

Beauties of the Truth

A Forum for the Publication of Scriptural Viewpoints
Thought to be Harmonious with God's Plan of the Ages
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*The Jewish Diaspora: 135 to the Fall of Rome*¹

BAR KOKHBA'S REBELLION (132-135 AD)

The last agonized moans of the crucified on Jerusalem's walls fell still, drowned out by the steady tramp of a heavy military occupation that followed the failed Great Jewish Revolt (70-73 AD). The Second Temple was destroyed by the Roman siege on August 4, 70 AD. This date is the 9th of Av on the Jewish calendar. As prophesied, no stone was left upon stone and the site was salted as a further special insult so that no blade of grass could grow.

After two generations, Judea seemingly was sufficiently pacified so that Emperor Hadrian paid a personal visit promising to rebuild (130 AD). This hopeful promise quickly revealed its dark character, for Hadrian's vision was that on the ruins would rise a model city re-named Aelia Capitolina, not a Jewish capital. Exercising the arrogance which was characteristic of this period, this name would commemorate his own name, *Aelianus Hadrianus*, which was to be placed first, and *Capitolina* after the cult name *Jupiter Capitolina* (Jupiter being the chief deity of the Roman Pantheon).

The Roman sacred plough roughly bit through the salt-deadened rubble of the temple mount. It was guided by the steady hand of the Roman religious officer Titus Aniosrufus (131 AD), in an act of pagan ceremonial dedication to mark the boundary of what would be the new Roman temple. This new temple would house images of both the emperor Hadrian and Jupiter. Hadrian's magnificent temple was to be located directly over the ruins of the once magnificent temple of the Lord.

While the ceremonial features of the law ceased with the destruction of Herod's temple, a Sanhedrin now solely of Pharisaic derivation was reconstituted, this time with no Sadducees. This reconstituted Sanhedrin carried on business from the Judean coastal town of Yavne (Jamnia). Rabbi Akiva, president of the Sanhedrin, convinced this body to support the impending revolt, proclaiming the chosen commander Simon as the Jewish Messiah. Taking the prophecy

from Numbers 24:17, "There shall come a star out of Jacob," Simon was surnamed "Bar Kokhba" which means "son of a star" in the Aramaic language. The Jewish leaders carefully planned the second revolt to avoid numerous mistakes that had plagued the first Great Jewish Revolt sixty years earlier. "Ploughing the field" galvanized even the most accommodating of the Jews dwelling near Jerusalem's ruins, and the second revolt quickly spread across the country in 132 AD, overwhelming the occupation forces. A sovereign Jewish state was restored for the two and a half years where religious rituals were observed and sacrifices were resumed on the Altar.

The outbreak took the Romans by surprise, but Rome also had learned the lessons of the first revolt. Hadrian recalled the entire army from Britain and also called in forces from the volatile border near the Danube River so that the empire could meet the rebellion with a more massive force than in the earlier campaign. Even so, Roman losses — including an entire legion — were so heavy that Hadrian's report to the Roman Senate omitted the customary salutation, "I and the legions are well."

The struggle lasted for three years before the revolt was brutally crushed in the summer of 135 AD. After losing Jerusalem, Bar Kokhba and the remnants of his army withdrew to the fortress of Betar, 12 kilometers southwest of Jerusalem. Betar then came under siege resulting in the

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death of Bar Kokhba, Rabbi Akiva, and many other important sages of the Mishnah on August 5, 135 AD. This date was the 9th of Av on the Jewish calendar, the day of national mourning marking both the destruction of the first temple by Nebuchadnezzar, and the second temple by Titus.² Before the conqueror's taste for blood was sated in the pillaging that followed, perhaps 580,000 died, and no burials of the fallen at Betar were permitted for 17 years. What had been known as *Judea* was renamed *Syria Palaestina* after Israel's intractable enemies, the Syrians and the Philistines. This is the origin of the present name *Palestine*.

In the aftermath of the second rebellion's collapse, near Hebron, *four* human beings spared from death were sold for one *seah* of barley (about 14 liters volume). Hadrian now built a wall around Jerusalem and allowed no Jews to enter the city. It was only at a later period that they were permitted to go to the surrounding mountains, probably the Mount of Olives, to cast a mournful, sorrowing look towards the seat of their ancient glory. Later yet, they purchased from the Greek and Roman garrison the permission to enter its precincts once a year, on the day of its destruction, the 9th of Av, in order to weep there for their mournful fate, and the fall and dispersion of Israel.

