

Beauties of the Truth

A Forum for the Publication of Scriptural Viewpoints
Thought to be Harmonious with God's Plan of the Ages
Volume 31, Number 4, November 2020

Four Generations Illustrating God's Plan

A study of Old Testament heroes is inspiring as we see their faith demonstrated in real life situations. Those described in Hebrews 11 remained true to God and the principles of righteousness in very difficult circumstances.

When examining some of these examples, there is an interesting possibility in connection with the fathers of Israel. Their experiences may illustrate the plan of God. It is a picture modeled in the lives of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph. We often study their lives independently. But by weaving them together a larger tapestry takes shape.

PROMISE TO ABRAHAM

In the beginning of his interchange with God, Abraham was given a vague promise of future blessings. God said, "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee: And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing" (Genesis 12:1,2). Abraham could not have known the magnitude of what this meant. But it laid a foundation for hope. In a similar way our first parents could not have realized the blessed future implied in the simple promise, "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel" (Genesis 3:15).

Adam and Eve must have cherished God's promise, knowing that the suffering their disobedience brought would someday end when the seed of promise would destroy the serpent. It gave them hope that all was not lost. But it was vague with many details still hidden. As they journeyed through life, how often they may have recalled those precious words. Likewise, God's promise to Abraham planted the hope that through his seed all the families of the earth would be blessed. The promise to Adam would be fulfilled through the seed of Abraham.

DAYS OF WAITING

Abraham's faith was tested by the long years of waiting for the birth of Isaac. This coincides with the Jewish Age when Israel waited in hope for their Messiah. This hope

is beautifully conveyed by the Psalmist. "Let Israel hope in the LORD: for with the LORD there is mercy, and with him is plenteous redemption" (Psalms 130:7,8). Israel's hope was linked to their redemption. Their waiting for the promised seed was still evident as the First Advent approached. "The people were in expectation, and all men mused in their hearts of John, whether he were the Christ, or not" (Luke 3:15).

When Sarah finally gave birth to Isaac, there was great rejoicing. The Apostle Paul explains the relationship between Sarah and Hagar. Sarah, he says, is "the mother of us all," indicating that the church is developed under a covenant of grace, rather than under the Law. When the merit of Christ was finally available, this feature of the Abrahamic Covenant could promise life, something the Law could not offer (see Galatians 4:21-31). The birth of Isaac, then, corresponds to the birth of Jesus, the long-awaited seed of promise.

Offering Isaac in sacrifice was one of the greatest acts of faith ever demonstrated. It provided an insight into the love of God who sent His only begotten son to atone for the sins of the world (John 3:16). Paul reveals that the offering of Isaac was a picture of the offering of Jesus by the heavenly Father (see Hebrews 11:19, A155).

