

Beauties of the Truth

A Forum for the Publication of Scriptural Viewpoints
Thought to be Harmonious with God's Plan of the Ages
Volume 32, Number 2, May 2021

The Hour and Day and Month and Year

The Unintended Reformation to World War I

“Christianity remained in the sixteenth century what it had always been — a shared way of life, not simply as an ideal but in practice, inescapably social because of Jesus’s central command: ‘Love one another as I have loved you’ (John 15:12). And the Bible was God’s word, his saving truth for human beings with implications for that life understood as a comprehensive whole, including politics and the right ordering of society. Preached to lay people of widely varying social locations and educational backgrounds in the early 1520s, ‘the Gospel’ ignited a firestorm of anti-clericalism in the towns and villages of the Holy Roman Empire and Switzerland.

“Christian women and men were only too familiar with the shortcomings of their omnipresent church whose clergy they were now told, had twisted scripture and concealed God’s truth from them. No wonder privileged priests were so self-serving and sinful! Sparked at least partly by such ideas, the German Peasants’ War of 1524-1526 was the largest series of popular uprisings in Western Europe before the French Revolution, involving hundreds of thousands of ordinary villagers and small-town dwellers before it was forcibly suppressed.

“It simply was the Reformation in its most widespread, visibly manifest, earnest early form. Secular leaders drew the obvious conclusion: Biblical ideas could be dangerously subversive” (Brad S. Gregory, *The Unintended Reformation, How a Religious Revolution Secularized Society*, Belknap Press of Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 2012, page 149).

Our Lord’s personal message to the sixth church, Philadelphia, is found in Revelation 3:7-13. It contains a promise that he will come quickly. The Philadelphia church immediately precedes the Lord’s long-awaited presence. The opening of the seal for the sixth church (Revelation 6:11-17) speaks to a special time where the cry will be “hide us” for all men, but especially those in authority:

Revelation 6:15, “And the kings of the earth, and the princes, and the chief captains, and the rich, and the

strong, and every bondman and free man, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains” (RVIC).

FOUR ANGELS

The four angels may be identified with the (1) social, (2) political, (3) economic, (4) and religious elements of society.¹ The four specific elements are highlighted in *The Battle of Armageddon* and Daniel 7:2,3. If these heaven-prepared angels are powerful enough to hold back the winds, we should not identify them with human messengers:

“And the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice from the horns of the golden altar which is before God. One saying to the sixth angel that had the trumpet, ‘Loose the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates.’ And the four angels were loosed that had been prepared for the hour, and day, and month, and year, that they should kill the third part of men” (Revelation 9:13-15 (RVIC).

How is it that these heavenly authorized agencies are bound by anything? Especially, the great river Euphrates? For that answer we need to look back at the fifth church and then forward to the seventh church.

“DAY” IN THE REVELATION TEXT

The Sinaitic Codex, one of the oldest and most significant New Testament sources, omits “day” in Revelation 9:15. However, “day” is included in P⁴⁷, one of the Chester Beatty papyri, a witness even older than the Sinaitic. Hence, “day” should be considered part of the original text for Revelation 9:15 (see RVIC). Kittel notes

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

“prepared” (G2090) has the sense of “expressing God’s whole creative action in every age and at every moment in nature and history.”² These four angels “that had been prepared” saw a world deeply troubled, but the actions of these angels were soon bound. It is the sixth church that points the way to the future, when these angels are loosed

Using the “day for a year” formula — “**The** hour (1 month), and day (1 year), and month (30 years) and year (360 years)” add up to a period of 391 literal years and one month, assuming a symbolic “hour” is one month (*i.e.* 1/12 of a “day” *cf.* John 11:9).

This period begins with the first martyr’s blood of the Reformation on July 1, 1523 and the ensuing religious chaos. It continues through the Peasants’ War (summer 1524-1526) and its social, political, economic, as well as religious chaos. With the close of the Reformation (1667) we find both Catholics and now Protestants. Everyone in a church-state system. Under the sixth church the French Revolution and Napoleon (1789-1815) were to see the loosing of the four angels bound in the Euphrates. They are not to be “bound” again. While Napoleon was defeated, ideas for social, political, economic, and religious reform continued to be set forward during the 19th century along with further tremors of revolution.

The old order was powerless to stop the work of these angels, and even Russia was forced to end serfdom. During the 19th century, especially in the Americas, dozens of “Utopian” experiments for a new order of society were to be tried — all to fail in short order. With the start of World War I, August 1, 1914 the period of Revelation 9:15 covers exactly 391 literal years and one month. The activity under the sixth seal is followed directly by the vision of Revelation 7:1. Here “four angels on the four corners of the earth [are] holding the four winds of the earth.” Following the destructive work of World War I, the four angels stand in the four corners of the earth all parts of the earth’s established order — holding back the winds until an even more important work is done.

