

# Beauties of the Truth

A Forum for the Publication of Scriptural Viewpoints  
Thought to be Harmonious with God's Plan of the Ages  
Volume 22, Number 4, November 2011

## ***Elijah, Ahab, Jezebel, Related Antitypes***

*"Elijah ... and all of his doings were a type on a small scale of greater things which came afterwards" (R5741).<sup>1</sup>*

Divine providence may arrange a forceful method of conveying lessons when an illustration is needed respecting moral conduct and its consequences. God can overrule so that men acting with complete moral free-will have their words and actions preserved in the Bible. History by its very nature relates general lessons, but personalities of special importance become a focus in "types" where they serve as heroes or enemies of righteousness conveying lessons of importance in an "antitype" acted out at some later date.

One example is Melchizedek, the priest and king of Salem, to whom Abraham paid tithes (Genesis 14:18-20). At first, this lesson conveyed in three brief verses of scripture might seem undistinguished from the many events of Abraham's life. We learn that this historical incident is a type when it becomes the focus of prophetic interest in Psalm 110:4; and then becomes a theme of the Epistle to the Hebrews in chapters five, six, and seven. Righteous Melchizedek pre-figured Christ's dual office as priest and king, superior in every way to the Levite priesthood bound to the ordinances of Mt. Sinai. The Melchizedek type also refutes the argument that Jesus cannot be a priest because he is not a Levite or descended from Aaron.

### **ELIJAH**

Elijah and his implacable enemy Jezebel are also types. Both are mentioned later in scripture as prefiguring some later antitypical fulfillment. Other characters and details in the historical accounts concerning them may also figure into the antitype, though in setting forth specific applications, prayerful caution and restraint are needed. Some, in following the shaky hypothesis that everything in the scriptural record was overruled as a type, have woven the Old Testament accounts into exaggerated antitypes, or into pictures conveniently pointing favorably to self.

Jesus endorsed the special Biblical lessons found in "types." Speaking of John the Baptist, who was God's fear-

less prophet speaking against a corrupt order, Christ said, "if you will receive it, this is Elijah who was to come" (Matthew 11:14). Many voices from the true church filled with God's spirit have followed John the Baptist's example during the Gospel Age. They have had this privilege of preaching in defense of our heavenly Father's character, plans, and purposes before the coming of the "great and dreadful day of the LORD" (Malachi 4:5-6).

The antitypical significance of Elijah, Ahab and Jezebel is persuasively set forth in the Harvest message (R5741): "Elijah's prophecy was larger than on the surface appeared; for he and all of his doings were a type on a small scale of greater things which came afterwards. Elijah was a type of the Church in the flesh — the Church of which Jesus is the Head, and all of His saintly followers are the members. It was of this antitypical Elijah that God declared, 'Behold, I will send you Elijah the Prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful Day of the LORD; and he shall turn the heart of the children to the fathers, and the heart of the fathers to the children; otherwise I will come and smite the earth with a curse' (Malachi 4:5, 6)."

"Jesus and His Apostles, and all of His followers, as the members of this greater Elijah, actuated by the Spirit of God, have been delivering a Message to the world. They have been reproving sin, and making known to the world the righ-

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teousness of God. If the world had heeded the Message, the Kingdom of Messiah on the spirit plane would eventually have been ushered in, as the desire of all nations, without any great Time of Trouble. ... That God meant Elijah to be a type of the Church is confirmed to us by certain statements in the Revelation. The matter is there covertly presented, a great religious system being figuratively described as Jezebel, and the worldly system to which this professed Church of Christ is united being represented by Ahab, the king of Israel.”

### NABOTH'S VINEYARD IN TYPE

Reprehensible as all of Jezebel's actions were, those linked to securing Naboth's vineyard led to a death sentence on Ahab's house. If there is an antitype here, it may be the way the “professed Church of Christ,” antitypical Jezebel, seeking to expand her adherents, authorized policies that increased the political and economic power of the European states. These states sought their “place in the sun,” to control colonial empires upon which the “sun never set.” This effort covered nearly 500 years, from the European “Age of Exploration” in the mid 15th century until the close of World War II in the mid 20th century. Roman Catholic states, Protestant states, and even the once powerful Orthodox-Christian state (Russia) jostled with each to carve out the best portions of the globe.

As the age of colonization moved toward its close, costs associated with these policies were recognized in words of self-pity by the British imperial poet Rudyard Kipling, in “Take up the White Man's burden.”<sup>2</sup> Kipling's sentiments are unflattering in portraying all things non-European, and they would not be uttered today. They powerfully illustrate how the current concern for “political correctness” has altered the dialogue on multi-cultural relations.

### SHATTERED MYTHS

With respect to judgment on Ahab, “the worldly system to which [the] professed Church of Christ is united,” history amply corroborates Pastor Russell's prophetic expectations. This civil order began to meet its doom in the First World War. A world with its value system and conventions lay rotting in the mud of the trenches and the shattered French countryside. The system of political colonization and its costs were a burden that would not survive the Second World War. However, a new and even more powerful system linked to economic domination was already taking root.