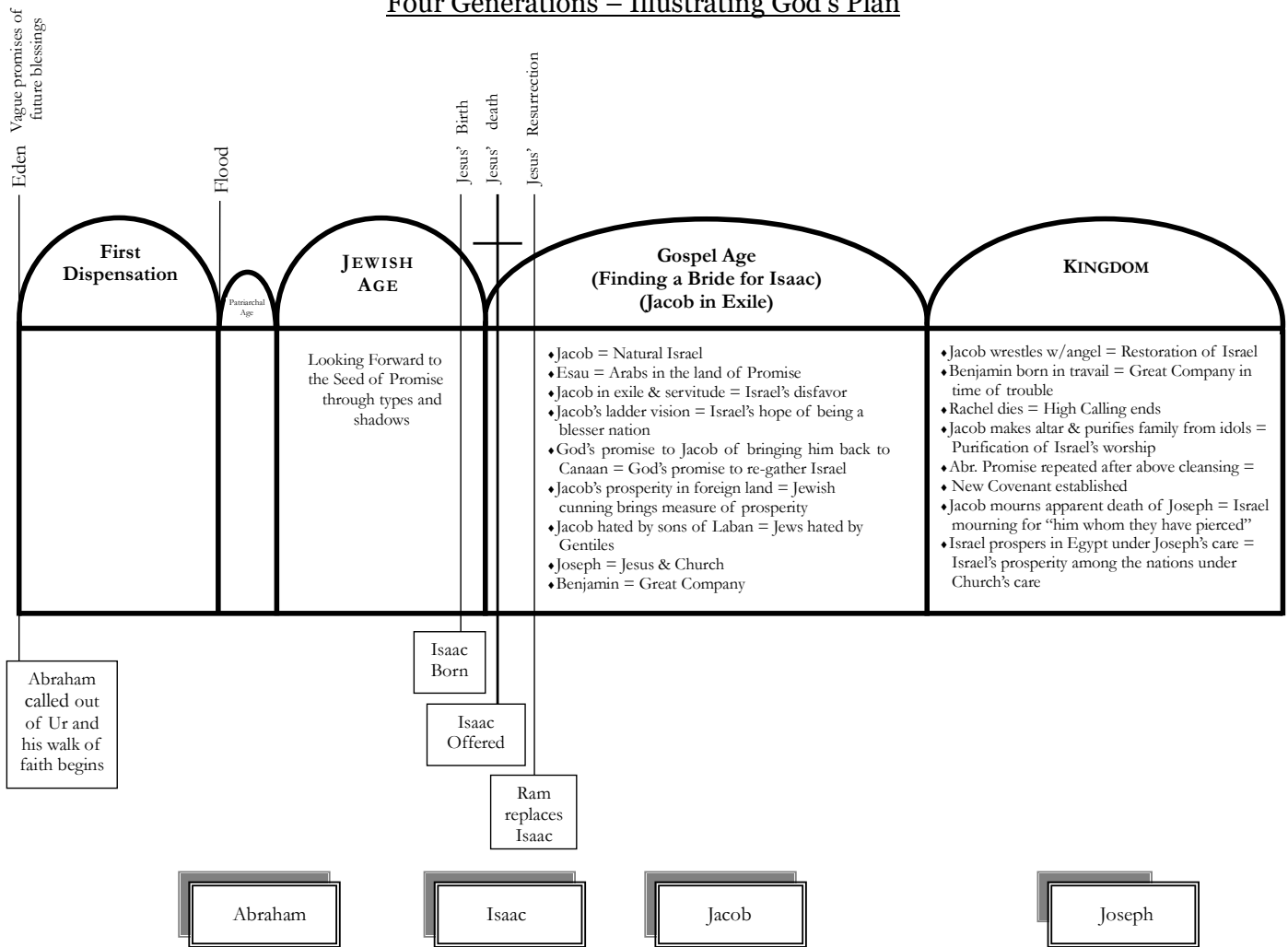
One can only imagine Abraham's joy when Jehovah provided a ram to take the place of Isaac. It was as if he received his son back from the dead. This was a lovely foreshadowing of Jesus' own resurrection. It was one of the great moments in history that brought joy, not only to the hosts of heaven, but to the Father Himself.

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BEAUTIES OF THE TRUTH is published as a service for brethren to stimulate their appreciation of the riches of God's Word. It is published free of charge. Subscriptions will be entered for all requestors. Address: Beauties of the Truth, 6748 Breckenridge, Lisle, IL 60532. Editorial Board: Brothers Richard Doctor (Managing Editor), Bill Dutka, Adam Kopczyk, David Rice, Tom Ruggirello, and David Stein. Online at www.BeautiesoftheTruth.org.

Four Generations – Illustrating God’s Plan



The sending of Eleazar to find a bride for Isaac is a picture of the Gospel Age search for the bride of Christ. Rebecca’s character and devotion to Isaac well illustrate the thorough consecration of the antitypical bride class.

JACOB ESCAPES TO HARAN

Moving forward through the lineage, we come to Jacob. His competitive relationship with Esau has endured for generations and well describes the rift between Jews and Arabs. When Jacob fled to Haran, he continued there for twenty years while Esau remained in the land. Jacob’s exile pictures Israel’s Diaspora during the Gospel Age. As he fled to Haran, God gave him the dream of a ladder extending to heaven with angels ascending and descending (Genesis 28:10-15). God promised to one day give him and his seed the land. He then reiterated the Abrahamic Promise that his seed would bless all the families of the earth. But Jacob’s return to the land was a distant hope.

A similar promise to return to their land after the Diaspora was made to Israel. “The LORD will have mercy on Jacob, and will yet choose Israel, and set them in their

own land: and the strangers shall be joined with them, and they shall cleave to the house of Jacob” (Isaiah 14:1).