LUTHER OPENS THE REFORMATION

The preparation of the four angels goes back to the Reformation: “In Luther’s day, of course, all support of the people had been to the Roman Church — the only Babylon at the time. Because the Roman Church had complete control over the elements of society those elements, the four angels, could not function outside of the approval of the Papacy. There could be no social changes, no financial theories explored, no political freedoms, and no religious questioning. The four angels were, indeed, bound in the Euphrates. The people supported Rome and were fearful of giving support to anything not sanctioned by Rome.”³

What *bound* the angels was not their lack of heavenly power; it was the people’s lack of understanding. Yet, the work of these angels in the sixth church was a direct answer to the prayers of the saints for the blessings of



Peasant Revolt

godly society — this is the “voice from the horns (power) of the golden altar which is before God” (Revelation 9:13, 8:3,4). Martin Luther nailing the 95 theses to the door of Wittenberg church (October 31, 1517) began the Reformation. Society would need much development before it was ready for *real* reform of all the four elements — the social, political, economic, and religious. The “bottomless pit” and “smoke” (Revelation 9:10) which Luther released led to “five months of torment” (5 months x 30 years/month = 150 years); a time of social, political, economic, and religious chaos for Europe. These “five months” close the fifth stage of the church and ran from October 31, 1517 to October 31, 1667.

DIET OF WORMS

From the start of the Reformation, the continuance of anti-Christ’s cruel, evil, time-tested program of executing dissenters was a failure. Luther departed from his home at Wittenberg for the Diet of Worms on April 2, 1521 stopping in route to preach. (“Diet” was the term for a formal assembly of the Holy Roman Empire where both church and civil authorities were present). The Diet started April 16 to address the charges of heresy against Luther. The inquisitor intensively questioned his beliefs, and Luther requested a day to consider his answers. The inspiring words that closed the interrogation stand as one of the most passionate statements of purpose, principle, and Christian conviction (April 18):

“Unless I am convicted by scripture and plain reason — I do not accept the authority of popes and councils for they have contradicted each other — my conscience is captive to the Word of God. I cannot and I will not recant anything, for to go against conscience is neither right nor safe. Here I stand, I can do no other, God help me. Amen.”

Holding only to the authority of scripture frustrated both clergy and civil authorities. Nevertheless, Luther was traveling with safe conduct papers and he was permitted to depart Worms by carriage Friday April 27, 1521. For the moment, Luther had slipped through the fingers of the church. Nearly a week later on his homeward travels, he visited and said farewell to his family, for he was certain he

<i>Influence of the Twelve Articles</i>	Social	Political	Eco- nomic	Reli- gious
(1) The power to choose and elect a pastor shall lie with the whole community (1 Timothy 3)	•			•
(2) Peasant will furnish the just tithe of corn, but only to God's servants (Hebrews, Psalms 109)	•			•
(3) We have been held as Serfs ... we are free, and we will be free (Ecclesiastes 6, 1 Peter 2)	•	•		
(4) Hunting rights "to capture ground game, fowls, or fish in flowing water"	•	•	•	
(5) The woods, be they possessed by spiritual or temporal lords ... [these woods] shall fall again to the whole community	•	•	•	
(6) That we be not so heavily burdened with ... services which are heaped up from day to day and daily increased	•	•	•	
(7) The Peasant shall enjoy and use land in peace, and undisturbed. But when the lord has need of the peasant's services, the peasant shall be willing and obedient ... for a befitting price	•	•	•	
(8) Just, independent assessment of the tax value of a peasant's land	•	•	•	
(9) Judicial punishment according to ancient written law, and according to the thing transgressed, and not according to respect of persons (Isaiah 10, Ephesians 6, Luke 3, Jeremiah 16)	•	•		
(10) Return of common lands to the community (in some cases "community lands" had been taken by lords)	•	•	•	
(11) Total abolition of "death-due" tax which impoverished widows (Deuteronomy 13, Matthew 8, Isaiah 10:23)	•	•	•	
(12) If one or more of the Articles here are not according to the Word of God, we will, where the same articles are proved against the Word of God, withdraw them				•

would die. Then back on the road, Luther was intercepted and taken captive by a band of five masked men who handled him roughly, threw a cloak over him, and spirited him away on horseback.

Search as they might, the authorities could find no clues to Luther's abduction. However, the violent abduction was a clever ploy by Luther's patron, Fredrick "the Wise" of Saxony, who had arranged for Luther's safekeeping deep in the Thüringen woods at Wartburg, a hunting castle retreat. The church moved forward according to measured protocol and Emperor Charles V declared Luther an outlaw worthy of death May 25. During the 10 months he was hidden, Luther completed one his most enduring works, the translation of the Bible into German.

