THE ROYAL HOUSE OF DAVID
“Therefore now, LORD, let the thing that thou hast spoken concerning thy servant and concerning his house be established for ever, and do as thou hast said. Let it even be established, that thy name may be magnified for ever, saying, The LORD of hosts is the God of Israel, even a God to Israel: and let the house of David thy servant be established before thee. For thou, O my God, hast told thy servant that thou wilt build him an house...”

I Chronicles 17:23-25

“Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.” John 17:17

WRITTEN OVER 100 YEARS AGO

John Thomas: An heir to the throne and kingdom of David is a matter of Divine promise. The Apostles testify that Jesus of Nazareth is that promised heir. PAGE 3

Robert Roberts: The New Testament requires the restoration of the Kingdom of Israel PAGE 5

PROPHECY FULFILLING

John Ramsden comments on the new leader of the Russian Orthodox Church PAGE 6

MILESTONES UPDATE Don Pearce looks at current world events in the light of prophecy PAGE 10

The Feast of Passover & the Future Redemption of Israel Daniel Billington brings an interesting perspective on Pesach PAGE 14

Archeology & The Bible

Paul Billington writes about The Discovery of the House of David following a visit to Jerusalem PAGE 18

Report on an address at The Jerusalem Conference PAGE 25

Ken Loveridge: Inscription from the House of David PAGE 26

DOCTRINE

Ron Kidd discusses the importance of Bible Truth PAGE 8

The Personal Devil & His Companions Arthur Bull continues his series on this subject. PAGE 32

Foundation Promises PAGE 24

EDITORIAL

HUMANISM: Enemy of the God of Israel PAGE 29

REGULAR FEATURES

Food For Thought PAGE 35

Prophecy Days & Events PAGE 31

Quotables: from various writers PAGE 9

BACK PAGE FEATURE

Sheepish Creationists should speak up & stop bleating...

Daniel Billington takes us through a study of the Passover feast, seeing a connection to Israel’s future redemption

Daniel Billington provides insight into the discovery of ancient inscriptions and brings us examples from the Royal palace in Jerusalem

And it came to pass, when the king sat in his house...” 2 Samuel chapter 7. Today the Royal House of David is being excavated in Jerusalem, bringing to light the very house where David received the Promise of God.

Don Pearce looks at the main players in Israel and the Middle East as the final picture develops

Ken Loveridge provides insight into the discovery of ancient inscriptions and brings us examples from the Royal palace in Jerusalem

“Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.” John 17:17
THE HEIR TO THE THRONE AND KINGDOM OF DAVID

It was revealed unto Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, through the prophet Daniel, that in the “latter days,” the God of heaven would set up a kingdom that should not be destroyed; which kingdom should not be left to other people, as the kingdoms of Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome have each successively been; or as the ten kingdoms into which the Roman empire is at present divided shall be; but a kingdom which “shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms (of men) and itself shall stand for ever” (Dan. 2:44). Some years subsequent to this, in the first year of the reign of Belshazzar, the king of Babylon, Daniel himself had a vision of the rise and fall of the great monarchies above alluded to. After viewing them until their dominion was taken away, in his account he says, “I saw in the night visions, and behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given, dominion, glory and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.” (7:13,14). Mark! this person like the Son of man had given unto him, dominion, glory, and a KINGDOM! There will be no difficulty in proving that the individual whom Daniel saw receiving these high honours, was no less a personage than our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

The reader will at once perceive an intimate connection between this prophecy of Daniel and a parable which Jesus spake to some who “thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear.” He said, “A certain nobleman went into a far country, to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return,” etc. (Luke 19:12). The “certain nobleman” designates Jesus, who was “born to be a king”—the “far country” the heavens into which he ascended, and in which he will remain “until the times of the restitution of all things”—the “kingdom” that which Daniel saw given to him, and which the Lord God has promised to give him—and “to return” his coming again, “in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, when he shall sit upon the throne of his glory,” “and judge the living and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom.” No one will deny that Jesus alludes to himself in this parable, and that he teaches in it, that he was to possess royal dignity on his return. This is no isolated doctrine of the Bible, but is fully corroborated by the testimony of prophets and apostles.

John the Baptist, the herald of the Messiah, announced the approach of heaven’s King, and declared that he was then in the midst of the people, and in order that he might be made manifest to Israel, he had come immersing in water (John 1:26-34). Jesus and his apostles taught the nation of the Jews that the kingdom of the heavens had come nigh unto them, and that they were therefore to repent, or amend their lives.

He intimated on various occasions that the Son of man should administer the affairs of the kingdom of God—reward his servants, and punish his enemies. He also claimed this kingdom as his own. Hence he promised the apostles that they should eat and drink at his table in his kingdom (Luke 22:30). And when at Pilate’s bar, accused by the Jews of making himself a king, he did not deny the accusation, but said, “My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence. Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest it I am king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth.” (John 18:36, 37).

There are some who infer that because Jesus declared his kingdom not to be of this world, that therefore it must be “out of the world. This is not correct. Literally he said, “My kingdom is not of this kosmos—a word which means order, arrangement, or constitution of things. His kingdom will not be of the order of things which prevailed in Judea at that time, but will be arranged according to an heavenly constitution of things. Hence it is styled “the kingdom of the heavens.” Jesus also said that he was born to be king; and in consequence of witnessing this “good confession before Pontius Pilate,” suffered death. And for “the suffering of death he was crowned with glory and honour,” and has obtained “a name which is above every name,” even “King of kings, and Lord of lords.”

We will not inquire, more particularly, concerning the throne and kingdom which Jesus will ultimately possess. We have already seen that the diadem of universal dominion shall be placed upon his head; that regal honours shall be given to him; but as yet we have not ascertained his right and title to all this glory. This is hinted at in the following words—“The Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David; and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever.”

This language is sufficiently clear to show that the kingdom which Jesus will possess is the kingdom of David—that the throne which he will occupy will be the throne of David—that to the subject of his kingdom will be everlasting—and that he is the legitimate heir and son of David.

In order to fully understand this important matter, we must refer to the covenant which God made with David, for he made “an everlasting covenant with him, ordered in all things and sure.” This covenant is recorded in 2 Samuel 7:12-16: also in Psalm 89, from which we make a few extracts. “I have made a covenant with my chosen, I have sworn unto David my servant, Thy seed will I establish for ever, and build up thy throne to all generations...” (verses 3, 4, 34-37). Again, “The Lord hath sworn in truth unto David; he will not turn from it; Of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne” (Psalm 132:11). The Lord, by the prophet Jeremiah, reiterates this covenant. He says, “Thus saith the Lord, If ye can break my covenant of the day, and my covenant of the night, and that there should not be day and night in their season; then may also my covenant be broken with David my servant, that he should not have a son to reign upon his throne,” (Jeremiah 33:50, 21).
The covenant requires then the heir to the throne of David be of a character approved by God. Hence we find this specified in the last words of David in the following manner: — “The God of Israel said, the Rock of Israel spake to me, he that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God... Although my house be not so with God; yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure; for this is all my salvation, and all my desire, although he make it not to grow” (2 Samuel 23:3, 5). David looked forward to the time when such a righteous king should occupy his throne: “who shall judge the poor of the people, save the children of the needy, and break in pieces the oppressor;” — a king “in whose days the righteous shall flourish;” — a king who shall have universal dominion, and before whom all kings shall bow, and become tributary: — and a king “who shall live,” or be immortal, whose name shall endure for ever, and in whom all men shall be blessed. See Psalm 72.

And yet history shows that the sons of David did not all of them walk in the steps of their father, nor regard the God of Israel. Even Solomon, the immediate successor of David, and who is claimed by some as the one referred to by the covenant, grievously sinned against the Lord. And the house of David became so corrupt, that Jehovah frequently warned the kings of Judah of the result of their wickedness. By Jeremiah he said to them—

“O house of David, thus saith the Lord; Execute judgment in the morning, and deliver him that is spoiled out of the hand of the oppressor, lest my fury go out like fire, and burn that none can quench it, because of the evil of your doings,” (Jeremiah 21:12).

And because they repented not, but rather increased in wickedness, the Lord determined to deprive them of the royalty, and overthrow the kingdom. Hence Ezekiel said to Zedekiah, the last of Judah’s kings,

“Thou profane wicked prince of Israel, whose day is come, when iniquity shall have an end, Thus saith the Lord God; Remove the diadem, and take off the crown; this (man) shall not be the same: exalt him that is low, and abuse him that is high. I will overturn, overturn, overturn it: and it shall be no more,UNTIL HE COME whose right it is; and I will give it him,” (Ezekiel 21:25-27).

And now let us pause to inquire, whether that method of interpretation can be correct which disregards the covenant which God made with David — a covenant confirmed by an oath, and the concurrent testimony of the prophetic word? We think not. Nor will it do to say the various items of that covenant are fulfilled, unless a descendant of David is now on his throne, reigning in his kingdom, over the tribes of Jacob, who is righteous, powerful, glorious, and immortal. This cannot be; for the kingdom and throne are yet in the dust, and Israel in captivity. And no one of Adam’s race has yet appeared who fills the character of David’s Son and David’s Lord, except Jesus of Nazareth. But let us examine the testimony a little further.

The text says, that the “Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David,” from which we infer that he is the promised son and heir, according to the covenant. Jesus was “the son of David according to the flesh.” His genealogy, both on his father and mother’s side, proves it. He is frequently styled the son of David in the Gospels. Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist, inspired by the Holy Spirit, designates Jesus as the is frequently styled the son of David in the Gospels. And this exaltation to his father’s right hand, is only for a set time, which the apostle Paul and applied to Jesus Christ, (Romans 15:28); thus proving the fact, that the Messiah was of the seed of David, according to his gospel, (2 Timothy 2:8).

Again, Jesus says that he has “the key of David,” (Rev. 3:7); and Jehovah says of him by Isaiah, “The key of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulder,” (Isaiah 22:22). The word key signifies authority or government; this is evident from what we read in Isaiah 11:6—

“Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the GOVERNMENT shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom to order it, and to establish it with judgment and justice, from henceforth even for ever.”

The apostle Peter also teaches the glory and exaltation of Jesus.

“Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a PRINCE and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins,” (Acts 5:31).

“Let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ” (Acts 2:36). And this exaltation to his father’s right hand, is only for a set time, “UNTIL I make thy foes thy footstool.” This glorious consummation will take place in the times of the restitution of all things, when God shall send Jesus Christ, to bless Israel and the nations.

Without pursuing the investigation of this subject any further, we conclude by saying, that the testimony of prophets and apostles agree in declaring Jesus to be the heir to David’s throne, and that, having received the royalty of his father, God, he will “return, and will build again the tabernacle of David that is fallen down, and close up the breaches thereof; and will raise up his ruins, and build it as in the days of old,” (Amos 9:11; Acts 15:16). That he will “restore the kingdom again to Israel,” (Acts 1:6); “make her that was cast far off a strong nation” (Micah 4:7); establish “Jerusalem as the throne of the Lord,” (Jer. 3:17); and as “the Ruler in Israel,” and “Prince of the kings of the earth,” “shall stand and rule in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God, and he shall be great unto the ends of the earth” (Micah 5:4).

Herald of The Kingdom, 1856
The Restoration of the Jews Taught in the New Testament

Twelve Lectures published in 1862 by Robert Roberts later appeared under the title Christendom Astray. On this page we produce an extract from Lecture No.14—“The Hope of Israel: or, The Restoration of the Jews, a part of the Divine scheme and an element of the Gospel”

The New Testament arguments against the restoration of Israel, are all based on misconceptions of the statements on which they are founded. One of these is Romans 9:6,7:—

“They are not all Israel, which are of Israel: Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but, In Isaac shall thy seed be called. That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed.”

Now this statement is in strict agreement with the prophets, without, in any way diminishing the force of their teaching in reference to the speciality of the Jews as a nation, and their future natural restoration. It is absolutely true that all of Israel are not Israel—that thousands of the seed of Abraham are not children—and that the divine principle is to count “the children of the promise” for the seed; and this is exemplified individually and nationally. In the case of the Jews, requirements such as circumcision, sacrifice, reverence for the name of God, and numberless other things specified in the law, were laid down as conditions of citizenship in the nation, and transgression was visited with expulsion. The penalty attached to almost every statute was, “That soul shall be cut off from his people.” Transgressors, therefore, though of Israel, were not Israel, even under the law. A whole generation of such non-Israelites perished in the wilderness; but this did not nullify the national election of the seed of Abraham (through Isaac). It only showed that fleshly descent from Abraham did not of itself constitute accepted Israelitishness—that it required Abraham’s faith as well as Abraham’s blood.

Individually as well, in reference to the heirship of the kingdom, “the children of the promise are counted for the seed.” No fleshly son of Abraham has a natural title to the honour, glory, and immortality of the kingdom covenanted. These are reserved for a class developed on the principle of believing the promises. In this respect, “the flesh profitteth nothing;” and even in respect of mortal citizenship, it proffitteth nothing, for as we have seen, that privilege is not to be granted on mere fleshly title. “I will bring you under the bond of the covenant, and purge out from among you the rebels.” This is the prophetic declaration. Thousands of Jews will be gathered from the countries who will never enter the land. Yet this will not destroy their national relationship. Being Jews, whom God has specially chosen as a nation with a view to the development of His ultimate purpose, they will every one be gathered in the preliminary restoration. This is the declaration of Moses, who says:—

“If any of thine be driven out unto the utmost parts of heaven, from thence will the Lord thy God gather thee, and from thence will he fetch thee” (Deut. 30:4).

Isaiah gives similar testimony, he says:—

“And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth” (chapter 11:12). “And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall beat off from the channel of the river unto the stream of Egypt, and ye shall be gathered one by one, O ye children of Israel” (chap. 27:12).

Thus there will be an indiscriminate national restoration without any reference to moral condition, just as in the case of the tribes when delivered from Egypt by the hand of Moses; because the nation as a whole is God’s by sovereign election, and cannot alienate themselves from that relation, though they may be rebellious and render themselves obnoxious to His destroying judgments. Yet, having been thus indiscriminately gathered, they are not at once settled in the land but, like their forefathers, in the day that they came out of the land of Egypt (see Ezekiel 20), are subject to an expurgating process in the wilderness, from which none who are morally unfit for the privilege of citizenship under the Messiah shall escape, “They shall come from the land where they sojourn, but shall not enter into the land of Israel.”

