

The Herald Of Christ's Kingdom

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The Torah

EDITOR'S JOURNAL

All things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms.—Luke 24:44

The Torah, the five books of Moses, is the theme of this issue. The Jewish Old Testament is comprised of three sections, the Law (Torah), Prophets (Nevi'im), and Writings (Kethuvim), referred to by Jesus in the text above. (Psalms is the first book of the Writings and stands for the entire third section.) The Jews refer to the Old Testament as the Tanakh, which is an acronym using the first letters of each word, TNK.

The Jewish division of the Tanakh is into 24 books, but the original division was into 22 books. Josephus, the ancient Jewish historian, confirms this: "We have ... only 22 books, which contain the records of all the past times; which are justly believed to be divine ... five belong to Moses, which contain his laws, and the traditions of the origin of mankind till his death" (Against Apion, I, 8).

This claim is supported by John of Constantinople (6th century) and Georgius Syncellus (8th to 9th century), Christian writers who cite a portion of the Book of Jubilees as evidence. "God, as it says, created 22 works in the six days, wherefore also there are 22 letters among the Hebrews and 22 books, and 22 founding fathers from Adam to Jacob" (John of Constantinople, cited from *The Old Testament Canon of the New Testament Church* by Beckwith). The 22 divisions of Psalm 119, a psalm dedicated to the Word of God, may be an inspired reference to this number of books. (The 39 books of our Old Testament may be reduced to 22 by combining the double books into one each, the 12 minor prophets into one book, Nehemiah with Ezra, Ruth with Judges, and Lamentations with Jeremiah.)

The article on Genesis, *In the Beginning*, observes the uniqueness of the record, and traces its composition to original accounts written by those who were eye witnesses to most of the episodes they recorded. Their names are appended to their testimonies, so we can determine the principal author in each case. A variety of observations are made respecting the record through chapter 11, and the remainder of the book is briefly summarized.

The article *Dwelling with God* gives a broad outline of Exodus and focuses special attention on episodes from chapters 12, 19, 24, 29. Of special note is the suggestion that the reference in Hebrews 12:23 about a "general assembly" —perhaps better rendered "festive gathering" —is drawn from the gathering of elders at Sinai at the inauguration of the Law.

Leviticus is discussed in two articles. *Laws of Redemption* discusses the value of the typical offerings, reviews the various parts of the book, and considers the various kinds of laws recorded. *The Offerings of the Law* looks at the meaning of the Sin, Burnt, Meal, and Peace Offerings, and how each relates to the others.

In The Wilderness, the Jewish name for the book of Numbers, outlines the book topically and then expands on three themes: numbering the tribes, the vow of the Nazirite, and Balaam's fourth oracle. These sections explain the remarkable decline of the tribe of Simeon; how the Nazirite vow was typical of our consecration; and three applications of Baalam's oracle, including one incipient in our day.

The Heart of the Mediator Revealed discusses Deuteronomy, Moses' closing admonition to the Israelites. It was the burden of Moses' heart as he prepared to leave them. He emphasized the necessity of consummate love for God as the only sure means of keeping Israel faithful to their covenant.

The closing article, *The Antiquity of the Books of Moses*, is a brief introduction to a larger study, supporting Moses' ancient authorship of the Torah.

The Torah covers more than 2500 years of God's providence over his people. It is a precious legacy from one of the noblest of God's servants of past ages, with whom he deigned to speak "face to face." It is the cornerstone of the Word of God. Let us cherish its treasures.

Genesis

In the Beginning

In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.—Genesis 1:1

"Bereshith" is the Hebrew title of the book of Genesis, being the opening word in the Hebrew text, which is translated "in the beginning." The opening chapter, styled "the generations [*toledah*, history, or account, NIV] of the heavens and of the earth" (2:4), is unparalleled in ancient writings, giving an elegant summary of the creative work in simple narrative, preparing the earth for human habitation. The sequence of the narrative matches the deductions of modern science, and this is inexplicable for such an ancient narrative, except on the grounds that this information was given from God, presumably through angelic messengers to Adam in the garden.

The account begins with an affirmation that "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth," without detailing the method or process. John's gospel refers to the same time and declares that at this point, "in the beginning," Jesus as the Word of God existed already, and that he was the agent of God in creating all that we see about us.

Genesis proceeds from that starting point to explain the sequence of the epoch days of the creative work without defining their length. The work of creative day one and three through five was declared "good," and the work of day six "very good." But the work of day two is not described in these terms. This day deals with the creation of the firmament, separating the waters above from the waters below. Some have observed that the omission of the expression for this day only intimates there was something unfinished about the waters, which was completed during the flood many years later. "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 accomplishment of each creative day, summarized briefly, could be: light, seas, rivers (draining the land), sun-moon-stars, air life, and beasts. It is noteworthy that during the era of the new creation, the work of the Gospel age is represented with very similar symbols. In 2Corinthians 4:6 Paul compares the light of the first creative day to "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" which hath "shined in our hearts." The symbols in Revelation 8-11 which describe the further stages of the Gospel age are: seas, rivers, sun-moon-stars, air life, and beasts (horses). There is thus an intended parallel between stages of the mundane creation and the stages of the new creation.

Man Created

By what process God caused the waters to "bring forth" life (1:20), or the earth to "bring forth" living creatures (1:24), is not specified. But of the creation of man we have clear testimony. God formed a body for Adam constituted of elements from the earth and

subsequently "breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul" (2:7). Thus was "the first man, Adam, made a living soul" (1 Corinthians 15:45). God imbued him with reason, gave him the quality of love, a sense of justice, and empowered him as ruler of earth. "God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them" (1:27). Thus we can appreciate God, relate to him, grasp something of his character and spirit, and God can appeal to us—"come ... let us reason together" (Isaiah 1:18)—even though we are vastly inferior to him in scale and scope.

The method of Eve's creation was remarkable. Adam was caused to fall into a deep sleep, a rib was removed and his flesh closed up, and of the rib God fashioned Eve. By this means they were intimately related. "This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh," and her designation "woman," Hebrew *isha*, denotes that she was "taken out of man," Hebrew *ish* (Genesis 2:23). She was named Eve, Hebrew *chavah*, living, "because she was the mother of all living" (Genesis 3:20).

That Eve's life was taken from Adam means her life and interests were bound up with his. Adam was given the role of leader of this perfect pair, and God "blessed them, and called their name Adam, in the day when they were created" (Genesis 5:2). Evidently this all had something to do with the method by which Eve, as well as Adam, could later be atoned for by the sacrifice of the one man Jesus, Eve being reckoned in a sense as "in" Adam.

Incidentally, this episode emphasizes the implausibility of the creative days being literal days. "Male and female" were created on day six, but before Eve was produced Adam had named "all cattle, and ... the fowl of the air, and ... every beast of the field" (Genesis 2:20) and experienced a sense of need for a suitable companion. Clearly all this did not all occur on one normal day.

The episode has a deeper spiritual meaning as well. As Jesus is the second Adam (1 Corinthians 15:47), the church will be the second Eve. As Adam was caused to fall into a deep sleep, so Jesus was caused to fall into the sleep of death. As Adam's side was opened, so Jesus' side was opened, by the spear, after he had fallen asleep. Forthwith gushed blood and water, representing the redemption and the truth, through which the church is developed, as a result of the anguish and suffering of our Lord. As Adam was granted a headship, so Christ is the acknowledged head of the church.

The creation of Adam is also a parallel to our Lord. "The Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed" (Genesis 2:8). Thus Adam's body was formed from the unfinished (in that sense imperfect) mother earth, though his life came from God above. When Jesus came into the earth, his body also was formed of an imperfect mother, and his life also came from above.

Where Was Eden?

The clues to locate Eden are in Genesis 2:8-14. It was "eastward" from Bible lands (verse 8), and at the intersection of four rivers—Tigris (Hiddekel), Euphrates, Pison which goes to Havilah where there is gold, and Gihon which goes to "the whole land of Cush." Verse 10 says "a river went out of Eden to water the garden; and from thence it was parted, and became into four heads." Probably this means as one traced the river upstream it was found to separate into four tributaries, so that the headwaters were from four distant locations. If so, their convergence would have been at a low point common to them all. Such a point common to the Tigris and Euphrates would be in what is today the Persian Gulf. The Gihon was evidently a river flowing from the west through Arabian Cush, the Pison one from the east where Ophir and Havilah settled, lands identified with gold (Genesis 10:29; 1 Kings 9:26-28). The flood augmented the sea levels, and thus the ancient garden is submerged and gone. The surrounding area today, though desert and desolate, is known for its oil fields which speak of lush carboniferous growth in past ages.

Coverings for Sin

The tempter seduced our parents into sin. Eve was deceived about the results of her choice, believing Satan's lie "thou shalt not surely die," but she was not deceived about whether it was right or wrong to eat the forbidden fruit. She knew it was against God's commands. Adam, who was "not deceived" (1 Timothy 2:14), knowingly shared his wife's fate. As a perfect woman, and one created specifically to be a complementary companion, she must have been of such engaging intellect, charm and beauty, so perfectly mated to Adam, the thought of her loss was no doubt more pressing and heavy upon Adam's heart than we can readily grasp. He had not the experience or faith of Abraham, who after many years of devotion was ready even to sacrifice his dearly loved son. There is every reason to suppose that when Adam is tested again at the close of the Millennium, his faith and trust being then developed, he will endure the exam faithfully, and Eve as well, and gain back from God, through the redemption in Christ, the bounties lost through sin.

After their sin Adam and Eve quickly recognized their peril, and the need of a covering. They "hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God amongst the trees of the garden," much as their descendants, mankind, would seek refuge in the various kingdoms of this world, represented by the "trees of Eden" (Ezekiel 31:9,16,18).

The first covering Adam and Eve sought when "the eyes of them both were opened" was an apron of fig leaves. We associate the fig tree with Israel, and leaves with professions, and probably this covering represented the first hope of mankind to cover their sins—namely the works of the Law. But this proved unsuitable, just as hoping to establish our righteousness through works is fruitless. God provided a more durable covering (Genesis 3:21), representing the covering we receive in Christ.

The same lesson is carried forward in chapter 4. Cain represents Israel. His vegetable offering, like the apron of fig leaves, was unsuitable. His younger brother Abel represents Jesus who brought an acceptable offering, a blood sacrifice (Hebrews 11:4; 12:24). Cain could have taken the lead and brought an acceptable offering also, just as Israel could have followed Jesus, offered acceptably, and found favor with God. But he did not, and they did not. Instead he killed his brother, and Israel killed their brother. For this Cain was a wanderer and a vagabond; for their sin Israel was a wanderer and vagabond for the greater part of 2000 years.

But Israel will yet have a place in God's plan, and an honorable one. We think this was shown by a later descendant of Cain, Lamech, who was the seventh from Adam through Cain, just as Enoch was the seventh from Adam through Seth. Enoch, who was "translated," pictures the church who with Jesus becomes the promised seed of Abraham to bless all the families of the earth. Lamech, the seventh through Cain, represents Israel at the end of their punishment. Lamech declared himself to be less guilty than Cain, just as Israel in the kingdom, repentant, will be less guilty than those who cried "his blood be on us and on our children" (Matthew 27:25). Three sons of Lamech are mentioned. Jabal raised cattle, Jubal was a musician, and Tubalcain ("offspring of Cain") was "an instructor of every artificer of brass and iron." His sister was Naamah, "pleasantness." These children seem to picture the benefits Israel will bring to the nations during the kingdom. They will offer to the nations the benefits of the atonement sacrifices, they will lead the world in praise to God, they will work with the nations of "brass and iron" (Leviticus 26:19; Deuteronomy 28:23; Psalms 107:16; Daniel 4:15; Isaiah 45:2) who formerly persecuted them, and transform them into obedient sons of God. Their beneficent influence will fill the world with "pleasantness."

The end of chapter 4 speaks of Seth's line. Cain, the first prospect to be the "seed" through whom the promised deliverance would come, had proven himself unsuitable. Abel died evidently without posterity and Seth, born after Abel's death, was recognized as the appointed seed. Seth means "appointed," "For God, said she [Eve], hath appointed me another seed instead of Abel, whom Cain slew" (Genesis 4:25). Abel represents Jesus who died, and Seth represents Christ risen. Verse 26 says Seth (much later) had a son Enos, and "then began men to call upon the name of the Lord." So when Christ as the second Adam, with the second Eve, bear their children, mankind will worship God.

The Book of Adam

Chapter 5 begins "This is the book of the generations of Adam." This term may as well be rendered "this is the written account [book] of the history [generations, Hebrew *toledah*] of Adam," i.e., the written account Adam composed. It refers not to what follows, but to what precedes. Just as Genesis 2:4 is a description of the preceding account of the "heavens and of the earth," so Genesis 5:1 refers to the preceding account written by Adam, which is the source of Genesis 2:5 to 4:26.

What immediately preceded was an account of Adam's line through his firstborn (Cain). What immediately follows is an account of Adam's line through Seth to Noah. Who

made this later record for us? "These are the generations [this is the history] of Noah" (Genesis 6:9). Naturally Noah would have recorded the descent pertinent to his own line, and thus he details the line of Seth.

From the figures contained in chapter 5 we can compute that Adam lived to see the ninth generation through Seth (counting Adam as generation one). Thus it is likely Adam lived to see the ninth generation through Cain also, or perhaps one generation more since Seth was a generation removed from Cain. If so then Adam would have lived to see the grandchildren, or even the great-grandchildren, of the Lamech of Genesis 4. Thus he could record the occupations of Lamech's posterity, consistent with Adam being the author of the account.

The Flood

The "sons of God" that "took them wives" (Genesis 6:2) were angels who spawned a hybrid race unauthorized by God. That race evidently perished at the flood. The angels themselves, of course, would have dematerialized, and subsequently were prevented from re-materializing. Both Jude and Peter speak of this matter, and it is their testimony which allows us to grasp the point of Genesis 6:2 (Jude 6; 2 Peter 2:4; 1 Peter 3:20).

The apocryphal Book of Enoch says "The angels ... descended in the days of Jared" (Book of Enoch 6:2,6, Ethiopic text). If so, then it is likely Jared's son Enoch observed the results. This means the angelic influence continued for over six centuries before the flood put an end to it. Probably this was the immediate cause of Enoch's warning, "the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, to execute judgment upon all" (Jude 14,15). The long delay in judgment emphasizes the words of Peter, "the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah" (1 Peter 3:20).

God's announcement to Noah of the coming flood was apparently 120 years before the event (Genesis 6:3), but the construction of the ark began considerably later (Genesis 5:32; 6:14, 18). Two pair of every kind of animal, and seven of clean animals, were brought into the ark to preserve animal life. Evidently the flood was a global event, but it is likely it was not equally catastrophic everywhere on the globe. It sufficed for God's purpose of extinguishing all human life except for the eight spared in the ark, but it is possible that various portions of the animal kingdom in remote parts of the globe came through, helping to account for the very different forms of animal life in widely separated places, like the marsupials in Australia for example.

It is a popular belief that Noah's ark is lodged snowbound among the inaccessible nooks of Mt. Ararat in Turkey. Perhaps so, though the evidence does not seem conclusive. Indeed, it may have rotted, or been pillaged for its materials, in ages long past. Another credible possibility, however, is that posed by the late Ron Wyatt, and formerly by the late David Fasold, that the decomposed hulk is located lower down (though still high), where it settled with the receding flood waters. (See www.ronwyatt.com for photos and articles.)

Peter indicates the ark was a symbol of Christ, those baptized into Christ being saved in the ark: "The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us" (1 Peter 3:21). The dimensions of the ark prominently display the number of the atonement, three, being 300 cubits long and 30 cubits tall. The width of 50 cubits gives a circumference of 700 cubits, perhaps indicative of the 7000 years which result in the full deliverance of mankind through Christ.

At the end of the flood the inhabitants entered a new world, reminiscent of the world at the time of our first parents. Once again humanity began with a few, poised for multiplying into the billions we have today. The segregation of relatively small genetic pools after the flood evidently accounts for the rapid distinction of races.

As the eight souls neared the end of their ordeal, Noah sent out some birds to check for signs of the receding waters. These seem to constitute a token of the unfolding of God's plan of the ages from the beginning forward. After a period of 40 days, first a raven was loosed which "went forth to and fro, until the waters were dried" (Genesis 8:7). A raven, an unclean bird (Leviticus 11:15), symbolized the curse of death which went out after the testing of our first parents in the garden, 40 symbolizing a test or trial. At the same time God sent out his holy spirit, represented by the dove Noah also released, to develop the class we know as the Ancient Worthies. Abel was of this class, Enoch another, Noah another, and no doubt many others before the flood we know little or nothing about.