JACOB PROSPERS DESPITE ADVERSITY

Jacob prospered even while in Haran. “Laban said unto him, ‘I pray thee, if I have found favor in thine eyes, tarry: for I have learned by experience that the LORD hath blessed me for thy sake’ ... And the man increased exceedingly, and had much cattle, and maidservants, and menservants, and camels, and asses” (Genesis 30:27,43). But Jacob’s prosperity fomented hatred in the sons of Laban, and they falsely claimed Jacob had stolen all their father’s goods (Genesis 31:1). This difficult relationship foreshadowed antisemitism of the Gospel Age. Hatred and persecution were taken to new heights. Many social ills were blamed on the Jews who prospered through their own intelligence and ingenuity, despite living under such opposition.

RETURNING HOME

As Jacob endured the hatred of Laban’s sons, he saw the need to return to his homeland. He gladly obeyed when

God said “return to the land of thy fathers” (Genesis 31:3). His family moved together, being then a large contingent. As they approached Canaan, Jacob sent his family ahead so he could pray, seeking God’s blessing. Jacob feared retribution from Esau, who believed he had stolen the birthright. While alone he had the unusual experience of wrestling with an angel (Genesis 32:24). What precipitated this encounter is not stated. It is also unclear if Jacob was initially aware that his opponent was an angel. After wrestling through the night, the angel finally “touched the hollow of his thigh ... and it was out of joint” (Genesis 32:25). This likely describes the dislocation of Jacob’s hip. Tradition says Jacob walked with a limp for the remainder of his life, a reminder of this extraordinary experience.

As the morning approached, a discussion took place. The angel said, “Let me go, for the day breaketh.’ And he (Jacob) said, ‘I will not let thee go, except thou bless me.’ And he said unto him, ‘What is thy name?’ And he said, ‘Jacob.’ And he said, ‘Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed.’ And Jacob asked him, and said, ‘Tell me, I pray thee, thy name.’ And he said, ‘Wherefore is it that thou dost ask after my name?’ And he blessed him there. And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel: for ‘I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved’” (Genesis 32:26-30).

The name Peniel, “face of God,” recognized that Jacob had received God’s blessing through the night’s struggle. It is also significant that the angel changed his name from Jacob, “Supplanter,” to Israel, “Ruler as a Prince of God.” For twenty long years Jacob had struggled in a foreign land. He had been taken advantage of by his father-in-law, Laban. He felt the competitive spirit of Laban’s sons. Even Jacob’s wives were at odds, rivals for the affection of Jacob. Now, finally, with God’s blessing he could return home and settle into a new life with his large family.

ISRAEL’S HISTORIC WRESTLING

All these experiences have a parallel in the struggles of Israel during the Gospel Age. As Israel has competed for success and prosperity, pictured by the experiences of Jacob in Haran, they will one day be transformed and used by God. Someday they will no longer compete for worldly success but be used to bless all the families of the earth.

The wrestling of Jacob in search of the angel’s blessing continued until daybreak. This may be indicative of Israel’s experience leading up to the establishment of the kingdom. Today, the struggle continues amid renewed antisemitism. As Jacob’s limp reminded him of his night of wrestling, so the struggle for the rebirth of Israel will remain in the mind of Jews everywhere. Events like the holocaust will never be forgotten, a grim reminder of Satan’s evil intention to destroy the seed.

The coming of morning was to be a blessing for Jacob and his family as he was reconciled with his brother Esau and

reestablished in the land of promise. When Jacob and Esau finally met, the ensuing scene was very touching. “He [Jacob] passed over before them, and bowed himself to the ground seven times, until he came near to his brother. And Esau ran to meet him, and embraced him, and fell on his neck, and kissed him: and they wept” (Genesis 33:3,4). The antitypical new day continues to dawn even though Jews today are not yet reconciled with their alienated brethren. How sweet the prospect of reconciliation!

JOSEPH AND BENJAMIN

Jacob treasured his wife Rachel more than the others. She gave birth to Joseph while still in Haran. After returning to Israel she died giving birth to Benjamin. As she endured hard labor, she named her second son Benoni, meaning, “son of my affliction.” But Jacob changed it to Benjamin, meaning, “son of my right hand.” Bro. Russell suggests Joseph and Benjamin, being children of the favored wife, represent the two spiritual classes: Joseph, Jesus and the Church — Benjamin, the Great Company (see R184, R5231).

