

# Beauties of the Truth

A Forum for the Publication of Scriptural Viewpoints  
Thought to be Harmonious with God's Plan of the Ages  
Volume 9, Number 2, May 1998

---

The Deluge and the Epic of Gilgamesh  
Daniel and the Lions  
Samson, a Type of Communism

---

BEAUTIES OF THE TRUTH is published as a service to the brethren to stimulate their consideration and appreciation of the boundless riches of God's Word. It is published free of charge. Subscriptions will be entered for all who request it. Address all correspondence to: Beauties of the Truth, 10034 S.W. 52nd Avenue, Portland, OR 97219. Editorial Board: Bros. Jerry Leslie (Managing Editor), Carl Hagensick, Raymond Luke, Michael Nekora, David Rice, Stephen Suraci.

## The Deluge and the Epic of Gilgamesh

*"All the mighty windstorms blew together ... at the same time the rainflood swept over the cult centers ... and the windstorms drove the mighty boat about on the mighty waters" (Epic of Gilgamesh, Sumerian version, circa 3rd millennium BC).<sup>1,2</sup>*

Clay tablets with curious wedge-shaped script emerging into daylight from beneath nearly three millennia of dust electrified the biblical and archeological community in the 1850s. These tablets - the "books" in an Assyrian temple library at Nebo from around 650 BC - spoke of a great flood and a ship saving both mankind and animals from complete destruction. The biblical community immediately appreciated the significance of this discovery (see R1615), however it was well into the twentieth century before linguists and archeologists completed their important work of recovering and translating the oldest and most extensive versions of this parallel non-biblical deluge account.

We now know that the originally discovered Assyrian account was itself a translation of what the Assyrians would have considered an ancient account. Tracing this deluge account back to earlier versions, archeologists uncovered a more extensive and older Babylonian version, and finally, after some extensive spade work, the oldest original version from Ur of the Chaldees in Sumer - Abraham's hometown (Genesis 11:31). This oldest account would be contemporary with Abraham if not older.

### GILGAMESH - KING OF URUK IN HISTORY

This non-biblical deluge account is a chapter from the *Epic of Gilgamesh*, a coming-of-age story concerning the arrogant and tyrannical young king Gilgamesh of Uruk.<sup>3</sup> Gilgamesh is an historical and not a mythical figure. He ruled after the flood as the fifth king of Uruk, or biblical *Erech*, a city just north of Ur, and second in

importance only to Babel in the confederacy of Nimrod (Genesis 10:10). Gilgamesh took great pride in being powerful enough to press the citizens of Uruk into forced servitude to construct a great walled city. Archeological studies have confirmed that contemporary with Gilgamesh a 9.5 km wall was constructed around Uruk with at least 900 semi-circular towers.<sup>4</sup> To put this in perspective, while Jerusalem in the time of Jesus was approximately 1 km<sup>2</sup> in area, Uruk's wall of sturdy convex bricks encompassed an area of 5.5 km<sup>2</sup>.

## **WHY WAS A DELUGE ACCOUNT INCLUDED IN AN EPIC ABOUT THE RAUCOUS LIFE OF A POST-DELUVIAN KING?**

In the Epic, Gilgamesh, experiencing a "mid-life crisis," sets off on a quest to learn the secret of longevity by taking a very difficult and distant trip to visit the father of all mankind. This patriarch became the father of all by building a large box-like craft to survive a great deluge.

Was an interview with the venerable patriarch Noah actually possible?

The genealogical record of Genesis shows that Noah could have conversed with the eighth generation of his descendants, so indeed such an interview was possible. However, it is highly improbable. There is a clumsy and polytheistic treatment of details in the Gilgamesh Epic suggesting that this was an imperfect recounting of the oral traditions about the flood then current in the fifth post-deluvian generation.

## **WHY REGARD NON-BIBLICAL ACCOUNTS?**

These deluge accounts are from societies that lost sight of the Patriarchal view of the one God. In place of the Almighty's fullness and power they substituted a fragmented view of divinity comprised of many deities. Because of this, we might be inclined to dismiss these accounts and their polytheist trappings in their entirety before observing some of their underlying themes. "It is important to notice, however, that many of the ancient mythical tales have a substratum of historical fact; and much in them that appears fabulous and nonsensical on the surface proves on careful investigation to have a hidden meaning."<sup>5</sup>

Today, elucidating this "substratum of historical fact" and its "hidden meaning" is the focus of cultural anthropology and archetypal psychology. As spiritually famished modern man hungers for purpose and place, even latter-day myth tellers have received broader public attention.<sup>6</sup> While portions of these contemporary studies have merit and deserve serious consideration, they require extensive sifting and evaluation and should be approached very cautiously. On the other hand, ignoring this new-found interest in myths and their interpretations has two negative consequences. (1) Contemporary studies in cultural anthropology and psychology frequently point to a somewhat different original psychological underpinning for even familiar myths than could be accepted in the past. (2) The modern interest in myths constitutes one of the significant winds of contemporary social change.

