will not take place until the last years of this age. But this

concept utterly fails to explain the opening words of the book which forcefully state that these things were written to show YEHOVAH God's servants things "WHICH MUST SHORTLY COME TO PASS" and that the time for their fulfillment was "AT HAND" (Revelation 1:1, 3).

The futurist idea regarding the 144,000 is that they will not be converted until the very last years of this age -- whereas the Book of Revelation clearly reveals the 144,000 were the "FIRSTFRUITS" unto the Lamb! Since many, many thousands have already been converted to the Messiah over the past almost 2,000 years, HOW could a group converted in the future possibly be the firstfruits unto the Lamb? Obviously, the converts from Israel in the first century A.D. were the firstfruits unto the Lamb and are symbolized by the number 144,000!

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# YEHOVAH'S Glory to Reappear in *Jerusalem!*

John D. Keyser

**T**he Millennial Temple is described in the last nine chapters of the Book of Ezekiel in the Old Testament, and is to be built and engineered by Yeshua the Messiah at his Second Coming. Notice:

Behold, the Man whose name is the BRANCH! From his place he shall branch out, and **he shall build the temple of the Lord [YEHOVAH]**. He shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule on his throne; so he shall be a priest on his throne, and the counsel of peace shall be between them **both [YEHOVAH God AND the Messiah]** (Zechariah 6:12-13).

Once again, as during both Solomon's and Herod's Temple -- the SHEKINAH GLORY of YEHOVAH God will be present in a new Temple in Jerusalem! Here is what the Bible records of YEHOVAH's Shekinah Glory in Solomon's Temple after it was dedicated --

Now when Solomon had finished praying, fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices; and **the glory of the LORD** filled the temple. And the priests could not enter the house of the LORD, because **the glory of the LORD** had filled the LORD'S house (2 Chronicles 7:1-2).

Just before the Romans destroyed Jerusalem in 70 A.D., a number of historians relate how YEHOVAH's Shekinah Glory (which dwelt inside the Holy of Holies in Herod's Temple) left the sanctuary, traveled through the East Gate and hovered over the Mount of Olives for three and a half years. Eusebius, early church historian of the third and fourth centuries, writes:

Believers in Christ congregate from all parts of the world, not as of old time because of the glory of Jerusalem, nor that they may worship in the ancient Temple at Jerusalem, but...that they may worship at the Mount of Olives opposite to the city, whither **the glory [the Shekinah Glory] of the LORD** migrated when it left the former city (*Proof of the Gospel*, Bk. VI, Chap.18).

Similarly Jerome (almost a hundred years after Eusebius) acknowledges that the Cherubim carried the Shekinah Glory from the Temple to a spot near the summit of the Mount of Olives --

Here also [the Mount of Olives] ...**the Cherubim after leaving the Temple** founded the Church of the Lord (*Letter VIII.12*).

A Jewish rabbi by the name of Jonathan, who was an eyewitness to the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D., said the Shekinah Glory left the Temple and for three and a half years --

**abode on the Mount of Olives** hoping that Israel would repent, but they did not; while a *Bet Kol* [a supernatural voice from heaven] issued forth announcing, Return, O backsliding children [Jer. 3:14]. Return unto me, and I will return unto you [Mal. 3:7]. When they did not repent, it said, I will return to my place [in heaven] [Hosea 5:15] (Midrash, *Rabbah Lamentations* 2:11).

YEHOVAH's Shekinah Glory returned to heaven where it now awaits the restoration of all things and the new Temple to be built in Jerusalem by the Messiah when he returns. Notice, now, the striking parallel to the Millennial Temple -- as Ezekiel was allowed to see it through a vision:

Behold, **the glory of the God of Israel** came from the way of the east: and his voice was like a noise of many waters: and the earth shined with **his glory**....And **the glory of the LORD** came into the house by the way of the gate whose prospect is toward the east. So the spirit took me up, and brought me into the inner court; and behold, **the glory of the LORD** filled the house (Ezekiel 43:2-5).

The Jewish people called the *glory* that filled Solomon's and Herod's Temple the *Shekinah*, whose root word means "to dwell" or "to tabernacle." This *glory* was manifested as a "supernatural light" that symbolized YEHOVAH God's presence among men! This Divine light became visible as it shone between the Cherubim over the Mercy Seat and the Ark of the Covenant. It was this "light" that the Jewish historian Josephus mentions in *War* VI, 290. He states that a great light shone over the altar in the Holy of Holies for thirty minutes at 3 o'clock in the morning (a week before Passover in 66 A.D.) and then departed.

There is a remarkable prophecy in the New Testament that uses the Greek equivalent of *Shekinah* to show the symbolic meaning to the Messiah as *dwelling* among his people. This prophecy is found in John 1:14: "And the Word was made flesh, and *dwelt* [Gr. Shekinize] among us, (and we beheld his glory)."

The Kingdom of YEHOVAH God can only begin its rulership of the world when YEHOVAH God Himself returns to take up the reigns of His government. The Millennium will witness the reception of the Messiah by the nations of Israel, and will also witness the return of YEHOVAH's Shekinah Glory to the Holy of Holies in the newly rebuilt Temple in Jerusalem!

Although there will be many similarities to both Solomon's and Herod's Temple -- there will also be vast differences in the Millennial Temple. For example, there is no reference to, or need for the Ark of the Covenant -- for the TRUE ARK will be in their midst! The same holds true for the High Priest -- Yeshua the Messiah will hold this esteemed office in the Millennium!

This glorious time in the affairs of mankind, when YEHOVAH God Almighty will *dwell* with the nation of Israel, is recorded by the prophet Ezekiel:

Then they shall dwell in the land that I have given to Jacob My servant, where your fathers dwelt; and they shall dwell there, they, their children, and their children's children, forever; and My servant David shall be their prince forever.

Moreover I will make a covenant of peace with them, and it shall be an everlasting covenant with them; I will establish them and multiply them, and **I [YEHOVAH God] will set My sanctuary in their midst forevermore.**

My tabernacle also shall be with them; indeed I [YEHOVAH God] will be their God, and they shall be My people.

The nations also will know that I, the LORD, sanctify Israel, **when My sanctuary is in their midst forevermore** (Ezekiel 37:25-28).

The regenerated nation of Israel will be a priestly nation, administering to the needs of the surrounding nations. Chapter 48 of Ezekiel describes the location of the twelve tribes as they surround the Millennial Temple in Jerusalem, and Yeshua the Messiah (the Prince) will have his portion of property -- see verse 21.

The healing of the nations will take place from the trees that grow alongside the river that issues from the Temple (Ezekiel 47:12; Revelation 22:2), and **“the name of the city from that day shall be YEHOVAH (YEHOVAH-Shammah) IS THERE”** (Ezekiel 48:35). The Hebrew name *YEHOVAH-Shammah* implies, YEHOVAH IS THERE!

We read of this time in Jeremiah 3:17, which says –

At that time **Jerusalem shall be called The Throne of the LORD [YEHOVAH God]**, and all the nations shall be gathered to it, to the name of the LORD [YEHOVAH], to Jerusalem; they shall walk no more after the stubbornness of their evil heart.

Also, in Jeremiah 23:5-6 –

“Behold the days are coming” says the LORD [YEHOVAH], “that I will raise to David a Branch of righteousness [Yeshua the Messiah]; **a King [YEHOVAH God] shall reign and prosper, and execute judgment and righteousness in the earth.** In His days Judah will be saved and Israel will dwell safely; now this is His name by which He will be called: **THE LORD [YEHOVAH GOD] OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.**”

YEHOVAH's presence in Jerusalem is clearly spelt out in Zechariah 8. Notice –

Thus says the LORD [YEHOVAH] of hosts: “Peoples shall yet come, inhabitants of many cities; the inhabitants of one city shall go to another, saying, ‘Let us continue to go and pray before the LORD [YEHOVAH], and seek the LORD [YEHOVAH] of hosts. I myself will go also.’ Yes, many peoples and strong nations shall come **to seek the LORD [YEHOVAH] of hosts IN JERUSALEM,** and to pray before the LORD [YEHOVAH] (verses 20-22).

For more information about the return of YEHOVAH God and His Messiah to Jerusalem, write for our free article entitled, *The “Second Coming” of YEHOVAH*. See inside front cover for mailing address.



## The House of Israel

### Archaeologists Find Celts in Unlikely Spot: Central Turkey

**I**n storybook histories, the ancient city of Gordion is remembered only as the seat of King Midas, he of the golden touch, and the place where Alexander the Great struck a famous blow in legend and metaphor. Challenged to separate the strands of an impossible knot, the Gordian knot, the conqueror cut through the problem, in the manner of conquerors, with one authoritative swing of his sword.

After Midas and Alexander, Gordion languished on the fringes of history, and until recently archaeologists had taken little notice of its Celtic past. Yes, European Celts -- the Gauls of Roman times and the forerunners of Bretons, Welsh, Irish and Highland Scots -- once migrated as far east as what is now central Turkey and settled in and around post-Alexander Gordion, beginning in the early third century BC.

Archaeologists say they have now excavated artifacts and architectural remains dispelling any lingering doubt that the Celts were indeed there, as a few classical texts had recorded in passing. These people called themselves Galatai, a Celtic name for tribal warriors, and became known to the Romans as Galatians. Their Christianized descendants were advised by the apostle Paul, in the New Testament, that "whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."

The remains of Galatian Gordion, archaeologists conclude, reveal that the Celts, although they came as mercenary soldiers, bringing along their wives and children, were looking beyond warfare and pillage. They put down deep roots, revived Gordion and created an ambitious, thriving society.

Above ruins of ordinary mud-brick houses, they erected a monumental public building of cut stone blocks that was surrounded by a massive stone wall. Inside a workshop were clay loom weights used in weaving, a possible clue to Celtic influence. Not far away, excavators found a stone sculpture of a human with faces in two directions, which replicates double-faced or "Janus" figures from Celtic sites in central Europe.

But the most decisive discovery was a grisly one: clusters of broken-necked skeletons and decapitated heads of children and adults, some of them mixed with animal bones. Ancient Celts had a reputation for ritual human sacrifice, but not the contemporary Greeks and Romans or any of the indigenous people of Anatolia, the central plateau region of Turkey.

In the current issue of *Archaeology*, a magazine of the Archaeological Institute of America, Dr. Mary M. Voigt of the College of William and Mary, a leader of the excavations, and her colleagues wrote, "Such practices are well known from Celtic sites in Europe and are now documented for Anatolian Celts as well."