Benjamin’s birth occurred after entering the land, near Ephrath, or Bethlehem (Genesis 35:19). Being born near the city where Jesus would one day be born, suggests a connection to the Messiah. The Great Company will cooperate with our Lord after going through great tribulation (Revelation 7:14). His name change demonstrates how the experience of this class will be transformed from distressful circumstances as they “wash their robes.” Their new role as the “son of my right hand” will see them



Jacob and Esau at last

serving before the throne of God (Revelation 7:15). The death of Rachel then indicates the closing of the heavenly phase of the Abrahamic Promise.

ENTERING THE LAND

After crossing the Jabbok River and meeting Esau, Jacob rested at a place he named Succoth, i.e. booths (Genesis 33:17). There he built a house and made booths for his cattle. Succoth would one day be the name of a Jewish festival celebrating Israel's time in the wilderness where they dwelt in tents. It is a feast specifically connected to the Kingdom (See Zechariah 14:19). With the naming of this place a symbolic connection points to the beginning portions of the kingdom.

EXPERIENCES IN SHECHEM

After leaving Succoth, Jacob journeyed to Shechem, on the west side of Jordan. There he purchased a parcel of land from the Canaanites and pitched his tent near the city. Jacob then erected an altar, naming it Elelohe-Israel, "The Mighty God of Israel" (Genesis 33:20). Jacob's purchase of land illustrates the legal rights Israel has to the land. Building an altar describes a recognition by many Jews that God's hand has been evident in the reestablishment of their nation.

Jacob's only daughter, Dinah, "went out to see the daughters of the land" (Genesis 34:1). Shechem, a local Canaanite, saw Dinah and forced himself upon her. This was understandably upsetting to her brethren, especially Simeon and Levi, her two full brothers. They contrived a plan that led to the slaughter of all the local Canaanite men. This may relate to the destruction of Christendom during Armageddon. It will be the just penalty for Christendom's reign of terror, depicted by the rape of Dinah.

PURGING IDOLATRY

In the following chapter, Genesis 35, God instructed Jacob to move to Bethel and there construct another altar. Many years earlier, as he fled from Esau, God had reiterated the Abrahamic Promise and given him the dream of a ladder to heaven. From that experience Jacob named the place Bethel (House of God) and made a vow. "And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, 'If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, so that I come again to my father's house in peace; then shall the LORD be my God: And this stone, which I have set for a pillar, shall be God's house: and of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee'" (Genesis 28:20-22).

God's instruction to erect another altar at Bethel was to remind Jacob of the vow he had made many years earlier. In preparation for the move to Bethel, Jacob gathered his family and instructed them to put away all their strange gods and change their garments (Genesis 35:2). How appropriate for God to now hold Jacob accountable to the



Jacob purging his entourage at the oak at Shechem

vow he had made. Symbolically, Israel made a similar commitment at Mt. Sinai. "He took the book of the covenant and read in the audience of the people: and they said, 'All that the LORD hath said will we do and be obedient'" (Exodus 24:7). But many years have intervened, and many Jews have sought other gods. But, as Jacob built the altar and cleansed his family from idolatrous practices, so the nation of Israel will be taught to put away every type of idol. Their worship of God will be purified, and they will remember their national commitment to serve only God.

Earlier, when wrestling with the angel, Jacob's name was changed to Israel. The name change is repeated at Bethel to confirm that, through God's power, Jacob would become a great nation and give birth to kings (See Genesis 35:11). Throughout the course of Jacob entering the land, there has been a progression of antitypical meanings. We have witnessed the nation of Israel gradually being prepared as God's instrument to govern the nations. But, as long as the ransom merit remains tied up with the spiritual classes, only limited progress can be made.

JOURNEY TO BETHLEHEM

As Jacob journeyed from Bethel, Rachel went into labor with Benjamin and died near Bethlehem. After her death, Jacob set his tent "beyond the Tower of Eder" (Genesis 35:21). How interesting that he would dwell in the very fields where the shepherds would someday hear the birth announcement of Jesus. (See *Beauties of the Truth*, August 2019, "Migdal Eder"). Moving there may illustrate completing the Great Company, last of the spiritual class.

AT HOME IN HEBRON

From Bethlehem Jacob continued southward to Hebron, his final destination and home of his father Isaac. Thereafter Isaac died and was buried with his father Abraham (Genesis 35:27-29). Isaac represented Jesus' role during the Gospel Age. His death indicates that role now comes to an end. The lives of Isaac and Jacob had overlapped by 120 years, showing how the grace and Law covenants were concurrent for a time during the Gospel Age.

