

The Berean

*A Christadelphian Magazine devoted to the exposition
and defense of the Faith once for all delivered
to the Saints; and opposed to the dogmas
of the Papal and Protestant Churches!*

1Jn 4:1-2 Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God:

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...they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so.”

CHRIST IS COMING SOON AND WILL REIGN ON EARTH

Boston, Mass.

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

We hope that this finds you all well and enjoying God's blessing over the past year. If you are planning on attending our study weekend in February, we ask that you please click on the link below and fill out the registration form. We need to start making arrangements for accommodations, so if you know you are coming, we ask that you fill this out as soon as possible.

We are excited to be able to have this study weekend again and we look forward to seeing everyone!

Hope in the one faith we share,
Brother Dave

[Boston February Study Weekend Registration.](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdKb6KmLZUgEt6R9b1PkNGClpnQNzOy5GhVD3n4OHeRA133TA/viewform?usp=sf_link)

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdKb6KmLZUgEt6R9b1PkNGClpnQNzOy5GhVD3n4OHeRA133TA/viewform?usp=sf_link

Tennessee Study Weekend April 7, 8, & 9. We look forward to anyone who can attend in person. If you cannot attend, it will be carried on Zoom.—bro. Jim Rankin

Lampasas June Gathering, June 9-11, Lampasas Meeting Hall, Lampasas TX.

Hye Gathering The 2023 Hye Fraternal Gathering will be Sunday, July 23rd - Sunday, July 30th, at the Christadelphian Campgrounds at Hye Texas. The 8:20 AM class will be over Esther and the 10:00 AM study class will be over Judges.

Editorial—How Few Believe the Bible True!

Berean Christadelphians believe that the book we all know as the Bible, consisting of the law, the prophets, and the apostles, is the only source of knowledge concerning God and His purposes at the present time or available in the earth, and that the Bible was wholly given by the inspiration of God in the writers, and consequently, is without error in its

parts, except what may be due to errors of transcription or translation. There may be today, no subject so challenged by the world around us. Even most who claim to be “christians” either outright reject the accuracy of the Bible, regarding it only as myths which make good moral stories or reject that it was infallibly given by the spirit of God.

The challenge to the Bible began a long time ago, in the 1800s, when a scientist name Charles Darwin wrote a book called “The Origin of Species” where he laid the foundation for what became the theory of Evolution. A contemporary with Darwin, Karl Marx, was himself proposing a new social order for societies, whereby he encouraged the common man to rise up against the wealthy classes. Marx’s efforts were known Scripturally as the going forth of the three unclean spirits like frogs (Rev. 16:13). He took three Scripturally clean concepts—liberty, equality, and fraternity—and defiled them in a system that required a working class, and elitists which are to govern the working class. Marx’s ideas turned the American and French revolutions back to a system of kings and serfs from which they had rebelled, only with different names.

Marx originally ran into much criticism for his ideas, and he attributed the criticism to a belief in the Bible. “Religion,” reasoned Marx, “is the opiate of the people.” By this he meant that the common people of the earth are satisfied with their plight, because they look for a greater reward after death. Consequently they are not motivated to rise up against the wealthy and powerful in the earth.

Marx knew that evolution and the Bible were completely contradictory. Evolution is the theory that life began by chance, apart from a Creator, such as described in the first verse of the first chapter of Genesis, the first chapter of the Bible. Marx knew that if he could discredit the Bible at its very foundation, he would eventually destroy belief in the Bible, and encourage the masses to raise up and overthrow the structure of society, as it existed in his day. And of course Marx was correct. Evolution and Creation are completely opposed to each other. Only one can be true. And over that last two hundred years, Marx clearly has won the debate in the eyes of the world.

But he did so in large part due to having a population who desired him to be right. He found a population that didn’t want to be constrained by the divine teachings found in the Bible, and it was these who exploited his teachings.

Jer. 5:31 “The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and my people love *to have it so*: and what will ye do in the end thereof?”

In reading about some of the archeological findings in Israel, we became aware of just how well Marx’s plan was working. For instance, in reading virtually any work on the Israelite exodus from Egypt and subsequent conquering of the land of Canaan under Joshua, you will find words to this effect, which occurs three times in one article from Wikipedia:

“Overwhelmingly, historians do not believe the exodus and conquering of Canaan ever happened.”

This belief has so corrupted the world, that it is even believed among the Jews. The following is from the Los Angeles Times, about a synagogue in Westwood California.

“For centuries the Biblical account of the Exodus has been revered as the founding story of the Jewish people, sacred scripture for three world religions, and a universal symbol of freedom that have inspired liberation movements around the globe.

“But did the Exodus ever actually occur?”

“On Passover last Sunday, Rabbi David Wolpe raised that provocative question before 2200 faithful in Sinai Temple in Westwood. He minced no words.

“After a century of excavations trying to prove the ancient accounts true, archaeologists say there is no conclusive evidence that the Israelites were ever in Egypt, were ever enslaved, ever wandered in the Sinai wilderness for 40 years, or ever conquered the land of Canaan under Joshua’s leadership. To the contrary, the prevalent view is that most of Joshua’s fabled military campaigns never occurred—archaeologists have covered ash layer and other signs of destruction at the relevant time in only one of the many battlegrounds mentioned in the Bible.

“The truth is that virtually every archaeologist who has investigated the story of the Exodus, with very few exceptions, agree that the way the Bible describes the Exodus is not the way it happened, if it happened at all, Wolpe told his congregants.

“Today, the prevalent theory is that Israel probably emerged peacefully out of Canaan—modern day Lebanon, southern Syria, Jordan, and the west bank of Israel whose people are portrayed in the Bible as wicked idolators. Under this theory, the Canaanites who took on a new identity as Israelites were perhaps joined or led by a group of Semites from Egypt—explaining a possible source for the Exodus story, scholars say. As they expanded their settlement, they may have begun to clash with neighbors perhaps providing the historical nuggets for the conflicts recorded in Joshua and Judges

“Scholars have known these things for a long time, but we’ve broken the news very gently, said William Dever, a professor of Near East Archaeology and Anthropology at the University of Arizona and one of America’s preeminent archaeologists.

This article, sadly, is true. Almost all archeologists and historians—at least those not associated with some Evangelical Christian entity—deny that the Exodus story has any truth in it. This is merely a further progression of Marx’s work.

These stories, they claim are myths, handed down from one generation to the next until the Babylonian captivity. The same myths can be found in many ancient civilizations, they claim. While in captivity, we are now told, the Jews codified these myths into a religion, and Judaism was born.

We will take some time over the next few months to examine whether or not Dr. Devers is correct, and examine whether or not the archeology of the Middle East “proves” the exodus never happened.

Song of Solomon

Part five

Son 4:6 Until the day break, and the shadows flee away, I will get me to the mountain of myrrh, and to the hill of frankincense.

Son 4:7 Thou *art* all fair, **my love**; *there is* no spot in thee.

Son 4:8 Come with me from Lebanon, **my spouse**, with me from Lebanon: look from the top of Amanah, from the top of Shenir and Hermon, from the lions' dens, from the mountains of the leopards.

Son 4:9 Thou hast ravished my heart, **my sister, my spouse**; thou hast ravished my heart with one of thine eyes, with one chain of thy neck.

Son 4:10 How fair is thy **love**, **my sister, my spouse**! how much better is thy **love** than wine! and the smell of thine ointments than all spices!

Son 4:11 Thy lips, **O my spouse**, drop *as* the honeycomb: honey and milk *are* under thy tongue; and the smell of thy garments *is* like the smell of Lebanon.

Son 4:12 A garden inclosed *is* **my sister, my spouse**; a spring shut up, a fountain sealed.

Son 4:13 Thy plants *are* an orchard of pomegranates, with pleasant fruits; camphire, with spikenard,

Son 4:14 Spikenard and saffron; calamus and cinnamon, with all trees of frankincense; myrrh and aloes, with all the chief spices:

Son 4:15 A fountain of gardens, a well of living waters, and streams from Lebanon.

Son 4:16 Awake, O north wind; and come, thou south; blow upon my garden, *that* the spices thereof may flow out. Let my **beloved** come into his garden, and eat his pleasant fruits.

Song of Songs

Part Five

Having brought to light his praise for the bride, the groom now notes that which would make the greatest impression upon him. For the bride, as we saw two months ago, that which made the greatest impression upon her was Messiah's triumphant entrance into Jerusalem, cowing down the elitists who for over a year had been breathing out threats against his life. To the groom, it is the stunning events upon the mount of transfiguration.

