

# THE HERALD OF CHRIST'S KINGDOM

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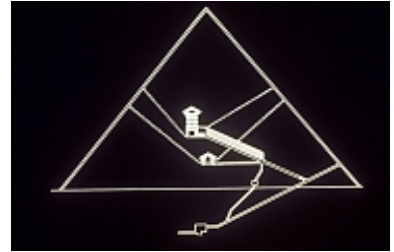
### The Great Pyramid

A Distant Revelation • The Giza Plateau  
Descending Passage and Pit • The Well and the Grotto  
Ascending Passage and Grand Gallery • Queen's Chamber  
King's Chamber • Isaiah 19

# In the Beginning

## The Great Pyramid

Of the seven wonders of the ancient world only the Great Pyramid near Cairo exists today. Around thirty-five pyramids were constructed in Egypt, all on the west side of the Nile. The Great Pyramid is the largest. It covers thirteen acres of the Giza plateau and would be about 480 feet high if the capstone were in place.



Archaeologists are most interested in the Great Pyramid because of its many unique features. Theories abound as to why it was built, the most popular being that it was a tomb for a pharaoh as were all the other pyramids. But why were rooms built high above ground level (in addition to the usual subterranean chamber) in this structure and not the others? Why no hieroglyphics on the walls describing the exploits of the pharaoh? Why were there working ventilation tubes—a unique feature of this structure—to one room and non-working tubes to the other? The guesses offered are fanciful at best.

The scientific and mathematical knowledge embedded in the Great Pyramid's construction lead some Bible Students to conclude the architect was God. Built long before the ten commandments were given to Moses in the mount, it stood then as it does now as a silent witness to God's plan for man. Like a parable in stone, the Great Pyramid "speaks" without words.

In this issue of *The Herald*, we look at the passages and rooms within this structure and see how they beautifully illustrate what God has planned for the ultimate blessing of all mankind. *A Distant Revelation* provides the overview for this subject. *The Giza Plateau* looks at the Great Pyramid in the context of its setting. Subsequent articles look in detail at all the important features found inside.

We end with a verse-by-verse examination of Isaiah 19, a chapter containing a cryptic reference to an altar and a pillar in the land of Egypt. Though serious students of the Bible differ about whether the Great Pyramid teaches anything at all, so many details fit that it is unlikely to be the result of coincidence. We trust that after reading this issue, our readers will be in a better position to make up their own minds.

## God's Hidden Language

### **A Distant Revelation**

*See this, you scoffers, wonder, and begone; for I am doing a deed in your days, a deed which you will never believe when you are told of it. —Acts 13:41 (New English)*

*Todd Alexander*

God speaks to us in many different and powerful ways. However, he sometimes reveals himself and his intentions through obscure people and hidden languages. For example, God dealt exclusively with Noah during his age because of Noah's faith. God asked him to do something very different in his time and Noah's obedience to God saved his life, the life of his family, and even the entire human race in that it was regenerated afterward.

God next worked with Abraham because of his obedient faith and even made an irrevocable pledge to him and his children after him. Today Abraham's children—the nation of Israel—are experiencing the fruits of their father's faith. Current events in that nation are the faint beginnings of the restitution blessings promised to their father almost four thousand years ago. Even though God's promise to Abraham was hidden from the rest of the world, his faithfulness to fulfill it was sure. We see God's divine plan of the ages progressing exactly as planned. Though hidden from the natural eye, through faith we see it acted out on the pages of human history.

Jesus continued the pattern of communicating in a hidden language by using parables to teach his disciples. When asked why he did this, he said he spoke in parables to hide the -intended meaning from the vast majority of people (see Matthew 13:10-13). Often what Jesus said was not what he meant. However, the word pictures he painted revealed eternal truths in a far more sublime way, and often resulted in a life-changing experience for those who listened.

Today, being in the "Day of the Lord" and with the benefit of hindsight, we have the privilege of seeing the fulfillment of many Hebrew prophecies. Prominent passages in Daniel, Ezekiel, Jeremiah, and Zechariah are all easily recognizable in the headlines of today's newspapers. While many of God's people in the past have had to walk by faith, today we almost walk by sight because of what we see happening in the world.

The Great Pyramid in Giza, Egypt, stands as the fulfillment of one of God's more obscure prophecies in the book of Isaiah. The prophecy reveals the Great Pyramid to be an ancient metaphor that God promised would speak to his people in modern times, a distant revelation. He also promised that it would reveal something about his character. The message of the Great Pyramid is now revealed to be both sublime and powerful and has had a profound effect on those who understand its sacred meaning.

The prophet Isaiah put a time stamp on the fulfillment of this prophecy by saying its purpose will be revealed during the "Day of the Lord." Many students of the Bible agree

we are now in that final day when God will reveal himself through his mighty power, first to those who are watching, then to the whole world of mankind. In less than two verses Isaiah answered the who, what, when, where, why, and how of the prophecy:

<b>Who?</b>	God
<b>What?</b>	The Great Pyramid.
<b>When?</b>	In the Day of the Lord
<b>Where?</b>	In Egypt.
<b>Why?</b>	God's time capsule.
<b>How?</b>	Through sign language, similar to the book of Revelation.

“In that day shall there be an **altar** to the Lord in the **midst** of the land of Egypt, and a **pillar** at the **border** thereof to the Lord. And it shall be for a **sign** and for a **witness** unto the Lord of hosts in the land of Egypt.”— Isaiah 19:19,20

In his prophecy Isaiah does not speak about a sacrificial altar where animal sacrifices were made, but of a holy place where God would demonstrate something more powerful. A pillar (Hebrew: memorial stone) in the middle of Egypt yet also at its border (“Giza” in Egyptian means “border”). Isaiah says that this Memorial Stone will be a sign (Hebrew: signal) and a witness (Hebrew: recorder, testimony) validating the God of the Bible. It will be a physical device that will demonstrate God's wisdom and power, recorded in ancient times and revealed in our day.

As shown in the photograph to the right, the Great Pyramid is situated in the midst of the land of Egypt in that it is at the focal center of the fertile Nile Delta region. Peculiarly it is also at the border because it is at the ancient division between Upper and Lower Egypt.

As the prophet Daniel predicted, the Time of the End in which we are now living has witnessed an explosion of knowledge and “running to and fro” (Daniel 12:1-4). The discoveries in Egypt have been almost as spectacular, giving us a detailed knowledge of their culture, religion, and aspirations. But there is one great problem most Egyptologists encounter when studying the knowledge of ancient Egypt: the uniqueness of the Great Pyramid. Although it is in Egypt, it is markedly different from any of the other thirty-five pyramids or monuments that are found in the Nile river basin. Its astronomical alignment, its precise construction, its upward passage system with air passages to the outside, its lack of hieroglyphics and wall paintings, its white polished exterior casing stones—all make the Great Pyramid different. There is no physical evidence that links its construction, purpose, and presence with the knowledge of ancient Egypt.

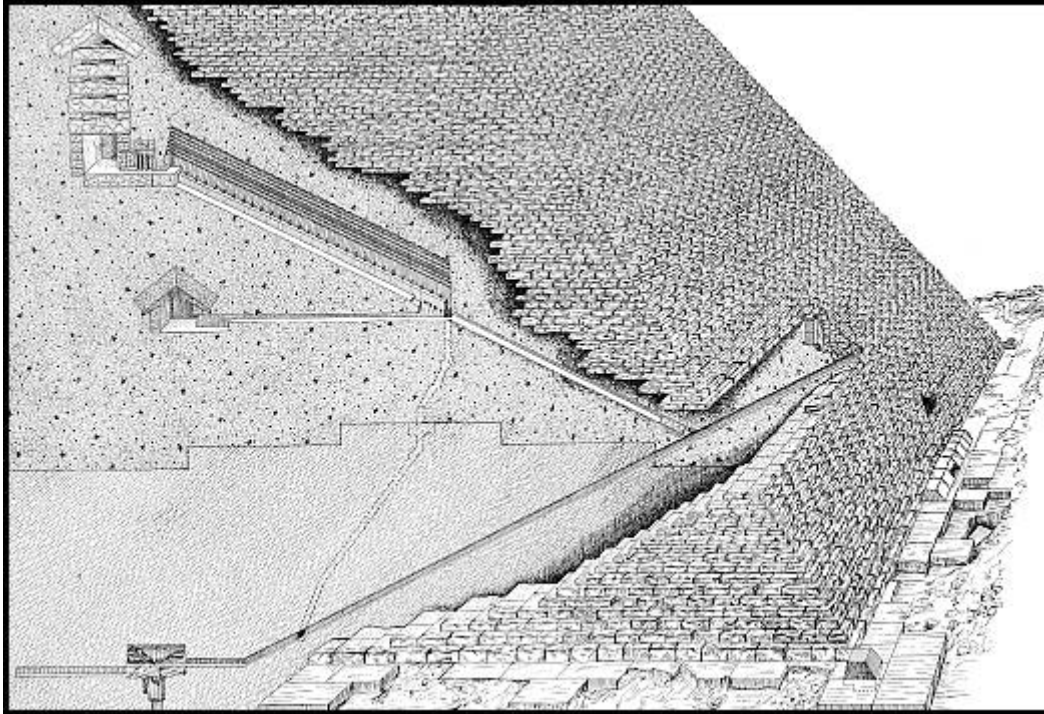
The Great Pyramid is definitely in the **middle** and at the **border** of Egypt as Isaiah's prophecy predicts, but it is not **of** Egypt; it never entombed a pharaoh or his treasure. In almost every respect it is unlike all the other pyramids and monuments of Egypt. In fact the Egyptian Book of the Dead describes its passages and chambers as a metaphorical tour of life, using language amazingly similar to that of the Bible!



**Great Pyramid from Outer Space  
Position of Great Pyramid Marked in White**

The scientific discoveries at the Great Pyramid over the past 150 years are almost unbelievable. The quality and amount of scientific information found to be concealed in the lines, measurements, and proportions of the Great Pyramid point to a supernatural architect. The pi proportion<sup>1</sup>, the golden section ratio<sup>2</sup> the distance to the sun, the length of the solar year, and the length of the pre-cession of the equinoxes<sup>3</sup> all prove that the architect of the Great Pyramid had scientific knowledge and wisdom we didn't know existed four thousand years ago! This amazing demonstration of terrestrial and celestial knowledge in the Great Pyramid confirms the prophetic claim that it would bear testimony of the Creator of the Universe, the Lord of Hosts.

The orientation of the Great Pyramid is amazingly precise: it is aligned to true north within four minutes of a degree. Dr. Richard Lepsius, a renowned Egyptologist, puts the Great Pyramid in a unique category of construction. He says all the other pyramids of Egypt are built from the inside out, while the Great Pyramid was built using a method of construction characterized by building from the outside perimeter inward. "Previous wise and providential thought" was also associated with this method of pyramid construction according to Dr. Lepsius.



## The Passages and Rooms

The passage system of the Great Pyramid is actually two passage systems joined by a blocked passage. The Descending Passage drops at a twenty-six degree angle from horizontal, is about 345-feet long, and ends in a forty-six-square-foot room commonly called the Pit. Though there is a vertical downward shaft in the middle of the Pit's floor and a fifty-three-foot long dead-end passage off its south wall, both lead nowhere and look unfinished. The Ascending Passage, a feature not found in any other Egyptian pyramid, branches upward from the Descending Passage at the same twenty-six degree angle from horizontal, but its entrance is blocked by a three-piece granite plug. As originally constructed there would be no access to the Great Pyramid's upper passages and chambers except for the hard-to-find Well Shaft near the bottom of the Descending Passage. The Well Shaft is an almost vertical tunnel roughly-cut through bedrock; it continues through the Great Pyramid's core stone all the way to the beginning of the Grand Gallery. The Well Shaft's opening into the Grand Gallery is also roughly cut, being out of character with the surrounding polished stone. It actually looks as if the opening occurred through a kind of controlled explosion.

The two upper rooms in the Great Pyramid are the focus of the Ascending Passage system. What is commonly called the Queen's Chamber is at the end of a horizontal passage. The Queen's Chamber has a gabled ceiling and is constructed of beautiful white limestone, a building material found nowhere else inside the Great Pyramid. It is finished and polished on all sides except for the floor, which remains rough. The King's Chamber, the highest room inside the Great Pyramid, is constructed of exactly one hundred red granite stones, beautifully polished and set with a precision not found anywhere else in Egypt. Its flat ceiling is made of nine huge slabs of granite each weighing approximately

one hundred tons. Above the King's Chamber, five construction chambers serve to displace the weight of the upper mass of the Great Pyramid from off the flat ceiling of the King's Chamber. These construction chambers also feature flat ceilings except for the top chamber which is gabled like the ceiling in the Queen's Chamber.

England's Sir Robert Menzies was the first explorer to connect the meaning of the Great Pyramid's passage system with the Bible (1865). He theorized that the passages in the Great Pyramid were an allegory of the **ages** of Bible history while its three chambers represented the **three destinations** of man found in the Bible. Professor Piazzi Smyth and Joseph A. Seiss, D.D., continued the discovery process and put together excellent written works showing a beautiful unfolding of God's plan encoded in the angles and measurements of the Great Pyramid's passage system. This metaphorical system of understanding the interior passages and chambers of the Great Pyramid closely aligns with the prophet Isaiah's prediction that the knowledge and wisdom of the God of the Bible will be demonstrated in a **memorial stone** in the **middle** of the land of Egypt in the **Day of the Lord**.