That opportunity closed when the Jewish age closed, represented by Noah receiving the dove into the ark again. He waited seven days, a number so often attached to the age of the spirit opening with Christ, and sent the dove out again. Probably this represents the work of the holy spirit during the Gospel age, developing Christ and his bride for their spiritual inheritance. The dove returned with an olive branch, signifying peace. This represents the end of the Gospel age when the peaceable kingdom of Christ is at hand. After a further seven days the dove was sent out again, "which returned not again unto him any more" (Genesis 8:12). So in the kingdom the holy spirit will be poured out on all flesh, and its benefit will be never ending.

A Type of the Coming Judgment

The flood was used by our Lord as an example of the judgment to come in Luke 17:27,30. "They did eat, they drank, they married wives ... until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all ... Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed." Many who heard those words had cause to reflect on them 37 years later when Jerusalem was ravaged, the temple pillaged and burned, and many massacred. But clearly the context of Luke 17 applies also to the judgments which climax at the second advent.

In Volume 4, page 529, under the subhead "Two Remarkable Types of the Impending Catastrophe," Brother Russell suggests the "judgments visited upon Judea and Jerusalem," severe as they were, were also typical of the judgments which end this age in

the Armageddon struggle—consistent with seeing in our Lord's words in Luke 17 a prophecy with a meaning to each experience.

In the same chapter Brother Russell observes that the French revolution was another type of Armageddon, and a close comparison of the symbols of Revelation bear out this suggestion repeatedly. It is therefore at least noteworthy that in Revelation 10 flood symbols are used in connection with the ending of the 1,260 years, the period of the French revolution. (See Revelation 10:1,6; 11:3,7; 12:15.)

The Faith of Noah

The very familiarity of the story of Noah's faith can dim the awareness of how incredible the faith of this man was. By what means God "spoke" to him we do not know, but the information conveyed was so specific—specific dimensions and specific numbers of animals—that it was apparently through a miraculous audible voice (as Moses heard above the ark of the covenant as recorded in Numbers 7:89), or perhaps an angelic visitor materialized to give the necessary information. For 120 years he anticipated the coming judgment, and when the time came later to construct the ark, he and his three sons must have aroused intense ridicule. The project was so large it could not be unnoticed, and evidently it was attended by an imploring, though futile, endeavor to alert others to the danger, as he was "a preacher of righteousness" (2 Peter 2:5).

Noah was born about 69 years after Enoch was "translated," but he must have heard much about him from his father Lamech, who would have overlapped with Enoch for about 113 years, and from his grandfather Methuselah, Enoch's son, who died in the year of the flood. Enoch's message must have been a difficult one for him to deliver, and the frowardness of the people difficult to endure. The account is brief, but the weight of the burden of these patriarchs must have been great. When Ezekiel speaks of the notable stalwarts of old, he mentions three who stood out for their piety: "Noah, Daniel, and Job" (Ezekiel 14:14). Noah is an example of the highest caliber, as must have been Enoch before him, of firm, continual, constant faith and purpose to maintain purity and devotion.

The brief description of this time, "The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence," gives a sense about the opposition they must have encountered from the proud and arrogant whose "thought ... was only evil continually" (Genesis 6:11,5). Their example should embolden us to stand against unrighteousness, and endure any necessary reproach, without moving.

The Table of Nations

Genesis 10:1 really belongs with the previous chapter, affirming that the preceding narrative was the product of the "sons of Noah, [namely] Shem, Ham and Japheth." Of course it could not have been from Noah, as it records his death.

The remainder of chapter 10 is a remarkable document, unique among historical documents as far as we know, tracing the line of descent of the nations of the ancient world back to the three sons of Noah. It is a record of greatest import, invaluable ... yet little appreciated by the wise of this world.

There is a peculiarity in the line of descent from Shem. His sons are listed, five in number, and some grandsons. Then it continues with the line which will lead to Abraham: Arphaxad, Salah, Eber, and Eber's sons Peleg and Joktan. Peleg means "division," and his name is explained: "for in his days was the earth divided." Presumably this refers to the division of the earth among the various peoples at the time of the Tower of Babel episode, which is narrated in the following chapter. According to chapter 11 Peleg was born 101 years after the flood, which gives us an approximate time for that division.

Peleg is the ancestor of Abraham, but before detailing his descent his brother Joktan's children are listed, 13 in number, ending with "Jobab" (verse 29). Joseph Seiss noted that the Hebrew word "ab" means father, and this may refer to "father Job." Job was from "the east," and these sons of Joktan made their "dwelling ... from Mesha, as thou goest unto Sephar, a mount of the east." If Job's lifespan was in the 200 year plus range (as commonly supposed), this would be consistent with life spans in the time just following Peleg. (In this case the designation of two of Job's comforters as "Shuhite" and "Temanite" would be anachronistic references to their dwelling places, like the reference in Genesis 14:14 to "Dan.")

Genesis 11:10 informs us this table of nations was supplied by Shem, who lived long enough to personally testify of the information contained. (That which follows could not have been affirmed by Shem, for it speaks of the death of Eber. Shem lived to see the others in this list predecease him, but not Eber, who outlived Shem.)

Chapter 11 introduces us to Abram, who became Abraham, the "father of all them that believe" (Romans 4:11). His remarkable life is recorded in parts of 15 chapters, and his death is recorded in Genesis 25:8. The experiences of Isaac and then Jacob follow. In Genesis 37:2 appears the last expression "these are the generations of [this is the account of]," and attributes the foregoing narrative to Jacob. This evidently was the end of the tablet records, the medium which used this kind of expression, from which Moses later assembled the book of Genesis.

The following narrative differs in form from the previous, and contains a sprinkling of Egyptian words rather than the frequent old Babylonian words common in the former. It

is about Joseph who rose to rule Egypt, and was probably inscribed originally on a different medium, with different literary forms.

Chapter 49 records Jacob's blessing of the 12 tribes. Chapter 50 records Joseph weeping for his dying father, the official Egyptian mourning for 70 days, and Jacob's burial with his fathers in the cave of Machpelah in today's Hebron.

Joseph lived to see "Ephraim's children of the third generation" (Genesis 50:23). As he approached death he affirmed his faith to his brethren: "God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land unto the land which he swore to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob." He secured of them an oath to take his bones with them at such a time. "So Joseph died, being an hundred and ten years old: and they embalmed him, and he was put in a coffin in Egypt"—awaiting God's time for the exodus.

Exodus

Dwelling with God

Thus saith the Lord, Israel is my son, even my firstborn.—Exodus 4:22

Richard Evans

In English versions of the Bible the name given the second of the five books credited to Moses was borrowed from the Septuagint (*exodos*, "going out" or "departure") and from the Codex Alexandrinus (*exodos aigipton*, "departure from Egypt"). In Hebrew Bibles it is called by the first words of the book (*ve-elleh shemot*, "these are the names").

The book covers about two centuries of the early history of Israel, God's earthly chosen people. Beginning at the death of the patriarch Joseph, it concludes with the construction and erection of the tabernacle at the foot of Mount Sinai and Israel dwelling with God.

An Overview

Exodus may conveniently be separated into three sections:

- The Deliverance (chapters 1-18).
- The Covenant (chapters 19-24).
- The Tabernacle (chapters 25-40).

Beginning with darkness and gloom, a people enslaved, it ends with glory, a people freed, the divine presence in their midst.

The Deliverance

The extraordinary birthrate of the Israelites caused fear among the Egyptians which brought suffering upon God's people. Pharaoh's command to destroy all Hebrew male newborns was contravened by the midwives, Shiphrah and Puah, because they "feared God" (Exodus 1:17). Pharaoh subsequently ordered all male newborns to be "cast into the river" (Exodus 1:22).

A concise personal history of Moses explains the manner in which he was "cast into the river" as a babe, the divine overruling so he was delivered, placed in the care of his mother, yet educated as the son of an Egyptian princess. When forty years of age Moses was placed in danger by defending his brethren. His resulting flight brought him in contact with Jethro, priest of Midian, whose daughter Zipporah he espoused.

After a second forty-year period, while tending the flocks of his father-in-law, the angel of Yahweh (Jehovah) appeared to Moses in a burning bush, commissioning him to deliver God's oppressed people. Though given the most positive assurances of divine providence and power to perform miracles, Moses was reluctant. This is understandable since there was no recorded precedent, Moses apparently being the first to be given such a commission and such power.

"And Moses said unto the Lord, O my Lord, I am not eloquent, neither heretofore, nor since thou hast spoken unto thy servant: but I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue" (Exodus 4:10). Stephen indicated Moses was "mighty in words" (Acts 7:22), so by "slow tongue" Moses probably meant he had lost proficiency in the Egyptian language from forty years of nonuse.

God acquiesced to Moses' reluctance and allowed his brother Aaron be his spokesperson. Pharaoh, however, far from submitting, made the yoke more grievous and refused to let the people go. Then God, through Moses and Aaron, brought on ten devastating plagues which convinced Pharaoh of divine omnipotence and compelled him to free the people.

Afterward many miracles were performed on behalf of God's redeemed people—the pillar of cloud by day and of fire by night, the deliverance from Pharaoh's army at the Red Sea, bringing water out of a rock, providing manna from heaven and great flocks of quails for meat, and victory over the Amalekites. Then, three months following their departure from Egypt, the Israelites camped in the wilderness of Sinai.

Estimating the number of people involved to be two million (Exodus 12:37), one "omer" of manna per person (Exodus 16:16) would result in 125,000 bushels gathered each day (according to the McClintock and Strong Cyclopedia, 16 omers = 1 bushel). A typical railway freight car carries 3,500 bushels. To deliver the amount of manna gathered each day would require a train of 36 cars, even greater if waste was a factor, and double on the day before Sabbath.

The Covenant

At Sinai God manifested himself to his people in an alarming display of divine majesty. However, their deliverance from slavery did not give them either right or fitness to draw near to their holy God: "And the Lord said unto Moses, Go down, charge the people, lest they break through unto the Lord to gaze, and many of them perish" (Exodus 19:21).

Because of the fear of the people God delivered his law and covenant to Moses as mediator. Subsequently, by sprinkling the blood of sacrificial animals, God's covenant with Israel was ratified and the people sanctified. Then, to the very people who were warned against daring to draw near to God, the command was given, "Let them make Me a sanctuary that I may dwell among them" (Exodus 25:8).

The Tabernacle

God gave detailed instructions for the construction and appointments of his dwelling place, the tabernacle, as well as for the preparation of a priesthood. This work, however, was delayed by Israel's idolatry with a golden calf, the displeasure of God, and the death of the rebels by the swords of the Levites.

The book concludes with the tabernacle filled and encompassed with divine glory—God dwelling in the midst of his redeemed people.

Lessons

The apostle Paul testified there are lessons in the events associated with Israel's exodus: "Now all these things happened unto them [the Israelites] for ensamples: and they are written for our [the Church's] admonition, upon whom the ends [purposes] of the world [age] are come" (1 Corinthians 10:11). Below is a limited appraisal of a few of those lessons.

Exodus 12—A Purchased People

That the Passover was an "ensample" was made evident by the apostle Paul: "Christ our passover is sacrificed for us [the Church]" (1 Corinthians 5:7). Jesus died at the "ninth hour," 3:00 p.m., the time at which the Passover lambs were slain in Egypt, and thus fulfilled the type.

"And ye shall keep it [the lamb] up until the fourteenth day of the same month: and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening [between the two evenings (3:00 p.m.)]," (Exodus 12:6, margin). Through the "blood" of the antitypical lamb God purchased the "Church of the Firstborn" (Hebrews 12:23) to be his servants, just as he hallowed Israel's firstborn who were later replaced by the Levites (Exodus 13:2; Numbers 3:12,13).

"Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Spirit hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he [God] hath purchased with his own [lamb's] blood" (Acts 20:28).

"But ye [the Church] are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar [purchased] people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him [God] who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous [*Shekinah*] light" (1 Peter 2:9, margin). This purchased people, a predestined people (Romans 8:29,30), the Church of the Firstborn, will serve the heavenly Father as a spiritual priesthood (1 Peter 2:5).

Exodus 19 — An Earthly Priesthood

God's destiny for his earthly creation is certain and will be glorious. "But glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile" (Romans 2:10). Through a resurrection of the dead, humanity will have an opportunity for the "glory" and "honour" of eternal life on earth (1Corinthians 15:21,22); but, as Paul declared, the Jew will be in the forefront. This was the promise God made Israel through Moses.

"Now therefore, if [when—*im*, #518] ye [people of Israel] will obey unto my [God's] voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people; for all the earth is mine: and ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests and an holy nation [a nation set apart for sacred service]" (Exodus 19:5,6). "Holy" is rendered from *qadosh*, #6918, meaning holy, sacred, set apart for sacred service.

This role for Israel was manifest in the divine design from the very beginning of God's relationship. "For thou [people of Israel] art an holy people unto the LORD thy God: the LORD thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth" (Deuteronomy 7:6).

God unconditionally chose Israel to be a "special people," a people set apart and "above all people." Following this definitive preamble, God declared the preordained consequence of this election: "Wherefore it shall come to pass, if [because] ye [people of Israel] hearken to these judgments, and keep, and do them, that the LORD thy God shall keep unto thee the covenant and the mercy which he sware unto thy fathers" (Deuteronomy 7:12). Some translators change God's promise by rendering *eqeb* (#6118) "if" instead of "because," making it conditional instead of unconditional. (See ASV and NASB for the proper thought.)

God decreed there will be a time "when" Israel will hearken to him. This divinely chosen people will be obedient! Israel, as a nation, is predestined to be a "holy" people! "And ye [Israel] shall be holy unto me: for I the LORD am holy, and have severed you from other people, that ye should be mine" (Leviticus 20:26). As a nation Israel will "obey" their God; and, "when" they do, they will serve him as a "holy" nation, a nation "set apart for sacred service."

The prophet Ezekiel made evident the time "when" Israel will be obedient: "For I [God] will take you [Israel] from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land ... I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them. And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God" (Ezekiel 36:24-28).

Just as with the church, Israel's predestination does not apply to individuals. It concerns the aggregate, the sum. Israel, as a nation, will be God's servant and his holy people. The individual Jew, however, is not predestined to share in this divine purpose. God will not

violate the free will of his creatures, and will not have any serve him who is unwilling. The choice is the individual's to make. "And if it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, choose you this day whom ye will serve ... but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord" (Joshua 24:15).

Exodus 24 — Making a Covenant

As explained by the writer of the epistle to the Hebrews, the making of the Law Covenant was a type, a shadow, of the making of the New Covenant. "Of a new covenant he [Jesus] is mediator, that, death having come, for redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant [Mosaic], those called [God's earthly people (Hosea 11:1; Isaiah 54:5,6)] may receive the promise of the age-during inheritance, for where a covenant is, the death of the covenant-victim to come in is necessary, for a covenant over dead victims is steadfast, since it is no force at all when the covenant-victim liveth, whence not even the first apart from blood hath been initiated, for every command having been spoken, according to law, by Moses, to all the people, having taken the blood of the calves and goats, with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop, he both the book itself and all the people did sprinkle, saying, 'This is the blood of the covenant that God enjoined unto you'" (Hebrews 9:15-20, Young's Literal). It has been said the common rendering of this text results in "hopeless obscurity." (See Wilson's *Emphatic Diaglott*; Vincent's *Word Studies in the New Testament*, p. 486; and Vine's *Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*, p. 623.)

Jesus made reference to this rite of covenant making when he passed the cup of wine to his apostles: "Drink ye all of it; for this is my blood of the new testament [covenant], which is shed for many for the remission of sins" (Matthew 26:27,28). One of the more serious errors introduced by translators is the use of "testament" for *diatheke*, #1242. Its use in the Septuagint leaves no question it should be rendered "covenant."

The expression "blood of the covenant" refers to the blood of the sacrificial animals ("covenant-victims"), the blood sprinkled to ratify a covenant (Exodus 24:6-8; Hebrews 9:16-20). This sprinkling typified the process by which God's heavenly priesthood is "made perfect" through suffering as "covenant-victims" (Hebrews 2:10; 5:8,9; 9:25,26). Only those of the Church of the Firstborn (Hebrews 12:23) are to be of that priesthood (1Peter 2:5,9). Only they are to be "able ministers" of the New Covenant (2 Corinthians 3:6).

In the night of the first Passover all firstborn in Egypt were in jeopardy of death (Exodus 11:4-6; 12:12,13,23), so only the firstborn required the protection of blood. In antitype, only those who are of the Church of the Firstborn are asked to partake of the cup, the blood of the New Covenant, and only they are in jeopardy during the antitypical Passover night (1 Corinthians 15:30).

All who partake of Jesus' cup are the "covenant-victims" that make the New Covenant. "Gather my saints [the Church] together unto me; those that have made a covenant with me [my covenant] by sacrifice" (Psalms 50:5, corrected). The Hebrew *berit*, #1285, with

the first person singular suffix, appears 52 times in the Bible. In English translations it is rendered "my covenant" 51 times [KJV, ASV]. Only in Psalms 50:5 is it inappropriately rendered "covenant with me."