JOSEPH'S REIGN OF BLESSING

When Jacob heard that his favorite son Joseph was alive, his heart must have leapt for joy. Not only was he alive, but he was in a position to save his family. What a wonderful recognition this will be when Israel will no longer be blinded to their true Messiah (See Romans 11:23).

Joseph's reign as Pharaoh's second in command is a lovely picture of the Kingdom reign of Christ. Under Joseph's care Israel prospered in Goshen. This pictures Israel's special relationship with the Joseph class as it too will prosper under the watchful eye of Jesus and the Church. As Joseph gave gifts of new raiment to his brothers, so Israel will be specially favored as they bring the New Covenant requirements to mankind (Genesis 45:22).

During the great famine, Joseph purchased the Egyptian people and their land as payment for being sustained from the storehouses of Pharaoh (Genesis 47:19,20). How aptly this describes the purchase of the fallen race through the ransom and Christ's ownership of the earth. But the food was not given out freely, it was to be purchased from

Pharaoh. So, in the kingdom, there will be a price to pay for sharing in the blessings. The price will be devotion of the heart in full consecration. The people were also required to pay 20% of their crop yields to Pharaoh (Genesis 47:24). This is an apt description of an ongoing recognition that man's prosperity will come from God through Christ.¹

CONCLUSION

It is not surprising to find hidden in many Old Testament stories, illustrations of God's plan. In this brief overview the men whose lives antotypically span the ages were chosen for their great faith. From the first vague hints of good things to come, to the precious promises of blessing all the families of the earth, God's plan marches grandly on to its ultimate rewards of prosperity and eternal life. How appropriate that God should leave these jewels to be mined and loved with appreciative hearts.

— Tom Ruggirello

(1) For a detailed explanation of the antitypical nature of Joseph see www.herald-magazine.com/2019/09/01/josephs-work-of-blessing

The Lesser Light to Rule the Night

“And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night” (Genesis 1:16).

The Sun dominates our daytime sky. Without its warming rays, life could not exist on Earth. It produces energy that supports life through the process of photosynthesis. The Sun has been used by God as a symbol of the Gospel message, a message of life and prosperity. As sunlight is used in the growth of terrestrial life, so the light of Gospel truth contributes to spiritual development. The prophet Malachi added to the symbol by describing our Lord as “the Sun of Righteousness” who will “arise with healing in his wings” (Malachi 4:2). Jesus also described the church as, “the righteous” who “shine forth as the Sun in the kingdom of their Father” (Matthew 13:43). The wonderful power of the Sun is aptly used to illustrate the life-giving influence of Jesus and the Gospel message.

“And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the Sun, and the Moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars” (Revelation 12:1).

In this passage the woman represents the early church. Being clothed with the Sun shows that she had the Gospel message to cover her as a robe of righteousness. The twelve stars on her head are the twelve apostles who guided the church. Under her feet was the Moon. This indicates that the early church was primarily Jewish and

supported by the Law. However, it was not her main source of light, just as the Moon merely reflects sunlight. (See Reprint 306 paragraph 4, and Volume 4 page 591).

THE MOON — A SYMBOL OF THE LAW

Just as the Moon is described as a “lesser light” than the Sun, so the Law of Moses was not the full light from God. Much of Israel's Law contained symbols of greater things to come. The typical sacrifices of the Tabernacle pointed to the actual sacrifices of Jesus, the church, and the future offerings of the world. So the Law was a lesser light to the reality of the Gospel and Millennial Ages.

The Jewish system is based on lunar cycles. The beginning of the Jewish religious year was determined by



Hagar, a picture of the Law Covenant, tending Ishmael

the first new moon after the spring equinox. The slaying of the Passover Lamb on the 14th of Nisan occurred when the moon was full. As the antitypical Passover Lamb, Jesus was also slain on the 14th of Nisan. Upon his death the moon began to wane, showing how the Mosaic Law was supplanted by the Gospel. For the Jews who came into Christ, the Law accomplished its purpose of being a schoolmaster, bringing them to Christ (Galatians 3:24, 25).