The three destinations of man described in the Bible are found in Matthew 7:13,14 and Isaiah 35:8. They are the Broad Road which leads to destruction, the Narrow Way which leads to life, and the Highway which leads to holiness.

The Broad Road leading to destruction is the metaphorical road upon which all mankind is walking. There is no way to escape death, the inevitable destination of that road. The Descending Passage is a natural representation of this Broad Road. First, one is forced to stoop within it, which shows that mankind cannot stand upright before God. With its twenty-six-degree downward descent, it is not easy to move within it and if one fell and there were no handrails added in modern times, it would be difficult to stop before hitting bottom.

The room at the end of the Descending Passage is the Pit which pictures death itself. It comes complete with a "bottomless pit" in the middle of the floor and a small continuation passage representing the second death of Revelation. The Pit represents the hereditary death we all die because of father Adam's disobedience. The only way out of the Descending Passage and Pit is via the Well Shaft. Correspondingly, the apostle Paul tells us the only way to life is through Jesus Christ (Romans 5).

Interestingly enough, the Well Shaft passes through a natural cave called the Grotto found at ground level. This natural cave has a rock formation in its north wall that looks amazingly like the head of a lamb and it existed well before the Great Pyramid was constructed. In one sense the Great Pyramid could be said to have been built around the Grotto. The language used to describe Jesus Christ and his work in the Scriptures is wonderfully similar. Jesus is said to be the Lamb of God slain from before the foundation of the world. How nicely this beautiful symbol of Jesus Christ is placed: within the foundation of the Great Pyramid but also in the center of the earth's land mass! Surely, the Descending Passage, Pit, Well, and Grotto encapsulate the biblical message of sin, atoning death, and redemption outlined in God's holy word the Bible.

The Granite Plug blocked the way for anyone to enter the Ascending Passage from the Descending Passage. Similarly the Law given to the Jewish nation blocked their ascent toward the ultimate destination of life. The apostle Paul says that the Law, which he thought to be unto life, he found to be unto death (Romans 7:10). The Granite Plug is made of red granite, a material only found in the plug and in the King's Chamber. Granite pictures things divine; the Granite Plug pictures the divine law of God that imperfect man could not keep.

The transition between the Hebrew age and the Christian age is recognized by the entire world as such a momentous event that it is the division between B.C. and A.D. dating. The apostle Paul uses the wonderful allegory of Abraham and his two wives to demonstrate God's relationship with two groups of people, the Hebrews and the Christians (Romans 4; Galatians 3). Hagar, the bondmaid, represents the Hebrews who were cast off in favor of Sarah, the free woman, who represents Christians. Paul uses the allegory of a well-known biblical story to detail the important philosophical concept of the bondage of the Law Covenant contrasted with the tremendous liberty now available through faith in Jesus Christ.

The Great Pyramid's demonstration of this transition is similarly profound. The Grand Gallery lies at the end of the Ascending Passage and continues upward at the same twenty-six-degree ascent angle. The Grand Gallery represents the invitation to a life in Jesus Christ, the one who through his voluntary sacrificial death opened up a new and a living way for all mankind to be justified before God, to stand upright before him, and to have an opportunity to escape hereditary death. Although the Ascending Passage is low and difficult to ascend, the Grand Gallery is twenty-eight-feet high and, if one uses the hand-holds on either side of the passage, is easy to ascend. This spacious Grand Gallery represents the new liberty offered through faith in Jesus Christ using the precious promises to help us along the way (2 Peter 1:4).

There is a great step at the end of the Grand Gallery. It corresponds to the decision point in our life when God extends an invitation to suffer and die with Jesus as part of the body of Christ. It is the point of consecration to do the will of God which Paul describes in Romans 12:1,2. The Great Step acts as a perch where we can look backward and see the faithfulness and drawing power of God who led us through some difficult experiences to get us to this point of decision.

The Ante-Chamber is a short passage and tiny room that connects the Grand Gallery with the King's Chamber. The room and its entrance represent the consecrated life of a Christian. Jesus said that those who would follow him must deny themselves, take up their cross, and follow him. The Ante-Chamber beautifully shows these three stages of a Christian's life. To enter the Ante-Chamber, one must stoop under a red granite overhanging block commonly called the Granite Leaf. The Granite Leaf represents the point of decision, the first stage, where we deny ourselves, give up our own wills, and take on the will of God through Christ which is our sanctification. At this point God separates us from the world, gives us the holy spirit (the earnest of our inheritance), and begins to teach us his truths. This is followed by taking up our cross and following Jesus,



doing what he would do, suffering the injustices he suffered, and filling up that which is behind of the sufferings of Christ (Colossians 1:24). Through our acceptance of this invitation, we become a member of the body of Christ, a glorious body which together with Jesus its head will be the great mediator between God and mankind in the kingdom. If we are faithful, we will receive immortality shown by entering the King's Chamber, a room made of polished red granite. The red granite represents the divine, immortal life promised to faithful Christians.

Jesus Christ, head and his body the church, will not be idle in their heavenly home. The Scriptures tell us that Jesus Christ and the church will have the specific job of helping all mankind—called the ransomed of the LORD—walk the Highway of Holiness described in Isaiah 35:8-10. This is the way leading to the third ultimate destination, earthly perfection.

This third way is illustrated in the Horizontal Passage with its destination the Queen's Chamber which represents the perfect earth spoken of in 2 Peter 3:13 wherein dwelleth righteousness. The ransomed of the Lord include all who have ever lived and died the - hereditary death of father Adam. They will be ransomed by the corresponding sacrificial death of Jesus Christ who tasted death for every human being (1 Timothy 2:6). All mankind will be brought to an understanding of the truth, not just through the ransom sacrifice of Jesus but by the sympathetic attendance and leadership of the Body of Christ who will act as the world's teacher.

The Queen's Chamber represents the ultimate destination of everlasting life on a perfect earth. Everlasting life will be given to all those who reach the end of the Highway of Holiness just as the Queen's Chamber is entered by all who walk the full length of the Horizontal Passage.

We see the wonderful plan of God outlined in the passages and rooms of this timeless - monument. Consistent with God's method of teaching through obscure people and hidden languages, the Great Pyramid houses a body of knowledge written in the silent but universally recognized language of symbol, line, and measure.

Invisible to the world, but powerful to those who through faith are watching, God is revealing himself to mankind as a wise master builder. He is **powerful** enough to encapsulate so much terrestrial and celestial knowledge into a single structure, **loving** enough to guide the entire human race through the experience of disobedience and sin into the salvation provided through his son, **just** enough to demand and then provide the legal means for such a great plan of salvation, and, finally, **wise** enough to reveal this plan to those he will use to perfect the world of mankind during the kingdom.

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1. "A transcendental number, approximately 3.14159, represented by the symbol  $\pi$ , that represents the relationship of the circumference to the diameter of a circle and appears as a constant in many mathematical expressions." -- *American Heritage Dictionary*, third ed.

2. A "ratio" observed especially in the fine arts, between the two dimensions of a plane figure of a line such that the smaller is to the larger as the larger is to the sum of the two a ratio of roughly three to five." -- *American Heritage Dictionary*, third ed.

3. A slow westward shift of the equinoxes along the plane of the ecliptic. resulting from the precession of Earth's axis of rotation, and causing the earth's equinoxes to occur earlier each sidereal year. The precession of the equinoxes occurs at a rate of 50.27 seconds of arc a year; a complete precession requires 25,800 years." -- *American Heritage Dictionary*, third ed.

## The "Stage"

# The Giza Plateau

*How great are his signs! and how mighty are his wonders! his kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and his dominion is from generation to generation.—Daniel 4:3*

**Russell Shallieu**

The pyramids at Giza have captured the attention and imagination of those who have gazed upon their lofty heights since time immemorial. Like sentinels the pyramids have been mute witnesses to history as it unfolded over more than four millennia. Napoleon's declaration, "Soldiers, from the height of these pyramids, forty centuries look down upon you," well expresses the reality and endurance of these monuments.

Before the Egyptian caliphs pillaged the exterior casing stones for building purposes in about 900 A.D., the smooth polished surfaces reflected the brilliance of the sun in the western (Sahara) desert. This dazzling spectacle was not limited to just a secular audience but was also seen by familiar biblical personalities including Abraham, Joseph and his family, Moses and his family, and an even more notable family which was escaping a deadly decree: Joseph, Mary, and the young child Jesus. "[Joseph] arose [and] took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt and was there until the death of Herod" (Matthew 2:14,15).

But it wasn't until the English astronomer John Greaves published a work in 1646 entitled *Pyramidographia, or A Discourse of the Pyramids in Aegypt*, describing the pyramids' significance in general and that of the Great Pyramid in particular, that interest was kindled in the scholarly and scientifically-minded community. The French furthered the historical and scholarly cause with the Napoleonic expedition of 1798, but scientific objectives were not realized on any great scale until the work of William F. Petrie. More importantly, the work of Robert Menzies, Joseph Seiss, Piazzi Smyth, and John and Morton Edgar opened the door to understanding the biblical message of the pyramid.

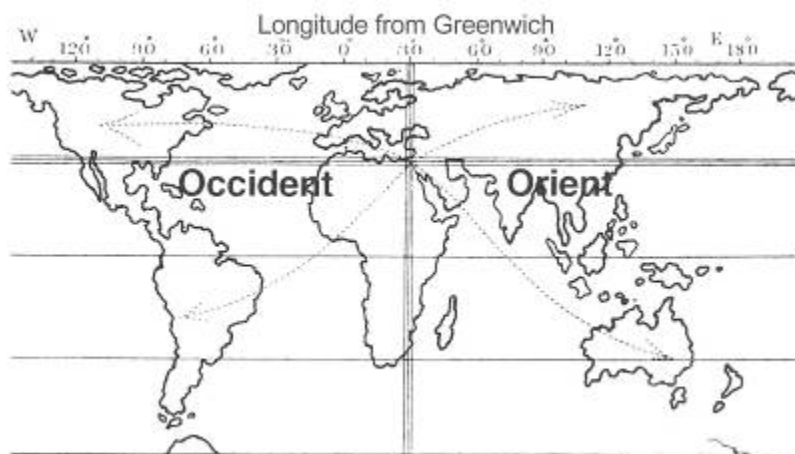
As if to complement the Great Pyramid and its counsel, we find that the Lord has provided other structures of lesser quality to illustrate certain spiritual lessons. The Great Sphinx and Solar Boat also have a story to tell as we shall see.

For example, the sun is the center of our solar system and well illustrates the dependence a Christian has upon Jesus, the true "**Sun** of righteousness" (Malachi 4:2). Likewise everything on the plateau depends upon the Great Pyramid, the focus of attention on a kind of theatrical stage. Some scholars suggest a true pyramid is most likely a solar symbol. One finds the distance from earth to sun indicated by the height of the Great Pyramid (that height multiplied by  $10^9$  yields the distance from earth to sun). The Great Pyramid is a nearly perfect pyramid and a fitting solar symbol. Nevertheless, a point of greater importance is that the plateau illustrates the history of man, i.e., the trial, fall, and redemption of Adam's progeny.

The prophetic meaning of Isaiah 19:19-21 describing an altar to the LORD in the midst of the land of Egypt, and a pillar at the border thereof to the LORD, has been explained in the preceding article. The photograph below shows how dramatically the Great Pyramid fulfills Isaiah's words.



In the Bible "Egypt" is often used to illustrate the entire human race; thus it is no surprise that the Great Pyramid is also situated in the center of earth's habitable land mass in the sense that a line of latitude passing through the Great Pyramid divides the earth into two hemispheres of equal land mass; a line of longitude does the same thing.



**Each hemisphere contains an equal area of landmass**

Consider the evidence that provides a link to the focal point of the plateau, the Great Pyramid. Imagine you are a witness to its construction in 2170-2140 B.C. Over the course of thirty years some two and one-half to four million blocks of core masonry, each

weighing about two and one-half tons, have been chiseled for positioning in this great temple-like building. Of all these building blocks, only the top stone seems an apparent misfit. Unlike all the others, it is a pyramid unto itself—its shape being in reality a **perfect** pattern for the rest of the building—but not recognized for its significance until the structure is nearly complete. How fitting then is the example that Jesus was, in a symbolic sense, this very stone, the stone the builders rejected: “He came unto his own, and his own received him not” (John 1:11).

Because of its design, a pyramid has one unique corner compared to the other four. The apostles Peter and Paul, and our Lord himself, seem to allude to the Great Pyramid in Egypt for by no coincidence the Great Pyramid, according to historical record, has been, and still remains, devoid of its top stone. But as the Bible suggests, Jesus will one day take his rightful position: “Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded. Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed [i.e., rejected], the same is made the head of the corner” (1 Peter 2:6, 7). Paul writes, “[We] are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone” (Ephesians 2:20).

Jesus is the pattern to which the entire structure must conform: “Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering, for a **pattern** to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting” (1 Timothy 1:16). Faithful Christians must be conformed to his likeness if they are to be a part of the temple, dwelling place, or house of God. “For whom he foreknew, he also foreordained to be **conformed** to the image of his son” (Romans 8:29, ASV). “Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a **spiritual house**” (1 Peter 2:5).