Here are several points of observation about the two accounts.

1. While the Babylonian account is vague as to the reasons for the flood, the oldest accounts from Sumer may suggest a remembrance of improper marriage identified in Genesis 6:2-3. Specifically, Ishtar, an otherwise minor goddess, is offended by man.<sup>7</sup>
2. The flood was divine retribution for man's offence and was to be of such severity that "no man was to live through the destruction."

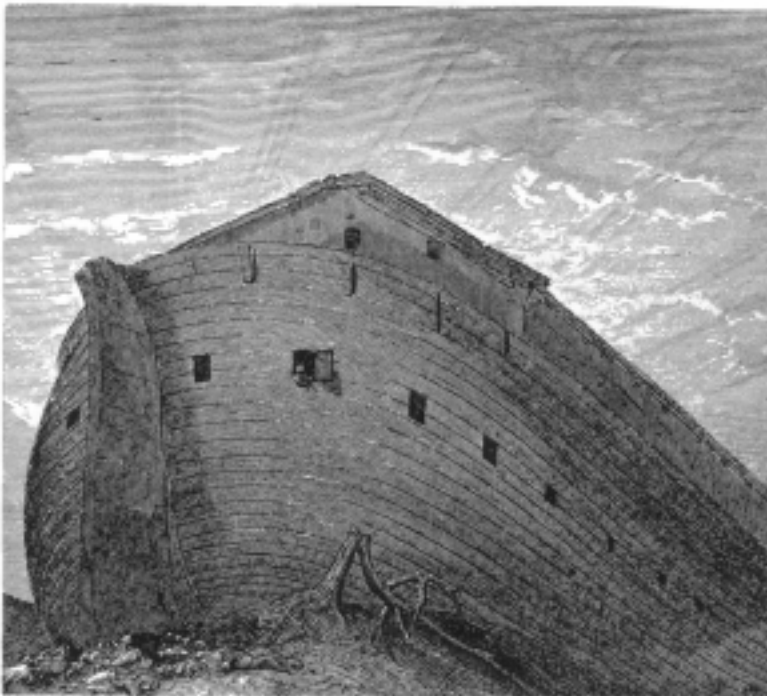
3. The Biblical name "Noah" means "rest" The Babylonian name "Utnapishtim" means "he saw life , " and is likely an honorary title. Both patriarchs are the tenth generation of their pre-deluvian ancestors.
4. In both accounts there is a divine decision to spare them and their families. Pious devotion by both patriarchs is recorded.
5. Both accounts give detailed instructions for constructing a large ark to save, as the Babylonian account explains, "the seed of all living creatures"
6. Noah preaches about the coming judgment for 120 years (Genesis 6:3; 2 Peter 2:5). In contrast, Utnapishtim also speaks to his neighbors, but he is deceptive about his construction project. The Babylonian account recounts pestilence, famines, and repeated plagues of reduced fertility preceding the flood. The Sumerian, Babylonian, and Assyrian accounts preserve "120" as the dimension in cubits of an unwieldy cubic boat. It may be that the original sense of the text was that the boat of Utnapishtim was "120 in extent," that is, in the time it took to build, not its length. This ambiguous sense that confuses length and time persists as late as the befuddled King James translation of Matthew 6:27.8
7. Both boats are coated within and without with "pitch" The Babylonian account suggests that it came in a solid form and needed to be softened with heat for use.
8. In both accounts those on board are the sole survivors of the cataclysm. Noah takes only four married couples. The Babylonian account embellishes this by including a daughter, a few additional relatives, construction workers, and a boatman.
9. Multiple animals and specifically sheep are present in each account.
10. Both accounts begin the flood in the month of May.
11. Both accounts record the deluge as a combination of rain and other dammed up waters.
12. In both accounts the flooding is sufficient to cover the mountains. The record of Genesis 7:20 notes that 15 cubits of flooding was sufficient to cover the mountains. No flood depth is transmitted in the parallel accounts. Additionally, the Genesis account records the ark being sealed for seven days, followed by a deluge lasting forty days. The Babylonian account speaks only of a seven day deluge.
13. In both accounts the ship grounds on a mountain. The Genesis account gives a period of 14 months on the ark after which there is a going forth at the Lord's command. The Babylonian account does not provide this detail, and the disembarking is at the discretion of Utnapishtim.
14. Noah thoughtfully first sends forth a raven - a highlands bird. Following this as the waters abate further, three times he sends forth a dove - a lowland bird - for lowlands reconnaissance. The Babylonian account bewilderingly reverses the logical order, sending forth a dove, then a swallow, then a raven.
15. In both accounts there is a sacrifice of thanksgiving of "every clean beast and every clean fowl" (Genesis 8:20). The Babylonian account records the sacrifice of an "ox and numerous sheep" upon leaving the ark.
16. In both accounts a divine promise is made that no more floods will occur.