The land was nearly depopulated of Jews, and their second epic defeat marked the beginning of the Great Diaspora of the Jews. This term "diaspora" is from the Greek *διασπορα*, "scattering" (John 7:35, James 1:1, 1 Peter 1:1). It appears in Greek apocryphal literature (2 Maccabees 1:27, Judith 5:19), and the writings of Josephus (Antiquities 12:13), as a general epithet for this prophetic period of disfavor.

JEWISH MIGRATION

At the time of Bar Kokhba's defeat, a large portion of the Jewish population still lived beyond the Roman Empire's borders in Persia, Mesopotamia, Oman, Yemen, Aden, and even as far distant as India and China where they had migrated since the Babylonian captivity. The scholars in these communities continued to influence Judaism throughout the world. Within the Roman empire significant and prosperous Jewish communities were to be found in Alexandria, Carthage and the major cities on the coast of North Africa. Large communities continued in Asia Minor and Greece. Within Italy itself, most of the major urban areas from Genoa, Rome and down to Sicily supported Jewish communities, as did southern Spain and most of Gaul.

The Jewish communities were equally active as agriculturists and occupied in urban professions.³ By 312 AD the Jews had settled every part of the Roman Empire but Britain. They were guaranteed freedom of religion and were allowed to practice Jewish law in disputes with fellow Jews. There were probably at least 3 million Jews in 312 AD, one million of whom lived west of Macedonia.

THE EMERGENCE OF CHRISTIANITY

Christian Jews had held themselves separate from the Messianic appeal of the Bar Kokhba rebellion. At the same time, the growth of an actively proselytizing Christianity



Coin from the Bar Kokhba Revolt.
Obverse — Temple facade with a rising star
Reverse — "Year one of the redemption of Israel"

from the pagan converts to the faith challenged the Roman system in a way that Judaism never had. Roman law had made accommodations for Jewish religion, and drew a clear distinction between Jewish religion and Jewish inspired politics. Christianity made no compromise to accommodate Roman emperor worship. Christianity's radical message of a "King of Kings and Lord of Lords" who was *not* the Roman emperor continued to attract imperial attention and periods of brutal persecution. Observing that no early New Testament collections of Gospels and Epistles contains the Revelation, it has been suggested that this powerful indictment of the present world order was circulated secretly. Thus far, the Jewish communities under pagan Rome were occasional, but rare, objects of persecution.

After a tolerant reign of nearly twenty years, Emperor Diocletian issued a series of edicts in 303 AD that sought nothing less than to re-establish the old imperial values of Rome and exterminate Christianity. His sullied name forever is linked to some of the severest and most inhuman of the persecutions devised by fallen human imagination. Failing health forced Diocletian, the "Augustus" Caesar, to retire in 306 AD, but his policies continued in force and were zealously pursued by Galerius and Maximian, two other co-rulers in the College of Emperors who encouraged the adoption of the persecuting measures. In the struggle for succession to supreme power, an able military commander, Constantine, became the leading contender for the throne.

One of history's most startling reversals of state policy then ensued. Constantine was not a Christian himself officially, but he claimed to have had two visions setting a course for the emergence of Christianity as the new religion of Rome. His first vision was of the sun in its glory emblazoned with the formerly despised Christian cross and reading in Greek, "By this sign shall you conquer" (*Touto nika*); this reportedly was followed by a vision the following night of Christ himself. On this dubious authority, the armies of Constantine now marched into battle with the cross insignia represented by a stylized cross-shaped "Chi-Rho," a Greek anagram for Christ emblazoned on their shields.

This army and its new insignia were victorious on October 28, 312 AD, and the ascension of Constantine heralded an era of new challenge for Christianity. With this victory

came unprecedented woes for the Jews of the Diaspora. Unofficially, Jews were now the object of scorn. Constantine stopped the Roman policy of persecuting Christians by issuing an “edict of toleration” (313 AD), which closed ten years of unspeakable cruelty. This edict said that it was no longer a crime to be a Christian.

Constantine recognized that the future of the Roman Empire did not rest in defending an increasingly troubled European frontier that could not feed itself and was already under pressure from raids and frontier wars caused by the massive migrations of peoples such as the Vandals and Goths. Constantine also recognized that the future did not lay with fortunes of the decadent city of Rome (which was not his, but Maximian’s, power base), nor should a diverse multi-cultural empire insist on observations of Rome’s traditional pagan religion which was losing adherents to not only Christianity but to other emerging religions such as Mithraism and Manichaeism.