When the last covenant-victims to drink of Jesus' cup have presented their "bodies a living sacrifice" (Romans 12:1) and have been "faithful unto death" (Revelation 2:10), the New Covenant will be ratified. Then the promises of that covenant to the "house of Israel" and the "house of Judah," God's earthly priesthood, will come to fruition (Jeremiah 31:31-34).

Exodus 24—A Festive Gathering

At first, after the arrival at Mount Sinai, Moses alone as mediator of the covenant was allowed to come near. This changed, however, following the ratification of the covenant by the sprinkling of the blood of the covenant on the people (the elders presumably representing the whole congregation of Israel). On that day Aaron, two of his sons, and seventy elders ascended the mountain along with Moses. The day before it would have been death for them to "break through to gaze." But on that day "they saw God." And such was their privilege due to the blood of the covenant, "they did eat and drink" in the divine presence. "Then went up Moses, and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel: and they saw the God of Israel ... And upon the nobles of the children of Israel he laid not his hand: also they saw God, and did eat and drink" (Exodus 24:9-11).

This gathering on the mount following the sprinkling of the blood of the covenant was, no doubt, in the mind of the writer of Hebrews when he used the expression "festive gathering." "But ye [the Church] are come unto mount Sion ... To the general assembly [festive gathering] and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all" (Hebrews 12:22,23). "General assembly" is rendered from *paneguris*, #3831, a word that denotes a public festival. (See translations by Weymouth, Montgomery, and Phillips, as well as the Berkeley version.)

The gathering on Mount Sinai dramatically prefigured the future "festive gathering" on Mount Zion God purposes for his creation. Moses represented Jesus as mediator of the New Covenant (Galatians 3:19,20; 1Timothy 2:5). Aaron represented Jesus as the antitypical Melchizedek, High Priest of the New Covenant (Hebrews 6:20). Perhaps the sons of Aaron here represented God's two priesthoods: Nadab, the elder, picturing the earthly priesthood (Exodus 19:6), Israel (also shown by Cain, Ishmael, Esau, Manasseh); Abihu, the younger, picturing the spiritual priesthood (Hebrews 3:1; 1 Peter 2:5,9), the Church (also shown by Abel, Isaac, Jacob, Ephraim). Plausibly then, the 70 elders, standing in for Israel, represented the rest of humanity (Isaiah 2:2,3; Jeremiah 31:27; Ezekiel 36:37,38).

The followers of Jesus will be gathered with him "in the air" (1Thessalonians 4:17); they will eat and drink at his table (Luke 22:30); and, as he promised, they will drink of a new cup (Matthew 26:29). "And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb [Jesus] stood on the mount Sion,

and with him an hundred forty and four thousand [the Church], having his Father's name written in their foreheads" (Revelation 14:1).

Israel's part in this gathering at Zion was foretold by the prophet Jeremiah: "Therefore they [people of Israel] shall come and sing in the height of Zion, and shall flow together to the goodness of the LORD, for wheat, and for wine, and for oil, and for the young of the flock and of the herd: and their soul shall be as a watered garden; and they shall not sorrow any more at all" (Jeremiah 31:12). Under the Law the grain, wine, oil, and young of the flock, made up the tithe the people were to eat and drink before their God (Deuteronomy 14:23, 26).

Ultimately God's human creation, under the tutelage of his two priesthoods, will join this gathering on "Mount Zion" (Isaiah 2:3; 35:10) and will eat of the "tree of life" and drink of the "water of life" (Revelation 22:1-17) in God's "watered garden," Israel (Isaiah 58:11; Jeremiah 31:12; Ezekiel 36:35). This greater gathering that God has in store for his creation will indeed be festive!

Exodus 29—Priesthood Sanctification

The Greek noun *telos* (#5056) is frequently translated "end." Just as with the English "end," however, *telos* has a broad range of meaning. It may signify the aim, purpose, or goal of an action; the final issue, result, or completion of a process. In the Septuagint the family of words associated with *telos* and its verb *teleioo* was used to describe the consecration (sanctification) process of the Aaronic priesthood. The priest had his hands filled (*teleioo o cheir*) with portions of the slaughtered ram of consecration (*teleiosis*).

The writer of Hebrews, following the Septuagint, used this word family to describe the developmental process of the Melchizedek priesthood. Just as it was necessary for Jesus, the head, to be "made perfect" (*teleioo*) as a sympathetic priest (Hebrews 4:15), so too must all who aspire to be "like him," and who are to be his body members (Romans 12:5). The writer asserted this process, as typified by the consecration rite of the Aaronic priesthood, was also prefigured by the sprinkling of the blood of sacrificial "victims" during covenant ratification (Exodus 24), as well as on Atonement Day (Leviticus 16). All who are to be of the heavenly priesthood (Hebrews 3:1) must be "made perfect" through suffering, the process pictured by the sprinkling of blood (Hebrews 9:25,26). "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the [elect's] [spirit unto obedience, and [namely] sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 1:2).

On the Day of Atonement, year after year, the Aaronic high priest entered the Most Holy to sprinkle blood upon and before the ark of the covenant. This foreshadowed the ministry of Jesus (Hebrews 9:25,26), who as the antitypical High Priest, suffered once (for 3 years). The mercy seat symbolized Jesus, as the head; the ark, on which the mercy seat rested, represented the church as the body, Jesus' footstool. "... in Christ Jesus whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation [mercy seat] through faith in his blood, to declare

his righteousness for the remission [passing over] of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God" (Romans 3:24,25, see Diaglott).

"But this man [Jesus], after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; from henceforth expecting till his enemies [the church, formerly enemies] be made his footstool [through conversion]" (Hebrews 10:12,13). Texts affirming the body members were enemies before becoming Jesus' "footstool" include Romans 5:10; Matthew 9:13; 10:36; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11; Colossians 1:21.

Thus, the sprinkling of blood on Atonement Day, as well as the sprinkling of blood to ratify the Law Covenant, were physical metaphors. Both were pictures of the required developmental process, the sanctification, or setting apart, of a spiritual priesthood—a process also prefigured by the consecration rite of the Aaronic priesthood. All who partake of God's "heavenly calling" must learn obedience and be made perfect just as did Jesus, the head.

"Make perfect" does not refer to the physical organism but to the development of a "holy" priest. At his birth Jesus was a perfect human organism. The process of being made perfect as a priest during his 3 year ministry had nothing to do with that God-given perfection (the perfection he gave to replace that which was lost by Adam). It is critical to an understanding of God's plans that this difference be carefully maintained.

After the work of developing God's spiritual priesthood is complete and all have been "made perfect," after the New Covenant has been ratified and the veil is removed from the eyes of the Jews (yet another lesson in Exodus, see Exodus 34:33-35 ASV, NASB; 2 Corinthians 3:11-14); then Israel will enter into the new arrangement and begin its work as God's earthly priesthood. All of the creation will come to the "festive gathering" and will know their gracious Creator, the "end" for which both priesthoods were elected. God will be "all in all" (1 Corinthians 15:28) and he will dwell in the midst of his creation!

Leviticus

The Offerings of the Law

If any man of you bring an offering unto the Lord.—Leviticus 1:2

David Rice

Leviticus, the third book of Moses, records the regulations from the Lord for the various offerings and sacrifices of the Law. The book of Exodus ended with the construction of the tabernacle, and the instructions given in Leviticus were received by Moses from God who "spake unto him out of the tabernacle of the congregation" (Leviticus 1:1), evidently by a voice from above the mercy seat (compare Numbers 7:89).

Portions of this book, namely chapters 8, 9, and 16, are well known because they are treated in Tabernacle Shadows. Chapter 25 is well known for its account of the law of Jubilee, and chapter 26 for its warning of "seven times" punishment if Israel neglected the commands of the Law. Chapter 14 receives attention from time to time. It is about the cleansing of lepers and pictures the cleansing of mankind from the leprosy of sin. Chapter 23 is generally consulted at memorial season for its laws concerning Passover. Also the death of Nadab and Abihu is familiar to many, recorded in the tenth chapter, though not often observed is that this episode, a continuation of chapter 9, occurred just one day after the priesthood was inaugurated.

The first seven chapters, however, are not so frequently considered. These contain all the detailed ordinances of the Law for the four basic kinds of offerings the Israelites presented to God: burnt offerings, meal offerings (meat offerings in the King James Version, chapter 2), peace offerings (consecration, vow and thank offerings were varieties of peace offerings), and sin offerings (guilt and trespass offerings were forms of sin offering). The first three are described in one chapter each, and the fourth in chapters 4:1 to 6:8.

Then, curiously, the offerings are repeated (the last two in reversed sequence): the burnt offering (6:9-13), meal offering (6:14-23), sin offering (6:24 to 7:10), and peace offering (7:11-21). This "second pass" through these offerings gives details pertinent to the priests, and specifies some differences in how the offerings are presented when the offerer is a priest rather than another Israelite. Modern translations, such as the NIV and some editions of the NASB insert helpful subheads which make these segments much clearer to the reader.

The seventh chapter finishes with three segments. It proscribes the eating of fat and blood (verses 22-27), explains the priests' share of the offerings (verses 28-36), and ends in a brief summary of these seven chapters (verses 37 and 38).

Burnt Offerings

The broadest type of offering an Israelite could present was a burnt offering. It could be either from the herd (cattle), the flock (sheep or goat), or a bird (dove or pigeon). If from the herd or flock, it must be a male, and in every case evidently a young animal. The animal was presented at the door of the tabernacle, killed by the offerer on the north side of the altar, then skinned (flayed), and the hide given to the officiating priest for his use (Leviticus 7:8). The blood was sprinkled on the sides of the altar. The carcass was cut in pieces, the inwards and legs washed with water, and all the pieces with the head laid on the wood on the altar and consumed with fire, as a "sweet savor unto the Lord."

In these two aspects—that the offering was fully consumed, and that it ascended to God as a sweet savour—lie the meaning of this offering. It represents a full, complete yielding of one's life to God, resulting in a full acceptance by God as a sweet aroma of devotion.

This kind of offering is referred to explicitly by the apostle Paul in two cases. "Walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour" (Ephesians 5:2). "Thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumphal procession in Christ and through us spreads everywhere the fragrance of this knowledge of him. For we are to God the aroma of Christ among those who are being saved" (2Corinthians 2:14,15, NIV). It is probable, also, that this is the kind of offering referred to in Romans 12:1, "present your bodies a living sacrifice," and in Revelation 6:9 where the "souls of them that were slain" are represented as ashes beneath the altar.

Leviticus 1:4 says the offering "shall be accepted for [the offerer] to make atonement for him." That is, it brings the offerer into harmony with God through whole-hearted devotion to God. This is not a sin offering, which brings atonement in a legal sense, but it is predicated upon a previous sin offering having established the basis for reconciliation. In instances such as the ceremonies of Leviticus 8, 9, and 16, the burnt offering always followed a sin offering. In the case of the Israelites presenting burnt offerings to God during the year, they were acceptable because of the previous cleansing of the Day of Atonement offerings. (For this reason such burnt offerings are sometimes referred to as "after Day of Atonement" offerings.)

God's "acceptance" is specially expressed in these offerings ascending directly to God as a sweet aroma. This is unlike the usual sin offerings which were eaten or "accepted" by the priests, or the peace (fellowship) offerings, consumed in part by the priests and in part by the offerer. Thus the concept of God's "acceptance" has become uniquely attached to burnt offerings. This emphasis is illustrated by the use of a burnt offering on the third day after the Passover. On the 16th of Nisan, when the first sheaf of the barley harvest was waved before the Lord (representing Jesus' resurrection as the firstfruit from the dead—1 Corinthians 15:20), a lamb as a burnt offering was offered, as though to show that the resurrection of Christ from the dead on Nisan 16 was the evidence by which God manifested his acceptance of Jesus as the Passover lamb sacrificed on Nisan 14. Thus it intimates God's acceptance of a previous offering.

The burnt offerings in Leviticus 8, 9, and 16, which followed the sin offerings, may carry a similar thought. They show that the offering of Christ (and the church) is a wholly devoted offering, a sweet aroma to God, evidencing his acceptance of the offerings just preceding.

Meal Offerings

A meal offering (Leviticus 2) was a "bloodless" offering, and in this way is distinct from the other offerings of these seven chapters. "The meaning involves neither of the main ideas of sacrifice—the atonement for sin and the self-dedication to God. It takes them for granted and is based on them. Accordingly, the [meal] offering ... seems always to have been a subsidiary offering, needing to be introduced by the sin-offering, which represented the one idea, and forming an appendage to the burnt-offering, which represented the other" (*McClintock and Strong Cyclopedia*, "Meat-offering").

Burnt offerings, sin offerings and peace offerings were evidently to be accompanied by meal offerings (Numbers 28:3-6; 6:14,15,17; Leviticus 9:4). Perhaps it is for this reason that after considering the widely observed burnt offering, Leviticus next considers the meal offering as a customary part of the former.

The meal offering was of "fine flour." Oil was poured on it, and together with frankincense it was presented to the priest. A handful of this offering, together with all the frankincense, was burned on the altar as "a memorial portion ... an offering made by fire, an aroma pleasing to the Lord" (verse 2, NIV). The remainder was classified a "most holy" offering, eaten by Aaron and his sons together with unleavened bread in the court, or in the case a priest was the offerer it was wholly burned and thus ascended to God (Leviticus 6:16-19,23).

The meal offering could also be presented cooked. It could be baked in an oven (unleavened cakes mixed with oil, or unleavened wafers anointed with oil), cooked on a griddle (unleavened mixed with oil, then broken into pieces and anointed with oil), or fried (with oil). Or it could be presented as "green ears of corn dried by the fire, even corn beaten out of full ears" (verse 14), anointed with oil. In each case a portion was burned on the altar with all the frankincense.

This offering of flour, as the main support of life and nourishment, evidently represented to the Israelites their thanks and appreciation to God for the life sustaining bounty they received from him. "Riches and honor come of thee ... in thine hand it is to make great, and to give strength unto all. Now therefore, our God, we thank thee, and praise thy glorious name ... for all things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee" (1 Chronicles 29:12-14).

To spiritual Israel it represents our acknowledgement that all we have is from God, our favors and blessings, our sustenance, our hopes in Christ. For this we offer back to God a token of what we have received, and the frankincense of praise. This recognition, and this spirit, should attend all our sacrifices and offerings to God.

Two things were specifically forbidden—leaven and honey. "For ye shall burn no leaven, nor any honey, in any offering of the Lord made by fire" (verse 11). This pictures that God will not accept in sacrifice anything sinful (we must be justified), and though mixed with oil, the influence of the holy spirit, we do not sacrifice "honey" which pictures the sweetness of our heavenly call.

Peace Offerings

A worshipper could choose from a wide variety of peace offerings. The offering could be of the herd or flock, male or female, but as always, "without blemish." It was slain near the door of the tabernacle, and as with the burnt offering the blood sprinkled about the altar. The fat and purifying organs were burned on the burnt offering which was on the wood, where it ascended to God, "the food of the offering made by fire unto the Lord" (Leviticus 3:11).

The specification that "ye eat neither fat nor blood" in Leviticus 3:17 implies that the residual meat of the animal was eaten by the worshipper, but this vital information is not explicitly affirmed until chapter 7. If the peace offering was for thanksgiving, he was to eat it that day, just as we should not defer to express our thanksgiving to God with rejoicing. If it were a vow or voluntary offering, he had two days to consume it—perhaps to indicate the completeness of his vow, allowing more if not all to be consumed during the extra day. (Any remainder was disposed of by burning.)

Leviticus 7:19 (NIV or NASB) indicates that other clean persons could assist in consuming the meat also, but no one who was unclean. This offering was intended for those who were at peace with God, as a celebration of the benefits of fellowship they enjoyed. When sin, burnt, and peace offerings were given on one occasion (as in Leviticus 8 and 9), this sequence is observed: first the sin offering because atonement for sins is primary, then the burnt offering as we yield ourselves fully to God, third the peace offering, celebrating the benefits of our relationship of peace with God.

In this age the peace offerings pertain to those who have come into Christ and are thus at peace with God. "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God" (Romans 5:1,2). Paul refers to the thank offering, one form of peace offering, in Hebrews 13:15. "By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name."

A unique feature of the peace offering was the waving of a portion of the offering before the Lord. Leviticus 7:30 specifies that the breast and the fat are waved before the Lord, the fat then burned upon the burnt offering on the altar, the breast given to the priests and consumed by their families. (It was not designated a "most holy" offering, for those could be eaten only by the priests.) The right shoulder (KJV verse 32) or thigh (NIV, NASB) were also allotted to the priests. Leviticus 7 does not include this element as part of the

wave offering, though it was included in the wave offering in the ceremonies of Leviticus 8 and 9.