Jesus had been out of Israel, up in Lebanon in Tyre and Sidon, forced out really because of the hostility raised towards him by the Pharisees and Scribes. He is aware that the purpose for which he came into the world was nearly upon him, and

he felt that what was left for him to do, was to strengthen that which remained.

About to depart this world and knowing the time of his return was not eminent, he first encouraged them to be prepared against the night. Until the break of day, he implored them, that is, until he should return, they needed to embrace the mountains of myrrh and the hills of frankincense. We have discussed myrrh as the sacrificial aspect of Jesus' life, while frankincense was the priestly aspect. The mountains and hills emphasize the importance, the enormity of these principles.

In the events leading up to this great moment, Jesus was receiving more and more resistance from the elitists. They had asked him for a sign, and he answered them that they would receive no sign but that of the prophet Jonah. It is curious that they understood this, and asked the guard.

Then following on this, he spoke to the disciples about the dangers of this most powerful ruling class. He explained that they had created rules which they imposed upon the people that God had never enjoined, through their "teaching for doctrines the commandments of men," they were the real threat to the truth.

His invitation to them to accompany him out of Lebanon, over to Mt. Hermon that they might witness the transfiguration, was the direct result of their answer to the question he asked them, just prior to that event.

Matt. 16:13-16 "When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am? And they said, Some *say that thou art* John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets. He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."

And from Caesarea Philippi, he with a chosen few ascend the Mount. This is the focal point of the whole trip, the ascending of Mt. Hermon and the transfiguration. "Look from the top of Amana, from the top of Shenir and Hermon!" What would they see from Mt. Hermon. They could look south and see much of northern Israel. They could see Mt. Ebal and Mt. Gerizim, the place of the curses and blessings. They would know that between these mounts was the land of Shechem, where Abraham received the promises, after he had entered the land. Probably they could see Bethel, where Jacob had received his promise.

And while on the Mount, Moses and Elijah appeared to them. On the mount then, at that time, stood the law and the prophets and the fulfillment of both, the fulfillment of all that they spoke was about to come to pass. Jesus could take great strength from this. He knew, with their confession, that he had kept all that God had given to him. Now he had the further confirmation that he had fulfilled

the law, as he conversed with Moses, and the prophets, as he conversed with Elijah. What lie before him was the greatest of all trials, but he knew, and took encouragement that he was on course.

Standing in the den of the lions, and in the mountain haunts of the leopards, they were prophesying of the great victory that Christ would have over the world. The den of the lions symbolized the home of the northern aggressors, and the leopards' haunts symbolized both the northern and southern Greek mountains towards which the war chariots of Zechariah six will go forth. The entire picture is one of victory, in spite of the perilous condition in which they were living during that last year of Jesus' life. Victory over the flesh. Victory over sin. And victory over the nations, all of which support sin in all its manifestations.

Jesus again celebrates his bride: "You have ravished my heart," the King James says, but the word for word says, "you have emboldened me." You have emboldened me with one of your eyes, and with one chain of your neck. The singular one may likely have reference to the single-mindedness of the bride. We discussed before that the eye symbolized wisdom and knowledge, while the chain on her neck indicated her straightforward, unswerving character.

Jesus was praising her knowledgeable perseverance through trials. As Peter said, where else shall we go. Jesus and the apostles are being antagonized at every turn. It may even have appeared to the apostles that Jesus has led them north to Lebanon to escape the pressure brought by the authorities. This was not the case. Jesus brought them forth because he knew that they had to be committed to his words, to be prepared, to be strengthened against the great trial that was about to close in around them.

The Messiah-groom took great encouragement from his disciples having endured to the end of his life. Jesus celebrates this in his final exhortation/prayer after the Passover dinner—

John 17:12 "While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled."

It gave him encouragement that his works were not in vain, but that some, few though they be, were prepared to endure all manner of difficulties to serve God. Hence, he told his bride, "Thy love is better than wine." Previously, she had asked to be taken to the house of wine, which is a reference to her desire for redemption. Jesus is now telling her that her love is superior to wine, that is, the love they have for Jesus makes all that he has to go through for his bride, worthwhile.

I always find among the most sobering thoughts of rejection at the judgment, is to be told that Jesus' death for us was in vain. All that he did, all that he went through, all the pain and suffering was wasted on us, because of our insolence. He celebrates the love of those who loved him, but he denies even knowing those who failed.

The smell of thine ointments is better than spices. The smell of the ointments is the works produced out of the symbols of ointments and spices. They have committed to the work. They will go forth with him, even into the throws of death which the elites had planned for them in Jerusalem. Jesus knows they are now prepared to go forth, and he praises them for it.

Thy lips drop as honey comb. Honey is, of course, a symbol of knowledge and enlightenment. These are the things that the lips of the bride has spoken. "Thou alone hast the words of eternal life." Honey and milk under the tongue gives us the same picture, with a slight change. The land Israel was promised was a land of milk and honey. This under the tongue was a confession of a belief in the promises made to Abraham, one of the primary requirements of those who would believe the gospel.

The smell of Lebanon is the smell of the large and fragrant cedar trees which prominently grew there. These would be the same cedars which were used in building the first Temple. Jesus is praising the brides recognition that her salvation lies in that great Temple that God would provide, and in coming into that Temple. Bro. Roberts wrote in "The Law of Moses":

"Every true son and daughter of the Lord God Almighty is a miniature tabernacle or temple, as saith Paul, "Ye are the temple of the living God. If any man defile the temple of God, him will God destroy." Our minds should be a holy place lined with the gold of a tried faith, in which the one Christ-sacrifice for sins is continually offered, and the smoke of grateful incense, kindled by the fire of the altar, continually ascending, while deeply secreted in the innermost ark of the heart is the law of God in its remembrance, the scriptures in their affectionate study, the institutions of divine appointment in continual reverence, and the bread of God in its continual eating. Thus shall we be the sons of God in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, misunderstood by all, hated by many, despised and rejected of men, persevering in a bitter probation that will end at last in life and light and joy everlasting, when "the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people ... and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away".

And the groom continues to praise his bride for her conforming to the divine principles shown in the ointments he describes, all of which we have already considered. But he does praise one other aspect here. "Thou art a garden enclosed." In this he praises the bride's faithfulness to him, and to him alone. She is not distracted by the world around her, to embrace worldly principles and behavior. Her life is dedicated to the groom, and to him alone.

She is enclosed within the garden, that is, within the principles of truth, and has no interest in wandering outside of it. Water is, of course, a symbol of the Holy Spirit, and her garden flows with fountains of water. She knows the validity of the testimony of the Spirit word and will not depart from it.

"Behold, Thy King Cometh!"

By bro. G. V. Growcott

*"He came if haply he might find anything thereon . . .
and when he came to it, he found nothing but leaves."*

Our readings in Mark have brought us to the last week of Christ's ministry. Since the raising of Lazarus he had spent a few weeks east of Jordan and is now returning with his disciples.

At the end of ch. 10 they pass through Jericho. From here to Jerusalem was about 15 miles—a steady climb out of the valley into the mountains—a rise in altitude of nearly a mile. Bethany lay on the route, about two miles from Jerusalem, at the eastern edge of the built-up Jerusalem suburbs—from there on down to Jericho was through barren hills. It was on this route that the parable of the Good Samaritan was laid.

At the times of the yearly feasts (and this was one of them) this road was filled with travelers coming down to Jerusalem from Galilee and the north.

As ch. 11 opens, Jesus and his disciples are in the vicinity of Bethany and Bethphage, the latter being between Bethany and Jerusalem and apparently the village where, in v. two, he sends two disciples for a colt. Matthew here refers us to Zechariah:

"This was done that it might be fulfilled what was spoken by the prophet, Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion: behold, thy King cometh unto thee. He is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass."

(It is interesting to note that for "having salvation" the margin in Zech. 9:9 has "saving himself.")

"Lowly, and riding upon an ass." The ass was a very common animal, a beast of burden and humility and peaceful activity, in sharp contrast to the horse, a symbol of pride, rulership and war.

Israel were forbidden to multiply horses, and in harmony with this we find in their early history their judges riding upon asses. Later their kings, in earthly splendor, turned to horses.

The prophecy in Zech. immediately continues:

"I will cut off the horse and the battlebow . . . and he shall speak peace to the nations . . . and his dominion shall be from sea to sea . . ."

—this lowly king who comes into his kingdom riding upon an ass. Surely the thoughtful Jew from Zechariah's day on must have wondered and pondered over this strange prophecy!

The ass was one "*on which never man had sat.*" Two points are emphasized in this, uniqueness and separation. Jesus, we remember, was laid in a tomb "*where never man had laid.*" In his life and death, he broke new ground—opening a "new and living way" which never man before had trod.