Following World War I the myth was forever shattered that God's providential care was specially guiding states through state religion. It makes no difference that the traditional forms were clung to in some quarters. These now were traditions and rituals without power to energize and inspire. Soviet Russian communism attempted the most radical break. Tsarist Russia went into the “Great War” singing devout hymns on its knees to seek God's blessing on Tsar Nicholas II and his doomed hemophiliac heir, the Tsarevich Alexei. Now she rose up with a hammer and sickle in her hands singing the “Internationale.”<sup>3</sup>

### CASTING OFF EVERY FORM OF “OLD”

Outside of Russia, in all aspects of life, old forms were cast aside. Opulent and exaggerated art, architecture, and music that marked the close of the pre-War *La Belle Epoque* gave way to new forms. The modern art movement cast aside the conventions and training of the academies in an attempt to embrace primitive and disturbing realism and surrealism. Renoir gave place to Picasso. In architecture, the opulent and sinuous lines of Art Nouveau gave way to the stark crisp minimalist lines of the international Bauhaus movement. In America, traditional structure of musical forms gave way to jazz, a musical form widely condemned in learned circles as another step backward for civilization. Horse and buggy were displaced by the automobile in a technology revolution unmatched until the introduction of personal computers at the close of the 20th century. Radio opened unprecedented mass-communication opportunities. Airplanes provided the freedom of birds on the wing as the pace of running to and fro became even more hectic.

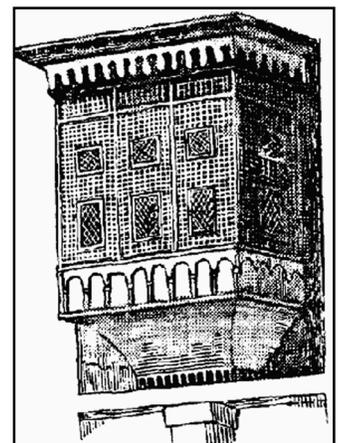
Both Elijah, “the Church in the flesh,” and Elijah's enemy Jezebel, the “great religious system,” survived. The combatant nations engaged in the “Great War” and the colonies dominated by Europe (and more recently the United States), found themselves staggering towards a new, frightening and uncertain epoch of man's history. It was an age of unfamiliar sights, unfamiliar sounds, unfamiliar cities, unfamiliar modes of running “to and fro,” and disillusionment about state religion.

### AHAZIAH AND WINDOW ACCIDENTS

The experiences of Ahaziah, successor to Ahab, seem to typify this new and frightening order. Ahaziah came to the throne of Israel after his father Ahab died. Jezebel, still the queen mother, enjoyed power and influence, but no longer had the same control she exercised as the consort of the king. Ahab's seal, not Jezebel's seal, was needed to initiate the heinous conspiracy against Naboth (1 Kings 21:8).

In antitype, we see the political upheaval following World War I. The communist revolution remained confined to Russia, and until the Stalinist regime showed its ugly character, Russia was a magnet for the disaffected and hopeful for this new order. Elsewhere, a flood of economic depression engulfed the developed economies until it covered all of Europe and North America. Desperate times may cause otherwise sensible people and nations to seek direction from charismatic flawed leaders. The unrelenting economic woes paved the way for Nazism and Fascism.

Adolf Hitler realized that blindness was so prevalent among his followers look-



Lattice Window, 19th Century

**ELIJAH**

Opposed Baal worship, proclaimed 1260 days of drought to Ahab  
*True Church in the flesh (R5741)*

Taken to heaven in a whirlwind during reign of Jehoram of Israel  
*True Church taken to glory in troublous events of anarchy (R5846)*

**ELISHA**

Elijah's successor as prophet  
*Lord's agent in two roles after true church departs (R5780)*

**AHAB**

Evil king of Israel  
*Government systems united with the false church, Jezebel (R5741)*

Condemned by Elijah and slain fighting Syrians  
*European Church-state governments that ended in World War I*

**AHAZIAH OF ISRAEL**

First successor to Ahab as king of Israel, son of Ahab and Jezebel  
*Successors to Church-state systems after WWI, ending in WWII*

Condemned by Elijah, died of injuries falling from window  
 about one year after Ahab's death  
*Post WWI European dictators condemned by the true Church*

**JEHORAM OF ISRAEL**

Second successor to Ahab, son of Ahab and Jezebel  
*Post WWII European governments*

Slain by Jehu 12 years after Ahab (uncle to Ahaziah of Judah)  
*Post WWII European governments overthrown*

**AHAZIAH OF JUDAH**

King of Judah, son of Jehoram and Athaliah  
*Post WWII non-Europ. Chrstn. govmts., US, Canada, Australia*