The waving before the Lord represents our appreciative recognition of all our benefits, and in turn our thanks and consecrated devotion to him, much as the waving of the sheaf of firstfruits each year by the Israelites expressed their thanks to God for his bounty. In Leviticus 8, though not in Leviticus 7, the animal offered was termed a ram "of consecration." The Hebrew word for "consecrate" means literally "to fill," and the wave offering filled the hands of the offerer as it was waved before the Lord.

As this offering was consumed jointly by God (the "food" that ascended in flame), the offerer, and the priest, and even the offerer's friends and the priest's family, it signified the joyous participation—fellowship—by all parties in the blessings of our fellowship and peace with God. The NIV in fact renders the term "Fellowship Offering."

Sin Offerings

Sin offerings are the subject of Leviticus 4, and they cover sins of ignorance (as opposed to intentional, froward sin, for which punishment was administered). Sins by four categories of persons are discussed: priests, the congregation, rulers, and common people. As on the Day of Atonement there was a difference between priests and the people—the former required a bullock, the latter a goat as a sin offering—so here there are distinctions. If a priest sinned, or the congregation, they were to bring a bullock for a sin offering. If a ruler or common person sinned, he was to bring a goat for a sin offering, the status of the sinner making a difference in the animal offered for atonement.

These sin offerings were the usual offerings brought by the Israelites from time to time as they recognized a need for cleansing. The annual Day of Atonement sin offerings had atoned for their sins collectively, and these additional ones were a remembrancer of the annual ones, as though to suggest the sinner came in recognition of his need for continued forgiveness, bringing an offering to recognize his culpability in the matter, and that some sacrifice on his part was appropriate in the circumstance. It served to renew their standing based on the Day of Atonement offerings. In a similar way we have been atoned for by the blood of Christ, but as we recognize our slips and sins we too humbly request forgiveness, remembering the sacrifice of the past as the basis for our standing. The world, in the kingdom, will do the same.

We think, as others have suggested, that the priest represented a member of the church, and the congregation a congregation of the Lord's people during this age. In each case they brought a bullock for a sin offering. The ruler probably represented the leaders in the kingdom—the ancient worthies who though perfect in body may have slips through inexperience, and the common people any person during the kingdom. These brought a goat for a sin offering in remembrance of the application of the goat's blood in the Day of Atonement offerings.

The additional details seem to bear out this distinction. When a bullock was used, its blood was taken into the tabernacle and sprinkled before the veil, and some put on the horns of the golden altar. When a goat was used, its blood was used in the court, sprinkled before the door, and applied to the horns of the brazen altar. (In each case the excess blood was poured at the base of the brazen altar.) So in the Gospel age the blood is used in the holy, as the church is in the holy. In the kingdom the blood will be used in the court, as the world will be in the court.

In both cases the fat and internal purifying organs were burned on the altar in the court. But the carcass was handled differently. In the case of a bullock the carcass was burnt "without the camp" (verse 12); in the case of a goat the flesh was eaten by the priests. So in the Gospel age the offering is accepted by God (and hence ascends in flame), but during the kingdom the offerings of the people will be appropriated by the priests, the church.

The matter of the "congregation" is of special interest because the law stipulated for them in Leviticus 4, which pertained to the period in the wilderness, was different than the law in Numbers 15:24 which was to become effective "when ye come into the land" (verse 18). Then a goat for a sin offering was to be used rather than a bullock. The wilderness period, as compared to residing in the promised land, represented the Gospel age as compared to the kingdom. In the Gospel age the "congregation" is part of the church, in the kingdom the "congregation" is part of the world. We look back to the application of the bullock's blood, they will look back to the application of the goat's blood. Thus there is a difference in animals at different times.

Leviticus 5 outlines a variety of faults for which sin offerings should be offered, and the sinner was able to bring such offering as he could afford. In the same way when we now, or the world later, recognize a deficiency or slip, we offer according to our ability what we may as evidence of our contrition. Beginning with verse 14, and through chapter 6, "trespass" or "guilt" offerings are discussed. The difference between these and the former are evidently that these trespasses involved particular offenses (or sins of omission) with a greater degree of willfulness, and which have caused material damage to the "Lord" (as by neglect of "the holy things") or a neighbor (as by deceit or misrepresentation). Offerings are prescribed, but the offerer additionally was required to make restitution for the loss, and add 20% extra as a penalty.

Thus should we—and the world in the kingdom—concern ourselves for our transgressions, applying to God for forgiveness, and making restitution, and even more, to those injured or disadvantaged by our conduct.

Numbers

In the Wilderness

These are the journeys of the children of Israel.—Numbers 33:1

Jeffrey Earl

The book of Numbers gets its title from the English translation of the Greek Septuagint version of the Old Testament. In the Hebrew Bible the title is "In the Wilderness," which is more fitting since only a few chapters deal with the actual numbering of the Israelites. The time period covered by the book is about 38 years starting from the second year after the exodus from Egypt. It includes the journey to Canaan, the years of wilderness wanderings after Israel's lack of faith in God, and ends with the journey back to Canaan prior to taking possession of the land.

To get a better perspective of the book of Numbers, rather than summarize events strictly by sequential chapters we will group each of the "sub-topics" into the five major themes outlined below. After that the numbering of the tribes, the vow of the Nazirite, and Balaam's fourth oracle will be discussed further.

Numbering the Tribes of Israel

1. The first numbering is taken "in the second year" after the exodus from Egypt and includes all the males 20 years old and over with the exception of the tribe of Levi (chapter 1).
2. The placement of the 12 tribes around the tent of meeting is specified with Judah on the favored east part of the camp. The order of the tribes when the camp is moved is also specified—Judah in the lead and Dan at the end, acting as a rear guard. The meaning of the sounding of the two silver trumpets is also described (chapters 2 and 10).
3. The Levites and the first-born males one month and older are numbered. The Levites are taken in exchange for the firstborn of the other tribes; 273 more first-born than Levites are redeemed for five shekels each. The Levites are set apart to assist the Aaronic priests (chapter 3).
4. The males aged 30 to 50 from the Levite families of Kohath, Gershon, and Merari are numbered and are given specific assignments in the tabernacle (chapter 4).
5. A second census is taken before the Israelites enter the promised land; the Levites are again numbered separately (chapter 26).

Levites, Worship, Vows and Atonement

1. The guilty are to confess their sin and make full restitution to the victim; the procedure for determining guilt for secret adultery with no witnesses (chapter 5).
2. Requirements for the Nazirite vow of full consecration to God (chapter 6).
3. The offerings from the leaders of Israel after the consecration of the tabernacle and altar (chapter 7).
4. Procedures for the cleansing of the Levites, their consecration, and separation from the rest of Israel; the responsibilities of Aaron and his sons and the other Levites in and around the tabernacle; the Levites are to work in the tabernacle only from age 25 to 50 (chapters 8 and 18).
5. Instructions on how and when to keep the Passover and the procedures if someone is unclean at the time of the Passover. The variability of time the cloud would cover the tabernacle and when to move the camp if the cloud was "taken up" (chapter 9).
6. Offerings when entering the land and the sin offerings (chapter 15).
7. Procedures for the purification of someone who has been defiled by a corpse (chapter 19).
8. Presentation of offerings for various occasions and times of the year (New Year, Day of Atonement, Feast of Booths, etc.) (chapters 18 and 29).
9. God's commands about vows made by men and women (chapter 30).
10. The distinction made between murder (to be put to death) and manslaughter (to be sent to a city of refuge) (chapter 35).

Complaints and Rebellions

1. The Israelites complain about their "misfortunes"; God sends fire and consumes some outlying parts of the camp (perhaps as a warning?) since no deaths are recorded. The Israelites complain about eating manna and long for meat; Moses asks for help from God to deal with the people and is given 70 elders; God provides quail but many overeat and die (chapter 11).
2. Miriam and Aaron speak against Moses; God tells them that he speaks to Moses directly, not in dreams as he does to prophets; God then strikes Miriam with leprosy (chapter 12).
3. After accepting the report from 10 of the 12 spies that went into Canaan that the people of that land cannot be defeated, the unfaithful Israelites are sentenced to wander in the

wilderness for 40 years; the 10 spies die in a plague. When the Israelites try to enter the land without God's blessing they are soundly defeated by the Canaanites and Amalekites (chapter 14).

4. Rebellion of Korah, Dathan, Abiram, On, and 250 chosen men; God causes an earthquake that swallows them up with their families. Israel complains against Moses and a plague is sent by God—14,700 die; Moses' intercession with God stops the plague (chapter 16).

5. To stop the rebellion by Israel and to prove through whom God speaks, a rod is taken from each of the 12 tribes and placed in the tent of meeting; Aaron's is the only rod that buds (chapter 17).

6. Complaints by the Israelites against Moses and Aaron because of a water shortage; Moses strikes the rock twice instead of speaking to it as directed by God and is denied entry into the promised land. Aaron dies and Eleazar is made high priest (chapter 20).

7. The Israelites speak out against God and Moses when bypassing the land of Edom; God sends "fiery serpents"—many are bitten and die until Moses prays to God on behalf of the people; a bronze serpent is made and placed on a pole—the people that were bitten look on it and are saved (chapter 21).

8. Israelites mix with the "daughters of Moab" and are lured into idolatry; 24,000 are killed by God as a result. All the chiefs of Israel who worshipped Baal are hanged as punishment. Phineas (son of Eleazar the high priest) and his descendants are given "a perpetual priesthood" by covenant (chapter 25).

The Lands Traversed and Their Inhabitants

1. One spy from each of the tribes is sent out to spy out the land of Canaan for 40 days; Caleb and Joshua state that the people can be overcome—the other ten spies say they saw giants in the land that cannot be overcome by Israel (chapter 13).

2. God gives Israel victory over the Canaanites dwelling in the Negeb; Israel defeats the Amorites and Bashan, taking possession of their lands (chapter 21).

3. Balak, king of Moab, hires Balaam to curse the Israelites, but God "persuades" him to bless Israel; sacrifices are made on seven altars in three different locations with Balaam uttering a blessing to Israel at each; a fourth oracle of prophecy is made by Balaam (chapters 22-24).

4. Israel is told to smite the Midianites (chapter 25); 12,000 men are sent to war against the Midianites; Balaam is killed; the spoils of war are purified (chapter 31).

5. The listing of the Israelites' itinerary during their wilderness wanderings. Israel is told to drive out all the inhabitants of Canaan and to destroy all idols—Canaanites who remain will be thorns in their sides (chapter 33).

Dividing the Land

1. There is no inheritance in the land by the Levites; the Israelites are tithed to support the Levites (chapter 18).

2. The size of the inheritance for each of the tribes is to be proportional to the population of the tribe (chapter 26).

3. Provision for an inheritance to be given to the daughters or other relatives if there is no son to receive the inheritance (chapter 27).

4. Reuben, Gad, and half of Manasseh given land east of the Jordan, but they agree to fight with the rest of the tribes to subdue the people in the land west of the Jordan (chapter 32).

5. Israel's boundaries are defined when they are given the promised land (chapter 34).

6. The people of Israel are to give the Levites cities and surrounding land to live in—they are scattered throughout Israel; arrangements for the six cities of refuge for those convicted of manslaughter (chapter 35).

7. There is to be no transfer of property between the tribes or tribal intermarriage if a woman is an heiress (chapter 36).

Numbering the 12 Tribes

About the same number of Israelite males 20 years and older were counted at the first census in the second year after the Exodus and the second census near the end of the 40 years of wandering the wilderness: 603,550 vs. 601,730. The Scriptures state that all over the age of 20 who "murmured against me" except Joshua and Caleb died during the 40 years in the wilderness (Numbers 14:29,30). Since this age distinction is the same as when the males were numbered, it is an open question whether all the women 20 and over were also condemned to die in the wilderness.

The tribe of Simeon seems to have been the most rebellious. While most tribes lost or gained no more than 10,000 (males over 20), Simeon's numbers went from nearly 60,000 at the first census to just over 22,000 at the second, a loss of about 38,000. Perhaps this was prophesied in Genesis 49:5-7, when it states "Simeon and Levi are brothers; weapons of violence are their swords ... O my spirit, be not joined to their company. Cursed be their anger, for it is fierce ... I will divide them in Jacob and scatter them in Israel." Simeon is not even mentioned in Deuteronomy 33 when Moses gives his blessing to the

tribes of Israel. Perhaps Simeon was the first tribe to be corrupted, scattered, and absorbed by the heathen people in their portion of the land given them (south of Judah).

Levi is also cursed in Genesis 49 and is subsequently given no inheritance in the land but was provided with cities that were scattered throughout Israel. The Levites increased only from 22,000 in the first census to 23,000 in the second census. Perhaps their numbers were reduced during the rebellion of Korah (great-grandson of Levi) and the 250 "chosen, well-known" Levites. Korah, his family, the 250, and his other supporters from the tribe of Levi were destroyed by God in an earthquake.

It should be noted that there are grave consequences when a numbering of the tribes of Israel is done without God's command or done so with a proud heart. In 2 Samuel 24, King David was punished with a "pestilence upon Israel" for numbering the men of fighting age when he was not authorized by God to do so. Even the commander of his army, Joab, knew that David was being prideful in numbering his men, and was possibly fearful of the consequences.

The Vow of the Nazirite

Nazirite comes from the word Nazir, and means a separated person, one devoted and consecrated to the service of God. The vow of the Nazirite is described in Numbers 6:1-21 and includes the following: 1) Cannot drink wine or strong drink or even consume grapes in any form (including the seeds); 2) Cannot shave or cut his hair; 3) Cannot go near a dead body, including anyone from his family. If he makes accidental contact with a dead body, he must shave his head and present sacrifices to the priest for a sin, burnt, and guilt offering. The priest also must make an atonement for him. He must then start the vow over again. When the time of his separation, or vow, has been completed, he must present sacrifices to the priest for a sin, burnt, peace, cereal, drink, and wave offering to God.

Those throughout the Bible that took the Nazirite vow included Samuel (1 Samuel 1:11), Samson (Judges 13-16), Jeremiah (Jeremiah 1:5; 7:29), John the Baptist (Luke 1:15), and possibly the apostle Paul participated in the vow with others (Acts 18:18; 21:23,24). Of those, Samuel, Samson and John the Baptist took the vow for life. Jesus was not a Nazirite since he both drank wine and touched the dead, but he was certainly devoted to the service of his Father in heaven.

The Nazirite may be a picture of true Christians in that they are to be separated from the world and by full consecration are dedicated to the service of God. A difference between the consecration of the Jew as a Nazirite and the full consecration of Christians is that the Nazirite was promised earthly blessings as a reward for faithfulness, and Christians are promised spiritual blessings if they overcome "the world, the flesh, and the devil," "present their bodies as a living sacrifice," and "remain faithful unto death."

Balaam's Fourth Oracle

Another interesting part of Numbers is Balaam's fourth oracle. This oracle is given in Numbers 24:15-19 and says "a star shall come forth out of Jacob, and a scepter shall rise out of Israel; it shall crush the forehead of Moab ... Edom shall be dispossessed." This is a prophecy that appears to have three fulfillments—two literal and one symbolic. The first was a defeat of Moab and Edom during King David's reign, the second when Israel will defeat the descendants of Moab and Edom in a future battle with them, and a third in which symbolic Edom, "Christendom," is finally overthrown.

The Moabites and Edomites (and also the Ammonites) were idol worshipers who populated the areas southeast and east of Israel. When Esau sold his birthright to Jacob and did not receive Isaac's blessing, his name was changed to Edom (Genesis 25:30), which means "red" (taken from the "red pottage" Jacob had made, Genesis 25:30). Furthermore, Esau married Canaanite women (Genesis 36:1,2,8,40-43) who "made life bitter for Isaac and Rebekah" (Genesis 26:34), probably at least partly due to their idol worship. Both of these actions would contribute to Esau not being in God's favor. Also, in Numbers 20:14-21, Edom refused Moses' pleas for safe passage through their land, even though Moses told them Israel would pay for any water they would use. Moab and Ammon were also not favored of God since they descended from the incestuous relationship between Lot and his two daughters (Genesis 19:30-36). Their descendants were also idol worshipers.

The "star ... out of Jacob" and the "scepter ... out of Israel" refer to those descending from the line of Jacob who would have the right to rule. This can be applied to both King David and Christ. The "star out of Jacob" could be connected to Matthew 2:2,9 when it refers to the birth of Jesus and the "wise men from the East" being guided by the "star in the east" which led them to the place where the child was located.

The first fulfillment of Balaam's fourth oracle occurred during the reign of King David when Israel defeated the Moabites and Edomites (2 Samuel 8:2,13,14). The Moabites that were not killed in battle were divided into thirds. Two-thirds were put to death and one-third became David's servants and paid him tribute. After he defeated Syria, David's army then slew 18,000 Edomites and made the rest his servants.

