

*Lives and Times of
The Bible*

Or

“Biblical Synchronicity”

An Approach to the Faith of our Fathers

Book III

A Study of Scripture in Greater Depth

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Disclaimer

The bible was, of necessity, written in compressed form. Its' authors, arguably aware of then current causes vs. effects and problems vs. solutions chose not to include some of that extra information in their written efforts. Therefore, in the research required to produce this book, no attempt was made to use only information supporting the doctrine or theological position of any specific denomination. There was effort made to use sources considered reliable and that were not known to be intentionally controversial.

Therefore, any information found contrary to any standard doctrinal thought is simply a report of what was found. Both the King James and New International translations of scripture are used.

The authors' only intention have been to discover what supposedly objectively oriented authors had to say about the topic.

A respected theological friend once said,

"Place the plow to the ground, and let's see what turns up."

Acknowledgments

We gratefully acknowledge the help of friends and family in researching and writing the material in this book. Son, David and wife, Jodi for their considerable help and advice in page set up, locating and researching sources of information; for help in vetting both significant information and significant authors; for help in deciding and locking into position all margins, free-standing side-heads, paragraph side-heads and section titles; for their patience waiting while we labored over such concerns as the rephrasing of split infinitives, participles, concept structure, point-of-view, etc.

Son, David, for his ground-breaking "Quantum Physics and Prayer" contribution.

The completed document would indeed be different without their invaluable help.

Preface

The lessons contained in this small work represent the research efforts of two men. Having been raised in Christian homes; having receiving rich research-based educations in the secular world; and one having spent fifty plus years teaching in both secular and non-secular colleges and universities, the other having spent many years as a counselor and court advisor, developed at least these four essentials for Christian instruction:

- *A knowledge of research methods.

- *An academic curiosity to learn about one's world.

- *A spiritual curiosity to know more about God.

- *A desire to follow a former professors' instruction:

“Dig until fact gives way to opinion; then, give the opinion as such if it seems helpful” and let the reader decide.

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To Judge or Not to Judge

Understanding the concept of judging should be important for everyone, especially for the believer. The compassionate person should try to understand others instead of drawing momentary conclusions regarding them.

Colossians 3:12-17 offers instruction to the believer in this regard.

Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you have a grievance with one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues, put on love, which binds them all in perfect unity.

Let the peace of God rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts. And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

James 5:9 cautions the believer not to grumble or complain against others.

Paul, in Romans 14:1-4, cautions us against quarreling with others, i.e., not intentionally to cause another person to stumble. All too often, in the

church, corporate, or business world, some will “set up” another person to fail. The outsider, observing such behavior from a supposed Christian, is cautious about becoming a participant.

The sensitive individual seeks peace with all men, which is not always an easy thing to do.

Leonardo da Vinci said *we do ill if we censure another person, especially if we do not understand.*

Benjamin Disraeli, of the 19th Century United Kingdom, said, *It is much easier to be critical than to be correct.*

Dale Carnegie implied on one remark, *Any fool can criticize, condemn and complain – most fools do.*

Jesus, in His Sermon on the Mount, gave divine instruction regarding judging.

Matt 7:1 Jesus said,

Judge not that ye be judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete it shall be measured to you again.

Scripture does not mean one is not permitted to judge. Such a requirement would be against human nature. For it is impossible for an individual to transact with others socially without the benefit of making a judgment.

Conveniently, in a few verses later, Jesus cautions us not to give dogs what is holy, or to give pearls to pigs. He then cautions us to avoid false prophets. Rather, judge them by their fruits. Avoid *ad hominem* arguments (arguments against the person).

Paul urged people to test everything, holding on to what is judged to be good and abstain from every form of evil. The word, *test*, here, means, to prove, verify, examine (judge).

Some Judgments Require an Ultimate Response

Yet, Matt 7:1-2 seems to state a serious caution to everyone. There is an occasional human behavior that rises above the occasional moment-by-moment judgmental requirements of daily life.

In other words, some individuals seem to act with inherent evil intent; to destroy without caution, or personal regard.

While the scripture indicates that such judging individuals will themselves be judged in like measure, **it does not say when, under what conditions, or by whom** the reactive judgment will be given in like measure.

While, In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus was instructive of the kingdom, of repentance, faith, worship, and humility, this discourse indicates harsh treatment awaits those who are rebellious of these matters. And, it does not place a statute of limitations on reactive judgment for one's wrong doing.

In verses 13-14, Jesus told his listeners to enter through the narrow gate:

For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it . . . Not everyone who says to me, "Lord, Lord" will enter the kingdom of heaven but only he who does the will of my father who is in heaven. Many will say to me on that day, "Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles? Then, I will tell them plainly, "I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers."

For one's daily life, this scripture's admonition seems reasonable. However, the ending quote introduces the prospect that some individuals' behavior toward others might be considerably more evil than would be in an occasional statement of disrespect or hypocrisy.

There is even an implication, with the phrase, *did we not prophesy in your name and in your name drive out demons and perform miracles*, some such persons will be from the community of believers.

Consider, instead, the possibility that the reactive judgment brought against the evil doer will be after death; that the offending individual will then face punishment in like measure as that individual had brought evil or discomfort into the lives of others. In other words, the individual would experience the evil from the other person's perspective.

Assuming this interpretation of the scripture is reasonable, consider the following:

Caligula, Roman emperor from 37 to 41 AD. He was known for his cruelty, extravagance, mindless spending of huge sums of money from the

national treasury; the execution of rivals and even his supporters; the assumption of his own divinity.

Maximilien Robespierre, French lawyer and politician. Though fighting early on for the common man, it was he who eventually came to dominate the French Committee of Public Safety and the ensuing Reign of Terror that took place from September 5 of 1793 to July 27 of 1794.

Exercising dictatorial control over the French government, he through The Committee, systematically executed 17,000 individuals perceived to be enemies of his revolution.

Adolph Hitler, who came to power in Germany promising to right the wrongs of the World War I Peace Accords, would:

- *Execute thousands of people by firing squad.
- * Execute thousands of people by hanging.
- *Execute thousands of people by lethal gas or injections.
- *Approve surgeries where organs were removed without the benefit of anesthetics.
- *Execute thousands of people through starvation.
- *Execute thousands of people by being frozen.
- *He would have approved multiple rapes and beatings.

These persons, all, in the afterlife, suffered these same atrocities themselves as divine punishment.

Luke 13:28 reads: *There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.* Indeed!

Our customary admonishment against social and interpersonal infractions may be important, but they pale by comparison.

If correct, for some, **there will be a payday!**

Quantum Physics and Prayer

Prayer for the believer is as common as eating. We listen to others pray and sometimes take lessons from what they say or even how they say it. Yet few take the time to define it, or to analyze its' complexity and varied purposes.

Definitions:

One dictionary of theology and religious terms defines it simply as,
Desiring God.

Another, *Talking with God.*

Or *Talking with God with the aid of the Holy Spirit.*

One thoughtful itinerant preacher defined it simply as, *the sincere desire of the spiritual heart.*

Matthew 6:9-19 (NIV) Jesus, without defining prayer, provides believers with a sample:

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.

Your kingdom come; your will be done.

On earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread. Forgive us our debts

As we also have forgiven our debtors.

And lead us not into temptation,

but deliver us from the evil one.

The NIV ends his sample prayer at that point.

Reasons and Causes of Prayer:

- Blessing and Adoration to God.
- Petition: asking God for help or forgiveness.
- Intercession: praying similarly as in a petition.
- Thanksgiving: expressing gratitude for a blessing from God.
- Confession: an acknowledgment of one's own wrong doing.
- Faith: a prayer of trust believing God will honor His promises.
- Worship: simply standing in awe and reverence of God.
- Fellowship
- Spiritual Warfare
- Lamenting
- Prophetic
- Dedication
- Listening to God

Consider This:

In the beginning, God made **both** the heavens and the earth. At the end of a week's work, he created man. The church expends nearly all of its' effort discussing only man and his shortcomings. There is scarce treatment of the contributions made by people of science by, and for people of faith.

But, man did not create science or math; he discovered them. **God made them!**

Question, is it possible that believers would profit from discovering a relationship between scientific information and a theological concept? Many physicists are also believers. Some physical discoveries seem to clarify a relationship between physics and prayer.

They have concluded that God is infinitely more complex than our most ingenious minds can comprehend. Their admonition might be, **don't dumb down God!**

Quantum Physics and the Purposes of Prayer:

"I regard consciousness as fundamental. I regard matter as derivative from consciousness. We cannot get behind consciousness. Everything that we talk about, everything that we regard as existing, postulates consciousness." ~ Max Planck

[physicist, and originator of modern quantum theories. Interview in 'The Observer' (25 January 1931), p.17, column 3]

QUANTUM ENTANGLEMENT

The most important term to know is entanglement, which lies at the heart of quantum physics. A very basic explanation is that entanglement is when elementary particles become linked and behave as one regardless of how far apart they are, i.e., inches, yards, or continents!

So, when one particle changes, the other does, too, at the exact same moment; faster than the speed of light. This, according to classical physics is impossible. We know it happens, we just don't totally understand how or why it does. Though, of course, that has not stopped us from using it to build the next generation of quantum computers.

Studying patterns seen in the Cosmic Microwave Background (CMB), which is radiation left from the early universe, researchers have shown that during inflation (the process of the universe rapidly expanding during the 'Big Bang') a different quantum state, called an "entangled state",

naturally formed when another scalar field is present [specifically the Higgs field - a field that gives mass to other fundamental particles]. This suggests that on a quantum level, all matter [you, me, and the ground under our feet] are basically entangled from the creation of our universe.

[Summation #1: All matter, including us, are connected on a quantum level]

By faith we understand that the universe was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things that are visible. (Hebrews 11:3)

CLASSIC VS. QUANTUM PHYSICS

Classical and quantum physics are the two primary realms of physics. **Classical Physics** governs the motion, energy, and force of the macroworld. It's behavior includes the domain of gravity and the motion of large objects like the solar system, which also acts to keep us stuck to the ground. The human brain has mostly been assumed to be within this classical system.

On the opposite side is **Quantum Physics** which rules the micro-world of particles, atoms, photons, and waves that interact and behave in frustratingly unpredictable ways.

An analogy to these battling views of physics could be thought of as follows: Classical physics is like the 'good child' who follows the rules, and their behavior is mostly predictable. While quantum physics is the 'rebel

child' who disregards all the rules and has no interest in fitting in a predictable 'box'.

As it stands, no one has found a way to make these two children get along, but there is no shortage of brilliant minds dedicated to making it happen. Doing so would lead toward a comprehensive, unified theory of everything which would explain the entire Universe, and Life itself, in a single equation. The key lies in solving quantum gravity, while still hypothetical, would help experts uncover more fundamental forces of our Universe and possibly lead us to a unified theory.

QUANTUM CONSCIOUSNESS EFFECT

The double-slit experiment is a fundamental experiment in quantum mechanics that explores the wave-particle duality of particles, such as electrons or photons. The experiment, first performed by Thomas Young in 1801 with light, was later extended to electrons by Clinton Davisson and Lester Germer in 1927.

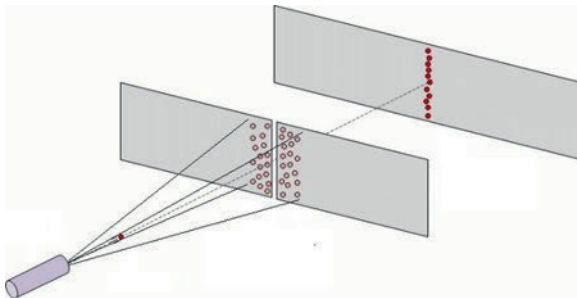
Here's a basic overview of the double-slit experiment:

Setup: In its simplest form, the experiment involves a barrier with two closely spaced slits and a screen behind the slits to detect the particles.

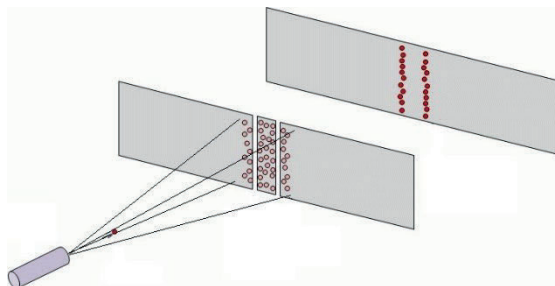
DOUBLE-SLIT EXPERIMENT

- A spray of light energy called Photons were shot towards a single slit in a barrier, and experimenters then noted the pattern it created.