Dr. Ronald Hicks, an archaeologist and specialist in Celtic prehistory at Ball State University in Muncie, Indiana, agreed that this appeared to be the strongest evidence yet for a permanent Celtic presence in Gordion.

"That certainly has the Celtic look," said Dr. Hicks, who is not involved in the project. "One of the Roman complaints about the Celts was that they still practiced human sacrifice. They said the Gauls were known for lopping off heads of men in battle, tying them to their

belts and bringing them back to display for all their friends at home.”

Dr. Oscar White Muscarella, an archaeologist at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, called the discoveries “an extraordinary accomplishment.” For the first time, he said, “we are able to see and hold in our hands what the Galatians did and can now talk about Galatians in Anatolia.”

...Gordion’s Galatian period had been neglected, Dr. Voigt explained in an interview, because archaeologists had their eyes on bigger prizes. They dug through the layers of Galatian ruins to get to the city as it was in Alexander’s time, 332 BC, and the even earlier city of Midas, ruler of Phrygia, probably in the eighth century BC.

Dr. Voigt said archaeologists were also put off by the seemingly impossibility of finding anything distinctive to confirm the Galatian presence in the city. How do you establish the ethnicity of an ancient population, especially if the people were warriors who traveled light, carrying with them little of their own material culture, and lived off the land?

“Historically, we knew they were at Gordion,” Dr. Voigt said, “but we didn’t know anything definitive about their way of life.”

In one of the few sketchy accounts, the Roman historian Livy noted that a king in Anatolia hired Celts as mercenaries to reinforce his own army. They arrived in 278 BC, 20,000 of them, including provisioners and merchants as well as their families, in a caravan of 2,000 baggage wagons. But by this time the Celts had become somewhat Hellenized.

For an unknown number of years since leaving their homeland, somewhere in central Europe near the headwaters of the Danube, the Celts had passed through the Balkans and paused in Greece to sack Delphi. In battle, they stood naked before the foe. Along the way, they learned Greek and inscribed some of their possessions in that language. Their ceramics and other household wares were in the Greek style.

“It used to be hard to detect the Galatians at Gordion,” said Dr. Keith DeVries, a University of Pennsylvania archaeologist and former director of the Gordion excavations. “There was not a single artifact that was absolutely demonstrable as Celtic. Some began to think the literary sources must be misleading us.”

Livy described Galatian Gordion as a trading center and a fortified settlement in the early second century BC, a judgment now supported by archaeologists. Artifacts like a small bone lion, probably used as inlay, suggested the Galatians enjoyed some affluence. Traces of a few substantial buildings -- with tile roofs, many rooms, paved floors, stone benches and generous courtyards -- seemed to attest to a city with a social and political hierarchy. This was more than a simple crossroads farming settlement, as some scholars once suspected.

A Roman army destroyed much of the city in 189 BC, but excavations showed that it was soon rebuilt and eventually became part of the Roman province of Galatia, though with a continuing Celtic imprint.

In more than a decade of meticulous excavations, archaeologists were struck by the juxtaposition of Greek and Celtic customs in Gordion. Ruins of a workshop yielded figurines of Greek deities presumably used in household rituals. Nearby, in the lower town, five skeletons were strewn across the ground of what had been an outdoor area, and another four had been thrown into a deep pit.

Even though the date of the buried skeletons is in some doubt, Dr. Voigt’s team said, “their treatment is undoubtedly linked to ritual practices that began in third-century Gordion and would represent continuity of Celtic traditions” after the town became part of a Roman province.

Nearly all these people appeared to have met violent ends, with strangulation by hanging or garroting the most usual cause. Several had broken necks and spines. A woman, probably 30 to 45 years old, had a fractured skull, and was also strangled. Below her lay

the bones of a younger woman, who seems to have been done in by the two heavy grinding stones weighing down her upper body. In the same pit, the bones of two young children were mixed in an apparently deliberate way. Among other switches, the jaw of an older child was placed with the cranium of the younger one.

Archaeologists concluded that all of these people were presumably “sacrificed.” They might have been war captives. Traces of wood in the base of a skull suggested that a person’s severed head had been mounted on a pole for display. Some victims might have been killed as part of Celtic divination rituals. Texts recount that Celtic religious leaders, the druids, were prophets who killed humans in order to discern the future as revealed by the dying victims movements.

In another part of the lower town, archaeologists came upon the largest bone deposit, holding more than 2,000 animal bones and those of a few dismembered humans. Three individuals -- a man of about 40, a woman of 35 and a child under 8 -- might have been a family. This might have been the scene of a feast associated with the Celtic celebration of Samhain, around November 1. Based on their age at death, the animals were probably slaughtered in the fall, the time for culling herds before winter. Some humans could also have been cooked for the feast.

“It may not be too far a stretch to associate Bone Cluster 3 with this Celtic festival, which we still celebrate as Halloween,” Dr. Voigt and her colleagues wrote.

The discoveries at Gordion have already contributed to changes in views of Galatian culture in Asia Minor. The Celts as politically and socially primitive barbarians who lived on raids and plundering had considerable basis in fact, which had been stressed in Greek and Roman texts. But at least in Anatolia, the new excavations suggest, the Celts succeeded in settling down, marshaling resources and labor for building and operating a prospering city -- not the behavior of primitives.

In an article last year in the British journal *Anatolian Studies*, English and Turkish scholars said the Galatian communities established in the third century BC consti-

tuted “a new, significant and increasingly important geopolitical entity within Asia Minor” and this “can hardly be attributed to a marginal, and politically, socially and economically unsophisticated people.” On the contrary, they wrote: “The fact that their polities survived to be incorporated into the Roman empire would indicate the existence of highly developed social structures bound together by shared value systems. The European Galatians successfully adapted to their new environment, changing it and being changed by it.” The authors of the article are Dr. Gareth Darbyshire of the Oriental Institute in Oxford, England; Dr. Stephen Mitchell of the University of Wales in Swansea, and Dr. Levent Vardar of the Turkish Department of Monuments and Museums in Ankara.

But they and other researchers, including Dr. Voigt and her colleagues at Gordion, concede that the Galatians and their culture remain poorly understood. And no one can be sure what happened to those European settlers in the city of Midas and Alexander.

Through intermarriage with indigenous people, the originally tall and blond Galatians probably blended in with others around them. “I don’t know how Celtic they would have looked, even in the time of Paul,” said Dr. Hicks, the Celtic specialist.

But the Galatians were still speaking a form of the Celtic language for several centuries after Paul. In the fourth century, St. Jerome observed that the Galatians used a dialect similar to one spoken in the Gallic town of Trier, back in the Europe they had left in the third century BC.

-- John Noble Wilford  
The Dunrobin Piper  
April 2002

### Israel Emblems in the Netherlands

**I**n seeking heraldic evidence of the Israelitish origin of the Celto-Saxons of Europe, we turn now to the Netherlands. In the central position of their emblem we see a shield on which appears a tawny rampant and

crowned Lion holding a Sword. Both of these are Israelitish emblems, for as we saw in our consideration of the emblems of ancient Israel, a rampant and crowned Lion comprised the emblem of the two-tribed Kingdom of Judah and a Sword was the emblem of the tribe of Simeon.

Then, as supporters, one on each side of the shield, we see two uncrowned rampant Lions facing inwards. Here again we have a true Israel emblem, for this uncrowned Lion was the emblem of the tribe of Judah and also of the three-tribed brigade headed by Judah. The fact that these two Lions face inwards is also a rather interesting point. In Jewish synagogues the symbol of the Judaic religion and of their claimed descent from the tribe of Judah, is composed of the two Tables of the Law surmounted by the Mitre of the Aaronic High Priest and supported by two uncrowned Lions, one on each side facing inwards, just as they are in the Arms of the Netherlands.

Referring again to the fact that the uncrowned tawny or golden Lion was the emblem of both the tribe of Judah and of the three-tribed brigade or Camp composed of the tribes of Judah, Issachar and Zebulun, we now come to another significant fact. In ancient Israel, the emblem of the tribe of Zebulun was a Ship. Yet as we have seen, Zebulun, as one of the three tribes forming the brigade or Camp of Judah, would also come under Judah's emblem, a Lion. So members of the tribe of Zebulun could and did use both a Ship and an uncrowned Lion as emblems.

A close study of the Arms of the Netherlands will reveal still other evidence of an Israelitish origin. In its right paw, the Lion on the Shield is holding a Sword, the emblem of the tribe of Simeon and in his left a bundle of Arrows, one of the emblems of the tribe of Manasseh. These Arrows also appear on the sail of the Ship of State emblem and in the municipal Arms of Bergen and Eysden.

We see, therefore, that the national emblem of the Netherlands is composed of five separate Israel emblems: the crowned rampant Lion of the Kingdom of Judah, the uncrowned Lion of the tribe and of the brigade of Judah, the Sword of the tribe of Simeon and the Arrows of the tribe of Simeon and the Arrows of the tribe of Manasseh. To this must be added the fact that the old emblem of Holland was

a Ship, the emblem of the tribe of Zebulun, and that the Captain of the Ship is the uncrowned Lion of the brigade of Judah, of which the tribe of Zebulun was a part.

The Netherlands is composed of eleven provinces, and of these eight have as supporters two tawny uncrowned Lions, the emblem of the tribe and of the brigade of Judah. It is when we consider the number of times that the Lion appears in the provincial and municipal emblems that its real importance as evidence of the Israelitish origin of the people of the Netherlands is seen.

According to our count there are 1,132 provinces and municipalities in the Netherlands, each of which has its own heraldic Arms, and in these 1,132 Arms *there are 521 Lions*. It is certain, therefore, that the Lion is as much the emblem of the people of the Netherlands as it is of the people of Britain *and* as it was of the people of the Kingdom of Judah. Perhaps, then, we need not be too surprised to learn that for many hundreds of years the Lion of the Netherlands was commonly known and called the "Lion of Judah."

Further evidence of this common ancestry, and that this ancestry is Israelitish, is to be seen in their common use of both the Lion *and* the Unicorn as heraldic emblems. The use of the Lion in both countries, and its evidence of our common Israelitish identity, has already been noted, as has also Britain's use of the Unicorn. So, remembering that the Unicorn was the emblem of the ten-tribed House and Kingdom of Israel, let us now turn to a consideration of the use of the Unicorn as a heraldic emblem in the Netherlands.