Slain by Jehu 12 years after Ahab's death (nephew of Jehoram)  
*Post WWII non-Europ. Chrstn. govmts., US, Canada, Australia*

**JEZEBEL**

Queen to Ahab, Baal worshipper from Sidon  
*A great religious system (R5741)*

Slain by Jehu 12 years after Ahab, cast from window by eunuchs  
*False church slain by "Jehu" (see below), and her own eunuchs*

**JEHU**

Sword of retribution on Ahab & Jezebel, anointed by Elisha (R3446)  
*Reckless driving generation that overthrows present order*

ing for charismatic leaders, that he said "I use emotion for the many and reserve reason for the few." In *Mein Kampf* he asserted: "By means of shrewd lies, unremittingly repeated, it is possible to make people believe that heaven is hell — and hell, heaven. ... The greater the lie, the more readily will it be believed." Nazism and Fascism set forth their own novel, powerful, antitypical Beelzebub-worshipping mythologies, to reclaim the energy of a mythical non-Christian past.

Ahaziah was mortally injured in a curious accident. He fell through a latticework window. In warm Eastern countries such lattice windows frequently project from the wall

of the building so that they may catch any breeze. They thus form enclosed balconies and are often highly ornamental. Portions of the lattice are hinged, so they may be opened or shut at pleasure. These details are important because both Ahaziah and Jezebel perished by falling or being thrown from such a lattice window. The figure showing a 19th century lattice window in Cairo is believed to be close to the type of window in use nearly three millennia earlier. It shows both the design features of windows that open and the lattice work mentioned in scripture.

Windows as a Biblical symbol suggest the hopes through which we view the world and through which the world sees us. For the Christian these hopes must be certain, and based on the word of God. The ravens and doves were released through a window by Noah to learn of conditions in the new world following the deluge. The olive bough, an enduring symbol of peace, arrived with the dove through this window. Rahab delivered the spies through a window. Rahab identified her faithful family by a scarlet line in her window. Like the spies at Jericho, both David and Paul were delivered from their enemies through a window. Through an eastward open window Elisha had Joash shoot the arrows of deliverance (2 Kings 13:17).

Clearly, windows of a Biblical home are more vulnerable than the doors or walls, hence when hope is lost "death is come up into our windows" (Jeremiah 9:21). In the Song of Solomon the beloved sees her lover through the "lattice" window of prophecy and prophetic hopes. Heaven's windows when opened — observe, not its doors, as one might expect — deliver blessings such that we cannot contain them (Malachi 3:10).

In the scriptures, women of nobility watched at the window and waited for their men returning from battle. This is depicted in the art of the era, and alluded to in Deborah's song of victory. The mother of Sisera, sensing his doom, "looked out at a window, and cried through the lattice, Why is his chariot so long in coming? Why tarry the wheels of his chariot?" (Judges 5:28).

Returning to Ahaziah, after the "Ahab" order perished in the First World War, hopes for a better successor were "dashed" (as in a fall from a window) by the rise of dictators during the 1930's. The ambitious despots who rose to power were adept at manipulating economic chaos, anger, frustration, despair, and confusion about the path forward, into a seemingly unbeatable engine for world domination.

These ambitious and unprincipled men outdid "Ahab" in their maliciousness. They appealed to the worst of human instincts — pride, tribalism, and racism. They exploited and manipulated the fallen Adamic tendency to blame and persecute minority communities [and sects] for all of society's problems. In Europe the "scape-goat" community became

the Jews. In Japan it became all foreigners. The world found itself plunged into another World War even more horrible than the first one. However, this dangerous movement for a new world order was short-lived; as was Ahaziah. This period ended with the close of World War II (1945) although it is possible that “Ahaziah’s” lingering at death’s door may be extended by eight years later if we include the death of Joseph Stalin in the Soviet Union (1953) when a new era of nuclear terror and the “cold war” began.

### JORAM AND SECULARISM

Ahaziah left no direct successor old enough to rule. His younger brother Joram (or Jehoram) came to power and was at least cautious about the growing nationalistic religious fervor that sought a return to the worship of Jehovah. He removed Baal worship from prominence, though he did not destroy it (2 Kings 3:2).

Characteristic of the post World War II era is a tendency to embrace secularism. Secularism starves the soul. Yet it seems a safer and fairer policy than that of nations since the dawn of their histories. Religion is set apart, to be brought out only at state occasions and times of crisis, and then the expressions must be only the most tepid acknowledgements of God’s existence out there — somewhere — and God’s capacity to bless and comfort in time of need.