### The Counterfeit Copy

The Great Pyramid has a primary importance on the plateau. The second pyramid is both naturally, as well as symbolically, a [crude] copy of it. The prophet Zechariah, in what would otherwise be an unsolvable riddle, alludes to this: “Who art thou, O great **mountain**? before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain: and he shall bring forth the headstone thereof with shoutings, crying, Grace, grace unto it” (Zechariah 4:7). Even as our Lord is the rightful heir and will one day be recognized as the head, typified by Zerubbabel, of a righteous kingdom, it is also true that God has permitted Satan to establish a kingdom of his own, a distorted copy or counterfeit of the true and perfect original pattern. Satan’s kingdom, like the second pyramid, is on a course for destruction. Mountains represent kingdoms in Scripture (see Job 9:5; Psalm 46:3; Psalm 48:1; Isaiah 11:9; Isaiah 13:4). Satan from the very beginning has desired to rule and have a dominion even as does the heavenly Father: “For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the **mount** of the congregation, in the sides of the north” (Isaiah 14:13).

This lesson in contrasts—of good versus evil—is also shown in Egypt by the design of its numerous temples. Each temple, with scarcely an exception, has a two-compartment sanctuary with an outer court, patterned after the Holy and Most Holy compartments of the Tabernacle and Solomon’s temple, structures that predated Egyptian temples of this design. The Tabernacle and temple were of Divine commission; temples in Egypt were constructed under pagan influences. Similarly, where the Lord instituted various animal sacrifices to typify things spiritual, the great Adversary promoted the notion that the animal itself was to be revered as if it were a god of one sort or another. Hence, the Egyptians worshiped the Apis bull, the Horus falcon, the Anubis jackal, Bast cat, Thoth-baboon, and Wadjet cobra, among others. As we read, “Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshiped and served the **creature** more than the Creator” (Romans 1:25).

Another proof that the second pyramid is a false copy of the Great Pyramid is the rather famous (as well as conspicuous) Great Sphinx. It is directly associated with the second pyramid by a causeway (a pavement similar to a roadway) connecting the second pyramid to a lower valley temple next to the Sphinx. The Sphinx is a most peculiar structure; it is formed from a natural outcrop of limestone rock, 240 feet long and some sixty-six feet high from ground level. Unlike all other statues in Egypt which have the head of an animal and the body of a man, the Sphinx has the body of a lion and a man’s head—similar to that found in Babylon and associated with Nimrod. The Scriptures clearly identify the Adversary as not only the god of this world (2 Corinthians 4:4), but also as a Christian’s predator: “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a **roaring lion**, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour” (1 Peter 5:8).

Satan is a master at copying. In this peculiar formation he has capitalized on this imagery of a lion to copy the role of a far greater “lion” than he, namely, Jesus: “One of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the **Lion of the tribe of Juda**, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof” (Revelation 5:5).

Many scholars think the Great Sphinx represents the sky-god, Haremakhet (“Horus on the Horizon”). This reminds us of those angels who sinned and are characterized as fallen angels, whose domain is described by the Greek word *Tartaroo* found only in 2 Peter 2:4, a likely reference to earth’s outer atmosphere. Paul refers to Satan, the prince of the fallen angels, as the “prince of the power of the air” (Ephesians 2:2).

From a more common point of view, but nevertheless significant, the Arabic name - ascribed to the Great Sphinx is Abu el-Hol (“Father of Terror”). Even the word “sphinx” (“living idol”) suggests the identity of one who has usurped the rightful position of another: “Ye shall make you no idols nor graven image, neither rear you up a standing image, neither shall ye set up any image of stone in your land, to bow down unto it: for I am the LORD your God” (Leviticus 26:1).

Thus we conclude that Satan has masterminded a counterfeit kingdom in the second pyramid and Sphinx complete with disciples who follow his deceptive practices: “Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!” (Isaiah 5:20).

## The Flood

The Giza Plateau has yet another story to tell and that story relates to Noah's flood. Noah, like his son Ham, migrated to Egypt and was joined much later by Shem. We do have evidence within the plateau that is suggestive of this cataclysmic event and its importance not only to this biblical family but also to humankind. This evidence is the Solar Boat, or Bark, which was discovered in 1954 and is today housed in a museum on the south side of the Great Pyramid. The boat, and another that remains in situ, was originally contained in a rectangular rock pit, covered by eighty-one sixteen-ton limestone blocks. Over the course of more than sixteen years, it was carefully removed and reassembled like a complicated puzzle into a fully fashioned boat measuring over 130 feet long with a displacement of about forty tons. According to Egyptian mythology such a boat would provide transport for the pharaoh and his entourage across the River Styx to the safe harbor of the afterlife. But more importantly, according to biblical reckoning, this boat would serve as a reminder that Noah and his family were carried from what otherwise would have been certain death to a new life, a new beginning. Their lives were spared by means of a "bark" of considerably greater size. After the flood which destroyed everyone else, Noah and his family regenerated the human race.

As "the heavens declare the glory of God" (Psalm 19:1) even to the point where we can perceive the gospel written in the stars, one day it will be apparent to all that God has placed the Great Pyramid as his witness upon this plateau to illustrate his plan for man!

## Death

# Descending Passage and Pit

*All go unto one place; all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again.*  
—*Ecclesiastes 3:20*

**Michael Nekora**

Nearly all the pyramids in Egypt were built as tombs for powerful Egyptian pharaohs. The entrance was always on the north face, probably because a stationary north star provided a fixed reference point in the night sky to align the descending passageway as it was being constructed. This indirectly provides a way to date a pyramid's construction since astronomers can calculate when a north star would shine down a passage descending at a given angle.<sup>1</sup>

In the case of the Great Pyramid this same north star could also be used to align the upward passage which has the same angle of ascent. Some theorize that the builders used a flat, mirror-like surface—perhaps liquid mercury in a pan—at the intersection of the Descending Passage and the Ascending Passage and reflected the light of the stationary north star upwards. That technique would allow them to maintain perfect alignment of the passage as construction continued year after year.

The only entrance to the Great Pyramid was about fifty feet above the base and about twenty-four feet east of the center line. It was cleverly concealed. The knowledge of how to find it was probably lost with the death of the builders and their immediate successors. This changed in 820 A.D. when Abd-Allah Al-Mamoun, a caliph from Baghdad, believing that this great monument contained a cache of secret treasure and learning, assembled a team of men to force their way in. They began much too low and on the center line. The work was extremely difficult. Although limestone may be softer than granite, this limestone was stronger than their hammers and chisels. Al-Mamoun's solution was to heat a section with fire then, when it was red hot, throw cold vinegar on it to make it crack.

These “safe crackers” could have tunneled completely through the pyramid and come up empty handed were it not for a fortuitous accident. A worker heard the sound of something heavy falling somewhere within the pyramid. They changed the direction of the bore and eventually intersected the Descending Passage.

The heavy “something” that fell was a stone covering the granite plug. This revealed the location of a secret passage. Unable to attack the granite as they had the limestone, the boring team simply attacked the limestone on one side of the plug. To this day anyone visiting the interior of the Great Pyramid enters the Descending Passage via Al-Mamoun's forced entrance, and gets to the upper passages and rooms by climbing around the granite plug, following the same path as those who did it nearly twelve hundred years ago.



Al-Mamoun's men must have been keenly disappointed for they found absolutely nothing in the Great Pyramid. And there was no sign that others had beaten them to a treasure. This huge structure did contain a cache of secret learning, but Al-Mamoun never benefitted from it.

## The Passage

In other Egyptian pyramids the single passage descends from an entrance to a subterranean pit. Such would seem to be the case with this pyramid as well. The long, steep Descending Passage drops from a high elevation to a pit nearly 120 feet below ground level. There is apparently nothing else; there is no escape.

This is an apt metaphor for the human race. Our first parents were created perfect. They entered life at a high level and could have continued to live at that level indefinitely if they had simply followed the rules. But they disobeyed and began to die. Abel's death was the first recorded in Scripture (Genesis 4:8). Some individuals lived for centuries, others did not. But whether life spans were long or short, all were condemned to death and there was no escape. "As in Adam all die" (1 Corinthians 15:22).



## The Pit

The subterranean pit has reasonably smooth, finished walls and ceiling, but the floor is uneven and completely unfinished. There is a hole in the center of the floor which was twelve feet deep in 1838. An English explorer at that time dug it deeper in a vain attempt to find something more. Also unexpected is a fifty-three-foot long low passage leading from the south wall to a dead end.

In all the Egyptian pyramids an underground crypt is associated with death. The unfinished floor with its hole is probably meant to signify a bottomless pit. "There are three things that are never satisfied, yea, four things say not, It is enough: **the grave**; and

the barren womb; the earth that is not filled with water; and the fire that saith not, It is enough” (Proverbs 30:15,16).

The low passage from the pit leads nowhere, certainly not to life. It brings no air in from the outside as do tubes in the King’s Chamber. So the symbolism continues to be associated with death.

In Christ’s kingdom when the world of mankind will be resurrected, life will still be conditional. The general rule that “the soul that sinneth it shall die” (Ezekiel 18:4) is God’s rule for all eternity.

The Bible calls death in the kingdom the “second death.” Those who are united with Christ to bring blessings to the earth will never die, but there is no such guarantee for those on earth. “Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years” (Revelation 20:6). “He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death” (Revelation 2:11).

Thus the small passageway extending south from the Pit aptly pictures the second death during the time of Christ’s kingdom.

### **Come Up Higher**

A descending passage and a pit are all that can be found in most every other pyramid and such it appears in this one as well. But appearances are deceiving. There are grander things in store for those who seek them in the Great Pyramid, things at much higher levels. “My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts” (Isaiah 55:8,9).

Like the experience of the two witnesses described in Revelation 11:12, a voice calls “come up higher.” The next article explains how we can do that without forcing our way around the granite plug as a previous intruder did. “He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber” (John 10:1).

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1. Due to the precession of the earth's axis, similar to that of a spinning top, the north celestial pole seems to inscribe a cone in the heavens requiring exactly 25,800 years for one cycle.

## Jesus in the Pyramid

# The Well and the Grotto

*For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.*  
—1 Corinthians 15:22

*Carl Hagensick*

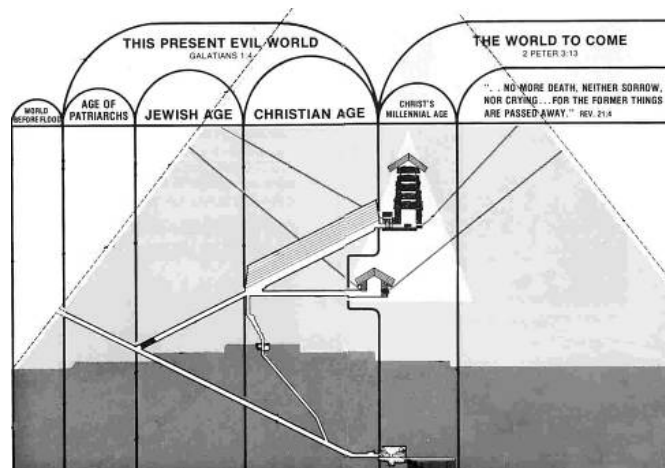
From a construction standpoint, the grotto is the most important room in the Great Pyramid. It is a natural depression in the limestone base for the building. As such, it existed before the structure was erected. The fact that it is connected by the well-shaft with the intricate system of passages suggests that it was a part of the original design. Since it does pre-date the pyramid as a whole, the layout of the complete configuration must have been planned around it.

In determining the possible significance of this seemingly unimportant chamber, we should consider three aspects of its unique location:

1. Its position on the basal plain underlying the pyramid.
2. Its relationship to the granite plug that blocks the Ascending Passage.
3. Its horizontal position in the well shaft connecting the Descending Passage with the upper walkways.

## The Chart of the Ages and the Pyramid

There is an amazing correspondence between the passageways of the pyramid and the Chart of the Ages found in the back of Volume 1 of *Studies in the Scriptures*. When the passages and chambers are viewed from the west, the blueprints of the two overlay as shown in the illustration below.



Plane R, the plane of human depravity and death on the chart, is equivalent to a horizontal line drawn at the level of the Pit; Plane N, the plane of human perfection is on the level of the Queen's Chamber; and Plane K, the divine nature, is equal to the floor of the King's Chamber.

The vertical lines of the Jewish age fall in the same location as the blocked Ascending Passage, picturing the law, while the Gospel age lies where the Grand Gallery is located.

### **The Basal Plane**

Though nearly level, the natural desert floor supporting the Great Pyramid has one section of ground slightly higher than the rest of the base. It contains an underground chamber called a grotto (see photograph on p. 16). The grotto is a natural formation pre-dating the pyramid itself. In like manner, Jesus was the "lamb slain from the foundation of the world" (Revelation 13:8).

The chart in *Studies of the Scriptures* (vol. 1) places Israel on a higher plane than depraved mankind who do not have the benefits of the laws and oracles of God; likewise the basal plane of the pyramid has one section higher than most of that plane. In that section, the highest layer of the basal plane, the grotto is located. So it was as a child of the Jewish race that Jesus had a special relationship to that particular people in addition to his relationship to mankind in general.

As the formation of the grotto was neither dug by human hands nor constructed as part of the pyramid itself, so Jesus, though born of Mary, did not partake of the imperfection of human genes. As it is written, "Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me" (Hebrews 10:5).

### **Relationship to the Granite Plug**

Granite is only found in the plug, the King's Chamber, and the Anti-Chamber. As the most precious of the pyramid's building materials, it is equivalent to what gold represents in the Tabernacle and temple: things divine. The granite floor, walls, and ceiling in the King's Chamber are a picture of the divine nature in the same way as the golden ark in the Tabernacle showed Christ and his church possessing the divine nature. The use of granite for the plug that blocks the entrance to the Ascending Passage is an apt symbol of the divine law which God gave to Moses at Sinai and which, because they could not keep it, kept the ancient Israelites from reaching the salvation represented in the upper passages and chambers.

