

Beauties of the Truth

A Forum for the Publication of Scriptural Viewpoints
Thought to be Harmonious with God's Plan of the Ages
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Water from the Rock at Rephidim (Exodus 17:1-7)

“And all the congregation of the children of Israel journeyed from the wilderness of Sin, by their journeys, according to the commandment of Jehovah, and encamped in Rephidim: and there was no water for the people to drink” (Exodus 17:1).

Chapter 17 opens with the nation of Israel pitching their tents in Rephidim after a journey of several stops coming from the wilderness of Sin. By this time the people have probably adjusted quite well to the daily routine of wilderness life with its weekly six manna-gatherings and occasional packing and unpacking to move with the Lord. However, as we shall see, this routine had to remove all of their stubbornness to the Lord's leadings.

The name “Rephidim” means “expanses, stretches, or rests or stays.” This was undoubtedly a very barren region, even as the meaning suggests. In fact, this area was also called “Horeb” which means “drought, desert, dried up.” So this barren, void land would naturally be most foreboding to strangers. And it would definitely be no surprise to discover that water was a very scarce item. Please notice that verse one distinctly says that the encampment at Rephidim was brought about at the “commandment of Jehovah.” Sadly, this fact was once again overlooked by Israel. We find them yet another time complaining against Moses.

Verses two and three: “Wherefore the people strove with Moses, and said, Give us water that we may drink. And Moses said unto them, Why strive ye with me? Wherefore do ye tempt Jehovah? And the people thirsted there for water; and the people murmured against Moses, and said, Wherefore hast thou brought us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our cattle with thirst?”

LACK OF FAITH PROFOUND

Their lack of faith was profound. They demanded that he produce water for them! Where was their recognition of God? Every morning Israel could plainly see that that God, not Moses, was providing their necessities. So their faithless request was quite upsetting to Moses. He

immediately and correctly reproved his people telling them, again, that it was Jehovah they were tempting.

However, God allowed the test to continue. This provoked them even further. They accused Moses of bringing the congregation into the wilderness to kill them with thirst! They so quickly forgot the miraculous deliverance that God's hand had given earlier. A faithless heart clouds the memory and eclipses the thankful appreciation one should have. So boisterous do they become that Moses begins to fear for his own life. “And Moses cried unto Jehovah, saying, ‘What shall I do unto this people? They are almost ready to stone me’” (verse 4).

So often servants of God have been threatened by the very ones God sought to help. Jeremiah, Elijah, David, and Daniel are among many examples. Even Jesus was threatened with stoning, similar to Moses' situation (John 10:31). Jesus was the bringer of special blessings to the nation. Had they merely listened, these blessings would have been theirs. But the reverse happened.

So with Moses. The people should have held Moses in high esteem for his part in connection with their deliverance. Indeed, the Lord had their welfare in mind by choosing a man of such noble character as Moses. It is true that Moses was under the Lord's training from his birth onward for this very difficult assignment. But his willingness to be used despite the distrust and scorn of the people is certainly to his credit. Of course, the Lord would not permit Moses to be killed in a rebellion against him. But he understood the people's need for water.

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SMITING THE ROCK WITH THE ROD

Verse 5: “And Jehovah said unto Moses, Pass on before the people, and take with thee of the elders of Israel; and thy rod, wherewith thou smotest the river, take in thy hand, and go.”

What river is God referring to here? Reflecting back to Moses’ earlier meetings with Pharaoh, we recall that it was with his rod that he struck the Nile River in order to turn the water into blood (Exodus 7:20). In fact, several translations identify the river as the Nile. Take for an example Moffatt’s translation of Exodus 17:5: “Move ahead of the people, said the Eternal, along with some of the sheikhs of Israel; take the stick with which you struck the Nile, and advance.”¹

Moses was then instructed what to do with his rod. Exodus 17:6: “Behold, I will stand before thee there upon the rock in Horeb; and thou shalt smite the rock, and there shall come water out of it, that the people may drink. And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel.”