Papyrus containing Bar Kokhba's orders found in the Judean desert by Israeli archeologist Yigael Yadin.

Christianity was seen as an emerging unifying force. Constantine wanted to establish a truly Christian empire untainted by paganism and he founded a new Christian capital at Byzantium and called it “Constantinople” (May 11, 330), on the border between Asia and Europe and also where his political power was strongest, thus ushering in an era of new challenge for Christianity and unprecedented woes for the Jews. While localities such as Alexandria had experienced sporadic anti-Jewish riots inspired by Christian mobs since the 200s, Constantine’s rise meant that Jews were now the object of scorn throughout the empire.

Constantine and his mother, Helena, caused churches and monasteries to be built everywhere; and officially sanctioned pilgrimage sites were established, including the Holy sepulcher and other sites in Jerusalem, and a site for Mount Sinai safely within Rome’s boundaries. Ultimately, an unholy union of church and state emerged with the following three parallel developments taking place:

- The Nicean Council setting the course for a formal endorsement of Trinitarian doctrine (325, 381 AD).
- Setting up the *daily* celebration of the mass as a magical recreation of Christ’s sacrifice, “the Abomination which maketh desolate” (400s).
- Setting up the Pope in place of Christ (539 AD) along with the setting up of a church organization that was parallel to the civil organization. So parallel were these organizations that 1600 years after the fall of Rome, long after the details of it’s civil administration have been forgotten, the basic Roman unit of political organization called the “diocese” still serves as the name for the basic unit of Catholic Church organization.

The prophet Daniel says much about the “Abomination which maketh Desolate,” and Jesus, in Matthew 24:15, admonishes us to take heed to these words of Daniel. In Revelation 2:13, the message to the church in Pergamos speaks of the spiritual ills of this period. These ills affected both houses of Israel, the spiritual seed, and the natural seed of Abraham, the Jews.

During Constantine’s reign a Roman Jew named Joseph converted to Christianity, and acquired Constantine’s confidence. After he obtained permission to proselytize his people, and to build churches and monasteries, he traveled in Palestine as a missionary focusing on Cæsarea, Tiberias, Nazara, and Kefr Tanchum.

All these towns were Jewish enclaves. He was unsuccessful and after reporting this to Constantine the emperor imposed heavy taxes and fines on Jews, and caused a great many of the leaders in these towns to be put to death. Constantine reigned till the year 342 AD, and his persecution may have driven the first Jews to Britain.

JULIAN THE APOSTATE

Not all Romans with a lust for power shared Constantine’s vision. A notable reactionary movement arose when Constantine’s nephew Julian, called the Apostate, assumed the government (361-363 AD). He was a great friend of the Jews and an ardent persecutor of the Christians.

In the second year of his reign, he gave the chief religious leader of Israel the order to rebuild the temple at Jerusalem. Preparations were actually made to carry this out, when the sudden death of Julian frustrated the measure, and the work was left unaccomplished.

Julian repealed all the contributions, taxes, and laws with which Constantine had burdened and punished the Jews. Shortly afterwards, Valentinian ascended the throne in 368 AD and he was especially kind to the Jews.

In the twelfth year of his reign, 380 AD, he commanded the rebuilding of the wall around Jerusalem, and promised to make liberal expenditures for this purpose; but he died in the same year, and this project also was frustrated. The brevity of his reign frustrated these plans and the course set by Constantine resumed.



Emperor Theodosius I, with the influential Ambrose, Bishop of Milan (by Anthony van Dyck, 1600s).

LOSS OF RIGHTS AND THE FALL OF ROME

Theodosius I (379-395 AD) then established the empire as “Christian” and Jews as outcasts without full citizenship rights that would be further eroded over the centuries and not be enjoyed again anywhere until 1791. During his reign, the Second Ecumenical Church Council (381 AD) solidified Trinitarian “Orthodoxy,” further alienating Jews from Church dogma. The Jewish Paschal week had marked the holiest week on the Church’s calendar since Apostolic times. Now these times and seasons were changed to the still current method of predicting “Easter” deliberately so that it almost never coincides with the actual proper observance (Daniel 7:25).