PHYSICS OF THE MOON¹

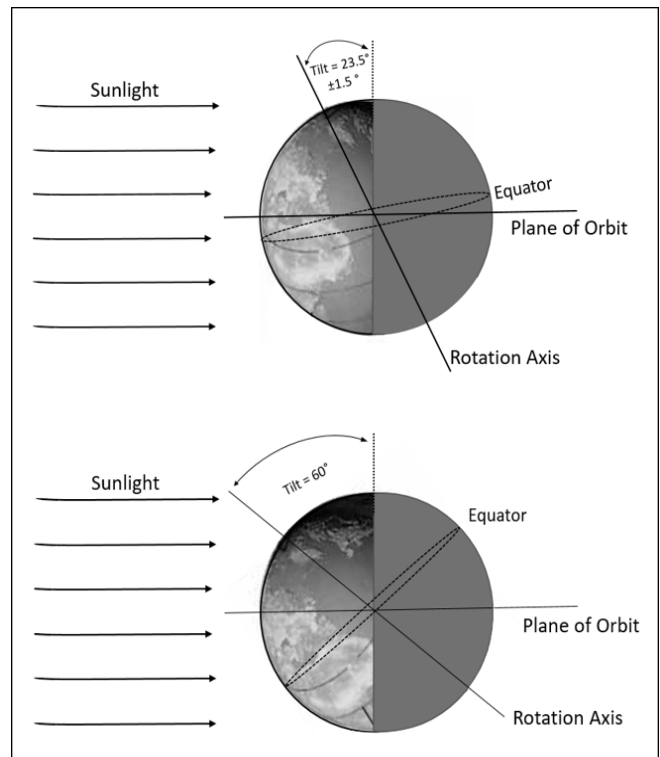
Earth's Moon is relatively large in comparison to Earth. No other planet in our solar system has a moon as large in proportion to its host planet. There are some interesting facts about the physical qualities of the Moon that may relate to the Law and its effect upon society.

For example, the Moon steadies the rotational axis of the Earth and helps create a more stable, life-friendly climate. Our Moon keeps the tilt of the Earth from varying over a large range. A larger tilt would cause greater climate fluctuations. Our planet's tilt is currently 23.5 degrees and varies from 22.1 to 24.5 degrees over several thousand years. If our Moon were as small as the moons of Mars, Earth's tilt would vary, not 2½ degrees, but 30 degrees, based on the proportional mass between the two bodies. Should the Earth tilt by that amount when leaning toward the Sun, the northern hemisphere would experience months of scorching daylight. High northern latitudes would be subjected to searing heat. The other half of the year would see viciously cold months of perpetual night.

But it is not just an extreme tilt that would cause devastating results. A significantly smaller tilt of Earth's axis would also create problems. The resulting milder seasons would prevent the wide distribution of rain, an important part of making a hospitable place for life. With the current 23.5-degree tilt, Earth's wind patterns change throughout the year, bringing seasonal monsoons to areas that would otherwise remain parched. A planet with little or no tilt would likely have much larger areas of arid land.

STABILIZING EFFECT OF THE LAW

The natural effect of the Moon upon our planet suggests that God's Law has had a similar stabilizing effect upon Jewish society. Throughout history, Jews have benefited from the influence of God's Law above other nations. It provided the proper constraints for an orderly society. Their advanced dietary and sanitary laws helped shield them from some of the devastating diseases the world has seen. Laws, such as those listed in the Ten Commandments (thou shalt not murder, thou shalt not steal, etc.), created a safer and more prosperous environment than societies without such laws. The pinnacle of human interaction described in the Mosaic Law was, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" (Leviticus 19:18). This alone could create a healthy and happy environment for all who lived by it.



Earth's tilt is adjusted thoughtfully.

When encouraging Israel to obey God's laws, Moses said, "Keep therefore and do them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the nations, which shall hear all these statutes, and say, 'Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people' ... and what nation is there so great, that hath statutes and judgments so righteous as all this Law, which I set before you this day?" (Deuteronomy 4:6,8). Moses understood that it was God's Law that could make Israel a great nation.

An important aspect of the Mosaic Law was how it affected Israel's relationship with God. By legislating rules that recognized His superiority, they were taught to respect His moral authority and goodness. Through the Law they could see certain qualities in God that provided a standard for them. If acted upon properly, this would naturally avoid the wide swings from righteous living to idolatry and immorality.

The principle of how laws create a stable social structure is not limited to Jewish society. The Apostle Paul urges Christians to respect the rule of law, even in an imperfect world. "Obey them that have the rule over you and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account" (Hebrews 13:17).