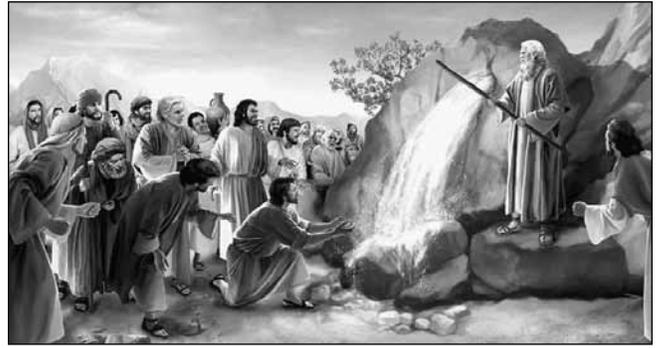
Horeb and Sinai are apparently interchangeable terms. If there is any distinction at all between the two it would be that Sinai refers to the mountain itself whereas Horeb designates the mountainous region in front of Sinai. But this is at most a very fine distinction.² Here in Exodus 17:6 the reference seems to be the mountainous region around Sinai inasmuch as Horeb is not prefaced by the word “Mount.”

The Lord showed Moses a particular rock in this Horeb region and told him to smite it with his rod and thus furnish the people with drinking water. This entire process was done with the elders as witnesses. This was to establish beyond doubt that it was a miracle from Jehovah.

Exodus 17:7 concludes: “And he called the name of the place Massah, and Meribah, because of the striving of the children of Israel, and because they tempted Jehovah, saying, Is Jehovah among us, or not?”

Some have wondered whether the name Massah refers to the testing of the Israelites by Jehovah or the tempting of Jehovah by the Israelites. The latter is supported by Deuteronomy 6:16 and Deuteronomy 9:22. “Ye shall not tempt Jehovah your God, as ye tempted him in Massah,” and “At Taberah, and at Massah, and at Kibroth-hattaavah, ye provoked Jehovah to wrath.” On the other hand, the former would seem to be true if we read Deuteronomy 33:8: “And of Levi he said, ‘Thy Thummim and thy Urim are with thy godly one, Whom thou didst prove at Massah, With whom thou didst strive at the waters of Meribah.’”³

We have a very interesting veiled reference to this particular section of scripture in two other places in the Bible. These are Psalm 95:8,9 and Hebrews 3:8,9. We quote verse 8 of Hebrews 3: “Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness.” When we recall the literal meaning of Massah and Meribah, we see this verse contains both these meanings — Meribah = “provocation” and Massah = “temptation.”



Moses at the rock

The Lord thus calls attention not only to this incident, but also to the fact that the entire forty years of wandering was filled with provocation and temptation. This is truly a sad account of history, but one full of important, necessary lessons of faith for the true saints of this Gospel Age. God has once again caused good to come out of misfortune.

ANTITYPICAL LESSONS

There are also spiritual and antitypical lessons for Spiritual Israel from these experiences of Natural Israel.

There are several separate pictures or antitypes in this account. The first one pertains to smiting the rock. The Apostle Paul identified Christ as the Rock from Exodus 17. “And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of a spiritual rock that followed them: and the rock was Christ” (1 Corinthians 10:4). So Paul indicates that the Rock in Horeb typified Christ. So, the smiting of the rock must signify the smiting of Jesus in death. Further, since Moses smote the rock, he may be a type of God and His Law, at whose direction Jesus died. Finally, as smiting the rock refreshed the Israelites, so also will come refreshment to the whole world in the Kingdom.

Another picture lesson from this can be applied more personally. As each individual member of the body of Christ needs spiritual refreshment during his daily earthly journey, he always has ample access to our Rock, our source of grace from God. If we need purification from some misstep we may have made, we may come to the cleansing stream through the Word of him who died for us. Indeed, this spiritual water is ever available, but only at this divinely appointed source.

The rock needed to be smitten but one time, no more. A single smiting indicates considerable importance not only in the type during a later experience of Israel, but also in the antitype. The crucial point is that Jesus needed to die only once for mankind, just as the rock was intended to be smitten only once. Paul appreciated this foundation truth. He writes in Hebrews 9:25-28 (ASV): “Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the High Priest entereth into the holy place year by year with blood not his own; else must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once at the end of the ages hath he been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of

himself. And inasmuch as it is appointed unto men once to die, and after this cometh judgment; so Christ also, having been once offered to bear the sins of many, shall appear a second time, apart from sin [or, sin-offering, RVIC], to them that wait for him, unto salvation.”

Our final lesson is devoted to an examination of the question asked by the Israelites who so tempted Jehovah. “Is Jehovah among us or not?”

