

Beauties of the Truth

A Forum for the Publication of Scriptural Viewpoints
Thought to be Harmonious with God's Plan of the Ages
Volume 8, Number 1, February 1997

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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: Bros. Jerry Leslie (Editor-in-Chief), Carl Hagensick, Raymond Luke, Michael Nekora, David Rice, Stephen Suraci.

Turning Point¹

The year 1878 is significant in Bible Student reckoning. It marked the end of the Jewish double or mishneh of 1845 years. The first half of favor began with the death of Jacob and blessing of the 12 tribes of Israel and extended to our Lord's death in 33 AD. The second half of disfavor commenced there and extends to the year 1878. Incidentally, this second half of the double also commenced with the death of the founder of the age and identifying of spiritual Israel. Corresponding to the parallel point of our Lord's resurrection, 1878 is also identified as the most likely date for the resurrection of the body members, the sleeping saints. "The Lord God will come with strong hand, and his arm shall rule for him: behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him" (Isaiah 40:10; 62:11). This year, 1878, was marked by two events in history: the Berlin Congress of Nations and the founding of the first Jewish settlement in Israel, Peta Tikva.

Just what did the Berlin Congress accomplish and why was it significant? The Berlin Congress was a conference that redrew the map of Europe and reassigned the domains of the Turkish/Ottoman empire *while setting the stage for history ever since*. Much of the negotiating for this congress was

done two or three years previous to 1878. The nations came to Berlin to ratify the posturing for power. The decisions made at this congress set the stage that fostered discontent and precipitated World War I and has even extended to the conflicts in Serbia, Bosnia and Croatia (Yugoslavia) today. Most important, however, was the positioning of Great Britain for its decision-making role in Palestine which gave greater liberty for Jewish immigration. This was a *marked beginning of Jewish favor*.

The following quotations document this congress as a turning point in world and Middle East history.

A JEWISH HOMELAND

Zion's Watch Tower, November 1887, R989

“It is not generally recognized, we think, that England has already become the protectorate of Palestine, and indeed all of Turkey's Asiatic provinces, of which it is one. England for a long time has felt a necessity for preserving Turkey for these reasons: first, her wealthy classes are large holders of Turkish bonds; second, if Turkey went to any one of her neighboring nations, or were divided among them, England would get little or none of the spoil, and the other rival nations would thus be lifted more than England into prominence and power in the control of the affairs of Europe; thirdly, and mainly, England realizes that with the Turkish government out of the way, Russian influence would be greatly increased in southern Asia, and would ere long absorb the India Empire, of which England's Queen is Empress, and from which England draws rich revenues in commerce, etc. Hence we find the Royal or Tory party in England strenuously supporting the Turks; and when in 1878 Russia was about to enter Constantinople, England interposed and sent her fleet of gunboats into the harbor. The result was the *Berlin Conference* of June 13, 1878, in which the chief figure was a Hebrew, Lord Beaconsfield [Benjamin Disraeli], Prime Minister of England, and Turkey's affairs were then settled so as to preserve her national existence for the present, and yet so arrange her provinces that in the event of final dismemberment each of the great powers would know which portion they would be expected to seize. It was at this time that all the provinces of Turkey were granted greater religious freedom, and England by secret treaty with Turkey became protector of the Asiatic provinces. In the language of the historian, Justin McCarthy, 'The English government undertook to *guarantee* to Turkey her Asiatic possessions against all invasion ... formally pledged herself to defend and secure Turkey against all invasion and aggression, and occupied Cyprus in order to have a more effectual vantage-ground from which to carry on this project.'

“It will be seen, then, that *Palestine is already under England's care, and accounts for greater laxity on the part of the Turkish government in the enforcement of its laws unfavorable to Jewish interests.*”

Disraeli, by Andre Maurois, 1928, pages 314-334

“[1877] Russia declared war on Turkey. The Czar sent General Ignatiev on a special mission to England to secure a promise of neutrality ... Lord Beaconsfield warned Russia that he would not

remain neutral unless the Tsar respected the three points indispensable to the preserving of the Empire: the Suez Canal, the Dardanelles, Constantinople.