Thus, even in the future national restoration of the Jews, the mere children of the flesh are not counted for the seed, but those of faith who shall be developed by the probation in the wilderness. It must then be obvious that it is a very short-sighted construction of Paul’s words indeed, which would use them to destroy the doctrine of Jewish national restoration. It is a construction to which he himself would strenuously object were he now alive; for he has left his mind on the subject on record. Speaking of his “kinsmen according to the flesh, who are Israelites” (Rom. 9:3), he says:—

“Blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob; as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers’ sake: for the gifts and calling of God are without repentance... If the fall of them be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles; how much more their fulness? If the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall THE RECEIVING OF THEM BE, but life from the dead?” (Rom. 11:25-26, 28, 12, 15).

Here Paul contemplates an approaching Jewish “fulness,” “a receiving again,” a national change, “when the fulness of the Gentiles is come in,” and warns the Gentiles in view of this not to boast against the Jews in the wisdom of their own conceit (verse 25). This lets us into Paul’s views on the subject of the restoration of the Jews. The prophets and Moses, as we have seen, foretold the glorious and national restitution of the veritable nation that has suffered the vengeance of the Almighty for nearly twenty centuries. How then could Paul, who spake none other things than they (Acts 26:22) inculcate principles entirely subversive of their teaching? It is only partial knowledge or positive ignorance that leads men to erect a system of doctrine on the New Testament that contradicts the plainest testimonies of the “holy men of old, who spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.”

There are other objections frequently urged of an equally baseless nature, but the limited space at disposal prevents the notice of them. Enough has been said to shew that the restoration of Israel is one of the main features of the divine purpose to be developed in the future—that the kingdom of God cannot be established without its accomplishment, and that in fact, it is an element in the grand event on which the world’s salvation depends. “Salvation is of the Jews” nationally and individually. It is important then to understand this element of the truth of God, that by our enlightenment we may be enabled to put off our Gentilism, and become related to a higher polity—even the commonwealth of Israel—in which, being “Abraham’s seed,” we shall be “heirs according to the promise.”
The election of Bishop Kirill as “Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church and Patriarch of All Russia” has come as a surprise to no one. As the veteran ecumenist head of his Church’s External Relations Department since 1989 and a member of the World Council of Churches since 1971, he has just the sort of experience relevant to improving relationships with the Vatican, and which, no doubt will also be of great use to his political masters. Having allegedly been a former member of the KGB, it was not surprising that his enthronement was so conspicuously attended by both President Medvedev and Prime Minister Putin!

So delighted was Pope Benedict XVI with the appointment that, according to the Vatican’s own newspaper, Osservatore Romano, he promptly despatched a delegation to the ceremony led by Cardinal Walter Kasper, President of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity. He took with him the gift of a chalice “as a pledge of his desire to attain full communion as soon as possible.”

No Easy Ride For Kirill
No one expects “attaining full communion” to be an easy ride for the new Patriarch. In our last issue we highlighted the continuing conflicts between the Orthodox Church leaders in Moscow and Constantinople—a struggle which has taken a bizarre turn in London this month. The British Diocese of the Russian Church wants to break away from domination by Moscow, under whose jurisdiction it has been since 1945, in favour of becoming accountable to the Patriarch at Constantinople. It is claimed that such a move will provide potentially greater pastoral care for the 150,000 Russians reportedly living in South East England. Which perhaps wouldn’t matter too much if it were not for the little matter of ownership of its UK assets—like the magnificent Cathedral of the Dormition in London’s Kensington area and all the properties associated with it! So it has taken a ruling by the UK’s Treasury Solicitors, acting for the Attorney General, to decide that the material assets and buildings must remain under the control of Russia, leaving a Cathedral building without Bishops and priests, and a disenfranchised priesthood and congregation without a church building!

But There Can only be One Man of Sin
But all these manoeuvres are of only passing interest and significance to the Bible reader. True, we are now seeing mounting evidence of the “Most High at work in the kingdom of men”
in religious as well as political affairs, but these are all moves in the grand development of the situation which will prevail both immediately before, and perhaps more visibly so after, the return of Christ.

It has taken over 50 years for the formation of the European Union as the principal latter day successors to the old Roman Empire outlined to us in Daniel 2:7. Now however the strengthening power and influence of Russia in the east is coming more prominently into view. This is not the occasion to review the way in which the prophecies of Daniel chapter 8 and 11 have been fulfilling slowly over the years, but from them we derive the prospect of a great militaristic power lead by Russia in the East and a religious power based in the West. This latter power will be led by what the Apostle Paul writing to the Thessalonians (2 Thess 2: 3-12) describes as “The Man of Sin,” and identified by John in Revelation 13: 18 in other terms. This however is not so much a reference to a specific individual, but rather a whole line or “dynasty” of leaders heading up an apostate church. There is no room in Bible prophecy for two or more such contemporary leaders! Precisely how these Christian groups will coalesce to form this great latter-day Antichrist power is not revealed to us and any further speculation is of no value. The Bible does, however, indicate how these separate military-political and quasi-Christian religious powers will be dealt with by Christ at his coming on another occasion.

Meanwhile, when we see these dramatic political and religious signs of the approaching end of this age, we should ask ourselves how nearer the coming of Christ must be to the “household” of believers.
By Ron Kidd

LONDON, ON

Those who accept the Bible as the word of God must at some point in their examination of its message conclude that there is something wrong with a world that accepts a multiplicity of religions. The God of the Bible informs us that “I am the LORD, and there is none else, there is no God beside me” (Isaiah 45:5). Furthermore, God has declared, “thou shalt have no other gods before me,” the reason being, “the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God” (Exodus 20:3; 34:14).

The New Testament takes this teaching a step further and declares God’s Son, the Lord Jesus Christ to be the only source of salvation, saying, “Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved” (Acts 4:12). The apostle Paul further adds that “there is one body, and one Spirit, even as you are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all…” (Ephesians 4:5, 6).

But the question that many folk ask today is does it really matter what we believe? Is it necessary to be familiar with all the details of the Bible? Amongst those who still accept the Bible, the general trend is to serve God casually. By this we mean that most people who claim to believe the Bible can do for an individual. The psalmist says, “the law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple” (Psalm 19:7).

The Importance of Truth

When Pilate asked Jesus Christ, “What is truth?” (John 18:38), little did he know the significance of his question. On the other hand Jesus knew exactly how important truth is, for he once said to his disciples, “If ye continue in my word, then shall ye be my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (John 8:31-32).

Now consider for a moment what Jesus is saying, he notes that the truth can only be obtained by continuing in his words, and by so doing, in some way, it makes a disciple free, or as the word suggests, liberated or delivered. But from what do we need to be delivered? Most will acknowledge that they are free to do whatever they like within the boundaries of the law; however Jesus is speaking about a bondage which everybody is burdened with but unfortunately is unwilling to accept; the burden of sin and death. All of us are bound in what might be described as the prison house of death; death is the inevitable lot of all men and women.

The word truth is derived from a Greek word meaning real, true, and genuine and is opposite to what is fictitious, counterfeit, imaginary, simulated or pretended. It is interesting to note that in the Hebrew the word is derived from “aman,” meaning steadfast, faithful or sure; from this Hebrew word we have the English “Amen” which people normally conclude a prayer with.

God is the absolute standard of truth, being described as “a God of truth” (Deuteronomy 32:4), and the psalmist, acknowledged this when he wrote, “Into thine hand I commit my spirit: thou hast redeemed me (or made him free), O LORD God of truth” (Psalm 31:5). It follows then, that those who choose to serve and worship God must adopt the same standard, and this is confirmed by the words of the Lord Jesus Christ when he said, “But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father is spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth” (John 4:23,24).

It is helpful and informative to search a Concordance and develop a summary of this word truth. Here are some of the findings:

• God’s word is Truth and sanctifies individuals (makes them holy): “Sanctify them through thy Truth: thy word is Truth” (John 17:17).
• God desires people to come to a knowledge of the Truth: “Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the Truth” (1 Timothy 2:4).
• The word of Truth is the gospel of salvation: “In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of Truth, the gospel of your salvation” (Ephesians 1:13).
• There are those that have changed the Truth into a lie: “Who changed the Truth of God into...”
a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than theCreator” (Romans 1:25).
• Those that believe not the Truth are condemned: “That they all might be damned who believed not the Truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness” (2 Thessalonians 2:12).
• Acknowledgement of the Truth brings repentance: “In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the Truth” (2 Timothy 2:25).
• God requires that His children walk in Truth: “I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in Truth” (3 John 4).
• The Church is responsible for being the pillar and ground of the Truth: “…the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the Truth” (1 Timothy 3:15).

A Falling Away

The New Testament speaks of a time when people would turn away from the true teaching of the Bible.

“Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the Truth, and shall be turned unto fables” (2 Timothy 4:2-4).

“But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of Truth shall be evil spoken of” (2 Peter 2:1,2).

Could words be any clearer? “…they shall turn away their ears from the truth,” “…they will not endure sound doctrine.” The true teaching of God’s word was going to be abandoned; it would be rejected in favour of “fables” i.e. mythology. And in addition men and women would speak evil of “the way of the truth.”

All this would take place before the Lord Jesus Christ returns to the earth. Consider what the apostle Paul says:

“Now we beseech you, brethren, through the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, that ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand…Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition” (2 Thessalonians 2:1-3).

In other words, before Jesus Christ returns, his teachings would be abandoned by the majority. The word for “falling away” is apostasia from which our English word ‘apostasy’ is derived. The subsequent context of Paul’s words reveals even more details:
• Those who support this great apostasy will perish, because they “received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved” (verse 10).
• Those “who believed not the truth” will be condemned, because they had pleasure in unrighteousness (verse 12).
• By contrast those that will obtain salvation are those who have believed “the truth” (verse 13).

Understanding Truth

We read the following words by the apostle Paul: “(God) will have all men to be saved, and to come to a knowledge of the truth” (1 Timothy 2:4).

But how do we gain that knowledge? The apostle John tells us that it comes from Jesus Christ.

“And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life” (1 John 5:20).

Truth is absolutely essential; a correct understanding of Bible teaching is crucial to receiving God’s blessing of life. Men and women will not drift into the kingdom of God because of good works or good intentions. On one occasion Jesus’ disciples asked, “Are there few that shall be saved?” to which Jesus replied, “Strive (agonize) to enter into the straight gate: for many will seek to enter in, and shall not be able” (Luke 13:23,24). The straight gate is the entrance to the way of life; it is described as a narrow way in contrast to the broad way which leads to destruction (Matthew 7:13,14).

When Jesus returns there will be many who will claim to have served him during their life, but will be rejected on the basis that Jesus never knew them (Matthew 7:21-23). What a tragedy this will be for people who believe that any service is better than none. Wouldn’t it be more sensible to begin searching now for God’s truth? Find it and embrace it, so that at Jesus’ return we might be found walking in truth (3 John 3).

In his prayer for his disciples Jesus said, “Sanctify them through thy truth, thy word is truth” (John 17:17). Here is our source of information—the word of God. It can, through its influence in our life ‘sanctify’ us, or as the word means make us holy before God. Therefore this state of holiness begins by reading God’s word and allowing its influence to change our life (Romans 12:2) because the “word of truth” is “the gospel of your salvation” (Ephesians 1:13).

The true teaching of God’s word was going to be abandoned; it would be rejected in favour of “fables” i.e. mythology.
As the Middle East situation enters a period of change, the Redemption of Zion is our focus

By Don Pearce  Rugby, U.K.

Our last update was written in early December - what a lot has happened since then! Israel’s Operation Cast Lead was 3 weeks away. Grim though the financial crisis seemed to be then, it has clearly worsened. Obama hadn’t taken office and the successor for the Russian patriarch was unknown. In Israel they were building up to their elections.

So we have no shortage of material, as we strive to discern, with the eye of faith, the hand of the angels working amongst the nations. Our generation is a privileged one—which brings its responsibilities. So much of what was being anticipated years ago—but difficult to see—are now realities. The shift in attitudes between Europe and Russia is truly startling. They openly expected that there would be Middle East change in attitude in the Middle East has been described as a tectonic shift in its geopolitics! The war in Iraq has created an unprecedented willingness among moderate Arab nations to work with Israel.

“the war in Iraq has created an unprecedented willingness among moderate Arab nations to work with Israel.”

A Tectonic Shift in the Geopolitics of the Middle East

The Voice of America (11-3-09) under the headline Obama Administration Overhauls US Mideast Policy, spoke of the great changes which had taken place in the Middle East.

“Senator Kerry says there has been a tectonic shift in the geopolitics of the Middle East. Kerry says the rise of Iran following the war in Iraq has created an unprecedented willingness among moderate Arab nations to work with Israel.

“So there is a new reality—moderate Arab countries and Israel alike are actually more worried together about Iran than they are about each other. As a result, they are now cooperating in ways that were unimaginable just a couple of years ago. The truth is that an international initiative to prevent Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon is an essential building block of stability in the Middle East. If we succeed, Arab moderates will be stronger and Israel will be much more likely to take the risks for peace,’ he said.”

America has recognised that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has to be settled and solved, in the broader context of the Middle East. Significantly President Obama is set to visit Turkey in April. Turkey is an important player in the current Middle East situation—will she continue to side with NATO and the West or move into Iran’s orbit? Eventually the “drying up of the River Euphrates” (Rev 16: 12) is to be completed with Turkey coming under the heel of Russia, in order that Russian military might may be centred in Istanbul, the Constantinople of old. Thus the seat of the Dragon will return to its old headquarters, mirroring the situation in the days of the Roman Empire, when the seat of the Dragon was based here. Then Turkey will be under the domination of the King of the North, not the King of the South as at present. If this downfall of Turkish power is to take place, it would indicate that in the short term, she continues to cooperate with the West rather than with Iran. Hence the importance of Obama’s visit.

However, back to the general Middle East situation. How interesting that the invasion of Iraq is now seen to have led to the moderate Arab nations looking to the West for help against an Iran which has redoubled its efforts to be the major player in the region. She has spent vast sums of money to acquire nuclear weapons which she sees as essential to ensure her dominant position.

The many Arab nations who border her see things differently! They saw in the Lebanon War of 2006 and the Cast Lead of 2008/9 clear evidence of the aggressiveness of Iran’s desire for regional power working through her proxy armies. Israel is a great threat to Iran’s ambitions. She already is a nuclear power and with the backing of America Israel is the only power in the region that can thwart her plans. Hence Iran, through her surrogate armies of Hezbollah and Hamas is seeking to eliminate Israel. Israel’s Arab neighbours have been brought to realise that Iran is their buffer against Iran’s expansionist plans. The deep religious divisions between the Shiites (Iran) and the Sunnis (the moderate Arab states) ensure that Israel, which is not a Moslem country, doesn’t really matter.

Better a Jewish friend than a Shiite enemy! Bear in mind too that Iran is not an Arab country and so is regarded with suspicion. In spite of the media hype against Israel, many must have been building up to their elections.
to avoid undue civilian casualties in their operation against Gaza. They have also seen the economic transformation of the West Bank which we have considered in the current Milestones booklet.