In our daily journey on this side of the veil, our Father puts in our path experiences of all kinds. Sometimes they seem good to our limited perception, other times bad. But no matter what our initial estimation of them may be, we must always remember that they are specially designed by God to help or develop us to fit His purposes and for our eternal well-being. To be lacking this conviction of faith is to ask, “Is Jehovah among us [with me] or not?”

CURBING FAITHLESSNESS

Israel had an overabundance of evidence that God was with them. With all this proof it was truly inexcusable that they should have so little faith and truth. Yet Jehovah continued patient and merciful. But there would be a point where it would no longer be loving for God to excuse their faithlessness. At that point, if He continued to overlook Israel’s bad attitudes, it would become a reinforcement to such a course. So, God must eventually take measures to curb or eliminate faithlessness or, sadly, the faithless ones themselves. This, in fact, is what He needed to do.

This same principle operates in God’s dealings with Spiritual Israel, as a class and as individuals. Once we make a full consecration to God’s will and are begotten of the holy Spirit, the evidence of His dealings with us should accumulate as proof of our divine sonship. These evidences will be primarily manifest to the individual, though others will, with time, see the Christ-like development of character. Thus, with proof of God’s dealings, faith should grow strong. With stronger faith may come more intense trials. The suffering that accompanies testing should not engender doubt. Rather, it should be counted as further proof of the great privileges we have. Notice this very thought in Romans 8:16,17, “The Spirit himself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified with him.” If our testing makes us ask, “Is Jehovah with me or not,” we stand in a dangerous position.

So rather than doubt, let us press on in our journey, trusting, full of faith that Jesus is our unfailing leader. He is fully able, competent, and willing to lead us in paths of righteousness. With this outlook, how can we not be pleasing to our heavenly Father? With all this, we should have a thankful heart for the marvelous guide given us in His Word, the Bible. There is still much in it to learn. Let us continue through our studies of ancient Israel to be learning pupils in the school of Christ.

— Br. David Stein

(1) See also *The Bible in Living English*, Byington.

(2) John Calvin wrote, “It is well known that Horeb is the same mountain which is also called Sinai, except that a different name is given to its opposite sides, and, properly speaking, its eastern side is called Sinai, its western, Horeb” (www.sacred-texts.com/chr/calvin/cc03/cc03006.htm).

(3) We might briefly note here that although the “Massah” in the verse quoted above does refer to the verses under our consideration, the “waters of Meribah” evidently do not. The “waters of Meribah” seem to be the Kadesh-Meribah incident described in Number 20 rather than this Rephidim-Meribah experience.

King David, a Model of Repentance

Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy loving-kindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions” (Psalms 51:1).

One of the questions candidates are usually asked at a baptismal service is, “Do you acknowledge yourself a sinner in need of redemption?” This acknowledgment is an essential part of growing a relationship with God. With that acknowledgment must come the acceptance of God’s forgiveness through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. We then strive to “clean up our act” through works of repentance and holy living. Paul describes this as the “washing of water of the word” (Ephesians 5:26). We study to become familiar with God’s moral requirements and then strive to conform our lives to these principles of righteousness.

Repentance means ceasing from sinful activities and completely turning from thoughts and conduct leading to sin. It means redirecting one’s life with respect to transgression. This is a new way of thinking: constantly harnessing our thoughts to bring them in line with God’s principles. But dealing with sin in one’s life can be a difficult proposition, especially endeavoring to repent from deeply ingrained habits of sin. God promises to help us and, if we submit to His leading, it guarantees victory. But we will

still be faced with a daily battle! By God’s grace, we have examples in the scriptures of those who took proper steps in dealing with sin. The example considered here is that of King David.

KING DAVID’S SIN

God had great love for David. God told Solomon of His high assessment of David in 1 Kings 9:4,5: “If thou wilt walk before me, as David thy father



King David, Repentant

walked, *in integrity of heart, and in uprightness*, to do according to all that I have commanded thee, and wilt keep my statutes and my judgments ... I will establish thy throne.”

David loved God and desired to do His will to his deepest core. Thus one might wonder how a man such as David became enmeshed in deadly sin. Sin often acts in exceedingly subtle and deceptive ways. It disarms defenses and seduces us before we realize the position we are in. “The heart is deceitful above all things, and it is exceedingly corrupt: who can know it?” (Jeremiah 17:9). This was exactly the situation with King David.

Sin entered David’s life at an unexpected moment. On his balcony one evening he chanced to see a neighbor lady bathing. This was, of course, Bath-sheba, and the sight of this prompted David to have her brought to his palace. This was the start of a string of sins that included adultery, lies, and murder. The whole sordid account is found in 2 Samuel 11. The last verse reads, “The thing that David had done displeased Jehovah.”

