

Beauties of the Truth

A Forum for the Publication of Scriptural Viewpoints
Thought to be Harmonious with God's Plan of the Ages
Volume 2, Number 3, August 1991

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BEAUTIES OF THE TRUTH is published as a service to the brethren to stimulate their consideration and appreciation of the boundless riches of God's Word. It is published free of charge. Subscriptions will be entered for all who request it. Address all correspondence to: Beauties of the Truth, 10034 S.W. 52nd Avenue, Portland, OR 97219. Editorial board: Brs. Jerry Leslie (Editor-in-Chief), David Doran, Carl Hagensick, Michael Nekora, David Rice, David Stein.

Mixing Oil and Water

There is an old saying that oil and water don't mix. Yet there is one place in the Bible where these two elements are combined to form one illustration. It is the illustration of unity, and it is found in the 133rd Psalm.

"Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard that went down to the skirt of his garments. As the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion: for there the Lord commanded the blessing, even life forevermore."

The unity of verse one is likened in verse two to the anointing oil, and in verse three to the rain waters that originated in Hermon, and eventually descended upon the mountains of Zion in Jerusalem. The purpose of this investigation is to demonstrate that these are not two pictures of the same thing, but are progressive pictures, showing successively the unity of the Gospel and Millennial ages.

CONTEXT OF THE 133RD PSALM

It is easy to place this particular Psalm in a context. It is the second to the last of a series of 15, called in the titles, "A song of degrees" While there are various explanations for this series title, the

most reasonable to this writer is that they were sung progressively by the pilgrims on their annual trek to the Feast of Passover in Jerusalem.

Picturing a pilgrimage from the Galilean highlands, notice the appropriateness of the allusion in Psalm 121 to the "hills." There the fearful prospect of highway robbers in the hill country is countered by the assurance of heavenly help.

Similarly, the 122nd Psalm speaks of the anticipation of the journey. *"I was glad when they said, Let us go into the house of the Lord. Our feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem."*

By the time they were singing the 133rd Psalm, they would be crossing the last ridge of hills before seeing the city itself. Their eyes would be beholding other pilgrims streaming in from the other directions of the compass. No wonder their anticipation would find expression in the words, *"How good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity."*

Finally, in the 134th Psalm, they reach their destination and sing their final praise, *"Lift up your hands in the sanctuary. The Lord that made heaven and earth bless thee out of Zion."*

THE ANOINTING OIL

Now, proceeding to the two symbols, we see that the anointing oil is treated first. The obvious point of reference is Lev. 8:12, *"And he poured of the anointing oil upon Aaron's head, and anointed him, to sanctify him."*

The lack of a separate reference to Aaron's sons being so anointed, coupled with the Psalm 133 reference, leads us to conclude that the anointing of the high priest was sufficient for the underpriests as well.

True, in Lev. 8:30, the sons are also sprinkled with anointing oil; but there it was **sprinkled** and not **poured** on the head, and there it was **mingled with blood**, showing that our acceptance is only due to the blood of our Redeemer. (Contrast T37 with T46.) It is also mentioned in Exod. 30:30 that the sons were anointed; however, this does not describe an anointing ceremony, but the use of the anointing oil. Thus this probably refers to the repetition of the anointing with Aaron's sons when they, in turn, became High Priests. (See footnote on T37.)

Another debatable issue in the application of Psa. 133:2 is whether the term "skirts of his garment" relates to the lower fringes, or to the "hem" that surrounds the neckline. This appears to be a distinction without a difference. Whether oil doused the garments themselves, or flowed along the skin lines within the garments, through the upper "hem" the results would have been the same. Gravity would have eventually brought the oil downward over the entire body to the lower extremities.

Thus the lesson is simple. One anointing covered all head and body. Our unity is in our relationship to the head. We share a common anointing. The anointing spoken of in Psa. 133 is not that of king and prophet, though they were also anointed. Here the reference is clearly to the priests, because of the allusion to Aaron.

To the journeying pilgrims of David's day, the joy expressed was in the continuing priesthood, all coming under the common anointing of Aaron. This illustrated the oneness of the "royal priesthood," where a 2000 year period is spanned under the anointing, or authorization, of Christ. Our unity is in being a part of His body, and thus a part of the High Priest of the next dispensation.

THE WATER WAS DIFFERENT

While the anointing oil was restricted to the priesthood, the same was not true of the rain water. As Jesus expressed it, God "sendeth rain on the just and the unjust" (Matt. 5:45).

At first glance, it is tempting to see in this second illustration of Psalm 133 an allusion to the Jordan river. Rising from headwaters at Mt. Hermon it descends through the Galilee to its final resting place in the Dead Sea. In New Testament times, its waters formed the main baptismal font for the early church. Both John and the disciples of Jesus were wont to use this stream for the baptismal rite. A passing reference to this passage on F443, where the Christian's unity in the Pentecostal baptism is described, lends force to this lesson.

However, this does not appear to be the primary lesson of Psalm 133. The Jordan water, though it descended from Mt. Hermon, never reached the mountains of Zion. The Jordan valley passes some 30 miles to the east of Jerusalem's hills, near to Jericho. Jerusalem is watered by its own springs and its streams feed the Jordan, rather than the reverse.