LUTHER RETURNS FROM HIDING

During Luther's absence, and with his blessing, the young Philipp Melanchthon had taken over the work of reform. Ultimately, he was not able to control the more radical elements within Wittenberg. Luther's colleague at the university, Andreas Bodenstein von Karlstadt, began to preach a radical program of iconoclasm that saw mobs destroying images at the local churches. Karlstadt cast away his academic vestments, worked as a farmhand, and began to teach a *symbolic* view of the Lord's Supper. Sadly, throughout his life, Luther retained the Catholic view on the doctrine of the Mass, despite the progress towards the symbolic understanding of the Lord's supper by most of the leading reformers such as Ulrich Zwingli

of Switzerland. Now a group of men appeared in the city called the "Zwickau Prophets." This group claimed to be directly inspired by the Holy Spirit, and falsely claimed the ability to reveal God's will apart from Scripture. Because events had gotten so far out of hand, Luther believed that it was essential to come out of hiding to restore order. Despite great personal danger, Luther returned to Wittenberg on March 7, 1522.⁴

FIRST MARTYRS

One year later in Holland; two young monks named Esch, and Voes embraced the Reformation and stood up against the inquisitors. They were to perish in the flames as the first martyrs of the Reformation (July 1, 1523). With a shudder, the great Catholic humanist Erasmus von Rotterdam, a native of Holland, was to lament, "The executions have begun — at last."⁵ But, to the amazement of all, the executions stopped nothing, they only added more zeal to the Reformation. Each assault on the truth furthered the resolve and conviction of the reformers. This date, July 1, 1523 marks the start of the 391 years and 1 month (Revelation 9:15).

PEASANTS' WAR 1524-1526

With the opening of the Reformation, general opinion held that a change would not come from reform by the leadership. The initiative needed to rest with the people themselves — with the classes specially oppressed by existing conditions, political, economic, and ecclesiastical.

These, and similar ideas, were now everywhere taken up and elaborated upon in a more radical sense. People were ready to listen. The whole structure of middle age society, economic, social, political, and religious, focused on the community. This was now breaking down everywhere. For centuries the community reported in hierarchical order to the Holy Roman Emperor and the Church as represented by the papal chair.

Our *brethren* in the Anabaptist movement preached that church and state should be separate. Today, historians recognize these Anabaptist pleas for church and state separation as one of the *most significant consequences* of the Reformation.⁶ However, reformers in Germany, the Swiss cantons, Geneva, Scotland, and elsewhere remained in bed with the civil powers for their survival. The Anabaptists were persecuted by Luther, Zwingli, Calvin, and the Catholics. Indeed, with the Reformation, the autonomy of the individual in all spheres of life was beginning to affirm itself.^{7,8} Peasants in western and southern Germany — then held in serfdom — invoked divine law to demand agrarian rights and freedom from oppression by nobles and landlords.

At first, Luther was very supportive of the peasants' resistance to the nobility. Luther's pamphlet, *Authority and How Far it Should Be Obeyed* (1523):

"They (princes) are mostly the greatest fools or the greatest rogues on earth; therefore must we at all times expect from them the worst, and little good...The common man begets understanding, and the plague of the princes works powerfully among the people and the common man. He will not, he cannot, he purposes not, longer to suffer your tyranny and oppression. Dear princes and lords, know ye what to do, for God will no longer endure it? The world is no more as of old time, when ye hunted and drove the people as your quarry."⁹

Spurred to action at Luther's urging, the peasants withheld tithe offerings to support the Holy Roman Empire's fight against yet another Turkish invasion. Luther wrote that the Turks were ten times wiser and more godly than German princes.¹⁰

By late May 1524, the withholding of taxes had become a crisis — funds were needed to fight the Turks. Added to this, astrology and superstition still held great control over the people. Now it was held that the stars indicated a Noachic deluge for the summer of 1524.¹¹ This was based on an alleged combination of sixteen conjunctures in the sign of Aquarius. So seriously was the prophesy believed that extensive preparations were made to survive the approaching catastrophe. Many, however, explained the presage as indicating a social inundation — the leveling of social distinctions by the "common man." Portents were alleged to have appeared; reports circulated of strange monsters being born. Illustrated broadsheets and pamphlets were in circulation. The title page of one portrayed pope, emperor, cardinals and prince-prelates



Anabaptist Dirk Willems saves his pursuer and is martyred (1569).

trembling before the approach of a band of peasants armed with the implements of husbandry and led on by the planet Saturn. Saturn was linked to ancient pagan belief in a return to "the Golden Age" of peace when all men were equal. All these things testified to the excited state of the public mind and the direction in which popular thought was turned. Here, were the stirrings of the Euphrates by the four angels. Soon entreaties by authorities became threats. Violence from both nobility and peasants erupted in July 1524.¹²

THE TWELVE ARTICLES

By February 1525, the redress sought by the peasants was distilled to *Twelve Articles*, which were printed and widely circulated. They address social, political, economic, and religious grievances — the four angels:

While their tone is conciliatory, mob violence was ruling the countryside. The first of the Twelve Articles was a demand that each village could elect their own pastors, citing 1 Timothy 3.¹³ Clearly, things had gone well beyond the withholding of tithes.