17. The Genesis account speaks of a rainbow after the flood as a remembrance of the covenant between God and man never to destroy the earth again with a flood of waters. In the parallel accounts, the "necklace of Ishtar" - a possible poetic reference to a rainbow - is mentioned. Some accounts specifically mention the "lapis" of Ishtar's necklace. The lapis is a deep sky-blue colored stone, and the cataclysm would certainly have provided the first clear dust-free view of the skies in almost 1400 years.<sup>9</sup>

What is most interesting is that Ishtar normally is viewed as a minor deity. Yet all the accounts maintain a prominent remembrance of her at their conclusion. Possibly these parallel accounts sought to link the original sin of begetting the *nephilim* with the covenant of promise.

## WHERE THE ACCOUNTS DIVERGE INSIGHTS INTO THE TOWER OF BABEL

Having looked at the remarkable points of convergence in these other deluge traditions, looking at where they differ is also of value. In sum, the Sumerian Utnapishtim is portrayed as more self-reliant, and even a cunning individual. In the non-biblical accounts there is no divine shutting of the door to the ark. Nor is there any record of commands from the Almighty to go forth.



The Ark Coming to Rest

The polytheistic underpinnings have an equally curious side that deserves mention. The gods are portrayed as frightful by the havoc they have caused: "The gods were frightened by the deluge, and shrinking back they ascended to the [highest] heaven ... [even there] the gods cowered like dogs ... [and] Ishtar cried out like a woman in travail ... the gods, all humbled, sit and weep." This is a world-view in which man may be compelled to offer set worship to the gods, the gods may be more powerful than him, but he certainly does not need to reverence them. The attitudes conveyed are closer to those of disgruntled and disenfranchised factory workers speaking about a distant and hostile board of directors. When sacrifice is offered, the gods gather "like flies"

Notice the quotation at the head of this article and consider the response of a people harboring irreverent and hostile attitudes toward divinity. The first place of importance that the non-biblical accounts mention being flooded are the cult centers. Is it possible that the communal building of ziggurats such as the tower of Babel were intended as raised flood-proof cult centers?

## SUMMARY

The Sumerian and Babylonian tablets predate the writing of Genesis and contain overwhelming parallels that speak to the common remembrance of the greatest environmental catastrophe man has ever witnessed. They speak most distinctly to a tradition that is more vaguely remembered by flood accounts from Greece, Persia, India, China, Japan and both North and South America. The principal impact of the Babylonian accounts upon the scholarly community has been to increase the respectability of the Genesis account and build a consensus

that at least some sort of flood must have taken place.<sup>10</sup> These accounts are not simply "cunningly devised fables." At the same time, we can see how rapidly mankind is capable of forgetting the providential care of our gracious and Almighty god and substituting in his place clumsy inventions of their own. May we faithfully transmit the record we have received!