The second fulfillment is a reference to a future defeat and control of the peoples of Moab and Edom (and Ammon) by Israel with the guidance of Christ and is found in Isaiah 11:11-14 when "the Lord will extend his hand yet a second time to recover the remnant which is left of his people [Israel] ... they shall plunder the people of the east. They shall put forth their hand against Edom and Moab, and the Ammonites shall obey them." This area would be in what is now Jordan. In a reference after the defeat of those peoples, it is stated in Jeremiah 23:5-8 that "the days are coming ... when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land ... Israel will dwell securely."

The third fulfillment may be referenced in Genesis 49:10 when it says "The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until he [Christ] comes to whom it belongs; and to him shall be the obedience of the peoples." Psalms 110:2 also refers to this right to rule when it states "The Lord sends forth from Zion your mighty scepter. Rule in the midst of your foes." This line descending from Jacob is also mentioned in Isaiah 11:1-5 when the "shoot from the stump of Jesse" with "the spirit of counsel and might" will "smite the earth with the rod of his mouth," speaking of the kingdom and rulership of Christ over the earth.

Brother Russell suggests that Edom symbolizes "Christendom" or "The Christian World" because they sell their birthright of special advantages for "a mess of pottage," and misrepresent the true character of Christ for their own earthly gain. He suggests that symbolic Edom can be equated with symbolic Babylon in Revelation. Isaiah 63:1-4 is consistent with this. There Christ is described as he "that comes from Edom, in crimsoned garments," red from having trodden the winepress, an event which Revelation 14:18-20 associates with Christendom, the "vine of the earth."

The death of Balaam is recorded in Numbers 31:8, "Balaam also the son of Beor they slew with the sword," evidently because of his counsel to entice the men of Israel with the idolatrous women of Midian (Numbers 31:16). Jude 11 also seems to imply that Balaam was chiefly interested in prophesying for monetary gain, speaking of those who "abandon themselves for the sake of gain to Balaam's error." This can also be applied to the tendency of many in Christendom throughout this age to seek monetary gain and acclaim. Edom refusing Israel passage through their land (making them "go around") could symbolize Christendom's refusal to allow other doctrinal viewpoints, causing the true church to hide during the height of the Papacy, and to separate from Christendom from the late 1800s onward.

It is also interesting to note that in Jeremiah 48:1-46 Moab is described repeatedly as being "broken down," "destroyed," and "no longer a people," yet in verse 47 it is stated "Yet I will restore the fortunes of Moab in the latter days, says the Lord" implying the destruction is not final and complete. Also, in Jeremiah 49:1-5, Ammon is described similarly as becoming "a desolate mound," "burned with fire" and "laid waste," yet is restored in verse 6, "afterward I will restore the fortunes of the Ammonites."

The same is not true for Edom. Jeremiah 49:7-22 states that "he is no more," "Edom shall become a horror," "no man shall dwell there, no man shall sojourn there" and "at the sound of their fall the earth shall tremble." This is consistent with the symbology of Edom representing Christendom since their destruction will be final, known throughout the earth, and without restoration.

Deuteronomy

The Heart of the Mediator Revealed

Hear, O Israel ... you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might. And these words which I command you this day shall be upon your heart; and you shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. And you shall bind them as a sign upon your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. And you shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.—Deuteronomy 6:4-9, RSV

David Kahn

The Israelites had been wandering for 40 years. Finally they came before the Jordan, to the brink of the longed-for promised land. Moses knew he was shortly to die. The time spent in the wilderness as mediator between the Lord and the people had taught him many valuable lessons. He knew the heart of the Lord and of the people. He could see that the people's hearts were still rebellious and unprepared for the promises and responsibilities of their covenant with God.

In this day came his last opportunity to prepare their hearts to keep the law. What could he say to them? How could his words help them discern the Lord's providence and watchfulness so that they could appreciate and respond to this special covenant, a privilege which no other people in the world had? How could he prepare them for this day, fill them with awe and reverence, inspire them to love and serve the Lord and only the Lord with their whole lives and hearts, and then instruct them in all things needful?

The Book of Deuteronomy, named from a Greek word meaning the Second Law, is hardly a dry book of laws and statutes. The Jewish name for the book, *Debarim* (Hebrew meaning "words"), comes from the opening phrase "These are the words" and is a more appropriate title.

The book is a discourse by Moses to the Israelites on the east bank of the Jordan before they entered Canaan, and it reflects everything important Moses had in his heart and needed to tell: the love of God for the people, and the need for the people to love God. Indeed, if there is one central theme that can be drawn out, it is that the keeping of all the Law is needfully linked to the first commandment: to love the Lord with all the heart, soul, and strength. Without that love it would be impossible to satisfy the Law. At least twelve times in the book the people are instructed to love the Lord. The book contains the whole philosophical foundation of Jewish religion; a full description of the covenant relationship between the Lord and Israel. And it makes clear that love for the Lord is the appropriate response to his abounding favor toward his people.

Authorship and Later References

The orthodox view of Deuteronomy is that it was written by Moses except for some short narrative sections. Chapter 27 is referred to in Joshua 8:31-35, when Joshua carried out Moses' instructions to proclaim the blessings and curses of the Law at Mount Ebal and Mount Gerizim, which indicates the book was in existence at the time of Joshua. There are later references to the book also. Deuteronomy 24:16, "Fathers shall not be put to death for their children nor children for their fathers," is alluded to in 2 Kings 14:6; 2 Chronicles 25:4; Ezekiel 18:20; and Jeremiah 31:29,30. Jesus and Paul refer to passages in Deuteronomy as the words of Moses in Matthew 19:7,8; Mark 10:3,4; John 5:46,47; Acts 3:22 and 7:37; and Romans 10:19.

Some sections are clearly intended for a people living in a later time, such as the laws concerning kings in chapter 17, laws which Solomon failed to observe. Chapter 12 mentions a central place for offerings to the Lord, such as Jerusalem later became, centuries after Moses died.

Some time after 723 BC, when the northern kingdom fell to Assyria, remnants of the inhabitants joined in affinity with the southern kingdom in Jerusalem during the reign of Hezekiah, who effected a great reformation following the sins of king Ahaz. He is thought to have done some work on reorganizing and canonizing books of scripture, as may be intimated in Proverbs 25:1.

After Hezekiah died, his son Manasseh reintroduced idol worship and forced the reformers and their books into hiding. Later, in the reign of Manasseh's grandson Josiah, during renovation work in the temple in the 18th year of his reign, "Hilkiah the priest found a book of the law of the LORD given by Moses" (2Chronicles 34:14), which stimulated many further reforms. Many believe this book was Deuteronomy.

Synopsis

Moses expressed the philosophy of the Law in terms of a covenant agreement between the people and the Lord, stressing the consequences of obedience or disobedience: "If you will listen to these commandments and obey them faithfully, then the LORD your God will keep with you his covenant and his constant love just as he promised to your ancestors" (Deuteronomy 7:12).

The outline of the book is roughly similar to that of a treaty between a king of one state and another subject state, in a style typical of treaties made in that area of the ancient world, such as between the Hittites and Assyrians. Such treaties contain the following divisions:

1. A preface specifying the name of the ruler (Deuteronomy 1:3).
2. A list of past favors and kindnesses shown to the people (Deuteronomy 1:4 to 4:40).

3. The list of demands and expectations to be complied with (Deuteronomy 4:44 to 26:19).

4. Instructions to read the treaty to all the people (Deuteronomy 27:8).

5. Blessings for the obedient and curses for the disobedient (Deuteronomy 27-28).

This covenant with Israel was agreed to and ratified by the people (Exodus 19:8; Deuteronomy 26:17), and was thereafter inherited by their descendants.

Such was the all-encompassing nature of this covenant with God that the Israelites were forbidden to make covenants with other people, especially the people dwelling in Canaan (Deuteronomy 7:2). The reason is that these entanglements would carry with them conditions that might cause the Israelites to compromise their own laws, to tolerate idols in their land, or in some other way interfere with the Lord's overruling care.

Throughout the book Moses showed why the Lord deserves the people's love, and why it is necessary and appropriate to follow all the commandments and statutes. He first traced the history of the Lord's marvelous dealings with the people, how he saved them from Egypt, provided them with manna and every necessity, and led them to victory over their enemies. He reminded them of the care God gave them and the consequences of rebellion (chapters 1 to 4).

Then the Law was given, starting with the ten commandments and fundamental principles (chapters 5 to 11). Moses exhorted the people first and foremost: Love the Lord your God with all your heart and soul. From this great commandment follow the principles of all the laws as Jesus taught in Matthew 22:37. From following this commandment the people would receive an obedient heart (Deuteronomy 30:6, Today's English Version), with which they would have no difficulty observing the law. This was followed by the complete set of statutes which are clearly shown to protect the society against evil and to preserve the worship of God (chapters 12 to 26). These statutes effectively replace the ones given in Exodus since they cover the same ground.

Finally Moses pronounced blessings on the people for obedience and curses for disobedience (chapters 27 to 30). The close of the book records the blessing of Joshua and the death of Moses (chapters 31 to 34).

One Like Unto Me

When the people witnessed the voice of the Lord coming from the fire and clouds on the mountain, they realized that they might not survive such encounters in the future. So they asked Moses to act on their behalf as a mediator (Deuteronomy 5:22-29; 18:16,17). The Lord was pleased to hear the people say this. It clearly showed their need for a mediator. It also pointed to the need for Christ to be a mediator for mankind.

One of the best known passages in Deuteronomy is Moses' prediction of his successor, Jesus: "The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken" (Deuteronomy 18:15). Moses knew this because God himself so informed Moses: "The Lord said unto me ... I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him" (verses 17,18).

Jesus quoted many passages from Deuteronomy (including all three times he answered the adversary when tempted in the wilderness). This is not surprising since both Moses and Jesus serve as mediators, and Moses pictured Jesus. Their mediatorial roles are similar in that they have both gone so far as to stand in the breach at the peril of their own lives—Moses at Mount Sinai and Jesus on the cross.

But their roles as mediators also differ in notable ways because the terms and conditions of the covenants are different. The Law covenant was impossible to keep for anyone except Jesus. Jesus, on the other hand, administers not a new forbidding "letter of the law," but the spirit of the law. His ministry is on a more spiritual level. Compliance to his precepts is on a higher level, an internal level which is sometimes seen only by the suppliant and God.

His requirements are less demanding on particulars, yet more demanding on principles. The law stipulated "thou shalt not kill," but the law of the spirit is not to even meditate such an offense. The law stipulated "thou shalt not commit adultery," but the law of the spirit is not to even harbor such thoughts in the heart. Thus the Lord's commentary on the law of God was from the internal, spiritual perspective.

Deuteronomy 6:5 reads: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might." It is cited in Matthew 22:37 and Mark 12:30. Our Lord added nothing to this statement because it was complete.

Deuteronomy 8:3, "Man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord"—cited in Matthew 4:4.

Deuteronomy 6:13, "Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God, and serve him"—cited in Matthew 4:10.

Deuteronomy 6:16, "Ye shall not tempt the Lord your God"—cited in Matthew 4:7.

Deuteronomy 5:18, "Neither shalt thou commit adultery"—cited in Matthew 5:27 and taken to a higher level.

Deuteronomy 24:1-3, regulations concerning divorce: our Lord in Matthew 5:32 instructed us to look at the issue from a higher perspective.

Deuteronomy 23:21,23, "When thou shalt vow a vow unto the Lord thy God, thou shalt not slack to pay it." Jesus in Matthew 5:33-37 says it is better simply to let your word be your bond without oaths: "Let your communication be, yea, yea; nay, nay."

Deuteronomy 19:21, "Thine eye shall not pity; but life shall go for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot"—but Jesus advised us not to press this requirement on our behalf, and rather "turn the other cheek" and let your adversary "have thy cloke also" (Matthew 5:39,40).

Lessons Learned

The Israelites who left Egypt were led to the border of the promised land in less than two years. But though the Lord had cared for them as a father cares for his child (Deuteronomy 1:31), they were insubordinate and refused to follow the Lord into the land, fearing the inhabitants. As a result they lost their opportunity, even though they were repentant afterwards (Deuteronomy 1:35,41). They had no trouble following the Lord when the path was clear and easy to follow. They considered themselves the Lord's people, in name at least. But when obstacles loomed ahead, they obeyed their fearful hearts rather than the Lord.

It was not until that generation had died (Deuteronomy 2:14) that their children allowed themselves to be led by the Lord, and were given victories over kings Sihon and Og on the east side of Jordan. Those first victories were important because Moses used them to lay the groundwork for establishing the Lord as the military leader of Israel (Deuteronomy 3:21-24).

Evidently that generation, which followed the Lord into battle and then into Canaan, was of a more faithful character, more willing to follow the Lord, than the first generation. Why was this so? What experiences shaped their character in the desert? Moses answered this question for us in Deuteronomy 8:2-6: "Remember the long way that the LORD your God has led you these forty years in the wilderness, in order to humble you, testing you to know what was in your heart, whether or not you would keep his commandments. He humbled you by letting you hunger, then by feeding you with manna, with which neither you nor your ancestors were acquainted, in order to make you understand that one does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD. The clothes on your back did not wear out and your feet did not swell these forty years. Know then in your heart that as a parent disciplines a child so the LORD your God disciplines you. Therefore keep the commandments of the LORD your God, by walking in his ways and by fearing him."

Moses outlined all the Lord's dealings with Israel up to that time. He impressed them with the many reasons they needed to love and obey the Lord, keep the Law, and teach the same to their children (Deuteronomy 4:32-40; 6:20-25). The wisdom and righteousness of the Law demonstrated the Lord's goodness in many principles such as fairness, equality, impartiality, and compassion for the poor, to the people of Israel and to their neighbors (Deuteronomy 4:6-8).

The Law Added to the Original Covenant

The reason the Israelites were favored with God's covenant is "because he loved thy fathers, therefore he chose their seed after them, and brought thee out in his sight with his mighty power out of Egypt" (Deuteronomy 4:37; 7:8). The Abrahamic Covenant said that God would be the God of Abraham's seed and that they would be his people (Genesis 17:7,8). God also promised to give his seed the whole land of Canaan and that they would bless all the families of the earth.

The Law Covenant was also tied to the promised land: "Ye shall walk in all the ways which the Lord your God hath commanded you ... that ye may prolong your days in the land which ye shall possess" (Deuteronomy 5:33). Obedience to the Law was requisite to Israel's blessing in the land received through the original covenant. In this sense the Law Covenant was part of the fulfillment of the Abrahamic Covenant; "it was added" to the original (Galatians 3:19).

A continued blessing was appropriate only under the condition of obedience, and the Law provided a measure, a standard, of their national obedience. Its precepts also served to fashion the Israelites individually into people of faith if they were followed. Also it prepared a remnant to receive the Messiah in due time, to become the nucleus of the promised seed destined to bless all the families of the earth.

The Law of Moses required a fully participating heart. It was impossible for anyone to completely and perfectly keep the law, aside from Jesus, due to their fallen condition. However, through the mercy of God, many blessings were promised which could be attained in proportion to one's honest efforts in keeping the Law as fully as one could. This was often exhibited in Israel's history collectively, for when the people turned to the Lord sincerely, they were blessed for it.

By this means, and by Moses' closing admonitions in this fifth and final book of the Torah, we see that the law, in its truest light, necessitated a full love for the Lord, and yielded blessings for those with this heart condition. It is similar today. Those who love the Lord with all their heart receive rich blessings beyond their fondest expectations.

The Antiquity of the Books of Moses

Both Christians and Jews believe the Torah, in its present form, is the work of Moses, a belief unchallenged until two centuries ago. At that time a study called "Textual Criticism" gained popularity, asserting that most of the Old Testament was neither written by its supposed authors nor at the times indicated by the text. From this theory it was an easy step to suggest that much of the Old Testament narrative and history is legend and folklore put into written form with little or no basis in fact.

Archaeology has not favored Textual Critics. The fact that many archaeological digs have nullified most of the critics' conclusions has not yet filtered into popular thought. In fact, some of their confident 19th century pronouncements look downright silly in the light of contemporary understandings of ancient times. Unfortunately many young and impressionable Christians are easily impressed by what seems to be a show of scholarship. They often accept such scholarly presentations without knowing how out of date they really are.

The Historical Beginning

In 1670 Baruch Spinoza, a Dutch-Jewish philosopher with pantheistic ideas, published the theory that writing was unknown prior to the 8th century BC (roughly the time of Isaiah). It was his theory that the Torah was composed by Ezra after the Exile. In 1753 Jean Astruc, a French theologian, published a book which separated those passages in Genesis where the name for God is Jehovah from those in which it is "*elohim*." He suggested that Moses, in compiling Genesis, had two sets of "sources" before him, the "Jehovistic" and "Elohistic," now shortened to "J" and "E" sources in scholarly circles. In 1787 Johann Eichhorn, a German historian, produced his Introduction to the Old and New Testaments and Apocrypha. He endorsed Spinoza's views and invented the term "Higher Criticism."