But there is another aspect. In the Law, the red heifer which was sacrificed and burnt to provide the ashes of separation that were used to cleanse anyone unclean, must be one which had never borne a yoke—never been used for any other purpose. Its whole life and existence must be entirely devoted to the one cause.

No man can satisfactorily serve two masters. If he tries, he will fail in both. "No man that is called to be a soldier entangleth himself in the affairs of this life." (What an unsuspected depth of meaning there is in that word "entangleth"!)

"They found the colt tied by a door without, in a place where two ways met" (v. 4).

What is the reason for putting that in? Perhaps it is to give us a sense of *sign and symbolism* in these events. We remember that the events of this day were the climax and turning point of Christ's mission to Israel. All that went before was building up to this.

This day he was to be presented to them as the divinely sent King and Savior, and they were to joyfully accept him as such. But, within a week, what a change was to occur, and with what long and bitter consequences for Israel!

Surely Israel stood, this day, "*by a door — ("I am the Door")—in a place where two ways met.*" One way was "Hosanna to the Son of David"—the other was: "Crucify him!"

What are we to learn from the method of taking the colt? Jesus told them to just walk up and take it, and if the owner questioned them, to simply say: "*The Lord hath need of him.*" No request, no explanation.

Is not this the lesson of Job? "The Lord hath need of him." The Lord's purposes and the deep counsel of His wisdom requires things a certain way. Man may not understand, but *his* wisdom lies in believing and readily accepting the will of the Lord in faith.

There is something marvelous in the statement itself: "The Lord had need of him." How could the Lord have need of *anything*? Of all the wonders of creation, there is nothing to compare with the wonder of creating personalities which can, through trial and sorrow, become fit to minister to God's eternal pleasure and fellowship. "The Lord hath need of him." God does not rest upon His Own divine all-sufficiency but seeks the love and companionship of man.

Having brought the colt to Jesus, they spread their garments on it, and he sat thereon. In this coronal procession, as the King came to his royal city, the furnishings of his mount were not the usual jeweled and gorgeous equipage of royalty, but the common clothes of his humble followers.

The natural mind will say: "What a haphazard makeshift for such an important occasion! How much better it would have been to have planned it properly and have gotten suitable equipment! How much more orderly and impressive it would have been!"

We need only think back to the splendors of Solomon's court—the wonder of his age—to see the contrast with this one who came claiming to be his greater and more majestic son.

But there is far more depth and significance and beauty in this scene, and in the use of the common work-clothes of his followers, than in all

the empty trappings of Solomon's external splendor.

John records at this point that much people, when they heard that Christ was coming, went to meet him, carrying palm-branches and crying, "Hosanna to the Son of David." Here we see enacted a symbol of Christ's later approach from the east to the Holy City with the 144,000, bearing the palms of victory in their hands and singing the Song of Moses and the Lamb.

And so this ever-increasing procession advanced toward the Holy City, just as eventide was approaching. The road led over the southern slope of the Mount of Olives, which up to this point in the journey obscured the view of the city. But Matthew says that as they came to the descent of the Mount of Olives—that is, as they reached the crest of the road, and the city came into view—there was a spontaneous burst of song:

"The whole multitude began to rejoice and to praise God with a loud voice."

But there were two exceptions to the general rejoicing, as we learn from Matthew. On the one hand some of the Pharisees said, "Master, rebuke thy disciples." It is quite evident they were displeased and out of harmony with the spirit of the event.

Doubtless they sincerely felt it was presumption and blasphemy. Doubtless they also felt it was a very undignified and unseemly proceeding, out of harmony with solemn, restrained religious worship and liable to bring upon them the restrictions of the Romans.

And as the acknowledged religious leaders of the people, they would resent any popular religious movement that was outside of their own initiative and control. Probably this latter would be the most powerful motive of their annoyance, though they would not recognize it as such.

But there was another who did not enter into the general rejoicing, though for a far different reason.

"And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it, saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace!"

"At least in this thy day!" The great day of crisis and of opportunity for Jerusalem came—and passed, and they did not know.

He was not deceived by the fickle Hosannas of the multitude. He knew

that within a week all this shallow enthusiasm would have melted away and he would be standing in Pilate's judgment hall, looking out alone upon a human sea of malice and hate, self-hypnotized by the chant of "Crucify him, crucify him!"

From the crest of the Mount of Olives road, as the palm-bearing and singing multitude approached from the east, the whole city lay spread out before them. On the left, to the far south, was Gehenna, the valley of Hinnom; above that, within the south wall, the royal hill of Zion.

Before them, in the valley between them and the city, was the Garden of Gethsemane, which would mean nothing to the multitude, but much to Christ as he gazed on the scene.

At the north end of the city (now looking toward the right) was the gleaming white Temple, built by an Edomite usurper who had striven to destroy the royal Heir at his birth. Edom is the same root as Adam—red earth. The Temple truly stood for the flesh—the very symbol Jesus himself used—shining in its whitewashed hypocrisy of external religious pretention and internal fleshly bickering and hate.

God was in His holy Temple—but *not in this one*. The glory had departed from this spot 600 years before, as Ezekiel saw in vision. God was in the Temple He had prepared for Himself—the spiritual Temple that this fleshly Temple was even now plotting to destroy and did destroy. But in three days God raised it up again.

And further north—beyond the city wall—the *hill of Calvary*.

"And Jesus entered into Jerusalem, and into the Temple: and when he had looked round about upon all things, and now the eventide was come, he went out unto Bethany with the twelve."

"And when he had looked about upon all things"—another of those strange expressions that lead to so much thought! Here was his final survey—his final evaluation. And how sadly short it fell of what might, and should, have been!

"He came if haply he might find anything thereon, and when he came to it, he found nothing but leaves"—
-nothing but outward pretense and show.

It was now evening. The dark night was closing down upon Jerusalem, and Jesus and the 12 disciples went back over the

Mount of Olives to spend the night in Bethany with Lazarus, Mary and Martha.

In the morning, on the return journey to Jerusalem, the scene of the previous evening, and its consequences, is enacted in impressive symbol, as recorded in vs. 13-14:

"And seeing a fig tree afar off having leaves, he came in haply he might find anything thereon . . . and he found nothing but leaves, and he said, No man eat fruit of thee hereafter forever."

Fig leaves. Ever since the Garden of Eden they have been a symbol of a vain attempt to conceal barrenness and nakedness. The fig was a slowly-maturing tree, requiring several years of patient, hopeful labor. When matured, it was very prolific, bearing 2 crops a year. Hence it became a symbol of well-established plenty and prosperity, long waited for.

In the Kingdom age, every man will sit under his own vine and fig-tree. So Jesus, by the power of the Spirit, saw Nathanael—the "Israelite indeed in whom there was no guile"—sitting under his fig-tree.

In connection with a former destruction of Jerusalem, Jeremiah in vision saw Israel as figs—good and evil.

The fig-tree was remarkable in that the fruit began at the same time as the leaves, unless the tree were barren. The statement "For the time of figs was not yet" seems a little out of harmony with the picture, but the simplest meaning seems to be that the ripe-fruit time, the *picking* time, was not yet, so there should be fruit. A comparison of the wording of similar passages supports this.

We note, "He was hungry." He *needed* the fruit, just as we have seen in the case of the ass—"The Lord hath need of him"—The fig-tree had the honored opportunity of ministering to his needs, and it failed. He was hungry, and it gave him no meat.

In the parable of the fig-tree, in Luke 13, the household says: "These three years I come seeking fruit on this fig-tree and find none." We wonder whether God has come to inspect our accounts, and has said: "*No fruit yet—just leaves.*" And how much longer before the edict is pronounced: "Cut it down; why cumbereth it the

ground?"

It is notable that this was Christ's only miracle of cursing, and it was upon a tree. The only other miracle in any way comparable is the destruction of the swine in connection with the healing of the demoniac. There it was animals. To round out the picture, it was fitting and necessary that his judicial, as well as healing power be manifested, but only in a symbolic way, on animals and trees, for his mission at that time was to save men's lives, not to destroy them.

The closest he ever comes to harming human beings is in the next verse of this chapter, where he cleanses the Temple—another vivid and deeply symbolic manifestation of the power and authority he possessed.

The Temple was both the proudest and the most sacred spot in the nation—the center of the glory, dignity and responsibility of the ruling priesthood.

"Make not my Father's House a house of merchandise." What was wrong with selling sacrificial animals and providing the necessary money-changing facilities? These were not only not wrong—they were essential. But the trouble was that these necessary things kept growing and closing in until they obscured, and then overshadowed, and finally smothered the spiritual.