Mideast Peace can start with Economic Growth

This was a Wall Street Journal headline (12-3-09). The writer commented that:—

“Though billions of dollars in ‘aid’ have flowed into the Palestinian territories, there is still no Palestinian state, nor security for Israel. With no effective restrictions on this aid, Palestinian leaders used it to bolster terrorist groups and fight Israel, rather than build their society.

“In order to succeed—finally—peace efforts need to create positive incentives. An economic peace process can create such a reality, as it has in the past, until political obstacles interrupted it.”

He then detailed the economic boom for the Palestinians in the 80’s and 90’s when many Palestinians were employed by Israeli businesses and farmers. Then came Yasser Arafat’s fomenting of the intifada in the late 1980’s.

“Today, many policy makers advocate a total separation between Israel and the Palestinians. But the latter cannot develop a prosperous economy and a viable state in economic isolation. Separation will result in economic ruin, as has already happened in Gaza. Israel and the West Bank are simply too small and too geographically integrated to support two economically divided entities. The fate of Israelis and Palestinians are economically intertwined. Jerusalem provides a good model of economic integration. The city has a large population of Israeli Jews and Palestinian Arabs living in close proximity. The latter are ardent Muslims, and most Jews in Jerusalem do not belong to the peace camp. Yet despite strenuous efforts by Palestinian terrorist organizations to inflame the city with repeated attacks, income from tourism has been so rewarding that Jerusalemites coexist without too many problems.”

He then takes the example set by Europe.

“For centuries, civilized Europeans slaughtered one another and political solutions were unable to stop the carnage. Then the creation of a European economic community shifted political priorities and peace came to reign. A similar process can lead, again, to peaceful developments in the Middle East. With no viable alternatives it’s certainly worth trying.”

Scripture indicates a period of peace and prosperity for Israel that attracts the nations to come to take a spoil and a prey (Ezekiel 38). We could well see a great transformation—the tectonic shift in the geo-political plates spoken of earlier in this article.

The Israeli Elections

These are a nightmare because of the electoral system that Israel uses. At least Israel has free and fair elections, which is more than can be said for other Middle East countries! The elections on Feb 10th brought an unexpected thin minority for Tzipi Livni’s Kadima party who won 28 seats, with Benjamin Netanyahu’s Likud party with 27 seats. Labor was pushed into 4th place with just 13 seats, overtaken by the right-wing Yisrael Beiteinu (Israel is our Home) party led by Avigdor Lieberman, with 15 seats. But this is just the start of the election process. The Knesset has 120 seats, so a leader has to pull together a coalition of other parties to ensure at least 61 seats to make a viable government. Although Livni had one more seat, she had earlier tried to form a coalition in order to avoid calling these elections, but failed to find enough support. Simon Perez, the Israeli President, called upon Netanyahu to form a government.

Netanyahu stands very much for retaining Israeli control over the West Bank and Jerusalem.

Netanyahu tried very hard to form a broad government, but Livni has refused to join such a grouping. At the time of writing Netanyahu is having one more attempt to bring her on board, but that seems a remote possibility. This forces him to embrace more of the smaller, right-wing parties, even though this takes him in uncharted territory. We await to see the outcome, but this appears to ruling out the possibility of exchanging land for peace. In spite of American pressure for a two state solution—an independent Palestinian State existing alongside the Israeli State—this would not be what a very right-wing Israeli government would sanction. They argue that the Palestinians would not be able to run their own State. Netanyahu stands very much for retaining Israeli control over the West Bank and Jerusalem. Would greater economic prosperity be sufficient to oust the militants? Eventually the peace process is to crumble as the Gogian nations seek to destroy Israel.

Potential Collision Course with the EU

The EU reacted swiftly to the possibility of a harder, right wing government. Its spokesman Javier Solana, the EU’s foreign and security affairs chief, said on Sunday:-

“Let me say very clearly that the way the European Union will relate to an (Israeli) government that is not committed to a two-state solution will be very, very different” (Associated Press 16-3-09).

Not a surprising statement in view of the fact that the EU countries will join with Russia, Iran and others to seek to destroy Israel! (A move that will bring Divine intervention—Ezekiel 38:18. Ed).

Israel’s Operation Cast Lead

Although the anti-Israel bias of the world’s media was evident once more as it had been in the Lebanon War of 2006, Israel was better prepared to counter these reports. It was abundantly clear that Hamas cared little for their own people, using civilians as military shields, using private houses, schools and mosques to store and fire weapons from. Their treatment of their rival Fatah leaders was especially brutal, many being murdered in cold blood. Hamas’ action in hijacking aid convoys and using UN schools caused considerable disquiet and an appreciation of the difference in attitude of the two sides. The Israelis often sent text messages to warn people to vacate property which Israel had targeted. There are few armies that operate like that! Much of the damage to property in Gaza was caused by the secondary explosions caused when the secret arms caches ignited. It certainly highlighted that Hamas could not be trusted.

Interestingly the battle was won in the first 4 minutes according to a report in Debka (23-1-09):

“The Israeli Air Force demolished two key Hamas war systems in the first 4 minutes of its massive offensive on Gaza Saturday morning, Dec. 27: six mosques in Gaza City holding the terrorists’ biggest weapons arsenals and scores of ‘beehives’ containing launchers primed for automatic multiple launches of hundreds of powerful rockets rigged for precision-targeting Israeli town centers.

“Israel’s aerial offensive knocked out 80 percent of these rockets and saved its southern cities. Left with only inferior projectiles, 98 percent of the hundreds of missiles the Palestinian terrorists managed to fire in the 22-day war missed their targets.”

Although the flow of rockets fired into Israel has continued, it has been at a lower rate, and in the past week Hamas has taken action against what it claims to be rogue elements that were responsible for the firings.

Nine Nations agree Plan to Combat arms flow to Gaza

Much of Israel’s firepower was directed at the hundreds of deep smuggling tunnels which pass under the Gaza/Egyptian border. The relatively sandy soil makes these easy to construct. Under the control of Hamas they bring in millions of dollars in transit fees. It is the main means of bringing into Gaza rockets, and equipment to manufacture rockets. Israel has insisted that other countries must join in the battle to prevent the continued use of these smuggling routes.

At a conference held 13-3-09, the U.S.,
Many in Israel look forward to such a visit with few understanding the quiet agenda that the Vatican is pursuing
Binyamin Ben-Eliezer called the discovery an ‘historic moment’ for Israel” (Israel21C 21-1-09).

A later article pushed up the potential reserves from 3 trillion cubic feet to 5 trillion. The oil rig has now moved to an adjacent block where they are confident of tapping into further reserves. The potential from the first drilling would put Israel at around No 48 in the world for gas reserves. Britain by comparison is No 32 with reserves 3.5 times bigger—but with a population ten times larger for it to supply. Any further finds would push Israel up the rankings. Knowing Russia’s desire to form a gas cartel it is not difficult to see what a desirable spoil this would be to Russia!

Germany—World’s Spy Champion

Germany is seeking to be the No 1 power in many fields; the latest is in spy satellites. This is an extract from an article by German-Foreign-Policy.com (6-3-09).

“Having launched a new reconnaissance satellite-based system, the German Bundeswehr is celebrating its enhanced capacity for carrying out independent military operations. The SAR-Lupe system, which had achieved full operational capability at the end of 2008, has catapulted the German Armed Forces into a position of a world leader in radar based reconnaissance, according to a high-ranking officer. With this ‘new instrument at its disposal’ Berlin can ‘at its own political volition, gather exclusive and global data independently.’

This new reconnaissance capacity has drastically reduced its ‘dependence on other countries’ in the field of security policy. Moscow played a key role in supporting the development of the satellite based system that will foster the trend toward independence from Washington. The spy satellites will not only provide information to the Bundeswehr but also to the foreign intelligence service. The images that can be retrieved by radar day or night and under any weather conditions will also be at the disposal of the Federal Office of Criminal Investigation.”

Berlin-Moscow

“The ‘space partnership’ with Russia has enabled Germany to develop its reconnaissance satellite-based system. By giving technological support to the development of the German system, Moscow has intensified its cooperation with the German armed forces, in spite of the protests from neighboring states, particularly Poland. According to its own indications, the SAR-Lupe system which provides high definition images—in contrast to traditional optical systems—under any weather or light conditions, will, via satellite, enable the Bundeswehr to obtain information of the highest quality from nearly any spot on the globe—around the clock and under all weather conditions ‘without having to physically intrude onto the territory of other countries.’”

This is another step on Germany’s path to power.

The financial crisis is perhaps offering Germany undesigned benefits. Last autumn Germany was castigated for not doing enough to help in the global struggle against the dire effects of the financial crisis. In France, President Sarkozy was hailed for his bold attempts to set things right and in Britain, Prime Minister Brown told the world what they must do. Germany was branded as the uncooperative one. The situation has changed somewhat! Sarkozy has been condemned for his protectionist plans, for saving the French car industry, and Brown is floundering in a sea of debt. Step forward Germany, the potential saviour of Europe! The Eastern European countries have been deeply affected by the recession. With new found EU money they had spent heavily to rebuild their weak economies and find themselves deeply in debt. Many of the older European countries lent generously to these newer EU counties and now find themselves facing bad debts. Germany had not gone for such lending, as she had been deeply involved in bringing the former East Germany up to speed after reunion. She had been very prudent in her budgeting and her mighty industrial base had cut costs and increased efficiency. She is now ready to step out as Europe’s saviour, but at a price.

“Germany’s apparent willingness to support its neighbors reflects a change in direction for the leadership. Until now Germany…has been reluctant to offer to help pay for what it sees as other countries’ lack of discipline in national spending. As a result, it is expected that extensive strings will be attached to any assistance offered, a point made clear by the president of Germany’s Bundesbank, Axel Weber. Speaking to the German daily Die Welt, he said “targeted aid for individual member states” may be “unavoidable” but any such moves would have to be accompanied with ‘strict demands and conditions (Spiegel Online).’”

Georgia: Left to Russia’s Mercy?

“Both the Americans and the Europeans understand that Russia has drawn a line in the sand around Georgia and most of its former Soviet territories. And if the West wants Russia’s help on any issue—from strong energy ties to Afghanistan to Iran—it must change its relationship with Georgia.

“Russia does not really care if Georgia is friendly to it, nor does it care if ‘Tbilisi is pro-Western. Georgia simply cannot threaten Russia, and Moscow has too many ways to destabilize the small state” (Stratfor 10-3-09).

As part of the Togarman region of Ezekiel 38:6 we can see that her steps towards the West have been thwarted by circumstances; her destiny is to be part of the Northern confederacy and whatever plans its President may make, he is powerless to overrule the angelic hands.

There was an interesting article entitled The Glue That Binds India And Israel explaining the remarkable way Israel is being linked to this “young lion” country bringing Ezekiel 38:13 to life. Also the efforts of Egypt, Saudi, Jordan and others to work together to counter the threat of Iran—again we can see this as part of the Sheba and Dedan nations mentioned in the same verse.

Let’s close with a short exhortation based upon an incident in the disciples’ lives which points to a time of trouble for the disciples prior to the Master’s return. The gospels of Mark and John in their 6th chapters record the night that followed the feeding of the 5,000. Jesus sent the disciples by boat to go a short trip to Bethsaida, while he remained on the mountain praying. A terrible storm took the oarsmen on a much longer journey. At dawn (the 4th watch) they saw the Lord coming, walking on the water, he stilled the waves and John records that they were immediately at the land—which was Gennesaret, which has the meaning “the garden of the prince.” Was not their journey an indication that it will be stormy waters for the disciples at the time of their Lord’s return, but their life’s journey will suddenly be over when they reach the garden of the prince? Their work will then be to bring this about, to help their Master in that long work of restoring the world to be like the Garden of Eden. It will be 1000 years before sin and death are eradicated then truly the earth will be the paradise that the Lord God intended at creation.

“For the Lord shall comfort Zion: he will comfort her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the Lord; joy and gladness shall be found therein, thanksgiving, and the voice of melody” (Isaiah 51:3).

Read

THE VATICAN AGAINST EUROPE

by Edmond Paris

Available from The Bible Magazine or from MilestonesUK@aol.com
For over 60 years the children of Israel have been back in their ancient homeland. Today a growing number of these people, particularly in Judea and Samaria, earnestly await their redemption by the Messiah (see the last issue of Bible Magazine page 27). We also, sharing a similar hope, yearn for both their redemption and ours. We also know that, as in the days of old prior to their deliverance from Egypt, things will get worse before they get better.

The prophet Ezekiel, many years after the death of David, wrote of our time when the children of Israel would return to their own land, and to the mountains of Israel:

“Thus says the Lord God: Surely I will take the children of Israel from among the nations, wherever they have gone, and will gather them from every side and bring them into their own land; and I will make them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king over them all; they shall no longer be two nations, nor shall they ever be divided into two kingdoms again. They shall not defile themselves anymore with their idols… but I will deliver them from all their dwelling places in which they have sinned, and will cleanse them. Then they shall be My people, and I will be their God. David My servant shall be their prince forever; they shall also walk in My judgments and observe My statutes, and do them. Then they shall dwell in the land that I have given to Jacob My servant…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 will set My sanctuary in their midst forevermore. My tabernacle also shall be with them; indeed I 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 37:21-28 NKJV).

What a change is yet to come to this nation which has survived millenniums of trouble and affliction including their time in exile “without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice” (see Hosea 3:4-5). But they are to be delivered and cleansed by “the root and offspring of David!” What exciting and amazing days we can expect when the Lord’s “servant David shall be their prince forever” (see Isa. 11:1,10; Matt. 1:1; 2:6; Rev. 22:16), and when He will set His “sanctuary in their midst forevermore.” The words of the prophet have been fulfilled exactly as prophesied up to this point, so we can have full confidence that the remainder will likewise be fulfilled (including chapters 38 to 48).

Moving forward to Ezekiel 45:8-9, we see that the injustices of the past will be no more (c/p ch. 22:27-29). Instead there will be atonement or “reconciliation for the house of Israel” (v. 17), and the feasts, new moons, and sabbaths will be reinstituted. Ezekiel specifically mentions two festivals: Passover and Unleavened Bread, and Tabernacles (vs. 21-25).

Three times in the year God commanded the children of Israel to appear before Him in the place of His choosing, eventually Jerusalem, to keep set feasts (Deut. 16:2,16; 2 Chronicles 6:6). In the first month of the religious calendar in the month Abib or Nisan was the Feast of Passover and of Unleavened Bread. This was followed by the Feast of Firstfruits, and then lastly the Feast of Tabernacles or Ingathering at the end of harvest.