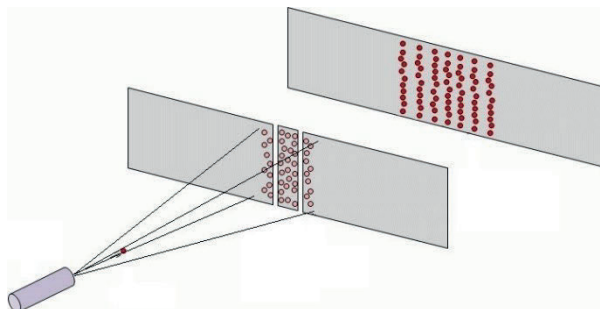
- Predictably it made a single column of hits on the screen, matching the slit.



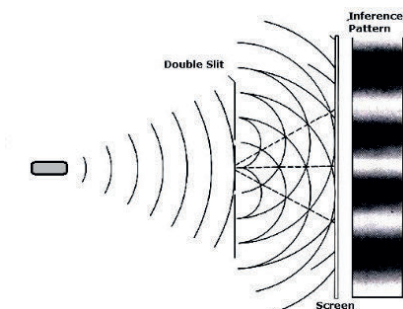
- When sprayed at two slits, they expected a pattern of two columns.



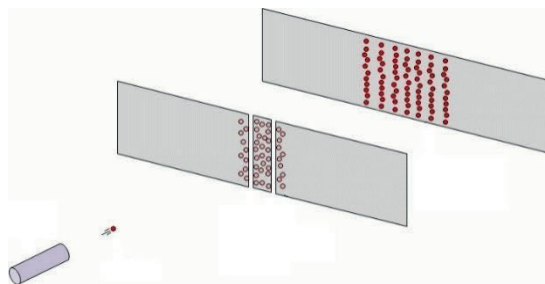
- But that's not what happened; several columns of hits from the spray appeared on the screen.



- They theorized that it was due to light energy behaving like waves on a pond. When they hit the barrier containing the two slits, the waves then had interfered with each other resulting in the pattern.



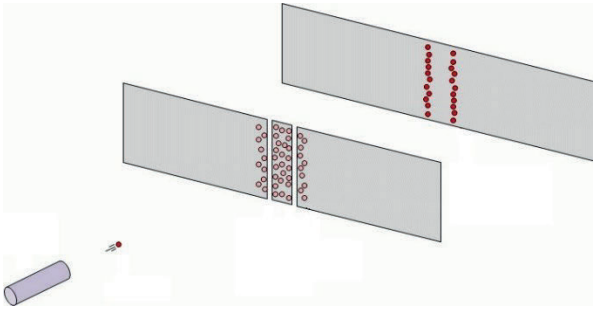
- So, they now tried the experiment again, this time, by shooting the photons one at a time towards the screen in order to get the two-column hit pattern, but that didn't happen either.



- It still ended up making several hit-columns! How is that possible?
There was no interference occurring.

This time, they added an observer to the experiment.

- They repeated the experiment, but this time they watched to see which slit the photons went through and where they hit on the screen.



- But this time they ended up with only a two-column hit pattern! **Nothing had changed in the experiment except the addition of an observer to the experiment.**
- This change phenomenon in the physics experiment only happened when a **Conscious Observer** watched which slit the photon travels through.

This is called **The Observer Effect**.

Discussion of What Happened

Wave-Particle Duality

Before the particles are being observed, they possess potential characteristics of both particles and waves. When **no one is observing**, they behave like waves, creating an interference pattern on the screen, where the waves either reinforce or cancel each other out, creating bands of light and dark.

But when there is someone to observe – the particles' behavior change into - the Observer Effect

The most intriguing aspect of the double-slit experiment is the observer effect. When you introduce a measurement apparatus to determine which slit the particle goes through, the behavior changes. The interference pattern disappears, and the particles behave more like individual particles, creating only two distinct bands on the screen.

Quantum Superposition

The concept of superposition is crucial here. Before measurement, particles exist in a superposition of states, meaning they can take multiple paths simultaneously (passing through both slits as waves). However, when measured, the act of observation forces the particle to "choose" one of the possible states, collapsing the superposition into a definite outcome.

This phenomenon is often described using the famous thought experiment called Schrödinger's Cat. The idea is that a cat inside a sealed box can be thought of as both alive and dead simultaneously until someone opens the box and observes the cat, at which point it must be in one state or the other.

The double-slit experiment and the observer effect challenge our classical intuitions and highlight the strange and counterintuitive nature of quantum mechanics. It raises questions about the nature of reality, the role of observation, and the fundamental principles that govern the behavior of particles at the quantum level.

[Summation #2: Our consciousness determines the state of reality]

Therefore, I tell you, whatever you ask in prayer, believing that you have received it, and it will be yours. (Mark 11:24)

Study of Quantum Consciousness

In October 2022, a study by scientists from Trinity College Dublin, published in the Journal of Physics Communications, proposed that **quantum entanglement** might occur in our brains.

When two particles, such as a pair of photons or electrons, become entangled, they remain connected even when separated by vast distances.

While the concept of quantum systems in the brain isn't entirely new, understanding these systems remains a challenge. Previous research, such as a 2018 study on xenon gas, hinted at quantum effects, but the specifics are not well understood.

Christian Kerskens, a neuroscience researcher at Trinity, highlighted the difficulty in studying quantum systems in the brain. He suggested that if the brain utilizes quantum computation, the involved operators could differ from those observed in atomic systems. To investigate this, Kerskens and his team had to find a way to measure an unknown quantum system using limited equipment.

Their approach involved leveraging existing methods used in quantum gravity research, using a magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) machine capable of detecting entanglement. The study aimed to observe whether an unknown quantum system could interact with a known system (proton spins in the brain) and induce entanglement.

The researchers scanned 40 participants using the MRI machine and monitored the correlated activity between the subjects' brains and heartbeats. The heart-brain connection is intriguing due to its influence on emotions, attention, motivation, and pain levels, with connections to aging and short-term memory.

The study focused on the heartbeat potential (HEP), of an electrical signal generated by the heart, linked to consciousness. When the HEP peaked, there was a corresponding increase in nuclear magnetic resonance (NMR) signals, indicating interactions between proton spins. The researchers interpreted this as a potential sign of entanglement, especially since the signals were only present when participants were awake.

The results suggest a possible connection between quantum phenomena and brain function, offering insights into quantum gravity. If confirmed, this could be a crucial step in understanding how the brain works and may even imply that consciousness itself operates as a quantum system.

[Summation #3: Our physical brains can communicate on a quantum level and potentially entangle.]

The spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God. For who knows a person's thoughts except their own spirit within them? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. (1 Corinthians 2:10-16)

Effects of Mass Consciousness:

Changes in Random Data during Global Events

Starting in the early 1990's, a laboratory scientist by the name of Dr. Dean Radin, began performing experiments testing the relationship between mind and matter. In these experiments, random number generators were used to test whether collective human intention (later also adding human attention) corresponds to a change in the physical environment; the research is still ongoing and is called, The Global Consciousness Project.

Basically, the experiment involves flipping a coin and wishing for "heads", then flipping it again and wishing for "tails". However, coins are not precise enough for this type of research. In place of flipping coins, the electronic number generators can produce random bits of data very quickly and precisely. In these experiments, participants are asked simply to use their minds to influence the output of the random number generator to create more "ones" or "zeros".

The Global Consciousness Project represents a new stage in the study of a relationship between the mind and the physical world, building on fifty years of prior experiments. The central focus of these experiments was to investigate how "intention" impacts the behavior of matter, ultimately leading to the fundamental question of what role the mind plays in the physical world.

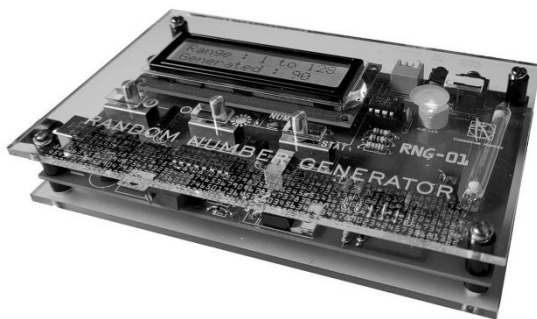
Western science traditionally sees the role of the mind in the physical world as relatively insignificant; for an example, even if an automotive designer might have a mental image and "intention" to build a car, it takes

a lot of effort to turn that “intention” into a tangible vehicle. However, the question at the heart of this research asks whether there is a direct link between one's “intention” and the behavior of the world.

Over the course of 30+ years, researchers have been studying the relationship between intention and the behavior of physical systems.

During farther development of the project’s concept, Roger Nelson at Princeton proposed that “attention”, in addition to “intention”, may play a role in this relationship. Specifically, he suggested that attending to something creates a coherent mental state that can also affect the physical world. If the target of “attention” is a random system, attending to it can make the system more ordered and less random.

To test this hypothesis, Nelson conducted experiments where a random number generator electronic circuit was placed near a group of meditators, which is comparable to prayer groups. He found that the randomness of the system



decreased during meditation, indicating a greater degree of order, suggesting that “attention” can lead to coherence and affect the behavior of physical systems. These experiments were conducted multiple times by Nelson and his colleagues, both with and without the meditators' knowledge of the presence of the random generator, and the results

consistently showed a decrease in randomness during periods of coherence.

The project now has observed and recorded over 200 events such as terrorist attacks, tsunamis, earthquakes, political events, celebrity deaths, and other unexpected occurrences in their database. The odds against 'chance' accounting for a composite of more than 200 events are 'over a million to one' against it. They have good statistical reasons to believe that the random generators are not behaving randomly during large-scale events that attract a lot of attention.

[Summation #4: Entanglement of our brain's consciousness during periods of common 'intentions' and 'attention' effects physical reality.]

Again, truly I tell you, if two of you agree on earth about anything you ask, It will be done for you by my Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them. (Matthew 18:19-20)

Consciousness as a Fundamental Aspect of Reality

Exploring the idea that consciousness is a fundamental aspect of reality suggests a paradigm shift, positioning consciousness not as an emergent property but as an intrinsic co-functioning element. This perspective prompts considerations of how consciousness might interact with and influence quantum processes.

In this framework, consciousness is posited as a foundational and irreducible element of reality. This concept challenges traditional views where consciousness is considered an emergent property of complex brain processes. Instead, it suggests that consciousness is woven into the very fabric of the universe.

One avenue that is being explored involves examining the concept of quantum coherence in consciousness. Indications are that states of heightened consciousness or focused intention leads to coherence in neural processes at a quantum level. This coherence, if extended beyond individual brains, could result in a collective quantum state influencing physical events.

The Orchestrated Objective Reduction (Orch-OR) theory proposed by Roger Penrose and Stuart Hameroff aligns with this framework. Orch-OR suggests that the exchange between the physical brain and the quantum world are processes within microtubules in neurons; with this information, implications arise that consciousness is not produced by the brain but is received from a collective source. Speculatively, these quantum processes could also extend beyond individual brains, and link through this collective source with others to form a global quantum consciousness.

[Summation #5: Our unified (collective) consciousness, occurring on a quantum level with our brains through identified nerve structures called Microtubials, is required for physical reality to exist.]

Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? (I Corinthians 3:16)

Error Correction Code:

In 2010, Dr. Sylvester James Gates Jr., a theoretical physicist at the University of Maryland (known for his work on Supersymmetry, Supergravity, and String Theory), made headlines when he revealed discovery of what appeared to be computer code embedded in the equations of supersymmetry, a theoretical framework that attempts to unify the laws of physics. Gates' findings suggest that the fundamental laws of physics might have a computational aspect to them.

What he found was the exact same computer code used by the World Wide Web within the mathematical formulas of the String Theory.

$$\begin{aligned} S_j &= r(\alpha^j) = s(\alpha^j) + e(\alpha^j) = 0 + e(\alpha^j) \\ &= e(\alpha^j) \\ &= \sum_{k=1}^{\nu} e_{i_k} (\alpha^j)^{i_k}, \quad j = 1, 2, \dots, n - k \end{aligned}$$

Specifically, he said it was an error-correcting mechanism; this has led him to speculate [in a mostly joking way] that we might in fact be living in a giant computer simulation.

Error correction code (ECC) is a technique used to ensure the accuracy of data transmitted over the internet. When data is transmitted over a

network, it can sometimes become corrupted or lost due to interference or other issues. ECC helps to detect and correct errors that may occur during transmission by adding extra bits to the data stream. These extra bits are used to check for errors and, if necessary, correct them.

Think of it like a “spell checker for data.” Just as a spell checker can identify and correct spelling errors in a document, ECC can identify and correct errors in data transmitted over a network. By using ECC, the internet can ensure that data is transmitted accurately and reliably, which is important for many applications, such as online banking, e-commerce, and online communication.