It is true, of course, that the Unicorn does not appear in the official Arms of the Netherlands as used today. Yet its use in the past is evidenced by its appearance in the Arms of several parts of the country including Hoorn and Menaldumadeel. That the Unicorn was a traditional emblem of the Netherlands, or at least of part of it, is also evidenced by its use as an identification and as a decorative feature on the bowsprit of the Dutch "Jaght Schips" (yachts) of the 17th century. Further evidence of a former use of the Unicorn as an emblem

of at least a part of the people of the Netherlands is to be seen on a stone tablet on a monument in the town of Dokkum, in the Province of Friesland.

Among the other emblems of ancient Israel which appear in the provincial and municipal Arms of the Netherlands, there are a few which we should consider. One of these is a Man, the emblem of the tribe of Reuben and of the three-tribed brigade of Reuben. This emblem appears in the Arms of at least twenty-four places including Bergen op Zoom, Hertogenbosch, Anloo, Beilen, Havelte, Oosterhasselen, Rolde, Sleen, Vries, Zuidwolde, Venlo and Sneek.

In considering this evidence we should not overlook the significance of the fact that the form and posture of the Man in the Arms of most of these places is identical with the one in the Arms of such widely separated places as Denmark, Greece, Sweden (Lappland) and some of the Scottish clans. This also points to a common but very ancient origin.

Reuben's secondary emblem, which consists of a number of wavy bars representing a body of Water, appears on the shield in the Arms of the Province of Zeeland and also in those of a dozen or more municipalities. The primary emblem of the tribe of Dan was a Serpent. This emblem, though not widely used among the Celto-Saxon peoples, does appear in the Netherlands in the Arms of Westerbork, Zaandam, Eysden and fifteen or more other places. Dan's secondary emblem was a Horse, usually, though not always, white and sometimes with a rider. This also appears in the Arms of at least twelve places including Baarn, Westerbork, Zuidlaren and Winsum.

Here we should remember that the emblem on the standard of the brigade of Dan was an Eagle. This brigade was composed of three tribes: Dan, Asher and Naphtali. Though each of these had its own tribal emblem, they were all entitled to, and did, use their brigade emblem, the Eagle. We need only glance at the heraldry of the Netherlands to see

that an Eagle holds a very important place in it. However, we cannot use all of these eagles as evidence of the Israelitish origin of the people of the Netherlands, for more than half are the *double-headed* Eagle, of the pre-1918 empires of Europe, whose origin is certainly not Israelitish.

-- W.H. Bennett

### Out of Scythia

It can be shown conclusively that large numbers of the ancient people of Israel were removed by successive Assyrian monarchs from their Palestinian homeland and placed in the lands to the south and south-west of the Caspian Sea, in or adjoining territory which was soon to see an influx of "Scythian"-migrating hordes. It is beyond dispute that the deported Israelites became engulfed in this westward-moving tide, which comprised elements of several races -- Nordic, Alpine and even Mongol.

Out of this sea of peoples -- of various races, some barbarians, others civilized -- there gradually emerged the important north-European nations of the Christian era. In such a way came the Celto-Saxon and kindred nations. A positive reconstruction of their movements has been impossible owing to the fact that a connected written record no longer exists and ethnologists have been compelled to rely on archaeology, folk-lore and saga for such knowledge as is available. It is quite certain that there is considerable divergence of opinion among the scholars who have investigated the matter.

It is significant that modern researches in the lands anciently occupied by these people tend to support the views of those scholars of past generations who were convinced that the Sacae of old and the Celto-Saxons of more modern times are racially identical and that for a long period they formed part of the Scythian hordes.



Arms of the Province of Zeeland

-- *Wake Up!* December 1978.

### The Jewish Enigma Has Been Solved!

One of the wonders of the age is the almost complete inability of the knowledgeable individual -- even the Christian -- to discuss the origin of the Jewish people, their history and their continuing existence. So inexplicable is this enigma that the seeker of Truth is compelled to ask, "Why?"

Looking at it from the viewpoint of the informed Christian, one is surprised to realize that the confusion -- and confusion it is -- is by no means confined to the rank-and-file followers of the Messiah. Their pastors, quite often ignorant of the topic themselves, are in no position to help. In fact, they are almost totally confused by their tacit acceptance of inculcated usages which are implicit in their religious training.

The whole subject has been swept under the carpet by theological mentors who have found the subject irritating in that any concept of a continuing, viable Israel nation is incompatible with the carefully nurtured doctrine that the existence of such a people is no longer a tenet of Christian theology -- indeed, that to attach any importance to the idea is contrary to the Faith. In their misguided view, it has become necessary to eliminate YEHOVAH God's Servant-people from all religious consideration.

To do this, many theologians of the 20th century have assiduously set themselves out to "lose" YEHOVAH's ancient people in a welter of names, so that YEHOVAH's concept of a restored Israel nation may be buried for ever. These names are: "Hebrews," "Jews," "Judaists" and, in more modern parlance, "Israelis."

The *Judaists* are Jews, of almost every nationality under the sun, who accept the Old Testament faith of Judaism. These are today's *Orthodox Jews*.

The *Israelis* are, of course, the small community of Jewish folk who have sought sanctuary in the ancient land of Israel during the period of the past generation. They have provided the western world with an unsolvable problem

*vis-a-vis* the Arabs. Some of the Israelis are Judaists. Many of them are of no religion. They are at present "sitting tight" on a powder-keg which may explode at any moment.

This leaves the terms "Jew" and "Hebrew" as verbal weapons wherewith to destroy the Scriptural concept of the people *Israel*, who were formed and called by YEHOVAH God to convey His benevolence to mankind.

The *Jews* of Yeshua's day were the tiny section of people, Israel, then living in Palestine. They were descended in the main from a remnant of the original, southern kingdom of Judah which had split away from the mass of Israel to form a separate kingdom. Most of these Judahites never returned from the captivity into which they had been taken. Their descendants made their way westwards, over the centuries, as did their exiled kinsfolk of the kingdom of Israel, as part of the westward-surfing hordes moving out from eastern Bible lands. Today's *Jews* contain a small proportion of the descendants of the small nation into which the Messiah was born. It is beyond question that the great majority of today's Jewish folk do not stem from ancient Israel at all. They are descended from *proselytes* to the Jewish faith who, *as a nation*, adopted that faith a thousand years ago.

As to the term *Hebrews*, there is no excuse whatsoever for its misuse as an expedient to further obliterate knowledge of the Israelites from whom the Celto-Saxon peoples of today are descended. The Hebrews were the progeny of Eber, great-grandson of Shem and ancestor of Abraham, who himself was a Hebrew. There were various other branches of this parent stock, obviously all of the same ethnic group. Thus the Israelites were all Hebrews, but only a small portion of the Hebrews were Israelites.

In view of the foregoing, it is not honest for theologians to cloud the issue of where the descendants of ancient Israel are in the world today.

-- *Wake Up!* September 1978

## *Where in Jerusalem Were the Disciples Assembled On Pentecost?*

Most people believe the disciples were assembled in the “upper room” when the holy spirit of YEHOVAH God descended upon them during that Pentecost of 30 A.D. But how could the various prophecies found in Ezekiel, Joel and Zechariah be fulfilled if this were true? An in-depth study of the New Testament reveals the TRUE assembling place for the early church during those eventful times.

**John D. Keyser**

**S**ince the events surrounding the day of Pentecost in 30 A.D. are of the greatest significance, it is a matter of much interest to determine just where, in the city of Jerusalem, Yeshua’s disciples were assembled when the holy spirit of YEHOVAH God descended upon them.

Most authorities claim the disciples were assembled in “the upper room” in Jerusalem. Notice –

It was on the day of Pentecost that the holy spirit was poured out by Jesus Christ on the group of about 120 disciples in the upper room at Jerusalem...(*Insight On the Scriptures*, Volume 2, page 599).

Samuele Bacchiocchi, in his book *God’s Festivals in Scripture and History*, states the following:

The Jewish pilgrimage feast of Pentecost gained new significance for Christians because it coincided with the birthday of the Church as an institution. On that day, the Holy Spirit baptized 120 disciples of Jesus as they awaited His coming in an upper room (Luke 24:53) (Part 1 -- The Spring Festivals. Page 189).

J.W. Taylor takes this hypothesis a step further by describing this “upper room” in great detail –

But even in Jerusalem itself there was one house which can be identified as having afforded shelter to our Lord and His disciples. This was the house of the “upper chamber” and the Last Supper, and appears to have been visited by Christ both before and after the crucifixion. In it He not only ate the Passover with His disciples and instituted the Eucharist feast, but later, after His Passion, it was in this house where the disciples were assembled when

“the doors were shut for fear of the Jews” that Jesus came and stood in their midst saying, “Peace be unto you: as My Father hath sent Me, even so send I you.”

This house of the Last Supper and of the great Commission is said to have belonged to the father and mother of St. Mark, and Barnabas his uncle (*Col. 5:10*), probably resided with them when he was in Jerusalem. After the crucifixion and ascension it became the general gathering-place of the disciples. All waited here in prayer until the descent of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost, and it was probably in its courtyard or outside it that St. Peter preached his Pentecostal sermon. We are told that it was situated on Mount Zion, and Epiphanius records that it escaped the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus, and that it was afterwards changed into a church....” Besides being described by Epiphanius, it is spoken of by St. Cyril and St. Jerome, and it has been kept in reverent memory ever since” (Biggs, p. 173) (*The Coming of the Saints*, pages 41-42).

In the May/June 1990 issue of the *Biblical Archaeology Review* is found an article entitled “Church of the Apostles Found On Mt. Zion” which purports to prove that the site of the “upper room,” which the author claims was where “the Last Supper had been held, where the apostles returned after witnessing Jesus’ ascension on the Mount of Olives and where Peter delivered his Pentecostal sermon as recorded in Acts 2” is now marked by the supposed traditional tomb of King David on Mt. Zion.

Bishop Epiphanius (mentioned above), who was a native of the Holy Land and lived from 315 to 403 A.D., left to us the following information:

When the Roman emperor Hadrian visited Jerusalem in 130/131 A.D., there was standing on Mt. Zion a small church of God. It marked the site of the Hypero-on (Upper Room) to which the disciples returned from the Mount of Olives after the Lord had been taken up. It had been built on that part of Sion” (Baldi, *Enchiridion*, number 733).

This same site is referred to by the early church father Eusebius (265-349) who makes these claims –

This is the word of the Gospel, which through our Lord Jesus Christ and through the Apostles went out from Sion and was spread to every nation. It is a fact that it poured forth from Jerusalem and Mt. Sion adjacent to it, on which our Savior and Lord had stayed many times and where he had taught much doctrine (*Demonstratio Evangelica*, c. 312 A.D.).