Some decades later theologians who accepted their views were known as "Higher Critics," the first of note being Abraham Kuenen, a Dutch theologian with a reputation as a devout and reverent scholar. He was Professor of Old Testament theology at Leyden University from 1853 onward, and did more than any man of his time to establish the "science" of Higher Criticism. He was supported by Edouard Reuss and Julius Wellhausen, both of Germany.

Wellhausen was the only one of these men to live into the 20th century. By then the theory that the Old Testament was first committed to writing in the 8th century BC was almost universally accepted by "advanced" scholars. In 1888 there were no known specimens of alphabetic inscriptions with an agreed upon date earlier than the Moabite Stone and the Siloam inscription, both dating from the 8th century, so their conclusions seemed correct. No one alive in 1888 dreamed that within another half century the world's museums would bulge with written documents and tablets going back centuries before the time of Moses.

Principles of Higher Criticism

The five predicates for the late writing of the Old Testament were: 1) writing had not been invented before about 700-800 BC; 2) religious thought started with polytheism in the earliest times and progressed to monotheism, and not the other way around as Genesis has it; 3) the Mosaic code is too far advanced for so early a date; 4) the Levitical ritual is too sophisticated for a people just out of Egypt; 5) the historical events in Babylon and Egypt recorded in Genesis are unhistorical and never occurred.

Archaeology since 1880 has explored all of these assumptions. Each stands refuted. An examination and accompanying evidence is contained in the full text of the article "The Antiquity of the Books of Moses." It is available on line (www.heraldmag.org) or may be requested from the Pastoral Bible Institute (see address on inside back cover).

Poems and Devotional Readings

The Song of Moses and the Lamb

Have you heard the new song? that most beautiful song,
The song which the saints now may sing—
How the old harp of Moses and sweet flute of John
With harmonious melody ring?

'Tis the song of the Lamb once by Moses foretold,
In the symbols and types of God's law;
As the dawn of the day doth those symbols unfold,
We behold what we ne'er before saw,

O! what visions of glory are brought to faith's view,
Of glory which all soon shall see;
For the great King of Glory shall make all things new,
And O! what rejoicing there'll be.

Thy works great and marvelous, Almighty Lord,
Are glorious indeed in our sight;
Thy ways just and true, Thou blest King of the world,
We acknowledge are perfectly right.

O! who shall not filially fear Thee, O Lord,
And Thy righteous ways own as the best?
Soon all nations shall worship and praise before Thee,
When Thy judgments are made manifest.

Tune your voices, ye saints, for this glorious strain,
And earth shall with melody ring;
Let the grand "harp of God" loudly swell the refrain,
For tributes of praise all may bring.

God's Word is that harp, which has long been unstrung,
And men heard but discordant its notes;
Now as tuned are its chords from Moses to John,
How grandly sweet melody floats.

It will float o'er the world in a rapturous strain,
Of glory and peace and good will,
And all then shall hear and may join the refrain
And joy shall the hearts of all thrill.

The Red Sea Place in Your Life

Have you come to the Red Sea place in your life,
Where, in spite of all you can do,
There is no way out, there is no way back,
There is no other way but—through?
Then wait on the Lord with a trust serene,
Till the night of your fear is gone,
He will send the wind, He will heap the floods,
He says to your soul, "Go on!"

And His hand will lead you through—clear through—
Ere the watery walls roll down,
No foe can reach you, no wave can touch,
No mightiest sea can drown;
The tossing billows may rear their crests,
Their foam at your feet may break,
But over their bed you may walk dry shod,
In a path that your Lord will make.

In the morning watch, 'neath the lifted cloud,
You shall see but the Lord alone,
Where He leads you on from the place by the sea, T
o the land that you have not known;
And your fears shall pass as your foes have passed,
You shall be no more afraid;
You shall sing His praise in a better place,
A place that His hand has made.

—Annie Johnson Flint

"What Is That in Thine Hand?"

"And the Lord said unto Moses, What is that in thine hand?"
—Exodus 4:2

If any man would be more abundantly used of the Lord in His blessed service, let him seek first to be fitted for it more and more. Let him imitate that beloved and honored servant, Moses, in meekness, humility, energy and untiring zeal and self-sacrificing service of the Lord. But the wise steward will seek always to cultivate along the lines of his natural abilities, and not expect the Lord to work a miracle for his advancement, and so waste valuable time seeking to develop that which he does not by nature possess.

—Manna, November 26

Moses Blesses Israel

"And this is the blessing, wherewith Moses the man of God blessed the children of Israel before his death." – Deuteronomy 33:1

Verse by verse study in Deuteronomy 33

Moses' life is nearing its end when he gives the three sermons (really one with intermissions between) that end the book of Deuteronomy. Within approximately one month Moses will die, succession will pass to Joshua, and Israel will ford the Jordan to enter their promised land.

While the contents, as the name Deuteronomy implies, is largely a repetition of the law delivered to the nation at Sinai, it is much more than that. Moses recounts the miraculous deliverance in the wilderness from varied trials and foes. He is selective in citing those elements of the law which will most effect the coming experiences of the nation. The sermon identifies the manner in which the law is to be preserved and regularly read to the people of Israel.

Moses closes his sermon with a song and a blessing. The song is written in Hebrew poetic form in chapter 32. It is not only historical, but also prophetic in nature. The nineteenth century scholar, O. V. Gerlach, has written: "This song, soaring as it does to the loftiest heights, moving amidst the richest abundance of pictures of both present and future, with its concise, compressed, and pictorial style, rough, penetrating, and sharp, but full of the holiest solemnity, a witness against the disobedient nation, a celebration of the covenant God, sets before us in miniature a picture of the whole life and conduct of the great man of God, whose office it pre-eminently was to preach condemnation"

The chapter we will consider is the closing of this magnificent sermon in the form of a blessing upon the tribes of Israel.

Introduction – Verses 1 through 5

And this is the blessing, wherewith Moses the man of God blessed the children of Israel before his death. And he said, The LORD came from Sinai, and rose up from Seir unto them; he shined forth from mount Paran, and he came with ten thousands of saints: from his right hand went a fiery law for them. Yea, he loved the people; all his saints are in thy hand: and they sat down at thy feet; every one shall receive of thy words. Moses commanded us a law, even the inheritance of the congregation of Jacob. And he was king in Jeshurun, when the heads of the people and the tribes of Israel were gathered together.

The blessings of Jacob on his twelve sons (Genesis 49) and the blessings of Moses recorded here form a parentheses for the experiences of the twelve tribes prior to their entrance into the promised land. The two blessings are distinct and separate. They differ both in content and in the order they are given.

It is noteworthy that Moses only blesses eleven of the tribes, omitting Simeon. While no reason is given, it may arise from the fact that the blessing of Jacob on Simeon (as well as Levi) was negative, more of a curse, and implied that neither tribe would have a distinct inheritance in the land: "I will divide them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel" (Genesis 49:9). While the tribe of Levi redeemed themselves in the matter of the golden calf (Exodus 32:26-28), the same was not true of Simeon.

When the land was divided to Israel, while Levi was not awarded a specific location, his scattering among the people as a holy tribe was a blessing. Simeon, on the other hand, was also not given a portion of land, but was to dwell amongst the people of the tribe of Judah (Joshua 19:1).

It has also been suggested that since Simeon was the one Joseph chose to put in prison as a guarantee that Benjamin would be brought from Canaan to Egypt (Genesis 42:24), he may have been the ringleader in the plot to kill Joseph (Genesis 37:19, 20).

The opening verses of these blessings call the attention of the crowd gathered before Moses to an occasion, some forty years earlier, when he had spoken to the fathers of these Israelites, giving them the laws of God at Mt. Sinai. In this description we have two geographic clues to the location of Mt. Sinai.

1. It was west of Seir, for the sun "dawned upon" them over these mountains (see NIV, RV, and NAS) for the correct translation of the Hebrew *zarach* (Strong's 2224), rendered "rose up" in the King James is "dawned upon."
2. It was to the immediate west of Mt. Paran (for the sun first appeared to them from behind these mountains). According to the International Bible Encyclopedia, "It is identified with the high limestone plateau of Ettih, stretching from the Southwest of the Dead Sea to Sinai along the west side of the Arabah."

These two descriptive phrases suggest a location in the central Sinai desert and are in agreement with the traditional location of the mount.

The term "he came with ten thousand of his saints" is reminiscent of Enoch's prophecy recorded in Jude 14, 15: "And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him."

This connection (along with that of similar words in Matthew 25:31 and 2 Thessalonians 1:7) suggests that the words are suggestive of coming judgment. Indeed, the law given at Sinai proved to be an instrument of judgment, for it contained the standard of righteousness which was unattainable by imperfect people. However, in the historic scene of Sinai it probably has reference to the hosts of angels who appeared at the giving of the law (Acts 7:53; Hebrews 2:2).

The final phrase in verse two is a further description of the giving of the law. The word "law" in the Authorized Version has no Hebrew counterpart. More likely the term "fiery" refers to the lightning that surrounded the trembling mount.

Moses, however, in his Deuteronomic sermon, proceeds from the awesome scene of Sinai to the assurance that this was not meant as judgment, but as a sign of Jehovah's love for his people. The Revised Standard version translates the second phrase in verse three, "all those consecrated to him were in his hand." All of the nation of Israel were considered as "consecrated" to him through the sacrifices of the tabernacle and their acceptance of the binding restrictions of God's law (Exodus 24:3, 7).

As the law had been read to them, they sat at God's feet and took heed of his commandments. It was just this law that they were to pass on from generation to generation as the inheritance of "the congregation of Jacob."

Reuben and Judah – Verses 6 and 7

Let Reuben live, and not die; and let not his men be few. And this is the blessing of Judah: and he said, Hear, LORD, the voice of Judah, and bring him unto his people: let his hands be sufficient for him; and be thou an help to him from his enemies.

Jacob, in blessing his sons, berated Reuben for laying with his concubine, Bilhah (Genesis 35:22), categorizes his oldest as being "unstable as water," and thus not excelling (Genesis 49:4). Moses, recognizing this characteristic, prays that the tribe of Reuben be not totally extinguished.

The Alexandrian Septuagint alone of all translations of this passages, inserts the name of Simeon before the phrase "let not his men be few." If this is correct, it is a fitting blessing since the tribe of Simeon was the most decimated during the wilderness wanderings, decreasing from 59,300 to 22,200 (Numbers 1:23; 26:14).

The blessing of Judah is a prayer for victory – that they would return from their campaigns, that their arms would be sufficient, and that Jehovah would always be at their side. It is noteworthy that in the conquest of Canaan, Joshua led four Israel on four separate expeditions. The first three were led by the tribe of Judah. The first foray defeated Jericho and Ai (Joshua 1-8). The second conquered the valley of Aijalon, defeating the five Amorite kings (Joshua 9-10). The third and southernmost campaign, conquered Lachish, Hebron, Dabir, and Gasa (Joshua 10). It was only after thus securing the tribal inheritance of Judah that the forces moved northward all the way to Hazor, a stronghold beyond the Sea of Galilee (Joshua 11).

Levi – Verses 8-11

And of Levi he said, Let thy Thummim and thy Urim be with thy holy one, whom thou didst prove at Massah, and with whom thou didst strive at the waters of Meribah; Who said unto his father and to his mother, I have not seen him; neither did he acknowledge

his brethren, nor knew his own children: for they have observed thy word, and kept thy covenant. They shall teach Jacob thy judgments, and Israel thy law: they shall put incense before thee, and whole burnt sacrifice upon thine altar. Bless, LORD, his substance, and accept the work of his hands: smite through the loins of them that rise against him, and of them that hate him, that they rise not again.

The blessings of Levi deal mostly with the priestly functions assigned to that tribe. The Urim and Thummim were evidently stones carried in the breastplate of the high priest, by which he ascertained the will of the Lord. The words mean literally "lights" and "perfections." The text before us is the only occasion in the Scriptures where the words are reversed – Thummim being before Urim. This may be indicative of the fact that the striving for perfection must be a prerequisite for one who would be a light-bearer.

The waters of Massah (temptation) and Meribah (strife) describe one of the early failures of the Hebrews because of their murmuring (Exodus 17:1-7). Evidently, though it is not part of the historic record, the Levites did not demonstrate such discontent in that instance.

Certainly their faithfulness is attested in the incident of the golden calf, referenced in verse 9. In that case, disregarding their close family ties to the other tribes of Israel, they slew 3,000 of the worshippers of the golden calf (Exodus 32:26-29).

Their resultant blessing consisted in their being made spiritual ministers to their fellow-countrymen. They would become the teachers of the law and the administrators of the burnt offerings and incense offerings. Moses concludes his blessing on this fortunate tribe by asking Jehovah to accept their sacrifices and to protect them from harm of those who would abuse them.

Benjamin and Joseph – Verses 12 through 17

And of Benjamin he said, The beloved of the LORD shall dwell in safety by him; and the LORD shall cover him all the day long, and he shall dwell between his shoulders. And of Joseph he said, Blessed of the LORD be his land, for the precious things of heaven, for the dew, and for the deep that coucheth beneath, And for the precious fruits brought forth by the sun, and for the precious things put forth by the moon, And for the chief things of the ancient mountains, and for the precious things of the lasting hills, And for the precious things of the earth and fullness thereof, and for the good will of him that dwelt in the bush: let the blessing come upon the head of Joseph, and upon the top of the head of him that was separated from his brethren. His glory is like the firstling of his bullock, and his horns are like the horns of unicorns: with them he shall push the people together to the ends of the earth: and they are the ten thousands of Ephraim, and they are the thousands of Manasseh.

Benjamin is to dwell beside the "beloved of the LORD," perhaps a prophetic reference to King David, whose name means "beloved." This harmonizes with Jehovah dwelling "between his shoulders." One of the borders of the tribe of Benjamin ran between the

hills of Jerusalem – the city itself laying in the inheritance of Judah while Mt. Moriah, with the sacred edifice being in the confines of Benjamin (Joshua 18:16; see Jamieson, Faucett and Brown on Deuteronomy 33:12). While Benjamin's inheritance was the smallest of the tribes, it included some of the most fruitful soil.

Joseph, as the most beloved of Jacob's children and inheritor of the birthright (1 Chronicles 5:2), receives one of the longest of the blessings of Moses. The blessing seems to be an elaboration on the name of Joseph's second son, Ephraim, who was blessed by Jacob ahead of his older brother Manasseh. Ephraim's name means "fruitfulness, and this attribute forms the major part of his Mosaic blessing.

The tribe of Joseph was given two portions of the holy land – one to Manasseh and the other to Ephraim. The latter was the most populous of the tribes and hence received the greatest land area. Its fertile valleys received abundance of dew and the crops dependant on sunlight and moonlight were copious. Underground springs were plenteous and the highly desirable mountain products, especially olives, grew profusely.

Moses bases this chief blessing, not so much on the fact that Joseph was the most loved child of Jacob, but more as a reward for the persecutions of his early life – as being the one "who was separated from his brethren."

Zebulun and Issachar – Verses 18 and 19

And of Zebulun he said, Rejoice, Zebulun, in thy going out; and, Issachar, in thy tents. They shall call the people unto the mountain; there they shall offer sacrifices of righteousness: for they shall suck of the abundance of the seas, and of treasures hid in the sand.

The combined inheritance of Zebulun and Issachar stretched from the Sea of Galilee to the Medierranean. Zebulunites, possessing the sea coast, "went out" on the sea, establishing profitable trade routes. This abundant trade was particularly in pearl, coral, and murex, a Tyrian dye used for expensive clothing. The "treasures hid in the sand" was from a special sand that lay on the river Belus, and was used for the making of glass for mirrors and household utensils.

"The mountain" referred to in the prophetic blessing was probably Mt. Tabor, to which the tribes were gathered for sacrifices prior to going out to battle against their northern foes. This mountain is of special note in the battle of Deborah and Barak (Judges 5).

Gad, Dan, Naphtali, Asher – Verses 20 through 25

And of Gad he said, Blessed be he that enlargeth Gad: he dwelleth as a lion, and teareth the arm with the crown of the head. And he provided the first part for himself, because there, in a portion of the lawgiver, was he seated; and he came with the heads of the people, he executed the justice of the LORD, and his judgments with Israel. And of Dan he said, Dan is a lion's whelp: he shall leap from Bashan. And of Naphtali he said, O

Naphtali, satisfied with favor, and full with the blessing of the LORD: possess thou the west and the south. And of Asher he said, Let Asher be blessed with children; let him be acceptable to his brethren, and let him dip his foot in oil. Thy shoes shall be iron and brass; and as thy days, so shall thy strength be.