Because God loved David and saw the good in him, it was important that David be recovered from the awful sins that had ensnared him. Accordingly, God employed the prophet Nathan to help awaken David to his sinful condition. To point out the dreadful sin of a King must have been a fearful proposition for Nathan. As King, David held the power of life and death over his subjects. But Nathan was a wise man. In 2 Samuel 12, we read how he artfully painted a picture for David using a parable of a rich man dealing unjustly and taking the lamb of a poor man. Nathan cleverly used David’s own righteous heart in revealing his sins. David sees the injustice and immediately judges that the rich man should die (verse 5). Nathan then strikes at David’s heart by informing him **“Thou art the man!”**

As a prophet of Jehovah, he then delivers the full judgment of God. Nathan tells David that God would have given him anything he asked. But now that he acted so sinfully, God decrees that “the sword shall never depart from thine house.” Furthermore, God says that the things that David did in secret would be done to him in public.

David painfully grasps how far into sin he had come and is overcome with grief and confesses, **“I have sinned against the LORD.”**¹ This is the appropriate response when ones see their sin. As a result of that admission, David is told that Jehovah had put away David’s sin and he would be spared from death. But the child born of adultery would die.² David recognizes that this child is bearing his judgment and is driven to humble himself before God.³

RECOGNIZING AND CONFESSING

Reviewing this entire experience allows us to see several distinct steps which are part of repentance. The first step is: **recognizing and confessing the sin.**

One cannot repent from sin unless they know what that sin is. This was King David’s situation. The first sin of adultery was followed by more sins. David had lost sight of



Nathan to David, “Thou are the man.”

the fact that these were sins. How could this happen? We surmise that David probably rationalized in his mind that as King of Israel he had powers and privileges above that of his subjects. After all, he might have reasoned, he was Jehovah’s Anointed. This, of course, was true. But such rationalization blinded him to the deceitfulness of sin and caused him to justify a terrible wrong he was perpetrating on Uriah and his family. He needed to be brought to the point of recognizing the terrible sins for what they were.

For a consecrated Christian, the lesson is to strive for such moral clarity in our lives that we will be able to see the “sin which so easily besets us” (Hebrews 12:1). If we are to achieve the Kingship and Priesthood offered to us, we must study and pray to more clearly see God’s will, and whether we are conforming to his laws and principles in every endeavor (2 Corinthians 13:5). If we do this daily, it may not be necessary for God to draw our attention to the sin like he did with King David. But if that should happen, if some dear brother or sister brings to our attention some sin in our lives, we should see it as God’s mercy toward us and not direct any anger to the messenger.

When we recognize the sin, we can begin to deal with it. Confession to God is an absolute requirement. It may also be to our benefit to share a confession with another! The subject of confession is not one that we discuss much. The idea of sharing your sins with someone can be a fearful thing. Yet God’s word suggests that the confession of our sins to another brother or sister can be a helpful in our effort to repent. Consider the following scriptures:

- “Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much” (James 5:15).
- “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9).

This essential first step is to see and acknowledge the sin in us, and then confess it to God. King David certainly did this. The 51st Psalm is a prayer of David in the wake of his sin with Bath-sheba that he put to music.⁴ How many of us would put our confessions of sin to music? Verse 3 says, “For I *acknowledge* my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me.”

This is heartfelt confession — his sin is ever before him. There is no attempt to whitewash it, rationalize it or diminish it in any way. He stands exposed before the God of the universe, who knows everything.

PENITENCE

The next step in repentance is **penitence**. This is deep regret and godly sorrow for the sin, accompanied with a desire to atone for the sin, to set things straight, to undo, if possible, whatever damage the sin caused. Penitence is deeply personal between the sinner and God. It is a serious manifestation of a grieving heart over the sin. David understood that his sin would have significant outward effects, the most immediate of which was the sickness of his newly born son.⁵ David's actions now are penitent. We are told in 2 Samuel 12:16: "David therefore besought God for the child; and David fasted and went in, and lay all night upon the earth."

By this act of penitence, David demonstrates a sincere regret for his sin. Further, David hoped that by afflicting himself in this manner, he might find mercy from God for the life of the child. "And he said, While the child was yet alive, I fasted and wept: for I said, Who knoweth whether Jehovah will not be gracious to me, that the child may live?" (verse 22).