- *Richard Doctor*

1. Heidel, Alexander, *The Gilgamesh Epic and Old Testament Parallels*, University of Chicago (1949, 1963 edition), page 104. This is still in print as a paperback in 1998. Though this work is very scholarly, the following two are more readable. As an added bonus, Heidel's essay on Sheol in this tome is in harmony with present truth.
2. Pritchard, James B., *The Ancient Near East - An Anthology of Texts and Pictures*, Princeton (1958, 1969 edition), page 28. We are indebted to S. N. Kramer, linguist for the Gilgamesh translation, for clarifying that it was the "cult-centers" which were flooded.
3. Sanders, N. K., *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, Penguin Classic (1964). This translation is edited to be readable while staying true to the text.
4. Nissen, Hans J., *The Early History of the Ancient Near East*, University of Chicago (1988), page 95.
5. Edgar, Morton, *Faith's Foundations*; "Mythology and the Bible," Portland Bible Students (1967), page 37.
6. Campbell, Joseph, with Bill Moyers, *The Power of Myth*, Doubleday, New York (1988). This is a companion book to a public television series of the same title.
7. The Sumer account maintained that the greatest offence was taken by the goddess Ishtar. Since Ishtar is the goddess of fertility and procreation identified with the planet Venus, the offence of improper marriage identified in Genesis 6:2, 3 would map over into Ishtar's province of care in the thinking of a polytheist. In the *Epic of Gilgamesh* there is a major sub-plot in which Gilgamesh deliberately spurns Ishtar's amorous advances, insults her, and amazingly (at least for mythology) survives her revenge [see footnote 101. Gilgamesh holds Ishtar directly responsible for manipulating Tammuz (Nimrod) and then seeing him torn apart (Chapter 3). For those who have been nurtured on a classic examination of world mythology and biblical themes such as *The Two Babylons* by Alexander Hislop (1916), in particular "Sub-section IV - Death of the Child," the distinctly non-reverent, but particularly insightful treatment of this myth in treatises such as *The Origins and History of Consciousness* by Erich Neumann (1954) deserve attention. In brief, Ishtar is a manipulative, controlling and "terrible" mother using and then destroying her son-lovers. The significance of the Gilgamesh Epic is that it is a celebration of the rejection of a matriarchy of the worst sort in favor of a patriarchal focus for society.
8. Goodspeed, Edgar J., *The Problems of New Testament Translation*, University of Chicago (1954), page 24. For Matthew 6:27 Goodspeed would translate "But which of you with all his worry can add a single hour to his life?"
9. The current scientific geophysical evidence for the flood, and for low or locally non-existent rains and consequent high dust levels prior to the flood in harmony with Genesis 2:5, 6 may be the subject of a later article. For the high dust levels prior to the flood see Mayewski, P.A., et al., "The atmosphere during the Younger Dryas;" *Science*, Volume 261 (July 9, 1993), page 195.
10. "Prehistoric flood from ice surge," *Science News* (October 4, 1975).

# Daniel and the Lions

*Fear knocked on the door*

*Faith opened it.*

*No one was there*

Not for a moment did King Darius think of what might happen to Daniel when he signed the decree outlawing the petitioning of any god or man save the king himself. Never did he suspect his counselors were seeking to entrap him so they might legally accomplish the death of his most trusted officer.

Daniel probably found out about the decree in the course of his official duties. As first president and chief executive, any new law would routinely be brought to his attention. When he saw the decree, he immediately realized its object and was appalled at the hatred of his colleagues. So what was his reaction? He hastened to lay the matter before the Lord!

"Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house; and his windows being opened in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees, three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime" (Daniel 6:10).

Why did he do that? He could have said to himself, "Prayer is a private matter between me and the Lord. In view of the decree, all I have to do now is shut the door and close the windows" But he didn't reason that way. One might wonder why Daniel had adopted the custom of worshipping in such a public manner in the first place, a manner so different from that which our Lord Jesus enjoined upon us in Matthew 6:6. There was a good reason. Daniel was among idolaters, each one of whom publicly worshipped the image of his god. Daniel was looked upon as an example of the Hebrew captives in Babylon. The Hebrews did not have an image of their God. For Daniel to have worshipped in secret would have been misunderstood to mean that he did not worship at all. Under the circumstances this would have been a reproach to the true God. So he worshipped openly with his face toward Jerusalem, the typical city of God, the great king of the universe, and toward the temple, the typical habitation of God. Three times a day he made confession of the only true God before the various nationalities of Babylon. By so doing he was also an inspiration to his own people, the captive Jews in Babylon. He encouraged faithfulness to God and a separation from idolatry.

These were valid reasons for Daniel's public worship. To discontinue the custom because of this new law would be an act of cowardice. It did not even enter his mind. He went to his upper chamber, opened the windows wide, knelt down in full view facing Jerusalem, and prayed aloud, addressing himself to the God of Israel. How well his enemies knew his schedule! A representative group was there under his windows listening, to witness Daniel's violation of the king's decree.