It is worth noting this idea of the universe possibly being a form of computer or that the laws of physics might be based on an information system, has a long history in physics and philosophy. The hypothesis that space and time could be a quantum error-correcting code is only one of several recent attempts to explore this idea in the context of quantum information theory and the theory of quantum gravity.

[Summation #6: an “error correction” system has been found built into the fabric of our universe.]

And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose. (Romans 8:28)

The Source:

The global consciousness research explains the effects seen when a congregation of people pray to God for intervention. There appears to be a system we have yet to discover that our Creator built into the structure of our universe which responds to “Attention” and “Intention” of our consciousness (prayers). The Error Correction Code found by Dr. Gates would support this understanding, as would Roger Penrose and Stuart Hameroff’s Orchestrated Objective Reduction (Orch-OR) theory.

With this Error Correcting Code in mind, Dr. Gary Schwartz (having background at Yale, Harvard, and the University of Arizona) refers to the brain as a biological translation device, not to be used as the source of our wisdom but rather as a receptor. In his work, Dr. Schwartz often emphasizes the interconnectedness of all things and the importance of taking responsibility for the effects of our thoughts and actions on others and the world around us. He also advocates for the use of scientific methods to study spiritual and paranormal phenomena, and he has been a proponent of using rigorous research methods to explore these topics in a systematic and objective way.

Aggregate of Summations:

Based on the summations, it is possible to draw the conclusion of a deep and interconnected relationship between consciousness, quantum physics, and the fabric of the universe.

The 6-key points are as follows:

1. **Interconnectedness on a Quantum Level:** All matter, including humans, is connected on a quantum level.
2. **Consciousness and Reality:** Our consciousness plays a role in determining the state of reality.
3. **Quantum Communication in the Brain:** Our physical brains can communicate with each other on a quantum level and potentially entangle.
4. **Effects of Collective Consciousness:** The entanglement of our brain's consciousness during periods of common intentions and attention can influence physical reality. *The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.*
5. **Unified (Collective) Consciousness:** Our collective consciousness, occurring on a quantum level through identified nerve structures like Microtubules, is essential for physical reality to exist.
6. **Error Correction in the Universe:** There is an "error correction" system built into the structure of the universe.

The overarching conclusion is that the interconnectedness of matter, consciousness, and quantum phenomena suggests a fundamental relationship between our subjective experience and the objective nature of the universe, and that this relationship is intricately woven into the fabric of reality, possibly through quantum processes and a collective consciousness. All of these were established in the beginning by God for the purpose of communication and interventions with His creations through the action of prayer.

At Pentecost: *And when they were all with one accord in one place...*

Tennyson: *More things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of.*

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.

(John 1:1-5)

***“The first gulp from the glass of natural sciences
will turn you into an atheist, but at the bottom of the glass
God is waiting for you.”***

~Werner Heisenberg (1901-1976)

Founding Father of Quantum Mechanics

The Mount of Olives

On the eastern side of Jerusalem, close to Jerusalem's Old City is a small ridge of mountains, unimpressive compared to the mountains of Switzerland and the Rockies of west-central United States. Many years ago, the mount was covered with groves of olive trees, hence, its' name.

Most people do not know that the mount was once used as a cemetery containing approximately 150,000 graves. Early people of social and political significance were buried there. Through the years, many of the graves have been destroyed through quarrying, political conflict, or to create housing for monks or villagers. A few are available for viewing today.

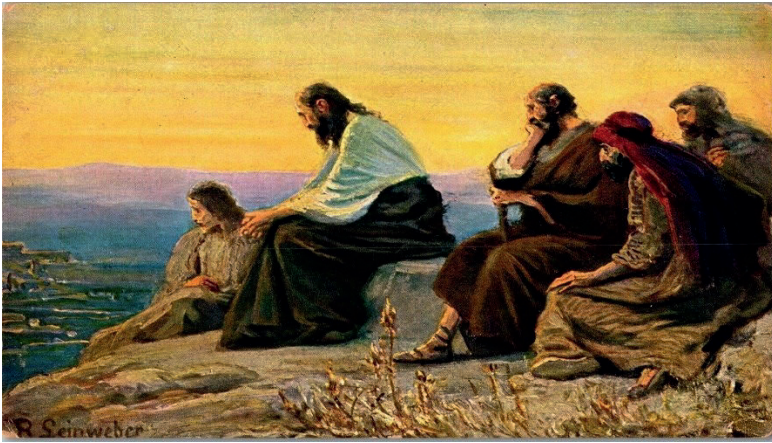
Historical Significance of the Mount of Olives

In the Old Testament, David, in his flight to escape the wrath of Absalom, found the mount useful in his escape (Samuel 15:30). David was reported to have been weeping as he ascended the Mount.



David fleeing Absolem to the Mount of Olives

It was on this Mount that Jesus wept as he looked back at Jerusalem, saying, *Oh, Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered my children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not. Behold your house is left unto you desolate.*



Jesus weeping over Jerusalem

For I say unto you, ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." (Matt 23:37-39)

It was in Gesthemane, at the foot of the Mount of Olives where Jesus asked Peter, plus James and John (sons of Zebadee) to wait. He went a bit further when he collapsed and prayed, anticipating the horror of the cross, *Oh, my father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will but as thou wilt.*

In Ezekiel 11:23, *And the glory of the Lord went up from the midst of the city, and stood upon the mountain which is on the east side of the city.*

This, a part of Ezekiel's vision while he himself was captive in Babylon 600 years before Christ was born. In his vision, the Cherubim at either end of the Arc of the Covenant came to life and exited the Holy of Holies, passed through the Court of the Priests and the Court of the People, out the Temple entrance, down across the Kidron Valley and up to the Mount of Olives.

At that moment in history, God's presence no longer resided in the Holy of Holies, setting the stage for eventually, through the offices of the Holy Spirit, taking up residence in the spiritual hearts of believers in Jesus Christ.

During the Second Temple period, religious ceremonies were held on the Mount of Olives marking the beginning of each new calendar period. In circa 52-60 AD, Antonius Felix, a Roman procurator, known otherwise as "the Egyptian", gathered his followers there preparing to invade Jerusalem. However, the Romans defeated him taking some captive while others barely escaped with their lives.

Again, in 70 AD during the Roman siege of Jerusalem, the 10th Legion of Roman soldiers used the Mount as a staging area. In 1481, Meshullam of Volterra, an Italian, wrote that every year, Jews would visit Mount Zion and the Mount of Olives on *Tish B'Av* to fast and mourn for the AD 70 destruction of the Temple Mount. From the Mount of Olives, they had a

clear panoramic view of the Temple Mount, the mount being approximately 100' higher.

Prime Minister, Menachem Begin, asked his newly restored Jewish nation of Israel to bury him on the Mount of Olives so he could be near the graves of Meir Feinstein and Moshe Barazani.

By 1949, and during Jordanian rule of the West Bank, Arabs destroyed 3800 tombstones and ploughed the land containing bodies. A road was paved leading through the cemetery. In 1964, the Intercontinental Hotel was constructed at the very summit of the mount. More graves were destroyed so parking lots and latrines could be constructed. A filling station was included with the parking lots.

The mount was reopened as a cemetery after the 1967 Six-Day War. However, in 1980, Israel annexed the area, but the United Nations in



View of the Temple's Eastern Gate as viewed from the Mount of Olives

Resolution 478 ruled the act as null and void. Afterward, vandalism of the graves resumed including the vandalism of the graves of Gerrer Rebbe and Menachem Begin. A watch-committee was set up in 2010 by Diaspora Jews to reverse the desecration of the Jewish graves.

At the end of time, Yahweh, Israel's God, and for Christians, Jesus Christ, is predicted to stand on the Mount of Olives as it would split in two. A prophesy from Zechariah states that when this happens, and the mountain splits in two, one half will shift north, and the other half will shift south (Zechariah 14:4).

In the New Testament, Jesus stood on the mount looking back over Jerusalem and wept as he said, *Oh, Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how oft I would have gathered you under my wing as a hen doth gather her brood, but you would not.*

The mount was a meeting place where Jesus spent time with his disciples. The Garden of Gethsemane is near the bottom of the mount where Jesus prayed, Father, if it be thy will, let this bitter cup pass from me. Even so, not my will but thine be done. It was in this Garden that Judas betrayed his Lord.

It is also the place where, in Ezekiel's vision, the Shekinah of God left the Holy of Holies, passed through the Holy place (Court of the Priests), through the Court of the People, out the front entrance, proceeded down across the Kidron Valley up to the Mount and came to rest.

Jesus is said to have ascended to heaven from this, the highest point in Jerusalem as his disciples watched. The shekinah that came to rest there

back in the time of Ezekiel, nearly 600 years before, was united with the actual physical Jesus, shekinah, at the moment the ascension occurred.

Today, the Church of the Ascension, (Dome of Ascension) stands there, built in 392 AD. Some declare that a footprint located inside the chapel is actually the footprint of Jesus himself. Too, it has been said that the severed head of John the Baptist was found at this location. Various religious sects relate different versions of these facts.

Too, prophecy declares that when Jesus returns to earth, he will come to stand on the Mount of Olives, perhaps in the same spot where he prayed that fateful day before experiencing the cross.



Mount of Olives from the Temple Mount across the Kidron Valley

Today, the Mount stands as a symbol of forgiveness, healing, light-from-darkness, Christian Victory, Peace through Christ, a symbol of hope. It reminds Christians everywhere that God-in-Christ remains the same

today as then. As with Christ, we, too, as did Jesus, need to secure a place of prayer where we can commune with The Father.

Bought with a Price

It was during the reign of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah, kings of Judah and during the reign of Jeroboam of Israel that the story of Hosea and his wife, Gomer transpired. Hosea prophesized for 70 years in the Northern Kingdom of Israel. He lived in the 700s BC.

In brief, Hosea predicted that Israel's sins would terminate with their being taken captive in Assyria. His prophecy came true.

In 740 BC, the Assyrians took the first group of Israelites captive into Assyria. Twenty years later, about 722 BC, they came back for the Samaritans. It was after a three-year siege, the ninth year of Hoshea, king of Assyria, that it happened. They, through Sennacherib, tried to lay siege to Jerusalem but failed. It was just a few years later that Nebuchadnezzar succeeded where Hoshea had failed.

The Assyrians began to repopulate Israel and Samaria. These new "squatter-citizens" (to use a modern term) so repopulated the area that when the Judeans returned from Babylon, they had to expel the unwelcome Assyrian transplants.

Meanwhile, the Lord had told Hosea, son of Beer, to take a wife he believed would be unfaithful and raise a family with her. The reason was that it would be a symbol of the nation's unfaithfulness to God.



Hosea takes a faithless wife, symbol of Israel's faithlessness to God

Israel's faithlessness to God included their following false gods and idols. They had denied Gods' statutes and had broken His covenant. They had followed Baal, building a Asherah Pole, a supposed act of worship; they had even burned their sons and daughters as offerings to other gods; they had employed supposed magical divinations as they invoked the blessings of other gods.

Hosea and Gomer's firstborn was a son, Jezreel. God said He would punish the reign of Jehu because of his massacre at Jezreel. Further, God would put an end to the nation of Israel (the northern kingdom). God would, in the Valley of Jezreel, break Israel's legal and spiritual hold on the land.

Gomer had a second child whom they named Lo-Ruhamah, a disturbing name in that, in Hebrew, it meant, "not loved." To God, it indicated God

would no longer show His love for Israel. Instead, he would show His love for Judah by saving them from Sennacherib, it seems, without battle.

Gomer, then, had a third child, another son whom they called Lo-Ammi which, in Hebrew, meant “you are not my people, and I am not your God.”

It was further promised that eventually, Israel and Judah would come together with a single leader, and that eventual day of Jezreel would be a great one.

It was following the birth of her third child that Gomer left Hosea for a promiscuous lifestyle. It is not known whether she entered cohabitation with another man or worked as a temple prostitute. It was after a time that God gave Hosea a strange command, *Go show your love to your wife again. Love her as the Lord loves the Israelites though they turn to other gods.* (Hosea 3:1).

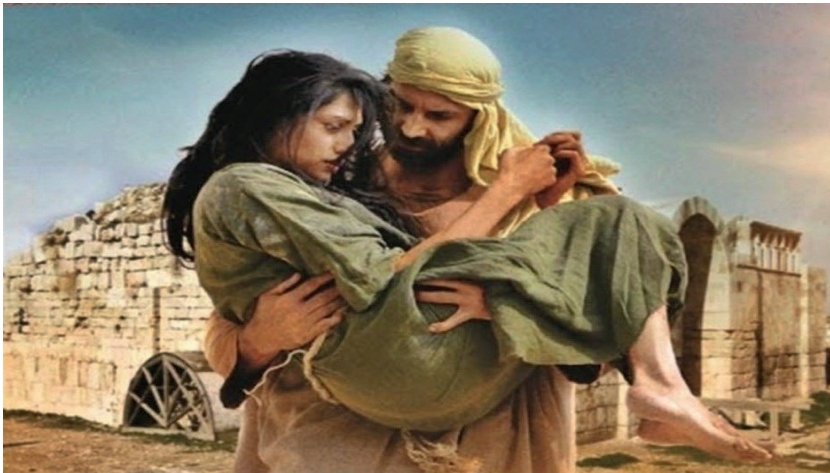


Gomer, in her sin, yet a candidate for redemption.