Another piece of so-called evidence for the place of the Pentecost outpouring comes from the pen of a man by the name of Eucherius -- who wrote in about 440 A.D. Basing his work on Jerome and other earlier sources, he wrote –

The plain upper part [of Mt. Zion] is occupied by monks’ cells, which surround a church. Its foundations, it is said, have been laid by the Apostles in reverence to the place of the resurrection of the Lord. It was there that they were filled with the Spirit of the Paraclete [the holy spirit] as promised by the Lord (Baldi, *Enchiridion*, number 735).

In 348 A.D., just a few decades after the Roman emperor Constantine declared Christianity a lawful religion, Cyril (who later became bishop of Jerusalem) delivered a famous sermon in the newly constructed basilica of the Holy Sepulcher. In the course of his address, he remarked that it would have been more appropriate to speak about the holy spirit in the very place where the Pentecost spirit descended upon the apostles -- namely "in the Upper Church of the Apostles" (Baldi, *Enchiridion*, number 730).

By this time the Judeo-Christian synagogue on Mt. Zion, which marked the supposed spot of the house with the "upper room," had become known as the Church of the Apostles.

### *A House Built on Sand*

It is often positively asserted -- as if it were a recorded fact -- that this "upper room" was "the birthplace of the Church." However, the truth is that the historical and Biblical records offer no proof whatsoever for the idea that the disciples were gathered in an upper room when the holy spirit came upon them. Not only that, but there is no proof that the upper room mentioned in Acts 1:13 was ever their assembling place during the ten days of their staying behind in Jerusalem, in obedience to Yeshua's command. The fact that Eucherius links this spot to the resurrection, and the fact that Cyril indicates this spot is close to the basilica of the Holy Sepulcher, engenders immediate suspicion because it can be conclusively proven that the death and Resurrection of the Messiah took place on the Mount of Olives. For more information send for our article entitled, *Just Where in Jerusalem Did Our Savior Die?*

All that is claimed in the Bible regarding the "upper room" is that the apostles, after witnessing Yeshua's ascension from the Mount of Olives, returned to Jerusalem and went to an upper room where Peter, James, John and the other of the eleven apostles were living -- see Acts 1:12-13. What appears from the records -- and ALL that appears -- is that those men, during their stay in Jerusalem, had their living quarters in an "upper room." There is no suggestion whatsoever that the living quarters of these men was also the meeting place of the 120 disciples of the Messiah who were in Jerusalem at that time. There is still less reason for supposing that the morning of the great Feast-day would have found them gathered in such a place.

### *The Precincts of the Temple*

There was, in fact, only ONE PLACE in the city of Jerusalem where devout Jews, of whatever sect, would have congregated on that morning. And there is only ONE PLACE where the events recorded in Acts 2 could possibly have transpired. That place is *the Temple*. But I don't base this conclusion on inference alone. A careful study of the Bible reveals positive proof that it was *in the Temple* that the holy spirit of YEHOVAH God came "suddenly" upon Yeshua's disciples, and that *from the Temple* the proclamation of the Good News of the Kingdom of YEHOVAH God began to go forth into all the world! And I will show that it was the outflow of the Gospel -- "all the words of this life" (Acts 5:20) -- that was prefigured by the vision of "living waters" issuing from the Temple.

Truly, it is befitting that it should have been so. For it is in accordance with all that has been revealed to us of YEHOVAH's order of things, and of the connection between the Old Covenant

and the New, that the first outpouring of the holy spirit, as a result of prophecies and promises, should have been in the Temple -- that the beginning of the building of the *spiritual* House should have been on the site of the *material* House. Indeed, the same reasons that required that the preaching of forgiveness in the name of the risen Messiah should begin "at Jerusalem," Luke 24:47, would seem to require also that it should begin at the Temple. So let us now ascertain whether the Biblical record gives any definite indications as to the place where the inspiring events of the first Pentecost after the Messiah's death occurred.

### ***"Continually in the Temple"***

The first scripture that is relevant to this study is the concluding portion of Luke's Gospel, where the Book of Acts is a continuation -- written by the same hand.

Luke here records the Messiah's commandment to his disciples to stay back in the city of Jerusalem until they should be endued with YEHOVAH's power from on high, Luke 24:49. The brief record of this verse does not state whether or not Yeshua designated any particular place in Jerusalem where they were to await the promised holy spirit; but the further record given in verses 52 and 53 of *what they did in obedience to the Messiah's commands*, supplies us with this information. For we read that "they worshiped Him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy, and were CONTINUALLY IN THE TEMPLE praising and blessing [YEHOVAH] God" (Luke 24:52-53).

This passage clearly declares that the Temple was the place where they assembled for the purpose of waiting upon YEHOVAH God in worship and prayer. And it furthermore declares that they were there "CONTINUALLY." Therefore, we need nothing further to tell us just where in Jerusalem they were assembled whenever we read of their being gathered "in one place" during that period. We have the emphasis of the word "continually" -- which leaves no room for the supposition that they were assembled as a company in any other place than the Temple during the ten days that followed the Messiah's ascension to heaven. This passage alone makes it clear that Yeshua had told them to wait *in the Temple* for the promised outpouring of the holy spirit.

When we consider the fact (which appears from both the Scriptures and from other contemporary records) that the Temple -- with its vast corridors or "porches" -- was the regular gathering place of all the various parties and sects of the Jews, however antagonistic to each other, it will be easy to realize that the Temple is just the place -- both because of its hallowed associations, and also because of its many convenient meeting places -- where the disciples would naturally congregate. Edersheim states that the vast Temple area was capable of containing a concourse of 210, 000 people. He also mentions that the colonnades in Solomon's Porch formed many gathering places for the various sects, schools and congregations of the people. In commenting on John 7 Edersheim says that the gathering places in Solomon's Porch "had benches in them; and from the liberty of speaking and teaching in Israel, Jesus might here address the people in the very face of His enemies." It was, moreover (and this is an important item of evidence), in Solomon's Porch that the concourse of Jews gathered which Peter addressed in Acts 3 -- see vers 11. Therefore, there can be little doubt that one of the assembling places to which Edersheim refers was the "house" where the disciples were "sitting" when the holy spirit came upon them.

When Luke continues his narrative in the Book of Acts he says, speaking of the apostles, that “These all *continued* (lit. were continuing) with *one accord* in prayer and supplications with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brethren” -- Acts 1:14. In substance we have here a repetition of what is recorded in the last verse of Luke’s Gospel -- namely that, during the ten days following the Messiah’s ascension, his disciples were “continually” together waiting upon YEHOVAH God (they “continued with one accord in prayer and supplication”). The record in Acts omits mention of the place where they so continued; but that information was not needed, seeing it had already been definitely stated in Luke 24:52-53. However, Luke adds the interesting fact that the women, and Mary the mother of Yeshua, and his brethren, were there with them. This was done, it must be remembered, by Yeshua’s express instructions. They were, of course, praying for the promised enduement from on high (Luke 11:13).

The next verse (Acts 1:15) states that “in those days (of waiting upon YEHOVAH God in the Temple) Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples and said (the number of names together were about an hundred and twenty),” -- and then follows the account of the choosing of Matthias, as an apostle and witness of the Messiah’s resurrection, in the place of Judas. Without a doubt this occurred in their *accustomed gathering place* in the Temple -- since they were “continually” there during those days of waiting for YEHOVAH’s holy spirit.

We should note how unlikely it is that the disciples, to the tune of 120, should (or could) be using as their gathering place the “upper room” which served the apostles for sleeping quarters.

### *The Day of Pentecost*

Finally the day of Pentecost came, and the event of the *great Feast-day* would furnish an *additional reason* why they should be found assembled in the Temple. The services of that day -- the offering of the morning sacrifice and incense, with the accompanying prayers (in which they would have undoubtedly taken place) -- began at sunrise. This service being concluded, they would naturally be “sitting” in their usual place. It was then that “suddenly” out of heaven came that sound “as of a rushing, mighty wind.” The words “they were *all* with *one accord* in one place” (compare 1:14) indicate that they were in their customary gathering place in the Temple. Similar words found at the end of chapter 2 lend emphasis to this; for we find there the statement that, after about 3,000 souls had been “added” to them, they still continued *with one accord in the Temple* (verse 46). This clearly shows that what they had been doing as a small company or congregation they “continued” to do so -- still “with one accord” as an exceedingly large and growing congregation. It further shows that the place where they were gathered when YEHOVAH’s holy spirit came upon them must have been of sufficient size to accommodate *3,000 more being “added” to them*; and it need hardly be mentioned that the Temple was the only building in Jerusalem open to the public, where this could have been possible.

Going over the passages again, it will be clearly seen that there is no room for doubt regarding what we have just covered. Here, again, are the passages:

1/. Luke 24:52-53. “And they worshiped Him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy, and were **continually** in the Temple, praising and blessing God.”

2/. Acts 1:14. “All these were **continuing** with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brethren.”

This clearly must have been in the Temple, since it is impossible that they should have been “*continually* in the Temple” and, at the same time, should have been “continuing with one accord” in another place.

3/. Acts 2:1. “And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all **with one accord in one place.**”

4/. Acts 2:46. “And they, **continuing daily with one accord in the Temple.**”

These passages reiterate that the disciples *continued*, during the entire period in question, in *one place* -- and the first and last passages quoted clearly state that the place was the Temple.

From the last passage quoted above it plainly appears that, after Pentecost, they still made it a practice to meet “daily in the Temple,” the wording being such as to indicate that this was not a new custom from that date, but was the “continuing” of what had been their custom since the Messiah’s ascension into heaven.

### *The Pentecost Service*

Additional information about this subject is found in Acts 2:1, when care is given to the *literal* meaning of this verse. As rendered in the New King James Version it reads “Now when the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.” The Greek word translated by the three English words “had fully come” (the rendering of which most certainly DOES NOT give the true sense of the word, since a day cannot be more “fully come” after it has actually come), means literally “*was being accomplished*” or “*was being completed.*” In *Bagster’s Interlinear Translation* the reading is: “And *during the accomplishing* of the day of Pentecost, they were all with one accord in *the same* place.”

What is implied here is that they were, as we should expect, in the Temple for the purpose of taking part in the appointed services of this great feast day. During an intermission in the ceremonies they would naturally be “sitting” together in their customary meeting-place within the Temple area. What this verse impresses upon us is that, during the accomplishing of the various ceremonies of the day of Pentecost, the disciples were not dispersed and mingled with the great crowds of worshippers, but *kept together*, and were with one accord in one place -- not scattered about. Therefore, it cannot be doubted that at the moment YEHOVAH’s spirit descended upon them they were all in one and the same place somewhere within the large area of the Temple -- most likely in Solomon’s Porch.