We also see David's penitence in the 51st Psalm. Notice his fervent expressions:

"Wash me thoroughly ... cleanse me" (verse 2)

"Purge me ... wash me" (verse 7)

"Create in me a new heart ... renew a right spirit" (vs. 8)

All of these and other expressions indicate that David was truly sorry for what he had done. He wanted the sin to be put away from him and to be restored to a righteous state. He realizes the condition of heart that God looked for. "The sacrifices of God are a *broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart*, O God, thou wilt not despise" (verse 17).

Similarly in our lives, after we have acknowledged a particular sin and confessed it, we must have godly sorrow. For those whose hearts are firmly consecrated to God, this should be a natural reaction. When the Apostle Paul wrote a severe reprimand to the church in Corinth regarding sin in their ecclesia, there was great anguish among them. Titus later informed Paul of their penitence.



Solomon, second son of Bathsheba, receiving the Queen of Sheba

Paul mentions their response in 2 Corinthians 7:9-10: "I now rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye were made sorry unto repentance; for ye were made sorry after a godly sort, that ye might suffer loss by us in nothing. For *godly sorrow worketh repentance* unto salvation, a repentance which bringeth no regret: but the sorrow of the world worketh death." This "godly sorrow" that Paul speaks of is proper penitence. False sorrow has no lasting benefits. True, godly sorrow, leads to salvation.

REPLACEMENT

The last step in repentance is **replacement**. The idea is to replace sinful behavior with the opposite behavior. For example, the liar must now practice telling the truth. The repentant thief must now practice generosity - the opposite behavior of stealing. The impure must strive for purity. Wrong thinking and wrong conduct must be specifically noted and replaced with the correct, opposite behavior. If we fail to replace sinful behavior, it will deceive us and continue to ensnare us.

King David followed this procedure. Psalm 51 speaks of the replacement action that David desired. "Then *will I teach* transgressors thy ways; And sinners shall be converted unto thee. Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, thou God of my salvation; And my tongue shall sing aloud of thy righteousness. O Lord, open thou my lips; And my mouth shall show forth thy praise" (vss. 13-15).

David committed his terrible sins in secret. But now he publicly demonstrated the behaviors he wants to characterize his life from now on. His sinful lies are replaced by praise. He wants to teach other transgressors and sinners, of which he was one, to be converted. He desires to replace the sinful behaviors with these positive ones.

These activities are elements of true repentance. As we find sins in our life, we must acknowledge and confess them to God, express true sorrow, and replace a sinful action with an opposite and righteous one.

KING DAVID'S SECOND SIN

In 1 Chronicles 21, Satan provoked David to sin against God by taking a census in Israel. We surmise that the nature of this sin was trusting in numbers rather than having faith in God. God was displeased with David and showed it by smiting Israel (verse 7). David regained his senses and realized what he has done, demonstrating again the steps in the process of repentance.

What was his first reaction? He acknowledged and confessed his sin. Verse 8: "And David said unto God, I have *sinned greatly*, in that I have done this thing: but now put away, I beseech thee, the iniquity of thy servant; for I have done very foolishly."

God accepts this sincere acknowledgment of sin, but there would still be punishment. Three alternatives are offered: 3 years of famine, 3 months of destruction at the hands of his enemies, or 3 days of pestilence at the



King David, at the Threshingfloor

hand of God. David chooses to put his fate in the hands of God, knowing His mercy (verse 13). The result was a pestilence that took the lives of 70,000 men. In the midst of this, David did further acts of penitence.

“David lifted up his eyes, and saw the angel of Jehovah standing between earth and heaven, having a drawn sword in his hand stretched out over Jerusalem. Then David and the elders, *clothed in sackcloth, fell upon their faces.* And David said unto God, ‘Is it not I that commanded the people to be numbered? even I it is that have sinned and done very wickedly; but these sheep, what have they done? let thy hand, I pray thee, O Jehovah my God, be against me, and against my father’s house; but not against thy people, that they should be plagued!’” (verses 16, 17).

David’s penitence is clear. He had already donned sackcloth and fallen upon the earth, setting an example followed by the elders. Seeing the avenging angel of Jehovah, he pleads for the innocent lives and asks that God’s hand be upon him instead. This penitent action stayed the hand of the angel. David is then instructed to set up an altar on the threshing floor of Ornan. He asks Ornan for permission to do so, and Ornan offers to give the land along with sacrificial animals, firewood and a meal offering (verse 23). David shows his nobility by refusing to take these things and instead pays 600 shekels of gold.