Hosea followed the Lord's command and bought his wife back with fifteen shekels of silver plus some barley. (Hosea 3:2)

Although not known for certain, it is likely that Hosea bought Gomer at auction. By implication, other men may have been bidding for Gomer. It has been suggested that, assuming Gomer was auctioned off, other bidders would have been allowed to "inspect" the merchandise on which they were bidding.

Once redeemed, however, Hosea owned his wife. He could have killed her from spite. God, as with Hosea, bought the penitent sinner with a price. He owns us! The price was the blood of his only begotten son. Once redeemed from our sin, we, the believers, are to live with and for the one who redeemed us with his blood.



Gomer, as Israel, redeemed through God's love.

Separated for Spiritual Service

or

Priesthood of the Believer

This Protestant doctrine normally associated with the New Testament combines Individual Responsibility before God with the believer's individual direct access to God. But its' beginning is not in the New Testament. Rather, it begins in the Old Testament with Moses' leading the children of Israel out of Egypt into the promised land.

It was the 13th Century BC when Moses, at 80 years of age, led the Children of Israel out of slavery in Egypt. They had been enslaved for approximately 400 years. They had already been in Egypt for 30 years before becoming enslaved there.

Having been subjected to the horror of slavery; of being physically abused, perhaps raped and being used as forced labor for pharaoh, Moses' offer of deliverance was universally welcomed.

Knowing little about codified law; of a structured government; of a structured faith; of a system of ethics and morality, they found themselves wandering in the desert not knowing where they were going or how to get there. Their confusion and frustration loudly expressed to Moses became intolerable.

God invited Moses to meet Him up on Mt. Sinai for a conference – one where Moses listened, and God spoke.

In the ensuing conference, God presented Moses with ten statements that would serve as the basis for forming a brand-new culture.

That new culture would include:

- *A system of codified law
- *A system of structured faith
- *A system of ethical and moral structure and
- * The seed that would germinate a structured government.

The Ten Commandments

While all ten commandments have religious significance, only the first four offered specific instructions for their faith:

Thou shalt have no other gods before me.

Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image.

Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.

Remember the Sabbath Day to keep it holy.

The following two statements relate both to daily life and to ethical structure:

Six days shalt thou labor and do all thy work.

Honor thy father and thy mother.

The following statements give instruction in the structure of codified law:

Thou shalt not kill.

Thou shalt not commit adultery (both legal, ethical and moral instruction).

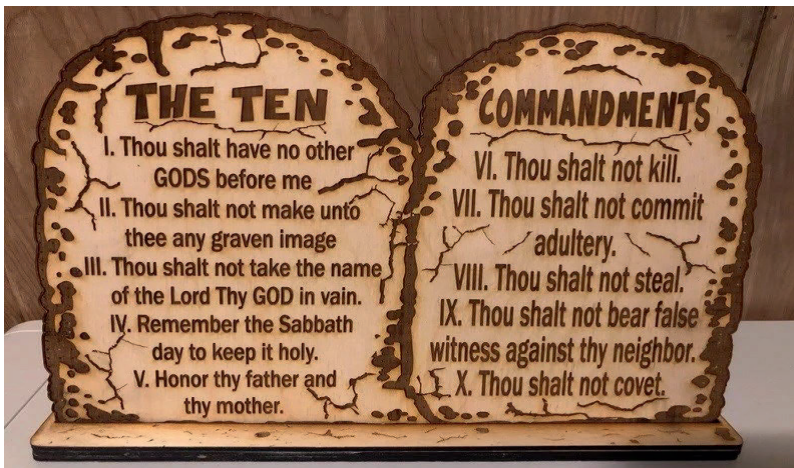
Thou shalt not steal.

Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.

The last statement relates to all: daily life, family life, legality, ethics and morality:

Thou shalt not covet (here, abbreviated).

These, being general statements, cannot possibly cover the entirety of human behavior.



The Ten Commandments by EtSY

For example, how is one to keep the Sabbath Day holy? What specific human behaviors are subsumed to that commandment? Or excluded

from it? Is walking excluded from keeping it holy? Work? If work on the Sabbath is unholy, then, doctors and nurses cannot help sick people become well. Each simple statement taken without further explanation leaves the individual in need of further clarification.

Both God and Moses knew further clarification was necessary because people, being very creative, would find unique ways to break these commandments. A structured system was essential for meeting this challenge. That system would require both: individuals to study the breaches of the commandments, and a place for them to carry out their duties.

Wilderness Tabernacle

Moses, through divine instruction, built a Wilderness Tabernacle. It was literally a fence made of cloth and animal skin in the form of a rectangle.



Wilderness Tabernacle

IT HAD THREE PARTS:

1. The Holy of Holies (or Most Holy Place)

- separated from the rest of the Tabernacle by a curtain.
- Inside it was the Arc of the Covenant where those eventually separated for spiritual service would meet with God.
- In effect, they had placed God in a “box.” The arrangement for God was appropriate, given that God was serving former slaves who were well acquainted with confinement.

2. The Holy Place (or Court of the Priests)

- separated from the rest of the Tabernacle by another curtain.
- The priests had not been chosen yet.
- But this is where they would conduct their work regarding expected breaches of the commandments.

3. Court of the People (The Folk)

- where people would come for both
 - the exercise of their faith or
 - for adjudication of any breach they made of the commandments.

Enter the first of the Priests

Aaron is Chosen, Exodus 28:1-3 (KJV)

And thou shalt take unto thee Aaron thy brother, and his sons with him, from among the Children of Israel that he may minister unto me in priests' office.

With this scripture, all of the priests chosen were to be from the house of Levi, though not all Levites were to be chosen. Such was the ordination of the first group ever to do spiritual service in the priesthood of God.

Moses had a place for priests to work, but as yet, he had no priests to do the work. There was a growing population in this new culture already with numerous breaches of the commandments but with no structured way to resolve the issues.

With this act, the first humans ever were chosen and set aside for spiritual (and legal) service. But these relatives of Moses were not enough to conduct all the people's business. More, many more, were needed, and both God and Moses knew it.

The Priesthood comes into being: Numbers 18:1, 5-6 (KJV)

And the Lord spake unto Aaron, saying. Thou and thy sons and thy father's house with thee shall bear the iniquity of the sanctuary: and thou and thy sons with thee shall bear the iniquity of your priesthood.

And thy brethren also of the tribe of Levi, the tribe of thy father, bring thou with thee, and minister unto thee: but thou and thy sons with thee shall minister before the tabernacle of witness.

v. 6 And I, behold, I have taken your brethren the levites from among the children of Israel: to you they are given as a gift for the Lord, to do the service of the Tabernacle of the congregation.



High Priest offering sacrifice to God

The Priests had considerable work to do. For example, the Ten Commandments were general principles to guide in the development of the new culture. They needed to be subdivided and classified as to the variously creative wrong doings of which the general population was capable.

One man might borrow an item but forget to ask permission. Would that constitute theft? Neither party to the controversy could be expected to render judgment. A priest was necessary to adjudicate the matter.

Begun in the 14th Century BC, they were completed by the 4th century BC. In those nearly one thousand years, 613 subdivisions and classifications to the ten commandments came into being having been

entered into law by priests. These laws are present in the Torah, otherwise known as The Laws of Moses. They are the rabbinical interpretations of the Ten Commandments.

With both the population and interpretations of the law expanding, there was an increasing need for a central government. The people were crying for a more central government. They, not unlike modern populations, did not know how to govern themselves.

Enter the Period of the Judges

Neither elected nor appointed, Judges each slowly emerged in popularity from the general population. People assumed them as having been chosen by God to help them settle disputes and promote the Torah. Judges were outside the temple complex among the people while the priests continued to function inside the temple complex. There were thirteen judges in all.

- | | | |
|-----|----------------------|------------------------------|
| (1) | Othneil (Jdg 3:9) | Tribe of Judah |
| (2) | Ehud (Jdg 3:15) | Tribe of Benjamin |
| (3) | Shamgar (Jdg 3:31) | Tribe of Nephtali |
| (4) | Deborah (Jdg 4:5) | Tribe of Nephtali (probably) |
| (5) | Gideon (Jdg 6:36) | Tribe of Manasseh |
| (6) | Abimelech (Jdg 9:1) | Tribe of Manasseh |
| (7) | Tola (Jdg 10:1) | Tribe of Issachar |
| (8) | Jephthah (Jdg 11:11) | Tribe of Ephraim |
| (9) | Ibham (Jdg 12:8) | Tribe unknown |

- | | | |
|------|-----------------------|--------------------------------------|
| (10) | (10) Elon (Jdg 12:11) | Tribe of Zebulum |
| (11) | Abdon (Jdg 12:13) | Tribe of Benjamin; family of Ephraim |
| (12) | Samson (Jdg 16:30) | Tribe of Dan |
| (13) | Eli – The only priest | (Likely a Levite) |



Deborah, the only female Judge in Israel

Although the system of Judges operated with a certain efficiency, they were doing so while outside the temple. It can be argued that the priesthood's control of wrongdoing among the people had weakened. But the nation still lacked a structured central government.

Enter the Period of the Kings

While there may have been a slight weakening of the Priesthood's control of wrongdoing among the people, God remained in the Holy of Holies along with the Shekinah, i.e., the fog, representative of the Cloud-by-Day

and the Lightning that struck the sacrifice, representative of the Pillar of Fire by night experienced in the desert wanderings.

Outside infractions of the commandments were infiltrating the temple complex if not the temple itself. Solomon, though his wisdom was legendary, was of the Tribe of Judah, not Levi. Yet, he built a palace for himself inside the temple complex.

Too, in addition to a reported affair he had with the Queen of Sheba, he built a smaller palace for Pharaoh's daughter inside the temple complex.

Solomon was not Confronted

Solomon was reported to have conducted extensive business contracts with other nations or city-states. Having completed a specific contract, he is reported to have been given the gift of an additional wife or concubine (a distinction without much difference).

Over many years, this weakening of both the interpretation of the Ten Commandments and the separation of wrongdoing outside the temple complex as compared with increased wrongdoing inside the temple complex eventually became of egregious concern.

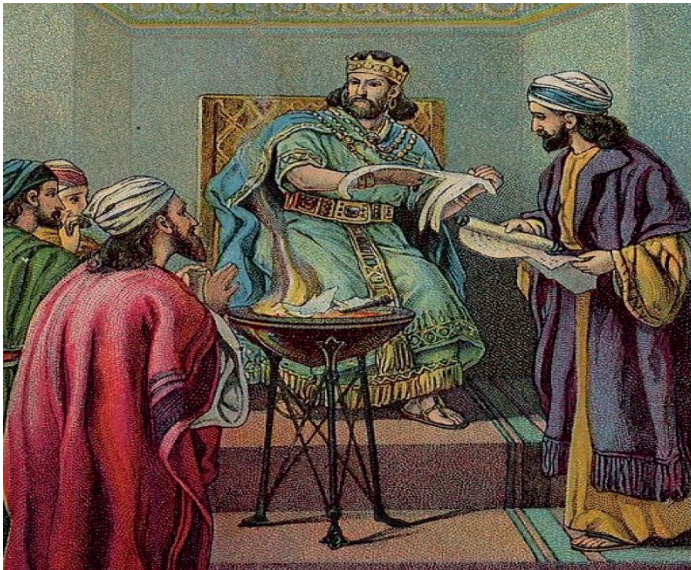
King Jehoiakim WAS Confronted

In the early 600s BC, Jeremiah confronted King Jehoiakim, a rogue king. Jeremiah wrote a summary of the wrongdoing of both the government and the priesthood. He included the wrongs of the people of Judah as likely imitating the behavior of the government and the priesthood.

Entering the palace of the king, Jeremiah stood and read his declarations of the sins of the people and of the government and the priesthood.

Jeremiah predicted that if the government, the priesthood and the Judeans did not repent of their sin, they could expect to suffer exile into Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar had been expanding his empire and needed farmers, businessmen, philosophers, politicians, lawyers etc. to help run his expanded empire. Judah had them all, ready for the taking.