Concerning this verse, the statement that the day of Pentecost “was being accomplished” means far more than that they were observing its ritual. The meaning of Luke here is that *all that was signified by that feast was finding its historic fulfillment.*

With this understanding we can now see a great wealth of meaning in these few words of Scripture.

The arrival of YEHOVAH's spirit took place some time before nine in the morning (see verse 15), just long enough for it to be "noised abroad" (2:6 -- KJV), and for an enormous crowd to gather. There would be ample time for this between the morning services and nine o'clock.

If we closely read the record of verses 1-14 it will be clearly seen that the events contained therein happened *all in one and the same locality* -- for there is no change of location. Wherever the disciples were when they began to speak in other (heteros -- different) languages, and where the astonished multitude assembled and listened to the first Gospel address ever preached "with the Holy Ghost come down from heaven," that was the very same place where the YEHOVAH's holy spirit came upon them.

Regarding the phrase "Now when this was noised abroad," it should be realized that this is not to be taken as meaning a rumor of this tremendous event was spread abroad because the verb rendered "noised abroad" in the KJV is *never* used in the sense of a rumor. The truth is that *the sound like a mighty wind was heard by the entire city of Jerusalem!* All the devout Jews in the city would, upon hearing this supernatural sound, rush to the Temple. In this connection the force of the words of Acts 2:2 should be specially noted: "*And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind (or Breath) and it filled all the house where they were sitting.*"

This awe-inspiring event was foretold by the prophet Isaiah, who wrote --

A voice of noise from the city, a voice from the temple, a voice of the Lord that rendereth recompense to His enemies. Before she travailed, she brought forth; before her pain came she was delivered of a man child. Who hath heard such a thing? Who hath seen such things? Shall the earth be made *to bring forth in one day? Or shall a nation be born at once?* For as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children (Isaiah 66:6-8).

The subject of this passage is *the birth of another nation*. Zion is represented as *being in travail, and as bringing forth children*. It is quite clear, therefore, that the "nation" here mentioned by the prophet is that "holy nation" of which Peter wrote in 1 Peter 2:9 -- a nation composed of all who have been "born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God" (1:23-25).

And beyond all question the "one day" foretold here is that great day of Pentecost, which was the birthday of that marvelous "nation," the like of which had never been seen in the world before.

The predicted "noise from the city" is, of course, the "sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind" that we have just discussed. And the predicted "Voice from the temple" was fulfilled when "Peter standing up with the eleven *lifted up his voice, and said unto them*" -- (verse 14). When they all spoke in different languages, under the influence of YEHOVAH's holy spirit, proclaiming the wonderful truth of the resurrection of the Messiah from the dead, then was a nation "born at once."

Not only that, but there is a remarkable significance in the words, “*Before she travailed she brought forth*” -- because the earthly Zion’s real “travail” did not come upon her until 40 years later when the Roman legions destroyed Jerusalem. YEHOVAH God, in His mercy and in answer to Yeshua’s prayer on the tree for his murderers, granted a reprieve for that space of time. Those distresses, which Yeshua himself foretold -- that “great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world” (Matthew 24:21) -- were termed by him “the beginning of *sorrows*,” literally *birth pangs* (Matthew 24:8). Therefore, this prophecy of the Messiah strikingly confirmed and also helps interpret that of the prophet Isaiah.

It is important to understand that in the days surrounding Pentecost -- and for a considerable period afterwards -- the disciples were in “favor with all the people” (Acts 2:48) and were therefore permitted to enjoy, in common with all the Jewish sects and parties, the privilege of being able to assemble for all the usual purposes -- and as a distinct group or sect in the Temple. And it should also be noted that no pious Jew would be anywhere else but in the Temple on that day -- see Acts 20:16.

We must conclude, therefore, that the MATERIAL House of YEHOVAH God served as the womb for the SPIRITUAL House of YEHOVAH God, and from it the Church was to come forth -- and soon *did* come forth. For a short while the two were identified, as the true spiritual “Israel of YEHOVAH God” was, for awhile, identified with “Israel after the flesh” -- the spiritual seed of Abraham with his natural seed. And this is, of course, in keeping with the revealed ways of YEHOVAH God.

This article is an illustration of how those of us who desire and attempt to be most careful in our study of the Bible can be in danger of taking things too much for granted. Most of us have proceeded on the assumption that the “one place” of Acts 2 was the “upper room” of Acts 1. What we have covered so far shows this assumption to be completely wrong!

### *The Source of the Living Waters*

It is quite evident that our study has a direct relation to certain Biblical prophecies -- such as Ezekiel 47 -- where the prophet describes his vision of the healing and life-giving waters issuing forth from *out of the Temple*. It was explained to the prophet that the waters which he saw were to go down into the desert (which suggests barren Israel), and to go into the sea (which symbolizes the nations), whose waters should be healed. The description continues --

And it shall be that every living thing that moves, wherever the rivers go, will live. There will be a very great multitude of fish, because these waters go there; for they will be healed, and everything will live wherever the river goes (Ezekiel 47:9).

It is easy to see in this passage the familiar scriptural figures of the Gospel -- and its life-giving and healing ministry. So we note with interest that the Temple -- the House of YEHOVAH God -- was to be the source of the stream of living waters.

Therefore, we cannot fail to see in this prophetic vision a SPIRITUAL foretelling of the issuing forth of the Gospel for all mankind from YEHOVAH’s appointed center -- which broadly

was Israel, more definitely Jerusalem and still more definitely THE TEMPLE! Other portions of Ezekiel's prophecy clearly have a spiritual fulfillment in this dispensation of the holy spirit.

In this regard we should also call attention to the prophecy of Joel. Inasmuch as the apostle Peter quoted from the second chapter of Joel, showing its fulfillment in the arrival of the holy spirit, and in those miraculous events whereby its presence was made known, it is significant that, in chapter 3 of Joel's prophecy, there is the promise that "all of the rivers of Judah will flow with waters, and a fountain shall come forth of the *House of the LORD*" (Joel 3:18). Those with YEHOVAH's spirit will be able to see in this verse and its context much that is applicable to this present dispensation -- though it could well be that the complete fulfillment of this passage, and also that quoted by Peter from chapter 2, must await the return of YEHOVAH God and His Messiah from heaven.

### ***"Go Speak in the Temple All the Words of This Life"***

We have the very significant record of Acts 5:17-25, which tells us that when the apostles were released from prison, where the Jewish religious leaders had cast them, by YEHOVAH's angel, the angel told them to "Go, stand and speak *in the Temple*, to the people all *the words of this life*" (verse 20). This makes it clear that it was YEHOVAH's purpose that the gospel-stream -- "the words of this life" -- should begin their flow in the Temple. In this we can see the continuity of YEHOVAH's dealings and the orderly working out of His great plan. Everything pertaining to the old dispensation centered in the Temple. Therefore, it was more than fitting that the new dispensation should start at the very same place, and thereby move out into the world which it was to over-spread.

The phrase "words of *this life*" is very significant. It is an *aid* to the right understanding of the passage because it *clarifies* the meaning of the expression "living waters" in the prophecies.

And, finally, the scripture tells us that, notwithstanding the strong opposition of the Jewish authorities, the disciples continued to teach and preach the Good News of the Kingdom of YEHOVAH God *in the Temple* and in every house -- see Acts 5:40-42).

### ***Living Waters Flowing from the House of YEHOVAH God***

For some time after Pentecost the church continued at Jerusalem, and seems to have been tolerated, in accordance with Gamaliel's advice (Acts 5:33-40), until the time of the stoning of Stephen. After this event the gospel stream spread throughout Judea and Samaria (Acts 8:1) -- the church at Jerusalem, the spiritual house of YEHOVAH God, being thus far its source. A little while later we find another "church of YEHOVAH God at Antioch; for the Bible mentions that Barnabas sought Saul (Paul) at Tarsus and brought him to Antioch, and that for "a whole year they assembled themselves *with the church*, and taught much people" (Acts 11:25-26). Here again, in "the church" in Antioch, we find the holy spirit in full charge. After a year of teaching *inside* the House, we find the living waters *flowing out* and producing the results that YEHOVAH God intended. For we read in Acts 13:1-2, concerning "the church that was at Antioch," that "as they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate Me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them." And so, from the House of YEHOVAH God, and in the power of the holy spirit of

YEHOVAH God, the stream of the Gospel flowed out in a *new direction* -- and extended farther than it had yet gone.

Still later, the gospel was carried into Europe and it came to Thessalonica -- not in word only, but also in power, and *in the holy spirit*, and in much assurance (1 Thess. 1:5). The result was "the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father, and in the Lord Jesus Christ" (1:1). This was to be an "example" or pattern for other churches, for the express reason, as the apostle wrote to them, that "From you *sounded out the Word of the Lord*, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith to God-ward is spread abroad" (1:8).

This pattern -- or *modus operandi* -- reached as far Glastonbury in the distant isles of Britain.

### *A Great Difference*

Our study brings into view a great difference between the Temple -- YEHOVAH's dwelling place in the old dispensation -- and the Church -- YEHOVAH's dwelling place in the new. In the case of the Temple, sacrifices were brought *to* it, blood flowed in it, and incense (worship) ascended *from* it. But *no healing waters flowed from it*. Therefore, what Ezekiel saw, and what was revealed also to Joel and to Zechariah -- living waters going out from Jerusalem (Joel 3:18; Zech. 14:8) -- was *something quite new*, and to which the Temple and its ritual presented no analogy.

These prophecies concerning the "living waters" were fulfilled by the *living waters of the gospel* which began, on the day of Pentecost, to flow out from the Temple in Jerusalem. Yeshua the Messiah uses the expression "rivers of living water" in John 7:38, and the meaning of the expression is given in the next verse: "But this spake He *of the Spirit*, which they that believe on Him should receive." It also is revealed that the Millennial Temple -- as pictured by Ezekiel -- will be the ultimate fulfillment of these prophecies as physical AND spiritual waters gush out from beneath the Temple occupied by the Shekinah Glory of YEHOVAH God, and administered by His High Priest Yeshua the Messiah.