The Lord has determined that the first and last of these feasts will be reinstated in a modified form under the New Covenant when the Kingdom of Israel (i.e. of God) is reestablished in the land, as promised to the fathers, under Jesus the King of the Jews (see Acts 1:6; 3:21; Ezekiel 21:27). In reference to this we read:

“They came the day of unleavened bread, when the passover must be killed. And he sent Peter and John, saying, Go and prepare us the passover, that we may eat… And he said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer: For I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves: For I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God.”

The Feast of Passover & the Future Redemption of Israel

By Daniel Billington

In exile: “without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice”
unt to you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come... And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me: That ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel” (Luke 22:7-18,29-30).

Then again:

“And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up year by year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles” (Zechariah 14:16).

From this testimony of Jesus and the prophets it is clear that we should expect these celebrations to again be part of worship in the future age where they will have their ultimate fulfillment. With this in mind we will endeavour to consider these festivals from the time of Moses, with their applications, to the time when the Branch (i.e. the Messiah) will “build the temple of the LORD” and “be a priest upon his throne” (Zechariah 6:12-13). In this issue we will consider,

**The Feast of Passover & Unleavened Bread.**

This festival was instituted by God following His firstborn son’s redemption (i.e. Israel’s) by the blood of a male lamb, and deliverance from the Egyptian oppressor through a baptism in the Red Sea (1 Corinthians 10:1-2). This feast was not only to be a dramatic and highly significant piece of the nation’s history, but also a very important type foreshadowing the future work of redemption for all Israel by the blood of the Lamb of God. The importance of this event is highlighted by the LORD’s command to Moses that time was to be measured from it, and a new year was to commence a new calendar with Abib as the first month (Exodus 12:1-2; 13:3-4). This was a time to be remembered and celebrated—the great anniversary of their redemption and liberation from oppression (Exodus 12:27!)

On the 10th of Abib, the first month of the religious calendar, a lamb (Heb. seh) was to be chosen in preparation for the Passover on the 14th, four days later. The lamb was to be a male without blemish and care was to be taken that no bone be broken (Exodus 12:5-6), pointing forward to the Lord Jesus, “a lamb without blemish and without spot” (John 19:13-16). This was the lamb that Isaac had looked for and that Abraham had foreseen (Gen. 22:7-8 – first use of the Heb. seh in the O.T.), and which was slain during the Passover (John 19:14,31) many years later.

Following the Passover on the 14th, the celebrations continued another seven days during which time only unleavened bread was to be eaten. The first and seventh days of Unleavened Bread were each to be a “holy convocation” or assembly (Exodus 12:15-16), called by John a “high day” or literally “a great one.” These special sabbath days were to be like the weekly Sabbath and normal labour was to cease (Lev. 23:5-8, c/p v.3).

The **Passover**, a word referring to this festival—in particular the first day, is the Hebrew word pesach meaning to pass over. During the midnight of Passover the Lord’s destroyer (i.e. the angel of judgment) went through the land of Egypt, slaying the firstborn of the unbelieving and belligerent oppressor, but passing over the dwellings of the faithful who had obediently taken hyssop, and with it applied the lamb’s blood of redemption on to their lintel and door posts. This was significant of not only Passover, but of all the plagues that the LORD brought upon Egypt. His purpose as commanded to Moses, and to Abram 430 years before, was the deliverance of His firstborn son out of Egypt, that they might be able to serve Him rather than the Egyptians, and to bring them “unto a land flowing with milk and honey” (see Gen. 15:13-14; Exodus 3:7-12:20 & 4:22-23). The issue is no different today! Do those that are called to be the LORD’s “firstborn ones” (Heb. 12:23 Roth.), have faith to come out of Egypt to serve Him, choosing deliverance, or do they prefer to continue serving the Egyptians—enjoying the fleeting pleasures while rejecting the suffering required to journey through the wilderness toward the kingdom (Exodus 14:12; Rom. 8:17)? Moses is remembered for his faith in forsaking Egypt and keeping the Passover:

“By faith Moses, when he became of age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he looked to the reward. By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured as seeing Him who is invisible. By faith he kept the Passover and the sprinkling of blood, lest he who destroyed the firstborn should touch them. By faith they passed through the Red Sea as by dry land, whereas the Egyptians, attempting to do so, were drowned” (Hebrews 11:23-29 NKJV).

Here we are reminded of the divine principle that suffering must come before exaltation, a principle that all those who wish to attain life eternal must subject themselves to (2 Tim. 2:11-12) as did the Lord Jesus Christ (Heb. 5:8-9). We cannot evade this prerequisite to being part of the divine family: “if you are without chastening, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons” (Heb. 12:8-10 NKJV). It is under this refining process that our faith is developed (Jam. 1:3; 1Pet. 1:6-7), without which it is impossible to please him, to the end that by His grace “we may be partakers of His holiness,” and made righteous.

A generation perished in the wilderness as a result of getting this wrong. Increasingly, modern Israel has the same choice to make. Those who reject their Biblical roots in an attempt to avoid suffering and seek to please a latter day Pharaoh, fearing his wrath and seeking his treasures, will be slain when the destroyer passes through. Despite all the difficulties some Jewish people, due to their belief in the promises, have already returned to “plant vines upon the mountains of Samaria,” therefore the time when the refined faithful are to be the first, “among the chief of the nations” must also be near! They will yet be the LORD’s firstborn, for He will say “I am a father to Israel, and Ephraim is my firstborn” (see Jer. 31:1-9).

Those who are to be the LORD’s firstborn must come out of Egypt. On the edge of the promised land Moses reminded the children of Israel of this purpose, and said to them: “the LORD hath taken you, and brought you forth out of the iron furnace, even out of Egypt, to be unto him a people of inheritance, as ye are this day” (Deut. 4:20). The Lord Jesus was also brought out of Egypt after the same pattern, “that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt have I called my son” (Matt. 2:15; c/P Hos. 11:1). Jesus’ brethren, “who through fear of death were all their lifetime
subject to bondage” (Heb 2:15), have also been delivered out of spiritual Egypt. They will be able to say, thou “hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation. And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth” (Rev. 5:9-10). The call to come out of this latter day Egypt will soon go forth to the tribes of Israel as well, “saying, Come out of her my latter day Egypt will soon go forth to the tribes of earth” (Rev. 5:9-10). The call to come out of this God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth, parts of our nation. And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth, and nation. And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth, and nation.

The Passover memorial was only for those who were part of Israel. The cutting off of the flesh was a prerequisite to participation: “The LORD said unto Moses and Aaron, this is the ordinance of the passover: there shall no alien eat thereof: but every man’s servant that is bought for money, when thou hast circumcised him, then shall he eat thereof...All the congregation of Israel shall keep it. And when a stranger shall sojourn with thee, and will keep the passover to the LORD, let all his males be circumcised, and then let him come near and keep it; and he shall be as one that is born in the land: for no uncircumcised person shall eat thereof” (Exodus 12:43,47-48 RV).

We see therefore that “no alien,” unless fully committed to the way of the LORD as shown by cutting off the flesh, was to share in the Passover meal. For all Israel, cleansing oneself and keeping the Passover was compulsory. Participation in the right way was of such importance that the LORD made a provision for those who, for no fault of their own (e.g. those defiled with a dead body), were unable to keep the feast at the appointed time and place. In this case the feast was to be kept one month later, on the 14th of the second month. To choose not to keep the Passover was sin. This requirement applied to all in Israel, both the stranger and those “born in the land” (Ex.12:49; Num.9:9-14).

We have an example of the Passover being kept in the second month at the beginning of the reign of Hezekiah, which was the first to reopen the doors of the house of the LORD and to restore its service (2 Chron. 29:1,3,30). Hezekiah wrote letters to all parts of the nation to call the people to come to Jerusalem to keep the Passover once again; however they were unable to “keep it at that time (i.e. in the first month), because the priests had not sanctified themselves sufficiently, neither had the people gathered themselves together to Jerusalem.” Therefore, it was kept in the second month, but even then many had not cleansed themselves and so Hezekiah prayed on their behalf: “and the LORD hearkened to Hezekiah, and healed the people.” The consequence of this was a true reformation. The feast was one of “great gladness” and was extended for another seven days. Such great joy had not been seen like it in Jerusalem since the time of Solomon!

In the days of Ezra the Passover was kept in the way which God desires all keep it, “for the priests and the Levites were purified together, all of them were pure.” However, they were not merely ceremonially clean, but had “come out” so to speak, from the Egypt of their day and had purified their hearts also—for “the children of Israel, which were come again out of captivity, and all such as had separated themselves unto them from the filthiness of the heathen of the land, to seek the LORD God of Israel, did eat...with joy: for the LORD had made them joyful” (Ezra 6:19-22).

What we have seen of the days of Moses, Hezekiah, and Ezra is a small foretaste of the time we hope for, when the Prince will invite “the people of the land” to his Passover, and will say to his apostles, “come eat and drink at my table and...sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel!” As in the days of old, this will not be a feast for all nations, but rather a feast for the firstborn.

Unleavened Bread

For the seven days following Passover, those of Israel were not permitted to have any leaven in their homes and were to eat unleavened bread. Nothing leavened was to be eaten. The children of Israel were to remember that at this time God brought their hosts out of the land of Egypt (Exodus 12:15,17-20). When they remembered this deliverance from Egypt they were to remember the misery and affliction they endured there, and so the bread was called “the bread of affliction” (Deut. 16:3). They were to remember Egypt as the place of affliction, while the place to which they were to come and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel was the place of exaltation.

The Lord said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows; and I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land unto a good land and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey...” (Exodus 3:7-8).

Why was it that they were not to eat leavened bread? One key principle of the Passover and Unleavened Bread was the need to be ready to leave at any instant! Therefore, they were to eat the Passover hastily, dressed and ready to go, “with your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand” (Exodus 12:11). So it was, that during the night after the firstborn had been slain, “the Egyptians were urgent upon the people, that they might send them out of the land in haste,” and so “the people took their dough before it was leavened” and left. They “could not delay” and so “they baked unleavened cakes of the dough which they brought forth out of Egypt” (Exodus 12:33,34,39). There was to be no hesitation in leaving the leavening influences of Egypt behind, and so all of it was to be removed from their homes. This lesson was picked up by Joshua, when he told the people that they must choose whom they would serve: “Now therefore fear the LORD, and serve him in sincerity and in truth: and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood, and in Egypt; and serve ye the LORD” (Joshua 24:14).

Also the Apostle Paul: “Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us: Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth” (1 Cor. 5:6-8).

Therefore, James exhorts us: “Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded.” (Ch. 4:8). Sadly the children of Israel continued to yearn for the “flesh pots” and did not completely remove the leavening influences of Egypt from their homes. Let us beware what Egypt-like influences we retain in our homes, but rather let us cleanse our hands...
and purify our hearts. **Until it be Fulfilled in the Kingdom of God**

The Passover was to be kept in the place "which the LORD shall choose to place his name." Israel was not permitted to celebrate the feast in the place of their own choosing (see Deut. 16:5-7). Following the construction of the temple during the reign of Solomon, this place was Jerusalem, the center of worship for the nation. Therefore, it was to the temple in Jerusalem that everyone was to come to keep the Passover (2 Kings 23:9,21-23; Luke 2:41).

It will also be to the LORD's house in Jerusalem where all Israel will come to celebrate the Passover in the future. Following the construction of the future temple where peoples of all nations are to come to worship (Micah 5:1-2), it is revealed by the prophet Ezekiel that the Mighty Ones of Israel will come, and the glory of Yahweh will enter His house as in the days of old. This will also be where the throne of the restored Kingdom of God will be placed, for Messiah "shall be a priest upon his throne" (Zech. 6:13):

"Afterward he brought me to the gate, even the gate that looketh toward the east: and, behold, the glory of the god (i.e. Elohim) 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... So the spirit took me up, and brought me into the inner court; and, behold, the glory of the Lord filled the house. And I heard him speaking unto me out of the house; and the man stood by me. And he said unto me, Son of man, the place of my throne, and the place of the soles of my feet, where I will dwell in the midst of the children of Israel for ever, and my holy name, shall the house of Israel no more defile, neither they, nor their kings, by their whoredom, nor by the carcases of their kings in their high places" (Ezekiel 43:1-7).

These are changed times; for there was never a throne in the temple under the old order of things. The prophet Ezekiel also reveals to something of the future celebration of the feasts in his 45th chapter. An examination of the details however (see chart), reveals that this is a new order of things. As we shall see the feast of the future age is to be different from the past in significant details. This should come as no surprise, "for the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law" (Hebrews 7:12). The priesthood will of course be that of Melchizedek with "the power of an endless life."

As in the past it will be necessary for a cleansing to take place before the Passover is celebrated. We read of this in Ezekiel 45:18-20:

"In the first month, on the first day of the month, thou shalt take a young bull without blemish and cleanse the sanctuary. The priest shall take some of the blood of the sin offering and put it on the doorposts of the temple, on the four corners of the ledge of the altar, and on the gateposts of the inner court. And so you shall do on the seventh day of the month for every person who has sinned unintentionally or in ignorance. Thus you shall make atonement for the temple" (NKJV).

Here we see that the blood is not put on the door posts and lintel of the home (Exodus 12:22-24), but on that of the house of God. The cleansing by blood of the people and sanctuary that is described in this first month is similar to that of the Day of Atonement, but Ezekiel makes no mention of this day which was in the 7th month (c/p Leviticus 16:29-34). Under the New Covenant there is no longer the need to have "a remembrance again made of sins every year" (Hebrews 10:3). There is no Day of Atonement.

Under the law seven days was the period of time required for cleansing the unclean (e.g. a leper, Lev. 14:9). Anyone who accidentally came in contact with a dead body was "unclean seven days," and required the sprinkling of blood on the seventh day: "the clean person shall sprinkle upon the unclean on the third day, and on the seventh day" (Num. 19:1,19). If the person was a Nazarite it was also necessary that he "shave his head in the day of his cleansing, on the seventh day" (Num. 6:9). Therefore, seven days is the period required for cleansing and reconciliation back to God of the unclean in Israel.

Sacrifices or drinking of wine has of itself never been able to "take away sins" and this will be no different in the future.

Sacrifices or drinking of wine has of itself never been able to "take away sins" and this will be no different in the future. However, memorial sacrifices are part of the New Covenant and will be offered. The Abrahamic covenant (which is the New Covenant) was confirmed by the sacrifice of animals (see Gen. 15:5-10 & 17-18), and so the association is not something new. The shedding of sacrificial blood is to commemorate the shedding of Jesus’ blood, the blood of the Lamb of God (c/p Ezekiel 45:15). The sacrificial blood of the offerings will provide the same memorial of Jesus’ blood as wine (Matt. 26:27-28). This is the “blood of the everlasting covenant” (Heb. 13:20), the covenant that was made with Abraham and will be made with the tribes of Israel (Heb. 10:16-18).