PALESTINIAN STORM PATTERNS

Jerusalem does receive waters from Hermon, but not through the channel of rivers. The prevailing wind pattern of Palestine is westerly from the Mediterranean until the higher ranges of the anti-Lebanon mountains (where Hermon is located) are reached. The winds then are shunted southward along the Jordan valley to the Negev, where the rising heat drives them back westward into the Mediterranean.

This pattern seems documented in the 29th Psalm. There, using the euphemism of "the voice of the Lord" for thunder, a typical Israeli thunderstorm is portrayed. It begins, in verse 3, upon "many waters," presumably describing the roiling effect of the storm on the Mediterranean sea. Then, in verses 5 and 6, it reaches the heights of Lebanon. Sirion, in fact, is the name given by the Sidonians to Mt. Hermon. (Deut. 3:9) Then the storm turns southward to Kadesh, the wilderness region in the Northwestern part of the Negev from which the spies went forth Kadesh-barnea.

Thus the picture seems to be that the dews rising from the melting snows of Hermon joined the rain clouds from the Mediterranean and were directed southward to irrigate the area of Galilee and Judea, including Jerusalem on the Mountains of Zion.

Hermon is spoken of as the dwelling place of Solomon and his love in the Songs of Solomon (Cant. 4:8). It is a leading contender in the identification of the Mount of Transfiguration.* Another name for Hermon is Sion (see Deut. 4:48). This "Sion" should not be confused with "Zion."

Hermon, then, is an apt picture of Christ and the Church on the sides of the north, looking out over the interests of Israel, the promised land. The blessings-"dew of Hermon" -spread out from them to bless the people of the South, particularly the dwellers of Jerusalem.

Jerusalem, here, would then represent resurrected mankind, as they enter into the relationship provided by the New Jerusalem descending from God out of heaven.

Thus seen, the 133rd Psalm provides a complete picture of unity. First, the unity of Christ and his Church in the anointing (Isa. 61:1-3). Second, the unity that will be afforded humanity by the teachings of righteousness from the mountain of the spiritual kingdom (Hermon) to the "just and the unjust" of the earth.

It is hard to summarize the lesson better than in the words of the Christian Hebraist A. F. Kirkpatrick, as quoted in the Soncino Bible:

"Brethren are to dwell together as brethren should do. A strong and united metropolis, at once the religious and political center of the country, will concentrate and invigorate the whole nation, and spread blessing through the body of which it is the head."

- *Carl Hagensick*

*Note the contextual argument in Mark 9:30 that Galilee lay between the Mount of Transfiguration and Jerusalem, which would not be true if that mount were Mt. Tabor. Identifying Mt. Hermon with the Mount of Transfiguration is also supported by the fact that the preceding incident takes place at Caesarea Philippi -Matt. 16:13; Mark 8:27 which is at the foot of Mt. Hermon.

New Testament Greek Words Regarding Christ's Second Presence

Below is a brief review of the relevant words, followed with a chart of their appearances in the Scriptures.

Erchomai. The first thing one must do to be present is "to come" " Thus the word *erchomai* is used more frequently of Christ's Second Advent than all others combined. The noun form, *eleusis*, means "coming." Another form, *ho erchomenos*, means "the coming one," or "he who is to come" Note both the similarity and contrast of the meaning in Jo 14:3 and Jude 14.

Parousia. This second most commonly used word means, presence " although there have been theological attempts to reinterpret it. Liddel and Scott, W Bauer (translated by Arndt and Gingrich), Young's concordance, Souter, G.R. Berry, Vine, A. Marshall, the American Standard Version margin, Rotherham, and Thayer, give the primary meaning of *parousia* as "presence" and of the verb form, *pareimi*, "to be present." Souter additionally notes the connotation of "a royal visit" Strong's concordance avoids the word presence, substituting, "a being near" (#3952 and

3918). But it is a nearness in space, rather than time, in the sense that anyone who is near to each of us is properly said to be present among us. (Note that Strong is not totally unbiased in his definitions, as shown in #3952 regarding the purpose of the parousia, or in #5590 contrasting psyche with pneuma.) In the gospels, Matthew alone uses parousia.

However, the other gospels do not substitute erchomai (or elevsis) for it; e.g., Luke 17:26 translates Jesus' words into Greek "in the days of the Son of man" where Matt. 24:37 uses "the parousia of the Son of man" (Compare also Matt. 24:39 with Luke 17:30.) In Php 2:12, parousia is directly contrasted with absence. Thus, parousia applies not to an instant of time, but to a "presence," or the beneficent visit of the King in the case of Christ's Second Advent. (The other Greek words denote particular aspects of the parousia.)

Heko. In the present tense, heko has a past connotation, "to have come," which is commonly overlooked in New Testament translation. (Heko looks back on erchomai.) Richer meaning will thus be seen in Luke 12:46 ("shall have come") and the other scriptures where it is used.