Soon, Jehoiakim had heard enough. He grabbed Jeremiah's trim knife (an instrument used to trim the frayed edges of a scroll) and proceeded to cut off the portion Jeremiah had just read. He proceeded to throw it into a fire. Further, he expelled Jeremiah from the palace and forbade him to ever return to the palace.



Jehoiakim burns Jeremiah's Scroll

Jeremiah returned home where he and his secretary, Baruch, rewrote the discarded portion of the scroll. They added to it further concerns for his

people. That scroll was eventually published in what modern bible readers know as the Book of Lamentations, an account of Jeremiah's sorrow for his land and his people.

Knowing Nebuchadnezzar was soon to be there to take many of the Judeans into captivity, the Arc of the Covenant was removed from the Holy of Holies and hidden where it remains hidden in this modern period.

In Babylonian captivity, a young man, Ezekiel, had just turned 30 years of age, a time when young men wishing to enter the ministry would make public their declaration to do so.

Ezekiel, at or soon after his declaration of himself as a prophet, had a vision. Chapter 10 of his book presents his vision of God's glory (His Shekinah) departing the Temple. It left the Holy of Holies, traversed the Holy Place, the Court of the People, out the front entrance, proceeded down across the Kidron Valley and came to rest on the Mount of Olives.

GOD WAS OUT OF THE BOX (The Holy of Holies) where He had been placed centuries before in the Wilderness Tabernacle.)

It should be noted that it would be theoretically impossible to have a concept of The Priesthood of the Believer for all mankind so long as God remained incarcerated in the Holy of Holies. In the Holy of Holies, God was controlled by the Jewish priesthood, kept there to serve Jews. For example, while there, God could not minister to the needs of Gentiles.

When Jesus died on the cross, the curtain separating the Holy of Holies from the Holy Place was rent in twain. Some say this gave people direct

access to God. However, God was not in the Holy of Holies and had not been there for nearly 600 years!

What it did was show the people just how empty their protocols of worship had been; how they had been deceived by the priesthood during that time. The priests absolutely had known the Holy of Holies was empty of God's presence!

The Coming of Jesus, a Watershed Event Releasing God: Available to all Mankind

About Jesus' Ministry:

- (1) Jesus, in his lifetime, never left the church into which he was born.
- (2) God-in-Christ wanted to open the good news of the gospel to all mankind.
- (3) The Priesthood was firmly entrenched in tradition.
- (4) God-in-Christ wanted to decentralize the gospel, i.e., move it's center out of Jerusalem and into all the world.

The gospel could not effectively be presented to the entire world so long as the Priesthood in Jerusalem controlled access to God. This issue would be pointed out dramatically eventually with Jesus at the center of the matter.

Jesus, the Chief of Priests, Scribes and Elders

Once, when Jesus had been teaching in the Temple, a group consisting of the chief priests, scribes and elders confronted Jesus. They asked Jesus by what authority he could do these things they had been witnessing. In other words, “Who told you you could do this?” The implication was that they, the keepers of The Law, had not granted permission for Jesus to act like God.

Jesus, ever the versatile debater, turned the issue around to confront them. Was the baptism of John the Baptist of God or of man? Jesus knew that John was a Levite, as did Jesus’ debaters, traditionally available to serve as a priest, but had not been appointed as such by them.

Jesus also knew that the people loved what John the Baptist had been doing for them. They thought of John as a prophet. So, if the present debaters were to say that John was not a prophet, knowing the people believed he was a prophet, the people would stone the chief priests, scribes and elders.

If they agreed that John’s baptism was of heaven, then they would have compromised their own theological and social position with the people. Jesus had them!

Enter the Priesthood of the Believer

Matt 5:15 says *Let your light so shine among men that they may see your good works and glorify your father which is in heaven.*

This statement carries the assumption that non-believers cannot, using their five senses, the only way they can know anything, see, hear, touch, smell or taste anything they can connect physically with God.

They must rely on someone who is a believer, observe them and draw conclusions about what God must be like.

The new concept, **Priesthood of the Believer**, would place believers out where sin is, outside the physical structures of organized religion.

Jesus' High Priestly Prayer

Jesus had just finished his instructions to his disciples during the Last Supper. Judas had not yet betrayed him. Jesus left the area, walking with Peter, James, and John down across the Kidron Valley intending to pray in the Garden of Gethsemane, part of the Mount of Olives.

As he walked along, he prayed aloud. He prayed for those near him, but he also prayed for all believers everywhere far into the future.

In 17:11 I will remain in the world no longer. But they are still in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name – the name you gave me – so that they may be one as we are one.

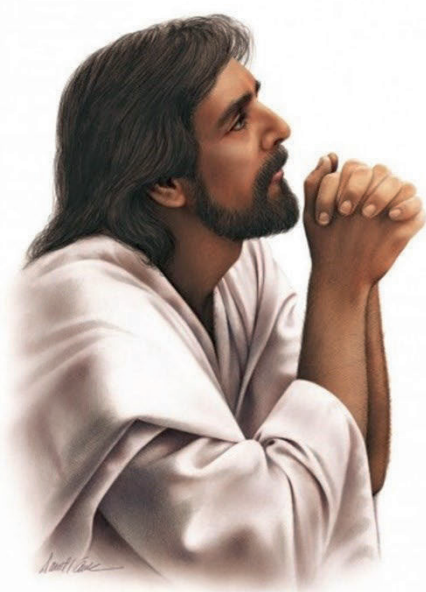
And then, Jesus continued in his High Priestly Prayer being still more specific about you, the believer:

In 17:15 My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one (implying that the

decentralized gospel message will place the believer in the center of the evil that is in the world, not inside the physical structure of organized religion.) *They are not of this world even as I am not of it.*

Sanctify them by thy truth, your word is truth. As you have sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world.

The Greek meaning for the word, sanctify, is *hagiatso*, “to separate for spiritual service.” And in the process of being separated for spiritual service, the believer, is expected to live a holy life.



*I am praying for
them. I am not
praying for the
world but for
those whom you
have given me,
for they are yours.
John 17:9*

Jesus' High Priestly Prayer for all Believers

Jesus had given *the coup de 'gras* to the established order of spiritual service: it is called;

The Great Commission

Matt 28:16-20: Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them.

And when they saw him, they worshipped him, but some doubted.

And Jesus came and spake unto them saying, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth."

Go, ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost.

Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you even unto the end of the world.

So, the believer, you, are working out where the sin is, to "serve God."

So, What is Your Service?

God-in-Christ, in decentralizing spiritual service, intends for the gospel not just to be preached in every nation on earth; He wants The Word to be represented in the lives of believers in every sub-culture and in every nation.

That is, he wants "bi-lingual" believers to live out the Great Commission through their daily lives both where they live and work.

E.G., he wants nurses who speak the language of nursing plus the language of redemption.

He wants surgeons who speak the language of medicine in surgery plus the language of redemption.

He wants truck drivers who speak the language of trucking plus the language of redemption.

But there is more, much more to spiritual service. Remember, Jesus said he would never leave nor forsake His followers, even to the end of the world. There is benefit for the believer:

Ps 1: Blessed is the man who walks not in the path of the ungodly nor standeth in the way of sinners or sits in the seat of the scornful, but whose delight is in the Law of the Lord and in it doth he meditate day and night. He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season. His leaf shall not wither and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.

In this Psalmist passage, God has said he wants the believer to study The Word; that such study will result in one's life being a successful representation of The Gospel Message.

Ephesians 2:14 For he is our peace, who hath made both one and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us.

Further, theologians quite properly declare that the "middle wall of partition" (Eph 2:14) refers to the theological wall Jews had erected separating their priests' service to Hebrews from service to Gentiles.

But there might be an additional meaning; that the old physical wall erected in the Wilderness Tabernacle separating “the folk” from the priests inside the tabernacle enclosure was gone.

Now, any believer can at any time, approach God with petitions of praise, supplication, grief, sorrow, fear, and more.

All in the Family

This lesson begins with the origin of the Jordan River, and its' headwaters in the mountains north of the Sea of Galilee. Mt. Hermon was part of that range.

The Jordan River flows southward into the Sea of Galilee, a body of water 13 miles long and 8.1 miles wide giving it a circumference of 33 miles. At its' southern end, the Jordan River flows out of the Sea of Galilee and proceeds further south and into the Dead Sea, a distance of 96 miles.

The Dead Sea, Israeli's own Great Salt Lake, itself, 31 miles in length and 9 miles in width at its' widest point. It is 380 meters deep, or 1246.7 feet, containing 40 billion gallons of water.



Limestone Qumran Caves above the Dead Sea

On the northeastern side of the Dead Sea and in the Judean, Desert stand a series of limestone caves called the Qumran Caves, part of an enormous escarpment.

But the lesson does not start there; historically, it begins at the start of the First Century in Galilee.

Christian History Focused on Qumran

In the early First Century AD, Mary, a 12 ½ yr old little girl, was told of God that she would give birth to a baby that would be the Messiah, one who would save man from his sin. She, a devout Jewess, was overjoyed at the prospect of becoming the mother of the Messiah!

Mary had a cousin, Elizabeth; their mothers had been sisters, according to a Catholic library. Elizabeth was married to a priest named Zechariah, a devout Jewish priest. Being a member of the priesthood and living in a small village in the hill country of Judea, Elizabeth and Zechariah enjoyed a high and respected position in their neighborhood.

They had desired to have a family but had been unable to conceive a child. The Gospel of Luke indicates that Elizabeth had finally conceived a son in her old age. When the son was born, Elizabeth and Zechariah named him, John. Life expectancy being 45-55 years in the First Century, Elizabeth could have been considered in her old age by the time she was 35-40 years of age.

Having been told she would bear the Christ Child, Mary, ecstatic, traveled the approximate 65 miles south from where she lived in Nazareth to the hill country of Judea where Elizabeth and Zechariah lived.

The trip would have taken many days to traverse the distance. The way there would have been filled with thieves and others committed to harming anyone, especially a little 12 ½ yr old girl.

Elizabeth was far long into her pregnancy with baby John when Mary arrived. Upon entering Elizabeth and Zechariah's home, Mary exclaimed,

My soul praises the Lord.

And my spirit rejoices in God my Savior.

For He has been mindful of the humble state of His servant.

From now on all generations will call me blessed.

For the Mighty One has done great things for me.

Holy is His name.

His mercy extends to those who fear Him.

From generation to generation.

He has performed mighty deeds with His arm.

He has scattered those who are proud in their inmost thoughts.

He has brought down those from their thrones.

But He has lifted up the humble.

But He has sent the rich empty away.

He has helped His servant, Israel.

Remembering to be merciful

To Abraham and his descendants forever.

Even as He said to our fathers. (NIV)

When baby John, then 5-6 months in utero, heard this, he leaped inside Elizabeth's womb. Indeed! Babys DO KNOW! John would have been born 3-4 months before Jesus.

Elizabeth, Zechariah, John and the Qumran

No one knows exactly where John was raised. There is some indication that Elizabeth and Zechariah may have died and that the Essene Monks of the Qumran Monastery adopted John and raised him. Beyond that assumption, little is known of John's infancy and youth.

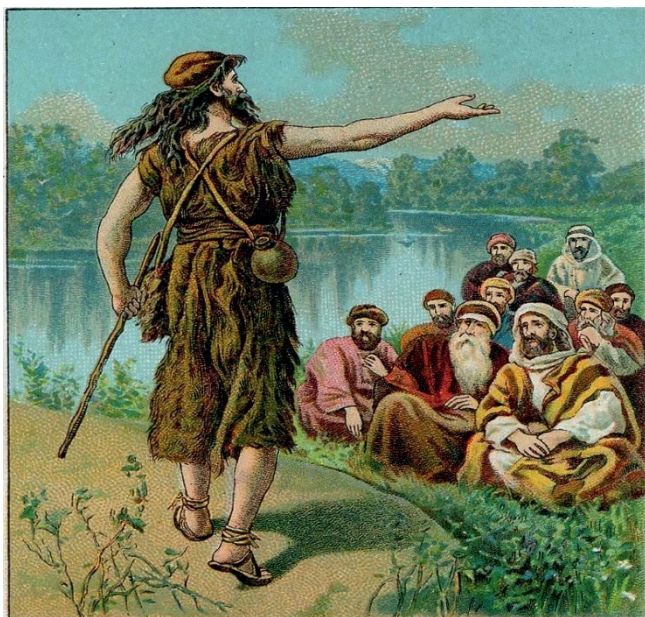
The Essene Monks spent considerable time copying manuscripts from sources unknown to modern researchers. They likely created many of their own manuscripts. Over time, the Monastery created and owned 929 known manuscripts. Thousands of scrolls and scraps of manuscripts are now in museums. It is not known whether John may have participated in creating some of those manuscripts.

