

Beauties of the Truth

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Thought to be Harmonious with God's Plan of the Ages
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Eve, The Mother of Us All

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

"DNA" is our shorthand for the complex set of inherited instructions used by every living organism on earth. No living cell is without its own unique DNA. For each one of us, our mother and father both contribute DNA that provides instructions for the color of our eyes and hair, how tall or short we are, how athletic our body build is, and of greatest importance — the basic wiring for our exceedingly complex brains. This inherited DNA resides in the cell "nucleus" and nearly all multi-cell organisms such as ourselves and apple trees have a nucleus with DNA. For each man, woman, and child, these instructions are carried on 3 billion DNA base pairs. Cells with DNA in a nucleus are called *Eukaryotes*. Simple single cell organisms such as bacteria have DNA but do not have a nucleus and are called *Prokaryotes*.

Every living cell in our body is hungry for power. Throughout each cell, multiple "organelles" called "mitochondria" provide the chemical power that keeps us alive. The DNA carried by human mitochondria is much, much simpler than the instructions in the nucleus, having a mere 16,569 DNA base pairs. These mitochondria are inherited almost exclusively from our mothers. Through mistakes, about once in 10,000 births (Tobias, 1999), mitochondrial DNA can come from both the mother and the father (McWilliams, 2019).

In a 1987 *Nature* article, Rebecca Cann and her co-workers, Mark Stoneking and the late Allan Wilson, painstakingly analyzed mitochondrial DNA from women throughout the world of many ancestral origins (Cann, 1987). Comparing mitochondrial DNA variants to each other, they produced a family tree showing how human mitochondria are all related to each other. This means that all of us are descended from a single mother. Today this ground-breaking work is the accepted consensus in the science community, though some are quick to add the caveat that this is just proven for women. Constructing the "tree" connections is far from straightforward.

The report left a wake, still rippling today, as the female ancestor was quickly dubbed "Mitochondrial Eve."

Other human-like — but not human species, such as Neanderthals — have left sufficient DNA to have their mitochondrial DNA analyzed. They do not share our common mother Eve. "The mtDNA [Mitochondrial DNA] of Neanderthals has been shown *not to be present* among contemporary humans" (Hofreiter, 2001).

WHEN DID MITOCHONDRIAL "EVE" LIVE?

Rebecca Cann treated two controversial questions. When did Mitochondrial "Eve" live? And Where? A workable, but flawed answer came from the "molecular clock hypothesis." What is this?

"The **molecular clock hypothesis** asserts that the rate of amino acid or nucleotide substitution is approximately constant per year over evolutionary time and among different species" (Huang, 2009). This hypothesis builds on some pioneering work looking at a common protein used by every living cell that has mitochondria (Margoliash, 1963).

Admitting that much work still needed to be done, the team set forth dates (Cann, 1987). By looking at the diversity of human populations that had migrated to Australia, New Guinea, and the Americas as models, and then using the *accepted dates* in the archeological community of 40,000, 30,000, and 12,000 years ago for these populations to become isolated, they postulated that Mitochondrial Eve lived between 140,000 and 290,000

IN THIS ISSUE

<i>Eve, The Mother of Us All</i>	1
<i>Saul and the Witch of Endor</i>	3
<i>The Flinty Rock</i>	6
<i>A Psalm for Solomon</i>	7
<i>Our House from Above</i>	8

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years ago (while recognizing the data also supported 62,000 years ago).

To set forth a date, based on an assumption for estimating that date, predetermines an answer. Logically this is called a tautology. In theory, the science community knowingly tries to avoid tautology — would that other communities took such care. None of the dates Cann was using would be close to the Biblical account dating *by at least a factor of ten or more*. But to the human evolution community the dates Cann set forward were exceedingly recent. She received considerable criticism. In response to this pressure, she soon focused on the older dates (Cann, 1988).