“There was another great player who up to that moment had only observed the moves, but was awaiting the moment to enter the contest. That was Prince von Bismarck. Abruptly, on February 19th, he slammed down his cards with a great speech in the Reichstag, a speech that was intentionally obscure, and so very clear. Obligated to choose between Austria and Russia ... [Bismarck] sided against Russia. He avowed his distrustfulness. The Eastern question was of small import to Germany ... What Germany desired was to avoid a conflict. Her role, amidst opposing interests, would be that of 'the honest broker' Naturally the treaty in course of elaboration between Turks and Russians would have to be submitted to the approval of the other European Powers in a Conference, or Congress, which would be held, if they were so willing, at Berlin.

“Lord Beaconsfield ... considered the treaty as impossible of acceptance, and informed Schouvaloff that he would attend the Congress only after a direct Anglo-Russian agreement on the gravest points. His conditions were twofold: no Great Bulgaria, and no Russian Armenia. The [Russian] ambassador left up: 'This was depriving Russia of all the fruits of war' ... The Prime Minister was anxious to prepare for war ... He proposed the calling up of the reserve, a vote of credit, the dispatch of the Fleet to Constantinople.

“At no price did Russia want war with England. She was much enfeebled by her campaigns. She had no fleet. And further, she much preferred an understanding with Beaconsfield than with Bismarck ... Beaconsfield was inflexible. So it was war - unless a guarantee could be given to England in the shape of a Gibraltar in the Eastern Mediterranean ... Russia accepted everything *A secret convention was signed with the Sultan, who agreed to cede the island of Cyprus to England, whilst in return England would assure him defensive alliance in the event of Russia in Armenia pushing beyond Kars and Batum ... In Beaconsfield's eyes, the most enchanting point in the affair was the acquisition of Cyprus.*

“[1878] An International Congress: To this conference, intended for the free discussion of a treaty, every State came armed with secret conventions. England had the London agreement with Russia. Turkey knew that she had ceded Cyprus to England, but was ignorant of the Bulgarian agreement. Austria had promises from England and Germany which gave her, without striking a single blow, Bosnia and Herzegovina ...

“Bismarck proceeded with military directness. Forthwith, the division of Bulgaria into two parts separated by the line of the Balkans was agreed to without discussion. Then everything went wrong. The Russians had granted the Turks the frontier of the Balkans, and wanted to refuse them the right to defend it or to maintain troops in that part of Bulgaria which had been left to them ... An unoccupied Bulgaria would once again be at the mercy of Russia, and Russia would have her access to the Mediterranean.

“During the third week of the Congress a bombshell exploded. The Schouvaloff agreement regarding Armenia had been divulged by an English newspaper, the *Globe*, to which it had been sold by a copying-clerk in the Foreign Office. The effect on English feeling was great. The

acquisition of Cyprus was still secret, and no compensation was in sight to balance the Russian conquests in Asia ... The next day the English made public the agreement regarding Cyprus.

“A magnificent welcome was arranged for the return of the negotiators . . . Lord Beaconsfield found an immense sheaf of flowers sent by the Queen. As the cheering went on and on, he had to appear with Lord Salisbury on the balcony. He said to the crown: 'We have brought you back, I think, Peace with Honour.'”

Bible and Sword, by Barbara Tuchman,
1966, pages 260-269

“Parliament met and, after hearing Disraeli defend his purchase of the Canal as a vital link in the chain of fortresses along the road to India, voted the £4,000,000 without a division. Thereafter the hinterland of the Canal, 'from the Nile to the Euphrates,' was to be an area of acute sensitivity to Britain. To hold the Ottoman gates against any rival intruders was now more than ever essential, *unless Britains were prepared to take over the Nile-to-the-Euphrates region herself.*



Jacob Receiving the Birthright from Isaac

“It has set 'everything again in flame,' wrote Disraeli, 'and I really believe the Eastern Question that haunted Europe for a century ... will fall to my lot to encounter -dare I say settle?' The 'peace with honour' that he brought back with such renown from the Congress of Berlin was the result of this encounter. But to 'settle' the Eastern Question was beyond even Disraeli's power - beyond, it seems, any human power, *for it still haunts the world today.* However, one result of Disraeli's efforts was the acquisition of Cyprus, 150 miles off the coast of Palestine, as *quid pro quo* for the British guarantee of Turkey's domains in Asia. The Russo-Turkish War of 1877 provided the opportunity, but, on the useful principle of sidestepping all Balkan wars whenever possible, let us hasten to its conclusion. Turkey was beaten, Russia occupied her European provinces, and the powers called a Congress to limit Russia's gains.