"It is written, My House shall be called of all nations the House of Prayer."

That was the great and central divine purpose in the Temple and in the Jewish nation—a nation of priests to manifest His Holy Name to the Gentiles—but it had become hopelessly bogged down in merely natural, fleshly things.

This is one of the biggest things we have to fight today—to keep the perfectly legitimate natural from swamping the spiritual. The Gospel of God is the most wonderful and most holy thing among men—it is the power of eternal perfection and redemption—but the great problem is to keep it held up high and clean and separate from natural things.

We have no illusion about this hall being the House of God, but inasmuch as it is devoted to the service of God and proclamation of

His eternal, saving Truth, we are under responsibility to keep it clear from all that is merely natural or social.

Paul emphasized the same lesson and the same ever-present danger when he wrote to the Corinthians: "What, have ye not houses to eat and to drink in?" The spiritual—never too strong in this dispensation of weakness—was, as ever, being crowded and suffocated by the robust companionship and pleasure of the flesh.

The next day, passing the same way, they discovered the fig-tree "dried up from the roots." Upon their exclaiming at it, Jesus brought out the greatest lesson involved—

"Have faith in God. Whosoever shall say to this mountain. Be cast into the sea, and shall not doubt in his heart—he shall have whatsoever he saith."

No obstacle can stand before the power of Faith. Now abideth these three—Faith, Hope and Love. Faith is the first, the foundation, the root, blossoming into Hope, and bringing forth the fruit of Love.

What is Faith? Both Paul and James made it clear that Faith is the power and driving force that makes men act contrary to nature and in defiance of human wisdom.

Faith does not consist of a passive acceptance of certain doctrines—it is an *active, living way of life*. Faith, says Paul, is the power that made Noah give his life to building the ark; that made Abraham leave everything behind and wander as an alien for 100 years; that made Moses turn his back on the luxuries of Egypt and throw in his lot with a rabble in a wilderness because they were—in their destiny and their potentialities—the people of God.

"Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God." Faith is not ignorant superstition, or surface emotion. Faith is deep-rooted in knowledge, though there are many shallow imitations that only time and testing can reveal.

Jesus here tells his disciples that prayer without Faith is useless. There is no use praying unless our way of life gives evidence that we believe God not only can, but WILL, take full care of those who seek Him.

"He that cometh to God must believe that He is a

Rewarder of them that diligently seek Him."

There is no use professing faith while at the same time giving evidence in our lives that we have more confidence in the protective power of worldly goods, or worldly organizations, or worldly companies whose guarantees of protection we buy.

But what else does Jesus here say is essential to effectual prayer?

—"And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also may forgive you" (v. 25).

There is a form of forgiveness—cold, patronizing and self-righteous—that is worse than no forgiveness at all. True forgiveness, as Jesus makes clear, is that kind we ourselves hope to get from God. It is not a matter of writing off the offence, and letting the barrier remain— unless we are quite content to be so treated by God.

There is a proud and evil human saying, "I forgive, but I do not forget"—a selfish attitude that seeks the personal gratification of granting forgiveness without assuming any of its humility or burden. Here again—would that type of forgiveness from God satisfy us, when we ask Him to *blot out our failures from His memory*?

Jesus is always slipping a few words that upset our carefully framed picture and make it so hard for the flesh. Speaking of the fate of the unmerciful debtor, he says (Matt. 18:35):

"So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother."

"From your hearts"— there is the key. We must get resentment and irritation clean out of our hearts, or they will poison us and bring us down to death.

At the end of the chapter the rulers, incensed by the events of these three days, come to him in another attempt to trap him in his words. What was his authority for doing these things?

But he gave them an answer which, while perfectly relevant to the question—as all the eagerly listening multitude would perceive—still turned their question against themselves.

He asked them, "Was John's authority of God or of man?" The point and relevance of his answer lay in the fact that John proclaimed himself as being sent for the very purpose of testifying to, and preparing the way for, Christ. John publicly and dramatically, as the climax of his mission, identified Christ as the Messiah.

Jesus simply reminded his questioners that he and John stood or fell together, and that they could answer their own question by telling where John got *his* authority.

Here the divine wisdom and mercy is shown in sending John to lay the foundation for the work of Christ. John was in line with what the people would naturally expect of a prophet. He was wholly and harmoniously within the established framework of the Mosaic system. But his work was to teach them to expect and be prepared for a change.

So it is with the unfolding of the divine purpose. It is precept upon precept, line upon line, each built upon that which preceded. The rulers rejected Christ because they rejected John. But the people accepted John and still rejected Christ. How could that be? In the same way they accepted Moses and rejected Christ. Jesus told them, "He (John) was a burning and a shining light, and ye were willing for a season to rejoice in his light."

"For a season." But there was no permanent effect—no depth of earth—no true comprehension of the purpose—above all, no *fundamental change of life*, for John's basic mission was to bring about a national purification and renewal of heart. His warning was: "The ax is laid to the root of the tree"—the barren Israel fig-tree. Therefore he exhorts with imperative urgency—"Bring forth fruits — fruits meet for repentance."

But no fruit came—only more leaves—a prolific and showy display of the fig leaves of piety and religious pretense. But no fruit—none of the essential inward fruits of the Spirit—love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, meekness—so the Roman ax descended, and the Israel fig-tree fell, and lay downtrodden and prostrate for 18 long and terrible centuries.

But now, in the great cycles of God's purpose, the fig-tree is again putting forth leaves, and soon the King will come again from the east to seek the fruit, and to present himself to the royal city.

Pentateuch and Archaeology

Nearly every archeologist today will tell you that there is no proof of any of the Pentateuch's writings in archeology. Well that may be true. Archaeology can't actually prove anything. One archaeologist for instance, admitted that where you have two archaeologists, you have at least three different opinions. The details of any matter in archeology are quite subjective. The time frames for events differ widely among archeologists, so much so that they try not to define their discoveries with firm years, but rather with ranges of several hundred years. So rather than saying they discovered something from 1450 BC., they will say they found something in a certain age, which can cover 100s of years. For that reason, we don't suggest that archeology will ever be reliable enough to prove the Bible, nor does the Bible need archeology to prove it. Rather, we will use the Bible to show that archeologists have found evidence of the proper event, in the proper time frame which agrees with what the Scriptural text says that they should have found. And that therefore, while archeology cannot prove the Bible, what archeologists have found is consistent with what the Bible says they should have found. The principle governing all these things must be:

2 Tim. 3:16-17 "All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works."

The Bible is true. Where the archeology supports the Bible, we take encouragement, but where the archeology is said to contradict the Bible, we simply wait for more information to come out, knowing that when the whole picture emerges, the Bible will be right. But we should clarify that. Archeology actually never contradicts the Bible. The arguments made from archeology against the Bible are not actually made from archeology, but from the absence of it. They complain that there is an absence of evidence. There is no proof, they say, that Moses ever existed. Well, there is also no proof that he didn't. They need to be reminded of a common refrain among archeologists themselves, that the absence of evidence is not evidence of absence.

For instance, not too long ago, just before the 1990s, it was commonly affirmed by all the world's experts, including leading archeologists in Israel, that there was no evidence that King David, or the united Kingdom of Israel ever existed. But, in 1993, an Israeli archeologist

working near the Syrian border found a fragment of basalt from the ninth century B.C., with an Aramaic inscription that mentioned the “House of David”—the first known reference to one of the Bible’s foundational figures.

Did this change the archeologists’ minds about David? No, they simply acknowledged that it may or may not be a reference to the Bible’s David, but that even if it was, he was only a leader of a small band of individuals, and certainly not the king over a united Israel as referenced in the Bible. But this makes the point about the absence of evidence. Supposedly, prior to 1990 there was no David at all, since there was no archaeological evidence of David. Now there are three archeological pieces found referring to him changing the evidence, but the conclusions of the experts remain the same. Indeed, some still claim that there was no King David at all, but that the references are to “a beloved,” which of course is what “David” means.

One of the most obvious references to King David isn’t even counted by the experts at all. It occurs in Pharaoh Shishak’s victory wall, celebrating King Shishak’s victory over King Rehoboam. The Scriptures tell us:

1 Kings 14:25-26 “And it came to pass in the fifth year of king Rehoboam, *that* Shishak king of Egypt came up against Jerusalem: And he took away the treasures of the house of the LORD, and the treasures of the king's house; he even took away all: and he took away all the shields of gold which Solomon had made.”