"STAB, SMITE, SLAY"

In early 1525 churches were desecrated by peasant mobs. Catholic writers such as Emser circulated tracts holding Luther responsible for inciting mobs against the peace. The message set forth to the nobility was — Behold! The ungodly fruits of Protestantism.¹⁴ Now Luther's Protestantism itself was in crisis.

Luther now condemned the peasant violence. Writing in *Against the Robbing and Murdering Hordes of Peasants* (May 1525) Luther found the *Twelve Articles* "unjust" and urged the nobility's military forces marshaled to suppress the revolt to show no mercy whatsoever. He instructed the knights to "Stab, smite, slay whoever can. If you die in doing it, well for you! A more blessed death can never be yours ... [as this killing] pleases God; this I know."¹⁵

By the time the military restored order in 1526, there were an estimated 100,000 German commoners slain. Proportionate to the population of Germany today, this would equate to over a million victims. Nor did matters end there. It is important to understand the price paid by

the German peasants for their failed rebellion not only in terms of lives lost, but also of the deeper impoverishment of the survivors who were forced to pay heavy reparations for the costs of the revolt. The four angels were *prepared*, but still *bound* in the Euphrates.

THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

“And I saw when he had opened the sixth seal, and there came a great earthquake” (Revelation 6:12, RVIC).

Great earthquakes symbolize revolutions. During the sixth church, the sixth seal was opened. What followed was the French Revolution. The first major tremor of this “great earthquake” was the storming of the Bastille prison in Paris, France (July 14, 1789). The Bastille was a hated the symbol of tyranny. Over the next quarter century, the repressed hatred for the nobility and clergy by France’s underclass brought a violent and bloody end to the ruling classes — at least temporarily. The French people’s ability to muster an army that could defeat the combined forces of the Holy Roman Empire and even carry military conquest as far as Moscow further struck terror into hearts of Europe’s monarchies. The miry clay and iron mix of the ten toes was soon to be crushed, to undergo the process of being ground to powder, and to be dispersed by the winds (Daniel 2:42,43). World War I marked the end of the Gentile Times.

ARCHDUKE FERDINAND OF AUSTRIA — A COINCIDENCE?

There also is a curiosity that seems not to be an accident. The call for organized military action against the peasants was issued by Archduke Ferdinand of Austria in September 1524. “Crush the rising and compel them to unconditional submission,” the Archduke writes to George Truchsess, Count of Waldburg, the chief commander of the forces of the Swabian League. Then the Archduke hypocritically urges, that Truchsess should “amicably treat with the peasants till he had collected his military forces together.” The curiosity occurs when this period closes. The spark that ignited World War I was the assassination of a later Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria on June 28, 1914.

SUMMARY

The Reformers died for religious freedom; the social, political, economic and religious reforms. This was the “preparation” of the four angels but they remained “bound” in the Euphrates. The French Revolution (1789) was the “great earthquake” for which the Reformation and then the Peasants’ War fought. The revolution in France was to illustrate the coming greater earthquake that would mark the end of the Times of the Gentiles (August 1, 1914). After this the four angels are no longer bound in the Euphrates. We see them “holding back the four winds until the saints are sealed in their foreheads.”

— Br. Richard Doctor

(1) *The Revelation Notebook*, New Albany-Louisville Ecclesia, 2010, page 125.

(2) Kittel, Gerhard, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (translated by G. W. Bromley), Wm. B. Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1964, Volume 2, page 705.

(3) New Albany, *op. cit.*, page 126

(4) Smith, Preserved, *The Life and Letters of Martin Luther*, Houghton Mifflin, Boston, 1914, page 147. Available from Google Books.

(5) D’Aubigne, J.H.M., *History of the Reformation*, Baker, Grand Rapids, MI, (1846 edition, reprinted 1976), page 362.

(6) Naphy, William G., *The Protestant Reformation*, BBC Books, Random House, 2007, pages 47-49.

(7) Bax, E. Belfort, *The Peasants’ War in Germany 1525-1526*, MacMillan, New York, 1899, pages 18, 19. Available from Google Books, the link to this book provided by Bro. Jeff Mezera is greatly appreciated.