“On June 4, 1878 the Cyprus Convention was signed pledging Britain to defend 'by force of arms' any attempt by Russia 'at any future time to take possession of any further territories of H.I.M. the Sultan in Asia' - and engaging the Sultan to cede Cyprus 'to be occupied and administered by England.'

“With this document safely in their pockets Disraeli and Salisbury went off to Berlin to join the other European powers in tightening an international noose that forced Russia to disgorge the gains ill gotten from defeated Turkey . . . When all delicate issues of the Congress were finally wrapped up in treaties, Disraeli revealed to a stunned but generally appreciative Europe the existence of the Cyprus Convention. It was hard not to applaud this one more daring stroke of the old master that so largely restored British prestige in the East.

“On the basis of newly found memoirs of the period a claim is made that Disraeli was the author of an anonymous German pamphlet published in Vienna in 1877 under the title *Die Juische Frage in der Orientalischen Frage* (The Jewish Question within the Eastern Question)² which proposed that in any reapportionment of the Turkish territories following a collapse of the Ottoman Empire Palestine should be given to the Jews, and further that Disraeli proposed to put such a plan on the Agenda of the Congress but was dissuaded by Bismarck. The evidence has been published by Dr. N. W. Gelber in a Hebrew brochure, subsequently translated by T. H. Gaster as *Lord Beaconsfield's Plan for a Jewish State*, New York, 1947”

SETTING THE STAGE FOR WAR AND HOPE

Balkan Ghosts, by Robert Kaplan,
1993, pages 26, 53-55, 62-63, 207

“At this late and critical juncture in Bulgarian history, the Russians arrived. A Russian army swept through Bulgaria in 1877 and 1878, liberating Bulgaria from Ottoman subjection in order to create a pro-Russian, Bulgarian buffer state against the Turks. *Although the 1878 Treaty of Berlin forced newly independent Bulgaria to cede Thrace and Macedonia to Turkey- triggering a renewed outbreak of guerrilla war - Bulgarian gratitude to the Russians never entirely dissipated.*

“The wealth of Habsburg Vienna and Budapest was built on the broken backs of their Slav subjects ... Beginning in the mid-nineteenth century, although modern Croats like to discount it, their forebears were attracted by the prospect of a 'South Slav (Yugoslav)' federation with the Serbs, independent of Austria-Hungary. *This feeling grew in 1878, when, at the Congress of Berlin, the Habsburgs grabbed the adjacent territory of Bosnia-Herzegovina (which had just freed itself from the Turks) and soon demonstrated that they could rule just as viciously as the Turks.* In 1908, the Habsburgs formally annexed Bosnia, whose population consisted of Muslim Slavs and Croats, as well as Serbs.

“Although tolerable on ethnic grounds, the union of Macedonia with Bulgaria created a new and preeminently powerful pro-Russian state in the Balkans that Great Britain, Germany, and (especially) Germany's ally, Austria-Hungary - with its own Balkan holdings to defend - could not accept. The treaty of San Stefano had to be amended. Jolted by this reality, the German Chancellor Prince Otto von Bismarck-Schonhausen convened a meeting in June 1878 to solve this and other Great Power problems; it became known in history as the Congress of Berlin.