During the Jewish revolt against the Romans in the First Century AD, the Essenes of Qumran, knowing the Romans were advancing south toward them, chose to hide their scrolls in clay pots deep inside the Qumran

caves. There is some evidence that the Essenes joined the Jewish Zealots who escaped to Masada to survive. Their survival was short-lived, however as the Romans painstakingly found a way to ascend their way up to the Masada (probably by building a siege ramp) where they found everyone dead, each one having taken his own life.

What is known is that John's appearance in scripture is when he was preaching in the wilderness in the Judean desert, awkwardly dressed in clothing made of camel hair, with a leather belt about his waist and eating locusts and wild honey. Such was the diet and clothing styles of the Essenes of Qumran.

John, like the Essenes, was a devout ascetic man preaching that people should prepare for the end of time. Some compared John with a reincarnation of the Prophet, Elijah or even the Messiah.



John, The Baptizer

John introduced a relatively new concept to servanthood, that of being submerged in water and lifted out again. He likely had learned it from the Essenes who had baptized people, i.e, submerged them in water and then lifted them out, as a rite of inclusion in their group. So, for a time, John was known as John, the Baptizer, named for this approach to his faith.

John, A Relative, Baptized Jesus!

It was a custom of Jewish men who wished to enter any facet of the ministry to announce it when they turned thirty years of age. Such was the case with Jesus. Having just turned thirty, Jesus stood on the shore of the Jordan River observing his own cousin, John, the Baptizer, as he one-by-one submerged candidates in the Jordan and raised them back to the surface.

Jesus stepped out in front and requested to be baptized by John. **This was not an insignificant matter!** Remember, John, when still in Elizabeth's womb, had leaped (a jump from the high diving board, as it were, in joy because even as a fetus, he clearly had understood to whom little Mary would give birth).

To Jesus' request, John, quite appropriately said, he, instead, needed to be baptized by Jesus. Jesus said it was proper that John should do this: *to fulfill all righteousness.* (NIV) John understood this statement.

Immediately, as Jesus came up out of the water, the Spirit of God in the form a dove descended from the heavens and landed on Jesus' shoulder.

Nothing is said in scripture as to how John reacted to his baptism of Jesus followed by God's Spirit descending there.

God spoke (one of the few moments in history when man actually heard the physical voice of God) saying, *This is my son whom I love. With him I am well pleased.* (NIV)

Hierapolis and the Gate to Hell

Located on the Lycus River, a river that carried enormous amounts of chalk deposits, Hierapolis, Laodicea and Colossae were each about 12 miles apart.

Antiochus, in the second century BC, had brought 2000 Jewish families there from Babylon of Mesopotamia. These Jewish families, along with a mixture of Greek and Roman residents, the city grew to a population of around 100,000.

There was a medical school located in nearby Laodicea from which doctors frequently assigned patients to bath in thermal pools formed by the chalk deposits left there by the frequent overflow of the Lycus River.

The thermal pools became an attraction for visitors and vacationers in the area.

Christian Influence in Hierapolis

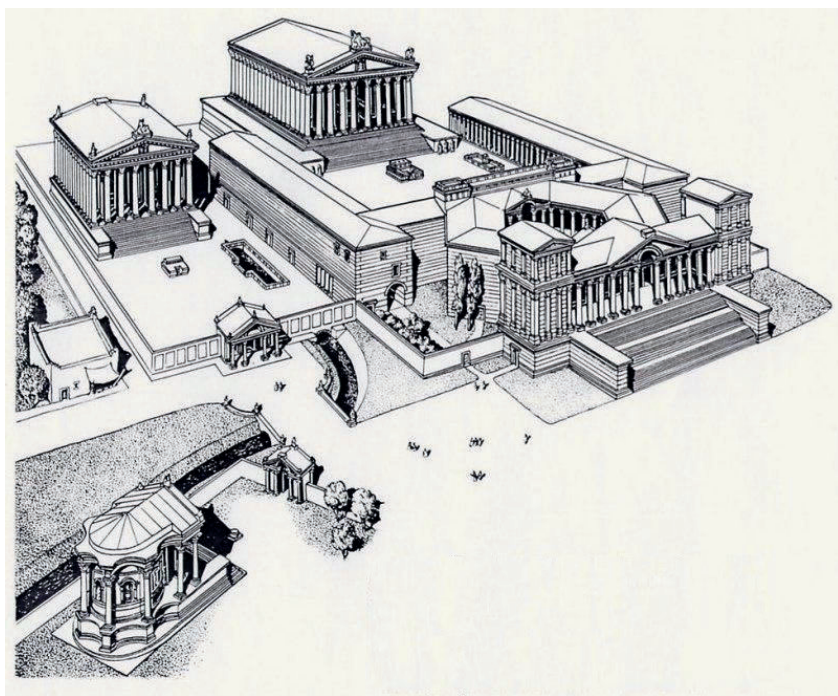
Paul founded a church in Hierapolis during the two years or so he was in Ephesus.

Philip, the apostle of Christ, spent the final period of his life in Hierapolis. His daughters, prophetesses, all, ministered there. Eventually, Philip was arrested, tried, convicted and crucified in Hierapolis.

The Temple of Apollo

The Temple of Apollo was unique to the area. Artemis, the goddess of Ephesus, was a mythological sister to Apollo. Above the Temple of Apollo, there was a sign that read, *For you are descended from me and from Mopus, the founder of the city.*

There was also a Plutonium Temple built as an integral part of the Temple of Apollo. The Plutonium Temple was intentionally built over two earthquake faults that intersected at that juncture.



Temple of Apollo

Emanating from the earthquake faults was a continuous vapor consisting of carbon dioxide – poisonous – lethal. There was a cave down inside the crevasses formed by the intersect of the two earthquake faults.

The gasses emanating from the cave were so strong they caused eerie sights in the local sky, becoming a contributing factor to local superstitions. Birds flying over the area would perish while in flight and fall into the cravass.

Priests serving in the Temple of Apollo and the Plutonium Temple discovered a cave deep in the cravass. Over time, they carved steps down into the cave, a dangerous task in that the vapors were potentially lethal to them.

The priests, then, would hold their breath and descend into the cave and return to the surface to catch their breath. The assumption given was that they were doing what Jesus had done when He died on the cross, only 10-15 years earlier. That is, they, too, could descend into Hell and be ‘resurrected’ as they re-emerged from the depths of the cave.

Archaeologists uncover ancient ‘gate to hell’ in Turkey



Gate to Hell in Hierapolis, Turkey

Eventually, they discovered a small area of the cave, sufficient for only a single person, where there was a small pocket of fresh air (carbon dioxide, being heavier than air, formed a natural space filled with fresh air). So, a priest, then, could descend into the cave and remain there for a time before returning to the surface.

Officials of the temples declared that only the priests had the divine power to descend into this “Gate of Hell” and return. They, in fact, constructed an entrance to the cave with a sign appropriately labeled, “Gate of Hell.”

Visitors could ask questions of the local Oracle of Pluto (the “resident god”) whereupon that Oracle would descend into the cave and, upon returning to the surface, either answer their question or foretell the future of any individual making the request – for a fee.

There was another “Gate of Hell” at the Temple of Adelphi.

Fruits of the Spirit

Galatians 5:22-23

Believers are admonished to seek and develop for themselves what are believed to be the characteristics of Jesus Christ. Such characteristics, developed with the aid of the Holy Spirit, would be unassailable as never being negative influences in any culture. They are virtuous characteristics of a believer.

Love: Love can be either a noun or a verb. As a verb, you can love someone. In that instance, you seek a good and proper relationship with that person. To love an object is to seek to possess that object.

To love God, it seems is both to seek and possess God's best in a person's relationship with God. Cf: Matt 5:44; Mark 12:30-33; John 3:16

Kinds of Love:

Eros: romantic love, sexual or passionate love.

Philia: friendship, goodwill love.

Ludus: playful, teasing, but uncommitted love.

Philautic: self-love, used to build self- confidence

Storge: parental, family love.

Agape: spiritual, self-less love where nothing is expected in return

Pragma: practical love, founded on reason, logic

Joy: It is the sense of being pleased and happy. One can have JOY when experiencing unpleasant life-moments. Beulah Land itself is the Christian's sense of peace and contentment present even in uncomfortable periods of life. Cf: Matt 5:2-12; Luke 15:7; Romans 14:17

Peace: A scriptural meaning of spiritual peace is the sense one experiences having made reconciliation with God. It is the absence of an inner war with wrongdoing. A believer's sense of PEACE is related to an accompanying sense of JOY. Cf: Luke 2:14; John 20:19; Romans 1:7; 5:1;

Patience: Difficult for many, it is an ability to wait for a more favorable outcome even when things seem negative. It is a hope for a more favorable future. Cf: Romans 5:1-5; Galatians 5:22-24

Kindness: Greek, *chrestos*; this is a human act of love or compassion, generosity or even service to another living thing. It is a friendly sense or act to another. Cf: Luke 6:35; I Peter 2:30; Ephesians 4:32

Goodness: It is an activity of a moral agent that is in keeping with a right motive. It carries with it also an origin from a sense of love. Cf: Ephesians 2:10; Phillipians 2:12-13

Faithfulness: From a biblical perspective, faithfulness is absolute reliability; a state of firm dependability; not arbitrary or fickle. Cf: I Peter 4:19; I John 1:19; Revelations 2:10

Gentleness: Greek, *chre'stotes* . A kind of kindness, wed with patience. Some define it as a condescending act to another being. Cf: I Thess 2:7; II Tim 2:24

Self-Control: Self-Control involves both verbal, thought and physical behavior. Many people speak first and then think about the consequences of what has just been said. Or the individual may act first and then consider the consequences of what they've done.

Those who exercise proper self-control will think first, feel about what they are planning, and then act on it.

THINK – FEEL - ACT

Socially immature people will get these three components out of sequence; they will think, then act, and then consider (feel about) the consequences.

~~THINK ACT FEEL~~ (WRONG!)

Such people suffer foot-in-mouth disease, or exclaim, “what have I just done!” Cf: Titus 1:8; I Peter 5:8; I Corinthians 9:19-23

Baal

Origin: Baal, according to a Ugaritic text, descended to earth from the “netherworld” otherwise known as the “domain of the god, Mot”. Ugarit was a politically powerful city-state in northwest Syria. Baal’s origin dates from approximately 2000 BC. One Baal-Palace was reported to have contained 950,000 square feet of space. There is no way to verify the figure.

Baal’s Function: The god, Mot, carried the power of drought, sterility among people, animals and even land. It involved a highly sexual function.

Too, Baal was a dying and rising god. Baal’s sister, Anat, would cut Baal with the blade of a knife in the heat of summer, after crops had been gathered. A vicious sister, she would smash him with a shovel, roast him with fire, and grind him with a millstone after which she would scatter his ashes over fields where crops were to be planted the coming season.

But Baal would revive each spring just in time to provide fertility to the new crops. Every seventh year, Baal would fail to provide fertility to crops. Some think the Hebrew practice of refusing to plant crops during a sabbatical year may have originated with their knowledge of Baal.

Worshippers of Baal employed certain rites of fertility in an effort to encourage the return of Baal each growing season. Upon the supposed

death of Baal each year, his sister, Anat, the virgin, would supposedly search the mountains for him.

Canaanites, worshipping Baal, carried on orgiastic worship procedures as a means of ensuring the return of Baal for the coming farming season. Sacred prostitutes would participate in each autumn's religious ritual. They sometimes resorted to human sacrifice as well, Cf Jer 7:31; 19:4-6. Some think Hosea's wife, Gomer, had participated in this immoral ritual until Hosea bought her back, supposedly when she was actually on an auction block.

Such rituals are roundly condemned in Judges 2:12-14; 3:7, 8, and Jer. 19.

Baal in the Northern Kingdom

During the 19th Century BC, Ahab was the ruling King of the Northern Kingdom of Israel. Ahab, a weak king, married Jezebel, a willful and powerful daughter of Ethbaal, king of the city-state, Phoenicia.

As the daughter of King Ethbaal, she was a princess, accustomed to the privileges of power. As the wife of Ahab, she was a queen with considerably more power and prestige.

Ahab and Jezebel had a daughter named Athaliah who became the Queen Consort of Jehoram of Judah.

Both Ahab, Jezebel and Athaliah established and participated in certain Baal-type worship procedures involving Altars of Baal called High Places.



A Temple of Baal

One confrontation of Baal worship is recorded in the Old Testament when Elijah confronted their practices of the worship procedures. In I Kings 18:19-20 Elijah challenged their false prophets to call down fire from heaven. *And the God who answers by fire, let Him be God.* Elijah's God answered by fire.