(8) Grimm, Harold J., *Social Forces in the German Reformation*, Church History, (31:1), Cambridge University Press, March 1962, pages 3-13. www.jstor.org/stable/3163356. In 1500 about half of the population of Augsburg, Germany owned no property and three percent were beggars, while one fifth of the population of Hamburg, Germany lived in extreme poverty. It was among these lower classes that the distinction between rich and poor was most advanced and that preachers of radical religious and social reform gained many followers who were willing to use violence in achieving their goals.

(9) Bax, *op. cit.*, page 29

(10) Bax, *op. cit.*, page 30

(11) Bax, *op. cit.*, page 59

(12) Sea, Thomas F., *Predatory Protectors? Conflict and Cooperation in the Suppression of the German Peasants’ Revolt of 1525*, The Sixteenth Century Journal, (39:1), Spring 2008, pages 89-111. www.jstor.org/stable/20478753

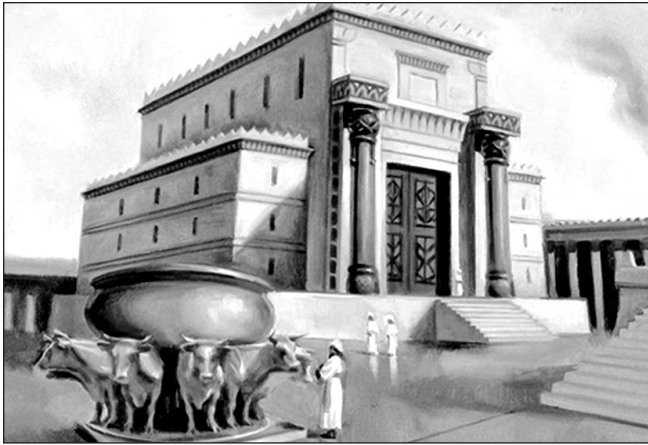
(13) Bax, *op. cit.*, page 63

(14) Edwards, Jr., Mark U., “*Lutherschmähung?*” *Catholics on Luther’s Responsibility for the Peasants’ War*, The Catholic Historical Review, (76:3) Catholic University of America Press (July 1990), pages 461-480. www.jstor.org/stable/25023340; citing Hieronymus Emser, *Auff Luthers greuel wider die heiligen Stillmess* (On Luther’s “gravel” [road fill of no consequence] against the holy peaceableness), Dresden, 1525.

(15) Pelz, William A., *A People’s History of Modern Europe — “The Other Reformation”: Martin Luther, Religious Dogma and the Common People*, Pluto Press, 2016, page 24, www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt1c2crfj.6

Two Pillars and Two Testaments

Solomon’s Temple is a symbolic representation of the glorification of the church at its completion, when the temporary and transportable Tabernacle in the Wilderness is replaced by the more permanent structure of the temple. The similar but expanded features of the temple also illustrates the progress of each member of the church throughout Gospel Age, beginning outside of God’s arrangement in the camp to justification (the court) to the spiritual life (the Holy) and to heaven itself (the Most



Solomon's Temple with two pillars

Holy). Yet unlike the Tabernacle, the Temple illustrates this process at its conclusion when the church is complete on “the other side of the veil” in heaven.

Another difference between the Tabernacle and Solomon's Temple is the two pillars named **Jachin** and **Boaz**. Some aspects of these two columns are discussed in an earlier article, “Two Pillars,” in the August 2015 issue of *Beauties of the Truth*, but there are other elements of their construction and symbolism that deserve consideration.

HEIGHT OF THE PORCH AND PLACEMENT OF THE TWO PILLARS

The first point of consideration is the relationship of these pillars to the overall structure of Solomon's Temple and particularly the porch at the entrance to the temple itself. A common assumption regarding the relationship of these two columns to Solomon's Temple supposes that they support the roof of the porch. However, there are several difficulties with this model.

The porch dimension is given as 20 cubits wide, so it spanned the entire (interior) width of the front of the temple building, and the depth is given as 10 cubits from front to back (1 Kings 6:3). The height is given as 120 cubits (2 Chronicles 3:4), but this stated height is most likely a very early manuscript error.¹ Twenty cubits, would conform to the 20 cubit interior height of the inner compartments in the temple proper (identical to the 20 cubit width of the porch matching the interior width dimension).²

There is some debate whether the two pillars named Jachin and Boaz support the roof of the porch or are actually outside the porch as freestanding pillars (*cf.* 2 Chronicles 3:17 in various translations). The weight of evidence seems to favor freestanding pillars not directly connected to the temple building.³

THE DESCRIPTION OF THE TWO PILLARS

If the above location of the pillars is accurate, then the porch of the temple is flanked by two enormous bronze columns (1 Kings 7:15-18, 20-22, 41-42, 2 Chronicles

3:15-17, 4:12-13) eighteen cubits high and twelve cubits in circumference (1 Kings 7:15, 2 Kings 25:17, Jeremiah 52:21). There are also capitals at the top (decorative extensions wider than the circumference of the pillar). These capitals are five cubits high (1 Kings 7:16).⁴