“The Russians did not leave Berlin unhappy. Bismarck compensated them for the loss of Macedonia with new lands in Bessarabia, taken from the Romanians, and in northeastern Anatolia, taken from the Turks. Moreover, the Treaty of Berlin granted full independence to Russia's Slavic

allies, the Serbs. And to compensate Habsburg Austria-Hungary for this new provocation, *Bismarck arranged for Bosnia, the province next door to Serbia, with a Serbian population that also wanted independence, to be transferred from Ottoman rule to Habsburg rule - the immediate cause of World War I. Great Britain, for its part, received from the Turks the island of Cyprus.*

“In October 1908, Bulgaria's King Ferdinand proclaimed his country's complete independence . . . That same week, the island of Crete (still part of Turkey) voted for union with Greece, and the Austrian Habsburgs annexed the Turkish province of BosniaHerzegovina, which they had been administering since the conclusion of the Congress of Berlin [1878] ... This development, in turn, encouraged Austria-Hungary to annex Bosnia, *inflicting on its Serbian population a tyranny so great that a Bosnian Serb would later assassinate the Habsburg Archduke and ignite World War I.*

“During the years of 1909 through 1912, all three of these states [Bulgaria, Serbia and Greece] built up their armies. In October 1912, they declared war on the Ottoman Empire . . . The allies' principle goal was to liberate Macedonia. *The First Balkan War ended in December 1912 with the dissolution of Turkey in Europe.*”

A Peace to End All Peace, by David Fromkin,
1989, pages 33, 269-270, 181-183

“For decades and indeed centuries before the outbreak of the First World War in 1914, the native regimes of the Middle East had been, in every sense, losing ground to Europe. The Khanates of Central Asia, including Khiva and Bukhara, had fallen to Russia, as had portions of the Persian Empire. *The Arab sheikhdoms along the Gulf coast route from Suez to India had been brought under British sway; and Cyprus and Egypt, though formally still attached to Turkey, were in fact occupied and administered by Britain.* The Anglo-Russian Agreement of 1907 brought Afghanistan into the British sphere, and divided most of Persia between Britain and Russia. In the Moslem Middle East, only the Ottoman Empire effectively retained its independence - though precariously, as its frontiers came under pressure.

“In the mid-seventeenth century, two English Puritans residing in Holland - Joanna and Ebenezer Cartwright - petitioned their governments 'That this Nation of England, with the inhabitants of the Netherlands, shall be the first and readiest *to transport Israel's sons and daughters in their ships to the Land promised by their forefathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob for an everlasting inheritance.*' Guided by the Scriptures, the Puritans believed that the advent of the Messiah would occur once the people of Judea were restored to their native land.

“The idea recurred: in the mid-nineteenth century, the social reformer Anthony Cooper, who became Earl of Shaftesbury, inspired a powerful evangelical movement within the Church of England that aimed at bringing the Jews back to Palestine, converting them to Christianity, and hastening the Second Coming. Shaftesbury also inspired Palmerston, the Foreign Secretary and his relation by marriage, to extend British consular protection to the Jews in Palestine.

“According to the leading authority on Palmerston's diplomacy, *his policy 'became connected with a mystical idea, never altogether lost in the nineteenth century, that Britain was to be the chosen instrument of God to bring back the Jews to the Holy Land.'*

“In 1914 the entry of the Ottoman Empire into the war appeared to have brought about the political circumstances in which the Zionist dream at last could be realized. 'What is to prevent the Jews having Palestine and restoring a real Judea?' asked H. G. Wells in an open newspaper letter penned the moment that Turkey came into the war.

“A similar thought occurred soon afterward to Sir Herbert Samuel, Postmaster General in Asquith's Cabinet, one of the leaders of the Liberal Party, and the first person of the Jewish faith to sit in a British Cabinet. In January 1915 he sent a memorandum to Prime Minister Asquith proposing that Palestine should become a British Protectorate ... and urging the advantages of encouraging large-scale Jewish settlement there. The Prime Minister had just been reading *Tancred* - a novel by Benjamin Disraeli, the nineteenth-century British leader (baptized a Christian, but born of a Jewish family), who advocated Jewish return to Palestine - and Asquith confided that Samuel's memorandum treads almost like a new edition of *Tancred* brought up to date.'

“Until the time of Disraeli, the creation of the empire had been a haphazard and, it was said, an absent-minded affair. Disraeli gave it glamor and focused attention on it.