It would be wonderful to know what Daniel said in that prayer. We can guess that after laying his problem before the Lord and resigning himself completely to the Lord's will, he would pray for the restoration of Israel, calling to mind God's gracious promises respecting the Holy Land toward which he was facing, that it would yet be the center of the whole earth and of God's holy people, that eventually and through these, divine blessings would be extended to every nation, people, kindred and tongue.

Having obtained the evidence they needed, Daniel's enemies lost no time in reporting it to the king. It is interesting to note that this new law was invoked against no one but Daniel, although there must have been numerous other violators among the idolaters of Babylon. Many would bow before their images through sheer force of habit and be guilty, but only Daniel was cited.

The king saw the trap into which he had been deliberately led for the very purpose of destroying his most trusted and valued counselor. The rule of the kingdom was that a sentence must be executed before sundown of the same day it was incurred, but the king tried every way to have the penalty upon Daniel rescinded or suspended.

Ordinarily when kings desired to be released from some decree, they called upon their wise men and magicians who usually were skillful in suggesting a way out of the dilemma by some technicality. So the king earnestly sought their counsel, telling them of his desire that Daniel be saved from the den of lions in spite of the law he had made. But in this case, there was an alliance of all the wise men of Babylon against Daniel:

"Then these men assembled unto the king, and said unto the king, Know, O king, that the law of the Medes and Persians is that no decree nor statute which the king established may be changed." Daniel 6:15

The king continued his efforts until the last minute, but finally the sun went down and he could delay no longer. The sentence must now be carried out. He called Daniel and talked to him, telling him how he had been ensnared and that he could find no way out. Then he made a statement that was strange for a

heathen king to make. He said: "Thy God whom thou servest continually, he will deliver thee!" How this must have warmed Daniel's heart! Daniel had already resigned himself to the Lord's will and that perhaps the Lord would permit the lions to kill him. After all, he was old in the Lord's service. Perhaps his career should now be terminated. But through the lips of a heathen king and just when he needed it most, he received a message of divine assurance: "Thy God ... will deliver thee!"

Let us try to picture what happened in the den of lions when Daniel was put into it. Suppose Adam, when he was still in Eden, walked into a den of lions. Would they have hurt him? Of course not. He was their king and benefactor. He had power over them. He was their master. They would have loved his visit. I think it is very likely that God endowed his servant Daniel with this attribute of a perfect man - that of dominion over brute beasts. If so, those enormous cats must have come to him purring with delight! They must have rolled on the ground, playing at his feet like kittens. Daniel immediately realized that something most unusual was happening, that the angel of the Lord was present with him. And Daniel must have at that moment lifted his voice in thanks to God. Later we can imagine that Daniel went to sleep, his head pillowed on the flank of one lion, his feet warmed against the back of another, and lulled by the soft purring of them all!



Daniel in the Den of Lions

# Samson, a Type of Socialism

Through Pastor Russell, the Lord furnished us with the "keys" of understanding. Using these keys we can understand things which could not be understood 80 to 100 years ago because it was not the due time. In this treatise we will examine the manner of the burning of the tares, the fall of Babylon, and the role of natural Israel.

We are to watch that "that day" not catch us unaware (I Thessalonians 5:4). We want to avoid making the mistake of not being prepared for an important change, such as being caught unaware by the fall of communism.

Although the brethren expected the harvest would last only 40 years, it was prolonged. Early expectations were for a worldwide revolution which, in the end, was limited to Russia, and after 30 years extended to other east European countries. These revolutionary governments Pastor Russell referred to vaguely in Volume 4, expressing the view that both socialism and communism would later fall.

Nuclear arms is another factor. They have multiplied so rapidly that they now have the potential of destroying all life on earth many times over. Bro. Russell alluded to the armaments of his day having far greater destructive capacity than those of the French Revolution. What would he say of today's weaponry? For the first time in history there is an arsenal that could fulfill Matthew 24:22: "unless those days be shortened, there should no flesh be saved " Though many brethren expect anarchy without the use of nuclear arms, this text implies the use of such weapons.

Also the modern spread of information and of commerce are important factors. Pastor Russell expected such developments would escalate the final conflict.