In Ezekiel 45:21-24 the prophet briefly describes the service of the future Passover, and seven days of unleavened bread. It is to be led by David the prince (i.e. Messiah), of the order of Melchizedek “for all the people of the land.” As we have seen, the Passover is only to be celebrated by those who are of Israel. The details of these verses must be carefully compared with the service under the law (see Num. 28:16-25). It will then become clear that this is a future time: the Prince is performing the priestly function; the Passover offering “upon that day” is a bullock, not a lamb; for the seven days the olah offering is 7 bullocks and 7 rams, not 2 bullocks, 1 ram, and 7 lambs. In fact, there is no mention in these verses of a single lamb! The only mention in the chapter of one lamb is in verse 15: “one lamb out of the flock, out of two hundred, out of the fat pastures of Israel!” The lamb for the continual olah, offered morning and evening under the law, is reduced to one in the morning (Ezek. 46:13-15). The “Lamb of God” is the one lamb. Therefore, there is no place for another lamb!

What a glorious gathering it will be when the first Passover of the future age is celebrated by a free, redeemed and purified people: “A Lamb stood on the mount Zion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand... These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb. And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without blemish” (RV) before the throne of God” (Rev. 14:1-5).

**Deliverance from the Latter Day Egyptian**

As we have seen the events of Passover also pointed forward to Israel’s future deliverance and redemption, when the destroyer will pass over those who he will have to come to save, and he will yet again bring them through the sea into the New Covenant, saving them from the latter day Pharaoh (Gog) and all those nations who hate them (see Gen. 46:30 & Psa. 21:8).

The prophet Zechariah speaks of this day when Israel will again come out of Egypt:

“I will bring them again also out of the land of Egypt, and gather them out of Assyria; and I will bring them into the land of Gilead and Lebanon; and place shall not be found for them. And he shall pass through the sea with affliction, and shall smite the waves in the sea, and all the deeps of the river shall dry up: and the pride of Assyria shall be brought down, and the sceptre of Egypt shall depart away” (Chapter 10:10-11). It will be when Israel has been brought to her knees by the Gogian oppressor, that her Redeemer will appear saying once again, “Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD” (Exodus 14:13). Following a similar victory over this latter-day Egyptian, all Israel will again sing: “he hath triumphed gloriously: The horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea” (Exodus 15:1). That this song has a future application is without doubt, for we read in the Revelation how that, following the completion of “the seven last plagues” or vials, the Redeemed will “sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty: just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints” (Rev. 15:1,3).

The glorious purpose of Yahweh will be accomplished as Moses wrote long ago: “thou shalt bring them in, and plant them in the mountain of thine inheritance, in the place, O Lord, which thou hast made for thee to dwell in, in the Sanctuary, O Lord, which thy hands have established. The Lord shall reign for ever and ever” (Exodus 15:17,18).
DISCOVERING THE ROYAL HOUSE OF DAVID
The Royal House of David existed in a period of history that remained hidden from the eyes of the world for many centuries. Outside of the Bible, little was heard of it, still less seen for most of 2,000 years. Acts 2:29 tells us that the sepulchre (tomb or monument) of David was identifiable in apostolic times, but tangible evidence of the Royal dynasty was virtually non-existent until Edward Robinson discovered Hezekiah’s tunnel in 1838. Many believed that King David was a myth—especially the academic world of the 19th and 20th centuries. Even when the “House of David” inscription was found at Tell Dan (1993 and 1994) many scholars remained sceptical of his actual existence. Today however, the “minimalists” who deny the Biblical record, are flying in the face of recently discovered facts that relate directly to the royal “House” itself.

Archaeologist’s Guide Book

Ancient historical records have often provided reliable guidance to archaeologists as they have searched for the physical remains of the past. Certainly the Bible has proved to be the archaeologist’s guide book at various excavation sites in modern Israel, and this is the case when we consider the area known as the City of David, just south of the Temple Mount towards the modern Arab area of Silwan.

In the 1920’s an archaeologist by the name McAllister found a stone stepped structure which he identified as a Jebusite fortress. When Kathleen Kenyon excavated the area—between 1961 and 1967—she arrived at a similar conclusion. So also the late Yigal Shiloh of the Hebrew university who excavated it from 1978 to 1985. They thought that the stepped stone structure was the last remains of the Jebusite fortress—a support structure.

In 2 Samuel 5:6-10 we have the Biblical account of the history surrounding this fortress:

“And the king and his men went to Jerusalem unto the Jebusites, the inhabitants of the land: which spake unto David, saying, Except thou take away the blind and the lame, thou shalt not come in hither: thinking, David cannot come in hither. Nevertheless David took the strong hold of Zion: the same is the city of David... So David dwelt in the fort, and called it the city of David. And David built round about from Millo and inward. And David went on, and grew great, and the LORD God of hosts was with him.”

We then read in verse 11 that the Phoenician King Hiram of Tyre built a palace for David:

“And Hiram king of Tyre sent messengers to David, and cedar trees, and carpenters, and masons: and they built David an house.”

If the stone stepped structure was part of the original fortress (the “Millo,” citadel or rampart)—where was the palace, and could archaeologists find any remains of it?

About eleven years ago archaeologist Eilat Mazar (granddaughter of Benjamin Mazar who excavated in the southern end of the Temple Mount) published an article in which she conjectured that if excavations were carried out just north of the stepped structure, the palace of David would be found there. It seems that her main reason for this was the passage in 2 Samuel 5:17,

“But when the Philistines heard that they had anointed David king over Israel, all the Philistines came up to seek David; and David heard of it, and went down to the hold.”

If David “went down” to the strong-hold or fortress, where did he go down from? Mazar assumed that going down was from north to south. In a newspaper article that had the headline: “Dr. Eilat Mazar: The Bible as blueprint” the following paragraph appears:

“Mazar, who is both revered and reviled by some of her colleagues for being a “Biblical archaeologist,” says that the Bible is unquestionably the most important historical source for her work, since it contains a ‘genuine historical account of the past.’

“I work with the Bible in one hand and the tools of excavation in the other,” she says. ‘The Bible is the most important historical source.’

So in her own way, Mazar is issuing a challenge to the modern unbelieving world—and that can make life difficult. Her ideas were not received with too much enthusiasm. Funds are not usually provided for her kind of speculation.

Mazar was persistent however. She received...
the necessary permission and funding so that she could proceed with the project in 2005.

**A Very Large Building**

It was discovered that the stepped structure was connected to a large stone wall, part of a large building which Mazar says must be dated to the 10th century BCE on the basis of the ceramics found—no later (see Report on page 25). The parts of the building that have now been uncovered she concludes, are the remains of the palace of David.

“I didn’t think that King David’s palace was so huge” she says. “I had in mind something much smaller. But it’s not; it’s very large.” The external eastern wall she says is almost six metres (over nineteen and a half feet).

But the other evidence which confirms the Biblical account, is that we are seeing here building that is typical of Phoenician construction. Mazar says that these remains have survived because the building was so well constructed, “very, very sophisticated construction methods” she says. Although it was 3,000 years ago it is possible to reveal the foundations of this “massive” building.

**Is it really Phoenician construction?**

“No doubt” says Mazar. “Just as the Bible says, and we can see it in the field, that only the Phoenicians knew at that time how to build such sophisticated construction. And the Bible says that these are the Phoenicians—Hiram king of Tyre, he did it—and we know Phoenician constructions...” It seems to be that the entire building covered about an acre.

In addition to this there have been other artifacts found which are of Phoenician origin, such as ivory (compare 1 Kings 10:21-22). In the same area Kathleen Kenyon found architectural ornaments that were typical of royal palaces and Phoenician design.

So far, only 25% of this palace building has been uncovered. Work continues but is subject to

“In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, and close up the breaches thereof; and I will raise up his ruins, and I will build it as in the days of old” — *Amos 9:11.*
both political and funding challenges. Who knows what yet may be discovered here? The Royal buildings were in use over a period of some 500 years—from the time of king David himself right down to the time of Zedekiah and the Babylonian destruction of 586 B.C.

In 2 Kings 25:9 we read of the tragic end of the kingdom at the hands of Nebuzaradan "captain of the guard, a servant of the king of Babylon."

"And he burnt the house of the LORD, and the king’s house, and all the houses of Jerusalem, and every great man’s house burnt he with fire."

They “brake down the wall of Jerusalem, and burnt all the palaces thereof with fire,” says 2 Chronicles 36:19.

Why the Kingdom was Ruined

Articles in The Jerusalem Post during the early 1980’s described the findings of the late Yigal Shiloh as he uncovered evidence of the terrible destruction wrought by the Babylonians upon the kingdom of Judah. The paper reported:

“Shiloh described the debris—‘some of it 2 to 3 metres high’—as evidence of ‘the total destruction’ wrought on the city by the Babylonians.”

If we study the commandments given to Israel by God, and then read the account given by Shiloh of what he and his team brought to light, it is not too difficult to see that the Babylonian destruction was the result of disobedience. Quoting from a Jerusalem Post article:

“Sifting through the ruins of the city of David, he and his team have come up with a rich storehouse of evidence about First Temple life style. It seems that Jerusalemites in those days were not very different from those of today. They traded, fought, cheated, prayed and sinned. They imported luxury items from abroad, and some of them, it seems, weren’t too particular about kashrut or obeying the edicts of their religious leaders.

‘We discovered some pig bones,’ said Shiloh. ‘If they were not for eating, what were they for?’ Also found were the bones of a catfish, another non-kosher item.

“But the most outstanding example of the wayward way-of-life of the denizens around Solomon’s Temple was the discovery of several exquisitely-carved fertility figurines. ‘Jews were not supposed to use such things, but of course they did...’"

Such idolatry has its counterpart in modern pornography—Its object was to excite lust, which we know it did (compare Jeremiah 5:7-9). The judgement that came upon that civilization is a stark warning to those who indulge in the modern version of these practices. The point is made, surely—a carved figurine or an electronically generated image on a computer or video screen—what is the difference?

The newspaper report continued:

“The well-off family of the sixth and seventh century BCE lived and slept upstairs. And, according to some of the evidence, it lived in

The tomb of the Phoenician King Hiram in Lebanon

style. In the burnt remains of one home (said by the archeologists to have been burned by the Babylonians) charred pieces of delicately-carved wood were discovered. Also found were fragments of ivory. The timber, boxwood imported from Turkey or Syria, and the ivory are thought to be the remains of ornate pieces of furniture.”

So pride-of-possession, keeping up with the neighbours, was also a feature of the times. So also was sharp business practices:

“A set of stone shekel weights, used on a shopkeeper’s scales, shows that there is nothing new in sharp practice. One shekel was the equivalent of 11.4 grams. But when Shiloh examined the stone weight he found it to be considerably less. ‘We call the owner Mr. Five per cent,’ said Shiloh.”

In Deuteronomy 25:13-16 we read this:

“Thou shalt not have in thy bag divers weights, a great and a small. Thou shalt not have in thine house divers measures, a great and a small. But thou shalt have a perfect and just weight, a perfect and just measure shalt thou have: that thy days may be lengthened in the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee. For all that do such things, and all that do unrighteously, are an abomination unto the LORD thy God.”

The Promise of Restoration

So the Royal House of David was overturned and literally lay in ruins. To Zedekiah, the last reigning monarch it was said through the prophet Ezekiel (21:25-27):

“...and thou, profane wicked prince of Israel, whose day is come, when iniquity shall have an end, and that the iniquity of thy sins which thou hast done in the midst of thySidon shall be brought upon thee. And thou shalt bring forth the jewels of my temple out of the midst of thee, of thy children, and of thine hoards, in the midst of thy houses..."

The kingdom was to be overturned “until” a future time; a time when the rightful heir to the Davidic throne should appear. This is the heir to the throne promised by God to David as recorded in 2 Samuel 7:12-16.

“And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed, and will establish his kingdom. He shall build an house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom for ever. I will be his father, and he shall be my son. If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men: But my mercy shall not depart away from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away before thee. And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever.”

A stone archway that was once in the building of the Royal palace
Again, in Psalm 89 (verses 34-36) it is written:
“My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips. Once have I sworn by my holiness that I will not lie unto David. His seed shall endure for ever, and his throne as the sun before me.”

As we consider the kingdom in its ruined state, and actually behold its ruins with our eyes, the prophecy of Amos 9:11 takes on a vivid and meaningful significance. God declares through the prophet:
“In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, and close up the breaches thereof; and I will raise up his ruins, and I will build it as in the days of old.”

The restoration of the kingdom of Israel is absolutely essential to true Christianity. The promises contained in the New Testament—as well as those of the Old Testament—demand it. The throne of David has to be restored.

Mary the mother of Jesus was told:
“And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end” (Luke 1:31-33).

Jesus himself made it clear that his kingdom, and the kingdom in which his disciples would sit, would be that which involved the twelve tribes of Israel—Luke 22:29-30. It was in anticipation of this that the gathered disciples asked the question of Jesus (Acts 1:6):
“Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?”

Without the restoration of the kingdom of Israel and of the Davidic throne, Christianity is a lie.

Nehemiah’s Restoration

It is sometimes claimed that a restoration of ancient City of David... A wall uncovered in Jerusalem has been linked to the time of Nehemiah. The section of the 2,500-year-old Nehemiah wall, located just outside the Dung Gate and the Old City walls facing the Mount of Olives, was dated by pottery found during a recent dig at the site, said Hebrew University archeologist Dr. Eilat Mazar.

“The archeologist, who rose to international prominence for her recent excavation that may have uncovered the Biblical palace of King David, was able to date the wall to Nehemiah as a result of a dig carried out underneath a nearby tower, which has been previously dated to the Hasmonean period, (142-37 BCE) but which now emerges was built centuries earlier.

“As a result of the excavation, both the 30 meter section of the wall and a six-by-three-meter part of the previously uncovered tower have now been dated to the fifth century BCE based on the rich pottery found during the dig under the tower, she said... The Bible relates that despite the resistance of hostile neighbors who had occupied the area around Jerusalem in the Jews’ absence, the whole wall was completed in a speedy 52-day period.”

As archaeological work was being carried out in an area above a tower, it started to lose its support, began to crumble and collapse. An article in the current issue of Biblical Archaeology Review considers Mazar’s discovery.

As the Bible points out, the building of the wall in Nehemiah’s time was a family affair—they were not professional builders (Nehemiah chapter 3). It is recorded that the adversaries poked fun at the building project (chapter 4:2-3): “What do these feeble Jews? will they fortify themselves? will they sacrifice? will they make an end in a day? will they revive the stones out of the heaps of the rubbish which are burned? Now Tobiah the
Ammonite was by him, and he said, 
Even that which they build, if a fox 
go up, he shall even break down 
their stone wall.”