Rome’s fall to Alaric the Vandal (410 AD) sent a shock through the civilized world and initiated a new period of isolation and persecution for the Jews. For the European portion of the empire in the west, Rome’s fall typically marks the beginning of the “Dark Ages” that were to last one thousand years. From this point forward the history of the Roman world must follow two tracks — the impoverished European portion and the Greek-speaking “Byzantium” in the East with its capital in Constantinople. The rise of Islam was to create new complications for the Jewish people in the unrelenting treading down of Jerusalem by the Gentiles, for which the worst lay yet in the future.

— Bro. Richard Doctor

(1) For some additional information about this period the following two web-sites should offer reasonable scholarship — en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bar_Kokhba%27s_revolt (and) www.ucalgary.ca/~elsegal/TalmudMap/Mishnah.html

(2) Doctor, R., “The 9th of Av,” *Beauties of the Truth* (17, 4) Nov 2006.

(3) Gilbert, M., *Atlas of Jewish History*, Dorset Press (1984) p.16-17.

The Sons of Aaron and Levi

“Who may abide the day [now present] of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? For he is like a refiner’s fire, and like fullers’ soap: And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver” (Malachi 3:1-6).

All those calling upon the name of the LORD in hope, faith and love are seeking a blessing. Though God’s chosen people are still blinded to their Messiah, yet the blessings and mercies of God are certain, as are his judgments.

“As the glorious Messenger of the Covenant is now present to sit as the great Judge, we may well ask the question propounded by God’s Prophet of old [Malachi 3:1-6] ... A part of the prophecy of Malachi 3 *seems to have an application to fleshly Israel*. The Lord reproves them, showing that His course toward them as a people had been in conformity to His Covenant with them at Mt. Sinai. But they had been unfaithful to their part of the Covenant. At the appearing of this great Messenger of the New Covenant, which is to supersede the old Covenant, He will purge God’s ancient people. The time is now due for favor to begin to be restored to them; but before their full restoration they must experience further chastisement for their purification and preparation for the great Messiah” (R.5442:5).

A special privilege of service in the Kingdom is the birthright specifically of the natural children of Levi, but are they indeed an identifiable separate population, excepting by Divine insight?

Current genetic research seems to answer, “Yes.”

The sons of Levi were taken in place of all Israel’s first-born to serve as the priests of the Holy Nation (Exodus 13:2, Numbers 3:40-51). The Bible speaks of how the priesthood was established with the appointment of Aaron of the tribe of Levi as the first high priest. The children of Levi from the sub-family of “Kohath” had the special privilege of priesthood.

Recognition of this connection of Jewish males descended from the priestly line continues to this day, even though the temple services ended with its destruction in 70 AD. It is determined by strict patrilineal (i.e. from the father) descent. The subsets of male Jews comprising the priesthood were known as “Kohanim,” hence the variants on the name “Cohen” in English represent this claim to priestly descent.

This led a curious group of scientists to put to the test whether this claim could be validated by showing a unique family relationship among those bearing this priestly surname. This began with the scientists knowing that each parent contributes only one chromosome that determines the sex of the child. It is critical to know that these sex determining chromosomes come only from the father, since a

mother carries two “X-X” chromosomes and will always contribute one of these chromosomes to her child, which will always be an “X” chromosome. It is the father with an “X-Y” chromosome combination who may contribute either an “X” chromosome, in which case there will be another “X-X” chromosome pair and he will have a daughter, or a “Y” chromosome, in which case there will be an “X-Y” pair and a son will be born.

Accordingly, scientists skilled in determining family relations through genetic inheritance found clear differences in the frequency of the male or “Y” chromosomes inheritance patterns between Jewish priests and their lay counterparts. Using this new technique, biologists have traced the diaspora of Jewish populations from the dispersals that began with the Babylonian captivity to the modern communities of Europe and the Middle East. The analysis provides genetic witness that these communities have, to a remarkable extent, retained their biological identity separate from their host populations, evidence of relatively little intermarriage or conversion into Judaism over the centuries.

Dr. Lawrence H. Schiffman, chairman of the department of Hebrew and Judaic Studies at New York University, said the study fit with historical evidence that Jews originated in the Near East and with biblical evidence suggesting that there were a variety of families and types in the original population. He said the finding would cause “a lot of discussion of the relationship of scientific evidence to the manner in which we evaluate long-held academic and personal religious positions,” like the question of who is a Jew.¹

The study was conducted by Dr. Michael F. Hammer of the University of Arizona with colleagues in the United States, Italy, Israel, England and South Africa.² The results accord with Jewish history and tradition, refuting theories like those holding that Jewish communities consist mostly of converts from other faiths, or that they are descended from the Khazars, a medieval Turkic tribe north of the Caucasus Mountains that adopted Judaism.