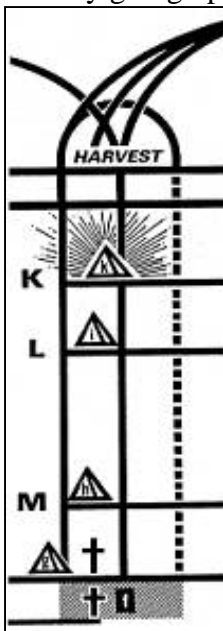


## The Grotto

The grotto, showing Jesus as a perfect human being, is on precisely the same level as the granite plug. Jesus was the only human being to completely meet all the exacting requirements of God's holy law. By so doing he demonstrated his own perfection and his qualifications to be a ransom for Adam and the human race that sprang from him.

## Relationship to the Upper End of the Well Shaft

Not only does the grotto hold a particular relationship to the granite plug, being on the same horizontal plane, but it is also nearly in vertical alignment with the upper entrance to the well shaft. This upper entrance stands at the juncture of four passageways: the Ascending Passage, the Horizontal Passage leading to the Queen's Chamber, the Grand Gallery going upward to the King's Chamber, and the well shaft twisting downward to the Descending Passage.



Most students of the Great Pyramid agree that this junction point with the Ascending Passage represents the death of Jesus Christ on Calvary's cross. Paul writes that Jesus "abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel" (2 Timothy 1:10). Immortality is shown in the King's Chamber on the fiftieth layer of masonry, and perfect human life is pictured in the Queen's Chamber on the twenty-fifth course. Both are guaranteed by the atoning sacrifice of Calvary.

The vertical alignment of the grotto and the upper entrance of the well shaft suggest a close connection between the representations of those two locations. The section of the Chart of the Ages reproduced here is the harvest of the Jewish age covering the period of time from Christ's first advent to the destruction of Jerusalem by the Roman armies under General Titus. During this period God's favor was transferred from the

nation of Israel to the Christian church composed of both Jews and Gentiles.

Notice the two crosses in vertical alignment. The upper one is on Plane N indicating human perfection, either actual or reckoned. The lower one is on Plane P, the plane of the elevation of Israel to God's favor during the Jewish age. The small letter "f" designates the shaded area on Plane P during this harvest. This shaded area represents the time of trouble that ended that age climaxing with the destruction of the great temple of Herod. As the upper cross depicts the death of Jesus for Adam and the human race, so the lower cross shows the relationship of that death in removing the curse of the law that resulted from the failure of the Jewish people to faithfully keep those commandments.

It is this lower cross that is also emphasized in the grotto because it lies on a lower level than the commencement of the Grand Gallery which also represents Jesus' death.

At the juncture of the Ascending Passage and the Grand Gallery lies the opening of the well shaft that observers say resembles an explosion, leaving the impression that the greater height of the Grand Gallery was sudden and abrupt. It is reminiscent of the poet's line, "He has burst the bonds of death." Since the Grand Gallery represents the walk of the Christian during the Gospel age and the Ascending Passage the walk of Israel under the law, this difference aptly depicts the effects of justification through the merit of Christ's sacrifice. Through justification Christians are reckoned as perfect human beings while actually in bodies of imperfect flesh. This gives them the freedom of which Paul wrote: "Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage" (Galatians 5:1). Similarly, in the resurrection of the human race, the blood of Christ will atone for the death sentence of Adamic sin and give men the opportunity to rise to a position where they can progress on the "way of holiness" (Isaiah 35:8) along the Horizontal Passage to their ultimate goal of everlasting life shown in the Queen's Chamber.

### **The Lamb of God**

Finally, and somewhat more speculatively, some who have made the effort to scale the narrow well shaft to the grotto have noticed an unusual rock formation in the natural walls of the grotto which bears a resemblance to the head of a sheep. Whether this is a part of the design or not, the grotto does appear to be an excellent representation of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, "the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29).

## Traveling Upward

# Ascending Passage and Grand Gallery

*All things are of God who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ.*

—2 Corinthians 5:18

*David A. Stein*

The upward passage system makes the Great Pyramid of Giza unique among the Egyptian pyramids. No other Egyptian pyramid has an upward passage above the ground line. Consequently, the presence of the Ascending Passage in this grandest of Egyptian pyramids warrants close examination.

## Construction Details

The upward passage was concealed at the time the pyramid was built. When moving down the Descending Passage, one passes the hidden place where the Ascending Passage begins. The designer clearly wanted to make its discovery difficult. Were it not for an event in 820 A.D. when Al-Mamun and his men were digging in the pyramid, its presence might not have been discovered until modern times. The vibrations from the diggers loosened the limestone cover in the yet-to-be-discovered Descending Passage. Because the workers heard the material fall, they immediately changed the direction of tunneling and emerged in the Descending Passage. They saw the face of a large granite block and dug out the softer limestone around it to gain access into the Ascending Passage. It was this event that opened up the entire passage system of the pyramid.

The Ascending Passage is inclined upward at an angle of about twenty-six degrees from the horizontal. Although it intersects with the Descending Passage, the original builders hid its entry. The presence of this huge block of granite—actually three blocks stacked against each other—which is called the Granite Plug by scholars, is curious. It is not only part of the original design, it is a second effort to keep anyone from entering the Ascending Passage. The removal of such a “plug” would be nearly impossible.

The size of the Ascending Passage is the same as the Descending Passage: about 4-feet wide, 3½-feet high. Because of the low ceiling, one must bow low to make the difficult climb. Although an ascent in this cramped passage is difficult, it is a bit easier than traveling down the Descending Passage because the upward inclination of the roof provides some advantage as one bends forward, something that does not happen in the Descending Passage.

In 1872 explorers who were carefully measuring the Ascending Passage found that although most of the passage is made of individual stones placed carefully next to each other, there were three great transverse stone plates with the passage cut cleanly through them. At these junctions the stones formed the walls, ceiling, and floor of the passage. They came to be called the “girdles.” They are oriented vertically in the passage like gigantic “doughnuts.”

The Ascending Passage floor line is over 125 feet long from its intersection with the floor of the Descending Passage to the start of what is called the Grand Gallery. The Grand Gallery is a dramatic change from the lower Ascending Passage because it is so lofty and roomy. The Grand Gallery is almost twice as wide and has a ceiling seven times higher than the Ascending Passage. The width of the Grand Gallery at floor level is the same as the Ascending Passage, but there are ramps on either side of the passage that produce a total width of about seven feet. Holes in the ramps provide places to hold to make that slippery ascent easier.



The commencement of the Grand Gallery also marks the intersection with the Horizontal Passage leading to the Queen's Chamber. The start of the floor of the Grand Gallery is some seven feet above the floor of the Horizontal Passage, so to get up into the Grand Gallery, one must climb one of the ramps.

This intersection is also marked by another interesting feature. At the commencement of the Grand Gallery on the western wall, there is a disruption in the normal smooth masonry work of the floor and walls. About four feet of the western wall at that point appears as if it had been opened by an explosion. The limestone of the western ramp is fractured and a hole down into the pyramid is present. This hole has been called the "Well" and the tunnel down into the interior of the pyramid the "Well Shaft." This Well Shaft snakes downward to the lower Descending Passage,

well below the ground level of the Great Pyramid.

The Grand Gallery floor line runs over 156 feet from the end of the Ascending Passage to a point above the great step at the top. The upper walls of this passage form a series of seven vertical corbels with each corbel making the width between the vertical walls a little narrower. It is an impressive sight!

At the top of the Grand Gallery there is a great step some three feet high. Because of the inclination of the floor, it is difficult to get over it. The top of this step is on the same level as the floor of the King's Chamber.

### **Symbolic Meanings**

If the Descending Passage represents the downward, sinful course of mankind from the first rebellion in Eden, it is logical that an upward passage would indicate some change from that downward course.



Bible history teaches that God selected a nation with which he would have a special relationship. That nation was ancient Israel. God's choice of Israel was mandated by a covenant that he had made centuries earlier with his friend, Abraham (see 2 Chronicles 20:7; Isaiah 41:8; James 2:23; Galatians 3). Because of the faith of Abraham and his trust and love of God, it was his seed that God selected to bless others. That seed became the nation of Israel.

God selected Israel and gave that nation his law. The people clearly saw this as a favorable development and were perhaps motivated by the promise that the one who keeps the law will live (Leviticus 18:5). The entire nation enthusiastically accepted this Law Covenant and agreed to its terms (Exodus 24:7).

To be sure, the Law Covenant did provide many blessings. It helped the people understand what God wanted. It helped them identify sin. It provided a way to expiate both national and individual sin through the sacrifices of the Law. But it did not provide life. All who labored under the Law continued to labor under sin and they died. Furthermore, the Law placed great requirements on the nation and governed most of the details of their lives. In this sense it became a burden for them since it revealed their own sinful state. Thus it had the dual characteristic of both blessing and cursing.

The Ascending Passage represents the time of Israel under the Law Covenant. It points - upward in contrast to the downward course of everyone else. It was to have lifted the nation to a purer and holier existence. But no one could keep this law perfectly. There were continual sacrifices of animals to cleanse the sin that never disappeared. The Law never lifted anyone out of sin. The low ceiling of the Ascending Passage shows this burden of the law.

The great granite rock blocking the entrance to the Ascending Passage represents God's divine law. Granite is much harder than limestone and corresponds to things divine, things much more enduring (hard) than earthy things. This law is forever condemning imperfect people since no one can perfectly obey it. Consequently none can extricate themselves from the condemnation of sin (Psalm 49:7,8). If help were to come, its source could not be among the progeny of Adam.

Eventually help did arrive. The long Jewish Age during which the Law Covenant was in control (the lower Ascending Passage) brings us to the time of Jesus Christ, a man who was not from Adamic stock and so did not inherit Adamic sin. He and he alone possessed what was required to redeem humanity. The death of Jesus opened a door to blessings that could scarcely be believed. Thus began the Gospel age symbolized by the Grand Gallery.

The Grand Gallery has a high and beautiful ceiling, one that is seven times higher than the ceiling of the Ascending Passage! The number seven is frequently symbolic of things divine. The Gospel age calling is indeed a divine calling (2 Peter 1:4). The upward climb in the Grand Gallery is still difficult (Matthew 7:14), but one may stand erect while negotiating the ascent. The loftiness and greater width of the Grand Gallery may well

depict the blessings of the yoke of Christ (Matthew 11:29). Under that yoke there is greater liberty and divine hope. The handholds of the passage suggest the many helps available to a Christian in his walk.

Since the Grand Gallery represents the Gospel age, the beginning of the Grand Gallery marks the death and resurrection of Jesus. The Scriptures teach that Jesus died and went to “hell,” the common grave of mankind (Acts 2:27,31). Precisely at this point we have a shaft to the lower parts of the pyramid. The symbolism shows how Jesus’ death brought him low into the grave. But he was resurrected by the heavenly father and burst forth to a new existence on the divine plane of immortality. Thus the “Well“ symbolizes the resurrection of Jesus from the grave.

The Grand Gallery, representative of the Gospel age high calling, terminates at the level of the King’s Chamber. The ultimate hope of the church is to be “kings and priests” with Christ Jesus (Revelation 1:6; 5:10). How appropriate that this wonderful passage should lead directly to the level of the king.

### **The Rectification Factor**

The entire passageway system is off-center. The builders chose to not place it in the precise north-south centerline of the pyramid. All of the passages are offset to the east exactly fourteen royal cubits, the exact distance that the Grand Gallery rises above the height of the Ascending Passage (see p. 30). What does this mean?

In *Pyramidology* (book 2, chap. 2) Adam Rutherford offers an appealing explanation. As man fell into sin, he lost the perfection he had when he was created and began to die. One might say he became off-center. The position of the entire pyramid passageway system off-center suggests this condition of imperfection. The distance away from center was called the Displacement Factor. Consequently the goal of Atonement is to recover man to the perfection he originally enjoyed.

The Grand Gallery, marking the commencement of the Gospel age and the sacrificial death of Jesus, is the beginning of correcting the problem of sin. How appropriate that the expansion in the height of the Grand Gallery is precisely this off-set distance. In this case it no longer represents the displacement of man from perfection, but rather the rectification of sin and death. Thus the bringing of things back in line is an undoing of the evil that was done. This same distance, when symbolizing the correction of things, is called the Rectification Factor. In harmony with this we find that the King’s Chamber is oriented such that one part of it is under the north-south centerline of the pyramid. The distance from the center of the entrance into the King’s Chamber to the center of the coffer is exactly 286 inches—the Rectification Factor! Bringing mankind back to the center line means they will be ultimately blessed by a restoration to all that God intended for them. The measurements are wonderfully in harmony with the general symbolism and are another indicator that the Great Pyramid is another revelation of God’s Plan.

## Summary

The construction of the upward-pointing passages clearly parallels many of the important themes of the Bible. Most significantly do we see the death and resurrection of Jesus and the call of the church. This witness of the Plan of God sits quietly in Egypt until the kingdom is fully set up. Then mankind will clearly see that God has had their eternal blessing in mind since the earliest of times.

## Everlasting Life on Earth

### Queen's Chamber

*And he will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering cast over all people, and the vail that is spread over all nations.—Isaiah 25:7*

*Daniel Wozniak*

From exceedingly ancient times, the pyramids of Giza have been associated with enigmas many have tried to explain. Among this collection of pyramids the Great Pyramid stands apart because of its complexity, its different passages and rooms, but also because of the complete absence of inscriptions and wall paintings. Many scientists throughout the world as well as most Egyptologists have sought to explain the mysteries of this pyramid.