Now there are hundreds of cities, known and unknown which are claimed to have been taken by King Shishak, or his Egyptian name, Sheshonq. Jerusalem is not among them, though clearly listed in the Scriptural text above. But what is among them is a hieroglyphic which identifies one of the conquered cities as “The Heights of Davit.” (spelled with a “t”.)

So Sheshonq claims to have conquered the heights of David. Could there be a more fitting description of Jerusalem? But the experts tell us that David is ended with a T and not a D so it can’t be David. But David is acknowledged to have been spelled with ending of a T in other iron age works from the later 6th century, BC. And beside that the Archeologists tell us that the Egyptians often confused the D and the T. So it is the height of folly to suggest this is not a reference to Jerusalem, and King David.

Similarly, we can take the fall of Jericho. Did the walls fall down? Yes. Did they fall outward, exactly as the Bible said? Yes. Did a portion of the wall remain up, consistent with the saving of Rahab and her family? Yes. So does this prove the Bible narrative? Not to the experts. The experts have determined that the Exodus took place in the iron age, generally they claim in 1230 BC., and the walls of Jericho (they have determined) fell down at the end of the middle bronze age, around 1550 BC. Kathleen Kitchen, the third archeologist to explore Jericho (the previous two archeologists having concluded that the walls fell down at Joshua's invasion) concluded that the walls were Middle Bronze Age walls (which they were,) and therefore she concluded that Jericho was destroyed in the Middle Bronze age, and uninhabited 250 years before the time which Joshua supposedly came into the land. So, she concluded that since her time line didn't fit, the story cannot be true.

But the question is not when were the walls of Jericho built, but rather, when did the walls fall down. Her arguments were both silly, and deceitful. Deceitful, in that she said she did not find pottery consistent with the late bronze age. She did not find *foreign* pottery consistent with the late bronze age, which according to the Bible, was when Joshua conquered the land. But the pictures of pottery published after her death showed that she found *indigenous* or native pottery which did in fact date to the late bronze age. And that proves that the wall did not fall down in the middle bronze age as she claimed, but rather, in the late bronze age, which as we shall show, is when the Scriptures say the wall came down.

We don't want to waste much time on the archaeological arguments of the experts which make little sense. We will look to the Bible and see if there is archeological support for the Bible's narrative, without getting too much into the arguments of the archeologists themselves.

So the question is, when did the Exodus and the invasion of Canaan take place? Since dates are used to discredit certain archeological finds, it is fundamental to first establish the correct dates. There are two commonly used dates, the dating of 1230 BC for the Exodus and 1190 BC for Joshua's invasion, used by most of the world's acknowledged experts, usually called the late date, and an earlier date of 1445 BC for the Exodus, and 1404 for the entrance of Joshua into Canaan used by the Evangelical Christian archaeologists.

The more common late date of 1230 BC is set by a verse in the Exodus itself:

Exo. 12:37 “And the children of Israel journeyed from Rameses to Succoth, about six hundred thousand on foot *that were* men, beside children.”

The city of Rameses, according to Archaeology, was not called Rameses until the reign of Rameses II, in the 19th Dynasty, 1275-1227 BC. Prior to this, the city was called Avaris under the Pharaohs of the 17th dynasty, who made it their capital, but the city itself had existed since the 12th Dynasty, around 1938 BC, which would be just before Abraham’s call out of Ur. The city would have been called Peru Neper, Egyptian for “safe voyage,” in the 18th dynasty, in the late bronze period.

Those who select the late date do so arguing that the children of Israel couldn’t have left Ramses, if it didn’t exist. Those who chose the late date point to other times when the Spirit chose words which would be explainable to future generations, though they might be inconsistent with the actual history, such as the use of Yahweh in Genesis, before God had identified himself as Yahweh to Moses.

Those who select the earlier date say that they base their findings on Bible chronology. Particularly they base their reasoning on 1 Kings 6:1.

1Kings 6:1 “And it came to pass in the four hundred and eightieth year after the children of Israel were come out of the land of Egypt, in the fourth year of Solomon's reign over Israel, in the month Zif, which *is* the second month, that he began to build the house of the LORD.”

So here is a firm time frame. It was exactly 480 years from the Exodus to the fourth year of Solomon. The fourth year of Solomon, we are told by archeologists, was 966 BC. The Exodus then must not be 1230 BC as determined by the world’s experts, but 1446 BC. This reasoning is good, and the way the chronology should be established. But how did they determine that the fourth year of Solomon’s reign was 966 BC? Sadly, they did so using archeology and not the Bible.

There has been found in Archeology, a document called the Assyrian Eponyms. Assyria was one of the ancient nations of the world, and they kept a list of years in which events happened. In these eponyms, there are certain solar events listed, and using mathematics, it is possible to figure out the exact date in which a certain event, like the eclipse of the sun or moon, occurred. All dating, and to some degree, even Carbon 14 dating, is based upon an assumption that a certain eclipse, called the Bar

Saggile eclipse mentioned in the Assyrian Eponyms can be dated to 763 BC. And this is how the date of Solomon's kingdom was established.

The problem with these Eponyms is that we know from contemporary writings, that the Assyrians did not count all the years. Years in which Babylon dominated Nineveh, the capital of the Assyrians, are ignored and left out of the record. We know of certain of these. We don't know whether or not there are others. But even the date of the eclipse should be questioned. First, there is more than one eclipse that could be referenced, which would alter the date by 31 years.

Second, there is a problem with the dates themselves. The accepted date for the Bur-Saggile eclipse doesn't actually fall in the third month, as required by the Assyrian Eponyms. It falls in the fourth. To accept that the 763 BC eclipse took place in the third month, means we must believe that the Assyrians missed the start of the Vernal Equinox by two weeks. And this is, in fact, what secular chronologists believe. The following note was made by one:

Gerber, Manuel "A Common Source for the Late Babylonian Chronicles Dealing with the Eighth and Seventh Centuries," *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Vol. 120:4, October–December 2000, p. 559 "In summary, the situation in Babylonia before the last third of the eighth century seems to agree with the statement in MUL.APIN (Hunger and Pingree 1989) that the vernal equinox fell on Nisan 15. Probably around 730 the aimed-for beginning of the Babylonian year was shifted some two weeks upwards in relation to the solar year, so the average New Year's Day fell shortly before the vernal equinox. This holds true for the entire seventh century. Only around 600 did a second shift occur, which pushed the average beginning of the year to about two weeks after the vernal equinox (figure 4B)."

Why would the Assyrians, a predominantly agricultural society, miss the starting date of their year, for over 100 years? The annual start dates may in fact have been based on constellations. But a more common method in those days was according to the first new moon, after the sun had crossed the vernal equinox, and this was verified by the condition of the barley in the husk, which had to be nearly ripe, a condition the Hebrews called "Abib." But, according to Mr. Gerber, it is clear that starting around 730 AD, something changed that caused the Assyrians to date the new year differently, so that looking back, and by this, I mean making astronomical calculations backwards, the new year appears to be dated improperly by two weeks. So something changed.

What changed was that the Bur Saggile Eclipse took place before the days of Hezekiah, 763 BC. Now in the days of Hezekiah, this event occurred.

Isa. 38:7-8 “And this *shall be* a sign unto thee from the LORD, that the LORD will do this thing that he hath spoken; Behold, I will bring again the shadow of the degrees, which is gone down in the sun dial of Ahaz, ten degrees backward. So the sun returned ten degrees, by which degrees it was gone down.”

Since God manipulated the heavens in the days of Hezekiah (714 BC.) to alter the course of the sun, how can we be sure about any astronomical reading prior to that event. Obviously, we can't. So no doubt the Assyrians were not missing the start date for the year, but the change in the heavens God created, makes it impossible for us to understand what they were seeing, and when.

So is there another way by which the date of Solomon might be obtained? And of course there is. And that would be simply by counting the days of the Judean kings, from the fourth of Solomon to the end of the kings under Zedekiah, and the destruction of the Temple. In fact, we are even given a prophesy concerning this time frame.

Ezek. 4:4-8 “Lie thou also upon thy left side, and lay the iniquity of the house of Israel upon it: *according* to the number of the days that thou shalt lie upon it thou shalt bear their iniquity. For I have laid upon thee the years of their iniquity, according to the number of the days, three hundred and ninety days: so shalt thou bear the iniquity of the house of Israel. And when thou hast accomplished them, lie again on thy right side, and thou shalt bear the iniquity of the house of Judah forty days: I have appointed thee each day for a year. Therefore thou shalt set thy face toward the siege of Jerusalem, and thine arm *shall be* uncovered, and thou shalt prophesy against it. And, behold, I will lay bands upon thee, and thou shalt not turn thee from one side to another, till thou hast ended the days of thy siege.”