As a result, one of the chief lessons to be learned from the Scriptures we have studied is that the "Spiritual House" of this era should be specially marked by being the SOURCE of a freely flowing stream of living waters -- carrying life and health into all the regions round about. And where this mark is lacking, even when the form of the House is quite correct, the explanation will doubtless be found in the conditions *inside the House*.

### **Upcoming Articles...**

The Virgin Birth and the Messiah

Islam's Peace

Was Yeshua the Messiah *Really* Born of a Virgin?

# The Messiah's Crucifixion *Tree*

Most Christians have it firmly implanted in their minds that there were three crosses at Calvary -- the center one holding the crucified Messiah while the crosses on either side contained the two thieves. It may come as a surprise to realize that the Bible nowhere states that the Messiah was crucified on a Roman cross! In fact, the Bible clearly reveals that the Messiah and the two thieves were crucified together on a living, growing *tree* -- fulfilling detailed prophecy and symbolism found in the Old Testament.!

**John D. Keyser**

“And when they had fulfilled all that was written of him, they took him down from the tree...” (Acts 13:29, *KJV*).

**W**e all know the traditional crucifixion scene that depicts three Roman crosses -- the Messiah in the middle and a criminal on either side. However, if you examine the Bible you will soon realize that it nowhere states that there were three Roman crosses. In fact, there is plenty of evidence to the contrary. You might ask: What difference does it make? The answer is that YEHOVAH God's plan is supremely detailed down to the smallest prophetic point for one very important reason -- to point unequivocally to the only true Messiah.

As YEHOVAH God wove prophetic pictures and patterns into the Bible to reveal His Messiah, He provided His holy spirit to enable man to understand their meaning and spiritual significance. A deep study of the Bible, coupled with YEHOVAH's spirit of truth to bring understanding, reveals YEHOVAH's beautiful and precise plan. Knowing *who* our Creator is -- and what our Savior has done for us -- is a solid foundation of truth, not blind faith. Total trust in YEHOVAH God comes from knowing who He is and what He has done for us. The greater our understanding, the greater will be our trust -- and the closer our personal relationship with Him will be.

Therefore, as we strive to gain a deeper understanding of the prophetic fulfillment of the crucifixion, an accurate picture is essential. One of the fundamental elements is the *means* of redemption. What light does the Bible shed on the actual scene of the crucifixion as it occurred nearly 2,000 years ago? And *how* does the Biblical/Hebraic picture enhance our understanding of the fulfillment of Messianic prophecy?

### *The Crucifixion Tree and the N.T.*

The Bible DOES NOT support the traditional idea of three crosses. As a matter of fact, certain versions of the Bible -- such as the KJV, the Jerusalem Bible and the NIV -- more accurately translate the following passages by referring to a crucifixion "TREE." Notice –

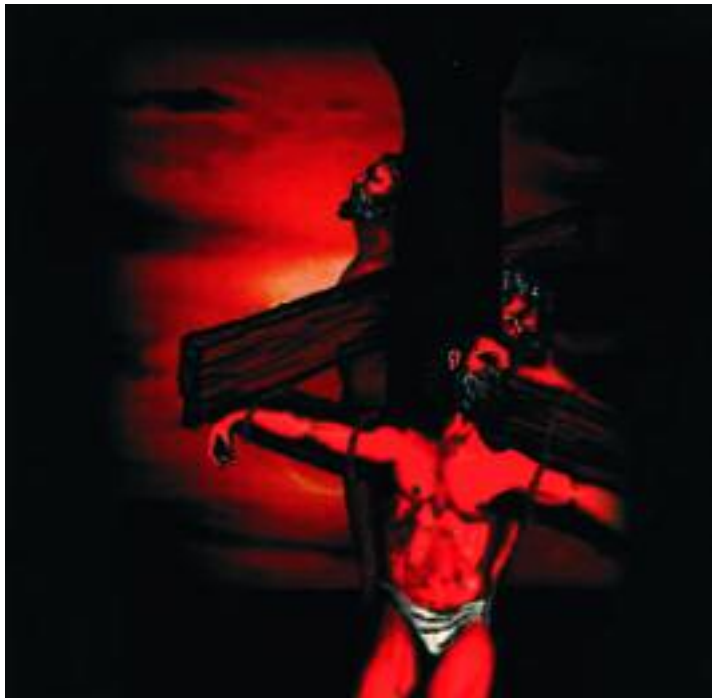
The God of our fathers raised Jesus from the dead -- whom you had killed by hanging him on a TREE (Acts 5:30, *NIV*).

The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a TREE (Acts 5:30, *KJV*).

It was the God of our ancestors who raised up Jesus, but it was you who had him executed by hanging on a TREE (Acts 5:30, *Jerusalem Bible*).

We are witnesses of everything he did in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They killed him by hanging him on a TREE...(Acts 10:39, *NIV*).

And we are witnesses of all things which he did both in the land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; whom they slew and hanged on a TREE (Acts 10:39, *KJV*).



Now I, and those with me, can witness to everything he did throughout the countryside of Judaea and in Jerusalem itself: and also to the fact that they killed him by hanging him on a TREE (Acts 10:39, *Jerusalem Bible*).

When they had carried out all that was written about him, they took him down from the TREE and laid him in a tomb (Acts 13:29, *NIV*).

When they had carried out everything that scripture foretells about him they took him down from the TREE and buried him in a tomb(Acts 13:29, *Jerusalem Bible*).

And when they had fulfilled all that was written of him, they took him down from the TREE, and laid him in a sepulcher (Acts 13:29, *KJV*).

Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who is hung on a TREE" (Galatians 3:13, *NIV*).

Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law by being cursed for our sake, since scripture says: Cursed be everyone who is hanged on a TREE (Galatians 3:13, *Jerusalem Bible*).

Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a TREE (Galatians 3:13, *KJV*).

He himself bore our sins in his body on the TREE...(1 Peter 2:24, *NIV*).

Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the TREE...(1 Peter 2:24, *KJV*).

The Greek word *xulou* (or *xulon*) is translated "tree" in each of the above passages. This Greek word refers to a LIVING TREE -- *not* a Roman cross! We should note that even as Yeshua the Messiah was being led to his crucifixion, he made a direct reference to this act being carried out "when the TREE is green" (Luke 23:31, *NIV*). The descriptive Greek word means "full of sap." Such a tree is clearly living.

Some might ask, "What about the 'cross' that Simon had to carry for the Messiah to the crucifixion site on the Mount of Olives?" In reality this beam was not a Roman cross but rather a *crossbar* that was directly nailed to the crucifixion tree. According to *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible* it was to this plank of wood that Yeshua was nailed at the *wrists*. (We should realize that the traditional depictions, showing nails through the hands, are physically impossible because the weight of the body would cause the nails to tear through the hands). The crossbar was then nailed to the TREE at which time nails were driven through the ankles into the tree trunk.

In certain passages in the Bible another Greek word -- *stauros* -- has been translated "cross." According to *Vine's Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*, its primary meaning is "upright pole" or "stake." However, it can also refer to a *crossbar* -- see *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*, Vol. 1, p. 1038. The same word, therefore, may refer to the CROSSBAR, the actual pole or TREE, or the crossbar/tree as a composite unit. Note the following:

As they led him away, they seized Simon from Cyrene...and put the cross [crossbar] on him and made him carry it behind Jesus (Luke 23:26, *NIV*).

Pilate had a notice prepared and fastened to the cross [crossbar]. It read: Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews (John 19:19, *NIV*).

The height of the tree trunk to which the Messiah was crucified can be estimated from the length of the hyssop branch, upon which a sponge soaked in sour wine was offered. *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible* (Vol. 1, pp. 1041-1042) estimates the reed was probably about three feet in length, thus making the height of the tree trunk from seven to nine feet.

There is a very interesting passage in the Book of John which highlights another aspect of the crucifixion –

The Jews therefore, because it was the day of preparation, so that the BODIES [plural] should not remain on the CROSS [tree -- singular] on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a high day), asked Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away (19:31, *NIV*).

Carefully note that the word "BODIES" is *plural*, whereas the word "CROSS" is *singular*. Here, the word *stauros* is translated "cross" and refers to the *tree* with three attached crossbars.

The New Testament records that the two criminals were crucified to the Messiah's right and left -- see Luke 23:33. However, a careful study of the New Testament nowhere indicates that they were crucified on separate crosses. This can only mean that Yeshua and the two criminals were CRUCIFIED ON THE SAME TREE! One man was crucified on his right side and the other on his left side. The symbolic picture represented by this arrangement is truly significant and will be discussed later.

It is now easy to understand how these men could have conversed with each other despite their agony and difficulty in speaking! Now we can clearly see that the soldiers came first to one thief, second to the next thief, and lastly to the Messiah -- as they walked AROUND the tree breaking legs as necessary to hasten death!

### ***Bullinger's Theory***

Because Dr. Bullinger in his *Companion Bible* failed to understand that the Messiah was crucified on a living tree, he concocted a radical theory to try and explain how the Roman soldiers killed first the two robbers and last of all came to the Messiah in the middle to slay him. According to Bullinger there were actually four others besides Yeshua who were crucified that day. He claimed that the Bible was showing there were two others on each side of the Messiah who were crucified with him. His reasoning was as follows: Since the New Testament called those crucified with the Messiah both "robbers" (Matthew 27:38) and also "malefactors" (criminals) (Luke 23:32), Bullinger came to the erroneous conclusion that there were *two* "malefactors" and also *two* "robbers"! This is why Bullinger came to believe that the two malefactors on one side had their legs broken first and then the soldiers came to the Messiah in the middle of the *two* malefactors and the *two* robbers. While Bullinger's hypothesis was ingenious, the Bible nowhere supports such an interpretation. In fact, all robbers are criminals (malefactors), but it is NOT true that all criminals are robbers. Luke simply used the generic term "malefactors" (criminals) to refer to the *two* robbers who were crucified with the Messiah.

However, Bullinger had a real point. How could the soldiers first break the legs of the two robbers and then come to Yeshua who was in the middle of them? Actually, the answer is quite simple! Notice what Ernest Martin wrote --

Since we are told by the apostle John (who was an eyewitness to the crucifixion) that all three were crucified on *ONE stauros* (i.e. a single *tree*), it is easy to see how the Roman soldiers broke the legs of the robber in the Messiah's right side (who had his back to the Messiah and was located on the northeast side of him) and then they broke the legs of the robber on the Messiah's left side (who also had his back to the Messiah but was located on the

southeast side of him). So, proceeding from the northeast side of the tree of crucifixion, the soldiers killed the first robber, went to the southeast side and killed the second robber, but they then came to the Messiah who was facing (let us say) westward towards his Father's Temple. When they reached Yeshua they found him dead already. (*Secrets of Golgotha*, pp. 176-177).