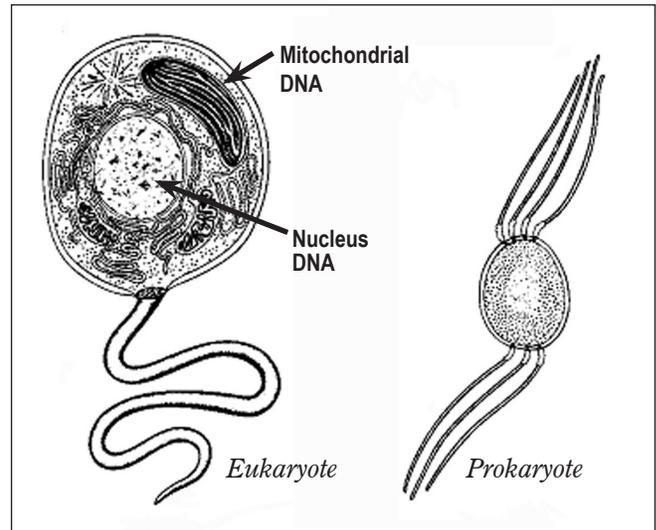
Dr. Allen Wilson, the professor at Berkeley under whom Cann worked, promised to keep looking into this timing question so that Cann's results could align better with the prevailing views in human evolution, as one of his colleagues reported well after Wilson's death in 1991 (Gitschier, 2010; Tobias, 1995).

SCIENCE ON THE ATTACK — SCIENCE TO THE RESCUE?

Given a challenge, the scientific community was spurred to further research. The results were more disturbing to the human evolution community. Things did not get better. Within a decade, mainline scientific journals were reporting: "Mitochondrial DNA appears to mutate *much faster* than expected, prompting new DNA forensics procedures and raising troubling questions about the dating of events ... mtDNA [mitochondrial DNA] mutates much more often than previously *estimated* — *as much as 20-fold faster*, according to *two studies* that are causing a stir. Other studies have not found such rapid mutation rates ... Regardless of the cause, evolutionists are most concerned about the effect of a faster mutation rate. For example, researchers have calculated that 'mitochondrial Eve' — the woman whose mtDNA was ancestral to that in all living people — lived 10,000 to 200,000 years ago. *Using the new clock, she would be a mere 6,000 years old*" (Gibbons, 1998).

Nor did it help that a separate line of investigators looking at population dynamics led by Douglas Rhode of MIT, with co-investigators from Yale, concluded that the "Most recent common ancestor [lived] *only a few thousand years back*" (Rhode, 2004). By "few" they meant 5,000 years.

Huang starts his critique of the molecular clock hypothesis with this salvo: "Data inconsistent with the molecular clock hypothesis have steadily accumulated in recent years that show *no correlation* between genetic distance and time of divergence. It has therefore become a challenge to find a testable idea that can reconcile the seemingly conflicting data sets ... Although there clearly exists a correlation between genetic distance and time of divergence, such correlation is not universal and is often violated as more data became known in recent



years. Numerous studies based on extant organisms have questioned the constancy of mutation rate" (Huang, 2009).

Despite these critiques, portions of the science community move forward on "Eve" and her mate, "Y-gene Adam," as though there were no problem, holding to the distant and even more distant dates (Callaway, 2013). Within the science community, an increasingly insistent chorus of critics opposing Mitochondrial DNA dating are at times philosophical: "So why do researchers persist in trying to solve a ... problem that may well be at the limits of, or even beyond, the analytical capabilities of the data and the available methods? The reason is that our own ancestry matters to us" (Wood, 2011).

Indeed, we all may concur — our own ancestry matters to us. The thoughts of Pastor Russell (R5097) seem appropriate here: "While we observe the glorious dawn of the New Dispensation, we notice clouds also. The Bible forewarns us that before the Kingdom of Heaven shall have been set up fully there will be a very dark hour for the world [respecting the light of the Gospel] — a period in which sin will have great liberty in its operation, and during which the saints of God will suffer persecution. At the same time we can see the reflection from the 'Sun,' although it has not yet arisen; we are now in the early dawn. But the coming darkness will make matters appear as though the morning will not come, as though the night had again set in, as though the Divine recognition of all things had ceased."

— Br. Richard Doctor

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Guinea, 40,000 years ago for Australia, and 12,000 years ago for the New World. These times enable us to calculate that the mean rate of mtDNA divergence within humans.”