THE ANALYSIS

The analysis by Dr. Hammer and colleagues focused on the “Y” chromosome, which is passed unchanged from father to son. In principle, all men should therefore carry the identical sequence of DNA letters on their “Y” chromosomes, but in fact occasional “misspellings,” that is miscoding of the four “letters” has occurred, and because each misspelling is then repeated in subsequent generations, the branching lineages of errors form a family tree rooted in the original Adam.

These variant spellings are in DNA that is not involved in the genes and therefore has no known effect on the body. But the type and abundance of the lineages in each population serve as a genetic signature by which to compare different populations.

Based on these variations, Dr. Hammer identified 19 variations in the “Y” chromosome family tree. The ancestral

Middle East population from which both Arabs and Jews are descended was a mixture of men from eight of these lineages. Among major contributors to the ancestral Arab-Jewish population were men who carried what Dr. Hammer calls the “Med” lineage. This “Y” chromosome is found all round the Mediterranean and in Europe.

Another lineage common in the ancestral Arab-Jewish gene pool is found among today’s Ethiopians and may have reached the Middle East by men who traveled down the Nile. But present-day Ethiopian Jews lack some of the other lineages found in Jewish communities, and overall are more like non-Jewish Ethiopians than other Jewish populations, at least in terms of their “Y” chromosome lineage pattern. The ancestral pattern of lineages is recognizable in today’s Arab and Jewish populations, but is distinct from that of European populations, and both groups differ widely from sub-Saharan Africans.

Another finding, paradoxical but unsurprising, is that by the yardstick of the “Y” chromosome, the world’s Jewish communities closely resemble not only each other but also Palestinians, Syrians and Lebanese, suggesting that all are descended from a common ancestral population that inhabited the Middle East some four thousand years ago.

Each Arab and Jewish community has its own flavor of the ancestral pattern, reflecting their different genetic histories. Roman Jews have a pattern quite similar to that of Ashkenazis, the Jewish community of Northern and Eastern Europe. (Ashkenaz, in Genesis 10, is the Hebrew word for Germanic tribes.) Dr. Hammer said the finding accorded with the hypothesis that Roman Jews were the ancestors of the Ashkenazis.

Despite the Ashkenazi Jews’ long residence in Europe, their “Y” signature has remained distinct from that of non-Jewish Europeans. On the assumption that there have been 80 generations since the founding of the Ashkenazi population, Dr. Hammer and colleagues calculate that the rate of genetic admixture with Europeans has been less than half a percent per generation.

Jewish law tracing back almost 2,000 years states that Jewish affiliation is determined by maternal ancestry, so the “Y” chromosome study addresses the question of how much non-Jewish men may have contributed to Jewish genetic diversity. Dr. Hammer was surprised to find how little that contribution was. “It could be that wherever Jews were, they were very much isolated,” he said. “The close genetic affinity between Jews and Arabs, at least by the “Y” chromosome yardstick, is reflected in the Genesis account of how Abraham fathered Ishmael by his wife’s maid Hagar, and when Sarah was then able to conceive, Isaac.”

— Richard Doctor

(1) Wade, Nicholas, “Y-Chromosome Bears Witness to Story of the Jewish Diaspora,” *New York Times*, May 9, 2000.

(2) Hammer, Michael F., et al., “Y-Chromosomes of Jewish Priests,” *Nature* (Vol. 385), January 2, 1997.

Jeremiah

“The word of the LORD came in the days of Josiah the son of Amon king of Judah, in the thirteenth year of his reign ... unto the end of the eleventh year of Zedekiah the son of Josiah king of Judah, unto the carrying away of Jerusalem captive in the fifth month” (Jeremiah 1:2, 3).

Jeremiah was Jehovah’s prophet to Israel, and to the nations surrounding. “I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations” (Jeremiah 1:5). As a humble servant of God, he was reticent. He considered himself too young for such an honor, “for I am a child [metaphorically].” But God replied, “Say not, I am a child: for thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee, and whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak” (Jeremiah 1:6, 7).

Jeremiah’s ministry from the 13th year of Josiah, to the end of the reign of Zedekiah, covered 40 years (18 in the reign of Josiah, and 11 each during the reigns of Jehoiakim and Zedekiah). At the end of that 40 years the kingdom of Judah was laid waste, because the Israelites would not cease from their sins, and would not accept their servitude to Babylon.