All of this is perfectly logical and is actually what happened. There is no need to resort to the outlandish theories of Bullinger, or anyone else for that matter!

### *O.T. References*

The apostle Paul makes the following statement when referring to the Messiah's crucifixion: "Cursed is everyone who is hung on a TREE" (Galatians 3:13). This is a direct reference to Deuteronomy 21:22-23, which says –

And if a man has committed a sin worthy of death, and he is put to death, and you *hang him on a tree*, his corpse shall not hang all night on the TREE, but you shall surely bury him on the same day (for he who is hanged is accursed of God), so that you do not defile your land which the Lord your God gives you as an inheritance.

A controversy raged among the Pharisees as to whether this passage from the Old Testament refers to a man being hanged on a TREE before or after death. Based on humane considerations, the Pharisees interpreted this passage to mean that the criminal should be put to a quick death by strangulation -- followed by hanging. There is, however, evidence from the Dead Sea Scrolls (*Temple Scroll* and *Nahum Commentary*) that this same passage was originally interpreted to mean that a criminal was hanged on a TREE as the *method of execution*.

According to the *Temple Scroll* (Column 64), those found guilty of certain capital offenses were killed by hanging on a tree:

If a man informs against his people, and delivers up his people to a foreign nation, and does harm to his people, you shall hang him on a TREE and he shall die....And if a man has committed a crime punishable by death, and has defected into the midst of the nations, and has cursed his people and the children of Israel, you shall hang him also on the TREE, and he shall die (Yadin, *The Temple Scroll*, p. 206).

According to the Sages, only blasphemers and idolaters were to be hanged on a tree -- though they abided by the more humane act of hanging after death. However, the Temple Scroll clearly shows that hanging on a tree could be used as a legitimate method of execution. Notice what Yigael Yadin says –

It is possible...that hanging alive goes back to the Second Temple period as the legitimate interpretation of the Bible's command to execute by "hanging," and that it was only the later Pharisaic halachah which gave a different interpretation, and condemned the practice of stringing up a condemned man while still alive. There is in fact proof of this in the Aramaic Targum (of a sentence in Ruth) which dwells on the four methods of carrying out judicial

sentences of death. It affirms that the fourth type, which is strangulation in rabbinic terminology, is indeed "hanging on a tree." And the late Israeli scholar Professor J. Heinemann pointed out that this Targum *preserves an ancient pre-Tannaitic (i.e. Before the mishnaic sages) tradition of punishment by actual hanging -- namely, with hanging as the cause of death (The Temple Scroll, pp. 207-208).*

In Addition to this, Yadin has reinterpreted the *Nahum Commentary* in light of the *Temple Scroll* to support the contention that the passage in Deuteronomy does indeed refer to hanging criminals alive on a TREE -- as practiced in ancient Israel. It is also a fact that crucifixion, as a form of hanging, was also practiced later in Israel's history. According to the Jewish historian Josephus, the Hasmonean king Alexander Jannaeus crucified 800 rebellious Pharisees in the first century B.C. (*Wars of the Jews*, IV, 6). With this knowledge it is obvious what the Jewish leaders meant when they informed Pontius Pilate that they had a law, and by that law the Messiah must die:

The Jews answered him, "We have a law, and by that law he [Yeshua] ought to die because he made himself out to be the Son of God" (John 19:7).

The Bible records that Pilate washed his hands of the entire affair because he knew the Messiah was innocent of any charge. He then handed the matter over to the religious leaders and stated: "See to it yourselves" (Matthew 27:24). Their response indicates they understood Pilate's action as a statement made according to Jewish law -- absolving him from any responsibility for this action (Deuteronomy 21:1-9). In this fashion Yeshua the Messiah fulfilled prophecy according to Jewish law -- not Roman law (Matthew 5:17; 26:54).

In an interesting aside Melito, the well-known Bishop of Sardis during the second century A.D., referred to the TREE as the instrument of crucifixion: "Just as from a TREE came sin, so *also* from a TREE comes salvation." It is apparent that the early Christians were well aware of the fact that the Messiah was crucified on a literal, living TREE. Also, it is a matter of historical record that before 326 A.D., the cross did not even exist as a Christian symbol, but was derived from paganism. For a fascinating discussion of the origin and history of the cross, read *Babylon Mystery Religion* by Ralph Woodrow.

### *The Two Trees*

The fact that the evidence in support of the TREE -- rather than the Roman cross -- for the crucifixion of the Messiah is overwhelming opens the door to making a profound connection between the crucifixion TREE and the Tree of Life. As we have already seen, the Greek word *xulou* (or *xulon*) was used to refer to the crucifixion tree. In contrast, the Greek word *dendron* -- which refers to a living tree primarily known for its fruit -- was NEVER used in this way. Significantly, the same Greek word (*xulou/xulon*) that refers to the crucifixion tree is *also* used to refer to the Tree of Life in the Book of Revelation! Notice!

He who has an ear, let him hear what the spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, I will grant to eat of the *tree of life*, which is in the Paradise of God (Revelation 2:7).

...And on either side of the river was the *tree of life*....yielding its fruit every month; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations (Revelation 22:2).

Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the *tree of life*, and may enter by the gates into the city (Revelation 22:14).

...And if anyone takes away from the words of this book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the *tree of life* and from the holy city, which are written in this book (Revelation 22:19).

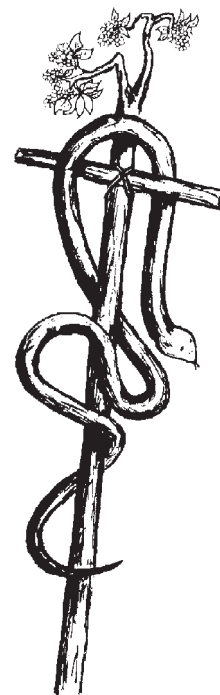
The use of the same Greek word confirms a DIRECT LINK between the Tree of Life and the crucifixion tree. That link, both LITERAL and SYMBOLIC, has been traced from the Tree of Life in the Garden of Eden to the crucifixion tree on the Mount of Olives.

### *The Lifting Up of the Messiah*

There is evidence that Aaron's rod, a branch from the Tree of Life, was planted on the Mount of Olives at the place of sin sacrifice, by King David. Even though Hezekiah later destroyed the copper serpent attached to its trunk, the tree remained for YEHOUAH God to work His ultimate redemptive plan for all humankind.

Yeshua the Messiah told Nicodemus: "...as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up; that whoever believes may in him have eternal life" (John 3:14-15). We should remember that the use of the copper serpent attached to the rod was to provide healing and forgiveness to the Israelites. Both symbolic and literal meanings are here evident -- *Yeshua was lifted up on the same standard!* Just as the serpent was lifted up high so that all could see it, so too was the Messiah lifted up on the highest location in Jerusalem -- so that all could see him. And all who look to him find total spiritual healing and eternal life.

Jeremiah's vision of the rod of an almond tree -- found in Jeremiah 1:11-12 -- and YEHOUAH God's promise to watch over His Word (to perform the act of redemption) was fulfilled at the crucifixion. In this way, the Tree of Life, the source of the almond rod, is both literally and symbolically represented in the redemption of all humankind. Through it, YEHOUAH God brought redemption first to the Israelites and then, ultimately, to all humankind through the Messiah -- the Fruit of the Tree of Life who gives eternal life to all who trust in him and YEHOUAH God the Father!



**The Serpent on the Standard**

### *The Ultimate Sacrifice for Sin*

Man's sin separates him from a spiritual relationship with his Creator, YEHOVAH God. YEHOVAH made it possible to establish a spiritual relationship through blood sacrifice because the penalty for sin is death (Romans 6:23) and *life* is in the blood (Leviticus 17:11). However, animal sacrifice could only provide a *temporary* solution for atonement of sin.

YEHOVAH God made the first animal sacrifice as atonement for Adam and Eve's sin of disobedience in the Garden of Eden. Understanding how precisely YEHOVAH works, it is more than likely that the place of the first sin sacrifice by YEHOVAH was the *same place* where Adam was directed to build the first sacrificial altar. Genesis 22:9 indicates that this very altar was repeatedly rebuilt and reused through the years by Abel, Noah and Abraham. The Mount of Olives was the site of this altar -- see our article, *The Mount of Olives in YEHOVAH God's Plan*. Furthermore, the most holy sin sacrifice -- the Red Heifer -- is known to have been offered on the summit of the Mount of Olives, "where God was worshiped."

With this understanding, the call of Abraham to sacrifice his only son Isaac takes on even greater significance. *The Torah Anthology* makes it clear that Isaac was not a child at this point in time, but a young man quite capable of overcoming his father. This *same pattern* was repeated in YEHOVAH God's sacrifice of His only son, YESHUA the Messiah -- who also willingly followed the will of his Father in the very same place. The Bible shows us that YEHOVAH God provided a substitute sacrifice in Isaac's place: A ram, whose *head* was caught in a *thorn bush* (Genesis 22:13). Two thousand years later, Yeshua, his head surrounded by the *same kind of thorns* (John 19:2), was provided as the ultimate substitute sacrifice for all humankind's sins.

As the Messiah's blood was shed on the crucifixion tree, a symbolic parallel is evident in the Yom Kippur sacrifice (Leviticus 16:14). Notice --

Moreover, he [the High Priest] shall take some of the blood of the bull and sprinkle it with his finger on the mercy seat on the *east side*; also in front of the mercy seat he shall sprinkle some of the blood with his finger seven times.



**The Menorah**

### *The Pattern of the Menorah*

The crucifixion of the Messiah reveals certain symbolic meanings and patterns when viewed from the Hebraic perspective. One such pattern is that of the menorah. The menorah -- the golden seven-branched candelabrum kept in the Holy Place of the Temple -- represented the Tree of Life. And a miraculous budding branch of this tree, known as Aaron's rod, was planted on the Mount of Olives by David and grew into the crucifixion tree.

In this symbolic parallel, Yeshua the Messiah represents the fruit of the Tree of Life. Accepting his sacrifice for atonement of sin provides the only way of salvation and eternal life. Therefore, the Tree of Life is seen to be both literally and symbolically connected to the crucifixion and what the Messiah did for us in his sacrifice.

Another pattern of the menorah emerges from the crucifixion tree -- the body of the Messiah forming its central shaft, surrounded by six outstretched arms of the three as they hung on the tree. Even as Yeshua claimed to be the light of the world, the menorah represents this truth:

Again therefore Jesus spoke to them, saying, "I am the light of the world; he who follows me shall not walk in the darkness, but shall have the light of life" (John 8:12).