Apocalypsis. Literally, an uncovering. Hence, revelation, and often a revealing of oneself. Note the revelation of things hidden, in 1 Cor. 2:10, and the revelation of Jesus Christ during His Second Advent in 1Pt 1:7.

Phaneroo. From the root phaino, "to bring to light" or "to shine" Hence the meaning of phaneroo, "to make manifest" Note the use of the word twice in Col. 3:4.

Epiphaneia. Like phaneroo, from the root phaino, "to bring to light," or "to shine." Hence the meaning of epiphaneia, "appearing," or "manifestation" Liddel and Scott add the usage, "the surface, outside, of anything." Thayer notes the use of epiphaneia "in 2 Maccabees of signal deeds and events betokening the presence and power of God as helper." Note the use of the word in conjunction with parousia in 2 Thess. 2:8-9. Epiphaneia can relate to the sign(s) of Christ's Second Presence, whereas apokalypsis implies full revelation.

Katabaino. From baino, "to go, walk, or step" Hence the meaning of katabaino, "to go down" "to come down," or "to descend" whether as in free fall from the sky, or as in coming down a hill. Used of Christ in Rev. 18:1 and of the Church in Rev. 21:2. In each case it implies heavenly intervention in the affairs of the earth.

Anastrepho, "to return" in Acts 15:16 may be another word regarding Christ's Second Advent. That possibility appears supported by Jer. 12:15, but not necessarily by Amos 9:11-15 from which it is quoted.

- *James Parkinson*

"I will come again, and receive you . . . that where I am, there ye may be also." – John 14:3

NEW TESTAMENT GREEK WORDS REGARDING CHRIST'S SECOND PRESENCE

Ερχομαι Erchomai (50) to come	Παρουσια Parousia (15) presence	Ηεκο Heko (7) to have come to be here	Αποκαλψισ Apokalypsis (6) Revelation	Πηανεροο Phaneroo (5) to manifest	Επιτηανεια Eiphraneia (4) manifestation	Καταβαινο Katabaino (4) to come down
Matt 10:23	Heb 10:37*	Matt 24:3	Matt 24:50	1 Cor 1:7	Col 3:4 ²	1 Thess 4:16
Matt 16:27	Rev 1:4*	Matt 24:27	Luke 12:46	2 Thess 1:7	1 Pet 5:4	Rev 10:1
Matt 16:28?	Rev 1:8*	Matt 24:37	Heb 1);37	1 Pet 1:7	1 John 2:28	Rev 18:1
Matt 24:30	Rev 4:8?*	Matt 24:39	2 Pet 3:10?	1 Pet 1:13	1 John 3:2?	Rev 20:1
Matt 24:42	Rev [11:17]*	1 Cor 15:23	Rev 2:25	1 Pet 4:13		
Matt 24:43		1 Thess 2:19	Rev 3:3 ²	Luke 17:30	(John 7:4)	(John 3:13)
Matt 24:44	(Matt 25:27)	1 Thess 3:13			(John 21:1)	(John 6:33)
Matt 24:46	(Luke 19:23)	1 Thess 4:15	(Rom 11:26)	(Rom 2:5)	(2 Tim 4:8)	(cf Rev 3:12)
Matt 25:10	(Rev 19:7)	1 Thess 5:23	(Matt 24:14)	(Rom 8:19)		(cf Rev 21:2)
Matt 25:19	(John 5:23)	2 Thess 2:1	(Luke 13:35)	(Eph 3:5?)		(cf Rev 21:10)
Matt 25:31	(John 5:28)	2 Thess 2:8	(cf Luke 15:27)	(1 Pet 1:5)		
Matt 26:64	(Acts 2:20)	James 5:7		(1 Pet 5:1)		
Mark 8:38	(1 Thess 5:2)	James 5:8				αναστρεπο to turn back
Mark 13:26	(Rev 6:17)	2 Peter 3:4				
Mark 13:35	(Matt 21:40)	1 John 2:28				
Mark 13:36	(Luke 19:13)					Acts 15:16?
Mark 14:62	(Matt 6:10)	(2 Peter 3:12)				
Luke 12:36	(Luke 17:20)	(cf 2 Peter 1:16)				
Luke 12:37						
Luke 12:38	cf ε ευσ coming	other uses of the word:				
Luke 12:39		1 Cor 16:17				
Luke 12:40		2 Cor 7:6				
Luke 12:43	(Acts 7:52)	2 Cor 7:7				
Luke 12:45		2 Cor 10:10				
Luke 18:8		Phil 1:26				
Luke 21:27		Phil 2:12				
Luke 23:42						
John 14:3						
John 14:18						
John 14:28		cf παρευτι To be present				
John 21:22						
John 21:23						
Acts 1:11		John 7:6				
1 Cor. 4:5		1 Cor 5:3				
1 Cor. 11:26		2 Cor 10:11				
2 Thess 1:10		2 Cor 11:9				
Jude 14		2 Cor 13:2				
Rev 1:7		2 Cor 13:10				
Rev 2:5		Heb 12:11				
Rev 2:16		Heb 13:5				
Rev 3:11		2 Pet 1:12				
Rev 16:15						
Rev 22:7						
Rev 22:12						
Rev 22:20 ²						