“General Smuts [1917] had expressed very decided views as to the strategical importance of Palestine to the British Empire ... With the addition of Palestine and Mesopotamia, the Cape Town to Suez stretch could be linked up with the stretch of territory that ran through British controlled Persia and the Indian Empire to Burma, Malaya, and the two great Dominions in the Pacific - Australia and New Zealand. As of 1917, *Palestine was the key missing link that could join together the parts of the British Empire so that they would form a continuous chain from the Atlantic to the middle of the Pacific.*

“As a Boer, steeped in the Bible, Smuts strongly supported the Zionist idea when it was raised in the Cabinet. As he later pointed out, the 'people South Africa and especially the older Dutch population has been brought up almost entirely on Jewish tradition. The Old Testament ... has been the very marrow of Dutch culture here in South Africa.' Like Lloyd George, he had grown up believing that 'tine day will come when the words of the prophets will become true, and Israel will return to its own land,' and *he fully agreed with Lloyd George that the Jewish homeland should be established in Palestine under British auspices.* Whether or not he originated the idea, Smuts was responsible for finding the formula acceptable to Woodrow Wilson - under which countries like Britain would assume responsibility for the administration of territories such as Palestine and Mesopotamia: they would govern pursuant to a 'mandate' from the future League of Nations.”

PROPHETIC PERSPECTIVE

The gem of truth to be found in this chain of history is that while this congress, in 1878, was largely motivated by a desire of European powers for greater prestige and dominance, yet a few key figures had an eye toward a Jewish homeland. The decisions made at this crucial moment in history resulted in two world wars. These wars decimated ancient empires and the struggle has continued in national and ethnic conflicts to the present. Yet providentially, this same repositioning of power opened the door for the Jewish return, resettlement and eventual formation of a Jewish state. “If

their rejection be the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance be, but life from the dead?" Romans 11:15 (NAS)

- *Jerry Leslie*

¹ Italics in citations are added for emphasis by the contributor.

² Whether Disraeli was the author of this pamphlet or not, he was clearly successful in positioning Britain as the defender of the ancient homeland of the Jews. As early as 1847 he published a novel with *Tancred* as its title. "This was the story of a young Englishman of noble family who makes a pilgrimage to the Holy Sepulcher in an attempt to understand 'the Asian mystery' It served mainly as a pretext for the author to develop his theories of Judaism and the Church. To Disraeli the mission of the

Church was to defend, in a materialist society, certain Semitic principles expounded in the Old and New Testaments, the chief of which was the belief in the role of the Divine and Spiritual in this world ... In Beaconsfield's eyes, the most enchanting point in the affair [Congress] was the acquisition of Cyprus. Thirty years earlier, in *Tancred*, he had made clear announcement of this. It pleased him thus to pass his romances and his dreams into history." - *Disraeli*, pages 200, 323

Why Rachel? Why Ramah?

"Thus saith the LORD; A voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation, and bitter weeping; Rahel [Rachel] weeping for her children refused to be comforted for her children, because they were not. Thus saith the LORD; Refrain thy voice from weeping, and shine eyes from tears; for thy work shall be rewarded, saith the LORD; and they shall come again from the land of the enemy. And there is hope in shine end, saith the LORD, that thy children shall come again to their own border." - Jeremiah 31:15-17

The context of Jeremiah 31 is one of joy, not of weeping The emphasis is not on the weeping for lost children but on joy for their return "from the land of the enemy" Though this prophecy had a localized fulfillment, it also had an application at the first advent of Jesus (Matthew 2:18). It seems just as certain that it has a still larger fulfillment when all the children of all the mothers of the world will come back from the great "land of the enemy" - death itself.

In the light of these multiple fulfillments, the question remains, Why Rachel? And why Ramah? There have been millions of mothers from hundreds of thousands of cities throughout the world who have undergone such losses. Why were these two selected?

WHY RACHEL?

Of all the mothers in Israel, no one could claim the title of "mother of all Israel" better than Rachel. Though she bore only two of the twelve sons of Jacob, those two well represent the whole of the nation. Benjamin was the junior member of the two-tribe kingdom. Joseph was not only in the northern kingdom, but the name of his son, Ephraim, became synonymous with the whole kingdom of Israel. Thus her two children represent the whole of Israel in the type, and all the people of the world in the larger antitype.

WHY RAMAH?