How different from the era of the First World War, where nations such as Czarist Russia could go to war after the city dwellers and peasants kneeled together singing their equivalent of “God save the king.” It is impossible to imagine such a public display today. In contrast, this era — the Joram era — is marked by an effort to embrace “human rights” as its religion. Here, Nobel Peace Prize winner and holocaust survivor Elie Weizel may be quoted, “The defense of human rights has become in the last fifty years a kind of world-wide secular religion.”<sup>4</sup>

### KISS THE SON

For all of secularism’s good intentions, receiving instruction from Christ, described in prophecy as “kissing the son” (Psalm 2:12), is far from its objective. The Islamic world presents its own special resistance to “kissing the son.” Summarizing our suggestions for antitypes set forth here, at this juncture, Ahab and Ahaziah have perished. Elijah is active and Jezebel still lives, as does her son Joram and all seventy other of Ahab’s sons (2 Kings 10:1).

Let us close with some reflections on “kissing the son.” O that the kings might bring themselves to kiss the son, for this refers to the holy kiss that is pure and without sin or taint of sin; this holy kiss that embraces comradeship and love with God’s beloved son, our Lord Jesus. It is a kiss that brings those who give it near enough to the Lord that they might even be able to hear a whisper from him. That hearing, they might render obedience to the one who loved us and gave his life for us.

— Bro. Richard Doctor

(1) For an extended treatment of the types surrounding Jezebel, please see “Jezebel’s Death,” *Beauties of the Truth*, 16, 2 (May 2005).

(2) Kipling’s poem was a response to the American takeover of the Philippines after the Spanish-American War (1899). For the United States this was a new and unprecedented development that domestic critics considered as fundamentally in conflict with the foundation principles of the American experiment in representative democracy.

(3) “Arise, you prisoners of starvation. Arise, you wretched of the earth  
• For justice thunders condemnation, for a better world’s in birth. •  
No more tradition’s change shall bind us. Arise you slaves, no more in thrall. •  
The earth shall rise on new foundation: we have been naught, we shall be all.”

This hymn to the international brotherhood of the working class celebrated revolution and praised the new but untested promises of equitable governance and social justice under a communist order. It originated in the Paris “Commune” of 1871.

(4) Kennedy, David, *The Dark Side of Virtue — Reassessing International Humanitarianism*, Princeton University (2004) page 278.

## Reader Reply on Gnosticism

*Some research from years ago.*

Your article on Gnosticism ... *Beauties of the Truth*, Volume 22, No. 2 (May 2011) reminded me of some research I did many years ago. I had a developing interest on how various ancient false systems of thought impinging upon the Bible’s Ransom teaching influenced so called “orthodoxy” into error; and researching along these lines developed a special interest in the “Gospel” of Philip. As doubtless you are aware; Gnosticism is a thoroughly mixed bag of utter confusion, however the faithful Church was providentially protected from its vile and baneful influences by the Gospel ministry of her faithful servants, of those in the right hand of Jesus Christ, especially as found in the writings of Irenaeus and Hippolytus. Their polemic writings concerning Gnosticism reflect the wide range of belief and practice in that thoroughly alien and deeply distorted demonic system, which having its origin in Tartarus well reflects that deep Stygian darkness.

One statement in the “Gospel” of Philip is in defiant contradiction to the Apostolic teaching of a “ransom for all” because it teaches a “ransom for some”; however, in true Gnostic fashion, it immediately muddies the waters by adding the thought of delivering others as well as redeeming others. A recent and authoritative translation by Professor Bentley Layton of Yale renders it; “The Anointed came to purchase some, to rescue some, and to ransom some.” (Page 329 section 5). Professor Kurt Rudolph of Leipzig University (Marxist) published in English (in 1983) his overview of the Gnostic system. He identifies the “Gospel” of Philip as a document representing the Valentinian version of Gnosticism, also Professor Layton describes this document as a “Valentinian Anthology,” page 325. It was also this variant of the Gnostic cult which led a so-called early “Church Father” Tatian into serious error contrary to the Bible’s true Ransom teaching.

The reason that Irenaeus singles out Tatian as a false teacher is that he denied a further opportunity of salvation to Adam. Modern higher critical as well as “orthodox” scholars express puzzlement at the seriousness with which Irenaeus treats of this matter. However Bible Students are not in the least surprised that Irenaeus takes issue with Tatian with his denial of Adam’s salvation from the grave, for they have the benefit and blessing of that beloved servant’s teaching concerning the Ransom; a teaching which was brought to light early in the Lord’s second advent. A teaching that had been lost in the early centuries of the Christian era. Tatian’s Valentinian heresy has been revived in recent times by J. F. Rutherford and his followers; who since 1931 have paraded themselves under the banner of “Jehovah’s Witnesses.” It affords an interesting example of how Gnosticism covertly still influences men towards error and false teaching in this modern age.

Your brother, by his grace, Richard D. Doidge (West Yorkshire, UK)

## Return of the Jews to Israel

*A brief look at what made possible the Jewish return to their homeland.*

Beginning with the Autumn 1874 planting and the Spring harvest of the winter crops in the Balkans, a number of seemingly-unrelated but rapid-fire events enabled the Jews to return to their land for the first time in about eighteen centuries. Within four years the first Jews were making Aliyah (return).