Jezebel had pushed through Ahab's courts a law that all false prophets should be executed. Elijah, knowing of this law, carried out its intent. Jezebel's prophets having been proven false, were summarily executed.

Jezebel, surprisingly, was quite unhappy about losing her prophets. Knowing this development, Jezebel's General Jehu started for the palace. Jezebel, thinking he was coming for a "state visit", prepared herself in royal clothing, make-up and hair style for the visit. A royal visit was not to be.



Elijah, contesting with the prophets of Baal

As Jehu came near the palace, Jezebel looked down at him from an upper floor and proceeded to taunt him.

Unfazed, Jehu called up to Jezebel's eunuchs to throw her down. They did, and Jezebel died on impact.

Sometime following this confrontation, Athaliah, living in Judah, was in the horse barn searching for a horse when she was murdered.

The Education

of

Paul The Apostle

Prelude: Paul's Curriculum Vitae, i.e., the entire course of Paul's life followed paths set out for him during his education, both Greek and Hebrew. The variant instructional components came together forming a cogent whole, his life having encountered Jesus.

One variant source was the apocryphal book of Sirach (c. 200-175 BC) whose author was **Yeshua Ben Sira**. Yeshua, in his book, referred to free teaching on which the concept of compulsory education was and is based.

Yeshua, himself, had a private academy in Jerusalem where he taught ethics and law.

Shimon Ben Shetah (c. 100 BC) had suggested that Jews should provide free teaching to Jews.

Rabbi Gamaliel, A Member of the Sanhedrin: A Pharisee of the highest order, he felt that a teacher should be provided for the Jews. This

teaching, at first, would be restricted to religious issues. Later, his curriculum would be expanded to include other subjects:

Life-skills

Swimming (a subject that would serve Paul well in time)

A choice of a profession

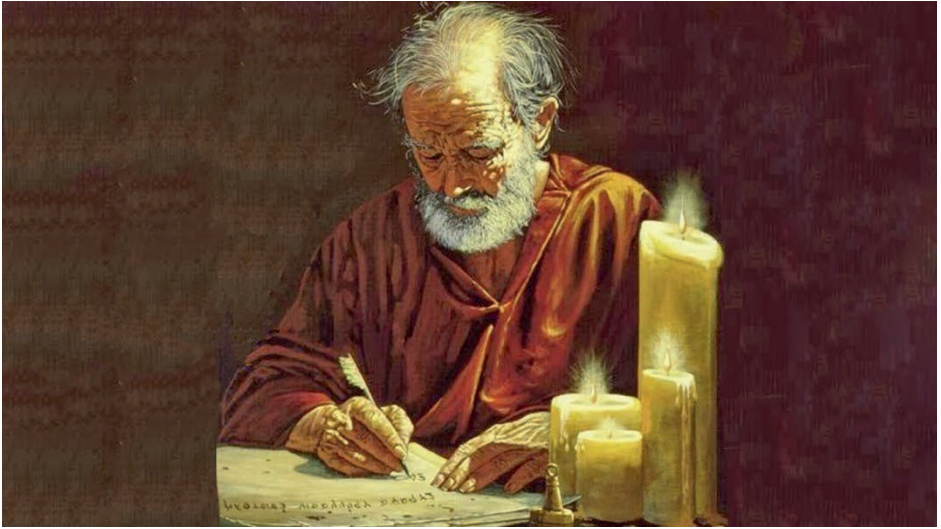
Greek Philosophers, Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle

Paul's Childhood and Youth: Paul's hometown, Tarsus of Cilicia.

To the north were the Taurus mountains, three-thousand meters tall (just under 10,000 ft), snow covered in winter. To the south was a magnificent view of the Mediterranean Sea. To the east and west were the hills of the Amanas mountains.

Camel and donkey Caravans came through the area using a pass cut there by Taurus' engineers, providing a way from the Euphrates to Ephesus and to Rome.

The River, Cygnus, beyond a waterfall just outside the city, was navigable from there all the way to the sea.



Paul the Apostle

Paul's hometown, Tarsus, was also the home of a highly respected university. Strabo, a famous Greek geographer, said it was better than the learning available either in Athens or in Alexandria.

Athenodorus, Stoic philosopher, was a popular citizen of Tarsus. Athenodorus had once advised Emperor Augustus; had said, *everyman's conscience is his god*. It should be noted that Socrates had once defined conscience as *knowing together*.

Old Testament believers did not experience God as "knowledge" so much as "in the heart."

Paul frequently used the Greek term for conscience, a clear reference to his knowledge of Greek philosophy. Seneca learned the concept of conscience from Athenodorus. Seneca had once said, *Live with men as if God sees it and speak with God as if men hear it*.

Paul's father, as was the custom, chose Paul's name, Saul, after King Saul, a man who was a head taller than all the people, and king of the Tribe of Benjamin. Paul's father added a second name, Paulus, which, in Greek, meant "Tiny." It seems that Saul/Paul was not a large man, perhaps even sickly. The name, Paul, would become his name of choice after he had met Christ.

Paul's father was Hebrew, of the Tribe of Benjamin. His father may have owned a leather factory and weaving mill. If so, one might conclude that Paul developed his skill as a tanner and tentmaker from his own father.

His father was thought to have manufactured popular Cilician textiles, working with the hair of goats bred on the Cilician plateau – stiff hair. Armed forces men preferred these garments for their durability and warmth.

The stiffness and awkwardness of the goat's hair often made workers' hands bleed.

It is thought that Paul's father took him on business trips, thus allowing Paul to witness the awesome power of Rome.

Josephus declared Paul to be a kinsman to Agrippa. In fact, In Romans 16:11, Paul referred to himself as "Greet Herodion, my kinsman." Another source indicates Paul to be kin to Herod Antipas. It was Herod Antipas who demanded the head of John the Baptist (Romans 6:11).

Paul would later refer to himself as having been born out of due time, perhaps either a reference to being a weakling, a “preemie baby” or of being the least of the apostles.

Paul’s father was Quintas Cornelius Prudens, and his mother was Priscilla. Paul spoke of living from the beginning of his life in his home country as well as in Jerusalem. Though circumcised on the eighth day of life, as was the law of the Pharisees, he was also a Roman citizen from birth.

Paul’s Early Education

Paul’s father, consistent with tradition, was responsible for Paul’s education. Paul would have learned prayers and the Psalms at home. In fact, many precocious young boys would memorize the entirety of the Psalms.

Precocious young boys were also expected to attend a synagogue school if one were near-by. There, they would be taught by a cantor, a *hazan*. Some lived with the cantor. Many were given the name, *tinot shel beit hakneset*, “little synagogue children.”

This “kindergarten” of sorts was called The Vineyard. Paul would have been expected to have read the Torah by age 5. Wealthy families often had slaves carry the child’s iron writing stylus and an accompanying wax tablet on which to write. Some used slates instead.

By age 10, Paul would have begun to study Oral Law, the *seyag ha -torah*, “the Fence of the Law.” There, Paul would have learned the various

purification rules. He would also have learned, from I Tim 1:8, that the Law is good when it is used lawfully.

While the Pharisees stressed rational solutions to issues, i.e., following the voice of reason, Paul would later declare having received an injury to his soul when he concluded that while the Torah was intended to bring life, it brought only death (Romans 7:10).

Paul may have attended an organized school called the *beit ha-sefer*, the “house of the book.” Learning was principally from their bible.

There were 25 students per teacher. If there were more students, assistants were assigned. By age 15, Paul would have been expected to understand doctrinal questions.

Gamaliel' and His Jerusalem School

Fathers often sent their sons to Jerusalem for study where the famous Gamaliel had a school.

The name, Gamaliel (“The Old One”) had been President of the Great Council for the past 25 years, i.e., before the destruction of the Temple.

There were six earlier scholars named Gamaliel, but the one nicknamed, “The Old One” was the one who taught Paul.

Gamaliel's school had enrolled 500 students where his curriculum included Greek Philosophy which would absolutely have included the works of Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle. A knowledge of Greek philosophy was necessary to all who would transact with Greek governors.

Gamaliel debated what to do with the first apostles. Old Gamaliel spoke in their behalf:

Men of Israel, consider carefully what you intend to do to these men . . .

Leave these men alone! Let them go! For if their purpose or activity is of human origin, it will fail. But if it is from God, you will not be able to stop these men; you will only find yourselves fighting against God.

Also, of Gamaliel: In a city where both Jew and Gentile live, a Jew should, besides looking after the poor, also appoint a superintendent to look after Gentiles and to receive contributions for the poor from the Gentiles if they want to give any; similarly, one should look after both Gentile and Jewish poor people; visit sick Gentiles, bury their dead and hold funeral speeches for them, console their mourners and clothe their destitute – in order to maintain the peace.

Here is a reported awkward debate between Paul and Gamaliel:

G: Of the Messianic age: *A woman will give birth every day, because it is written among them are pregnant women and women in labour.* (Jer 31:8) (“every day” were Gamaliel’s words added to scripture.)

P: (Mocking Gamaliel) Knowing that Gamaliel had compromised the scripture) *There is nothing new under the sun.* (Prov 1:9).

G: Continuing on the Messianic Age: *Trees will produce fruit every day, because it is written. (Ezek 17:23)It will produce branches and bear fruit.* (Again, Gamaliel added “every day” to the verse.)

P: Again, mocking him: *There is nothing new under the sun.*

G: Made these impossible assertions to develop spontaneous critical thinking in Paul.

P: Again, Paul said, *There is nothing new under the sun.* It was common for a student to quote scripture in reply to a question he could/should not answer. This is what Paul had done.

This example helps one understand Paul’s generous attitude toward Gentiles, for the needs of the saints in Jerusalem and to develop critical thinking.

Paul entered Gamaliel’s school at approximately age 15 and remained there for 3-5 years. Those would have been years 20-25 AD, just before Jesus began His ministry.

Paul seems to have been influenced by the philosophy of Stoicism. This many have been where he deduced his personal discipline, his self-denial and missionary work. Paul developed three spheres of influence from Gamaliel:

- * That Jews had a moral responsibility to Gentiles.
- * The necessity of contact with other cultures.

*Dictating his letters to the churches. (Gamaliel had dictated his letters, often while sitting on the steps to the Temple Mount).

Paul borrowed ideas from other scholars of his day:

Acts 16 he refers to *some of our poets*.

In his speech at the Areopagus, he appears familiar with Epimenides of 500 years earlier.

Of Aratus of Cilicia from c 300 BC with the quote, *we are the kin of gods*.

From Epimenides, *Cretans are always liars, evil brutes, lazy gluttons*.

From Athenian writer, Menander of c. 300 BC in I Cor 15:33, quote from a play: *Thais, "Bad company breeds bad manners."*

Gamaliel drew up some applications of the Law to improve the position of women:

Divorce

Testifying in court

Respect for women

A Situational Interpretation of the torah; that the

Torah could be interpreted in context of an

Individual situation.

Sources: Risto Santala, *Jerusalem Perspective*

The Messiah in the New Testament

Yeshua El Mesia's En Tanaj

It's About More Than Jonah

And "The Whale"

(A Great Fish)

Traditional Treatment of Jonah's Story; The biblical story of Jonah is often treated simply as a prophet refusing to follow God's direction. Focus centers on the believers' need to remain sensitive to what God wants; that refusal to follow God's direction can result in embarrassingly painful consequences. This biblical story is about this and much much more.

In short, Jonah was likely well-versed in the socio/military behavior of Nineveh. In defense of Jonah's decision, one should review the might and power of Nineveh and its' ruler, Sennacherib. There are two miracles in the story of the prophet Jonah.

Miracle # 1:

The first miracle in the story of Jonah was itself, two-fold: his survival of three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish; and his ultimate

acceptance of God's directive to preach repentance to the people of Nineveh.

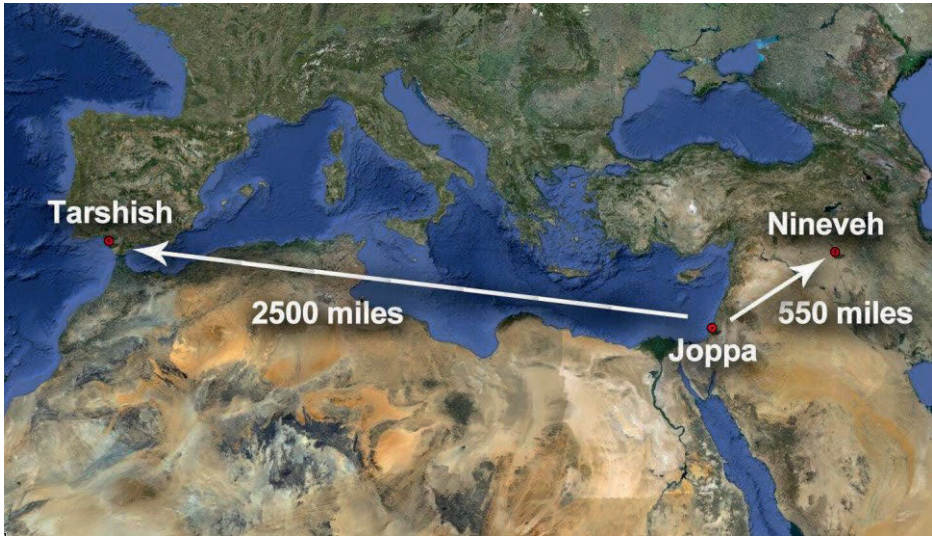
Nineveh is seen by God as being exceedingly wicked. Jonah is directed by God to travel to Nineveh where he is directed to preach repentance to the residents of that city. Jonah, living in Hath-Hepher, a city in Israel's Northern Kingdom, decided, instead to travel to a distant city far away from Nineveh.