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Saul and the Witch of Endor

“Then said Saul unto his servants, Seek me a woman that hath a familiar spirit, that I may go to her, and enquire of her. And his servants said to him, Behold, there is a woman that hath a familiar spirit at Endor” (1 Samuel 28:7).

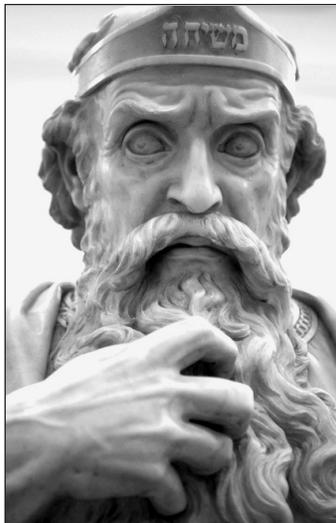
Some religious people refer to the account known as “Saul and the witch of Endor” to support their belief in immortality of the soul — the belief that humans in a spirit form survive the death of their bodies and live on in another realm.

To refresh the memory, we here refer to the Scriptural account of the meeting between King Saul and a spirit medium as found in 1 Samuel, chapter 28. We are informed that the prophet Samuel had died, and that Saul had expelled the mediums and necromancers (those who contact the dead) out of the land (verse 3). At this time the Philistines were preparing to attack, and Saul assembled his troops at Mount Gilboa. Saul attempted to inquire of the Lord about what course to take, but God would not answer him. We are specifically told that God would not answer “by prophets” (verse 6). Saul now wanted to inquire of one of the spirit mediums that had been outlawed, and was told “there is a woman that hath a familiar spirit at Endor” (verse 7). It should be noted that, while the woman is commonly referred to as a “witch,” in the Hebrew text, she is referred to as *esha ba-alet ob*, “a woman in whom is a soothsaying daemon” (Gesenius).

“And Saul disguised himself, and put on other raiment, and he went, and two men with him, and they came to the woman by

night: and he said, I pray thee, divine unto me **by the familiar spirit**, and bring me him up, whom I shall name unto thee” (verse 8). The woman reminded him that such practices had been outlawed in Israel by the king himself. “And Saul sware to her by the LORD, saying, As the LORD liveth, there shall no punishment happen to thee for this thing. Then said the woman, Whom shall I bring up unto thee? And he said, Bring me up Samuel. And when the woman saw Samuel, she cried with a loud voice: and the woman spake to Saul, saying, Why hast thou deceived me? For thou art Saul. And the king said unto her, Be not afraid: for what sawest thou? And the woman said unto Saul, I saw gods [a god, ASV] ascending out of the earth. And he said unto her, What form is he of? And she said, An old man cometh up; and he is covered with a mantle. And Saul perceived that it was Samuel, and he stooped with his face to the ground, and bowed himself” (verses 10-14).

At this point “Samuel” (the impersonating evil spirit) asked why he had been called up from the dead. Saul explained that the Philistines were warring against him, that God had turned away from him and would not answer



King Saul, troubled of mind

him by prophets or by dreams. “Samuel” replied that it was pointless to inquire of him (a dead prophet) because “the LORD has departed from thee and become thine enemy” (verse 16). The kingdom would be given to David. The final words of the message were: “Moreover the LORD will also deliver Israel with thee into the hand of the Philistines: and tomorrow shalt thou and thy sons be with me: the LORD also shall deliver the host of Israel into the hand of the Philistines” (verse 19).

BIBLE TEACHING, THE STATE OF DEATH

The question we must ask is: Did Saul really talk to Samuel after his death, thereby indicating that Samuel had some kind of

existence after death? To accept this understanding would fly in the face of what the Bible in its entirety has to say about the state of the dead. The Bible teaching is that the dead are unconscious, and that they will remain so until called forth from the tomb by the resurrection power of God. Note the following Scripture texts: “Do not put your trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help. His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish” (Psalms 146:3-4).

“For that which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts; even one thing befalleth them: as the one dieth, so dieth the other; yea, they have all one breath; so that a man hath no preeminence above a beast: for all is vanity. All go unto one place; all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again” (Ecclesiastes 3:19-20).

“Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave [Sheol], whither thou goest” (Ecclesiastes 9:10). “There shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust” (Acts 24:15). “The hour cometh, in which all that are in the tombs shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of judgment” (John 5:28-29 ASV).

A SATISFYING EXPLANATION

With what, or with whom, did the woman and Saul get in touch? The Hebrew word translated “familiar spirit” is *ob* (Strong’s H178). According to Gesenius’ *Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon of the Old Testament*, this word refers to “a soothsaying daemon, of which these men [the spirit mediums] were thought to be possessed.” A soothsayer was one who was supposed to be able to forecast the future. The word *ob* could also refer to the spirit mediums themselves, as Gesenius puts it: “a **soothsayer**, who evokes the [shades, ghosts] of the dead by the power of incantations and magical songs, in order to give answers as to future or doubtful things.”

But of note here is that when *ob* refers to the spirit entity itself, Gesenius identifies this one as being “a daemon,” or demon. In the older translations, such as the King James, this word is translated as “familiar spirit.” A “familiar spirit” is defined as “a demon supposedly attending and obeying a witch.” While it is true that the “familiar spirit” which is clearly identified in the account is the one that had already attached itself to the woman, and was the means for bring up the dead “Samuel,” it is our thesis that the “Samuel” entity itself was also a demon (or perhaps the same demon impersonating Samuel). Saul had said to the woman, “I pray thee, divine unto me by the familiar spirit, and bring me him up, whom I shall name unto thee” (1 Samuel 28:8).

With the mention of demons, then, we need to review briefly what the Bible has to say on this

subject. That demons exist, there can be no doubt. Jesus frequently expelled demons who were in possession of unfortunate people (see Matthew 9:32-33, Luke 9:42, 11:14). In one of these accounts (Luke 9:42), the demon or “devil” is specifically referred to as an “unclean spirit.” Thus, the demons must be spirit beings. Peter referred to the demons as “the spirits in prison; which sometime were disobedient, when the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water” (1 Peter 3:19-20). These spirits, then, were disobedient in the days of Noah. This brings to mind the account in Genesis that says certain sons of God married the daughters of men, and wreaked havoc on the earth prior to the Great Flood.

The Genesis account says: “It came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them, that the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose. And the LORD said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years. There were giants in the earth in those days; and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them, the same became mighty men which were of old, men of renown” (Genesis 6:1-4).

The “sons of God,” in contrast to the “daughters of men,” must have been some of those angelic “sons of God” who occupy the heavenly court and who shouted for joy at earth’s creation (see Job 1:6, 2:1, 38:7). But now they made demons of themselves by materializing human bodies and cohabiting with human women. When the Flood arrived, these fallen angels dematerialized, but remained close to mankind to cause all manner of trouble.

Thus it was that Paul and Silas, in the course of a missionary journey, were confronted by a girl who was possessed by an evil demon. We are told: “And it came to pass, as we went to prayer, a certain damsel possessed with a spirit of divination met us, which brought her masters much gain by soothsaying” (Acts 16:16). Paul and Silas cast the demon out of her, and were thrown



Paul and Silas, in prison for casting a spirit out of a damsel

into prison for their pains. The demon operated much the same way as the one which was attached to the witch of Endor, with the exception that this demon apparently did not impersonate the dead.

We are getting closer now to our answer, that the entity which appeared to be the dead Samuel was actually a demonic impersonator. Are there any other indications that this could not have been Samuel, other than the general tenor of the Scriptures regarding the actual condition of the dead? Let us see.

THE APPARITION COULD NOT HAVE BEEN SAMUEL

There were specific prohibitions in the law of Moses against consulting spirit mediums. A few of these are: “Regard not them that have familiar spirits, neither seek after wizards, to be defiled by them: I am the LORD your God” (Leviticus 19:31). “The soul that turneth after such as have familiar spirits, after wizards, to go a whoring after them, I will even set my face against that soul, and will cut him off from among his people” (Leviticus 20:6). “A man also or woman that hath a familiar spirit, or that is a wizard, shall surely be put to death: they shall stone them with stones: their blood shall be upon them” (Leviticus 20:27). It was due to these prohibitions that King Saul had initially attempted to expel the spirit mediums from the land.