In numbering the people, David’s sin was a covetous and unfaithful act meant to establish the greatness of his own kingship and military might. The appropriate replacement behavior then would be to honor the greatness of God at whatever cost to himself. The pestilence ended with God’s command to set up an altar. David’s choice of action was to provide the most praise-worthy altar imaginable. From this experience he determined that this would be the place of God’s holy temple, a house for God. And that precise location is where Solomon’s Temple would be built (2 Chronicles 3:1). In the very next chapter (1 Chronicles 22), David begins gathering all of the material that would eventually be needed. God had already told David that he would not be permitted to build the temple. That would be left to his son Solomon. But David participated in the start of the project and glorifies God in so doing.

SUMMARY

King David showed the steps necessary to repent of sin. They are:

- Acknowledging the Sin and Confessing it
- Showing Penitence, godly sorrow and regret
- Replacing the evil behavior with righteous behavior.

As we wrestle against sin in our own lives, following these steps will ultimately, with God’s help, lead us to victory over the flesh. As Paul so wonderfully said of the brethren at Corinth:

“For behold, this selfsame thing, that ye were made *sorry after a godly sort*, what earnest care it wrought in you, yea what clearing of yourselves, yea what indignation, yea what fear, yea what longing, yea what zeal, yea what avenging! In everything ye approved yourselves to be pure in the matter” (2 Corinthians 7:11).

— *Br. David Stein*

(1) There are multiple occasions in scripture where individuals make the statement “I have sinned” in an act of confession. But in most cases it does not reflect a true and sincere confession of the heart. Using the words alone is not sufficient.

(2) There is a difficulty here that this innocent child is dying because of David’s sin. The child will, of course, be raised in the Kingdom. But under the Law, David should have been stoned to death for this sin. However, this would appear to be yet another picture of the ransom sacrifice of Jesus. He who was innocent paid the price for the sin of Adam thus redeeming the whole world.

(3) God desires to forgive the sins of those who ask. We can always receive forgiveness from the Father because of the sacrifice of Jesus. However, while God forgives our sins, he seldom takes away the **consequences** of sin. We must learn that actions have consequences, and they are ours to bear even though we are forgiven the sin itself.

(4) The superscription of Psalm 51 clearly identifies this Psalm in connection with David’s sin. It says, “To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David, when Nathan the prophet came unto him, after he had gone in to Bath-sheba.”

(5) The birth of the child reminds us that this judgment of God had come about *nine months* after the initial sin! God’s patience is considerable, but there is no escape from the consequences of sin, even if they take a long time to come.

(6) Paul writes clearly in Romans 14:23 that “whatsoever is not of faith is sin.” This is a serious principle that all of God’s people should reflect upon.

286.1 Inches

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

Most Bible Students who are readers of this journal are familiar with the spiritual lessons that come out of a study of The Great Pyramid (GP) of Egypt.¹ Its design and the many measurements of its internal and external features provide many spiritual lessons that strongly corroborate

the Divine Plan of the Ages. The Bible text that provides a foundation for evaluating the Great Pyramid for spiritual lessons is Isaiah 19:19,20, cited above.

One measurement seldom remarked upon is thrilling both for its special use in the GP and for the lessons it teaches. Not surprisingly, it reflects some fundamental teachings of the Bible on the recovery of man from sin and death.

One might expect the internal passageways of the GP to be directly on the North-South midline of the structure. But they are not. In fact, nearly all passageways are offset or displaced from the midline by 286 pyramid inches.²

Believing that the dimensions of the Great Pyramid are divinely intended to convey deeper meaning, we expect this eccentricity to be significant, especially when searching for a spiritual application. In the 1880s, Professor Charles Lagrange of the Royal Observatory in Brussels named this measurement of 286 pyramid inches **The Displacement Factor.**³

All of the passages within the GP align in the north-south plane with this displacement. The fact that this shift is toward the east gives us a clue for determining the possible symbolic meaning.⁴

In the Bible, there are several instances where an eastward movement appears to signify a departure from God or a rejection from His favor.