Every part of this pyramid is a revelation of the plan of God. This is particularly true of the room known as the Queen's Chamber and the long Horizontal Passage leading to it. Particularly mysterious are these areas:

1. The Horizontal Passage is as high as the Descending Passage for about six-sevenths of its length, but then the height increases to allow a person to stand upright (see photos to the left).
2. In one wall there is a corbeled niche containing nothing.



3. Ventilation tubes to this room were covered with stone, and recently discovered barriers to keep air from entering were placed further up these tubes.

The Queen's Chamber sits on the twenty-fifth course of masonry and represents, as suggested in *Studies in the Scriptures* (vol. 3), the ultimate destination of the Highway of Holiness: perfect human life on earth for the world of mankind. We know that during this time the earth will become a paradise as it was at the beginning, when all mankind will live in harmony with their creator.

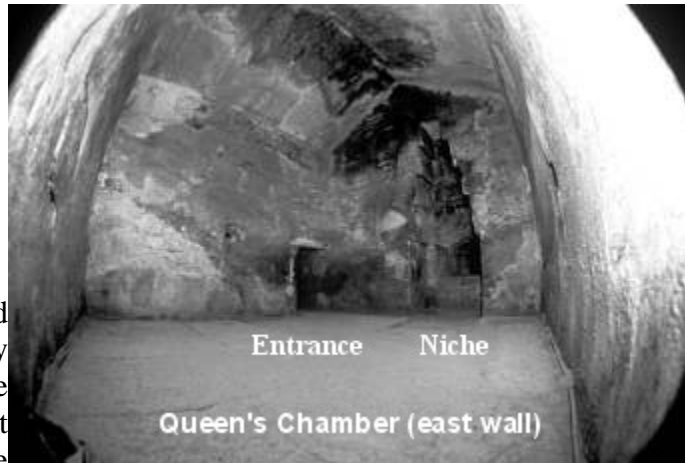
#### The Horizontal Passage

As explained in a previous article, the Descending Passage represents mankind's downward journey on the Broad Way that leads to destruction (Matthew 7:13). The

Horizontal Passage, at least for the first six thousand years of mankind's existence, pictures this same period of time. It begins with the usual constricted height of 3¾-feet, but after a length of 127 feet, the floor drops twenty-one inches allowing a person of average height to stand upright. Thus during Christ's thousand-year kingdom when the "covering cast over all the people" is removed, mankind will be able to stand upright, walk into the "Queen's Chamber," and be in the condition of perfect, everlasting life. How beautiful is this symbolism.

## The Niche

The niche is almost 3½-feet deep and a bit more than sixteen feet high. Intruders in the past dug a passage several yards deep in the niche's back wall in a vain search for treasure. It has five distinct sections each narrower than the one below. The widest at the base is sixty-two inches, the narrowest at the top is twenty inches. The center-line of the niche is displaced from the center-line of the Queen's Chamber by exactly one Sacred Cubit<sup>1</sup> indicating that it is a value that should be noticed and connected with the sacred significance of the structure.



In Egypt a niche traditionally called attention to a statue or a mummy within a case. Since the niche in the Queen's Chamber is so high, it would not have been designed to be used that way. However, because the Queen's Chamber represents God's kingdom on earth, perhaps this niche is meant to call attention to the most famous statue in the Bible: the statue seen in a dream by King Nebuchadnezzar and described in Daniel 2:31-33. Of course, the construction of the niche predated that dream by many centuries. The statue in the king's dream consisted of five distinctly separate parts and represents the five universal kingdoms of earth beginning with Babylon (head of gold), succeeded by Medo-Persia (breast and arms of silver), then by Greece (belly and thighs of copper), Pagan Rome (legs of iron) and finally Papal Rome (feet of mixed iron and clay). Thus the niche in the Queen's Chamber suggests these five universal empires.

## The Ventilation Tubes

Man requires one absolutely essential element to live: air! The entire animal creation needs oxygen so the cell structure can grow and develop and the body purify itself. Those who send men into outer space or to other planets must find a way to provide breathable air. This is a key reason why humans cannot live on another planet.

Those who have been inside the Queen's Chamber confirm that it is extremely difficult to remain in the room for long because its air is so poor, so polluted. That is why visits to

this room are quite limited. This room has no ventilation. True, the long Horizontal Passage leading into it permits some air to enter, but there is absolutely no air circulation.

A diagram of the Queen's Chamber shows the presence of ventilation ducts on the north and south walls leading from the room to the outside. These ducts were discovered in 1872 by Waynman Dixon. He noticed a crack and found that a wire pushed into it traveled a considerable distance. The five-inch-thick covering stone was chipped away revealing a tubular channel about eight inches square and roughly seven feet long. The tube turned up at a thirty-two-degree angle for an unknown length.<sup>2</sup>

What a surprise this must have been! Why was so much work spent in constructing a ventilation duct which, because of its rock cover, ventilates nothing? To compound the mystery, the removal of the covering still did not allow any air to flow. Probes sent into the ducts produced inconclusive results.

So, although a room for the living existed, because of the lack of air, no one could actually live in it. Similarly, Christians know that the earth itself constitutes a kind of "room" for the living—we call it Christ's kingdom because Christ often spoke about it—but the details of when and how it will all come about are not generally known. For a long time there has been no indication that man could live everlastingly right here on earth.

As the 1872 discovery made clear, ventilation tubes existed, but why was there no air? In spite of numerous attempts based on calculations showing where the vents should exit the north and south faces of the pyramid, no one has discovered the opening of either one.

In 1993 German engineer Rudolf Gantenbrink sent a vehicle with tank-like treads carrying a small video camera and spotlights up the southern shaft. Because the tube was horizontal at the beginning, then turned up, it was not possible for the human eye to see anything. But under the gaze of the video camera traveling up the tube, the precise work of the pyramid builders is impressive. For its entire revealed length this tube is uniformly constructed, almost a work of art. One is especially impressed knowing that this construction occurred more than four thousand years ago.

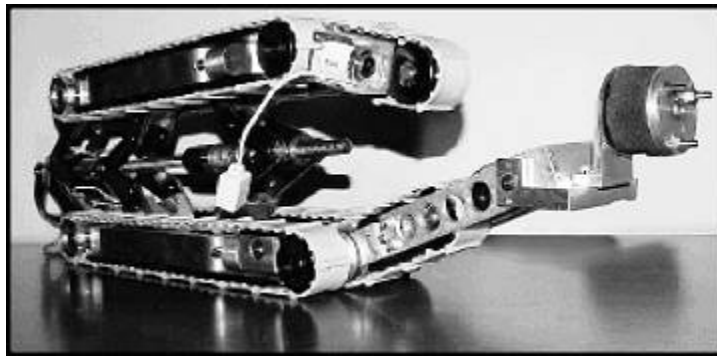


Photo: Copyright National Geographic Television and Film

The robot eventually reached a wall in the tube at roughly the two-hundred-foot mark. The video image showed that the barrier was deliberately constructed and not caused by debris. How surprising: ventilation tubes to the King's Chamber were constructed and they work; ventilation tubes leading to the Queen's Chamber are deliberately blocked by walls. What was on the other side of this newly-discovered wall?

In September 2002 a team sponsored by National Geographic sent a second robot up the tube. A drill mounted on the robot made a hole in the barrier wall which was about twenty inches thick. A tiny fiber-optic camera passed through this hole revealed a second wall a short distance further up the tube. No air yet passes through either tube and nothing has been said about further "drilling" explorations.

The most likely explanation for such strange construction is that the Great Pyramid teaches its lessons in symbols. If that is not the reason, construction like this makes no sense. But let us think about it from the viewpoint of seeing the Queen's Chamber as a picture of human perfection on earth. To live on earth there must be air. There always was air supplied to the King's Chamber, but although the possibility to do the same was there, no air entered the Queen's Chamber.

In 1872 the first hint appeared that "life" in this room was a possibility when the covering stone was taken away. This is quite close to 1874, the year our Lord returned to complete his church and begin the work of restoring humanity to perfect life on earth. But today - humanity does not have such life because the church is not complete. When that event occurs, the barrier stones will be removed and the room—the earth—will become habitable: "Prepare ye the way of the people; cast up, cast up the highways; gather out the stones; lift up a standard for the people" (Isaiah 62:10). We know that everything needed to permit life on earth will be supplied under the Messianic reign.

During the last 130 years, like the discovery of the ventilation tubes in the Queen's Chamber, the establishment of Christ's kingdom has become easier to see for some, but also more mysterious to most of the world. The time for the liberation of mankind condemned to slavery under Satan approaches, but like the exodus of the people of Israel, the world will confront some tests before it can pass through its "Red Sea." Just as in the time of Moses, plagues must come upon "Egypt" before deliverance occurs. Nothing changed after the first plague, or the second. It took ten plagues before the people were liberated.

We are living in the period where plagues have been sent to change mankind's behavior, but the more that are sent, the worse depravity becomes, the more evil increases, and the heart of man hardens. In all domains—political, economic, and social—whatever has been done in secret is soon made known; few things can be hidden for long. Like the ancient Egyptian civilization which was destroyed because of its opposition to God, the present evil world by its selfish behavior is on the road to ruin.

There can be no doubt that the long-awaited reign of Christ will open a new and living highway which will allow everyone to enter the "Queen's Chamber." There everlasting

life will be possible because the old barriers, the former things, will be gone. The establishment of Christ's kingdom will provide everything needed for perfect life on the earth.

This will be a kind of "stage two" in the plan of God. No longer will the Lord apply the merit of his sacrifice just to the church; by then she will have proven her loyalty and - attained perfection. But the Lord will make a new covenant first with the people of Israel, then through Israel with all humanity: "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah: not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: and they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more." —Hebrews 8:8-12

What a marvelous prospect awaits the human race because of the ransom paid by our Lord nearly two thousand years ago when he was hung on a cross. In spite of a dark night which is coming upon the world, there is hope, a marvelous hope for a better time when everyone, in a mass exodus from Satan's evil empire, will be able with all their hearts to praise and glorify God and his son Jesus Christ. May we all continue to pray, "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

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1. Professor Smyth, an English mathematician, studied the Great Pyramid and in the 1860's said a Sacred Cubit, equivalent to 25.025 British (and American) inches, was found several places within the Great Pyramid. This value is almost exactly one ten-millionth of the earth's polar axis.

2. *The Great Pyramid*, Piazzi Smyth, 1978 edition, p. 428



## King's Chamber

*Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is mount Zion, on the sides of the north, the city of the great King.—Psalm 48:2*

*Dick Kindig*

To those who have studied the various details of the Great Pyramid, the King's Chamber attracts attention because of its many unique characteristics.

1. It is not only the highest chamber in the Great Pyramid, it is the most finely finished.
2. It is constructed of granite, a rarely used building material in the Great Pyramid.
3. It contains functioning air vents and the Great Pyramid's only article of furniture: a lidless stone chest that looks like a coffin.
4. It has a distinct shape and meaningful measurements.
5. A remarkable "ante-chamber" precedes the main chamber, and is entered from the Grand Gallery, a passage without parallel in any other pyramid.

Why did the Great Pyramid's architect build it this way? Other articles in this issue describe the Descending Passage and the upward pointing Ascending Passage blocked by granite. The Ascending Passage feeds directly into the Grand Gallery whose height is seven times higher; it also has handholds to make the climb easier. Finally, at the end of the Grand Gallery, there is the great step. The one who negotiates the great step and continues on the flat floor must stoop three times before he can actually enter the King's Chamber.

When Christians began to notice the correlation between the pyramid passages and Bible dispensations, some were surprised by the concept of two ages of grace and the two life destinations which they offered. The King's Chamber focuses on that part of redemption which culminates in the glories of heaven, made available to those who follow in the footsteps of Jesus. Just as the precious granite pictured the divine law blocking the way to life at the beginning of Jewish history, so granite symbolizes the divine life awaiting those who successfully make an ascent through the means of grace God has provided.

### The Air Passages

"Beautiful for situation" (Psalm 48:2) is the way the psalmist symbolically describes the heavenly kingdom, a kingdom of those beloved by God, a people in whose hearts God is pleased to dwell. The King's Chamber is "beautiful for situation." It occupies the most honored place in the most exalted building ever built. It sits on the fiftieth course of masonry which occupies half the area of the base of the Pyramid. The coffer marks the only place one can stand on the north-south vertical plane within the entire edifice. As a

symbol of the resurrected glory of Christ and the church, the coffer symbolizes the center of all God's activity throughout history, and the attainment by Christians of the measure of Christ's love! God's goal has been the selection, training, and polishing of this special "new creation," his heavenly family. Some Scriptures speak of the church as the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:27; Ephesians 4:12); others speak of it as his bride (Revelation 21:9). Together with Jesus as head and the church his body they occupy the center of God's plan, enjoying the highest place—"eternal in the heavens" (2 Corinthians 5:1). The lidless coffer—reminiscent of the open tomb—and the air passages delivering what is essential for life symbolizes immortality. It is unthinkable that any tomb built by the ancient Egyptians would contain ventilation shafts. The Egyptians well understood the putrefaction process; they knew that air causes the decomposition of things and the destruction of dead bodies. But air is vital to sustain living beings. Thus the air passages send a clear signal that the purpose of this room is not death but life.

The King's Chamber symbolizes the highest kind of life, heavenly life, promised to the Christian Church (1 Peter 1:4). Christians are promised life within themselves, the same kind of life Jesus was given which was originally possessed only by the Father (John 5:26; 2 Peter 1:4). How fitting that the air passages of the King's Chamber are open to all who attain it. The air passages to the Queen's Chamber must be opened by those who enter, thus symbolizing that the opportunity for life in the Millennial kingdom hinges on obedience.