*ο ερχομενολο "the coming one," in these five texts

4 verbs, 3 nouns (related texts in parentheses)

An Ass and a Colt

Zechariah 9:9 reads: “Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh upon thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, [even] upon a colt the foal of an ass”

The triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem was described in all four Gospels. In Mark, Jesus instructed his disciples: “... ye shall find a colt tied, whereon never a man sat; loose him, and bring him. ... And they brought the colt to Jesus, and cast their garments on him; and he sat upon him” (Mark 11:2, 7). Luke's account is substantially the same (Luke 19:30, 35). John wrote: “And Jesus, when he had found a young ass, sat thereon; as it is written, Fear not, daughter of Sion: behold, thy King cometh, sitting on an ass's colt” (John 12:14, 15).

But, in Matthew's account, two animals are mentioned. Arriving at Bethphage, Jesus directed two disciples: “Go into the village over against you, and straightway ye shall find an ass tied, and a colt with her: loose [plural] them, and bring [plural] them unto me. ... And [they] brought the ass, and the colt, and put on them [the animals] their [the disciples] clothes, and they sat thereon” (Matt. 21:2, 7).

Why two animals? There is no question about the authenticity of these verses in Matthew. Therefore we may be sure two animals were involved. Otherwise we would have to conclude Matthew was mistaken -an untenable position for all who accept divine inspiration of the Bible.

There really is no contradiction. All accounts are accurate, but none give all the details. Mark, Luke, and John, for whatever reason, simply ignored the second animal. Matthew and John failed to mention the colt had never been ridden. And only Mark mentioned the colt was “tied by the door without in a place where two ways met” (Mark 11:4).

The suggested lesson is found in the symbolic meaning of “horses” in the Bible. Following Bro. Russell's lead (C316), horses may picture doctrines; the philosophic principles, tenets, concepts which determine one's conduct in life capitalism, socialism, Catholicism, Islamism, Hinduism, etc. Thus, the ass (a beast of burden like a horse), probably the mother of the colt and long ridden, may represent the doctrinal or philosophic principles of the Mosaic covenant, God's arrangement with Israel. The colt, having never been ridden, may represent the “new doctrine” of Jesus (Mark 1:27), his “new commandment” (John 13:34; I John 2:8), the “mystery” he made manifest (Col. 1:25-27).

Paul wrote concerning this new teaching: “... by revelation he made known unto me the mystery ... which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit” (Eph. 3:3, 5; also I Cor. 2:7.) The writer of Hebrews called it “a new and living way” (Heb. 10:20).

The colt was tied “in a place where two ways met” The two ways could suggest much the same as do the two animals-the way of works versus the way of faith (Rom. 3:20-22), the way of the Law versus the way of Grace (Rom. 6:14-23). Another possibility is the two ways specified in Matthew 7:13, 14: “... wide is the gate, and broad is the way, which leadeth to destruction ... strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life” (Matt. 7:13, 14).

The name of the village where the two ways met was Bethphage, meaning “house of unripe figs” (McClintock and Strong). This is significant when it is remembered a fig tree is used in the Bible to represent Israel (Matt. 24:32). It is very likely Jesus cursed the fig tree near or at Bethphage (Matt. 21:17-19).

- R. E. Evans

Birthright

A “double portion” of the paternal property was allotted by a birthright of the firstborn son, under the Mosaic law. The “double portion” was the right of the firstborn, even if he were the child of a less favored wife. (Deut. 21:15-17)

The blessing of the firstborn had a basis even in Genesis. In Genesis 49 Jacob called his sons, and began the blessing with his firstborn. The firstborn son was the rightful successor of his father's heritage. So it was a cherished heritage to be in the lineage of Abraham, and receive the promise to bless all the families of the earth.

The sacred force of this custom carried forward to Jesus. He is “the firstborn among many brethren” (Rom. 8:29), and “the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence” (Col. 1:18)

In the firstborn, the evidence of God's protection during the 10th plague was apparent. Later God arranged to exchange them for the tribe of Levi (Num. 3:11-13). The exchange was solemnized by the redemption price of 5 shekels each.

However, in several important cases, God specially favored the younger above the firstborn. It seems that in much of what God has arranged, the exception to a general rule illustrates his higher principles. Here are some examples.

ABEL

Adam and Eve, as our first parents, were given a heritage to fill the earth and have dominion over its fruitage. They could have continued in this heritage, but they lost the privilege and their lives. But they did receive the promise that the seed of the woman would bruise Satan. This implied the end of the curse.

Their firstborn was Cain, their second Abel. We can only assume both were instructed by their father, Adam, in the duty of worship of their Creator. Each brought the firstfruits of his labors. Cain, as a husbandman, offered the fruits of the field; Abel, as a shepherd, fatlings of his flock. God was pleased to accept the offering of Abel, but not that of his brother. Paul says Abel's better offering demonstrated faith on Abel's part (Heb. 11:4).