So here we have a prophesy by Ezekiel about the siege of Jerusalem. There were 390 years for the iniquity of the house of Israel, and an additional forty years for Judah, making 430 years. So what do we find in this regard? From the rebellion of Jeroboam, in the fourth year of Rehoboam, to the destruction of the temple, there are exactly 390 years of Judah's kings. And of course, forty years prior to this rebellion, was the fourth year of Solomon and the laying of the foundation of the

Temple. So there are 430 total years from the destruction of the temple to the fourth year of Solomon. And we are not dependent upon speculative archeology for the date of the fall of the temple. It is well recorded in history to be 586 BC.

So now, using true Bible dates, let's find the date of the Exodus.

586 BC the year of the fall of the Temple
-430 years of Ezekiel's prophesy and the years of Judah's kings
= 1016 BC. for the laying of the foundation of the Temple
-479 from 1 Kings 6 (in the 480th year, or after 479 years)
=1495 BC. for the date of the Exodus

Now if the fourth year of Solomon was 1016 BC., and the Exodus was 480 years prior to that, we can see that the Exodus was 1495 BC. This is 300 years earlier than the world's experts say, and 50 years earlier than the Christian archaeologists say.

The Sojourning of the Children of Israel in Egypt

What else do we know about dating the ancient world from the Bible. We know this:

Ex. 12:40-41 Now the sojourning of the children of Israel, who dwelt in Egypt, *was* four hundred and thirty years. And it came to pass at the end of the four hundred and thirty years, even the selfsame day it came to pass, that all the hosts of the LORD went out from the land of Egypt.

From this verse, all modern archeologists from both groups tell us that the children of Israel were to be considered in Egypt for 430 years. But this has always been a question. Josephus, the Jewish historian, and Manetho the Egyptian priest/historian for instance, says they were in Egypt for 215 years. Bro. Thomas set the time in Egypt as 225 years. He started the 225 with the covenant to Abraham when he entered the land in Shechem. As we'll see, I have it as 160 years. The thought is that the section of the verse in comas, that is (who dwelt in Egypt) should be read as a parenthesis. The children of Egypt, (yes those who dwelt in Egypt,) actually wandered 430 years. The Septuagint also has the text this way:

Exo. 12:40 "And the dwelling of the sons of Israel, which they dwelt in *the* land of Egypt, and in the land of Canaan, they and their fathers four hundred thirty years."

Now I would argue that the addition of the Septuagint "and in the land of Canaan" is spurious, but it does show that those Hebrew Rabbis who

were translating the text into Greek, did not believe that the entire 430 years were spent in Egypt.

That this must be the case is shown in the words of the Apostle Paul. It said this:

Gal 3:17 “And this I say, *that* the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect.”

From this it must be clear that promise to Abraham was made 430 years before the giving of the law. The giving of the law was in the third month after the start of the Exodus. So for the law to come 430 years after the promise, the promise would have to be made as Jacob is coming into Egypt. This is not consistent with the Scriptures.

Those who support the 430 years in Egypt idea, tell us that the covenant Paul is in reference to, is the covenant made to Jacob. But even that was made 60 years prior to his coming to Egypt. And since Gal. 3:16 focuses us on the promises made to Abraham—

Gal 3:16 Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ.

—it seems unlikely that anything other than the promises made to Abraham is the subject.

Now there is another time period involved in the wandering, and that is this, as made to Abraham:

Gen 15:13-16 “And he said unto Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land *that is not theirs*, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years; And also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge: and afterward shall they come out with great substance. And thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace; thou shalt be buried in a good old age. But in the fourth generation they shall come hither again: for the iniquity of the Amorites *is not yet full*.

Here we have two verses which make it impossible for them to have been in Egypt for 430 years. Abrahams’s seed was to wander for 400 years. As Isaac was born into a land that was not his, according to Hebrews 11, Abraham’s seed was wandering from Isaac’s birth till they entered the land of Canaan under Joshua. So it is not possible that the Children of Israel wandered 430 years, and the children of Abraham to

have only wandered for 400 years. For this reason, all commentators treat the years as an estimate, and not an exact date.

But the years is an exact date. Abraham's seed wandered from the birth of Isaac, till the children of Israel entered the land under Joshua. This is a four-hundred-year period that ended 40 years after the Exodus. And, since, using simple math, since it was 30 years greater, and ended 40 years sooner, the time period of the 430 had to start 70 years before the time period of the 400.

So if we think about what was happening 70 years before Isaac was born, and the 400 years of Abraham's seed began wandering, then we come to Abraham being 30 years old, and still living in Ur of the Chaldees. Was this when the promises were first made to Abraham? Yes, Abraham was still in Ur when the promises were first made to him:

Gen. 12:1-4 "Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee: And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed."

Was this promise made to Abraham in Haran, or in Ur? The Genesis 12 account seems to indicate Haran, but other texts tell us it was in Ur.

Gen 11:31 "And Terah took Abram his son, and Lot the son of Haran his son's son, and Sarai his daughter in law, his son Abram's wife; and they went forth with them from Ur of the Chaldees, to go into the land of Canaan; and they came unto Haran, and dwelt there."

So Abraham was already going to Canaan when he left Ur. And Nehemiah confirms this again,

Neh. 9:7-8 "Thou art the LORD the God, who didst choose Abram, and broughtest him forth out of Ur of the Chaldees, and gavest him the name of Abraham; And foundest his heart faithful before thee, and madest a covenant with him to give the land of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Jebusites, and the Girgashites, to give it, I say, to his seed, and hast performed thy words; for thou art righteous:

These verses indicate that the covenant was first made to Abraham when he was still in Ur, 70 years before the birth of Isaac, when he was 30 years old. And 30 is a common age by which holy men of old embarked

upon their destiny. Joseph was 30 when he stood before Pharaoh, David and Solomon both began their kingships at 30, Jesus began his ministry at 30, and under the law, the priests began their work at 30. So while there is no specific verse that gives us Abraham's age when he left Canaan, it appears more than coincidental that 430 years before the giving of the Law of Moses, Abraham was 30 years old and living in Ur.

Along with wandering for 400 years, Abraham was told that his seed would come out in the fourth generation. How then can 430 years only be four generations? Well, we are told, in this one instance, a generation is 100 years.

But a generation is clearly 40 years. Jesus told his disciples in the Mt. Olivet prophesy, that this generation will not pass, till the things he spoke of were fulfilled. He spoke this in 27 AD., and the wars he prophesied of began in 66 AD. The generation was in its last year, but it had not passed, as Jesus promised.

We can also see this in the genealogy of Moses. For instance, Levi went into Egypt. He had a son Kohath, who had a son Amram, who had Moses, who was the fourth generation, and was 80 at the Exodus. So Moses came out in the fourth generation.

So we have set the time frame for the Exodus, and we will next month, look at the events which happened in this time frame.

"Universalism"

From the 1953 Berean.

The style is unmistakably bro. Growcott's though the article is unsigned.

"Universalism" is the increasingly popular doctrine that every human being that ever lives will eventually be brought to salvation. It seems to be largely motivated by a revolt against the evil doctrine of eternal torment. It loses most of its logic and appeal when the true destiny of the ignorant and the wicked is understood.

It will be observed that some of the "Universalists" arguments (which it is planned to list and consider later in this series) are simply "private interpretations" placed upon passages. These interpretations are abstractly possible, but do not necessarily follow from the actual wording of the passages and are not in harmony with the broad scriptural picture.

There appears to be two errors upon which the "Universalist" viewpoint

is founded:

- (1) A complete ignoring of the mass of clear testimony concerning the permanent destruction of the wicked and of the ignorant. And
- (2) a rigid insistence upon an absolute interpretation of the word "all" and "every," regardless of context or scriptural usage.

Paul's statements (for example) that "ALL things are lawful" (1 Cor. 6:12), and that "One believeth he may eat ALL things" (Rom. 14:2), show how unsound is a blind insistence on such an interpretation of "all" and "every," wherever found.

[Every time the word "all" is used in an argument, I can still hear the words of bro. Don Newcomer making the point that the first time the word "all" is used in the Scriptures, it doesn't mean "all." Eve was the mother of "all" living—

Gen. 3:20 "And Adam called his wife's name Eve; because she was the mother of all living."—

yet she wasn't the mother of Adam.—JP]

The Universalist not only insists upon a universal application of these words to the time being spoken of but extends them forwards and backwards to the limits of time. "All people," to the Universalist, must be understood to mean all people who ever have lived or whoever will live. This, of course, *could* be the speaker's meaning in any particular case, but the Universalist insists that it *must* be in every case. His whole view point depends upon it. The following passages, we believe, clearly disprove Universalism:

"Blasphemy against the Holy Spirit shall not be forgiven unto men . . . Whosoever speaketh against the Holy Spirit, it SHALL NOT BE FORGIVEN HIM, neither in this world, NOR IN THE WORLD TO COME" (Matt. 12:31).