## Measurements

The longest measurement of the King's Chamber is the cubic diagonal, the distance from any corner to the opposite corner. Suppose we compare this length to the other passages in the Great Pyramid, first with the Grand Gallery. Dividing the length of the Grand Gallery by the cubic diagonal of the King's Chamber produces the quotient 3.65268. This number is significant because when multiplied by one hundred, the result is the exact length of one solar year <sup>1</sup> (within the expected variation caused by slight measuring differences). The Christian age, symbolized by the Grand Gallery, is linked to the sun (Revelation 12:1).

Dividing the length of the Horizontal Passage by the cubic diagonal of the King's Chamber produces the quotient 2.951277. When this number is multiplied by ten, the result is the exact length of one lunar month <sup>2</sup> (again within the expected variation caused by slight measuring differences). The lunar cycle is tied to the fortunes of Israel and the kingdom age arrangements. Christ's visit to the Jews represented their fullest favor (the time of the full moon which was the stipulated time of the Passover sacrifice). When Christ died on the cross, "immediately the moon began to wane"—Israel's disfavor began. Moses asked God what to do if a person was unclean or in a far country at the time of passover (the full of the moon). God's answer was to wait until the moon was full again (Numbers 9:4-13). So those who do not gain the benefit of Christ's sacrifice at Calvary **can** celebrate the sacrifice and participate in its benefits the next time Israel's fortunes are at their full which will be in the time soon to come. A relatively small number have benefitted from Christ's sacrifice during the Christian age, but as the angels

sang at the birth of Jesus, these “good tidings of great joy” are to be “for **all people.**” These blessings will flow to the world through Israel—a covenant arrangement pictured by the moon, and by the Sabbath day as well (see Ezekiel 46:1; Jeremiah 31:31).

We have seen evidence that the King’s Chamber is related to the length of the Christian era by a solar factor, and to the Messianic age through a lunar factor. Consider now its -relationship to the First Ascending Passage. Dividing the length of the Ascending Passage by the cubic diagonal of the King’s Chamber produces the quotient 2.996073, greater than expected if it were to be one lunar month. In fact, this is a remarkable result! Although there are literally  $365\frac{1}{4}$  days in one year, students of the Bible know that one prophetic year contains 360 days (see Revelation 11:2,3 where forty-two months are equated with twelve hundred sixty days). The ratio of  $365\frac{1}{4}$  days (one solar year) and 360 days (one prophetic year) is 0.98563. If the ratio of the King’s Chamber cubic diagonal to the First Ascending Passage length is multiplied by 0.98563 (the “prophetic year” ratio), the result is 2.953019 which when multiplied by ten is the number of days in a lunar month.

Thus the King’s Chamber’s cubic diagonal bears an interesting relationship to all three -upward passages. The ratio with those passages produces an astronomical measure that is clearly supported by the Scriptures which show the sun representing the Christian age, the moon representing the Messianic age, and the moon also representing the Jewish age, the age of prophecy. It is unlikely this level of accuracy is accidental. The need to multiply the quotients by ten or one hundred seems to be dictated by the scale of the structure not because there is any inherent meaning in those factors.

All the passages of the Great Pyramid are left of center. The actual measurement, center point to center point, is about twenty-four feet (fourteen royal cubits). If we think of the entire course of human history as a time of being fallen, and the distance from alignment with the capstone as representing the amount we are fallen—the loss of perfection as it were—then whatever can return us to alignment under the perfect image of God, the perfections of Christ, would be the amount we are out of harmony, the amount we need to be changed or rectified.

There are only three places one can be in the exact east-west vertical plane of the Great Pyramid: the “Great Step” of the Grand Gallery, the niche in the Queen’s Chamber, and in the Descending Passage just before it ends at the Pit. Philippians 2:10 tells us that all will bow to Jesus whether in heaven, earth, or under the earth!

Whether we spend eternity on earth or in heaven, the only way we can do the Father’s will and be pleasing to him is if we become conformed to the character of his son. Those in the Queen’s Chamber will have reached the point where Christians begin their walk (except those on the earth will be actually perfect). Those in the coffer—the condition of immortal life—will be the only ones who are perfectly conformed to the image of Christ, for they are exactly in the north-south vertical plane.

## The Ante-Chamber



The Ante-Chamber is not an end in itself, but it is a means to an end. It pictures the conditions which Christians experience before they enter the King's Chamber, just as the Horizontal Passage pictures the conditions faced by the world of mankind before they enter the earthly kingdom, the Queen's Chamber.

The walk of individual Christians begins by first coming to Jesus and the gracious provision of Justification by Faith. This is beautifully shown by the Great Step's alignment with the east-west vertical plane. Thus standing "in faith" on the top step of the Grand Gallery, there is a high vista to be seen. Those who look up see the glorious promises of God—overlapping ages and layers of grace. Those who look back see a dark past, a slippery slope. As the Scriptures teach we are called by "glory and virtue" (2 Peter 1:3). The image of God's goodness and the prospect of being like him are the great magnets that draw true-hearted men and women toward the heavenly father.

But more is required than just turning one's back on sin; we must step forward and present our bodies a living sacrifice (Romans 12:1). We must move forward into the life of the spirit, taking up Jesus' cross and following him.

Thus each Christian turns his back on the slippery slope of human depravity and steps forward to confront a wall. It is the wall of humility and represents the figurative death of the flesh by participating with Christ in his cross. Those who really become disciples of Christ must stoop under a great limestone portcullis to move forward into "the school of Christ."

Suddenly the environment changes: no longer do we stand on limestone—the righteousness of a man, so to speak—we stand on granite. Old things have passed away, all things have become new (2 Corinthians 5:17). God views us as New Creatures. We are begotten by the holy spirit and can now cry, "Abba, Father" to God (Romans 8:15).

The Ante-Chamber's rough-hewn appearance stands in stark contrast to the perfection and polish of the King's Chamber. It fittingly pictures the period of human life, of undone conditions, of unpredictable and rough-hewn experiences that God uses to test and develop his spiritual children.

Every true Christian experiences disciplinary experiences. As Hebrews 12:7 puts it, "What son is he whom the father does not chasten?" The Great Pyramid shows the heavenly father's will by a granite "leaf." One can stand in front of it, but it is a kind of granite wall. Again humility is shown as one must bow low to continue progressing toward the reward God has in reservation for those who love him.

“The goal of this command is love, which comes from a pure heart, a good conscience, and a sincere faith” (1 Timothy 1:5, NIV).



When we come to the end of our earthly life, we enter a passage that could be called the actual death of the flesh. In the ancient Tabernacle it is the veil separating the Holy from the Most Holy. In the Great Pyramid it is a low passage entirely surrounded by granite showing that “precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints” (Psalm 116:15). When we pass “beyond the veil,” we arise in the spiritual condition, the granite King’s Chamber.

There is one other similarity between the Ante-Chamber and the Tabernacle. The high priest passed four posts supporting the veil when he moved from the Holy to the Most Holy. To pass from the Ante-Chamber into the King’s Chamber one must pass under a granite portcullis clearly marked with four deep semicircular grooves which look like pillar-like indentations in the stone.

### Concluding Thoughts

The walls of the King’s Chamber could have been adorned with hieroglyphic writings as were those in so many other pyramids. But they were not. Instead, we find “writings” of an entirely different kind. To understand what the inspired architect is saying, we need to turn to the clear teachings of Scripture which tell us what God is doing in the world. Once we possess that information, we find striking symbolisms and compelling testimony in the Great Pyramid that God is indeed in charge and will bring his creation to the perfection he has long planned for them. The highest goal of those who are serving him now is to be faithful unto death and thus receive the promised reward, everlasting life in heaven. May we all meet, one day, in the King’s Chamber!

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1. According to the *American Heritage Electronic Dictionary* a solar year is "the period of time for the earth to make one complete revolution around the sun, measuring from one vernal equinox to the next and equal to 365 days, 5 hours, 8 minutes, 43.51 seconds." Expressed as a decimal fraction it is 365.2422 .

2. According to the *American Heritage Electronic Dictionary*, a lunar month is "the average time between successive new or full moons, equal to 29 days, 12 hours, 44 minutes." Express as a decimal fraction it is 29.53 days.

## **The Burden of Egypt**

*Woe to them that go down to Egypt for help; and stay on horses, and trust in chariots, because they are many; and in horsemen, because they are very strong; but they look not unto the Holy One of Israel, neither seek the LORD!—Isaiah 31:1*

### *A verse-by-verse study of Isaiah 19*

Chapters 13 through 23 of the book of Isaiah contain a series of prophecies, or “burdens,” against ten nations surrounding Israel during the reigns of kings Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah (Isaiah 1:1). The burden of Egypt, the seventh in the series, is the subject of chapter 19.

The Hebrew word translated “burden” indicates an obligatory responsibility. The use of the word in Jeremiah 23:33 is illuminating: “When this people, or the prophet, or a priest, shall ask thee, saying, What is the burden of the LORD? thou shalt then say unto them, What burden? I will even forsake you, saith the LORD.” The word is a stronger one than “prophecy” because when a “burden” is laid on the prophet, there is an absolute necessity that it be delivered. Professor Strong says it refers especially to singing and Brown, Driver, and Briggs gives “uplifting, that to which the soul lifts up” as one of its definitions. Thus, while frequently associated with “woes” or prophecies of doom, these “burdens” of Isaiah have a bright side for they are uttered against the enemies of Israel. Even though some of these countries were allies of Israel at the time, their alliances were of expedience and not to be relied upon. Therefore the “woe” of our theme text was also a chastisement from God for the failure of his people to rely on him rather than on political confederations.

### **Judgment on Egypt—Isaiah 19:1-4**

*The burden of Egypt. Behold, the LORD rideth upon a swift cloud, and shall come into Egypt: and the idols of Egypt shall be moved at his presence, and the heart of Egypt shall melt in the midst of it. And I will set the Egyptians against the Egyptians: and they shall fight every one against his brother, and every one against his neighbor; city against city, and kingdom against kingdom. And the spirit of Egypt shall fail in the midst thereof; and I will destroy the counsel thereof: and they shall seek to the idols, and to the charmers, and to them that have familiar spirits, and to the wizards. And the Egyptians will I give over into the hand of a cruel lord; and a fierce king shall rule over them, saith the Lord, the LORD of hosts.*

While there may have been a fulfillment of this prophecy in a literal sense during the time of Isaiah, the main application lies in the future. The complete anarchy described in these verses is elsewhere alluded to in other end-time prophecies (Ezekiel 38:21).

The LORD in this passage is Jehovah. Although he is spoken of as traveling into Egypt, the Hebrew word translated “presence” (*paniym*, Strong’s 6440) does not so much signify presence as it does the turning of a face toward. It corresponds to the Greek *prosopon* (Strong’s 4383) used in Acts 3:19, “Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence [face] of the Lord.” The word translated “swift” (Hebrew: *qal*, Strong’s 7031) literally means “light.” Because light, or white, clouds contain less moisture, they are swift clouds. This connects well to Revelation 14:14, “And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle.”

This all suggests a linkage between the “presence” or returned face of Jehovah with the second advent of Jesus Christ. The object of this returned attention of Jehovah to intervene in earth’s affairs is judgment. Egypt, in this context, is typical of the world, especially the Christian world (Revelation 11:8). The first effect is fear and perplexity at the turn of events. This coincides with Jesus’ words in Luke 21:25,26, “There shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; men’s hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken.”

At the time of the exodus, the Egyptians resorted to idols and the doing of supernatural works by the court magicians. This is reminiscent of the apostle Paul’s description of Jesus’ second advent: “Then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: even him [Jesus Christ], whose coming is after [or, accompanied by] the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders” (2 Thessalonians 2:8,9). The miraculous acts referred to are “lying wonders” and not truly miracles, only having the appearance of such. The illustration is particularly applicable to Egypt since it calls to mind the wondrous actions of Pharaoh’s magicians in withstanding Moses.

The cruel lord and fierce king into whose hands these workers of wonders in Christianity are relegated is none other than Satan himself, making one last stand before his thousand-year banishment (Revelation 20:1-4).

## Plagues—Isaiah 19:5-10

*And the waters shall fail from the sea, and the river shall be wasted and dried up. And they shall turn the rivers far away; and the brooks of defense shall be emptied and dried up: the reeds and flags shall wither. The paper reeds by the brooks, by the mouth of the brooks, and every thing sown by the brooks, shall wither, be driven away, and be no more. The fishers also shall mourn, and all they that cast angle into the brooks shall lament, and they that spread nets upon the waters shall languish. Moreover they that work in fine flax, and they that weave networks, shall be confounded. And they shall be broken in the purposes thereof, all that make sluices and ponds for fish.*

After Pharaoh's magicians were subdued by the miracles of Moses, a series of plagues came upon that nation. In like manner, Isaiah describes the returned face of the Lord as being accompanied by a series of plagues or disastrous events upon the land itself. These plagues in this Isaiah study are concentrated on the Nile delta. The Hebrew word *matsowr* (Strong's 4693; singular, or the plural *Mizraim*, meaning the two Egypts) literally means "[the delta of] Egypt." Thus the "brooks of defense" refer to the seven branches of the Nile river.