This period of 40 years reminds us that at both the first advent, and the second advent, there were also 40 years of warning before severe judgments. At the first advent this ran from 29 AD when Jesus commenced his ministry, until 69 AD, the last year Israel observed their Day of Atonement offerings, for the temple was destroyed the following spring. At the second advent, a like period of 40 years ran from our Lord’s second presence in 1874, to 1914 when World War One engulfed Christendom. Thus the judgments prophesied by Jeremiah against Judah in his day, appear to be a foregleam of the judgments against Israel at the first advent, and against Christendom at the second advent.

CHOSEN BEFORE BIRTH

Of Jeremiah, God said “Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee” (Jeremiah 1:5). This description certainly fits our Lord Jesus also, who was destined from even before the womb to be God’s spokesman to Israel and to all. Thus here also appears a connection between Jeremiah and Jesus.

A further connection between the two is supplied in Matthew 16:14, where Elijah and Jeremiah are named in connection with our Lord. “Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some Elias; and others Jeremiah, or one of the prophets” (Matthew 16:14). Jesus was a fulfillment of both Elijah and Jeremiah, in many respects.

Jeremiah’s words were received by the humble of heart, but were unheeded by the nation at large, and also by the surrounding nations. But as a messenger from God, he had a message for all three of these segments. So did our Lord Jesus during his first advent, and during his second advent.



Jeremiah the Prophet (by Michaelangelo, Sistine Chapel)

A RELIGIOUS REFORMATION

A great religious reformation in the 18th year of Josiah is recorded in 2 Chronicles 34:8 and following. It was not the beginning of turning to God, for verse seven shows that Josiah had done considerable work in removing false worship from Israel already. But in the 18th year, as a consequence of work at the Temple, a discovery was made of the “book of the law of Jehovah given by Moses” (verse 14). It led to a great change in the religious direction of the nation, at least for as long as the influence of Josiah was respected. As Jeremiah’s ministry began in the 13th year of Josiah, this religious reformation commenced five years into his forty year ministry. Was there a religious reformation marked at the fifth year of the forty years beginning at each of the two advents of Jesus?

Apparently there was. Five years after 29 AD brings us to 34 AD, which was the year of the conversion of Paul to be an Apostle of Jesus Christ. He was not one of the founding apostles, in the sense of being established with the others at the time of the Pentecostal blessing. But he was an added apostle, and the words at his conversion tell us he was a chosen agent on behalf of Jesus both toward the Jews and Gentiles. “He is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel” (Acts 9:15). The Book of Acts, from chapter 13 forward, records how effectively Paul was to minister to the same three segments as Jeremiah. The 14 epistles of Paul which appear in the New Testament constitute the bulk of the apostolic epistles we still use today.

Paul was a student. He was trained under Gamaliel, who even today is recognized as one of the leading rabbis of Israel’s history. And he lived a sanctified life, even before coming into Christ. It was this diligence — even though misdirected by his blindness to Christ until his conversion — which the Lord saw could be used on behalf of Christianity, if he was corrected. His conversion was a humbling experience. It is likely that if such a strong confrontation against former persuasions had come to many people, they may not be able to receive the correction with the humility that Paul

JEREMIAH PARALLELS

40 Years of Jeremiah's ministry

- Year 1 Calling in 13th year of Josiah
- Year 5 Reformation in 18th year of Josiah
- Year 22 First Captivity (Daniel 1:1)
- Year 30 Second Captivity (Jehoiachin)
- Year 40 Fall of Zedekiah

40 Years of First Advent

- Year 1 Beginning of Jesus' ministry, 29
- Year 5 Conversion of Paul, 34
- Year 22 Council at Jerusalem, 51
- Year 30 Three Missionary Tours complete, 59
- Year 40 End of Probation for Israel, 69

40 Years of Second Advent

- Year 1 Beginning of Harvest, 1874
- Year 5 Watchtower Publication, 1879
- Year 22 Herzl / Zionist Movement, 1896
- Year 30 Studies in the Scriptures complete, 1904
- Year 40 End of Probation for Christendom, 1914

did. In this is a lesson to all of us, to be pliable under the hands of the Almighty, and receptive to correction — even if it is humbling.

Paul's studious set of mind, coupled with sanctified devotion, and humility before God — specially his repentance from the persecution of the saints — all enabled him to be a useful agent in God's hand.