If God had refused to communicate with Saul by means of living prophets, why would he send the dead prophet Samuel with a message for him? It does not make sense. The last time Saul saw Samuel alive, he had been disobedient and was rebuked by Samuel. When Saul then asked Samuel to accompany him to a public sacrifice, Samuel said: “I will not return with thee: for thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, and the LORD hath rejected thee from being king over Israel” (1 Samuel 15:26). Although Saul persuaded Samuel to reluctantly accompany him on that occasion, the account concludes: “And Samuel came no more to see Saul until the day of his death: nevertheless Samuel mourned for Saul: and the LORD repented that he had made Saul king over Israel” (1 Samuel 15:35). Rather, a clever demon, who knew how Samuel denounced Saul prior to his death, imitated the kind of message the prophet would deliver if he had the opportunity. This was in order to practice deception.

As it turned out, Saul and those of his sons who accompanied him to the battle were killed at Mount Gilboa — Saul falling on his own sword to avoid being abused and killed by the Philistines. The parallel account by the chronicler gives the following reason for Saul’s downfall: “So Saul died for his transgression which he committed against the LORD, even against the word of the LORD, which he kept not, and also for asking counsel of one that had a familiar spirit, to inquire of it; and inquired not of the LORD: therefore he slew him, and turned the kingdom



Landscape at Mount Gilboa, where Saul fell

unto David the son of Jesse” (1 Chronicles 10:13-14). Notice that by inquiring of the apparition (or familiar spirit) through the spirit medium, Saul was **not** inquiring of God through Samuel.

Furthermore, there is God’s counsel delivered through the prophet Isaiah, which seems to imply that by attempting to contact the dead, people are really coming in contact with familiar spirits or demons: “And when they shall say unto you, ‘Inquire of those that have familiar spirits, and of the wizards, that whisper, and that mutter:’ should not a people inquire of their God? (should we then) in behalf of the living (inquire) of the dead?” (Isaiah 8:19, Leeser).

This understanding, that Saul through the witch was really put in touch with a demon rather than the dead prophet Samuel, is not new. It was advocated by Pastor Charles Taze Russell back in 1897 in the booklet, “What Say the Scriptures about Spiritism?” He wrote: “The methods used by the evil spirits through the medium at Endor were similar to those in use today. They caused to pass before the medium’s mental vision the familiar likeness of the aged prophet, Samuel, wearing as was his custom a long mantle. ... The fallen spirits are not only well informed in respect to all the affairs of the earth, but they are adepts in deceit. ... One remarkable thing in connection with the manifestation of these fallen angels, or ‘demons,’ is that people of ordinary common sense are so easily deceived by them” (Reprints, pages 2172-73).

In conclusion, it was not the prophet Samuel who was called up by the witch of Endor, but a demonic impersonator.

— Br. Robert Virgil

The Flinty Rock

“Out of the flinty rock” (Deuteronomy 32:13).

Twice in the wandering of Israel through the wilderness, Moses provided water by striking a rock. The rock in each case is widely considered to be a picture of Jesus, and striking the rock a picture of his death. The first case was soon after the Israelites entered the wilderness, and the second case was near the close of the 40 years of wilderness wandering.

The first is recorded in Exodus 17:6. There God told Moses, “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.”

The second case is in Numbers 20:8-11. There God told Moses, “Take the rod, and gather thou the assembly together, thou, and Aaron thy brother, and **speak** ye unto the rock before their eyes; and it shall give forth his water, and thou shalt bring forth to them water out of the rock: so thou shalt give the congregation ... drink. (9) And Moses took the rod from before Jehovah, as he commanded him. ... (11) And Moses lifted up his hand, and with his rod he **smote** the rock twice: and the water came out abundantly, and the congregation drank, and their beasts also.”