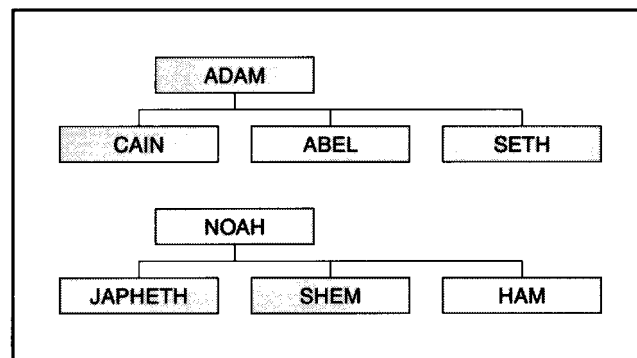
Faith implies a previous revelation: it comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. It is probable that there was some command of God, concerning the rite of sacrifice, with which Abel complied. The “more excellent sacrifice” was the firstlings of his flock. This was a confession that

his sins deserved death, and the expression of a desire to share the benefits of the great atonement that, in the fullness of time, should be presented to God for the sin of man.

There are two significant aspects to the malice of Cain. First, rather than any general act of jealousy, he seems to pick up on the nature of Abel's blood sacrifice and draw his brother's own blood, making him his victim. In this he only compounded his guilt, not trusting in a provided victim to expiate his own sins.

Next, when queried by God, he answers, "Am I my brother's keeper?" Though the word "keeper" is not the same as used in verse 2 to describe Abel as a shepherd, it is used to describe a shepherd in I Samuel 17:20. The word means "to hedge about, to guard." Land is cultivated, but sheep are guarded. He was denying any identification with the works of Abel.

By Cain's sin, he disinherited himself from the line of the promised seed. Abel became a picture of the faithful seed, though God used others to perpetuate the lineage because of his early death (Gen. 4:25).



SHEM

Shem, the son of Noah, was another exception. He is often considered the firstborn, for he is mentioned first in six passages as: Shem, Ham and Japheth. However, he was actually second born. The correct birth order was: Japheth, Shem, Ham. Here is the evidence.

In Genesis 5:32 we read, "Noah was 500 years old and Noah begat Shem, Ham and Japheth", It is obvious that they were not all begotten or born in that year, for they were not triplets. The text means his children began to be born in that year. His oldest son was born that year.

According to Genesis 7:11 the flood came upon the earth just 100 years later during Noah's 600th year. However Shem was not 100 till 2 years after the flood (Gen. 11:10). This means he was born in the 502nd year of Noah's life. An older brother was born in the 500th year of Noah. This older brother was not Ham, for in Genesis 9:24 he is called Noah's "younger" son. Therefore Japheth must have been first. Japheth is also called the "elder" in Genesis 9:21. So the order is Japheth, Shem, Ham. The prominence of Shem seems connected with his initiative of faith and honor in his act of covering his father's shame in Genesis 9:20-27.

Shem was given the unique privilege of being one of only two links between Adam and the first seed of the Abrahamic covenant. Methuselah, in his first 243 years, was contemporary with Adam,

and had ample opportunity to be grounded in the hope for the seed. Shem lived his first 98 years contemporarily with Methuselah, until the year of the flood. He had enough time to hear Methuselah's firsthand account of his experience with the first created couple. Shem also lived to Abraham's 150th year, long enough to see Abraham's seed, Isaac, who was then 50, and married to Rebekah for 10 years. Jewish tradition claims Shem was Melchizedek, to whom Abraham paid tithes.

All this was his special privilege of faith, though Shem was the second born. God chose the second born for the heritage of faith, when faith rose to the opportunity.

ABRAHAM

Consider Abraham with whom God chose to establish a special birthright promise. Abraham himself was one of three children. "Terah lived seventy years, and begat Abram, Nahor, and Haran. Now these are the generations of Terah: Terah begat Abram, Nahor, and Haran; and Haran begat Lot." (Gen. 11:26-27) Like the listing of Noah's family, Abraham is listed first, but he was not the firstborn.

Terah began his family when he was 70. He lived for 205 years. Therefore his oldest son would have been 135 when he died. Yet the account says Abraham was only 75 when he departed from Haran after his father's death, on his way to Canaan. So he had an older brother. Which of the two brothers was the firstborn we cannot be sure, but we can make a likely determination. His brother Haran had two children, Lot and Milcha. He then died in Ur. The other brother, Nahor, married Haran's daughter, Milcha. This suggests that Nahor was the youngest and close to a generation younger than his oldest brother, for his brother's daughter was close to his own age.

The father, Terah, then moved to the city of Haran (named after another ancestor whose name was Haran) with his two sons, Abraham and Nahor, their wives, Sarah and Milcha, and the orphaned Lot. After Terah's death Abraham, Sarah and Lot moved to Canaan. From these facts, we infer that Abraham was the second born, and certainly not the firstborn.