### BACKGROUND EVENTS

England defended the Ottoman Empire and gained significant influence over it (1799, 1854, 1878). German power and influence rose due to victories over Austria (1866) and France (1871). Financial panic in 1873 hit Vienna in May and New York in September, beginning the Long Depression (1873 to perhaps 1896). Long drought began in Anatolia in central Turkey. In the British General Election of 1874 February 17, the Conservatives won a majority of Parliamentary seats; Disraeli subsequently again became Prime Minister (1868, 1874-1880).

### PROXIMAL CAUSES

The Autumn 1874 planting in the Balkan Peninsula yielded a near-total-failure harvest in the Spring of 1875. Turks still extracted full taxes from non-Muslim tenant farmers (several times what Muslims paid), leaving many Christians with nothing to eat. Roman Catholics in Herzegovina and Bosnia rebelled against the Turks in the Summer in the “Christian uprising,” and were brutally crushed. Turkey declared bankruptcy and refused to repay loans from European countries. European sentiment turned decidedly against the Turks.

In 1876 Serbia and Montenegro supported the Christian uprising by declaring war on Turkey; the principally Eastern Orthodox Bulgarians revolted; they were all roundly defeated. British Prime Minister, Benjamin Disraeli<sup>1</sup> (newly Earl of Beaconsfield), dismissed Turkish cruelty against Christians as mere rumor, accounting alliance with Turkey as essential to preserving the British Empire. (Disraeli’s rival, William E. Gladstone, popularized the cause of the Balkan Christians and eventually retook the Prime Minister’s office again in 1880.)

Russia had severe economic problems, but its influence in the Balkans was jeopardized by the crushing of the Christian uprising. After hesitation, Russia declared war on Turkey in 1877.

Early in 1878 Russia conquered as far as Adrianople. Turkey hastily agreed to the Treaty of San Stefano (March 3), granting Russia near-dominance over most of the Balkans. England and other major European powers resisted that shift of power; so a Congress of Nations was convoked in Berlin to arbitrate a new settlement, concluding with a treaty granting full independence to Herzegovina, Serbia and Romania, and allowing anyone to buy land and immigrate to Palestine (July 13). Disraeli played a prominent role in making this outcome possible. Later that year Jews immigrated and founded the first new Jewish community there, *Petach Tiqvah* (“Door of Hope”).<sup>2</sup>

A four-year flurry of activity in the 1870’s led circuitously to the return of the Jews to their land, and ultimately to the reestablishment of Israel (1948). “I will plant them upon their land, and they shall no more be plucked up out of their land which I have given them, saith Jehovah thy God” (Amos 9:15).

— Bro. James Parkinson

(1) In 1813 Isaac Disraeli had a quarrel with his synagogue and in 1817 had his children baptized as Christians. That decision made possible the political career of Benjamin Disraeli.

(2) Although the first effort was abortive due to malaria mosquitoes, today Petach Tiqvah’s population is over 100,000.

## Luther and Russell

*Brief comments regarding the decline of the Ottomans and return of Israel.*

### MARTIN LUTHER ON THE LAST DAY

“When the Turk begins to fail a little the Last Day will surely come [der jungste Tag gewisslich kommen]. For this is the way it must be according to Scripture. ... There is commotion enough in the political life at present. Lawyers never had more to do than just now.”<sup>1</sup>

“When the Turk begins to decline, then the last day will be at hand, for then the testimony of the Scripture must be verified. The loving Lord will come, as the Scripture says: ‘For thus saith the Lord of Hosts, yet a little while and I will shake the heavens and the earth, and the sea and the dry

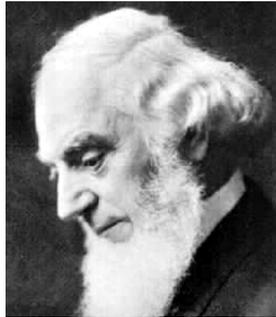


land: and I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come.’ At the last there will be great alteration and commotion; and already there are great commotions among men. Never had the men of law so much occupation as now. There are vehement dissensions in our families, and discord in the church.”<sup>2</sup>

### C. T. RUSSELL ON THE RETURN OF THE JEWS, BEFORE THEIR RETURN BEGAN

“We read of the restoration of Israel and other nations in Jeremiah, Isaiah and the minor prophets and also of the earth being restored to Edenic beauty, when the wilderness shall blossom as a rose, &c.: and the church, in general, believe in the restoration of a living remnant of Israel to their own land and to God’s favor, but as a rule they have never thought of the prophecy embracing the dead as well as the living, and other nations as well as Israel. But these things are mentioned in the same Bible.”