The disasters described affect four of the foundations of the Egyptian economy:

1. The Papyrus reeds—Egypt was highly advanced in the literary arts. The library at Alexandria became the largest in the ancient world with over forty thousand volumes. Thus the manufacture of paper from the papyrus reeds was an essential part of the nation's commerce.
2. Agriculture was the mainstay of the economy. With the Nile being smitten, irrigation for the rich croplands in the delta would be severely affected.
3. The fishermen—both the Nile where angle fishing was popular and the Mediterranean where nets brought in the harvest—would be affected by these plagues.
4. The textile trade—ancient Egypt had a highly developed textile trade. The kalasiris, or flowing robe similar to the sleeveless Japanese kimono, was made of fine linen from native flax and was a chief export.

The net effect of the disasters was to be total economic collapse. A similar concept in second advent prophecy is found in the sixth plague of Revelation where it is the waters of the Euphrates, not the Nile, that is dried up (Revelation 16:12-16).

## The Princes of Zoan—Isaiah 19:11-17

*Surely the princes of Zoan are fools, the counsel of the wise counselors of Pharaoh is become brutish: how say ye unto Pharaoh, I am the son of the wise, the son of ancient kings? Where are they? where are thy wise men? and let them tell thee now, and let them know what the LORD of hosts hath purposed upon Egypt. The princes of Zoan are become fools, the princes of Noph are deceived; they have also seduced Egypt, even they that are the stay of the tribes thereof. The LORD hath mingled a perverse spirit in the midst thereof: and they have caused Egypt to err in every work thereof, as a*



*drunken man staggereth in his vomit. Neither shall there be any work for Egypt, which the head or tail, branch or rush, may do. In that day shall Egypt be like unto women: and it shall be afraid and fear because of the shaking of the hand of the LORD of hosts, which he shaketh over it. And the land of Judah shall be a terror unto Egypt, every one that maketh mention thereof shall be afraid in himself, because of the counsel of the LORD of hosts, which he hath determined against it.*

Zoan is the Hebrew name for Tanis, an important city at the southern end of the Tanic, at the beginning of an eastern branch of the Nile. It was the capital of Egypt from the twenty-first to the twenty-fourth dynasties, when the capital shifted to Memphis around 725 B.C. It was during the latter portion of this period that the Isaiah prophecy must have been written.

Noph is another form of Memphis, indicating that this city was already rising to prominence. Noph's princes were the Cushite brothers Shabaka and Piye who conquered Egypt from the south. Isaiah is thus prophesying against the twenty-fourth dynasty of Egypt and its Cushite or Nubian successor. In 701 B.C. Shabaka joined forces with Hezekiah of Judah in an attempt to thwart Assyrian aggression from the north. Although Assyria was the victor, it was not able to conquer Jerusalem.

Isaiah's prophecy indicates that Jehovah opposed this union and punished Egypt with an economic depression. The "woman-like" fear would not be occasioned so much by the Assyrian conquest of Egypt (which occurred about a half century later), but by the reports of the success of the Assyrian campaign against Judah. Similarly all attempts at opposing alliances to Christ's incoming kingdom are equally doomed to failure (Isaiah 8:12,13).

### **A Tale of Five Cities—Isaiah 19:18**

*In that day shall five cities in the land of Egypt speak the language of Canaan, and swear to the LORD of hosts; one shall be called, The city of destruction.*

The chapter concludes with a series of four prophecies relating to "that day." These prophecies apparently mark a time division in the chapter and relate, not to the time of the Assyrian conquests, but to a much later time when God will again turn the fortunes of both Egypt and Israel to prosperity. We understand these four prophecies to relate to the "end time" of the second advent of Jesus Christ.

The five literal Egyptian cities appear to include Bubastis (capital of the twenty-second Dynasty from 945 to 730 B.C.); Tanis (capital of the twenty-third Dynasty—co-existent with the twenty-second from 817 to 730 B.C. and the twenty-fourth Dynasty from 720 to 714 B.C.); Per Ramessu (earlier known as Avaris, one of the most important cities of the time); Memphis, capital of the twenty-fifth Dynasty from 716 to 656 B.C.); and Heliopolis (or, On, the priestly city).<sup>1</sup>

While it is indeterminate whether the language of Canaan refers to Hebrew, it seems the most likely probability and would well represent the “pure language” of Christ’s kingdom coming to the world (Egypt) from restored Israel (Zephaniah 3:9).

Manuscripts differ as to whether the unique city of this verse is “city of destruction” or “city of the sun.”<sup>2</sup> If it refers to the “city of destruction,” it would seem to represent that the religious elements of present society are destined for destruction. If it is the “city of the sun,” the inference would be that present religion would be replaced by conversion to the city of the “Sun of righteousness” that arises with “healing in his wings” (Malachi 4:2).

### **An Altar and a Pillar—Isaiah 19:19-22**

***In that day shall there be an altar to the LORD in the midst of the land of Egypt, and a pillar at the border thereof to the LORD. And it shall be for a sign and for a witness unto the LORD of hosts in the land of Egypt: for they shall cry unto the LORD because of the oppressors, and he shall send them a savior, and a great one, and he shall deliver them. And the LORD shall be known to Egypt, and the Egyptians shall know the LORD in that day, and shall do sacrifice and oblation; yea, they shall vow a vow unto the LORD, and perform it. And the LORD shall smite Egypt: he shall smite and heal it: and they shall return even to the LORD, and he shall be intreated of them, and shall heal them.***

The movement of the new dynasty to Memphis placed the capital at the south end of the Nile delta which separated lower and upper Egypt. This location was to be marked with “an altar” and “a pillar.” The altar signified a place of worship while the pillar illustrated the structure as both a memorial and a boundary marker.

Such a structure exists some ten miles north of Memphis: the great pyramid of Giza. This pyramid, erected some thirteen hundred years before this prophecy, serves both of these functions. It marks the border between upper and lower Egypt while standing at the mid-point of the fan-shaped Nile delta (see photograph on p. 5). It also differs from other pyramids in the area which were built as burial chambers for the pharaohs. The Great Pyramid contains a memorial to the creator of the universe, his plan being etched in the stone layout of its rooms and passages.

In the day when this pyramid shall deliver its message to the world, it will serve as a place commemorating the worship of Jehovah. Those who comprehend its precognition of this plan will bring themselves as a living sacrifice. They will make vows of obedience to the incoming kingdom and perform those vows.

Then the Lord will turn from his destructive works upon society and begin the rebuilding process shown in the following “in that day” prophecy.

## **A Highway—Isaiah 19:23**

***In that day shall there be a highway out of Egypt to Assyria, and the Assyrian shall come into Egypt, and the Egyptian into Assyria, and the Egyptians shall serve with the Assyrians.***

A highway is a means of communication. Highways between countries signify peaceful commerce and travel between them. As in the earlier part of this chapter, Egypt and Assyria were deadly enemies; so “in that day” peace would be once again established between them and that which they represent. Egypt was as much a model of civilization at the time as Assyria was of wild raiding elements. So today the world is divided into civilized and more war-like camps, between haves and have-nots, between conservatives and liberals. Little understanding exists between them. But “in that day” of Messiah’s kingdom, both sides will begin an era of mutual harmony and cooperation.

The metaphor of a highway is a frequent one in Isaiah’s prophecy. Most notably, in Isaiah 35:8-10 it is called “the way of holiness,” and aptly describes the educational opportunities of the kingdom in which all who will may “learn righteousness” (Isaiah 26:9).

Isaiah 11:15,16 describes the opening of this highway, likening it to the exodus from Egypt in Moses’ day: “The LORD shall utterly destroy the tongue of the Egyptian sea; and with his mighty wind shall he shake his hand over the river, and shall smite it in the seven streams, and make men go over dryshod. And there shall be an highway for the remnant of his people, which shall be left, from Assyria; like as it was to Israel in the day that he came up out of the land of Egypt.” The seven streams are the seven main branches of the Nile delta. The wording of this text suggests that the wilderness experiences of Israel pictured what earth’s inhabitants will face in their uphill battle to holiness.

Isaiah 40:3 and Isaiah 62:10 speak of the preparation of the roadbed for this highway as the gathering out of stones. This is the work of the present dispensation as both natural and spiritual Israel gain valuable lessons in the present time to assist all mankind in the Messianic kingdom to reach the goal of absolute perfection.

## **The Role of Israel—Isaiah 19:24, 25**

***In that day shall Israel be the third with Egypt and with Assyria, even a blessing in the midst of the land: whom the LORD of hosts shall bless, saying, Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel mine inheritance.***

In ancient days there was a literal road joining Egypt and Assyria. It was called the Via Maris and was the most important international highway throughout the biblical period, originating in Egypt and running north by way of the Plain of Philistia and the Plain of Sharon. The road crossed the Carmel ridge at Megiddo, passed through the Valley of Jezreel, and continued by way of Hazor to Damascus (see Nelson’s *Illustrated Bible Dictionary*). Israel was the center point of this highway, and it was in Israel at a mountain

pass just north of Megiddo where commerce could be stopped or permitted. Thus it is symbolically that the battle of Armageddon, named for Megiddo, will be the turning point from whence mankind will begin its upward climb to peace.

“In that day” then, the entire world, like Egypt of old, will be called “my people” and the disenchanted masses, pictured in Assyria, will truly be called the work of God’s hands. There will be a special role for the nation of Israel: God calls them and them alone his “inheritance.” Being at the mid-point of the highway of holiness it will be their privilege to help produce world-wide peace in their intermediary and ambassadorial roles as representatives of Christ’s Millennial kingdom.

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1. Source: Web page of Kibbutz Reshafim: [www.reshalim.org.il](http://www.reshalim.org.il)

2. The most reliable manuscripts favor “the city of the sun,” including two Qumran texts, the Latin Vulgate and the margin of the Massoretic while the Massoretic text itself favors “city of destruction.”

## Poems and Short Features

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### God's Witness of Stone

In a dry weary land; in a wilder ness lone;  
In a desert of sand, is God's Wit ness of Stone,  
So majestic the whole and so deep its design,  
It convinces the soul of a Builder Divine.

Over four thou sand years, it has stood in that place,  
'Mid the sighs and the tears of the poor fallen race.  
With its secret un known some have gazed at this tower,  
While Jehovah alone knew the depth of its power.

Now there's wonderful skill, that is seen all within;  
Come! be hold, if you will, the dark symbols of sin;  
And then trace from "the fall" how the Lord doth atone,  
Showing hope that's "for all" in this Bible of Stone.

'Tis a chart for the wise, giving signs for that day,  
When man kind will arise and pursue the right way;  
They'll read the glad story which be fore was un known,  
And God will have glory through His Wit ness of Stone!

—Anonymous\*

(\**The Great Pyramid Decoded*, E Raymond Capt, 1971, Artisan Sales, Thousand Oaks, Calif.)

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## The Royal Cubit

### [the “Measure” of Jesus’ Redemption]

The Egyptian Royal Cubit (RC) was evidently employed in the construction of the Great Pyramid. Its length, determined from measuring sticks preserved in tombs from antiquity, was between 20½ and 21 inches. In the Great Pyramid, this measure appears conspicuously several times.

- Queen’s Chamber Niche: one RC at the top, three RC at the bottom
- The step in the Horizontal Passage: one RC tall
- The passages: two RC wide
- The Coffin: two RC wide
- King’s chamber: ten by twenty RC
- Queen’s Chamber: ten by eleven RC
- Grand Gallery ramps: one RC wide, floor and ceiling are two
- Insets along the sides of the Grand Gallery: one RC long, one RC high
- Masonry platform on which the structure stands: one RC thick
- Three “girdle stones” upward in the Ascending Passage: spaced ten RC apart
- Platform base length: 440 RC
- Height to the apex (if present): 280 RC

There are three places where fourteen RC, twice the perfect number seven, are used which reminds us of the value of Christ’s redemption (fourteen lambs also represent this redemption in Numbers 29:13).

(a) From the “well” to the bottom of the Descending Passage (where it levels off to horizontal). Perhaps this suggests the “measure” by which Christ’s redemption (pictured in the “well”) reaches to the fallen race for their rescue.

(b) The vertical expansion by which the Grand Gallery ceiling height exceeds the height of the Ascending Passage. This would “measure” the amount of freedom and redemption Christ’s ransom provides as one leaves the Law Age (Ascending Passage) and enters the Gospel Age (Grand Gallery).

(c) The entrance to the Pyramid is not in the vertical center of the north face of the Pyramid, but offset to the left (eastward) by fourteen RC. This offset of the entrance from the center line of the apex may represent the “measure” of mankind’s deficiency from perfection as they entered the downward course of sin represented by the Descending Passage.

# News and Views

## Pastoral Bible Institute News

### World News

#### *Religious*

A national poll by the Oxnard-based Barna Research group, an independent marketing research firm that has tracked trends related to beliefs, values, and behaviors since 1984 ... found that 76% of Americans believe in heaven. ... 14% said heaven is just “symbolic,” 5% said there was no afterlife and 5% said they weren’t sure. 64% [of Americans] believe they’re heaven-bound. On the other hand, only one-half of 1% said they were hell-bound. 39% believe hell is “a state of eternal separation from God’s presence,” while 32% believe it is “an actual place of torment and suffering where people’s souls go after death.”

—Los Angeles Times, 10/24/2003

Cardinals from around the world have descended upon Rome to celebrate the 25th anniversary of Pope John Paul’s papacy. But with rising concerns over the 83-year-old pontiff’s health, many church watchers see the gathering as a dry run of the future conclave that will choose a successor from among its ranks. Many promising contenders are from developing countries, reflecting the seismic shift in church membership away from Europe in recent decades. More than half the world’s Catholics now live in the Southern Hemisphere, with Latin America alone home to 46%. With that shift, the church may adjust some of its priorities to reflect the pressing concerns of this demographic shift, such as economic fairness and government corruption.