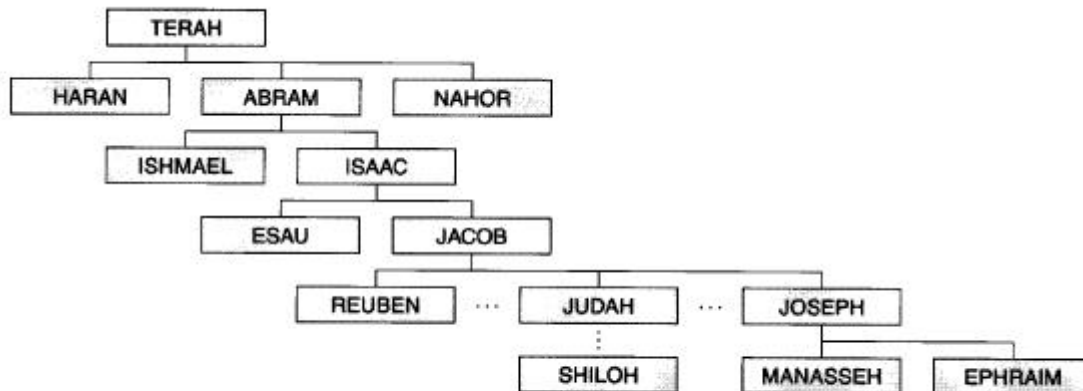
The promises to Abraham for his great act of faith are very familiar to us. Yet he lacked children by his wife Sarah for many years. He did, however, have a son by his concubine, Hagar, when he was 86 (Gen. 16:15-16).

ISAAC

Abraham had great hopes in this seed to fulfill God's promise. In due time Sarah bore him Isaac (Gen. 21:2-5). While Isaac was the firstborn to Sarah, he was the second born to Abraham. The children were raised in the same home and Abraham had great expectations for his firstborn, Ishmael.

Sarah however laid hold on an element of faith. "Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, which she had born unto Abraham, mocking. Wherefore she said unto Abraham, Cast out this bondwoman and her son: for the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, even with Isaac. And the thing was very grievous in Abraham's sight because of his son. (NIV. because it concerned his son.)" (Gen. 21:9-11)

The seed had to be of the right mother. In this respect Sarah is memorialized in Hebrews 11:11 for her faith “to conceive seed ... because she judged him faithful who had promised” “Later, God commended Abraham for his faith in offering up Isaac (Heb. 11:17-19). Certainly Isaac's faith is shown in submitting to the test of Abraham's knife on Moriah.



JACOB

When Isaac came of age, after his mother's death, he married Rebekah. She was a granddaughter of Isaac's uncle Nahor. She bore Isaac twins. The first to be born was Esau who was covered with red hair; the other was Jacob who was born holding Esau's heel. Even while still expecting, Rebekah received a vision from the Lord that the elder would serve the younger (Gen. 25:23).

When the boys were grown, Esau sold his birthright for a bowl of lentils. The older had less respect unto the promise. Rebekah discerned this and arranged for Isaac to receive the first blessing as Jacob was dying. Again it was the mother's vision that saw that the second born's faith should be rewarded. This switch caused much dissension between the brothers, but in time they reconciled in the land of Seir.

Jacob also married from Nahor's house. He married Rachel, who was a great granddaughter of Nahor. He received Leah, then served a total of 14 years to Laban for the sake of Rachel. He had a concubine for each wife, however, Rachel was always the intended bride.

JOSEPH

Rachel was barren for many years. Yet in the end, Jacob had 12 sons and 1 daughter named Dinah. The last and youngest children were by Rachel: Joseph and finally Benjamin. Rachel died while bearing Benjamin.

Reuben was Jacob's firstborn, and Jacob acknowledges this in Genesis 49. But Reuben lacked something of parental honor. He defiled his father's bed by lying with his father's concubine, Bilhah. I Chronicles 5:1-2 (NIV) explains the consequences. “The sons of Reuben the

firstborn of Israel (he was the firstborn, but when he defiled his father's marriage bed, his rights as firstborn were given to the sons of Joseph son of Israel; so he could not be listed in the genealogical record in accordance with his birthright, and though Judah was the strongest of his brothers and a ruler came from him, the rights of the firstborn belonged to Joseph.”

This is a direct reference to the blessings bestowed by Jacob in Genesis 49. The Chief Ruler (Jesus) would come of Judah, but the birthright would go to the lineage of Joseph, as the son of his intended wife, even though he was nearly the last son.

It was Joseph who in faith laid hold on the reality of his early dreams of sheaves of wheat. He faithfully served Potiphar's house and patiently served an undeserved prison term. He then faithfully served Pharaoh's domain and was promoted to share the very throne of Egypt. He bore no grudge toward his brethren who sold him to slavery and blessed his father's house.

So his father gave him the firstborn's portion, though he was nearly the last born. This procedure stands in stark contrast to the guideline of Deuteronomy 21:15-17, for Joseph was the son of the second wife who was loved more. It was a higher rule of faith that took precedence over the letter of the law.

The blessing of Jacob takes an interesting departure from the norm. As pertains to the seed of Abraham, he says Shiloh would be of Judah, but as pertains to the double portion of land, it belonged to Joseph. Indeed it was so. Joseph was not given a portion of the land of Canaan. But because his two sons each received a portion, Joseph really received a double portion. Because there were not portions for Joseph and Levi, there were still 12 portions after the division of the land.