“How will this [Christ’s] kingdom rule over the world? Will it have Jerusalem for its capital or seat of empire? Will Christ sit in Jerusalem upon the throne of David? ‘Jerusalem shall be rebuilt upon her old heaps as in the former time,’ Israel after the flesh will again be the chief nation, and ‘a praise in the whole earth;’ for ‘the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.’ But fleshly Israel is not nor ever again will be ‘the kingdom of God.’ They were once, but it was taken from them and given to another people, children of Abraham by faith — the church. Under the sounding of the seventh trumpet all the kingdoms of the world (now under the control of Satan) ‘become the kingdoms of our Lord; (they pass into the possession of Christ and under the rule of his kingdom, the devil being bound) — Revelation 20:2. Israel, with their capital in Jerusalem, will doubtless be the chief of these fleshly nations, but it will no more be the Heavenly kingdom than they.”<sup>3</sup>



These few lines in 1877 give priority to the faithful church, while predicting the regathering of Israel. The following year the return of the Jews to Palestine/Israel began.

(1) Luthers Werke: Kritische Gesamtausgabe: Tischreden, 6 volumes. (Weimar: H. Bohlau, 1912-1921).

(www.thefreelibrary.com/Lunther,+the+Turks,+and+Islam.-a0169989145)

(2) Table Talk, translated by Wm. Hazlitt, 6:325.

(www.archive.org/stream/tabletalkmartin00hazlgoog/tabletalkmartin00hazlgoog\_djvu.txt)

(3) C. T. Russell, “The Object and Manner of Our Lord’s Return,” 1877, pages 24, 55.

## Ancient Hebrew Text

*Discovery of a text that may be the most ancient example of Hebrew writing.*

An ancient text was discovered on a shard of pottery in Israel, and turned out to be the earliest known example of Hebrew writing. Scientists have discovered the earliest known Hebrew writing — an inscription dating from the 10th century BC, during the period of King David’s reign.

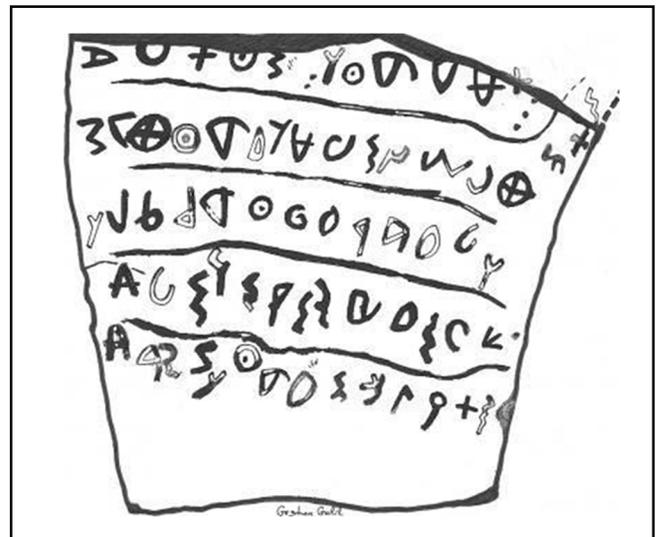
The breakthrough could mean that portions of the Bible were written centuries earlier than previously thought.<sup>1</sup> Until now, [some] held that the Hebrew Bible originated in the 6th century BC, because Hebrew writing was thought to stretch back no further.<sup>2</sup> But the newly deciphered Hebrew text is about four centuries older, scientists announced this month.

“It indicates that the Kingdom of Israel already existed in the 10th century [BC] and that at least some of the biblical texts were written hundreds of years before the dates presented in current research,” said Gershon Galil, a professor of Biblical Studies at the University of Haifa in Israel, who deciphered the ancient text.

The writing was discovered (~2008) on a pottery shard dug up during excavations at *Khirbet Qeiyafa*, near Israel’s Elah valley. The excavations were carried out by archaeologist Yosef Garfinkel of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. At first, scientists could not tell if the writing was Hebrew or some other local language.

Finally, Galil was able to decipher the text. He identified words particular to the Hebrew language and content specific to Hebrew culture to prove that the writing was, in fact, Hebrew.

“It uses verbs that were characteristic of Hebrew, such as *asah* (“did,” Strong 6213) and *avad* (“worked,” Strong 5647), which were rarely used in other regional languages,” Galil said. “Particular words that appear in the text, such as



*Reproduction of text that may be the oldest extant Hebrew writing.*

*almanah* (“widow,” Strong 490) are specific to Hebrew and are written differently in other local languages.”

The ancient text is written in ink on a trapezoid-shaped piece of pottery about 6 inches by 6.5 inches (15 cm by 16.5 cm). It appears to be a social statement about how people should treat slaves, widows and orphans. In English, it reads (by numbered line):

“You shall not do [it], but worship the [Lord] • Judge the sla[ve] and the wid[ow] / Judge the orph[an] • [and] the stranger. [P]lead for the infant / plead for the po[or and] • the widow. Rehabilitate [the poor] at the hands of the king • Protect the po[or and] the slave / [supp]ort the stranger.”

The content, which has some missing letters, is similar to some Biblical scriptures, such as Isaiah 1:17, Psalms 72:3, and Exodus 23:3, but does not appear to be copied from any Biblical text.