- The expulsion of Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden was from the east, where Cherubim were placed to present entrance to the Garden (Genesis 3:24).
- Cain “went out from the presence of Jehovah” to the “east of Eden” (Genesis 4:16).
- Lot chose the Jordan Plain and traveled east to live in the sinful areas of Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 13:11).
- The 10-Tribe northern Kingdom of Israel was taken captive by Assyria and relocated to the east (1 Chronicles 5:25,26).
- The southern Kingdom of Judah was taken captive by Babylon and exiled to the east (2 Chronicles 36:6,7).

The eastward displacement, as viewed from the front or north face of the GP, would be to the left. The goats of Jesus’ parable of the Sheep and Goats are cursed and placed on the King’s left hand (Matthew 25:33).

By contrast, several instances of westward movement indicate Divine favor.

- God appeared to Abraham and called him out of Ur to the land of Canaan, a westward move (Genesis 12:1).
- The Tabernacle faced east. So when the High Priest of Jehovah served, the way into the Tabernacle was toward the west (Exodus 27:9-18; Numbers 2:1-34).
- Solomon’s Temple also faced east, therefore entry made moving toward the west (Ezekiel 8:16).
- The return of the exiled Jews from Babylon journeyed west to Jerusalem.

- The Wise Men seeking Jesus journeyed westward to find him (Matthew 2:1).
- The Apostle Paul’s Missionary Journeys were all to the west.

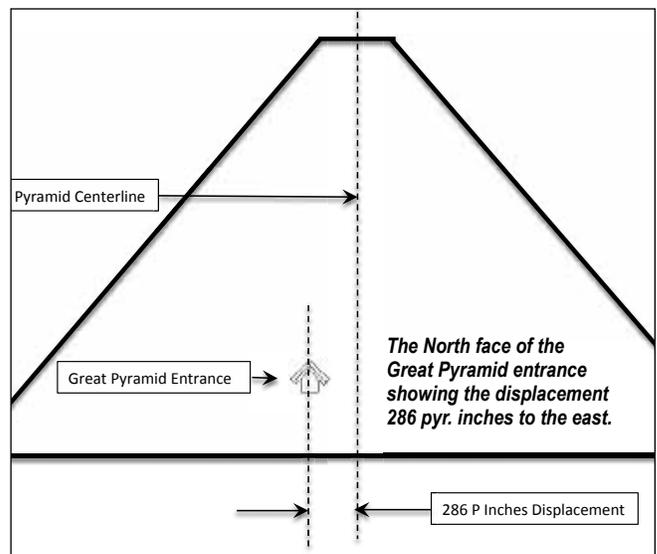
Considering these indicators, the displacement of the Great Pyramid passage system towards the east demonstrates that the history of man has been “off-center” under the influence of sin. So this Displacement Factor of 286 pyramid inches represents the sinful and imperfect condition of man and his resulting condemnation to death. It also indicates the need for a corrective factor to make things right or bring them back to “center.”

We know from the Divine Plan, that the corrective factor which will atone for sin is the ransom price paid by the death of Jesus Christ. The Great Pyramid demonstrates this correction using the exact same dimension of 286 pyramid inches. This is called **The Rectification Factor.**⁵

This Rectification Factor is dramatically shown in the Great Pyramid’s Grand Gallery. The Ascending Passage is, like the Descending Passage, rather cramped for movement being only about four feet high. But it brings one to the Grand Gallery, which abruptly opens upward to a magnificent new height. The additional height of this gallery is of great interest. It is 286 pyramid inches higher than the Ascending Passage! This is the exact distance of the Displacement Factor.

Chronologically speaking, The Grand Gallery begins at the death and resurrection of Jesus in AD 33. This indicates that the resurrected Jesus provided the necessary correction for sin and displacement away from God. In Romans 4:24,25 we read: “But for our sake also, unto whom it shall be reckoned, who believe on him that raised Jesus our Lord from the dead, who was delivered up for our trespasses, and was raised for our *justification.*”

The Greek word *dikaiosis* (G1347), “justification,” has the thought of making right or *rectification!* This is exactly the symbolic meaning of the 286 pyramid inches.



As the Grand Gallery represents the Gospel Age, we see the church now benefiting from the rectification for sin and its resulting liberation provided by the ransom sacrifice of our Lord Jesus. As 2 Corinthians 3:17 notes: “Now the Lord is the Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.”

The liberty that we now have as sons of God will, in due time, also be provided for all of creation. Romans 8:20,21 declares this most beautifully: “For the creation was subjected to vanity, not of its own will, but by reason of him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God.”