THE YEAR 34 AD

We say that Paul was converted in the year 34 AD. It may surprise some of our readers to know that Paul was converted so soon as the year after our Lord's crucifixion.¹ Some time after seeing this, we were glad to learn later from Bro. Frank Shallieu, before his passing, that his studies more than 20 years earlier led him to the same opinion.

The evidence for Paul's conversion in the year 34 AD is as follows. Galatians 1:18 says that three years after Paul's conversion, he went to Jerusalem, where he met Peter and James, and other local brethren, but did not visit generally in the churches of Judea. Galatians 2:1 says that fourteen years later he went again to Jerusalem for a council about the Gentiles. In the meantime his first missionary journey with Barnabas had occurred, and following the council he joined with Silas for a second missionary journey.

At the end of the first three years from Paul's conversion he escaped Damascus while Aretas was king (2 Corinthians 11:32). At the end of his second missionary journey he appeared before Gallio, deputy of Achaia, at the end of his visit

in Corinth (Acts 18:12). The context through verse 22 shows that this was about the spring time of whatever year, as he soon returned to Jerusalem for the feast of Pentecost.

Paul had been a year and a half at Corinth. Before that he had traveled overland through Asia Minor, by boat to Greece, overland through Macedonia, down to Athens, then to Corinth. If his travels before Corinth together matched the length of his settled stay in Corinth, then his second missionary journey would have taken three years.

This information allows us to assign some dates. The earliest date for Aretas as king of Damascus² was 37 AD, the year Emperor Tiberius died. Aretas died three years later in 40 AD, but there is good reason to use the earliest date, 37 AD, for the year of Paul's escape (which means his conversion, three years earlier, was in 34 AD).

Here is the reason. When Paul escaped from Damascus, he went to Jerusalem. Fifteen years later he went to Jerusalem again for the council of elders. If his escape from Damascus was in 37 AD, then the council at Jerusalem was in 51 AD. Thereafter Paul returned to Antioch, and then began his second missionary journey. If that consumed three years, then he returned to Jerusalem for the feast of Pentecost in 54 AD — it is hardly feasible to date it earlier.

That means he appeared before Gallio, near the end of that second missionary tour, late in 53 AD or early in 54 AD. Most sources cite 53 AD as the latest year feasible for Gallio as proconsul. Thus if Paul escaped Damascus later than 37 AD, the end of his stay in Corinth would be too late to appear before Gallio.

In summary — Paul's escape from Damascus could not be earlier than 37, for Aretas did not rule Damascus until then. It could not be later than 37, for then the end of Paul's stay in Corinth would be too late to appear before Gallio.

Thus Paul escaped Damascus in the year 37. Which means his conversion three years earlier was in 34 AD. Thus the ministry of Paul, and the testimony he bore, commenced five years into the 40 years which began with the Baptism of Christ in 29 AD.

SECOND ADVENT PARALLEL

Paul was not the bearer of Christian doctrine from the beginning. That was Christ, originally, and the other Apostles subsequently.

Similarly, Bro. Russell was not the bearer of the message of the second advent from the beginning of the harvest. Nelson Barbour and other Adventists had anticipated the date 1873 (subsequently modified to 1874). It was the recognition by Barbour and other early Adventist students of the scriptures, after the date, that perhaps Jesus had returned and was invisibly present, that so engaged the attention of Bro. Russell. As a consequence, he arranged a meeting in Philadelphia in the summer of 1876, where each shared with the other their studies — Bro. Barbour on the Lord's Second Presence, and Bro. Russell on the great hope for the world which the second advent was to introduce. Each contributed something meaningful to the other.

For a time there was a joint effort to publish their findings, but after some disruptions it seemed expedient to commence a separate journal. Thus the first issue of “Zion’s Watch Tower” commenced publication in the summer of 1879 — five years after the Lord’s return in 1874. Thus the religious reformation which followed may be said to have a beginning five years after the Lord’s Second Advent — in parallel with the reformation in the days of Jeremiah, and also at the first advent.

Paul is thought by many brethren to have been the first messenger to the Church, and Bro. Russell the seventh. In this respect they represented the work of Christ in a special way during each harvest period. If Jeremiah is a picture of our Lord Jesus, and his work during the two advents, it is fitting that the parallel to Jeremiah’s work would be exemplified in these two messengers.