Moses places the praising, or "enlarging" of God, as a precondition for his blessing. He acknowledges the war-like disposition of the Gadites. The "first part" which this tribe was to receive refers to the land east of the Jordan where they, along with Reuben and half the tribe of Manassah were given inheritance on the premise they would help their brethren conquer the rest of Canaan.

The phrase, "teareth the arm with the crown of the head," is explained by an observation of the noted Dr. Livingstone in his Journal of Travels in Africa, where he writes that all "all ravenous animals, seize their prey at the shoulder-blade, at a particular point of the neck, near the skull, when a wound in the spinal marrow produces a speedy and apparently a painless death."

The fact that Gad was promised "a portion of the lawgiver" is not in conflict that the "lawgiver" was to come from the Judah. This promise seems to indicate that Gad would be appointed a place on the judicial council which would govern Israel for the next four centuries. These were the tribal judges appointed to administer "the judgments of the Lord, and his justice with Israel."

Dan is likewise noted for his warrior qualities. The reference to Bashan does not refer to the promised inheritance of Dan, since their portion was far from this land, but more to the fact that the woody ridges of Bashan were noted for being inhabited by lions.

Since the inheritance of Naphtali was in the north central part of ancient Canaan, the allusion to "the west, and the south" is curious. Probably the words are to be taken in their metaphorical meaning of "sea-ward" for west (since that direction pointed to the great Mediterranean sea) and "sunny" for south. The land of Naphtali covered the entire western shore of the Sea of Galilee and is noted for its warm winter climate, thus making it a vacation paradise to this day.

Asher, whose very name means "blessed: (Genesis 30:13) had a four-fold blessing:

1. An increase in numbers – they were among the most populated tribes with 53,400 members at the end of the Exodus. Many translations have "may he be blessed above his brothers," suggesting a superlative inheritance. Asher's history does not seem to bear this out however, implying that the Authorized Version correctly grasps the meaning of the text.
2. Acceptance by his brothers – Asher frequently acted independently and was not supportive of the other tribes. In the battle of Debroah and Barak they were content to be neutral because of commercial interests (Judges 5:17). Moses here appears to plead for the other tribes to accept Asher, nevertheless, as part of the promised nation.

3. Richness of the land, both above ground and below – The "oil" into which he dipped his foot undoubtedly refers to the rich olive groves that were in his territory. Porter's *Handbook of Syria and Palestine*, notes the presence of copper and iron mines on the southern slopes of Lebanon (p. 363). These resources of Asher were supplemented by these ores being imported in trade to their busy port cities.
4. Continuance of strength and vigor – "as thy days shall thy strength be." This was probably contributed to by healthy climate and a diet rich in the palliative powers of the olive, both in its fruit and its oil.

Closing Words – Verses 26 through 29

There is none like unto the God of Jeshurun, who rideth upon the heaven in thy help, and in his excellency on the sky. The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms: and he shall thrust out the enemy from before thee; and shall say, Destroy them. Israel then shall dwell in safety alone: the fountain of Jacob shall be upon a land of corn and wine; also his heavens shall drop down dew. Happy art thou, O Israel: who is like unto thee, O people saved by the LORD, the shield of thy help, and who is the sword of thy excellency! and thine enemies shall be found liars unto thee; and thou shalt tread upon their high places.

Jeshurun, meaning "the righteous one," is a pet name of God for Israel, used only in Deuteronomy and Isaiah. In its first use (Deuteronomy 32:15) it is used in a negative sense, indicating Israel's decline from righteousness; while in Isaiah 44:2 is it used positively to indicate the end to which Israel was God's "chosen one." In Moses' closing words it is used as a name for Israel as the recipient of God's favor and blessing.

This closing benediction is primarily an ode of praise to God for both his promised protection in their battles with their enemies and his assurance of their physical prosperity and well-being if they live up to this name of Jeshurun, the righteous.

With this blessing of each of the tribes of Israel individually and the nation collectively Moses, like Jacob before him, ends his message to the chosen people, the twelve tribes of Israel.

The Antiquity of the Books of Moses

The first five books of the Old Testament -- Genesis to Deuteronomy -- are collectively known as the Pentateuch. Both Christians and Jews believe they are, in their present form, the work of Moses. This belief was unchallenged until two centuries ago. At that time a study called "Textual Criticism" gained popularity. Textual Critics asserted that most of the Old Testament was neither written by its supposed authors nor was it written at the times indicated by the text.

From this theory it was an easy step to suggest that much of the Old Testament narrative and history are legend and folklore put into written form, with little or no basis in fact. This supposition being carried into our own day gave rise to misconceptions about the Old Testament. Worse still, it eroded Bible authority in the common mind.

Archaeology has not favored Textual Critics. The fact that many archaeological digs have nullified most of the critic's conclusions has not yet filtered into popular thought. In fact, some of their confident 19th century pronouncements look downright silly in the light of contemporary understandings of ancient times. Those writers of the past century having committed their thoughts to paper have achieved a certain notoriety whether or not their words have been proven false.

Unfortunately, there are many young and impressionable Christians. They, in youthful enthusiasm, are easily impressed by what seems to be a show of scholarship. They often accept such scholarly presentations without knowing how out of date they really are. To this end, a brief review of the present position may be helpful.

The Historical Beginning

In 1670 Baruch Spinoza, a Dutch-Jewish philosopher who held pantheistic ideas, published the theory that writing was unknown prior to the 8th century BC (roughly the time of Isaiah). He concluded that Moses could not have written the early books of the Old Testament. It was his **theory** that they had been composed by Ezra after the Exile.

After Spinoza came Jean Astruc, a French theologian. He published a book in 1753 in which he separated those passages in Genesis where the name for God is Jehovah from those in which it is "elohim." He suggested that Moses, in compiling Genesis, had two sets of documents or "sources" before him. These he called the "Jehovistic" and "Elohistic," today shortened to the "J" and "E" sources in scholarly circles. Later Johann Eichhorn, a German historian, produced his *Introduction to the Old and New Testaments and Apocrypha* (1787). He endorsed Spinoza's views and invented the term "Higher Criticism." The seed sown by these three men flowered and bore fruit. A few decades later the theologians who accepted their views were known as "Higher Critics."

The first such of note was Abraham Kuenen. He was a Dutch theologian with a reputation as a devout and reverent scholar. He served as Professor of Old Testament

theology at Leyden University from 1853 onward. Kuenen did more than any man of his time to establish the "science" of Higher Criticism.

Kuenen was supported by Edouard Reuss and Julius Wellhausen, both of Germany. Wellhausen was the only one of these men to live into the 20th century. By then the **theory** that the Old Testament was first committed to writing in the 8th century BC was almost universally accepted by so-called "advanced" scholars. True, in 1888 there were no known specimens of writing or of alphabetical inscriptions agreed to date earlier than the Moabite Stone and the Siloam inscription. Both of those date from the 8th century. So their conclusions **seemed** correct. No one alive in 1888 dreamed that before another half century would pass the walls of the world's museums would bulge with written documentation and tablets going back to twenty-five centuries before Christ, a thousand years before the time of Moses.

Principles of Higher Criticism

What were the principles upon which the case for the late writing of the Old Testament is built? There are five:

- (1) That writing was unknown and had not been invented before the time of the Hebrew prophets (about 700-800 BC).
- (2) That the religious thought of nations, without exception, started with polytheism in the earliest times and progressed to monotheism, the worship of one God, in later times, and not the other way around as Genesis has it.
- (3) That the code of laws credited to Moses is too far advanced for so early a date. It must have been devised during the time of the Israelitish kings and Moses' name merely attached to them.
- (4) That the levitical ritual is too sophisticated for a people just out of Egypt and must have been the product of a priestly class after the Babylonian captivity.
- (5) That the historical events in Babylonia and Egypt recorded in Genesis are unhistorical and never occurred. They are merely a later compilation of old traditions and folklore, and many of the kings and notable persons referred to never existed.

The Cold Hard Facts

Archaeology since 1880 has explored **all** of these assumptions. **Assumptions** they proved to be. It demolished all the theories regarding the Old Testament which had been painstakingly erected by the critics of the 19th century. To demonstrate this to the present day reader we will cite a few of the established facts.

The argument for the late invention of writing was nullified in 1888 when the El-Amarna tablets were discovered in Egypt. This was a large find of official correspondence between Egypt and Canaan which had been inscribed in cuneiform on clay tablets. These records dated to the time of the Exodus (footnote 1). This find took the art of writing back to 1400 BC in one bound.

In 1905 the famous Egyptologist Prof. Flinders Petrie showed that the Serabit inscriptions in Sinai dated to the period of the 12th Egyptian dynasty, about the time of Abraham (footnote 2). Previously they had been thought to date from early AD times. In 1907 Winckler found records of the Hittite empire in modern Turkey. When they were deciphered in 1919, they were dated at about 1800 BC. In 1932 records were discovered of the Canaanite people at Ras Shamra near Sidon, their date: 1400 BC. Eclipsing all these are the thousands of cuneiform tablets found in the ancient cities of Babylon, Assyria, and Sumeria, extending to [about two millenniums BC]. Some of the records date [earlier] in a kind of picture writing.

The celebrated Sumerian epic, the *Enuma Elish*, sometimes called the Babylonian story of creation, contains astronomical allusions which show that it was originally composed when the sun was in the constellation of Aries (between 2000 and 2500 BC). One Sumerian tablet refers to the "writings of the ages that were before the flood." As far as man can trace the art of writing was known. Schultz, in his *Old Testament Theology* had said in 1891 "Of the legendary character of the pre-Mosaic narratives, the time of which they treat is sufficient proof. It was a time prior to all knowledge of writing." Similar statements had been made by all the leading critics. Later discoveries have shown their conclusions to be **mistaken** and **valueless** in this field.

Jumping Fifty Years Through History

The clever critics never gave up. The British scientific journal *Nature*, a mouthpiece for the "modern scholarship," commented upon the impact of the Ras Shamra discoveries. This is what it said in its September 12, 1942 issue: "It would now seem that many of the patriarchal stories of the Old Testament were not mere oral traditions collected by authors of the time of Solomon and later, but were part of a written heritage derived from the Canaanite Bronze Age" -- anything is better than allowing Moses the credit -- but the grudging admission was at least a concession to obvious fact.

The idea that polytheism preceded monotheism has been effectually refuted now that so much is known about early civilizations. Prof. Stephen Langdon, one of the leading Assyriologists of the 20th century, said "The history of the oldest religion of man is a rapid decline from monotheism to extreme polytheism ... it is in a very true sense the history of the fall of man."

Many Babylonian and Sumerian epic poems have survived to our day. The further back they go the nearer they approach monotheistic thought. In fact, many of the "gods many and lords many" (1 Corinthians 8:5) that were revered by the ancients have been found to be deified men. A notable example is the great Babylonian god Marduk or Bel, who is

now known to have been a pre-dynastic hero who lived about five hundred years before the rise of the Sumerian city states. This person is mentioned in Genesis under the name of Nimrod. Dr. Frankfort, who excavated Eshunna in 1930, found evidence of third century BC worship of gods under different names as varying manifestations of the one God. It is now supposed that this is how polytheism developed.

The idea that the Mosaic Laws were too advanced for "primitive" human thought has been abandoned. In 1902 the laws of Hammurabi of Babylon and Urakagina of Lagash were discovered. These legal codes belong to 1800 BC and 2200 BC respectively (footnote 3). Neither of these two equal the Mosaic Laws, but they represent the capability of wise and just lawmaking in those distant times. They prove the credibility of the Mosaic authorship. This is apart from the fact that Exodus claims that Moses received the fundamental principles of his laws from God himself -- not from human lawmakers.

The Levitical ritual of the Pentateuch too has found a companion ritual similar in style and date. In 1932 a system of belief was discovered which was used in ancient Phoenicia at nearly the same time as the Levitical rituals were being used in Canaan. The Phoenician rituals governed the worship of pagan gods as detailed in some of the Ras Shamra tablets. Again, there is no relation between the two rituals. The fact that the tablets exist disposes of the argument that men were not sufficiently developed at that time to devise such rituals.

The assertion that the historical events related in Genesis lacked external confirmation and never really occurred is now disposed of by the vast accumulated history of ancient civilizations now available for study. Not one statement of fact in Genesis has been disproven. Many records of people and events for which the Bible was the only authority for thousands of years have now been established indisputably true by contemporary written tablets and documents.

In establishing the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch, the origin of the documents now composing Genesis has still to be explored, because the entirety of those events was narrated long before Moses' lifetime. Regarding the other four books, Exodus to Deuteronomy, the position is different; they deal entirely with matters personally connected with Moses. There can be no doubt that these books were completed in written form during the Exodus. It is probable that this occurred during the thirty-eight years that Israel spent at Kadesh. The final chapters of Deuteronomy with their account of the death of Moses were probably added by Joshua or Eleazar. Dr. A. S. Yahuda, a leading authority on ancient Egyptian and Hebrew languages, pointed out that these four books were written in an Egyptianized form of Hebrew which demanded that the writer thought as much in Egyptian as he did in Hebrew. That writer, of course, was Moses, brought up in the courts of Pharaoh and "learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians."

Experts on ancient languages have substantiated that the last fourteen chapters of Genesis contain a significant number of Egyptian words. These are the chapters which detail the story of Joseph in Egypt. The first eleven chapters of the book (from creation to the death of Terah) contain a number of Akkadian and Sumerian words. The Akkadians were

descendants of Shem and the Sumerians were descendants of Ham. Both races dwelt together in the plains of the Tigris and Euphrates from whence Abraham came. It is evident in these two facts that the history of Joseph was recorded first by Joseph or his fellows and that these documents (quite likely written on papyrus and in Egyptian) came into Moses' possession. The records of the lives of Abraham, Isaac and Ishmael, Jacob and Esau, and the twelve sons of Jacob in Canaan, might well have been recorded either on goatskins, parchment, or clay tablets. All of these writing methods were used in Canaan. They would have been preserved in the archives of the heads of the tribes -- and so likewise would have come to Moses.

In the case of the first eleven chapters internal evidences point to their having been compiled, in the form in which they came to Moses, by those persons who had firsthand information concerning their own times. We quote from P. J. Wiseman, a notable archaeologist who points us to the key to understanding the authorship of this first eleven chapters as well as the balance of the book:

"The master key to the discovery of the composition of the Book of Genesis is to be found in the proper use of the phrase 'These are the generations of ...' If this key is handled properly, it will be seen that it solves every literary difficulty, critical or otherwise." (footnote 4)

The unique use of this one phrase casts the entire book into a framework which is marked off into eras by its recurring use.

"Dr. D. R. Driver says (*Genesis*, pg. ii), 'The entire narrative as we now possess it is accommodated to it.' Driver quotes Professor Ryle to inform us that the use of that phrase 'represents, as it were, successive stages in the progress of the narrative.' Commentators of all schools of thought, such as Spurrell, Lenormant, Skinner, Carpenter, Harford-Battersby, Bullinger, Lange, Keil and Wright divide the book into sections which begin with the phrase." (footnote 5)

The expression is used to describe history, nine histories to be precise. It becomes evident that the clue to its use is that it points **backwards** in the story to the origins of the family history and not forward to a later development through a line of descendants.

"Here it means the exact opposite of descendants, for it is used to indicate the tracing back of the genealogy to its origin; and this is precisely the meaning of the Greek word *geneseos* translated 'generation.' So when we read 'this is the book of the history of Adam' it is the concluding sentence of the record already written and not an introduction to the subsequent record." (footnote 6)

What we find, then, is this:

Chapters 1:1 to 5:1 -- written by Adam

thence to 6:9 -- by Noah

thence to 10:1 -- by the sons of Noah

thence to 11:10 -- by Shem

thence to 11:27 -- by Terah

thence to 24:12 -- by Ishmael

thence to 25:19 -- by Isaac

thence to 36:1 -- by Esau and beyond to 36:9

thence to 37:2 -- by Jacob

Those first eleven chapters we find were written by five authors, each receiving the work of their forebears and appending to it their own. Were it not for the fact that archaeological finds now demonstrate that civilization springs into view all at once and fully developed (rather than gradually as erroneously hypothesized by evolutionists), such a conclusion would be hard to understand. One might reason, how did those early men possess the skills to record their own history? We forget that in this regard we are not talking about some civilization hidden for thousands of years from contact with other men. We are told by the Bible itself that man was created in the image of God. Commensurate abilities ought to be expected rather than to be thought shocking.