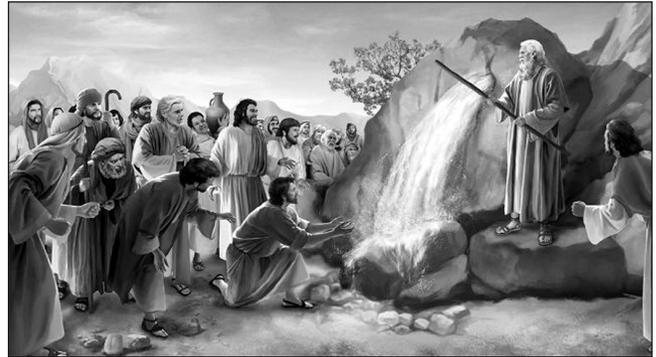
The first smiting of the rock symbolically indicates that it was necessary for Jesus to be smitten, to die for the sin of the world, in order for the water of truth and life to refresh the saints of the Gospel Age. The second case, when Moses was told to “speak” to the rock, symbolically indicates that to provide the water of truth and life for the world in the Kingdom, Christ need not die again. He will respond to a word of instruction and issue forth a river of blessings for mankind.

However, on the second occasion Moses smote the rock — he smote it twice. For that infraction Moses was not allowed to cross the Jordan into Canaan. It is a symbol that any who reject the once-for-all death of Christ, and as it were require a second smiting of Jesus, will fail to gain eternal life. This much is well known and oft discussed.

FLINT

Recently, in a local class study, one of the sisters noticed a comparison that had escaped our attention. Sr. Ruth uses the Lamsa version (from the early Aramaic version), a unique translation. She uses it not because it is better (though it may be in some cases), but because it is often different, and helpful for comparison. In Exodus 17:6 it adds a word, twice, that is not in the common version. “Behold, I will stand before you there on the **flinty** rock at Horeb, and you shall strike the **flinty** rock, and there shall gush water out of it, that the people may drink.”

No other version we could find includes the word “flinty” in this verse. The word “rock” is from H6697,



Moses strikes the Flinty Rock — a picture of the death of Christ

“properly a cliff (or sharp rock, as compressed); generally a rock or boulder; figuratively a refuge; also, an edge (as precipitous).” The reference to “flint” or “flinty” apparently is not intrinsic to the Hebrew word. Why, then, would Lamsa, uniquely, describe it this way?

Perhaps the word in this case is borrowed from another reference to the same episode. Years later Moses reminded the Israelites of this experience. That reminder is in Deuteronomy 8:15. “Who led thee through that great and terrible wilderness, wherein were fiery serpents, and scorpions, and drought, where there was no water; who brought thee forth water out of the rock of **flint**.” In this text Lamsa says “flinty rock” — the same expression that it uses twice into Exodus 17:6.

The word rendered “flint” in Deuteronomy 8:15 is H2496, “*challamiyah*, probably from H2492 (in the sense of hardness); flint.” Apparently the only instances of this word in the Old Testament are the five following cases:

- Deuteronomy 8:15, “water out of the rock of **flint**.”
- Deuteronomy 32:13, “and oil out of the **flinty** rock.”
- Psalms 114:8, “Which turned the rock into a standing water, the **flint** into a fountain of waters.”
- Isaiah 50:7, “For the Lord GOD will help me; therefore shall I not be confounded: therefore have I set my face like a **flint**, and I know that I shall not be ashamed.”
- Job 28:9, “He putteth forth his hand upon the **rock** [flint].”

Notice that in Psalms 114:8, apparently referring to the same episode as Deuteronomy 8:15, the word “flint” is used to describe the rock that was smitten. This provides a second instance of the word “flint” associated with that experience.

“I SET MY FACE LIKE A FLINT”

What engaged our collective attention is that Isaiah 50:7 uses the same word when referring prophetically to Jesus. This text is prophetic of the resolve that Jesus would exhibit in resolutely enduring his closing, intense experiences, without wavering. Jesus would set his “face like a flint” when facing the very experiences represented when Moses struck the “rock of flint.”

It is a reminder to us of the acute nature of the ordeal that Jesus faced. His mind was set to endure the affliction. Jesus had confidence in the faithfulness of God to bring the promised outcome. “Jehovah will help me; therefore shall I not be confounded ... I know that I shall not be ashamed.”