Well, perhaps it was not the 
strongest wall and tower ever built, 
but it survived for some 2,500 
years—long enough to testify to the 
accuracy of the Bible’s history. Just 
as Nehemiah and his associates were 
opposed, so today some 
archaeologists (e.g. Finkelstein of 
Tel Aviv) try to cast doubt upon the 
Bible—but as Mazar put it: “In the 
end, the stones will speak for 
themselves.” And they have!

The restoration of Nehemiah’s 
time—fact of history though it is— 
comes nowhere near to fulfilling the 
many prophecies of the restoration of 
the kingdom. These prophecies require 
something greater and even more majestic than 
the glory of the kingdom in the days of David 
and Solomon.

Greater than Solomon!

King David, as he approached the end of his 
life, called his servants and told them: 
“Take with you the servants of your lord, and 
cause Solomon my son to ride upon mine own 
mule, and bring him down to Gihon: And let 
Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet 
anooint him there king over Israel; and blow ye 
with the trumpet, and say, God save king 
Solomon. Then ye shall come up after him, 
that he may come and sit upon my throne; for 
he shall be king in my stead: and I have 
appointed him to be ruler over Israel and over 
Judah” (1 Kings 1:33-35).

David’s servants responded, saying: 
“As the Lord hath been with my lord the king, 
even so be he with Solomon, and make his 
throne greater than the throne of my lord king 
David” (verse 37).

The record continues: 
“So Zadok the priest, and Nathan the prophet, 
and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and the 
Cherethites, and the Pelethites, went down, 
and caused Solomon to ride upon king David’s 
mule, and brought him to Gihon. And Zadok 
the priest took an horn of oil out of the 
tabernacle, and anointed Solomon. And they 
blew the trumpet; and all the people said, God 
save king Solomon. And all the people came 
up after him, and the people piped with pipes, 
and rejoiced with great joy, so that the earth 
rent with the sound of them” (verses 38-40).

This Gihon—the Gihon pool—has now been 
fully excavated and found to be 15 metres by 15 
metres (50 feet by 50 feet square). It is about 
4,000 years old, cut out of solid rock, and so 
dates back to the time of Abraham and Melchizedek. Only a portion of it is visible to 
visitors.

On top of the pool there was a massive 
protective tower. As more work is done here, 
results are being continuously revised as more 
information is gathered, but so far it 
seems that four walls of the tower have 
been found. We are told that there was a 
protective walkway where people could 
come and draw water (see photo and 
diagram).

In any case, this is the general area 
where Solomon was anointed king over 
Israel and Judah. The Biblical text 
suggests that the ceremony took place at 
an elevated level, for 1 Kings chapter one 
uses different words in the account, as 
follows:

- Verse 33 — “down to Gihon”
- Verse 38 — “to Gihon” (upon, 
above)
- Verse 45 — “in Gihon”

The Hebrew word used in verse 38, 
translated “to,” has the sense of “upon” 
or “above.” So the question arises as to whether 
Solomon was standing on a platform of some 
kind—“on” or “above” Gihon. Possibly a tower 
or a wooden platform. Whatever the case, he was 
anointed in this general area and all the people 
could see the inspiring scene as it took place. 
Obviously the ravages of invading armies and 
destructive forces have laid waste the former 
splendour of the site.

Whatever grandeur and majesty we might 
associate with the coronation of king Solomon, 
that which awaits the greater son of David will 
surpass it.

Perhaps it is only in the visions of Daniel and 
the Apocalypse that we can find words in which 
to express the glorious scene that lies ahead when 
he whose right it is, restores again the kingdom 
to Israel and sits upon the throne of his father 
David. God is faithful to His promises, and the 
scene described gives a focus upon the glory and 
Majesty of the great God of heaven, whose 
promises to Abraham and David will be fulfilled 
in the Olahm...

“...I beheld till the thrones were cast down, 
and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment 
was white as snow, and the hair of his head 
like the pure wool: his throne was like the 
fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire. A 
fiery stream issued and came forth from before 
him: thousand thousands ministered unto him, 
and ten thousand times ten thousand stood 
before him: the judgment was set, and the 
books were opened” (Daniel 7:9-10).

“And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many 
angels round about the throne and the beasts 
and the elders: and the number of them was 
ten thousand times ten thousand, and 
thousands of thousands; Saying with a loud 
voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain 
to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and 
strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. 
And every creature which is in heaven, and on 
the earth, and under the earth, and such as are 
in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I 
saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and 
power, be unto him that sitteth upon 
the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever” 
(Rev. 5:11-13).
FOUNDATION PROMISES

“And the Lord said unto Abram,... Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward: For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever. And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth: so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered. Arise, walk through the land in the length of it and in the breadth of it; for I will give it unto thee...” *Genesis 13:14-17*

“In the same day the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates.” *Genesis 15:18*

“I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee. And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee. And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God.” *Genesis 17:6-8*

“When thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build an house for my name, and I will stablish the throne of his kingdom for ever. I will be his father, and he shall be my son. If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men... thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever. According to all these words, and according to all this vision, so did Nathan speak unto David...” *2 Samuel 7:12-17*

“Incline your ear, and come unto me: hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David.” *Isaiah 55:3*
Among the political leaders and journalists that addressed the Jerusalem Conference this year, was Eilat Mazar who initiated and has been in charge of archaeological digs in the City of David over recent years. Among such notables as Benjamin Netanyahu, Avigdor Lieberman, Natan Sharansky and the Jerusalem Post’s Caroline Glick, this archaeologist brought a very different ingredient into the considerations of this most interesting event.

Speaking at Jerusalem’s Regency Hotel on Mt. Scopus where the conference was held, Dr. Mazar began her presentation by pointing out that Jerusalem has had a population from very ancient times. Speaking in Hebrew, her remarks were translated saying that:

“Three thousand years ago when king David came to conquer the city, he does not find a very meagre settlement—an unimportant one, as archaeologists sometimes claim, but rather a very fertile and strong settlement. In the area that is north of the Canaanite city there are archaeological excavations (being carried out).”

“These days I am sure you can all go and see the fortifications of the city that they are now excavating more and more—and they date to over 4,000 years ago. That is, the Gihon fountain—particularly this area.”

Dr. Mazar explained that the city was densely populated, so that when a new ruler like king David comes, he does not find enough space. “He wants to build. He has a vision; he wants to enlarge the city, he has to do that, so he works northwards.”

“The Torah says that the Phoenician king Hiram, king of Sour (Tyre), builds a palace for David in Jerusalem, and myself as an archaeologist, and others, would ask themselves, can we—alongside the Biblical text, the historical text, see if there are any remains of that palace, because the Phoenicians were excellent builders. So we started excavations in Jerusalem, at the head of the hill of the city of David.”

She explained that the Phoenicians had a problem. The problem was one of how to proceed, because this entire rock had different holes in it, creating difficulty for the builders. They had to lay a foundation that was unmatched in the world—a building of about 30 metres.

Illustrating the building schematically, she told the conference what a very sophisticated building this was—“a very, very elaborate building of steps around the main centre.” There was an inner access of stairs on two sides, with support for the whole system at the head of the hill.

This support was in order to build something on top—it all supports a great building, she said. On the other side of a seven metre wide wall—the eastern wall of the building—the team of archaeologists found that they were actually in the north-eastern segment of this huge building.
During the last three years “we might have excavated only 25%” of it, “but the huge revelation is that the remnants are there.” There are still things to be excavated and revealed.

Mazar said that they could never have imagined that a building of 3,000 years ago still has remains. Referring to a diagram she said, “This is part of the building... and we can see some rooms, some floors...” but “how can we date it? because of course the argument is around the date. Perhaps it is of later dates—but no—these things are momentous, for beneath these walls we can see the filling of rubble. Out of this we have found ceramics of the 12th and 11th centuries before the common era. There are no later ceramics.”

“Look at the different rooms that we have excavated... This is very typical of the 10th decade BCE. And we found some vessels; we found ivory—things imported from Cyprus which testify to a connection with the Phoenician people. Not everybody had ivory.”

The conference was then shown the heads of arrows that had been uncovered. These “were used by the Biblical people—bronze.” The Israelites fought back in the war, “dozens of arrows that had been uncovered. These ‘were used by the Biblical people—bronze.”

Reference was made next to stamps (bullae) that had been found. These “were very small stamps—a centimetre wide—used for stamping different documents.” This would be the personal stamp of a minister—an important person of the ruling establishment. Mazar showed three stamps out of the dozens that had been uncovered. “You can read the names very clearly.” In the 1980’s Professor Shiloh found a stamp belonging to Gemariah ben Shaphan. “You can even read (it) from this distance because it is so clear.”

In 2005 the team uncovered a seal-stamp of Jucal ben Shelemiah. Mazar referred again to the conference. “This is fantastic” said Mazar as she referred to Mazar’s suggestion.

Now some of these people are mentioned together. “This is fantastic” said Mazar as she referred to Jeremiah 38:1.

“If you open the Bible, four ministers come to the king—king Zedekiah—and ask him to kill Jeremiah, because Jeremiah wants to surrender to the Babylonians, and these four ministers are against it. One of those four ministers is Gedaliah ben Pashur, and we found his stamp of course, and Jucal ben Shelemiah—we found his stamp just a few metres away as well. We have three ministers here. The Biblical text talks about them as holding important positions. While doing the excavations around the palace we have found their personal stamps, the size of several centimetres, together!” Other findings testify to the date being around 1,000 years before the common era, she said.

The building and its majesty is unique. “There is no possibility of a technical match to such a building... and we, of course, have uncovered only 25% of it. We are still looking forward to excavations, and I do hope that with proper support we shall manage to reveal the full size of the palace.” Mazar said that it will be seen as one of the most beautiful monuments produced by Jewish culture, and we can share it with other world cultures.

The most famous Hebrew inscription found in the City of David is connected with the tunnel of Hezekiah which was re-discovered more than 170 years ago. Edward Robinson, an American Bible student who came to the Land with the express purpose of identifying Biblical sites, was the first in modern times to make his way through from the Spring of Gihon to the Pool of Siloam.

Almost fifty years passed before the tunnel’s inscription came to light. In 1880, a sixteen year old schoolboy was making his way from the Pool to the Spring in the dark as his candles had been snuffed out. Guided by the feeling of the chisel-marks in the stone, he was able to detect the point where their direction changed and concluded that this was where the workmen had met. Feeling his way, he detected the lines of an inscription. Emerging at the “Virgin’s Fount,” he returned to school and reported his find. His exciting news caused a sensation in Jerusalem, but unfortunately, before the inscription could be protected, it was blasted from the walls of the tunnel by a treasure-seeker. Before he could escape with his prize, the Turkish authorities took possession of the broken pieces and sent them off to a museum in Istanbul, where it remains to this day. This example of ancient Hebrew writing confirms the Bible record, as well as helping to date the tunnel itself.

Inscriptions and writing of any kind are welcome discoveries at any archaeological dig. The Dead Sea scrolls were an exceptional discovery, in being preserved in a country which is not dry enough in most cases to keep papyrus and skins from deteriorating. Words inscribed in
stone tend to accompany the excavation of large buildings, but smaller objects are usually the key in most digs. In looking for clues to dates and people, coins are by far the most helpful, but they are also not unique.

Most coins that are found in excavations are those that are lost inadvertently. They tend to be small denominations, such as the “Widow’s mite” which we are familiar with from the scripture record (Mark 12). When Jesus watched—and heard—the widow making her contribution in the Temple court, he knew that she was giving the smallest coins, which spoke of her poverty. Archaeologists then, are looking for small lumps of metal which can be important markers for their work, but they are also looking for two other important sources of inscriptions. In the same way that we nowadays use scraps of paper to jot down telephone numbers, addresses or names, people in Bible times used pieces of broken pottery. Earthen-ware pots which were unclean, cracked, chipped, or in some other way unfit for use were broken and discarded. They were inexpensive, and were simply replaced. Archaeological sites throughout the Middle East are covered in sherds of pottery, and the experts have established means of identifying the age of these pots by their shape, style and colour. Another complication in dealing with pieces of pottery that may have writing on them, is that the sherds are often covered in mud or dirt. In most digs today, every piece of pottery is washed and examined before being discarded.

One other important source of inscriptions is also very small. Rather than having distinctive hand-written signatures, important people in Biblical times carried personal seals, usually of semi-precious stone. These seals were normally made into rings, or suspended around the neck. You will remember that Jezebel used Ahab’s seal (1 Kings 21) to write letters condemning Naboth, that King Ahasuerus gave Esther and Mordecai (Esther 8) his ring to use for official correspondence concerning the Jews, and that Jeremiah sealed the deed when he purchased the field in Anathoth (Jeremiah 32).

The seals of government officials were used to make an impression on small lumps of clay which were used to seal official correspondence. Letters of papyrus or leather were rolled up and tied with cord, and the lumps of clay (bullae) were placed on the cord and impressed with the seal. We know that coins are virtually indestructible, but we might expect that clay would dissolve in a wet climate. When official correspondence was filed away, the bullae remained attached to the letters. During the Babylonian, and other destructions of Jerusalem, the fires which destroyed the city also destroyed the contents of the archives. These files were consumed, but the tiny pieces of impressed clay did not burn, they were baked hard by the fire, and preserved.

An important point with all of these inscriptions, is that they can only help to identify or date another discovery when they are found in context in an excavation. They lose much of their

By Ken Loveridge  PRINCE GEORGE B.C.
value for an archaeologist when they are removed from the location where they are discovered.

In the 1970’s and 80’s, two large lots of bullae came to light, but it was not possible to associate them with specific digs. Nahman Avigad, a well known Israeli archaeologist, published reports on both of them. The first collection was from the Persian period, when Nehemiah was in Jerusalem, and contained both bullae and seals. Its provenance or discovery location was unknown. The second collection was from the time of Jeremiah before the Babylonian destruction of the city. Both collections shed light on the government structure at the time, as well as some of the officials involved. Nine senior ministers of the Kingdom of Judah are named on these bullae, and significantly, for the first time, two of them are found in the Bible record.

“Baruch the son of Neriah the scribe” (Jeremiah 36) is identified as “Berekhyahu son of Neriyahu the scribe.” He was the personal secretary, friend and confidant of the prophet Jeremiah, who wrote Jeremiah’s prophecies in a scroll. The second person identified was “Jehucal the king’s son” (RV) whose bulla reads “Yeramne’el son of the king.” In Jeremiah 36:26 we read “And the king (Jehoiakim) commanded Jerahmeel the king’s son, and Seraiah the son of Azriel, and Shelemiah the son of Abdeel, to take Baruch the scribe and Jeremiah the prophet: but the LORD hid them.”