EPHRAIM

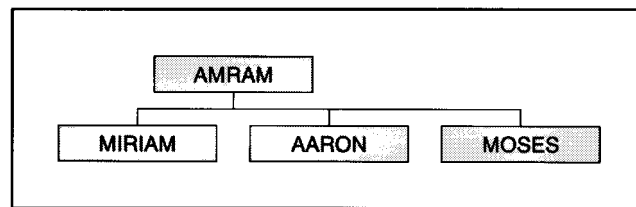
Pharaoh gave Joseph an Egyptian wife named Asenath (Gen. 41:45). She bore him two sons, Manasseh first, then Ephraim. As Jacob, or as he is now called, Israel, is about to die, a tender scene occurs in Genesis 48:1-2, 8-22 (Moffatt). “Israel stretched his right hand out and laid it on the head of Ephraim the younger boy, and put his left on Manasseh's head, crossing his hands intentionally, as Manasseh was the first-born”

Jacob, on this death bed, memorializes his gratitude for being blessed as the second born. He sees by faith that God would bless the younger of his grandchildren, and so it was. In time Ephraim far exceeded Manasseh in numbers after the settlement of Canaan.

MOSES

Moses was the one by whose hand the Hebrews were delivered from Egypt. Although he rose to the throne of Egypt, we read, “By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season” (Heb. 11:24-25)

God raised Moses as a deliverer and would later raise to Israel another deliverer like, but greater than, Moses. But Moses was not the firstborn. He was the second brother. Miriam was the firstborn daughter, Aaron the firstborn son, followed by Moses. The deliverer would be the second son rather than the first. Aaron served as Moses' spokesman and priest, but not deliverer. It was Moses' faith that was honored. By faith he chose to leave the house of Pharaoh after 40 years. His faith endured another 40 years in the wilderness with his father-in-law, Jethro. At 80 his faith guided his people for another 40 years until he died at 120 years.



Was there any other reason God arranged to favor Abel before Cain, Shem before Japheth, Isaac before Ishmael, Jacob before Esau, Judah and Joseph before Reuben, Ephraim before Manasseh, and Moses before Aaron?

We can suppose there were at least two reasons. Israel was God's firstborn: "Thou shalt say unto Pharaoh, Thus saith the Lord, Israel is my son, even my firstborn: And I say unto thee, Let my son go, that he may serve me: and if thou refuse to let him go, behold, I will slay thy son, even thy firstborn." (Exod. 4:22-23). God foresaw their lack of faith to fulfill all that would be required of his chosen nation. The Gentiles were his second earthly sons. They were grafted into the places where the first branches were broken off (Matt. 21:43; Acts 15:14; Rom. 11:17).

The firstborn who were broken off are not forgotten and will be grafted in again to the root, the Abrahamic promise. But their inheritance will be earthly. The second born's portion is spiritual.

Another reason is that God arranged a grand type of the two Adams. The first Adam was God's first created son on earth. Adam lost his earthly birthright through disobedience. It would be God's second son on earth (though created first in the heavens), who would receive the birthright and redeem the purchased possession. Through the second Adam, the "firstborn" and his family will return to its inheritance.

Paul notes this unique exchange in the expected order. "The first Adam became a living soul. The last Adam became a life-giving spirit. However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural; then the spiritual." (I Cor. 15:45-46 NAS) How much higher are God's ways and thoughts than ours!

- Jerry Leslie

History of the Ark

“The Ark of the Covenant ... represented the eternal purpose of God ... for mankind in the Christ. ... Christ Jesus and his Bride, the ‘little flock,’ to be ... imbued with power and great glory...” (T121) Therefore, some of its travels and circumstances may represent the experiences of Jesus and his saints in their journey to glory– to their spiritual temple. (cf. R3282, R5679) Below is a summary of the Old Testament narratives regarding the Ark.

SINAI

Construction directions from God	Ex. 25:10-22
To be placed in the Most Holy.	Ex. 26:34, 40:3
Moses directs Israelites to make the Ark.	Ex. 35:12
Bezaleel makes it.	Ex. 37:1-9
Brought to Moses by Israelites.	Ex. 39:35
Tables of the Testimony put into it by Moses, and placed in the Tabernacle.	Deut. 10:1-5 Ex. 40:20, 21
The meeting place between God and Moses, where Moses heard a voice speak.	Ex. 25:22, Num. 7:89
To be anointed with the holy oil.	Ex. 30:26, 40:9
Anointed when the Priests are consecrated.	Lev. 8:10
Not to be approached by Aaron at all times.	Lev. 16:2
Sprinkled with blood on Day of Atonement	
Under the charge of the Kohathites.	Nu m. 3:31
Coverings of the Ark previous to the march.	Num. 4:5, 6
The ordinary place of the Ark in the march.	Num. 10:21

THE WILDERNESS

Departs from ordinary place to lead the way.	Num. 10:33-36
Remained in camp during Hormah defeat.	Num. 14:44
Aaron's rod laid up before it.	Num. 17:10
Rod and pot of manna put inside.	Heb. 9:4
Perhaps one of the “holy instruments” Phineas took to battle.	Num. 31:6
Levites to place Book of the Law inside.	Deut. 31:9-26

THE LAND

The Ark divides the waters of Jordan.	Joshua 3 & 4
Walls of Jericho fall down before the Ark.	Joshua 6
Israel defeated at Ai. Joshua falls before the Ark, and God directs him as to Achan.	Joshua 7
Ark stands before Ebel and Gerizim, while blessings and curses are pronounced.	Deut. 27:11-26 Joshua 8:30-35

GILGAL

Joshua holds a standing camp at Gilgal, from whence he makes excursions and conquests of the land. Here also he divides some portions of the land amongst Israel. It is probable that the Tabernacle and Ark were here for some time.