Although this world can never offer perfect laws, their efforts still help stabilize society. A world without laws would be chaotic and dangerous. The English philosopher John Locke recognized this when he wrote, "The end of law is not to abolish or restrain, but to preserve and enlarge freedom ... Where there is no law, there is no freedom."²

EARTH'S MAGNETIC FIELD³

Sitting 93 million miles from the Sun keeps the Earth at a temperature perfect for life. However, sitting so close to the Sun also poses a threat. Along with sunlight and heat, there is a steady stream of destructive ionized high-energy particles. If this “Solar wind” poured down on us as does the sunlight, it would kill most of the plant and animal life as we know it. To make things more challenging, these ionized particle streams are punctuated by occasional solar “storms” that emit large bursts of even more energetic particles.

By divine wisdom, we are protected from this solar wind. The Earth’s magnetic field deflects this “solar wind” much like an automobile windshield deflects wind. During severe solar storms, bright displays of light, known as auroras, are created at Earth’s poles when solar wind particles collide with elements in our atmosphere. This lovely display of colors is a reminder of the Lord’s forethought and loving protection.

The Danish Physicist Hans Christian Orsted discovered that the movement of electricity through a wire creates a magnetic field around that wire. This principle helps scientists understand how Earth’s own magnetic field is created. In simple terms, the outer core of the Earth contains a strata of molten iron alloy, an excellent conductor of electricity. As the molten iron circulates, its movement creates electricity, which, in turn, forms a magnetic field. However, recent computer models and geochemical studies of rock formations have suggested the Earth alone cannot generate enough energy to maintain our magnetic field.

Researchers from the National Center for Scientific Research (CNRS) have suggested that the Moon could be the missing source of energy. The Earth has a slightly flattened shape and bulges at the equator. This is caused by the centrifugal force of Earth’s rotation. The Moon contributes to this as its gravity helps deform the liquid mantle. It is the same force that causes our ocean tides. These forces together stimulate motion of the liquid iron in the outer core, which in turn increases the electrical charge, which then strengthens the magnetic field. So, the Moon is now believed to contribute to the strength of Earth’s magnetic field.

GOD’S PROTECTIVE CARE AND DIRECTIONS FOR LIFE

By creating the physical laws on which the universe operates, God provided the protection needed for life to exist on Earth. But He also knew that scientific principles were not enough for man to exist on the highest level of life. Science cannot provide spiritual protection from sin or the moral direction to live in a perfect society. Any form of sin contaminates, not only

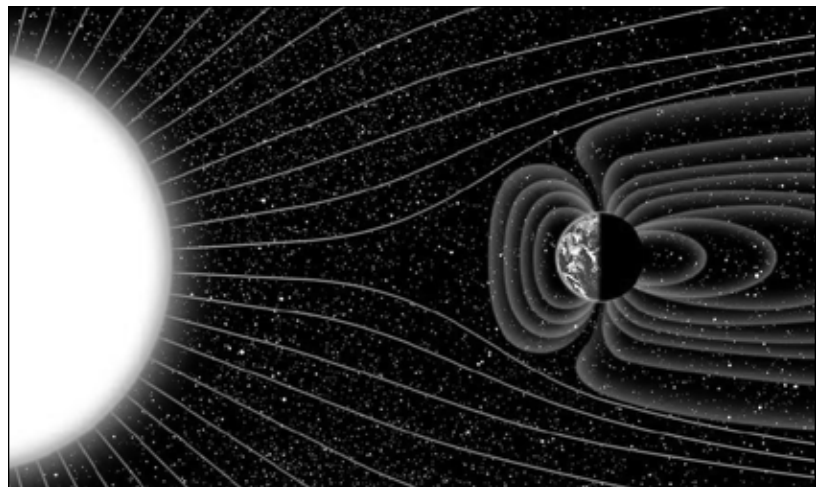
the individual, but society as a whole. Unless it is first identified, it cannot be dealt with. The Apostle Paul wrote, “I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, ‘Thou shalt not covet’” (Romans 7:7).