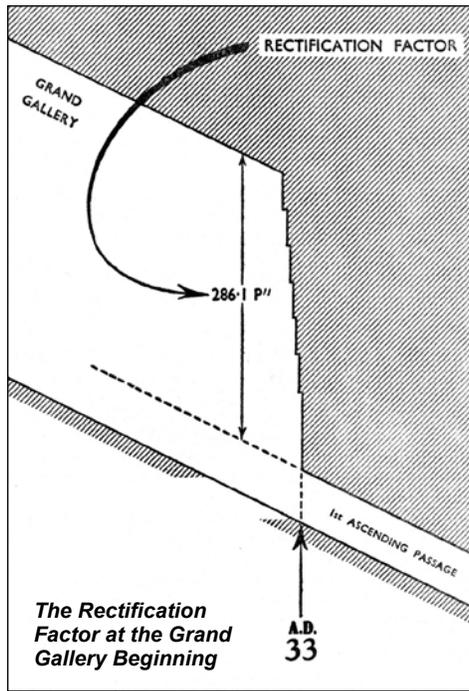
We can see this significant dimension of 286 pyramid inches once more.

We saw that the passageways in the GP were all offset from the centerline by 286 pyramid inches. Traversing in the Ascending Passage up to the 50th level of the GP, one reaches the Grand Gallery. This chamber contains only one item, The Coffin. It looks like an open sarcophagus, but there is no evidence that it was ever used as such. Symbolically, it represents an open coffin and shows the resurrection of the dead. The level of the Kings Chamber suggests this resurrection is to the Divine Nature. As recipients of the very nature of God, Jesus and the Church will be set up in Kingdom power and will be perfectly suited to correct all of the ills that sin and death have brought to humanity.

The Coffin in the King’s Chamber is to the right of the entry portal by exactly 286 pyramid inches! Consequently, it is set exactly on the North-South centerline of the GP. The full rectification of all things is then seen in the precise location of the coffin.

CONCLUSION

Like the many other dimensions in the design of the Great Pyramid, the 286 pyramid inches is another thrilling parallel to the theme of redemption, so fundamental in the Bible. While the saints at the close of the Gospel Age have been permitted insight into these marvelous architectural details, these lessons may be much more helpful in the Kingdom. At that time



mankind will learn how God foresaw and managed all of the details of his wonderful Divine Plan of the Ages. This will build confidence that God, through His Anointed, can and will bring mankind to perfection on the Highway of Holiness. The antitypical glorious Priesthood will teach the world a new language of holiness and purity (Zephaniah 3:9) and prepare them for everlasting life.

In this regard, an item of note is that Levi was the 13th tribe of Israel⁶ and a type of the antitypical priesthood. The Hebrew language, which contains a portion of the inspired word, contains 22 letters.^{7,8} If the Antitypical priesthood is to teach a pure language to the world, we multiply these as two factors together and arrive at 286! So, perhaps, taken together, this is why

this special number was chosen.

The Apostle Paul describes the ultimate rectification in Ephesians 1:10. “That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him.”

— Br. David Stein

(1) Brother Russell in Volume Three devotes the last chapter of the book to a consideration of these lessons.

(2) The more precise value is 286.1 P inches. See Adam Rutherford’s *Pyramidology*, Volume II, 1962, page 255.

(3) As reported by Adam Rutherford in *Pyramidology*, Volume II, 1962, page 236.

(4) It should also be mentioned that placing the entrance of the Great Pyramid off-center also made its location more difficult to detect by tomb robbers.

(5) The term Rectification Factor was coined by Adam Rutherford. *Pyramidology*, Volume II, 1962, page 250.

(6) The twelve tribes of Israel, all of which had a land inheritance, are: (1) Judah, (2) Issachar, (3) Zebulun, (4) Reuben, (5) Simeon, (6) Gad, (7) Ephraim, (8) Manasseh, (9) Benjamin, (10) Dan, (11) Asher, (12) Naphtali. The tribe of Levi, which had no inheritance in the land, was the thirteenth tribe in the nation.

(7) The original pure language evidently was proto-Hebrew, an early form of Hebrew, the language God gave to Adam and Eve and was spoken in the perfection of Eden. See the full presentation of this idea in *The Origin of the Speeches* by Isaac E. Mozeson, 2005. See also www.edenics.com

(8) It is also noteworthy that there are 22 books in the original Hebrew Scriptures.