Among the evidences that we find for their having been written by those involved with their own story are the facts that the geographical names are those in current use at that period and that some of them had passed out of use or been replaced by other names by Abraham's day. The proper names are derived from Akkadian or Sumerian originals and in many cases incorporate the names of their gods. Many words of Akkadian or Sumerian origin appear in the text of these eleven chapters. Thus the primeval home of the first man was Edinu in Sumerian lore (Eden in Hebrew) until about 2200 BC when the legends changed the name to Dilmun, which lingered as the name of an island in the Gulf -- no longer in existence -- into historical times.

Similarly, the land which Genesis chapter four names as the home of Cain in his exile was the eastern shore of the Gulf, known at Nod (Hebrew: Nod) until about 2200 BC when it became known as Manda (still surviving in the name of its principal river, the Mand). Instances such as these show that Genesis chapters two to four (at least) were composed by a dweller on the Euphrates not later than about 2300 BC. Certain grammatical errors in dealing with some Sumerian words indicate that the compiler was more familiar with the Semitic Akkadian language than with the Hamitic Sumerian tongue. This strengthens the supposition that he was one of the ancestors of Abraham, perhaps Eber. He must, even at this early date, have compiled his narrative from pre-

existing records, and almost certainly had two separate accounts of previous times before him, one Semitic and one Hamitic, which he combined into a continuous story.

So the sacred book of the Christian and Jewish faiths had its origin, not in folklore and legends of ancient times collected and edited by some priestly dignitary in the 8th century BC, but in the painstaking work of men of God who lived in the dawn of history. They set down their stories in archaic forms of writing which had to be repeatedly translated and copied into new and different characters even before Abraham saw them. It has been abundantly proven in our own era that the stories of the Old Testament are factually true, the work of men who knew the facts and lived within measurable time of the events they recorded.

(footnote 1) Recently David Rohl, in *Pharaohs and Kings*, 1995, made a compelling case that this actually dates to the time of Saul and David.

(footnote 2) Recently David Rohl, in *Pharaohs and Kings*, 1995, made a good case that the 12th Dynasty actually dates to the time of Joseph. See also "Chronology of the Second Millennium BC," a paper by James Parkinson, 411A Arden Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 91203.

(footnote 3) David Rohl's work suggests these dates should be brought closer about two and a half centuries.

(footnote 4) *New Discoveries in Babylonian about Genesis*, Marshal, Morgan & Scott.

(footnote 5) *Ibid*, page 51.

(footnote 6) *Ibid*, page 51.

NEWS AND VIEWS

World News

Religious

The Vatican rejected the concept that other religions could be equal to Roman Catholicism and ordered its theologians not to manipulate what it called the truth of the faith. The Vatican's restatement of its position was outlined in a complex theological document [which] repeated Church teachings that non-Christians were in a "gravely deficient situation" regarding salvation and that other Christian churches had "defects," partly because they did not recognize the primacy of the Pope. The 36-page document was prepared by the Vatican's Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith and approved by Pope John Paul. Walking a theological tightrope, the document said the "Church of Christ" was present and operative in other Christian Churches today. But, in the Vatican's view, it subsists fully in the Roman Catholic Church because the Pope is the successor to Saint Peter whom Christ named as his first vicar on earth. Papal primacy was divinely willed, it said. "Therefore, there exists a single Church of Christ, which subsists in the Catholic Church, governed by the Successor of Peter and by the bishops in communion with him," it said.

—Reuters, 9/5/2000

Climaxing a 30-year ecumenical journey, the Episcopal Church gave final approval Saturday to a historic unity agreement with the nation's largest Lutheran denomination. The pact, previously approved by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, means that the 7.5 million members of the two mainline denominations may receive communion in each other's churches, share in outreach ministries and, most notably, call either an Episcopal priest or a Lutheran minister as their local pastor. The agreement, which takes effect next January, is not a merger. Both denominations will maintain their separate identities and organizations. The move, however, represents a major departure from denominational distinctions—and a dramatic new sign that churches are moving to heal centuries of division as Christianity enters its third millennium.

—Los Angeles Times, 7/9/2000

In November, the northern Nigerian state of Kano will begin enforcing sharia, Islamic law. "We are all scared of what will happen," said Tarosi, a 41-year-old Christian in this sprawling, mainly Muslim city of more than 1 million. "All Christians are afraid. . . . Many have sent their families away and are here standing on one foot, ready to run if things get bad." As part of a movement to reassert the Islamic identity of northern Nigeria, eight mainly Muslim states have adopted sharia since last October. That step has ignited Muslim-Christian fighting that has killed hundreds of people and renewed questions about whether Africa's largest and most populous country can remain united

and peaceful. For many here, this conflict has become a threat to Nigeria's stability and democracy. Kano is the largest and most economically important state to adopt sharia. Nigerian interpretations of the code prescribe such punishments as amputation of a hand for theft and public flogging for other crimes. States adopting sharia also have introduced Islamic curricula in public schools, prompting Christians—those who can afford it, anyway—to transfer their children to private religious schools. Ibrahim Datti Ahmad, president of the Supreme Council for Sharia in Nigeria predicted that 19 of the country's 36 states eventually will adopt the Islamic code.

—Washington Post Foreign Service, 8/31/2000

The nation's two largest ecumenical organizations [the National Council of Churches and the National Association of Evangelicals] are positioning themselves for a radical realignment that could bring liberal and conservative churches together in common social causes and lead to the disbanding of the venerable National Council of Churches. Earlier this year, the executive board of the National Council of Churches voted to disband the organization over the next three years if a new broad-based church group is formed. Precisely what form a new organization would take remains deliberately vague. "We want to invite Roman Catholics and evangelicals to come to our table, but to have them see this as an opportunity to invent a new table," [said the Rev. Robert Edgar, the council's general secretary]. The next step is likely to be a summit next spring that would bring together leaders from a broad range of Christian denominations. Father John Hotchkin, a ranking Catholic ecumenical affairs officer in Washington, said in interviews that [his] organization would probably participate.

—Los Angeles Times, 9/5/2000

Social

Life expectancies in some African countries will soon drop below age 30 because of the staggering number of AIDS deaths, experts said Monday. And for perhaps the first time in their history, some nations in southern Africa will experience negative population growth as a result of AIDS, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. The epidemic in Africa is the continent's "worst social catastrophe since slavery," said Dr. Kevin DeCock of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. About 5,500 now die of AIDS every day [in sub-Saharan Africa], but researchers predict that about 13,000 will die daily by 2010. AIDS now accounts for 21% of all deaths in the region, with malaria a distant second at 9.1%.

—Los Angeles Times, 7/11/2000

The [old] view was that the adult brain couldn't manufacture new cells to replace those that naturally died off over time. However, a growing body of research has revolutionized the way neurologists perceive the adult brain—no longer as a cerebral clock that winds down over time but as a dynamic organ that responds to new information and experiences

by generating additional circuitry. Experts now say that the adult brain, far from being doomed to wither, appears able to grow, adapt, and in some ways even improve with age.

—Consumer Reports, August 2000

Open sewers give Brazil's cities a wastewater stomach ache. Lack of treatment is damaging health and the environment. Less than half of the sewage generated by greater Sao Paulo's 15 million inhabitants is actually treated and the situation is even worse in the rest of the country. According to a recent government study, 92 percent of wastewater generated in urban areas is pumped into the country's rivers without any treatment at all. Fifty people die every day as a result of inadequate basic sanitation. Many of the victims are children. Sixty-five percent of all infant admissions to hospitals are a result of infections related to solid or liquid waste. Cities in Brazil's central and northeastern states have the most serious problems, experts say. The problem is not limited to impoverished towns. Even Sabesp, the Sao Paulo utility and possibly the world's largest water company, still treats only 40 percent of Sao Paulo's sewage. The principal reason is that the municipalities, which are charged with waste management under Brazil's constitution, lack the necessary funds to expand treatment facilities. "The situation of sanitation and water management in Brazil is a disgrace and the population will become angry if the politicians and society at large do not act soon," says Mr. Passeto of *Agua e Cidade*.

—Financial Times 7/27/2000

Ben Gurion University of the Negev researchers have proposed an innovative irrigation system that will help reduce the widespread hunger that is affecting Ethiopia. The system was developed with the Israeli company Netafim and costs one-tenth of systems currently available. The Ambassador of Ethiopia to Israel, the Hon. Zewde Otoro, is visiting the International Program for Arid Land Crops Center (IPALAC) at Ben Gurion University of the Negev, to see the model African Market Garden that uses this new technology. IPALAC will be creating some 25 irrigation systems of this kind in West Africa during the next year. The Pilot Project is based on a Low Pressure Drip Irrigation system, designed especially for use by resource-poor small farmers. "We built a remarkably easy system at relatively low cost that is simple to maintain," explains model garden creator Dov Pasternak, "which is why it works." IPALAC is an initiative designed to share relevant aspects of the Israeli experience in combating "desertification" with countries of the developing world, particularly Africa. The program has traditionally worked with local farmers teaching them to grow hardier plants.

—Israel Wire, 7/31/2000

Financial

The Turkish Nicosia government failed to pay the July installment of an 18-month plan to pay money owed to depositors of four banks taken over by the authorities. The deputy prime minister said that the repayment timetable negotiated by the finance ministry was

"unrealistic." "The bank owners are guilty but free while many people I know have lost their money," said Alez Ulugbay, a Turkish Cypriot airline employee. The Social Democrat party conceded that Turkey no longer had the means to be as generous as in the past after launching ambitious economic reforms in January, 2000.

—Financial Times, 7/26/2000

The leaders of the world's seven richest nations, the Group of Seven, vowed at their summit to get tough on money laundering around the world. The G-7's communiqué outlined its hit list: Underworld cartels that launder cash from drug deals and other criminal activities through willing banks; corruption in the world financial system; bank secrecy and laws that sustain it; nations and mini-states whose laws shield the identities and assets of account holders. The G-7 says the narcotics business is worth \$600 billion a year. Huge as that number is, it is dwarfed by the amount Americans alone have sent to offshore tax havens, estimated to be six trillion dollars by Vernon Jacobs, editor of the Global Asset Protection newsletter.

—Investor's Business Daily, 8/1/2000

Civil

Russia plans to send an aircraft carrier battle group to the Mediterranean Sea at the end of the year. Independent analysts say that such a force would have the potential to complicate NATO military operations in the Balkans or the Middle East, and its establishment signals that Russia plans to become more involved in these regions. Vladimir Kuroyedov, commander-in-chief of the Russian navy said in a press interview, "I can assure you that the group of vessels flying the St. Andrew flag will have greater power than the power of the Soviet Mediterranean squadron in its time." Russia remains harshly critical of the U.S. and NATO for its military operations against Serbia in 1999, and has been hostile to a U.S. plan to deploy anti-ballistic missile defenses.

—Financial Times, 7/31/2000

The head of the Turkish army has called for a purge of all Islamist government employees, accusing them of trying to undermine the secular state. Huseyin Kivrikoglu, chief of the army's general staff, is quoted by the Hurriyet newspaper as saying that Islamists have penetrated official positions at every level. "The army expels this kind of people as soon as it detects them. If [the government] wants public offices to function properly it should do the same," he said. The comments come in the wake of a disagreement between Turkey's president and prime minister over a decree enabling the sacking of civil servants linked to Islamist and Kurdish movements. President Ahmet Necdet Sezer has twice refused to approve the decree. The draft is now to be submitted to parliament when its summer recess ends in October.

—BBC News, 8/31/2000

Israel

Never before did Israeli and Palestinian leaders lay their cards on the table, face up, for the other to see. Never before did they agree to make such a serious effort to agree on their three principal disputes—Jerusalem, borders, and refugees. And never before did such a dramatic attempt fail. Barak and Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasser Arafat came to grips with issues that Israeli citizens have for the most part disposed of with slogans and certainties. In his post-summit news conference, Barak lauded the "legitimate and important" discussion of these issues that had begun as a result of the summit. Yet how will the agonizing examination of these bottom-line disputes that took place at Camp David change Israeli thinking, if at all? A survey conducted by Dr. Mina Tzemah and published last Friday in *Yediot Aharonot* found that 70 percent of Israeli Jews opposed giving up any control in Jerusalem, even if the Palestinians agreed in return to declare an end to the conflict with Israel. This squared with the traditional "holy" consensus on keeping Jerusalem "the eternal, unified capital of the Jewish people under Israeli sovereignty."

—Jerusalem Post 7/31/2000

The Camp David summit has united the Arab world like the crisis preceding the Six Day War. But then, in 1967, the crisis caused unity on the Israeli side as well, and a national unity government was formed. The publicity boosted Yasser Arafat's reputation as a second Saladin, fighting heroically for Moslem rule in Jerusalem. It is aiding him in enlisting the help of the Moslem world for the Palestinians' struggle. Today, as in 1967, the Palestinians are making a settlement with Israel conditional on a prior agreement to grant the "right of return" to the Palestinians, in other words, to supplant the millions of Jewish immigrants who came to Israel under the Law of Return with millions of Palestinians [who claim their] ancestors lived in the country before the establishment of the state of Israel, and who want to challenge the Jewish character of the Jewish state.

—Jerusalem Post 8/2/2000

The Jewish National Fund will soon launch a five-part environment plan that will substantially shift the focus of the 98-year-old organization from its time-honored crusade of planting trees to saving water. The JNF will initiate an awareness and fund-raising campaign in the US that will highlight the severe shortage of water that Israel currently faces and the potentially disastrous situation in the near future, according to Ronald Lauder, president of the JNF in the US. "Israel could run out of water by 2012," Lauder said Wednesday at a luncheon of the JNF board of directors with Jerusalem Post editors. "And that's assuming that Israel has no major drought. If there is a major drought, that number gets closer to 2007 or 2005. There is no great mystery to how to do it," Lauder said. "The only one that's really difficult is desalination, which takes money. All the technology is there." The biggest difficulty is getting the government to recognize the urgency of the problem and to act on it now. For example, in order to get a desalination plant built and running, "it takes five to ten years. No government here, as

far as I can see, thinks in terms of longer than one or two years. We feel like we're David against the Goliaths of the Israeli bureaucracy. It's something very scary."

—Jerusalem Post 8/24/2000

Media analyst David Bedein of the Israel Resource News Agency in Jerusalem reports that the Palestinian Authority's new textbooks for grades one and six contain numerous passages that call on the students to liberate all of Jerusalem and all of Palestine. The new books also feature maps which do not show Israel, but portray all of "Palestine" instead. The Italian consul in Israel, Mr. Gianni Ghisi, who was responsible for organizing the funding of the European consuls for the new Palestinian textbooks, said that the PA would not let him see the new textbooks before they were published, in direct violation of an agreement stipulating that the Europeans would review the texts before publication. Bedein also reports that the task force on incitement established at the Wye Plantation Conference almost two years ago has ceased its meetings. The committee met regularly for over a year after its formation, discussing Palestinian incitement in its media and textbooks.

—Arutz 7, 8/31/2000

Book Review

***A World Lit Only by Fire*, William Manchester, Back Bay Books, 1992, 299 pages.**

No era has been a greater source of awe, honor, and wonder than the Medieval Period, the Middle Ages. Bible Students generally believe this was the time of the true church's wilderness wanderings in the 1,260 years of Revelation 11:3. The world was engulfed in deep superstition, ruled by the Catholic Church. As Will Durant observed in the Age of Faith, one secret of the papacy's hold on the masses was its capacity to inspire absolute terror. In the early 1500s however, the power of the Catholic Church was waning, reeling from the failure of the crusades, corruption in the Curia, and debauchery in the Vatican. Even so, Martin Luther's revolt against Rome seemed hopeless until he decided to address the German people in their own language rather than Latin. As Luther spoke to the common people, a new wave of nationalism fueled the growth of nation states and gradually led to the replacement of the Holy Roman Empire. Luther's revolt led to similar success in England, where loyal Englishman rallied to Henry VIII.

As the Renaissance dawned, multiple critics made it difficult for the church's intimidation to continue. Defenders of the Catholic faith such as Sir Thomas More encountered scholarly dissidents such as Copernicus and Erasmus. Luther and Erasmus successfully rallied the people on a spiritual level as Ferdinand Magellan unwittingly prepared to alter their perception of the physical by a voyage around the world. Manchester sees both activities as equally significant: "[Magellan] will be at sea when Luther takes his stand at Worms. Most of the rest of the contemporaneous tumult in Europe would seem irrelevant to him. However, all these events form a mosaic, and his expedition will become part of it. History is not a random sequence of unrelated events.

Everything affects, and is affected by, everything else. This is never clear in the present. Only time can sort out events. It is then, in perspective, that patterns emerge." Most students of the Bible will recognize this "mosaic" as the hand of God in the affairs of the earth.

Manchester organizes a tremendous amount of history into a compelling narrative which greatly aids an understanding of the Papacy, its rise, power, and decline. Known for his compelling historical works, Manchester sorts through the multiplicity of activity to isolate those few that drove the world into a most important time in the history of the true church—the Reformation.

—Len Grieb