The literal city of Ramah does not appear elsewhere in the immediate context of the Jeremiah scripture. If it did, it would become necessary to determine which Ramah is meant. Nelson's Bible Dictionary refers to no less than six cities by this name - one each in Benjamin, Ephraim, Naphtali, Asher, as a city in the Negev inhabited by Simeon, and one in Gilead of the tribe of Manasseh. Three of these Ramahs have historical details given in scripture. The one in Gilead is better known as Ramoth-Gilead of Gad, and is usually referred to as Ramoth-Gilead. Therefore it does not seem that this Ramah is prominent in this prophecy.

This leaves two Ramahs - the ones in Ephraim and in Benjamin. These are the same two tribes which are descendants of Rachel. Ramah of Ephraim was the more prominent of the two, particularly during the period of the kings. It was revered as the home of the last judge of Israel, Samuel. The emphasis in our theme text, however, appears to be more particularly on the Ramah of Benjamin. It is this Ramah that is mentioned when Israel faced the scourge of Assyria (Isaiah 10:29) and is connected with God's judgments on both Ephraim and Benjamin (Hosea 5:3, 8). Thus the selection of these two names - Rachel and Ramah - appear well chosen by Jeremiah to show the universality of both the death sentence and the removal of that sentence. All the children so bereaved by their forlorn mothers will return from "the land of the enemy" and "come again to their own border."

- *Carl Hagensick*

A Subtle Hint of the Resurrection

Sometimes we look so hard at the antitype that we completely miss a little blessing in the story (or type) itself.

For example, at the end of Job's trial it says: "And the Lord restored the fortunes of Job when he prayed for his friends, and the Lord increased all that Job had twofold." Then it lists what he received.

<u>Job 1:2-3</u>	<u>Job 42:12-13</u>
7,000	14,000 Sheep
3,000	6,000 Camels
500	1,000 Oxen
500	1,000 Donkeys
3	3 Daughters
7	7 Sons

At first glance it appears that Job did receive twofold of everything listed in the first chapter. Then we see that he did not end up with 6 daughters and 14 sons, but instead the same number as before, 3 and 7. But didn't the text say that he received twofold? Finally we realize that because the original sons and daughters will someday have a resurrection, Job does indeed receive twofold of everything

- *Robert Wagoner*

The Resurrection

“The doctrine of the resurrection appears to have been thought of much more consequence among the primitive Christians than it is now. How is this? The apostles were continually insisting on it, and exciting the followers of God to diligence, obedience, and cheerfulness through it. And their successors in the present day seldom mention it! So apostles preached, and so primitive Christians believed; so we preach, and so our hearers believe. There is not a doctrine in the Gospel on which more stress is laid; and there is not a doctrine in the present system of preaching which is treated with more neglect!”

- Adam Clarke, *endnote #3, 1 Corinthians 15*

Historic Confirmation of Bible Student Chronology

Summary report of L.A. Times feature article, “Time Keepers,” by staff writer Thomas H. Maugh, II, August 29, 1996. Metro section, p. B-2. (See also NATURE, “The Exodus Enigma,” July 18, 1996, p. 213, a scientific report in more technical terms.)

OVERVIEW

In a breakthrough of historic proportions, researchers from Cornell University have developed the first tree-ring chronology from the Middle East, allowing precise dating of many events from the very cradle of civilization. It involves a method of counting time that depends on analyzing tree rings from specimens that can be associated with specific events. This kind of dating, formally called “dendrochronology,”¹ is not new to archeology, but only recently has been applied to the Middle East. The technique has aroused worldwide interest because it will permit the dating of many events with a precision hitherto thought impossible and perhaps resolve a hundred years of debating among historians and archeologists who had proposed conflicting theories. Combined with high-precision radiocarbon testing, it may lead to a dating method that is “truly absolute,” and produces data that are accurate “to the year.”

THE TECHNIQUE

To establish the new chronology, the Cornell University team collected wood and charcoal samples from 22 sites throughout the eastern Mediterranean. Radiocarbon dating² was then employed to give approximate dates for important rings noticed in their samples. Then to tie it down exactly, they correlated the finds with a great global catastrophe of the era - the eruption of the volcanic island Thera in the Aegean Sea. Ash from the powerful explosion dispersed into the upper atmosphere, causing worldwide climatic effects, and inhibiting the growth of tree rings for that year. Archeologists had long believed the Thera eruption occurred around 1500 BC, but more recent finds by University of Arizona scientists have dated it to 1628 BC.³ That was the critical finding needed to nail down the new chronology and was found to harmonize nicely with another

volcanic eruption in Iceland, which an earlier tree ring study had dated to 1159 BC. This link provided the evidence needed to verify the astounding accuracy of the new method.