Another important development is the state of Israel. The foreword of Volume 4 says "prophecy requires an evidently larger number of wealthy Hebrews to be [in Israel] before the Armageddon crisis be reached" (page xvi, para. 1, regrettably this sentence is lacking in the Romanian translation). He was right. The time was extended, and since then the wealth of Israel has grown considerably. "Jacob's trouble" will thus find the wealth mentioned in Ezekiel 38. All of these factors are elaborated on in the "keys," the six volumes.

## THE YEARS SINCE

The years since the death of Pastor Russell provoke many questions. What was the importance of 1914 and 1918? What has happened with world revolution? Was it limited to the eastern world? What role did the revolutionary government play? What is indicated by 1988 as the date for the fall of communism? What can we expect to follow the fall of that social system?

In addition to the six volumes, Bro. Russell gives a unique suggestion in the Photodrama, in which he titles one picture "Socialism Prefigured by Samson." He did not explain these words, perhaps because he could not at the time elaborate more on this type. Beginning with this affirmation, and adding new factors, we obtain a picture that is still dim as it emerges. In the spirit of a sound mind, and with an eye to reality, let us examine this picture together.\*

---

\* In one article written in May 1914, R5458, Bro. Russell relates the giants of labor unionism and socialism to Samson. On pages 5612 and 4087 he relates Samson to spiritual lessons for the Church in the Gospel age. See also Beauties of the Truth, Vol. 8, No. 2, May 1997. In the years 1912-1916 Bro. Russell does write extensively about the perils of socialism.



In the days of Pastor Russell the world was separated into two antagonistic camps. On one side were the capitalists, so-called "Christian" exploiters, supported by the nominal church. (Here we view Babylon as an entire system of religious, political-military and economic domains.) In the second camp we find the exploited - the unhappy workers and farmers who, little by little, are rising from the darkness of superstition and ignorance and learning their rights, which were hidden for centuries by false religious systems. It was these systems, with the power of the clergy, that used the ignorance of the masses to exploit them.

Enmity between the exploited and the exploiters generated tension. Noticing this tension Bro. Russell deduced the possibility of future anarchy, threatening to undo the religious and political systems which were based on lies and unrighteousness. This is elaborated in Volume 4. Pastor Russell expected this great revolution to come in 1914, but partially put it off to 1918. In the article "The Harvest Not Yet Ended" (1916) he suggested the parallels of the ages might date from the final victory of the Romans over the Jews in AD 73, and extended the parallels to 1918. This date is not a mistake, and is, in fact, an important one.

After the fall revolution of 1917, Russia in the spring of 1918 formed a "revolutionary government" based on a constitution separating church from state. The workers movement that brought about this victory was named "socialism" In this way "the earthquake" of Revelation 16:18 was limited to the eastern world where the "Christian" czars pushed the world into an untenable situation. The worst of the persecution was felt by the Jews (who had just received divine favor 40 years earlier).

It was not by chance that Russia rose and punished the corrupt "Christian" systems, putting the clergy into prison. At the same time, in 1918, as a result of losing the war, the great monarchies fell. They had been the heirs of the Roman Empire, the last emperors anointed by the Pope in Rome. Then also the Ottoman Empire fell, which had ruled Palestine and been an obstacle to the founding of the new Jewish state. Since then Jerusalem has no longer been "put down" by pagan empires. All this focuses on the year 1918.

After the First World War the workers movement intensified and gave birth to "the revolutionary governments." These were extended after 1948 to the east European countries. In the end, the capitalist world succeeded in stopping the extension of communism. Two methods were used for this. (1) Through different social democratic policies, Christianity put an end to its exploitation, thus in large measure diminishing popular dissatisfaction. (2) The western nations obtained an advantage in the arms race during the cold war.

## **SAMSON**

Though we might look at many aspects of the communist movement, we will focus on the danger which Samson (socialism) represents for the Philistines ("Christiana" capitalism). Do the dissatisfied masses continue to constitute the principle danger to Babylon? Although the capitalist world halted the extension of communism, communism continues to present an imposing danger.

The new revolutionary governments became the principle enemy of the capitalist world. The tension which existed in the days of Pastor Russell between different social strata has been transformed into a tension between world powers: East and West. This tension produced both opposing ideologies and imperial ambitions. Both Moscow and Washington guarded these interests using ideology. The West, America and NATO, guarded the nominally Christian world, and the East, the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact, sought a victory for communism.