The linking of these names in scripture reinforces the identification of the bullae with these men.

Finally we come to the inscribed materials actually found during the controlled excavation of the City of David. Yigal Shiloh, directing his initial excavations from 1979 to 1982, found a group of 51 bullae in a room that came to be called the “House of the Bullae” in Area G, which had previously been excavated by Kenyon, and the PEF before her. These bullae were also from the time of Jeremiah, and had been baked in the conflagration when the city was destroyed. The identification of one in particular—“Gemariah the son of Shaphan” (Jeremiah 36) with “Gemaryahu son of Shaphan” helped to date the collection. This was the first time that a bullae found in a controlled, datable context, was given a positive identification with the name of a non-royal personage mentioned in the Bible. Shiloh says that “...this find may represent a public archive, located in some bureau close to the administrative centre in the City of David.”

In 2005, Eilat Mazar, with the necessary funding and permission, began to excavate the area that she had identified as the location of David’s palace, above the Stepped Stone Structure on the eastern slope of the City of David. That excavation has continued to the present day with a growing list of finds. One inscription found was on a single bulla was “Belonging to Yehucal, son of Shelemiyahu, son of Shovi,” who in the Bible is called “Jehucal the son of Shelemiah” (Jeremiah 37:3 and 38:1). The first time he is mentioned, he is being sent by King Zedekiah to Jeremiah to ask him to “Pray now unto the Lord our God for us.” On the second occasion, he is appealing to the king with three other officials for the death of Jeremiah because he is calling for the surrender of the city to the Babylonians.

The last finds I’d like to mention were made in 2006. These were a black stone seal, and yet another bulla with the name of a minister of Zedekiah. The archaeologists dismantled a tower constructed by Nehemiah, on the eastern slope of the City of David, and found under it the seal engraved with “Shlomit” in Hebrew. The seal itself appears to have been made in Babylon, with the name engraved in Jerusalem. Shlomit may be the same as “Shelomith” a daughter of Zerubbabel (1 Chronicles 3:19). The bulla inscription was that of “Gedalyahu ben Pashhur” or “Gedaliah the son of Pashur” as he is called in Jeremiah 38:1. As a result of this appeal to the king, Jeremiah was lowered into the cistern, from which he was rescued only by the actions of Ebed-melech. Again, the archaeological context is important in dealing with inscriptions.

Undoubtedly, more discoveries will be made in the City of David. Just recently, it was announced that the entrance to a tunnel was found beneath the palace excavation which may have been the tsinnor or gutter used by Joab to enter the Jebusite city. Each of them helps us to relate to, and to understand more about the united kingdom under David and Solomon, especially as it concerns Jerusalem. As Dr. Mazar says in her 2005 excavation report, “The congruity of the Biblical text with the names of these ... officials appearing on bullae from the City of David is not only astounding, but, more importantly, instructive on the great importance and accuracy of the Biblical source.”
HUMANISM: Enemy of the God of Israel

“Surely your turning of things upside down shall be esteemed as the potter’s clay: for shall the work say of him that made it, He made me not? or shall the thing framed say of him that framed it, He had no understanding?” Isaiah 26:16.

The greatest challenge to Bible truth in our time is the philosophy of Humanism. Humanism has permeated through the Christian religion, has saturated academia, and is reflected in a powerful media that more and more promotes an emotionally driven outlook of the world. It is not just that Humanist thought has displaced a Bible-based culture in much of the “Christian” world; it has set out to destroy the very foundations of that society by undermining the Bible-based values upon which it rested.

As Winston Churchill expressed it a century ago, “We owe to the Jews in the Christian revelation a system of ethics which, even if it were entirely separated from the supernatural, would be incomparably the most precious possession of mankind, worth in fact the fruits of all other wisdom and learning put together.” He was referring of course to the Bible. That Book which was presented to the Queen of Britain and the Commonwealth at her coronation, with the words: “...we present you with this Book, the most valuable thing that this world affords...”

This “most precious possession of mankind”... “the most valuable thing that this world affords...” has been supplanted by a God-dishonouring and totally worthless philosophy.

What is Humanism?

The Oxford Dictionary defines Humanism as:

“1 an outlook or system of thought concerned with human rather than divine or supernatural matters. 2 a belief or outlook emphasizing common human needs and seeking solely rational ways of solving human problems, and concerned with humankind as responsible and progressive intellectual beings.”

According to the New World Encyclopedia (on-line),

“Humanism is an attitude of thought which gives primary importance to human beings... “Secular humanism, which denies God and attributes the universe entirely to material forces, today has replaced religion for many people.”

Humanism is said to be founded upon rationalism; in other words, the theory that reason (human reasoning) is the foundation of all knowledge, and is therefore the ultimate authority. It is a concept that stands in direct opposition to any claim for Divine Revelation.

Although Humanism has this essentially atheistic background, some have sought a compromise position. The Roman Catholic Church for example, has used the phrase “authentic humanism” which for them accomplishes a remarkable feat of mental gymnastics whereby papal infallibility can authenticate Humanism! Other forms of religious Humanism are a little less complicated—but not much.

The issue is clear. God’s existence can only be proved by Himself—and that requires a communication of some kind from Him. Unaided by light from heaven we can have no knowledge of the great Creator of all things or of His purposes—but that light has shone forth in the Scriptures of Truth. The evidence for this lies in the Bible itself, and in the facts that are revealed therein—facts which men, unaided by inspiration, could not possibly have made known.

There is a principle of integrity involved here too. The apostle Peter wrote (2 Peter 1:16):

“We have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty.”

The apostle Paul emphasized the same point in 1 Corinthians 15:14, 15.

Not only the apostles, but the prophets also declared that their words were those of received revelation: e.g. “...the word of the LORD came unto me saying...”

“Yea, hath God said...” has been the rationalist approach ever since Eden (Genesis 3:1). The Humanist philosophy thus requires that the apostles and prophets be charged with being liars. That is the accusation implicit—and sometimes explicit—in the doctrine. “... he that believeth not God hath made Him a liar...” says 1 John 5:10, “because he believeth not the record that God gave of His son.”

The Final Reality

It was a rationalist who told Eve “Ye shall not surely die” (Genesis 3:4). And it was her own mind that reasoned on the basis of her desires (or lusts) and adopted the convoluted rationalism presented to her. The fruit in the situation appeared “good,” “pleasant” and desirable—but how mistaken the fallible mind can be! In spite of all the calculations the final reality was death.

Now it is soothing and consoling to think that death is not the final reality—that the human soul or spirit somehow survives death. If that is the case, then the rationalist of Genesis 3:4 and 5 was right, and God was wrong. We cannot have it...
both ways—we either die (cease our conscious existence), or we do not. The double emphasis in the Hebrew text of Genesis 2:17 is translated by the English phrase “surely die.” Death is a certainty, and the truth of the Bible on this matter is expressed in Ecclesiastes 9:5, where we read that “...the living know that they shall die: but the dead know not any thing.”

The overwhelming physical evidence supports the Bible’s definition of death. When we die, it’s over! The brain ceases to function—“His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth (as says Genesis 3:19); in that very day his thoughts perish” (Psalm 146:4). (It should be noted that Strong 6250 gives the meaning as thinking or thoughts. Modern translations use an extended meaning such as “plans.” A corpse is brain dead!

The only hope of life after death that the Bible offers, is that of resurrection—but the Humanist doesn’t even offer that hope.

**The Mind of Flesh**

The connection of the human heart (the affections and emotions) to the head (or mind) is seen in several passages of the Bible. For example, Jeremiah 17:9, “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?”

Also in the New Testament, Mark 7:21-23, “For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: All these evil things come from within, and defile the man.”

This, of course, is not the view of the Humanist who has his own set of values and is usually ready to justify the criminal rather than the victim. The mind that is uneducated in Godly principles will adopt values that are opposed to the Divine mind—as Isaiah 55:8, 9 says:

“For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.”

And again:

“Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight! Woe unto them that are mighty to drink wine, and men of strength to mingle strong drink: Which are addicted to wine, and脱 of justice; Which understand not the way of righteousness, nor the path whereunto they ought to walk.” (Isaiah 5:20-23).

When human thoughts and values are placed above God’s, then inevitably there will be antipathy between those who follow God’s ways and those who are driven by human reasoning and sentiment. The apostle Paul wrote:

“Because the mind of the flesh is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can it be: and they that are in the flesh cannot please God” (Romans 8:7 R.V. A.S.V. etc.).

This enmity is the outworking of God’s purpose as He initiated it at the beginning (see Genesis 3:15). Today, this hostility lies at the root of the anti-Bible currents in society. It exists because the doctrine of the Bible is the word of God, and because the philosophy of Humanism challenges that word.

**A Chosen People**

This is a Bible doctrine which many have stumbled over, and which the world today rejects. For those who reason according to their fleshly mind—and therefore upon the basis of human thought and values—all human beings are equal: males, females, young, old, black, white, Jew, Gentile, cultured and uncultured, civilized and uncivilized etc. But that is not the relationship to God—and no other nation has had to bear the same degree of responsibility. God says:

“You only have I known of all the families of the earth: therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities” (Amos 3:2).

Though a holy nation chosen of God, this shows us that iniquity was found therein. There was failure. Some were “cut off from among his people” as is stated many times in the Law. So as Romans 9:6 states, “they are not all Israel, which are of Israel; neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children...” Many disobedient Jews (Korah, Dathan, Hopnhi, Phinehas, Ahab, to mention a few) were disinherited just as surely as was Ishmael. Citizenship of Israel required more than physical descent, it required obedience to the law; it required faithfulness.

So Romans 11:17 says “some of the branches” were broken off; “Some” are not “all” the branches! The failure of some did not change God’s purpose with the nation—IIsrael was still the chosen nation, it was (and still is today) a holy nation—for the gifts and calling of God are without repentance” (Romans 11:29).

The root of the Israelitish olive tree is holy, and Romans 11:17 says that “wild” (or Gentile), branches have been grafted in “among them.” Ephesians 2:11 and onward explains the same thing, showing how Gentiles who are “aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise” may become “fellow-citizens with the saints (or holy ones)” and “fellowheirs, and of the same body”—chapter 3:6.

**Not Replacements**

Many years ago a writer by the name of Robert Roberts wrote in a book entitled Christendom Astray the following:

“But this opening the way for the admission of the Gentiles did not destroy the Israelitish character of ‘THE HOPE.’ The effect was just the other way. Instead of the Gentiles converting the hope into Gentilism by their reception of it, the hope converted them into Jews, conforming them to its essentially Israelitish character. Hence, says Paul, to those Ephesians who received it, ‘Ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise... Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God’” (Eph. 2:12, 19). He further said to the Romans, “HE IS A JEW which is one inwardly” (Rom. 2:29), that is, he who, being a Gentile by birth, has become a Jew in heart, and taste, and hope, is more of a real Jew than the reprobate natural son of Abraham.”

He continued:

“New Testament arguments against the...
The human mind may not like the idea of the Jews being God’s chosen nation; but He has not consulted with humanists for their opinion on the matter:

“Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? (Romans 9:20).

Wilful Unbelief

The Humanist does reply against God however. It is truly amazing to witness the wilful blindness of those who scoff at the idea of God’s word being fulfilled through Israel and the events of our time—or for that matter, even in ancient history. There seems to be an undercover conspiracy among museum curators, researchers and archaeologists, to either ignore or play down evidence for Bible truth. As Hershel Shanks, editor of Biblical Archaeology Review has remarked in his current issue: “It’s mostly Biblical connections that strike fear into an archaeologist’s heart.”

It would make more sense to fear God!

That, of course, is not fashionable in today’s world. The truth is that even scholars are more concerned about being fashionable (orthodox, and conforming to the current school of thought) than they are about giving us the facts. This has a price-tag however. It does so in science, in politics, and in religion. So the Bible and its people Israel, are sacrificed.

The Doctrine of Election

The purpose of God according to “election”—the word in Romans 9:11 means selection, seems unfair to the natural mind. Why should God choose one person above another—why choose Jacob above Esau, and that choice be made before either of them were born? Why should God choose one people or one nation above another? Such are the reasonings of men who put “human rights” before God’s right to do as He will with His own creation.

So it is in our day—God has chosen to restore His people Israel to their ancient Land for His holy Name’s sake, and because He is faithful to His promises made to the fathers. He is not doing this because of Israel’s righteousness; even now the vast majority of Jews in Israel are there in unbelief. No, this is simply “the election (selection) of grace,” not of works. And it is not amazing how church people can bubble over with joy about Christian grace when they imagine that it is extended to themselves, yet shrink back in horror if we suggest that this grace might be extended to the Jewish people!

Whether the Humanists like it or not, Israel is back in their Land, and it is God’s declared purpose to fully restore all twelve tribes. There is no such undertaking in respect to Arabs, Palestinians or Canaanites, unless they embrace the hope of Israel and become “fellow-citizens with the saints.” Under the rule of Islam that is impossible.

The world today is being driven by the unclean spirit of Humanism—a spirit and a philosophy that will gather the nations into a place called, in the Hebrew tongue, Armageddon. Their anti-Zionist, anti-Semitic and anti-Bible frenzy is bringing them into collision with Israel—and consequently with the God of Israel who will judge them for their wickedness and unbelief of His revealed word.

We live at a time when all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, “There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob.” For this is God’s covenant (the New Covenant of Jeremiah 31:31-34) unto them, when He shall take away their sins—Romans 11:26, 27.
The attempt to deflect the powers of evil by quasi-magical constraint and compulsion readily gave place to methods of persuasion, which in turn led to making a bargain or pact with the Devil. Instances of the pact occur from the 4th century onward, but the most celebrated case in popular mythology is that of Faust. A species of diabolatry (belief in the almost unlimited power of the Devil) which flourished among the early Luthers, spelled eternal damnation for Faust, and all the more so because he had recourse to magic in order to satisfy his craving for knowledge. Faust, also called Faustus, or Doctor Faustus, was hero of one of the most durable legends in Western folklore and literature, the story of a German necromancer or astrologer who sells his soul to the devil in exchange for knowledge and power. There was, in fact, a historical Faust, who more than once alluded to the devil as his Schwager, or crony. He died about 1540, leaving a tangled legend of sorcery and alchemy, astrology and soothsaying, studies theological and diabolical, and necromancy. Contemporary references indicate that he was widely traveled and fairly well known, but all observers testify to his evil reputation. Contemporary humanist scholars scoffed at his magical feats as petty and fraudulent, but he was taken seriously by the Lutheran clergy, among them Martin Luther and Philippe Melanchthon.