—Wall Street Journal, 10/17/2003

The Church of England faces a 21st century crisis after losing money on property speculation in the 1980s and on stocks in the past two years. The 43 dioceses run by England’s bishops are battling pension costs and shrinking congregations. The London Diocese says it risks bankruptcy in a decade. Membership of the Church of England has fallen by two-thirds since 1930 to 1.35 million. Practicing Roman Catholics now outnumber Anglicans in England. Half of the Church of England's dioceses are running deficits, according to a survey published by the Church Times.

--Bloomberg News, 10/31/2003

## *Social*

Scientists at the University of California at San Francisco reported that they extended the lifespan of the worm to six times its normal length, or 120 days. It's the longest life extension ever achieved in any animal, says Dr. Cynthia Kenyon, leader of the team of scientist who are altering an important gene to make mutant worms that far outlive their normal cousins. "In human terms, these animals would correspond to healthy, active 500-year-olds," Dr. Kenyon and her co-authors write. The work could have important implications on the genes that govern lifespan in all animals, and holds hope for understanding many diseases related to aging.

—Science, 10/24/2003

The U.S. Famine Early Warning Network said more than 17 million Ethiopians might need emergency food aid by 2007. The network said the worsening situation is due primarily to declining rainfall and an upward spiraling population. Aid agencies blame entrenched poverty rather than a lack of rainfall for the emergency. The United Nations Integrated Regional Information Networks said Ethiopia is suffering an unprecedented humanitarian crisis that left 13.2 million—one in five of the population—facing starvation during the year.

—UPI, 10/14/2003

At least 35,000 people died as a result of the record heat wave that scorched Europe in August. The Washington D.C. based Earth Policy Institute (EPI) ... calculated the huge death toll from the eight western European countries with data available. "Since reports are not yet available for all European countries, the total heat death toll for the continent is likely to be substantially larger," the EPI statement said. More than 2,000 died in Britain, with the country recording its first ever temperature over 100 degrees Fahrenheit on August 10.

—UPI, 10/10/2003

A Californian biotechnology company has put the entire sequence of the human genome on a single chip, allowing researchers for the first time to conduct tests on the complex relationships between the 30,000 genes that make up a human being in a single experiment. The Human-Plus Array—so called because the individual letters of the genetic code are "printed" on to it using similar technology to that used in computer chip fabrication—marks a milestone in biological miniaturization and industrialization of genetic research. Elisabeth Fisher, a professor of molecular genetics at the Institute of Neurology in London, said gene chips were revolutionizing the study of complex biological processes. "Human diseases invariably involve complex biochemical pathways in the cell. The immense power of these chips lies in our newfound ability to work out what all these pathways are in a single experiment instead of one step at a time," she said.

—Financial Times, 10/3/2003



Russia faces a near-crisis of demographics. With death rates rising and low birthrates continuing, some experts predict that in 50 years the country's population, now 145 million, could shrink by a third. Currently, there are almost twice as many abortions as births.

—Los Angeles Times, 9/19/2003

A new University of California-Los Angeles study indicates being snubbed socially can produce the same brain response as being physically hurt. Experts say the study, appearing in the journal *Science*, provides a hint into the importance the brain places on social ties. Dr. Jaak Panksepp, from the Center for Neuroscience, Mind and Behavior at Bowling Green State University, said that feelings of social exclusion are powerful instincts in animals and humans. Psychological pain in humans, especially grief and intense loneliness, may share some of the same neural pathways that elaborate physical pain.

—UPI, 10/10/2003

### *Civil*

A prominent human rights group estimated Thursday that 11,000 children are fighting in [Columbia's] civil war, serving as messengers, foot soldiers and even executioners for leftist rebel bands as well as right-wing paramilitary armies. The figure, released in a study by New York-based Human Rights Watch, is one of the highest for child combatants in any current conflict and marks a dramatic increase since the late 1990s. ... [Columbia is] locked in a decades-old conflict that claims nearly 4,000 lives a year.

—Los Angeles Times, 9/19/2003

Crime has risen sharply in Japan in the last few years, altering everyday lives, especially of city dwellers, and for the first time becoming a hot political issue. In one of the world's safest countries, where people had not even been conscious of crime until a few years ago, almost everyone now knows someone who has been robbed or whose house has been broken into. While overall numbers are still low—the annual murder total has remained around 1,300 for the last decade—nationwide statistics from the National Police Agency show a rapid rise particularly in crimes affecting ordinary people. “There was a safety myth here—that Japan was a safe place without doing anything,” said the lieutenant governor, Yutaka Takehana. “But now that myth has collapsed.”

—New York Times, 9/7/2003

Germany's craze for Ostalgie—nostalgia for the former East Germany is increasing as Germans celebrate the 13th anniversary of the reunification of Germany in October. "Ostalgie is very dangerous, as it presents the German Democratic Republic as a great place to have lived. It sees a dictatorship through rose-tinted spectacles," says Angelika Barbe, an adult education worker who refused to join local communist youth activities and was marked down as a troublemaker. There has been a growing demand for seminars and discussions by the federal agency administering the Stasi archives. The agency received about 94,000 applications to see the files last year.

—Financial Times, 10/03/2003

Zimbabwe was once one of Africa's most prosperous states. But it is prostrate today, its vital signs flickering, asphyxiated by ever-tighter governmental curbs on the economy and basic freedoms. Driven by desperation, greed or simply a sense that the end is nearing, its rulers and citizens are methodically stripping the country of its assets. Desperate citizens have become dark-of-night scavengers of coffins, copper electrical cable and even aluminum street signs, now in such shortage that finding an address is a trial. At night, streetlights are turned off for lack of foreign currency to pay South African and Zambian power suppliers. "This country is truly in a crisis," said Collen Gwiyo, the 38-year-old first secretary general of the Zimbabwe Coalition of Trade Unions. "It's a political crisis, leading to an economic crisis, feeding a humanitarian disaster." In a nation that exported beef and wheat only three years ago, four million people—one in three—now subsist on foreign food donations. Four in 10 children are stunted or wasting away from malnutrition, according to the United Nations.

—New York Times, 10/19/2003

### ***Financial***

The administration of Mexican President Vicente Fox is coming under fire for abandoning attempts to prosecute those responsible for a \$100 million campaign scandal involving the state oil monopoly. Company funds were diverted through its union to the 2000 presidential campaign of the long-ruling Institutional Revolutionary party. Independent critics are complaining that the administration is sacrificing commitments to uncover the corruption of his predecessors in exchange for their potential help in passing his plans.

—Financial Times, 9/18/03

A UK government study found some genetically modified crops might alter the balance of insects and wildlife in farm fields, although farmers may be able to limit the effects by rotating crops. Fewer bugs and weed seeds were found among genetically modified sugar and fodder beets and spring-sown canola compared with normal plants, while more bees and butterflies were found among genetically modified corn than the regular plantings, according to results from the three-year study on the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs' Web site. The UK government is studying products made by several companies after complaints about the possible effect on the environment.

—Bloomberg News, 10/16/2003

Almost all of Italy's 57 million citizens were left without electricity when supply lines from France and Switzerland were knocked out, adding to a string of blackouts across Europe and North America during the summer. The power failure raised new questions about the fragility of electricity grids in even the most developed economies, and highlighted Italy's growing dependence upon cross-border supplies of electricity.

—Financial Times, 9/29/2003

Many state and local governments face ballooning pension promises to police officers, firefighters, teachers and other public employees. As they issue more bonds to finance those obligations, it leaves taxpayers on the hook for even more debt. States and municipalities are drawn to bond sales because they bring instant cash, easing budget pressures without further tax increases or reductions in retirement benefits. But recent investment losses have already left some cities and states on the hook for a mounting debt, covering not just the retirement money for their workers but also the interest on the bonds. Government pension plans can dig themselves into deeper holes because, unlike corporate pension plans, they are not bound by federal requirements to maintain a certain level of funding. Some have no reserves at all: they just pay as they go, out of revenues. In California, home of the nation's weakest public pension plan, the state teacher's plan has only \$1 for every \$5 it owes.

—New York Times, 10/12/2003



Ten active fires burned from Los Angeles County to the Mexican border, blackening nearly 500,000 acres, killing 14 people, injuring dozens of others and destroying more than 1,000 homes. Gov. Gray Davis said the wildfires would cost California billions of dollars amid the dire financial woes that prompted voters to recall him from office, and officials said the cost to the state would be unprecedented. "This will be the most expensive fire in California history, both in the loss of property and in cost of fighting it," Dallas Jones, director of the state's Office of Emergency Services, said. More than 10,000 fire-fighters were battling the fires, aided by crews from Nevada and Arizona.

—Reuters, 10/28/2003

### *Israel*

By 2005, the Jewish community in Germany will grow by 30 percent, to 130,000, a German Jewish leader said. The rapid growth of German Jewry began in 1990 following the fall of Communism, which prompted the influx of Jews from the Soviet Union. "Today we have 83 Jewish communities with 100,000 members, and synagogues are being built all around the country," said Paul Spiegel, President of the Central Council of Jews in Germany, according to the London Telegraph. "We could not have dreamed of this when we returned after the Second World War."

—JTA, London Telegraph, 10/23/2003

European Union foreign ministers said that the union would officially declare all wings of the militant Palestinian group Hamas a terrorist organization and freeze its assets. That decision, reached at a meeting of the ministers in the northern Italian town of Riva del Garda, further isolated Hamas at a volatile juncture in the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians. It followed a similar decision by the United States and was prompted by a suicide bombing in Jerusalem on Aug. 19 that killed 22 people. The union had previously pronounced the military wing of Hamas a terrorist organization, but it had not done so in regard to the political wing and fund-raising charities ... affiliated with Hamas.

—New York Times, 9/7/2003

Ben Gurion University researchers have invented a method of using sunlight to replace laser-based surgical tools. It's cheaper and less risky. As the medical world develops, patient treatments improve, but so too does the cost, widening the gap between those who can afford advanced medical treatments and those who can't. While it's becoming increasingly rare to see a scalpel in operating theaters in the Western World as lasers replace them, virtually all surgery in the Third World is done with knives. Even in Israel, most hospitals have only a few laser devices. A group of physicians at the Department of Solar Energy and Environmental Physics, Jacob Blaustein Institute for Desert Research at Ben Gurion University of the Negev have developed a device that could emulate the actions of laser surgical tools using only sunlight. The device's great advantage is its low cost. The prototype machine costs \$7,500 to build, while the cost of an equivalent laser device is estimated at \$100,000.

—www.globes.co.il, 8/12/2003

The American refusal to criticize a sudden Israeli air raid on Syria has helped bring relations with the United States to a new low, the Syrian Foreign Ministry said. "Syrian-American relations have deteriorated markedly to a point that they have not reached in recent years," Ms. Kanafani said at a news conference. [She noted] that at a time of growing violence in Iraq it was in the interests of the United States to attain all the help it could get from surrounding countries. The United States and Syria had been developing closer relations since the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks against New York and Washington, especially after Damascus shared intelligence about Al Qaeda and other terrorist organizations it had been tracking.

—New York Times, 10/11/2003

A unique park was recently opened in the Hula Valley in a combined effort of farmers, the Jewish National Fund and nature conservationists. The Hula Valley's newly reclaimed swamplands are now home to over 13,000 cranes from Siberia. During their migration from Siberia, the crane family units stay together. The plan was put into action when it became obvious that Israel is the preferred wintering location of the Grey Crane. The participants have turned the would-be pest into a welcome winter guest. Since the crane's favorite meal is found in the corn crops of the local farmers, these agriculturalists bring in three tons of corn daily to a designated area in the Hula Valley. The intelligent cranes eagerly flock there in the early morning and early evening when the feed is spread out. The area now has ponds and streams, with ducks and geese among the new inhabitants.

—Jewish Universe.net, 1/21/2003

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## Motion Picture Review

**Luther.** Produced by Thrivent Financial for Lutherans and Neue Filmproduktion of Berlin, Germany, in English. With Joseph Fiennes, Alfred Molina, and Peter Ustinov. Opened 26 Sept. 2003.

This impressive cinematic production, filmed on over one hundred sets in twenty locations throughout Germany, Italy, and the Czech Republic at a reported cost of \$25 million does an incredible job at making a man of history come to life. Because of the pathos and death, the PG-13 rating is appropriate. Those in the Reformation histories are presented with close attention to historical detail.

In his days as a pious Augustinian monk Luther would be in confession for up to six hours and Johann von Staupitz, Luther's confessor and mentor, is sensitively portrayed. Luther wrote: "If it had not been for Dr. Staupitz, I should have sunk in hell." Luther's deep-seated spiritual angst and psychological pathology might be disconcerting, but it is accurately portrayed. At the beginning of the film when Luther is trapped in a desperate storm while traveling, he dedicates his life to God. The film traces his transformation from a pious Roman Catholic fearful of God's judgment to the bold reformer. His hot temper is downplayed.

Elector Frederick "the wise" is wonderfully played and provides a touch of relief in the drama of the era. Watch for details such as Pope Julius, the "Fighting Pope," galloping through the streets of Rome in his golden armor. We are not shown that inquiries like the Diet of Worms—a general meeting of the nobility of the Holy Roman Empire—went on for an entire day making it a grueling ordeal. Nor do we see the Spanish Cardinals hissing at Luther after his famous "Here I stand" speech. We are shown the societal impacts of Luther's ministry, and the wide spectrum of reaction to it; it is not a cinematic Bible study.

It is rare indeed to be able to recommend a motion picture, but this is one of the best.

—Richard Doctor

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