Scripture says, the word of the Lord came to Jonah, son of Amittai, "Go to the great city of Nineveh and preach against it, because its' wickedness has come up before me."

Located on the Tigris River in northern Mesopotamia, we might not know of Nineveh were it not mentioned in scripture. It was a great city in its' day, with a reported population of 100,000 or more. It supposedly took three days to traverse its' dimensions.

Jonah, instead, scheduled himself as a passenger on a ship bound for Tarshish. As can be seen on the map below, Tarshish was located on the **southernmost tip of modern Spain as his destination.**

Tarshish was at the opposite end of the Mediterranean Sea from Hath-Hepher, 2500 miles away and literally as far away from Nineveh as he could have traveled. Nineveh was only 550 miles away. Clearly, Jonah did not want to get near Nineveh. And there was a reason.



Jonah's alternate chosen destination

Nineveh was governed by the great Sennacherib, a warrior whose army had never lost a battle with other mighty armies. The city of ancient Nineveh was comparable to the great city of Babylon. While Babylon was known for its' education and culture, Nineveh was known for power and might. All of Judah would later be unable to overcome Babylon's power. And here, little Jonah, alone, was being told of God to go preach to that wicked city.

Jonah was a Reluctantly - Learning Prophet

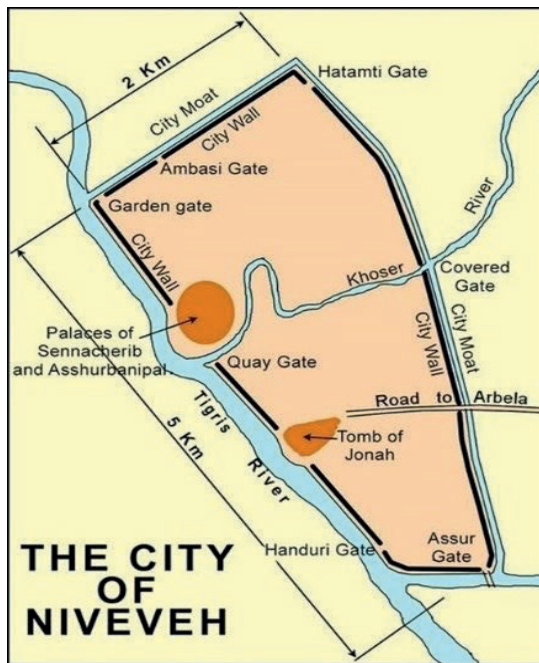
Jonah's story involves God's "reminder" that His followers should take seriously God's direction. Three days and three nights in the belly of a great fish taught Jonah a much-needed lesson in obeying God's direction. Released from the great fish, Jonah proceeded to Nineveh along with what must have been much personal fear and trepidation – one man

against the mighty Sennacherib! Arriving there, he preached repentance, and the people of Nineveh did repent.

While the people repented, the greater powers of that great city, i.e., Sennacherib and his cohorts, clearly did not repent. Scripture is silent regarding Sennacherib's reaction to Jonah's preaching.

Perhaps one result of Jonah's preaching repentance was that God forestalled His judgment against the city, allowing it to become even the capitol of the Great Assyrian Empire.

The citizens of Nineveh likely had heard of Jonah's disobedience and of his unfortunate episode in the belly of the great fish. That information might have motivated them to attend with greater interest Jonah's preaching repentance, else they might suffer a similar visit from God.



*Ancient Nineveh; Tomb of Jonah,, bottom left
Sennacherib's Palace near top left*



Entrance to ancient Nineveh



Jonah preaching in ancient Nineveh

Today there is a mound in the ruins of Nineveh named *Nebiunis* which, in Arabic means *Jonah*. Naming the space for Jonah not only identifies him as having been there, but it also gives indication of their respect for this prophet of God and his having preached repentance there.

Beneath the Nebiunis mound was found the ruins of a mosque, named the Jonah Mosque itself blown up in a battle in 2014. Found beneath the ruins of the Jonah Mosque were the ruins of an even earlier church, perhaps a result, too, of Jonah's preaching.

In further excavations, researchers found a six-sided prism about 2' tall and containing writing in Cuneiform. Upon eventual interpretation, it was discovered that it was from King Sennacherib, himself, ruler of Nineveh.

Sennacherib's ultimate intent was to capture and destroy Jerusalem. But he was 1000 miles away from Jerusalem, and a number of cities stood between him and his ultimate prize.

The City of Nineveh (and its' ruins)

Another mound, called Kuyunijiq, northwest of Nebiunis, was excavated. In it was found a huge courtyard with nearby two miles of gypsum walls where there were carvings of Sennacherib's exploits. Nearby were two human-headed-winged bulls sitting side-by-side and guarding the entrance to a massive hallway.

At the end of the hallway was a wall-carving with this quote:

Sennacherib, the mighty king, king of Assyria, sitting on the throne of judgment, before . . . the city of Lachish. I give permission for its' slaughter.



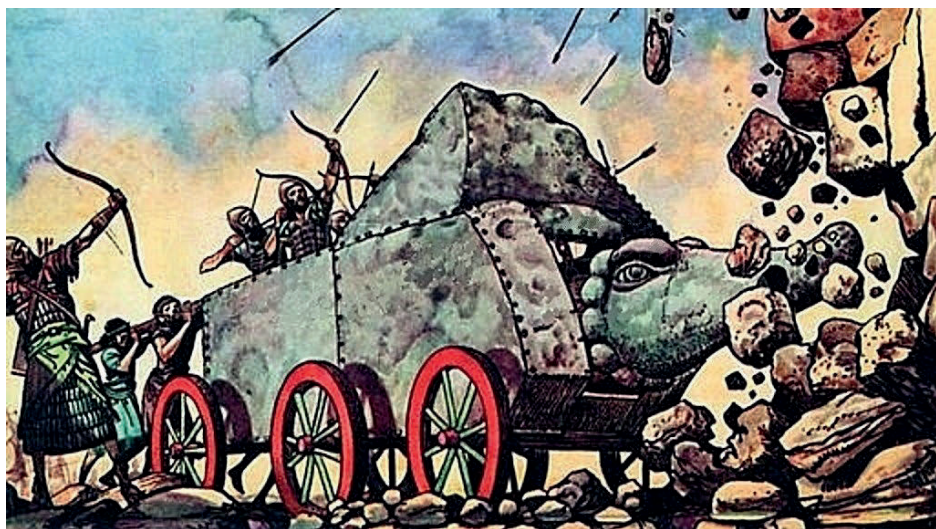
Artist's depiction of the Massive Celebration Hallway in Ancient Nineveh

It said that at Lachish, Sennacherib had positioned himself for a “King’s View of the Battle of Lachish.”

A discussion of Sennacherib and his exploits leading him to the slaughter of Lachish and other cities of Judah is indicated. Sennacherib, in Nineveh, was 1000 miles away from Lachish.

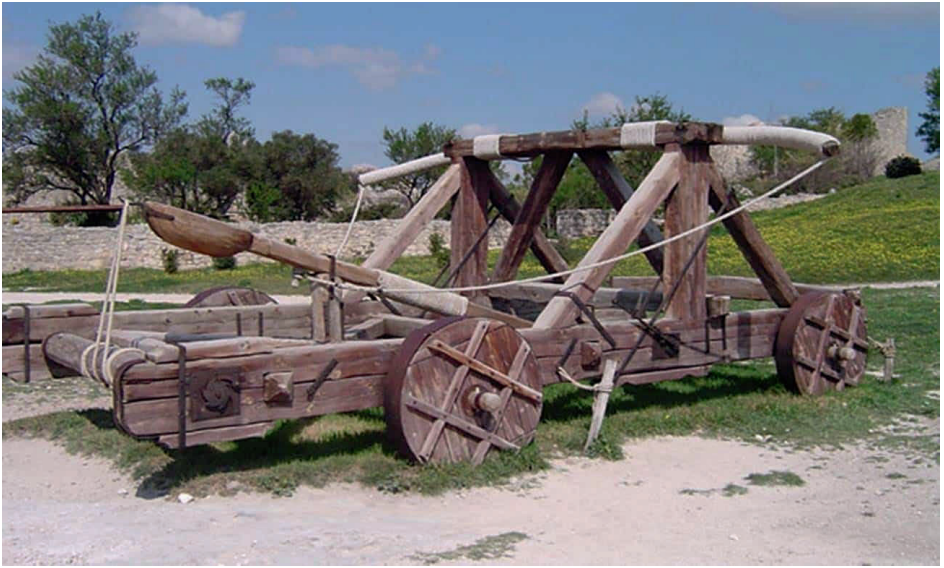
Sennacherib started from Nineveh toward the coast of the Mediterranean where he began a series of conquests. First, he subdued

the forces and cities of the Palestinians along the coast. Continuing down the coast and somewhat inward of the land of the Judeans, he conquered Joppa, Ekron, Moab, Amon, Timnah, Ashkelon, and all the fortified cities of Judah. It was 701 BC when he arrived at Lachish.



Assyrian Battering Ram

Arriving at Lachish, Sennacherib had ready his catapults, battering rams, siege towers, and possibly was prepared to construct a siege ramp.



One version of an ancient catapult used in the siege of a walled city

Subduing Lachish, murdering hundreds of its citizens and taking others into captivity or sending them into slavery, he continued on into Egypt where he supposedly conquered the Egyptians.

Miracle # 2: Defense of Jerusalem

However, hoards of disease-carrying mice infected his soldiers while they were in Egypt. Little note was taken of their infection.

Upon returning to the area of Jerusalem, he attempted a siege of that city. First, he sent emissaries to meet and negotiate with King Hezekiah in the city.

Hezekiah sent him a tribute, but it was not enough. Sennacherib then prepared a full siege of the city.

But on the night before the first day of the siege, with catapults, battering rams, siege towers in place, and bolstered with the knowledge that he had never lost a battle, Sennacherib was ready.

God had other plans.

Sennacherib's soldiers had been infected from the Egyptian disease-carrying mice. One hundred eighty-five thousand of Sennacherib's battle-hardened soldiers of Nineveh became deathly ill and died.

II Kings, 35 records the mighty miracle delivered for Jerusalem that night.

That night the angel of the Lord went out and put to death a hundred and eighty-five thousand of the Assyrian camp. When the people got up the next morning – there were the dead bodies. Sennacherib king of Assyria broke camp and withdrew. He returned to Nineveh and stayed there.



Angels striking down Assyrian Soldiers in Defense Of Jerusalem

The inscriptions on the wall at the end of the Great Hallway back in Nineveh retold the siege of Jerusalem, but it left out the fact that it failed.

The citizens of Jerusalem, along with King Hezekiah, must have been quite concerned, having heard of Sennacherib's success in conquering other Judean cities. Sennacherib had never lost a battle up to that moment in time.

Jerusalem was to have been Sennacherib's most boastful prize, but it was not to be. In 612 BC Babylon and its allies completely destroyed Nineveh.

While a new modern Nineveh has arisen in the area, Ancient Nineveh's original portion of land has remained desolate for over 2400 years.

Zephania 2:12

The last known indication of Nineveh was from Zephaniah. He refers this way to the destruction of Nineveh:

You Cushites, too, will be slain by my sword. He will stretch out his hand against the north and destroy Assyria, leaving Nineveh utterly desolate and dry as the desert. Flocks and herds will lie down there, creatures of every kind. The desert owl and the screech owl will roost on her columns. Their hooting will echo through the windows . . . what a ruin she has become!

Matthew 12:

A wicked and adulterous generation asks for a sign! But none will be given it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of a huge fish, so the Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

The second miracle of the story of Jonah was that God preserved Hezekiah's Jerusalem.

Typical of God: **God sometimes sends seemingly unassuming, people, filled with fear and trepidation to accomplish great things! Don't underestimate God!**

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