

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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Joshua's Request

"Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon, and thou, Moon, in the valley of Ajalon" (Joshua 10:12).

Abstract. Much has been written through the centuries about these scriptures found in Joshua 10:12-14. Some of the explanations of Joshua's request defy the very laws of the universe established by God. God uses His universal laws to accomplish things but does not go against these laws. With this in mind what could be the meaning of this request? To answer this we will consider three segments:

(1) The context of events leading up to this battle at Gibeon, for in them lies the meaning for Joshua's request.

(2) The motivation for Joshua's request. Jehovah's purpose is to redeem Israel from the nations, and most importantly, from their gods (2 Samuel 7:23). Joahus'a request accords with this purpose.

(3) The event itself. We will show that the physical event depicts Joshua's motivation to fulfill Jehovah's purpose for redeeming Israel from the nations and their gods.

From secular history we understand that the peoples of the land worshipped a multitude of various gods. False gods of the sun, moon, storm, and summer solstice would play a role in the upcoming battle. But instead of helping the Amorites, they were powerless in stopping Israel's one true God.

THE COVENANT WITH GIBEON

After the battle with Ai, the Gibeonites tricked the Israelites into a covenant (Joshua 9:3-6). Now the Gibeonites would be able to live in peace among the Israelites (Joshua 9:15, 16). In response, the kings of the mountains where Gibeon is located gathered against Gibeon (Joshua 10:1-5). Recognizing the peril, the Gibeonites sent for help from the Israelites, who honored their obligation to their new allies. The stage was set for a battle between Israel and the five Amorite kings (Joshua 10:6-9).

There are about twenty miles from Gilgal to Gibeon. Verses 7-9 show that Joshua ascended from Gilgal to Gibeon — they had to go up hill in order to get there — a climb of 3,400 feet (Hastings Bible Dictionary). So the Israelite

army had a forced march, uphill, at night, in order to have the element of surprise against the Amorites. Considering the terrain and distance traveled, probably this march was done on the night of a full moon or near full moon.

Another important aspect of these verses is that Joshua, like Moses, built up the faith of Israel's armies by assuring them that Jehovah was with them. Israel had to have faith in their one God and not fall back onto false gods (Deuteronomy 31:7, 8, Joshua 10:25). We see the results of the battle in Joshua 10:10, 11.

JOSHUA'S PRAYER

Now we consider the motivation behind Joshua's request. As the events unfolded, Jehovah fought for the Israelites. Joshua put this to his advantage in the eyes of Israel. Remember that Joshua was dealing with a new generation of Hebrews who had needed to be circumcised and had not seen the plagues that had happened in Egypt. The previous generation had died in the wilderness. So Joshua built them up in faith as he and Caleb tried to do after spying in the land years earlier (Numbers 14:29, 30, 32, 33, Numbers 14:7-9).

In Joshua 10:12, 13, Joshua showed Israel who their true God was and exposed the false gods of the Amorites, as Moses did in Egypt (Deuteronomy 4:33-35, 39). The Amorites worshipped a sun god and a moon god. Jericho was the city of the Moon.

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It was important that Israel recognize and have faith in Jehovah who was fighting for them.

The meanings of some of the words in Joshua 10:12, 13, give us some insights into the motivation behind Joshua's request. As Moses showed the superiority of Jehovah over the gods of Egypt in the ten plagues, so Joshua would show the superiority of Jehovah over the gods of the Amorites. Joshua had stood by the side of Moses and learned from him — now he puts this learning into practice.

First, the request is made in the sight (Strong 5869, "eye," as showing mental qualities, compare Genesis 3:5) of Israel.

In verse 12 Joshua asks for the sun and moon to be still (Strong 1826, "to be still, silent, be dumb, grow dumb"). In verse 13, the words "stayed" or "stood still" are from Strong 5975, which means "to make a stand, hold one's ground, arise, appear, come on the scene." Joshua wanted the sun and moon to make their stand, to come on the scene, in other words to be present as the events unfold.

The word "hasted" in verse 13 (Strong 213) means "to press, confined." The phrase "to go down" is from Strong 935, "to come, to enter, to fall or light upon, attack." Joshua wants the sun to be confined from going down or attacking. Interestingly, all these words have a military implication.

In Joshua's word choice, he tried to get Israel to use their mental faculties to see that Jehovah is a living God as compared to the gods of the Amorites. The words Joshua used regarding the sun and moon shows their limitations. This is done to expose them as false gods in the eyes of Israel. He calls to the sun and moon to be silent and watch what is going to happen to their worshippers as Israel through Jehovah avenged themselves on their enemies. Israel is to understand that even though the sun and moon stand their ground in the heavens, they are unable to attack or do anything to stop the armies of Israel. Joshua wants Israel to understand that these are nothing more than creations of Jehovah which Jehovah controls. These are not gods. Israel is to worship the creator and not the creation (Genesis 1:14, 1 Chronicles 16:25, 26, Nehemiah 9:6, Psalms 148:2-5).