*(Reported in Clara Moskowitz, “Bible Possibly Written Centuries Earlier, Text Suggests,” Live Science, 15 January 2010.)*

(1) By higher critics — Editor’s note

(2) The new find may be the oldest Hebrew writing identified to date. However, other Hebrew inscriptions have been found that are older than the 6th century BC. For example, an inscription in Hezekiah’s tunnel has long been thought to date back to the 8th century BC. — Editor’s note

## What Did the Magi See?

*What the Magi may have seen around the time of Jesus Christ’s Birth.*

Magi in the East saw the “star” of the King of the Jews (Matthew 2). But what was it that they saw, and how did they interpret it? That question has been around for centuries, but astronomical information recently pointed out may answer it.

An improved chronology of Roman history around the time of Jesus is provided by Ernest L. Martin.<sup>1</sup> Building on and beyond the work of W. E. Filmer,<sup>2</sup> Martin demonstrates convincingly that Herod died after 4 BC, and that it was most probably January 28, 1 BC. Martin’s choice for the birth of Jesus is between 3 BC and 2 BC, in the late Autumn. He chooses the former, though he is less convincing here than for the year of Herod’s death. Over a 17-20 month time frame, various remarkable celestial events would likely have caught the attention of those who observed stars and planets, looking for their meanings. In **Table 1** (next column), the more notable observational phenomena are compared with Roman history and events significant to Jesus’ life.

For dating Jesus’ birth (or anything else), Martin acknowledges that any reference to the woman clothed with the Sun, with the Moon under her feet (Revelation 12:1-5), is necessarily interpretive.<sup>4</sup> (The more so, as in the celestial realm Draco the dragon is too far away to stand before Virgo the virgin.) At any selected place on earth (e.g., Jerusalem

**Table 1**  
**From Herod to our Lord’s Youth**

*(Julian years and days, Jerusalem time, 24 hour clock)*

- 38 BC** – Romans declare Herod king of Judea
- 36 BC** – Herod captures Jerusalem, begins actual reign (Sabbath year, Day of Atonement)
- 9 BC** – Titius is governor of Syria
- 6 or 7 BC, to 4 BC** – Quintilius Varus governs Syria
- 4 BC** – Herod demoted from “Friend” to “Subject”
- 4 to 2 BC** – Sentius Saturninus is governor of Syria
  - May 11-18, 2 BC, Zacharias in priestly course
  - May 20, 3 BC, Merc.-Saturn conj. (Taurus), 1:08
  - June 3, 3 BC, Venus-Sat. conj. (Taurus), 18:27
- 2 BC** – Quirinius, acting governor, between Sentius Saturninus and Quintilius Varus?
  - ca. April, John the Baptist born?
  - May 8, Jupiter-Regulus conj. (Leo), 18:31
  - June 17, Jupiter-Regulus conj. (Leo), 20:14
  - August 26, Mars-Jup. conj. (Leo-Virgo), 17:36
  - Sept. 1, Sun mid-Virgo, moon under foot, 18:23
  - Sun exits Virgo about October 1st = Tishri 1
  - Jesus born during this period, likely Tishri 1
  - Golden eagle torn down from Temple (Kislev 7 = December 5, Friday)
  - December 25 or 26, near midnight, Jupiter stops in mid-Virgo (reverses direction)
  - Likely, Magi go to Bethlehem
- 2 BC-1 AD** – Quintilius Varus is governor of Syria
- 1 BC** – Two rabbis tried, sentenced (January 6)
  - Both rabbis executed (January 9, Friday)
  - January 10, total eclipse of Moon, 1:28
  - Herod dies (Shebat 2, January 28)
  - Herod buried (February 27?)
  - Archelaus slays 3000 in temple during Passover, Jewish revolt
- 1-4 AD** – Caius Caesar is governor of Syria (tutored by P. Sulpicius Quirinius)
- 4-5 AD** – L. Volusius Saturninus governor of Syria
- 6-7 AD** – P. Sulpicius Quirinius governor of Syria
- 14 AD** – Augustus dies, Tiberius becomes emperor

at 18:23), Martin’s criteria of the Sun at 151°-170° right ascension and the Moon at 187°-194° are simultaneously met about four years out of ten. Here are two such occasions.

September 11, 3 BC (Wednesday, Tishri 1, 166°, 190°)  
September 1, 2 BC (Monday, Elul 2, 151°, 191°)

The first of these, coinciding with the New Year, makes it the more auspicious. In later years, the next three also qualify, and the fourth one comes close enough to mention.



Adoration of the Magi

September 9, 28 AD (Thursday, Tishri 2, 160°, 194°)  
 August 30, 29 AD (Tuesday, Elul 2, 155°, 190°)  
 September 7, 31 AD (Friday, Elul or Tishri 1, 162°, 188°)  
 September 17, 30 AD (Sunday, Tishri 1, 172°, 193°)

Martin lists ten astronomical events in the fifteen months from May 20, 3 BC, to August 26, 2 BC. (Here we extend the range to September or the beginning of October.) The significance of the individual events, to the Magi observing them, would be intensified by the concentration of so many.