In Jesus’ last journey to Jerusalem, he knew what awaited him. He explained it to his disciples in Matthew 20:18,19. “Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man shall be betrayed unto the chief priests and unto the scribes, and they shall condemn him to death, (19) And shall deliver him to the Gentiles to mock, and to scourge, and to crucify him: and [he added without doubting] the third day he shall rise again.”

That Jesus set his “face like a flint” is observed, in other words, in Luke 9:51. “When the time was come that he should be received up, he **stedfastly** set his face to go to Jerusalem.”

Could we have any better example? If we face difficulties, trials, adversities, in our Christian life, or in our mundane affairs, let us face them with confidence that God will give us necessary fortitude, if we meekly set ourselves to the experience.

— Br. David Rice

A Psalm for Solomon

“Give the king thy judgments, O God, and thy righteousness unto the king’s son” (Psalms 72:1).

Psalm 72 is unique. Apparently it was one of the last psalms composed by David, near the end of his long reign of 40 years, for this Psalm expresses a prayer to God by David for the blessing of the new king Solomon, who was appointed by David in his declining days to be his heir and successor to the throne. The closing verse of this psalm says merely “The prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended” (verse 20).

Saul, David, and Solomon, each reigned for 40 years, and are widely seen by brethren as representing the Jewish, Gospel, and Messianic ages, respectively. In this progression Solomon represents the jurisdiction of Christ to be manifest during the Millennial age blessing of the world. With this thought in the backdrop of our minds, as we read the Psalm, many points seem to fit nicely. Here are some suggestions from a recent study by brethren in India.

THE KING’S SON: SOLOMON

Verse one is a request that Solomon, “the king’s son,” be imbued with godly judgment and righteousness in his administration — as Christ Jesus, and his administration of the Kingdom, will be. “He shall judge thy people with righteousness, and thy poor with judgment” — just as Jesus will do, raising the poor of earth to wonderful blessings.

Verses 3, 4 — the mountains perhaps represent the chief administration, Christ and the Church from above, and the “little hills” perhaps the Ancient Worthies, bringing peace and righteousness to the people, delivering the needy and breaking oppression.

Verse 5 — “They shall fear thee as long as the sun and moon endure, throughout all generations.” In Matthew 13:43 the sun represents the saints that shine forth in the Kingdom, the moon perhaps represents the reflecting light of the Ancient Worthies who will lead Israel, and all, in the Kingdom.

AS RAIN UPON THE MOWN GRASS

Verse 6 — “He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass, as showers that water the earth.” In Isaiah 40:7 and elsewhere “the people is grass.” Perhaps here the “mown” grass depicts mankind having passed through the time of trouble initiating the Kingdom, or perhaps “mown” indicates the grooming disciplines of the Kingdom. In either case, the refreshing showers of blessing will be gratefully received. “I will cause the shower to come down in his season; there shall be showers of blessing” (Ezekiel 34:26).

Verse 7 affirms that “in his days shall the righteous flourish” (as also in Psalms 92:12), and there will be “abundance of peace.” Indeed, 1 Kings 4:24 says of Solomon, “He had dominion over all the region ... and he had peace on all sides round about him.” The end of verse seven says “so long as the moon endures,” perhaps meaning until the work of the Ancient Worthies is complete.

EXPANSIVE DOMINION

“He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth” (verse 8). Zechariah 9:10 says the same thing, perhaps lifting the words from this text. Zechariah 14:8 also affirms that “living waters” from Jerusalem will go “half of them toward the former sea (the Mediterranean) and half of them toward the hinder sea (the Dead Sea), refreshing both the living formerly laboring under the curse, and the dead who will be raised again for blessing. This will continue throughout the Millennium, as Zechariah says, “in summer and in winter shall it be.”



King Solomon, leading Israel in worship

Verse 9 — Those who have been in wilderness surroundings will appreciate the benefits of Jesus’ rule and “bow before him.” Even “his enemies” shall be subdued.