ANOTHER STEP IN THE PARALLEL

The burden of Jeremiah was to urge Israel to repentance before God, and acceptance of the chastisement that was due. That chastisement came in three stages, namely three captivities of Israelites to Babylon. The last of these was at the end of Zedekiah’s kingdom. These three times are referred to in Ezekiel. In a prophecy about the coming fall of Zedekiah, the prophet said “Let the sword be doubled the **third** time” (Ezekiel 21:14).

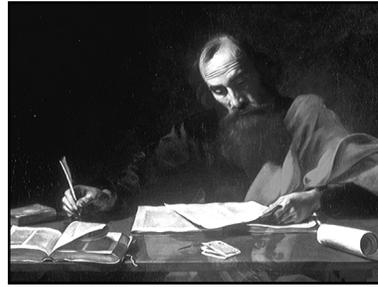
The first captivity was a relatively small one -- some of the choice young men such as Daniel and his three Hebrew friends — and some other booty as well. Daniel 1:1 says this was in the third year of Jehoiakim. This would have been 22 years into the 40 years of Jeremiah’s ministry,³ and it was the first fulfillment of Jeremiah’s warnings to Israel about God’s coming punishment. Thus this was a significant marker in the years of Jeremiah’s ministry. Is there a similar marker in the years following the first advent, and the second advent?

If we add 22 years to 29 AD, the result is 51 AD. If we add 22 years to 1874, the result is 1896. Is there a meaning to these dates? It appears there is. As referred to earlier, 51 AD is the date of the council at Jerusalem to resolve questions about the Jewish customs, relative to the Gentiles. One might say it was the time for the resolution of the “Jewish” issue for the Gentile converts.

What of 1896? That was the date commencing the Zionist movement with the publication of Theodore Herzl’s *The Jewish State*, followed the next year with the first Zionist Congress. So at both advents, the Jewish Question came into focus in years which stand in parallel to the first fulfillment of Jeremiah’s prophecies of impending punishment.

YET ANOTHER STEP

The second captivity of Israel was much larger. In this King Jehoiachin went captive, and Nebuchadnezzar replaced him with Zedekiah. Ezekiel went to Babylon in this captivity also, and it is from this captivity that Ezekiel numbers the years as he dates his prophecies. Thus this year marked a significant milestone, namely the first major captivity of



The Apostle Paul

“good figs” for their preservation in Babylon. This captivity was eight years later than the previous one, and thus 30 years into the 40 of Jeremiah’s ministry.

At the first advent period, this brings us to 59 AD, and at the second, to 1904 AD. Is there a parallel here? Possibly there is. Paul, the first messenger to the Church, by this year had completed the three missionary journeys which constituted the bulk of his ministry, and was imprisoned at Caesarea. There would be more to his ministry, but a milestone had been reached.

At the Second Advent, the year 1904 also was a milestone regarding the work of the seventh messenger. In that year the series *Studies in the Scriptures* was completed by the release of Volume Six, *The New Creation*.

Thus the year of the first major captivity in Jeremiah’s days, parallels milestone years in the work of the first and seventh messengers to the Church.

THE CLOSE

The close of Jeremiah’s 40 years point to the year 69 AD, and 1914 AD, respectively. In Jeremiah’s ministry this marked the end of Zedekiah’s kingdom. In 69 AD it marked the close of 40 years of probation for Israel — the Romans invaded and took Jerusalem the following spring. In 1914 it marked the close of 40 years of probation for Christendom, and World War I shook the kingdoms.

— Bro. David Rice

(1) Editor’s note: Some writers have concluded for later dates, even as late as after Pentecost of 37 AD. See for example F. W. Farrar, *The Life and Work of St. Paul*, Vol.1, p.178, Dutton & Company (1902); as reprinted by Klock & Klock Christian Publishers).

(2) Aretas evidently ruled Damascus through a governor.

(3) Josiah reigned 31 years, and Jeremiah’s ministry began in year 13. Thus his ministry lasted 18 years to the end of Jeremiah. Then came Jehoahaz, whose reign of three months crossed over the Tishri new year day of Judah. Which means the accession year of Jehoiakim commenced the year following Josiah’s year 31. Thus to the 18 years ending the reign of Josiah, we add the accession year of Jehoiakim, and three years thereafter, for a total of 22 years from the 13th of Josiah to the 3rd of Jehoiakim.

Financial Report

4,167.13	Balance January 1, 2007
1,689.40	Donations
- 3,016.35	Expenses
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2,840.18	Balance January 1, 2008
549	Current Subscribers