Joshua 14:6
Joshua 9:6
Joshua 10:7-43

SHILOH

Tabernacle removed to Shiloh.
The remainder of the land divided.
Levitical cities appointed.
The two and a half tribes sent back.
Israel assembles here respecting the altar of the Reubenites. Hence it is possible that the Ark was in the Tabernacle all the time it was at Shiloh.

Joshua 18, 19
Joshua 21
Joshua 22:9
Joshua 22:12
Joshua 18

SHECHEM

Subsequently we find Joshua gathering all Israel to Shechem, and that "the sanctuary of the Lord" was there. But the Ark may have remained at Shiloh, as the Tabernacle was replaced there again before the time of Judges 20.

Joshua 24:1-26

SHILOH

The Tabernacle and Ark again stationary here, as is evident from the "house of God: twice mentioned, and the Ark also in connection with it. That this was at Shiloh seems plain. 1 Samuel 1 opens with worship and sacrifice carried on at Shiloh. The Ark directly mentioned as at Shiloh.

Judges 20:18, 26
Judges 20:27
Judges 21:2, 12
Judges 21:19
1 Sam. 3:3

APHEK AND EBENEZER

Brought to battle, captured by Philistines.

1 Sam. 4

ASHDOD

Removed by Philis. from Ebenezer to Ashdod. Dagon falls before it at Ashdod.

1 Sam. 5:1-8
1 Sam. 5:3

EKRON

Ark sent to Ekron, Philistines plagued.

1 Sam. 5:8-12
1 Sam. 6:1, 2

BETH-SHEMESH

The Ark sent up in a new cart, takes the way to Beth-shemesh. The men of Beth-shemesh slain, because they looked into the Ark.

1 Sam. 6:9, 20

KIRJATH-JEARIM

Taken to Kirjath-jearim, and remains 20 years.

1 Sam. 6:21
1 Sam. 7:1, 2

GIBEAH

Saul consults the Ark at Gibeah at the time of Jonathan's miraculous success; but it must have been only removed from Kirjath-jearim for a time, as we find it again there.

1 Sam. 14:16-18
2 Sam. 6

KIRJATH-JEARIM

(Called also Valle of Judah and Gibeah)

The Ark fetched up thence by David out of the house of Abinadab, whence it had been twenty years. In 2 Sam. 6 the house of Abinadab is said to be in Gibeah, but this only means "the hill"; see 1 Sam. 7:1.

2 Sam. 6

THE HOUSE OF OBED-EDOM

Uzzah smitten, and the Ark is carried aside into the house of Obed-edom, the Gittite. It remains there three months.

2 Sam. 6:11
1 Chron. 13:14

THE CITY OF DAVID (Jerusalem, or Zion)

David prepares it a tent in the city of David. He carries it up on the shoulders of the Levites to the city of David and deposits it in the Tabernacle he had made for it.

2 Sam. 6:12-23
1 Chron. 15:1-29
1 Chron. 16:1-38

Levites appointed to minister before the Ark. (The Tabernacle and altar of burnt-offering this time at Gibeon, and remained there till Solomon removed it and its vessels to the Temple.)

1 Chron. 15:1, 16:39, 21:29
1 Kings 3:4-15, 8:4
2 Chron. 1:3-13

David desires to build a house for the Ark, but is not permitted.

1 Chron. 17:1
2 Sam. 7:2

David sins in the matter of Bathsheba. Uriah refuses to take his rest in his own house, because the Ark and Israel are abiding in tents.

2 Sam. 11:11

David obliged to flee from Jerusalem, because of Absalom's rebellion, and sends back Zadok and the Levites with the Ark to Jerusalem, after they had accompanied him a little way.

2 Sam. 15:24, 25
2 Chron. 3:1

Solomon builds the Temple on Mt. Moriah. The

1 Kings 6:1

oracle for the Ark, with two large cherubim.

1 Kings 6:19-28

MOUNT MORIAH

The Ark is borne from the city of David, or Mt. Zion, to its resting place in the Temple, on Mt. Moriah; and its staves are drawn out.

2 Chron. 5

1 Kings 8

We hear no more of the Ark till the time of Josiah, when it seems as if it had been previously moved from the Temple, but was replaced there by his command. 2 Chron. 35:3.

There is a prophecy concerning the Ark in Jeremiah 3:16, 17.

Summarized from Henry W. Soltau, "The Holy Vessels and Furniture of the Tabernacle." London, England-1851