Verse 10 refers to presents for Solomon from “the Kings of Tarshish ... the kings of Sheba and Seba.” The three kings here remind us of three gifts given Jesus at his birth, but here the donors are from even more widespread areas. These three names, Tarshish, Sheba, and Seba, are drawn respectively from Japheth, Shem, and Ham (Genesis 10:4-5, 28, 7), thus representing the entire world population in its scope. “Yea, all kings shall fall down before him: all nations shall serve him” (verse 11). Ultimately “every tongue” will “confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Philippians 2:11).

Verses 12, 13, 14, 15 — Jesus will deliver the needy, the poor, “and him that has no helper. He will redeem them from deceit and violence of every kind, and their lives will be “precious ... in his sight.” They in turn will offer “prayer ... for him continually ... daily shall he be praised.”

Verse 16 — “upon the top of the mountains,” restored Israel (Isaiah 2:2, Micah 4:1), shall appear “an handful of corn in the earth,” perhaps representing the bread of life, the benefit of redemption in Christ, emanating from Israel. There will be an abundance of “fruit.” As Revelation 22:2 depicts it, 12 kinds of fruit, bearing monthly, for a thousand years. “And they of the city [the world of mankind] shall flourish like grass of the earth” — all mankind.

Verse 17 — “His name shall endure for ever: his name shall be continued as long as the sun: and men shall be blessed in him: all nations shall call him blessed. (18) Blessed be Jehovah God, the God of Israel, who only doeth wondrous things. (19) And blessed be his glorious name for ever: and let the whole earth be filled with his glory; Amen, and Amen.”

— Gleaned from a presentation by Br. Lawrence Pradeep

Our House from Above

“If our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens ... in this [present house] we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven” (2 Corinthians 5:1, 2).

Paul discusses the “house” from above in the first eight verses of 2 Corinthians 5. It is an engaging metaphor, not often used. Perhaps Paul derived it from Jesus’ words recorded in John 14:2, “In my Father’s house are many mansions [places of abode] ... I go to prepare place for you.” Here also our heavenly reward is likened to a home.

For the present, “while we are at home, in the body [our present earthly home], we are absent from the Lord” (verse 6). The word “absent” here is really, in the Greek, “away from home” — that is, while we are here, we are away from our heavenly, prospective home, above.



“I go to prepare a place for you” (John 14:2).

With our heavenly hopes, we are “willing rather to be absent [Greek, away from home, that is, we are willing to leave our present earthly abode] from the body, and to be present [Greek, at home] with the Lord” (verse 8). (See Volume 6, pages 673-674, for a discussion.)

HEALING OF LEPROSY

There is an interesting connection between this metaphor used by Paul — a house as our abode, whether our earthly house now, or our heavenly house later — and the law of cleansing leprosy, from Leviticus chapters 13, 14. This passage considers leprosy in three areas: leprosy in one’s person, leprosy in one’s garment, and leprosy in one’s house. The first two cases applied to Israelites while in the wilderness, or later when they would come into Canaan. But the third case, leprosy in one’s home, applied only to the time after the Israelites would come into the land of promise (Leviticus 14:33 and forward).

The distinction is understandable in a natural way. For the Israelites did not have houses built in the wilderness. They lived in temporary dwellings, so they had no finished homes for leprosy to be an issue. But there is also a lesson for us in spiritual ways.

Israel in the wilderness represented spiritual Israel during the Gospel Age. We may have sin, leprosy, in ourselves, and we should be cleansed from it. Or the garment of our covering, the robe of righteousness, our covering of Christ’s merit, may be in peril. That would be if we for any reason lose faith in our redeemer and the value of faith in him. That would be “leprosy” in our garment. And Leviticus 13 gives a process to remedy that.

But at present, we do not have our lasting homes, in a spiritual sense. When we do receive them, in the resurrection, they will be heavenly bodies and sin will no longer be an issue. However, for the world of mankind, resurrected on earth in the Kingdom, there will still be some jeopardy. If they permit sin to corrupt them, they will be in jeopardy of losing their homes, their earthly bodies. Those human bodies are to be their everlasting home, perfected during the Kingdom. If they do not check the spread of sin, and remedy the problem, they are in danger of losing that home.

Thus this particular kind of leprosy is at issue only in the next age, “when ye be come into the land of Canaan” (Leviticus 14:34).

— San Diego Class Studies