As the Law of Israel provided protection and guidance, so even the laws of this world provide similar help for its citizens. However, the laws of man are imperfect and inferior to the laws that will be established in the Kingdom. As a compass directs the traveler and points to magnetic north, so God’s laws will give moral direction which will contribute to the work of the Kingdom. As Earth’s magnetic field shields the entire planet, so the Kingdom of God will be universal, bringing humanity the direction needed to reach perfection, both on an individual basis as well as a society.

NO NEED FOR SUN OR MOON

Laws are an essential part of a functioning civilization. Without them the unruly would have free hand in dominating others. However, there will come a time when written laws may no longer be necessary. Once God’s kingdom has accomplished its work of writing God’s Law in the heart of each individual, outward conduct will be guided by the ingrained principles of God. This is described in the promise to Israel, “I will put My law in their inward parts and write it in their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people” (Jeremiah 31:33). This does not mean laws will not exist, but everyone will be so in tune with the principles of righteousness that written laws will likely be unnecessary.

This is described in the Book of Revelation, “And the city had no need of the Sun, neither of the Moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof” (Revelation 21:23). The Sun, as a symbol of the Gospel, and the Moon as a symbol of the Law, are external influences. When the message of God’s love is fully etched into every heart, these external messages will no longer be needed. What a glorious prospect!



The magnetic shielding of Earth

CONCLUSION

As we begin to learn the scientific principles on which our universe exists, our thoughts turn to our wonderful Creator. As our tiny planet hangs in space it is as if God is cradling us in His mighty hand, or, as the Psalmist describes, under the shadow of His wings (Psalm 91:1,4). The brilliance and harmony of creation leaves us in awe.

The protection He has provided for this tiny jewel that is man's home reflects the heart of a father who desires only good for His children. How can we do other than worship and praise Him for all we see? Our hearts again join with the Psalmist. "When I consider thy heavens, the

work of Thy fingers, the Moon and the stars, which Thou hast ordained; What is man, that Thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that Thou visitest him? For Thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honor. Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of Thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet ... O LORD our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the Earth! (Psalms 8:3-6, 9)

(1) Information gleaned from *The Privileged Planet*, by Guillermo Gonzalez and Jay W. Richards

(2) Locke, John, *The Second Treatise of Civil Government*.

(3) Scientific Information gleaned from www.Astronomynow.com

The Law as a "Schoolmaster"

"Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith" (Galatians 3:24).

The Greek word translated "schoolmaster" is — παιδαγωγός — *paidagogos*. This word occurs three times in the New Testament, Galatians 3:24, 25, and 1 Corinthians 4:15. Paul selected this word here because it beautifully describes the function of the Law to bring Israel to Christ. The word does not mean a teacher as the King James translation suggests.

Vine's Expository Dictionary nicely focuses on the meaning. "Here the idea of instruction is absent. "In this and allied words the idea is that of training, discipline, not of impartation of knowledge. The *paidagogos* was not the

instructor of the child; he exercised a general supervision over him and was responsible for his moral and physical well-being. Thus understood, *paidagogos* is appropriately used with 'kept in ward' and 'shut up,' whereas to understand it as equivalent to 'teacher' introduces an idea entirely foreign to the passage, and throws the Apostle's argument into confusion." (From *Notes on Galatians*, by Hogg and Vine, pages 163, 164. Compare *epitropos*, "a steward, guardian, tutor.")^{1,2}

One of the main purposes of the Law was to keep Israel together as a social unit with a common law and religion in order to conduct them to Messiah in due time. This is exactly the function of a *paidagogos*. The Law did indeed accomplish this, but the nation collectively was not in the frame of mind necessary to recognize Jesus as their Messiah and consequently was rejected by the Lord (Matthew 23:38, 39).

It is noteworthy that the Law, under the figure of Hagar (see Galatians 4:25), is still functioning as a *paidagogos* in conducting Israel to Messiah in modern times. It will, in the end, bring all of the fleshly seed of Abraham to Christ (Zechariah 12:10). The casting out of Hagar and Ishmael by Abraham is another figure of the displacement of Israel in the Gospel Age. Hagar, the Law, is still conducting Ishmael, Israel, during this time and eventually is brought to a well in Beersheva of refreshing, representing the blessings of the New Covenant still future.

— Br. David Stein



Moses at Mount Sinai

(1) *Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*, W. E. Vine, page 265, Fleming H. R. Tevell Company, 1940.

(2) See also a thorough treatment of the subject here: www.digital-commons.liberty.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?referer=&httpsredir=1&article=1114&context=sor_fac_pubs