THE RESULTS

The new chronology has opened a window of insight into the dawning of early kingdoms and city states, stretching from 2220 BC to 718 BC. The findings move back the date of the Late Bronze Age, including Egypt, Assyria and pre-Greek civilizations, by as much as 100 years. It demonstrates that one of the long-held conventional timelines, the so called High Chronology, “is clearly not sustainable.” This will now necessitate “a reworking of conventional assessments of the chronology of the Old World”



The Fall of Jericho

Researchers in various lands are now beginning to take advantage of the new timeline. Archeologists from Ben-Gurion University of the Negev in Israel and the University of Groningen in the Netherlands have used it to come up with new results for the fall of Jericho. This was the first city to be sacked by Joshua and the Israelites after crossing the Jordan and completing the 40 year wilderness wandering, as detailed in Joshua chapter 6. Secular scholars had long held that the city had been destroyed (and the walls collapsed due to an earthquake) around 1400 BC. But the new date based upon the tree ring chronology and “high precision radiocarbon dating on charred cereal grains” from Jericho was found to be about 45 years after the eruption of Thera, thus pinpointing Jericho's fall to about 1583 BC.⁴ It is even speculated that the heavy clouds of dust and smoke emitted by the volcano might have caused the biblical “darkness that can be felt” (Exodus 10:21) that was part of the plagues

inflicted by God upon Egypt to release Israel from bondage under Pharaoh.⁵

COMMENTARY

After more than 100 years of uncertainty regarding the dates of historical events in the Middle East and the unending conflict between our Bible chronology and the secular scholars, these new results are indeed welcome news. It appears that the Lord has seen fit to permit the development of this new method at the present as a special encouragement to His people. So far as we know, the Bowen/Russell chronology, as set forth in Volume 2 of *Studies in the Scriptures*, is one of the very few Bible chronologies that can directly correlate with the new findings.*

The new date for the fall of Jericho, about 1583 BC, compares with that of the B/R chronology of 1575 BC, showing a variation of only 8 years!⁶ The gap has thus been narrowed from 175 years as heretofore thought, down to this small number. (Perhaps even this small difference can be accounted for by the normal range of allowable deviation inherent in radiocarbon testing of the samples needed to correspond with the tree-ring patterns.) Corroborating the date of Jericho also provides indirect evidence for closely related events: the start of the Exodus (40 years earlier, 1615 BC), Moses' birth (120 years earlier, 1695 BC), the start of the Period of the Judges (6 years later, 1569 BC), and the start of the Period of the Kings, based on Paul's statement in Acts 13:19-21 (456 years later, 1119 BC); all dates according to the Volume 2 chronology.

As encouraging and significant as the new finding for Jericho appears to be, it is too early to draw sweeping conclusions from it. Nevertheless, it seems to be part of a general trend of moving back the dates of early civilizations in the late Bronze Age. This has the effect of bringing the secular dates for this period closer and closer to those that we have long accepted and believed to be well established in the Word of God.

With cautious optimism, then, we may sense yet fuller corroborations of the components of our chronology that parallel the parameters of the tree-ring technique. If the B/R chronology continues to correlate with additional findings, it would seem only reasonable to conclude that this would offer strong confirmation of the Period of the Kings (513 years), the Period of the Judges (450 years) and the Period from the Covenant to the Exodus (430 years). May all interested in this area be on the alert for further findings and be aware of their implications in strengthening our faith in the harvest message we have been given.

-Charles Redeker

* The chronologies of H. Fynes Clinton and Martin Anstey also show close correlation, but both of these exhibit marked deviations in other links of the chronology.

Editor's footnotes:

¹ See *American Journal of Archaeology* (AJA99:1995), "Science in Archaeology."