In this we see Samson representing the communist systems, the evolution of the workers' movements. Some may find it difficult to see a man of God represent an atheist system. However in Joel the Lord's great army is

composed of unhappy people, blind with anger, which God sends against corrupt Christianity. In a similar way God may take revenge through Samson for the iniquities done in his name for many centuries by Christendom, the Philistines, a nation far from God. Christendom is also represented in other pictures by pagan cities such as Babylon and Tyre (Isaiah 23).

Thus we think it logical to consider Samson a picture of communism, and the Philistines a picture of Christendom. This view is strengthened by viewing the last events of Samson's life and death. We will now examine only that part of Samson's life concerning Delilah and her search for the secret of his power. We will not present a meaning for every detail, but only compare the decline of communism with some of the more important events of this part of Samson's life.

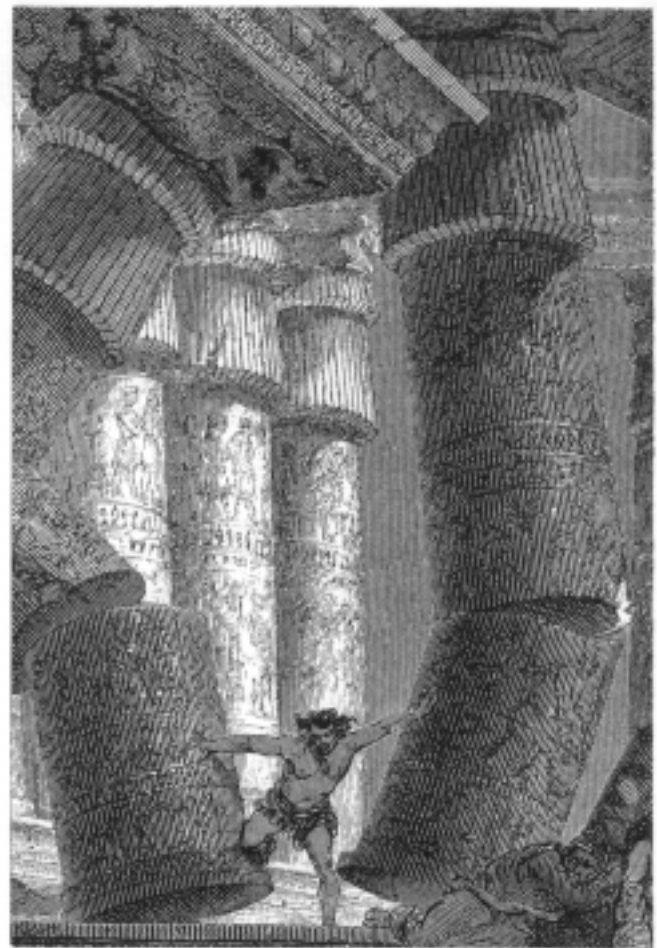
## THE APPLICATIONS

In 1948 Communism extended over eastern Europe. The West (Philistines) succeeded in stopping it, using the general dissatisfaction of the masses with the Socialist dictatorships. Through the church systems of the different countries (the Philistine women) they fomented a counter revolution against Communism. In this process there were three great trials three trials of the blinding of Samson.

- (1) In 1956 in Hungary
- (2) In 1968 in Czechoslovakia
- (3) In 1980-81 in Poland (the Solidarity movement)

In 1988 there was a fourth trial in Moscow, the very center of the communist ideological world - a most sensitive spot for Samson. The betrayal was brought about by Mikhail Gorbachev, a communist reformer, through "Perestroika" Gorbachev's first step was the liberation of the church system from their 70-year captivity, and the "forgotten harlot" began to sing again. In the spring of 1988, for the first time since the spring of 1918 when Lenin by decree separated church from state, a religious service was held in the Kremlin - exactly 70 years later (Isaiah 23). Even those older communists who did not regret the disappearance of the communist ideology and the failure of the "communist cause" felt a great loss of dignity in their loss of "super power" status.

After so many years of the cold war, communism was conquered. Samson was bound. Political and military powers were reduced. Samson's hair was cut by the abolition of the Warsaw Pact. No prospect exists for economic stabilization. Samson is blind.



Samson Pushing Down the Pillars of the Temple

At the same time, NATO is growing. The Philistines rejoice. But Samson's hair is also growing. This is manifest by the fact that, especially in Russia, the communist party is gradually rising to power by democratic methods. Conservative forces have a growing

influence, even seeking collaborators from extreme nationalist forces. The voice of nostalgia for a resurgence of the Soviet Union as a great world power is being heard more and more.