The magicians of the Pharaoh whose dream Joseph interpreted, were, by the word used to describe them, horoscopists or astrologers. So also were those whom a later Pharaoh called in vain to upstage the power of Yahweh yielded by Moses. These magicians admitted by only the third plague that their own powers were mere trickery, by declaring, “this is the finger of God!” The magicians in the service of both Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar, described in the book of Daniel, were of the same kind. Simon, a resident of Samaria, used “sorcery” (AV). The Greek word means magic. We are told that he managed to convince the people by his trickery that he was “the great power of God... of long time he had bewitched (hoaxed) them with sorceries (magic)” — Acts 8:9-11. Simon, who doubtless felt threatened by the undeniable power of the Holy Spirit in Peter and John, first offered a large cash payment for a piece of the action. When Peter refused, and exposed the magician’s selfish motives, he like Pharaoh’s horoscopists, recognized that this, in contrast with his own trickery, was the power of God.

Early in the 17th century Frenchman Henri Bouguet produced Discourses on Sorcery. This was for use as a manual in the detection, apprehension and punishment of witches. Even small children were to be tortured—and killed, if found to be witches. It is indeed ironic that sorcery is a notable practice of Babylon the Great, the very system which supervised the destruction of heretics, by accusing them of sorcery.

“By thy sorceries (pharmakeia = magic) were all nations deceived. And in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth” (Revelation 18:23-24).

This word literally refers to the mixing of potions and poisons, which is often involved in the sorcerer’s practice. It can be seen in another description of the same system in Revelation 7:4 of a “woman...having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication” (her poisonous doctrines). All who have imbibed her false teachings have been deceived by them. Part of that wine is belief in a personal evil spirit, the Devil and his demons. The “lordly dish” handed to Sisera led to his untimely end (Judges 5:25), so the cup now offered by “Babylon the Great” glitters of gold, and the simpleton who drinks of it “knoweth not that it is for his life” (Proverbs 7:23). All because he refuses to read the Scriptures for himself, and instead places his eternal welfare into the hands of a “hireling” (John 10:12-13).

Magic and witchcraft have their origins in ancient paganism. These practices were found in Canaan when Israel arrived. The law of Moses legislated against such—“Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live” (Exodus 22:18). The witch whom Saul consulted was also a necromancer, who was asked by the king to “bring up” him who was dead (1 Samuel 28). “There shall not be found among you any one that is a necromancer. For all that do these things are an abomination unto the Lord” (Deuteronomy 18:10-12). The wicked queen Jezebel was notorious for her assiduous pursuit of witchcraft (2 Kings 9:22). King Manasseh was evidently notorious for her assiduous pursuit of witchcraft (2 Kings 9:22). King Manasseh was evidently trained up from childhood so that he “used witchcraft, and dealt with a familiar spirit, and with wizards: he wrought much evil in the sight of the Lord, to provoke him to anger” (2 Chronicles 33:6). Both Nineveh and Babylon were champions and disseminators of sorcery, and so were brought to destruction by God (Isaiah 47:9-12; Nahum 3:4). Why were these
practices so hateful to God? Because they taught that man has a divine nature (immortal soul), which is a lie (see Ezekiel 18:4, 20).

Magic and witchcraft were also found in the Gentile world into which the apostles of Christ went preaching the gospel. As we have seen, in later times, when the church had become corrupted, magic, witchcraft and their attendant philosophies were accepted as real powers.

“The churchmen, either from craft or from ignorance, favoured the progress² of a belief which certainly contributed in a most powerful manner, to extend their authority over the human mind.”

The same author refers to the most enormous fictions being circulated, concerning the exploits of evil spirits. For example, the successful incursions of the Saracens, and later the Turks, into the Christian Middle East, were attributed to intervention by hordes of demons. These fictitious reports were not less liberal in assigning to the Christians extraordinary means of defence through the direct protection of dead “saints” or of “holy” men, possessing the power to work miracles, as referred to in 2 Thessalonians 2:8-9.

Remains of the pagan superstitions are noticed by the above-noted author in his own country of Scotland. “The Celtic tribes ... possessed ... a natural tendency to the worship of the Evil Principle. They thought it worthwhile to propitiate them with various rites and prayers.” Remains of these superstitions were put on record in 1769 when a noted traveler¹ witnessed the ceremony of the Baaltein, Beltane or First of May in the Highlands. Special cakes were ritually prepared then offered to beasts of prey that they, or rather the beings whose agents they were, might spare the flocks and herds. The traveller mentions that some festival of the same kind was, in his time, observed in Gloucester. Another custom lingered late in Scotland. In many parishes there was long suffered to exist, against a church ordinance to stop it, a certain portion of land, called the Gudeman’s Croft. It was never ploughed or cultivated, but preserved in its native wild state, like the Temple of a pagan temple. The gudeman’s croft was regarded as the portion of the arch-fiend himself. If a ploughshare entered its soil, the elementary spirits were supposed to testify their displeasure by storm and thunder. Within Scott’s own memory, many such places, sanctified to barrenness by some favourite popular superstition, existed, both in Wales and Ireland, as well as in Scotland. For the same reason the mounds called Sth Bhruaith¹ were respected, and it was deemed unlawful and dangerous to cut wood, dig earth and stones, or otherwise disturb them.

It would not be out of place to make clear Scott’s attitude towards the Scriptures³ by relating an incident about a week before he died. Sir Walter Scott said to his son-in-law, “Read to me from the book,” and when the question came back “what book?” the dying author answered “Need you ask?—There is but one.” Scott explained the long lingering of the old pagan superstitions by first referring to the mode of the people’s conversion to Christianity. It would be hard to imagine those who were converted en masse to have acquired a knowledge of Christianity, in the genuine and perfect sense of the word. It was frequently the case an entire tribe would assume the religion which had been chosen by a favoured chief, whose example they followed in mere love and loyalty. Such hasty converts, professing themselves Christians, were neither weaned from their old belief, nor instructed in their new one. Accustomed to a plurality of deities, they may well have been of the opinion that in adopting the God of the Christians, they had not renounced the service of every inferior power.

After Constantine’s victory in favour of the Christians, it became a crime for a Christian convert to worship Pan or Ceres. This would be a relapse to the rites of paganism, and he would be excommunicated. But he still might indulge his superstition, being left at liberty to fear these former deities in their new capacity as fiends. Thus, though the thrones of Jupiter, and the superior deities of the heathen Pantheon, were totally overthrown and broken to pieces, fragments of their worship, and many of their rites, survived the conversion to Christianity.

This can be seen in superstitions which descended down towards our times. On the shores of the Baltic Sea was worshipped the river or ocean god, Nixas or Nicksa. Amid the twilight winters and overpowering tempests of those gloomy regions, this demon was chosen as the power most adverse to man. Closely related in a lesser aspect were some Naiads of Germany, called Nixa. The Old Nick, known in England, is an equally genuine descendant of the northern sea god. The British sailor, who feared nothing else, confessed his terror for this terrible being. The Bhar-guest, or Bhar-gaist, was known through various country parts of England, and particularly in Yorkshire, also called a Dobie, a name of Teutonic descent.

We shall note the belief in fairies and other lesser spirits, only in passing, although Scott packs in a full chapter on the subject—as a further indication of the propensity of human nature towards such belief. The poet Chaucer in his Wife of Bath’s Tale, depicts in artistic form how full of fairies was ancient Britain, and the minds of the resident Celts. He speaks then of rising doubts concerning this still lingering general belief in Edward III’s time:

In old time of King Artour, Of which that Bretons spoken great honour, All was this land fulfilled of faerie; The Elf queen, with her joly company, Danced full oft in many a great meade..." The bard of Woodstock continues on to show that the effect of the preaching of itinerant friars was a great falling off in such belief. When we see the opinion which Chaucer has expressed of the regular clergy of his time, in some of his other tales, we are tempted, remarks Scott, to suspect some mixture of irony in the compliment. Dr Corbett, Bishop of Oxford and Norwich in the early 17th century, “a poet with a vein of humour not unworthy of Geoffrey himself,” wrote The Fairies’ Farewell—and delays the final banishment from popular faith in England until the reign of Queen Elizabeth.

"...Lament, lament, old abbies, The faeries’ lost command; They did but change priests’ babies, But some have changed your land; And all your children spring from hence Are now grown Puritans... By which we note, the fairies Were of the old profession, Their songs were Ave Mariæ, Their dances were procession, But now, alas! they all are dead..." We take a final furtive look at the era of fairies, when Scott, quotes Reginald Scott’s 1584 Discovery of Witches. The admixture of beliefs with that of the Devil is quite telling. “Some one knave in a white sheet hath cozened and abused many thousands, especially when Robin Goodfellow (a fairy) kept them in a coil in a country. In our childhood, our mother’s maids have so terrified us with an ugly devil having horns on his head, fire in his mouth, and a tail at his breech; eyes like a basin, fangs like a dog, claws like a bear ... and a voice roaring like a lion, whereby we start and are afraid when we hear one cry ‘Boh!’ and they have so frayed us with bull-beggars, spirits, witches, urchins, elves, hags, fairies, satyrs, Pans, faunes, sylans, Kitt-with-the-candlestick, tritons, centaurs, dwarfs, giants, imps, calcaris, conjurers, nymphs, changelings, incubus, Robin Goodfellow, the spoor, the man-in-the-oak, the hellwain, the fire-drake, the puckle, Tom Thumb, Hobgoblin, Tom

Sir Walter Scott: "There is only one Book!"
which they called the Luciferians. Because of the opposition of these Protesters to Rome, it was decided that they must have made a pact with the chief enemy of the church, Lucifer, the Prince of Darkness.

The Jesuit Delrio, in his de Magia, accused the Protesters of being in league with the Devil in his warfare against the church. Innocent VIII (1484 to1492) issued a bull, saying, “It has come to our ears that numbers of both sexes do not avoid to have intercourse with the infernal fiends, and that by their sorceries they afflict both man and beast; that they blight the marriage-bed, destroy the births of women, and the increase of cattle; they blast the corn on the ground, the grapes of the vineyard, the fruits of the trees, the grass and herbs of the field.” The inquisitors were then called upon to “convict, imprison, and punish,” etc. To mastermind the massacre that was to follow, Innocent appointed two Dominicans as inquisitors. They jointly wrote

Catholic Church Burning a Witch

Malleus Maleficarum, The Witches’ Hammer, in 1486. It is actually a handbook for the discovery and punishment of witches. It contains a complete theology of witchcraft that is unsurpassed in nonsense posing as scientific analysis. For three centuries it was on the bench of every judge and on the desk of every magistrate. Early in the manual it is stated that Satan directly influences human beings, even to the point of changing their shape and doing them permanent harm.

De Rosa observes, none could explain why the witches, regarded as the mouthpieces of the Devil, so apparently formidable, allowed themselves to be captured, tortured and burned. Not one single instance is on record of a witch successfully cursing an inquisitor or surviving the stake-fire.

A Chronicler of those times, Enguerrand de Monstrelet, showed how the secret meetings of Protesters, held under cloud of night in some solitary spot, was declared to be Sabbaths of hags and fiends. In that year, he records, several men and women of lower rank, belonging to the Waldenses at the town of Arras, in France, were arrested and imprisoned. These were so horribly tortured, that they agreed to the suggestion that their meetings, were with the Devil, from whom they received instruction and some money. A meal with him was followed by a scene of general profliacy, after which all went home. Further torture persuaded them to accept the suggestion that their superiors were also involved with the Devil, following which their masters were also arrested, imprisoned and tortured until they confessed similar crimes. Then the lesser people were killed and burnt, while the more wealthy of them were allowed banishment at the cost of all their property.

In 1488 the country surrounding the German town of Constance was laid waste by lightning and tempest. Two women were made to confess themselves guilty as the cause of the devastation, and were killed for their crime. About 1515 five hundred “Protestant witches” were executed at Geneva. In Lorraine the inquisitor Remigius boasted putting to death nine hundred people in fifteen years. In 1524 a thousand persons were put to death in one year at Como in Italy, followed by a further hundred per year for several years. This is a mere glimpse at what was happening everywhere in Europe. In France the following century saw not hundreds, but thousands burnt in the Church warfare against the Devil. Then suddenly, in 1657, without warning or explanation, it was stated by the Roman Inquisition that the inquisitors had erred for a very long time. There was no explanation why the popes had affirmed the reality of witches. Over several centuries it was accepted by the church that the Devil held sway over half of Christendom. Suddenly this whole teaching was abandoned. Then came the edict of Louis XIV in 1672, putting an end to all further prosecutions for witchcraft, after which the crime itself was heard of no more. Six years earlier, the French Academy of Sciences had been founded. Ignorance and attendant superstition began to retreat. Phenomena which had been attributed to the operation of spirit beings, were now accounted for on natural principles. The mass of ancient opinions concerning myriads of spirit creatures, practicing their malice on hapless mankind, began to be derided and rejected by men of sense and education.

Footnotes
1. Peter de Rosa, author of Vicars of Christ—the Dark Side of the Papacy (published 1988) is a graduate of the Gregorian University in Rome, and a professor in London. He left the priesthood in 1970 afterwards married, with children, still proclaiming to be a “patriotic Catholic.”
2. Sir Walter Scott, was a Scottish novelist, poet, historian, and biographer who is often considered both the inventor and the greatest practitioner of the historical novel. His Letters on Demonology and Witchcraft were published in 1831, near the end of his life.
3. Quoted by Scott from Pennant’s Scottish Tour, by Thomas Pennant.
Food For Thought

“For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water: Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished:” 2 Peter 3:5, 6

“The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. Corrupt are they, and have done abominable iniquity” Psalm 53:1

For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. — 1 Corinthians 1:21

“I have made the earth, and created man upon it: I, even my hands, have stretched out the heavens, and all their host have I commanded.” Isaiah 45:12

“The Lord by wisdom hath founded the earth; by understanding hath he established the heavens.” Proverbs 3:19

“Take thou away from me the noise of thy songs; for I will not hear the melody of thy viols.” Amos 5:23

To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them. Isaiah 8:20
Sheepish creationists have every reason to look the evolutionist straight in the eye and point out the miraculous design of created things, like the eye of a sheep for example. The pupil is a different shape to the human pupil. It is somewhat rectangular in shape and the eyeball is placed to the side of the head, so in effect it has a built-in wide-angle lens which is further enhanced by specially placed visual receptors in the retina. It has a greater field of vision therefore, which together with enhanced hearing (the sheep can focus sound) provides us with a spiritual lesson. It also has a special hoof design for sure-footed walk. The Creator is telling us we can learn something from sheep!

Now chew this over: sheep follow a leader, either to good pasture or to danger. Many people are like sheep and have gone astray after Darwinism which leads them to death, but with the gift of vision, hearing ability, and the ability to ruminate upon the facts, we ought to know better. The Shepherd of Israel has supplied us with all the necessary information, so it is time to speak up, and put to silence the gainsayers — Titus 1:9.