"If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin UNTO DEATH—I do not say that he shall pray for IT" (1 John 5:16).

"It is IMPOSSIBLE, if they (who had been partakers of the Holy Spirit) shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance . . . That which beareth thorns and briers is rejected, whose END is to be burned" (Heb. 6:4-8).

"If we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of

the Truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment, and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries" (Heb. 10:26-27).

"He that being often reprov'd hardeneth his neck shall suddenly be destroyed, AND THAT WITHOUT REMEDY" (Pro. 29:1).

"Enemies of the cross, whose END is DESTRUCTION" (Phil. 3-18-19).

"False apostles, deceitful workers, ministers of Satan .. whose END shall be according to their works" (2 Cor. 11:13-15).

"Behold the ungodly, who prosper . . . then understood I their END. Surely Thou didst set them in slippery places: Thou castest them down to destruction" (Psa. 73:12,17,18).

"Sin . . . *things* whereof ye are now ashamed . . . the END of those things is DEATH" (Rom. 6:20-21).

"As the whirlwind passeth, so is the wicked NO MORE; but the righteous is an everlasting foundation" (Prov. 10:25).

"The wicked shall be cut off from the earth, and the transgressors shall be rooted out of it" (Prov. 2:22).

"Drought and heat consume the snow waters: so doth the grave those which have sinned . . . he shall be no more remembered" (Job 24:19-20).

"The face of the Lord is against them that do evil, to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth" (Psa. 34:16).

"Evil doers shall be cut off . . . For yet a little while, and the wicked SHALL NOT BE . . . The wicked shall perish and the enemies of the Lord shall be as the fat of lambs; they shall consume; into smoke shall they consume away . . . The transgressors shall be destroyed together: the END of the wicked shall be cut off" (Psa. 37:9-10,20,38).

"Let the sinners be consumed out of the earth; and let the wicked be NO MORE" (Psa. 104:35).

"The Lord preserveth all them that love Him: but ALL the wicked will He DESTROY" (Psa. 145:20).

"He will gather his wheat into the garner; but he will BURN UP THE CHAFF with unquenchable fire" (Mat. 3:12). (Burning up chaff (stubble, Mal. 4:1; tares, Mat. 13:38-40) is a very different thing from purifying gold and silver through fire. These symbols cannot be confused.)

"The tares are the children of the wicked one . . . as therefore the tares are gathered and BURNED IN THE FIRE; so shall it be in the end of this world" (Mat. 13:38-40). (TARES are not "purified" or "pruned," they are DESTROYED. How can we get "salvation" out of such passages as these?)

"The day cometh that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, that it shall LEAVE THEM NEITHER ROOT NOR BRANCH . . . Ye shall tread down the wicked, for they shall be ASHES under the soles of your feet" (Mal. 4:1-3). (This is complete obliteration, without anything remaining or carrying over.)

"Wherefore hast Thou brought me (Job) forth out of the womb? O that I had given up the ghost (gava—expired) and no eye had *seen* me! I SHOULD HAVE BEEN AS THOUGH I HAD NOT BEEN; I should have been carried from the womb to the grave" (Job 10:18-19).

"Man that is in honor, and understandeth not, is like the beasts that perish . . . Like sheep are they laid in the grave; death shall feed on them" (Psa. 49:29,19,14).

"The man that wandereth out of the way of understanding shall remain in the congregation of the dead" (Prov. 21:16).

"They (Israel's heathen conquerors) are dead, THEY SHALL NOT LIVE; they are deceased, THEY SHALL NOT RISE: therefore hast thou visited and destroyed them, and made all their memory to perish" (Isa. 26:14).

"Babylon shall become heaps . . . that they may sleep a PERPETUAL sleep, and NOT AWAKE. I will make drunk

her princes and her wise men, her captains and her rulers and her mighty men, and they shall sleep a perpetual sleep and not awake" (Jer. 51:37,57).

"The day of the Lord is near upon all the heathen: as thou hast done, it shall be done unto thee: thy reward shall return upon thine own head . . . they shall BE AS THOUGH THEY HAD NOT BEEN" (Obad. 15-16).

"As many as have sinned without law shall PERISH without law" (Rom. 2.12).

"I will also laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh . . then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, BUT THEY SHALL NOT FIND ME . . . The turning away of the simple shall slay them, the prosperity of fools shall destroy them" (Pr. 1:20).

"Seek ye the Lord WHILE HE MAY BE FOUND" (Isa. 55:6).

"Every branch in me (Jesus) that beareth not fruit He (God) taketh away . . . If a man abide not in me he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered . . and cast into the fire . . . and burned" (John 15:2.6).

"Wide is the gate and broad is the way that leadeth to DESTRUCTION, and many go in thereat; but strait is the gate and narrow is the way that leadeth to life, and FEW THERE BE THAT FIND IT" (Matt. 7:13-14).

"These as natural brute beasts made to be taken and destroyed . . . shall UTTERLY PERISH in their own corruption" (2 Pet. 2:12).

"If judgment first begin at the house of God, what shall the END be of them that obey not the Gospel? If the righteous SCARCELY BE SAVED, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear? (1 Pet. 4:17).

"It had been good for that man if he had not been born" (Matt. 26:24). Could this be said of ANYONE who is destined to eternal salvation?

"I (Jesus) pray not for the world, but for them which Thou hast given me . . . The world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world" (John 17:9, 14).

"There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the END thereof are the ways of DEATH" (Prov. 16:25).

"Whoso despiseth the Word shall be DESTROYED" (Prov. 13:13). Thine enemies . . . Thou shalt make them as a fiery oven in the time of Thine anger: the Lord shall swallow them up in His wrath, and the fire shall DEVOUR THEM" (Psa. 21:8-9). How can anyone convince himself that it is possible to harmonize the idea of universal salvation with all these passages?

"We are unto God a sweet savor of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish. To the one we are the savor of DEATH UNTO DEATH; and to the other the savor of life unto life." (2 Cor. 2:15-16) (How, according to the Universalist view, was the preaching of the Gospel by Paul a "savor of DEATH unto them that perish"?).

"When the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and AS MANY AS WERE ORDAINED TO ETERNAL LIFE, believed" (Acts 13:48). (This is conclusive, Of those to whom Paul preached (at Pisidian Antioch), a certain number believed. The Spirit testifies that these were ALL out of that group who were ordained to eternal life.)

"And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved" (Acts 2:47) (Again showing clearly that ALL are not to be saved, but only SOME. This would be the normal and reasonable meaning that would ordinarily be taken out of all passages that speak of salvation and rejection.)

After all this, after the life of probation, after the separation at the judgment seat, and the rejection and destruction of the wicked, after all this which the Scriptures speak of in such terms of finality without any hint of reversing it all later, to suggest that we must read into these passages an entirely different idea from what they appear to plainly teach is very far-fetched and unsound. Universalism is a humanitarian revolt against the cruel, satanic teaching of eternal torment and torture for

rejected immortal souls. As such, Universalism merits sympathy, but it is dangerous and unsound. It rejects the teaching of much scripture, and it has the very harmful tendency of undermining the great effort and incentive needed to "work out our salvation with fear and trembling." For obviously, if all are to be eventually saved, the vital importance of success in overcoming the flesh in this life is greatly lessened and obscured.

The Scriptures constantly and consistently seek to impress man with the fact that his eternal salvation depends upon his course in THIS life—"He that *endureth to the end* shall be saved;" he that "keeps Christ's works to the end," "is faithful unto death," "patiently continues in well-doing," "keeps in memory," "holds fast," "is firm unto the end," "gives diligence to make his calling and election sure," "continues in the faith," "is not moved away," "does not look back," "mortifies the deeds of the body," "abides in Christ," "keeps his first love," "does not fall from his steadfastness," "looks diligently lest he fails," "is not entangled again in the world," "gives more earnest heed—does not let slip—does not neglect," "takes heed lest he fall," "continues in faith and love and holiness," "brings forth fruit with patience," "does not turn away," etc., etc.

ALL these urgent warnings are given that men may apply themselves "WHILE IT IS CALLED TODAY"—"*Strive* to enter in . . . When once the Master of the house is risen up and hath *shut to the door*, and ye knock at the door saying, Lord, open to us, He shall say, I know you not."