The columns “in the porch” (verse 19) with capitals four cubits high would be a confusing addition to the design and the height of the capitals for the two pillars, unless these are instead the support columns and capitals for the porch separate from the two pillars.⁵

The account of the two bronze pillars describes a knotwork design — apparently two rows of seven sets of chains of flowers per row — circling each freestanding pillar around the capitals. Two rows, of 100 pomegranates in each row, circled one row above and one row below the two rows of knotwork designs on the capitals.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE NUMBER TWO

Two is a number used to symbolize the spirit of God. More specifically, it epitomizes the spirit as it is manifested through the Old and New Testaments. Compare Ephesians 6:17 which describes the “sword of the spirit, which is the word of God” with Hebrew 4:12 which describes the “word of God” as a “two-edged sword” for an example of how the number two portrays the spirit of God as represented in the two testaments.

Pairs of identical symbols are frequently used to represent the Old and New Testaments. Below are some of the more common examples:

- The double-edged sword (Hebrews 4:12).
- Two rows of showbread in the Holy of the Tabernacle and temple made with two-tenths of an ephah of flour each (Leviticus 24:5-6).
- Two olive trees (Zechariah 4:3, 11-12, Rev. 11:4).
- Two anointed ones (Zechariah 4:12-14).
- Two languages (Hebrew, Greek) of the Old and New Testaments naming the king of the locusts (Rev. 9:11).
- Two witnesses⁶ (Revelation 11:3, 5-6).
- Two lampstands (Revelation 11:4).
- Two wings of a great eagle (Revelation 12:14). Two luminaries — the sun and moon — also picture the two testaments in this chapter.

Other possibilities include the two silver trumpets and the two prophets (Numbers 10:1-10, 11:26-29), the two swords with the disciples (Luke 22:38) which Jesus describes as “enough” [the two testaments are enough for the church after his departure], and dual descriptions of God's word in Revelation (1:2, 9, 6:9,⁷ 12:17, 19:9-10, 20:4) as “the word of God and the testimony of Jesus”⁸ suggesting the Old and New Testaments.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE TWO PILLARS

Connecting the two testaments with various pairs of symbols and types suggests that a similar approach to the

two pillars of the temple is credible. There are several supportive reasons for interpreting the two pillars in the court as types of the Old and New Testaments:

(1) Two is elsewhere used symbolically as a picture of the Old and New Testaments and it is reasonable to suggest that it is used in the same way in the temple arrangement.

(2) The pillars are decorated at the top with two rows of 100 pomegranates around the circumference, so 200 per pillar. This feature re-emphasizes the number two and the pomegranates may suggest the fruits of the spirit.

(3) Around the top of the pillars is also a row of seven chains or nets of flowers that appear to be inserted between the two rows of pomegranates. In harmony with the suggestion that the pillars represent the written message and character of the spirit of God in the two testaments, the row of seven hanging flower designs also pictures the vessels of the spirit of God. This set of seven hangings of flowers illustrates the spirit sent to and through the seven churches of Revelation (Revelation 4:5, 5:6). The fruits and graces of the spirit are portrayed through the beauty of the flower tapestries.

(4) The pillars are given names. The one on the right is named **Jachin** (establish) and the one on the left named is **Boaz** (strength). The two pillars are distinguished from each other by names in the same way the Christian Bible is distinguished between Old and New Testaments. The meaning of the names may be significant also with Jachin or “establish” perhaps representing the Old Testament and Boaz or “strength” representing the New Testament.^{9,10}

(5) According to 1 Kings 7:46, these huge standing pillars just outside the temple building were first cast in the clay of the plain of Jordan. If the two pillars represent the Old and New Testaments, the construction process may represent how the word of God was first enclosed in, and constructed through, the agency of ordinary but spirit-led people represented in the clay of the plain of Jordan (2 Corinthians 4:7).

These two pillars do not appear anywhere in the Tabernacle arrangement. Additionally, the word of God in both the Tabernacle and the temple is pictured by the showbread within the Holy place or the spirit-begotten condition. Yet the temple arrangement also seems to picture the word of God as two pillars appearing in the court condition and therefore seen and understood by all people as they become believers. This location in the court emphasizes the change that takes place upon the completion of the church and the establishment of the kingdom on earth. No longer hidden within the Holy, the scriptures appear as two strong pillars for all to see and hear (Revelation 20:12).