From the conception of John to the birth of Jesus was fourteen to fifteen months (as deduced from Luke 1:36). If one begins with Zechariah's course of the priesthood and the angel's message to Zechariah, the interval may be

## Table 2 Our Lord's Ministry

<b>28 AD</b> – Sabbath Year
<b>28 AD</b> – September 9 (Thursday, Tishri 2), 18:23 Sun in mid-Virgo, Moon under feet
<b>29 AD</b> – August 30 (Tuesday, Elul 2), 18:23 Sun in mid-Virgo, Moon under feet
<b>30 AD</b> – March 22, Lunar conjunction, 20:22 This would make Nisan 1 = Friday, March 24 and Nisan 14 = Thursday, April 6
<b>31 AD</b> – Sept. 7 (Friday, Elul or Tishri 1), 18:23 Sun in mid-Virgo, Moon under feet
<b>33 AD</b> – April 3 (Friday), Jesus crucified Moon rises, initially 60% eclipsed 1260th day since baptism? <sup>3</sup>
<b>33 AD</b> – April 5 (Sunday), Jesus resurrected Mercury passes Venus (in north-looking Pisces, missed by -8°)

slightly longer. It may be reasonable to consider whether the events from Zechariah's priesthood (and revelation from the angel Gabriel), to the birth of Jesus, are parallel to this array of astronomical phenomena. If so, it would point to the birth of Jesus near the Autumnal equinox of 2 BC.

Martin (page 112) accepts that Herod Philip died in 36 AD "in the twenty-second year [of the reign] of Tiberius" (Josephus, *Antiquities*, XVIII, iv, 6). So when John the Baptist began his ministry in the fifteenth year of Tiberius (Luke 3:1), it should be 29 AD (not 27), in the Spring. From the death of Augustus in 14 AD, the fifteenth year also brings us to 29 AD. So Jesus' baptism would have been also in 29 AD (probably near the Autumnal equinox).

In 30 AD (Martin's choice for the crucifixion of Jesus Christ), March 22 the conjunction of the Moon with the Sun occurred at 20:59 Babylonian time, or 20:22 Jerusalem time.<sup>5</sup> By the following sunset (about 18:00) more than 21 hours had past; so that Nisan 1 would have begun on May 23 (Thursday), Roman reckoning, and 75% of that day would have corresponded to May 24 (Friday). Unless the Jews had poor eyesight or were deficient in calculation, the Nisan 14 crucifixion that year would have been on April 6 (Thursday), and not on Friday.

Moreover, a 30 AD crucifixion would necessitate compressing Jesus' ministry into 2½ years at most, in apparent contradiction to the Gospel of John.<sup>6</sup> The only other candidate for the crucifixion is April 3, 33 AD (Friday), which fits a 3½ year ministry (required by John's gospel), and also a birth of Jesus near the Autumnal equinox of 2 BC.

— Bro. James Parkinson

(1) "The Star that Astonished the World," Portland, OR: ASK Publications, 1996.

(2) "The Chronology of the Reign of Herod the Great," *Journal of Theological Studies*, October 1966, pages 283-298.

(3) See "From Jordan to Golgotha," *Beauties of the Truth*, February, 2011. That article examines the possibility that Jesus' ministry lasted for a period of 1260 days.

(4) The probability is the number of days the sun is within the allowable range in Virgo divided by the lunation period, then multiplied by the width of the Moon's allowable range divided by its travel in one solar day, or  $P = (20 \text{ d} / 29.53 \text{ d})(7^\circ / 12^\circ) = 0.395$ , or about 40%. The 170° limit (lower body) seems likely softer than the 150° limit (higher, towards the neck of Virgo). Separation of 10° or more between Sun and Moon is necessary for the New Moon to be seen. Thereafter, separation increases about  $(12^\circ - 1^\circ) = 11^\circ$  per day. To a first approximation, for separations of 10°-21° the New Moon will mark the first day of the month (7th month Tishri, or 6th month Elul), separations of 21°-32° will mark the second day of the month, etc. Days near mid-September are more likely to be in the month, Tishri.

(5) Bryant Tuckerman, "Planetary, Lunar, and Solar Positions," Volume 2, AD 2 to AD 1649; Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society (1964). At five-day and ten-day intervals at 7 pm Babylon/Baghdad time.

(6) Martin makes a case, largely based upon the astronomical phenomena, that Jesus' birth was on September 11, 3 BC, and a good case at that. While that case is not repeated here, the case for BC 2 near the Autumnal equinox is sketched here. If Martin may have misinterpreted some of the data, he is nonetheless to be greatly appreciated for generating and collecting most of that data.