The prophet Isaiah said "Rejoice not thou, whole Philistia [Christendom] because the rod of him that smote thee is broken: for out of the serpent's root (pagan power, or more precisely the pagan Roman empire, Revelation 12:7) shall come forth a cockatrice, and his fruit shall be a fiery flying serpent ... thou whole Philistia, are dissolved: for there shall come from the north a smoke, and none shall be alone in his appointed times" (Isaiah 14:29, 31). Verse 32 confirms that this is speaking about the last days of the age.

Though we cannot predict exactly the course of future events, we can observe that in Russia the situation is ripe for a dictatorship. As after the French Revolution, when Napoleon made order from a country torn by politics and put an end to the headless state, so with present Russia. Possibly a Slovak Napoleon, as a "head" ("Gog" in Hebrew means "roof" or "head") will rise through demagoguery and win public opinion with deceiving promises.

Being unable to resolve the great economic problems he may look for an outside enemy, a scapegoat, and follow an imperialist, expansionist policy. At first he might revive the atmosphere of the cold war and blame the West for the disastrous state of the economy. He will remain as blind as Samson.

Just as Samson never recovered his previous position, never judged Israel again, and could never fight in an open way with the Philistines, neither will communism regain its position of the past 70 years (40 years in Eastern Europe). Economic and political stability will not be possible with the revival of communism but it will have sufficient military force to rise from its humiliation and oppose the West which had previously humbled and blinded it by a Catholic-Protestant alliance (western Europe and the United States).

If so, we would expect one revolt by which more loss will be created than in the past when it was a world power. So it was with Samson. He killed more Philistines in his death than in his life. It is important to keep in mind that the antitype concerns systems, not individuals. Thus by the revival of communism and its revolt Christendom will be destroyed - but communism will also fall.

## **THE ARMY OF GOG**

From this perspective it is easy to see Samson as a type of communism. Even more interesting is the connection between communism and the army of Gog in Ezekiel 38. Verse 15 says this army comes from "the uttermost parts of the north" Drawing a vertical line on a map from Israel to the north leads to Moscow.

If we accept this interpretation we have a tool we can use two ways: (1) the army will punish Christendom, (2) in Jacob's trouble it will humble the pride of the Jewish people. There Gog, "surpassingly proud" (Leeser translation) will fall (Habakkuk 1:11) because he should not have raised his hand against that which is God's. "Woe to thee that spoilest, and wast not spoiled; and dealest treacherously, and they dealt not treacherously with thee! When thou shalt cease to spoil, thou shalt be spoiled" (Isaiah 33:1).

We cannot disallow the possible use of nuclear arms in this struggle. Satan has always wanted to cause the greatest damage to God's work, and specially now, knowing he has but a little time. It is a sign of his loss of control. The Lord will hinder his intentions, but he may permit a limited use of nuclear weapons.

The consequences of the battle will be traumatic. Anarchy will follow the war and survival will be difficult. Men will react as animals, motivated by fear, hunger, radiation and death. Such anarchy will be like that described in Jerusalem in AD 70 by Flavius Josephus, when starvation among the Jews was so severe women

ate their own children. This condition must be halted if people will survive (Matthew 24:22).

The entire earth will receive this divine protection. Though Gog enters the Middle East, they will not send in rockets because they will have relegated troops to the region. What will the red army look for when they "come to take a spoil" (Ezekiel 38:13)? Gog will seek wealth. Perhaps it will be the oil in the Middle East, thus cutting off the source of fuel to the West.

Then may be fulfilled the text, "I will not cure your ills, for in my house is neither food nor clothing: do not make me a ruler of the people" (Isaiah 3:7). No one will have the courage to govern. This will prepare the way for the Messianic government from Jerusalem through the patriarchs and prophets. The first to receive these blessings will be the living remnant, and then those resurrected by Messiah.

This is only a possible scenario. The last events could occur very rapidly and be a surprise to all the world, especially for those not watching. If we were surprised by the fall of communism, we should not be surprised if it returns to bring about the final collapse when it rallies its strength once again.

Whatever method Divine Providence chooses to clean the earth to become the "footstool of God ' " we should watch and pray to be counted worthy to escape these things, and to stand before the Son of Man (Luke 21:36). We should seek to be prepared as New Creatures so that, with the Lord's approval and by his power, we will be part of the glorified Messiah to bless the world.

- *Andras Ortel (Romania)*