— Br. Jeff Hausmann

(1) Dillard, Raymond B. (1987). *Word Biblical Commentary*, Volume 15, 2 Chronicles, 1st edition, page 27, note 12b (2), Word Books, Waco, TX. In his explanation, Dillard notes the similarity in the

language between “cubits” and “hundred,” with a graphic showing how the possible confusion in language that may have caused this error. The height of the porch at 120 cubits seems awkward in comparison to the outward height for the rest of the temple at 30 cubits, making this disparity improbable. Another reasonable alternative is a 30 cubit height to match the exterior height of the temple building (which could be assumed as one possible height for the porch based on the lack of any other indication in 1 Kings 6:2-3).

(2) Lamsa/Aramaic, while not conclusive, reads “20 cubits” (Editor).

(3) The reasoning for freestanding pillars is as follows:

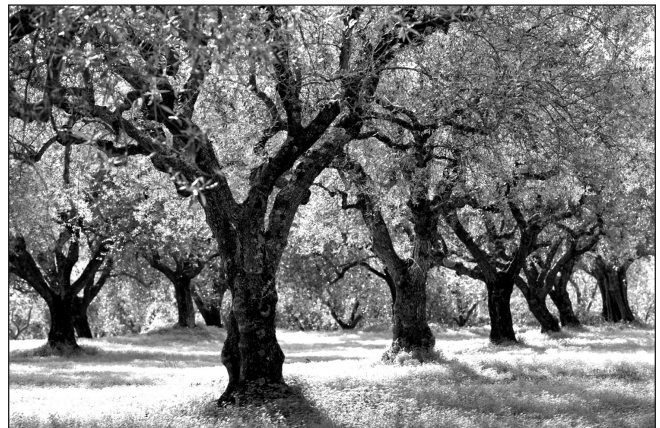
(A) The description of these two special pillars follows after the discussion of the construction of the temple building itself in 1 Kings 6:2-36 and is contextually located within the description of the artifacts of the Temple (1 Kings 7:13-50). This suggests that the pillars are something other than integral parts of the temple porch.

(B) There is also the difficulty of aligning the height of the pillars (18, 23, 35, or even 40 cubits are the only credible possibilities) with the several potential dimensions for the height of the porch (20, 30, or 120 cubits). Whatever conclusions are drawn regarding the possible height of the porch and of the pillars, no combination of numbers matches the pillar height to the porch height. 2 Chronicles 3:15 gives the height of the pillars as either 35 cubits or 40 cubits (depending on whether the 5 cubits for the capitals are included with the 35 cubits or — less likely — in addition to the 35 cubits), but this seems to be a difficult proposition based on the balance of the description, and it is possibly another textual error. However, a marginal note in the NASB notes that it literally reads 35 cubits long rather than high, although this seems to be the same dimension. Oddly, but without any apparent reason, 35 cubits is the sum of dimensions listed in 1 Kings 7:15,16 (18 + 12 + 5 cubits).

(C) DeVries, Simon J. (1985). *Word Biblical Commentary*, Volume 12, 1 Kings, 1st edition (pages 104, 110). Word Books: Waco, TX. A questionable translation may have obscured the issue of the pillars. DeVries in his commentary believes 1 Kings 7:19 should read “at” [i.e. in front of, or next to] rather than “in” the porch.

(4) 2 Kings 25:17 says three cubits, but 1 Kings 7:16, 2 Chronicles 3:15, and Jeremiah 52:21 all say five cubits.

(5) DeVries translates the rather confusing verses 16-20 this way: “And two capitals he made to set on top of the pillars, castwork; five cubits was the height of one capital and five cubits was the height of the second capital. Reticulations [patterned lines] shaped like a net, festoons [flowers] shaped like a chain, belonged to the capitals which were on top of the pillars, seven for one capital and seven for the second capital. And he made the columns; and there were two rows surrounding each reticulation made to cover the capital which was on top of the pomegranates; and the same for the second capital. And the capitals which were on top of the columns, styled as lilies, in the porch [note, DeVries believes the columns in this verse are columns



Olive trees — Two of them represent the Old and New Testaments

supporting the porch and different from the two pillars], were four cubits. And the capitals were atop the two pillars; also upward with respect to the protuberance, which was distinct from the second capital.” Devries, Simon J. (1985). *Word Biblical Commentary*, Volume 12, 1 Kings, 1st edition, page 104. Word Books: Waco, TX.

(6) The necessity for at least two witnesses is independently established by God elsewhere in the scriptures. Deuteronomy 17:6 and 19:15 (*cf.* Hebrews 10:28-29) describe the necessity for at least two witnesses in any court case, and both Jesus and the Apostle Paul extends this concept to the Christian church, as well (Matthew 18:16, 1 Timothy 5:19). Additionally, Paul links the requirement for two or three witnesses to his own visits and his exhortations to the Corinthian church (2 Corinthians 13:1).

(7) Although in this verse the reference is to the saints and “the word of God, and because of the testimony which they had maintained.” The natural assumption is the testimony is the “testimony of Jesus” although the exact language isn’t used in this particular instance.