But Universalism says, "Do not be misled. There will be another chance. There will be endless chances, whatever you do. You are *bound* to be saved eventually."

The Four Accounts of the Resurrection

From a 1953 Berean

The accounts of the resurrection of Christ by Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John are not inconsistent with each other, though in some features they vary. Some seem to think the statement that "He appeared *first* to Mary of Magdala" is inconsistent with the testimony of Matthew, that he appeared to certain "women."

There is no inconsistency here. He *did* appear to Mary first; he *did* appear to those women: It does not say "first." Even if it did, there would be no difficulty—there were two Marys among them.

There were a number of women related to the transactions of the resurrection morning. We find (Matt. 27:55; Mark 15:40-41) that "many women" had followed Jesus from Galilee to Jerusalem, "Among whom were Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James and Joses, and the mother of Zebedee's children."

These many women were witnesses of the crucifixion, and also of the deposit of the body of Christ in the tomb of Joseph (Luke 23:55, also Mark 15:47); after which they returned and prepared sweet spices and ointments, and rested on the Sabbath (Luke 23:56), having arranged for an early visit to the sepulchre on the first day morning to embalm (Mark 16:1).

In the early visit, most of "many women" appear to have taken part (Luke 24:1), and at first in one band. The several accounts may be pieced together thus:

Before the arrival of the women, there had been an earthquake and angelic manifestation attendant of the resurrection of Jesus, throwing the keepers of the tomb into a panic (Matt. 28:2). The women, who had wondered how they were to obtain access to the tomb, arrive and find the stone rolled to one side, and the sepulchre open.

They conclude the body had been taken away and are perplexed (Luke 24:2). Mary Magdalene, leaving the other women at the sepulchre in their perplexity, returns and tells Peter (John 20:2),

"They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and WE know not where they have laid him."

In Mary's absence, two angels appear at the sepulchre, in whose presence the remaining women stoop, affrighted, to the earth. The angels inform the women of the resurrection of Christ and tell them to go and tell his disciples. They depart quickly with fear and great joy and run to bring the disciples word (Matt. 28:8).

Mary returns with Peter and John, who inspect the empty sepulchre, and see the left clothes of the dead. Not knowing the Scriptures that Jesus should rise again from the dead, sorrowing curiosity satisfied, they go again to their own home (John 20:2-10).

Mary remains behind and stays outside the sepulchre weeping. In a short time she takes another look into the sepulchre: this time she

sees the angels who had some time before appeared to the rest of the women. She does not know them to be angels, but probably supposes them to be visitors. They ask her why she weeps.

"Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him."

Having said this, she steps back to resume her position outside the sepulchre, and sees a third person, whom she supposes to be the gardener. She instantly asks him where he has laid the body of Jesus. The response reveals to her the delightful fact that *it is Jesus himself!* Forbidding her to touch him, he tells her to go and tell his disciples that he is about to ascend.

The other women, yet on their way, having been angelically apprised of the resurrection, are met by Jesus, who salutes them, and tells them to go and ask his brethren to meet him in Galilee. They hold him by the feet and worship him. There is no interdiction against touching him, as in the case of Mary, the cause being removed (Matt. 28:9-10).

Mary Magdalene arrives at the place of the disciples' stay, about the same time as "Joanna and Mary, the mother of James, and the other women that were with them" (Luke 24:10). The women (all of them) tell what happened; but their words seem as idle tales.

Two of their company afterwards (during the day) go on some business to Emmaus; and while on the way, are joined by the Lord, who converses with them, but holds their eyes, and reveals himself to them at the end of the journey and then disappears (Luke 24).

The two from Emmaus return and narrate their experience. While they are discussing the matter, Jesus himself appears, shows the nail marks on his hands and feet, submits to be handled, and eats before them in their midst, Thomas being absent.

Thomas returns after the interview, but refuses to believe what he is told, unless he sees Christ for himself, and is allowed to put his fingers in the holes of the nails and spear.

Eight days afterwards, the disciples being again assembled, and Thomas being with them, Jesus again appears in their midst, and addresses himself specially to Thomas, whose skepticism disappears.

Afterwards the disciples return to Galilee, where Christ appears to them several times. Finally, at the end of 40 days (the disciples having returned to Jerusalem) he takes leave of them at Bethany.

This enumeration of events, which is consistent with a strict collation of the four narratives, admits of the statement of Mark being correct, that Jesus appeared "first" to Mary Magdalene, and therefore dispenses with the necessity for rejecting any or any part of the New Testament narratives, which are all sustainable in respect of authenticity.

It is, however, worthy of observation that the evidence of the resurrection of Christ does not lie with these narratives. They form a part of it; but are not logically essential to it, though they collaterally strengthen it much. The evidence of Christ's resurrection in the testimony of the apostles, as recorded in the Acts and Epistles, would be conclusive even if God had not granted us the kindness of a circumstantial narrative by credible eye-witnesses.

Hints For Bible Markers

Psalm 18:25 – 26

“With the merciful thou wilt show thyself merciful; with an upright man thou wilt show thyself upright; With the pure thou wilt show thyself pure; and with the froward thou wilt show thyself froward.”

2 Samuel 22:26 – 27

“With the merciful thou wilt show thyself merciful, and with the upright man thou wilt show thyself upright. With the pure thou wilt show thyself pure; and with the froward thou wilt show thyself unsavory.”

In this verse we have the very spirit of Christ. When he gave the rule for judgement he said, *“For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again”* (Matthew 7:2). And when one of his disciples asked to be taught how to pray, did he not teach us all, *“And forgive us our sins; for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil”* (Luke 11:4). If we are repentant, openhearted, patient, and forgiving with others, we can have confidence that God will be

merciful towards us, forgiving us for our multitude of sins, no matter how severely we have failed, if we return with a true intention and desire to observe His commandments.

Of course there is more to the lessons in this verse. “*With an upright man thou wilt show thyself upright; with the pure thou wilt show thyself pure.*” The effect of such guidance is to make us pay attention to our conduct. To make us strive to maintain a loving, willing, and obedient heart to the will of our Heavenly Father. This then drives us to develop characteristics such as kindness, restraint, generosity, patience, and love. “*And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.*” (2 Peter 1:5-8). These character traits must be cultivated by those who hope to be accepted by the Lord of mercy in the coming day of judgement when the sheep and the goats shall be separated, and the righteous shall rejoice in his presence.

We are poor followers of Christ if we cannot show our compassion as well as our knowledge. Our Master gave us many examples of exhibiting compassion to follow. It is so easy to say “You poor thing, I feel so sorry for you! What will you do?” The Messiah had compassion on the multitude, giving us a practical illustration of the manifestation of his compassion. He made them sit down, gave thanks to his Heavenly Father for the provision, and then he fed them. Therein lies a powerful lesson for us.

“*With the froward thou wilt show thyself froward.*” The root words for what is translated “froward” is two different words. The first word translated froward (Strong’s number: H6141) means; crooked, froward, perverse. Froward is an old English word which means: “Perverse, that is, turning from, with aversion or reluctance; not willing to yield or comply with what is required; unyielding; ungovernable; refractory; disobedient; peevish.” The second word translated froward (Strong’s number: H6617) means; to *struggle* or (figuratively) *be* (morally) *tortuous*: wrestle. The

idea is that if we come before God in a perverse manner, He will twist it for use against us, teaching us the perverseness of our ways.

If we come before our brethren in a half-hearted, doubting spirit, presuming to criticize, find fault, and pass judgment we can be sure we will be wrestling with the Scriptures of Truth, unable to understand or obey the commandments contained therein. The spirit in which God would have us learn is as a young child. One who does not question the wisdom or truthfulness of his teacher (the bible). If he does not understand, he looks for an explanation, never doubting.

These two verses clearly express the providential favor of the Almighty towards those who love His name and are worth contemplation and remembrance, especially during our times of trial. *“The eyes of the LORD are upon the righteous, and his ears are open unto their cry”* (Psalms 34:15).

Psalm 18:27

“For thou wilt save the afflicted people; but wilt bring down high looks.”

2 Samuel 22:28

“And the afflicted people thou wilt save: but thine eyes are upon the haughty, that thou mayest bring them down.”

This brings to mind that great day of exaltation after our period of trial and despair. As we learn from Isaiah 2:17, *“And the loftiness of man shall be bowed down, and the haughtiness of men shall be made low: and the LORD alone shall be exalted in that day.”* The high and pompous, self-important rulers, rich men, ecclesiastics of this world will be brought to naught. The occupation of the vain rulers, the clerical False Prophet, and the vanity of riches will be gone.

Continued next month should the Lord will

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