### *What Happened To the Crucifixion Tree?*

The fate of the crucifixion tree is not known. However, it can be assumed that it was eventually cut down and destroyed. Because such a tree was considered cursed by the Jews, it may have been destroyed soon after the Messiah's crucifixion. Even if this did not occur, it is well known that all trees around Jerusalem were destroyed by 70 A.D. By the Roman general, Titus, during his siege of Jerusalem.

It should be noted that the Messiah was charged by the Jewish authorities with the most heinous of crimes -- that of blasphemy (see Matthew 26:65). This meant that he was looked upon by the people as "accursed of God," and this is exactly how the apostle Paul described him in Galatians 3:13. This was a reference to Deuteronomy 21:22-23 in the Old Testament -- where it explains that such an "accursed" person even defiled the very soil where his execution took place. This defilement also applied to the TREE on which a person was hanged or crucified. In the Book of Hebrews Paul said that the tree (the stauros) was considered "a shame" (Hebrews 12:2) and the crosspiece (Latin: *patibulum*) "the reproach" (Hebrews 13:13). All the instruments of crucifixion were "accursed" because they came into contact with the "accursed one." Writes Ernest Martin –

The essential teaching on how to cleanse the land of such "accursedness" is found in Deuteronomy 21:22, 23, and in the previous verse 21 it says this purging was to be done by *burning* (Hebrew: *bahgar*). In the Old Testament example of such purging, it was thought necessary to burn the possessions of such an "accursed one" because the abominable sin of the person was even transferred to the things owned by the sinner (since he had touched them and this reckoned even his possessions "accursed") -- *Secrets of Golgotha*, pp. 179-180.

We see this with the possessions of Achan, who lived during the time of Joshua (Joshua 7:15, 24-26). He sinned so grievously that he was killed -- along with his children and animals -- and all his "accursed" things were burnt up with him. This practice of complete and utter destruction was deemed the only way to purify the land of Israel from such defilements.

Taking this as the cardinal example of what happened to an "accursed one" and the "accursed things" which he had come in contact with, it is almost certain that the tree on which the Messiah was crucified was burnt to ashes by the Jewish authorities. It was reckoned "a shame" -- it-

self “accursed.” To keep the land from being polluted, Yeshua had to be destroyed before sundown of the Preparation Day and the “accursed” stauros had to be burnt up so that no person could ever touch it again.

The Jewish authorities of the day wanted to take the dead body of the Messiah and the “accursed” (shameful) tree and *burn them up together* just like the example of Achan in the Old Testament. It was for this reason that Joseph of Arimathea went before Pontius Pilate to ask for the Messiah’s body so that he could arrange for its burial before the authorities committed it to the flames (Mark 15:43). If Pilate had refused to release the body of the Messiah to Joseph, it would indeed have been consumed by fire along with the tree he died on.

In fact, there was a prophecy which many people at the time believed referred to the Messiah and his death. Martin explains –

It [the prophecy] showed that the tree and the person on the tree would be destroyed *together*. Though the original teaching of this Old Testament prophecy seemed to refer to the prophet Jeremiah, later Christians came to feel that it was a direct prophecy of what happened to Christ at his crucifixion. The prophecy is found in Jeremiah 11:19.

For I was like a docile lamb led to the slaughter; I did not realize that it was against me they fashioned their plots: “Let us destroy the TREE *WITH ITS FRUIT* [or “sap”], let us cut him off from the land of the living. That his name be remembered no more!” (Italics mine -- the subsidiary word “ox” in the King James Version is not in the original Hebrew). -- *Secrets of Golgotha*, p. 181.

The *Anglican Commentary* (London: 1875) provides an interesting quote from Jerome in the 4th century regarding this very verse:

Jerome well says on this verse; “all the churches agree in understanding that under the person of Jeremiah these things are said of Christ. For he is the lamb brought to the slaughter that opened not its mouth. The TREE is his cross, and the bread [fruit] his body: for he says himself, ‘I am the bread that came down from heaven. And of him they purposed to cut him off from the land of the living that his name should no more be remembered’” (vol. V, p. 395).

Even though later Christians interpreted Jeremiah 11:19 in a number of ways, it is a fact that the Hebrew makes one think that *the tree*, along *WITH the fruit* (the body) were prophesied to be destroyed *together!* While this prophecy -- acknowledged by Christians as referring to the Messiah -- has the crucifixion tree *destroyed* along *WITH* the Messiah, we know that Joseph of Arimathea was able, at the last moment, to rescue Yeshua’s body from such a fate. However, this Old Testament passage still clearly shows that the tree itself was *destroyed*. And typically, in the judgment rendered by the Sanhedrin against the Messiah, it could be reckoned that Yeshua was “destroyed” along with the tree (at least he should have been destroyed *with* the tree) had not Joseph of Arimathea rescued his body from being committed to the flames. The prophecy of Jeremiah 11:19, as understood in the original Hebrew and correctly referring to the Messiah and the tree he died on, is further proof that early Christians *knew* the crucifixion tree itself was not spared from destruction.

## The Shroud of Turin

### Scientific Confirmation of a Hoax

**W**hy, over the years, has the Christian world remained silent and produced no champion who could have challenged the claims made for the Shroud of Turin? The weight of Scriptural evidence and an analysis of the burial practices of the time can lead to only one logical conclusion -- namely, that Yeshua the Messiah was not wrapped in the shroud at the time of burial. No such method was in vogue in the practice of the time.

“And there came also Nicodemus, which at the first came to Jesus by night, and brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about an hundred pound weight. Then took they the body of Jesus, and WOUND it in linen clothes with the spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury” (John 19:39-40).

Wound or wrapped in linen clothes! NOT a shroud. Turning to the eleventh chapter of John we read about Lazarus who had died and was buried. When Jesus cried with a loud voice, “Lazarus, come forth,” the account states that: “He that was dead came forth, **bound hand and foot with graveclothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin.** Jesus said unto them, Loose him and let him go.”

In his *Commentary* Dr. Adam Clarke states that the phrase, “bound hand and foot with grave clothes,” means “swathed about with rollers...These were long slips of linen a few inches in breadth, with which the body and limbs of the dead were swathed, and especially those who were embalmed.” Dr. Clarke continued: “It is evident that Lazarus had not been embalmed” (Martha’s comment in the 39th verse would indicate this to be true); “it is probable that his limbs were not swathed together, as is the case with

those who are embalmed, but separately, so that he could come out of the tomb at the command of Christ, though he could not walk freely till the rollers were taken away.” However, the body of the Messiah was embalmed and completely wrapped in the linen rollers. Both Matthew 27 and Mark 15 confirm that the body of the Messiah was wound with linen rollers, or grave clothes, when placed in the new sepulcher in the garden (John 19).

The first day of the week, following the Crucifixion, Mary Magdalene came to the sepulcher early in the morning and saw that the stone that covered the entrance to the tomb had been taken away. The account states: “Then she runneth, and cometh to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple (who was John), whom Jesus loved, and said unto them, They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulcher, and we know not where they have laid him. Peter therefore went, and that other disciple, and came to the sepulcher. So they ran both together: and the other disciple did outrun Peter, and came first to the sepulcher. And he stooping down, and looking in, saw **the linen clothes** lying; yet went he not in. Then cometh Simon Peter following him, and went into the sepulcher, and seeth **the linen clothes** lie, and **the napkin**, that was about his head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself. Then went in also that other disciple, which came first to the sepulcher, and he saw, and believed” (John 20).

What did John see that convinced him that Jesus had, indeed, risen from the dead? The linen wrappings remained in place as though they were still around the body: they merely

collapsed as the body had come up out of the wrappings without disturbing them. Thus when John and Peter saw this, they knew that the resurrection of the Messiah had taken place. The linen wrappings could not retain his resurrected body any more than the locked room could prevent him from appearing to his disciples (John 20).

Thus, the claims made in regard to the so-called Holy Shroud are a spurious invention to deceive the credulous. It was evidently a product of the apostate church of the Middle Ages and used as an object of veneration so that the Church might profit by it. It is but one among many other fragmental articles of one kind or another which have been brought into being for a similar supposedly sacred purpose. All such relics become a source of idolatry and are condemned by YEHOUVAH's Word, the Bible. Even the brazen serpent Moses made had to be destroyed because it had become an object of idolatrous worship. The Shroud of Turin should be consigned to a similar fate.

Since attention was first called to the Scriptural evidence demonstrating that this Shroud was a fake, we have been waiting for one of the many scientists examining the Shroud of Turin to finally confirm what we know to be true. We now have that confirmatory evidence in a statement by one of the best microscopists in the world. His statement was published in the *Boston Herald American* under the title "Shroud Called Hoax" as follows:

"A one-time member of the Shroud of Turin Research Project said yesterday that the cloth believed to be the burial shroud of Jesus Christ is a hoax. Walter C. McCrone, described by one colleague as the best microscopist in the world, said he found no evidence of blood on the centuries-old material; he believes the images on the cloth were painted. 'I can't sit still while my findings are ignored -- worse yet, said to be incorrect,' said McCrone, head of the McCrone

Research Institute. 'I can assure you I have compelling, rational and straightforward reasons for saying the Shroud of Turin was painted with a thin watercolour paint by an artist.'

"McCrone said that in the sample he took of the shroud he found evidence of red iron earth and vermilion paint, adding that there appear to be no brush marks because watercolour never produces brush marks. He said that if the church ever allows the shroud to be carbon dated, the process will prove conclusively that the cloth is a hoax."

A later report in the *Pasadena Star News* stated the following –

"The Shroud of Turin is only about 700 years old and cannot be the authentic burial cloth of Jesus Christ as believed by millions over the centuries, the archbishop of Turin said Thursday.

"Cardinal Anastasio Ballestrero's announcement that he accepted the results of dating tests conducted by three laboratories ended a debate over the origin of the cloth that has raged for hundreds of years.

"Ballestrero told a news conference at the headquarters of his archdiocese that carbon-14 tests by labs in the United States, Britain and Switzerland concluded with 95 percent accuracy that the shroud cannot be more than 728 years old, dating to between 1260 and 1390."

YEHOUVAH God would not have allowed the grave cloths to remain in existence to be venerated like a Catholic relic. If you recall, the body of Moses was buried in an unknown grave to prevent such adoration and worship from occurring -- which is pure adolatry in YEHOUVAH's eyes.