(8) The only exception to this rule in Revelation [every place in that book where the two phrases “the word of God” and “the testimony of Jesus” are seen together] is found in 19:13 where “the Word of God” is applied as a title to Jesus (*cf.* John 1:1) rather than as a reference specifically to the scriptures.

(9) Editor Note: The pillars were first cast in clay in the plain of Jordan, illustrating how New Creatures were begotten while still vessels of clay. It was a massive task to move them from Jordan to the temple. So it is with the Church from her lower estate to the high exaltation of her destiny. The head of these columns was decorated with bronze pomegranates and a chain of lily work. The head of every Christian is Christ full of beauty, fruitfulness, fragrance and precious promises.

(10) Editor Note: If we read them like a sentence, but with the Hebrew right to left direction and take note that the Temple entrance is between them we get: “**He will firmly establish — The Temple — In strength.**” This is a wonderful promise. Ephesians 1:19, “And what the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to that working of the strength of his might.”

The Hebrew Record

“The days of Seth were 912 years” (Genesis 5:6).

The book of Genesis provides numbers for the lifespans of the 10 patriarchs from Adam through Noah, inclusively. Another record, the Sumerian King List, also supplies year numbers for a list of pre-flood leaders.¹ However, their list omits the first man, Adapa (Adam), and also the last patriarch, the Sumerian flood hero, Ziusudra (Noah of Genesis). Therefore, the Sumerian list connects to the eight patriarchs from Seth through Lamech.

The Sumerian tablet record refers to these as “kings,” and the years assigned to each of them as “reigns.” In both ways the Sumerian record is imprecise, as compared with the Hebrew list. However, there is an interesting connection between the numbers given in Genesis, and those given in the Sumerian list.

Here are the Sumerian numbers for each of these eight persons, in sequence — 28,800, 36,000, 43,200, 28,800, 36,000, 28,800, 21,000, 18,600.² These numbers are orders of magnitude too large to be realistic. But as everyone following the flood would have the same pre-flood history,

one might ask whether there is any connection between these fabulous numbers reported by the Sumerians, and the corresponding numbers reported in Genesis.

Sumeria, as ancient Babylon, used a base 60 counting system. This lingers in our culture with 60 seconds to a minute, 60 minutes to an hour, and 360 degrees to a circle. The Sumerians had units called **sars** (3600 years each), and **ners** (600 years each). Reducing the Sumerian years to those terms, we have the following, in sars (and ners) — 8, 10, 12, 8, 10, 8, 5 (and 5 ners), 5 (and 1 ner). These numbers were apparently rounded into sars and ners by dropping smaller amounts of years for each person. The total sum of these is **66 sars, and 6 ners**.

Suppose we do the same to the Hebrew lifespans, from Seth to Lamech — drop the digits column, and count only the 100s and 10s. Those lifespans from Genesis would then become — 910, 900, 910, 890, 960, 360, 960, 770. The sum of these happens to be **66 hundreds, and 6 tens**.

It appears that the Sumerian list began with the Hebrew numbers, dropped the last digits, remembered that the sum of these is 66 large units and 6 smaller units, and took that to be **66 sars and 6 ners**, to fit their base 60 system. The fact that the number **six** is involved in each amount made that sum specially memorable to the base **six-ty** Sumerians.

When some Sumerian scribe wished to reconstruct the list, but recalled only the memorable sum, he did the following. (a) He allocated a convenient 10 sars for each person. (b) To avoid identical numbers, he modified that to 8, 10, 12 sars for the first three, and repeated 8, 10, 12 sars for the next three — so far totalling 60 sars. (c) He had two more persons to add, and the sum would be too great. So he reduced the last one from 12 to 8. He now had 56 sars. (d) He applied 5 each for the next two persons — now he was at 66 sars. (e) He had only to add 6 ners more, so he added 5 and 1 respectively to the last two on the list. This achieved the desired result — **66 sars, 6 ners**.

In other words, the Sumerian record, distorted as it is, preserves the memory of the more precise record that we have in Genesis.³

(1) *The Sumerian King List*, Thorkild Jacobsen, 1939, pages 71-77.

(2) The Sumerian record reports the sum of these accurately, 241,200, and along the way gives subtotals. So we know the Sumerian record accurately reflects their intention, without any miswriting or misreading of the figures.

(3) This comparison between the Sumerian list, and the more original Hebrew list, also reflects on the question whether the Hebrew record, or the Septuagint record, gives the original numbers. For the Septuagint gives the years of Lamech as 753, which does not accord with the Sumerian adjustments.

The Samaritan text is even more discounted, for it reports the years of Jared, Methuselah, and Lamech as 847, 720, and 653 years, respectively (*McClintock and Strong*, “Chronology,” page 298). Collectively, this is even more incompatible with the ancient Sumerian adjustments.