² Radiocarbon 14 dating has previously been questioned in connection with contaminated samples, improper association with human habitation, variations in ¹⁴C absorption factors or reckoning with the few ¹⁴C atoms in samples older than 6000 years. ¹⁴C has a half life of 5568 years (some studies show it to be 2.9% longer). The present study seeks to more accurately plot the variation in the ¹⁴C absorption rate over time.

³ The reviewed articles do not spell out exactly how they arrive at this date, other than saying they were "calibrated ... using a smoothed function through a decadal dendrochronologically obtained data set" and then graphing the results. Some of our editors consider these conclusions premature. Two other Bible Students are doing extended research on this subject. Those seeking some technical details may contact Jim Parkinson in Glendale, California or Richard Doctor in Lisle, Illinois.

⁴ Studies of Jericho cereal samples from this period were performed at Groningen University, The Netherlands. Conventional radiocarbon dating of these and other Jericho samples produced six dates averaging 45 years after the year 1628 BC determined for the Thera eruption, implying an average of 1583 BC, with a probable error of ±13 years.

⁵ This suggested association of the Thera eruption with the plague of darkness just prior to the exodus needs to be recognized as an assumption. As such, it should be kept separate from the datings of the eruption itself and of the destruction of Jericho, which are both based on solid scientific measurements. Hence, whether Thera caused the darkness or not has no bearing on the validity of the 1628 BC data determined for the eruption and the 1583 BC date for the destruction of Jericho.

⁶ these radiocarbon results would substantiate a destruction of Jericho by fire within about 8 years of the chronology proposed in *Studies in the Scriptures, Volume 2*, and that difference is within the ± 13 year probable error of the measurements. Although there were other destructions of Jericho (both earlier and many centuries later), only this destruction (at the end of the Middle Bronze Age) 1) occurred just after the Spring harvest, 2) followed no more than a brief siege, and 3) was produced by massive fire, all of which are indicated in the Joshua 6 account. (See Bryant G. Wood, "Did the Israelites Conquer Jericho" BAR 16, March 1990, pages 44-59.)

A Word of Caution. If this process produces dates that are "truly absolute" accurate "to the year," providing "astounding accuracy," then it shows the Bowen chronology short by 13 years at the Exodus (1628 vs. 1615 BC). On the other hand, if this new approach is off at all, it may be far afield. A deeper look is appropriate

Tree-Ring Dating. It is one thing to bore a single bristle-cone pine from California and count thousands of rings. It is quite another to collect multiple samples of much shorter-lived, and long-dead trees, and correctly stitch together their overlapping ring patterns. "In 1986, D. Yamaguchi recognized that trees tend to auto-correlate - that is they possess the ability to cross-match with each other in several places within the tree-ring sequence ... he found 113 significant candidate wiggle-matches throughout the whole of the AD tree-ring sequence" (*Pharaohs and Kings*, 388-389). The same problem occurred in the Turkish dendrochronology, which is the basis for the present article. "The problem [Kuniholm] found was that the ... wiggle-match computer test produced not one but three results - 1258, 1140 and 981 BC. Each had a l-value greater than 4 which, according to the dendrochronologists, makes all three 99.9 per cent certain to be correct! ... Kuniholm ended up rejecting the date with the highest l-value of 5 (981 BC) in favor of 1140 BC, presumably because the latter better fitted the historical expectations." (*Pharaohs and Kings*, 389).

Radiocarbon Dates for the Eruption of Thera. "C-14 dates for short-lived materials from the Thera eruption span the period 1760-1540 BC with the great majority falling earlier in that period. As a result, in 1989 the Third International Congress favored an eruption date between circa 1680 and 1670 BC" (*Pharaohs and Kings*, 386). Notice that the current findings, also claiming radiocarbon support, are 50 years different.

- David Rice

Beauties of the Truth 1996 Financial Statement

\$ 3343.94	Balance January 1, 1996
1933.62	Donations
45.56	Interest
- 2957.92	Expenses
\$ 2365.20	Balance December 31, 1996

Erratum

In our November 1996 issue there was a footnote referenced on page 5. However, we missed printing the footnote. It should have been: "The word 'hate' ought to be understood in the light of Matthew 10:37 as loving one's relatives less than the Lord. Jesus Christ should never be placed on the same level as human relatives."

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