In 1 Corinthians 12:2, the Apostle Paul refers to idols as being dumb (Strong 880, "voiceless, dumb, without the faculty of speech, idols").

The Psalmist also brings this out in Psalms 115:4-8 and 135:15-18.

It is also found in Habakkuk 2:18-20 (in verse 18, the word dumb is from Strong 483, mute, silent, dumb, unable to speak; and in verse 19, it is from Strong 1748, silence).

Joshua, through Jehovah, is passing judgment on the gods of the Amorites. The Hebrews had a similar experience when they came out of Egypt with respect to the Egyptian gods. As each plague presented itself, Egyptian gods and goddesses were exposed as powerless in the presence of Jehovah. As judgment came on the gods of Egypt, so judgment came on the gods of the Amorites (Exodus 12:12, Numbers 33:3, 4, Exodus 18:11).



The place of Gibeon

Another example of this is when Elijah tormented the priests of Baal and told them to shout louder so Baal could hear and send fire down on the altar (1 Kings 18:27, 28). That understanding helps explain Joshua 10:14.

At the Exodus from Egypt, and at Elijah's confrontation with the priests of Baal, God used Moses and Elijah to expose the false gods. In Joshua 10:14, Joshua is asking God for the opportunity to expose the false gods. Jehovah granted the request of a man. Joshua validated this request, giving credit to Jehovah who fought for Israel.

Scripture shows that Israel had a problem worshipping the hosts of heaven, the sun and the moon. Israel did not differentiate between what was a creation of God for their benefit, and God himself. Stephen summed up this weakness up in Acts 7:39-43 (see also 2 Kings 17:16, 17, 2 Kings 21:3-5, Jeremiah 8:1, 2, and 2 Kings 23:5). Moses warned Israel not to worship false gods (Deuteronomy 4:3, 4, 19, 20). But he also predicted that they would (Deuteronomy 31:16-20. See Ezekiel 8:15, 16 for a blatant example).

The Moabites, Amorites and Canaanites worshipped a moon god, Sin, Yerach, or Ashtoreth — a sun god, Shapash or Baal — a storm god, Addu or Adad — and the god of noon, summer solstice, and the underworld, Nergal. All four of these sun, moon, storm, and solstice, would play a role in the upcoming battle — but all were powerless to stop Israel's one true God.

EARLY TENDENCY

In Deuteronomy chapter four, Israel was in Shittim, east of Jordan. Moses with Joshua knew that Israel had gone after Moabite and Midianite women and had started to worship strange gods. That occurred just before Israel would go into the land. This incident is recorded in Numbers 22-25. It began with Balak, King of the Moabites, seeking Balaam to curse Israel. Balaam would not curse Israel because God told him not to, but he did tell Balak how to snare Israel (Numbers 31:16, Revelation 2:14). Thus Joshua learned a lesson from Moses on how to demonstrate to Israel who was the one true God (Numbers 25:1-5, Joshua 10:13, 14).

The word "heads" in Numbers 25:4 (Strong 7218) means a head as in rank, those who had a position of authority and

responsibility. Note — they are hung against the sun. The word “hang” (Strong 3363) is defined by Strong as “properly, located; figuratively, to abandon; causatively, to impale.” Notice that they are hung before the sun, the god which they worship. The word “grove” in the Old Testament (Strong 842) is *asherah*, from the root *ashar*, which means to be straight or upright. This ancient god was the symbol of fertility and was represented by an upright pole, called the tree of life. Moses used what he knew of these false gods to give Israel a solid example that Jehovah is superior. He hung the kings on their *asherah* in front of their sun God. He challenged the Moabite sun god and *asherah* to save their worshippers.

Joshua followed Moses’ example and did the same thing with the king of Ai, and then with the five Amorites kings (Joshua 8:29, Joshua 10:26, 27).

Israel constantly needed physical proof regarding Jehovah. They had difficulty developing faith in things not seen and would fall away (Joshua 24:14, Hebrews 11:1, 6).

JOSHUA 10:12, 13

Here is Joshua 10:12, 13, with Strong’s reference numbers.

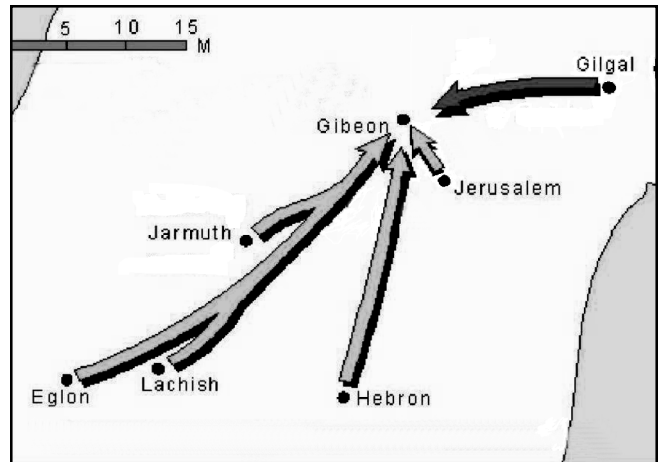
(12) “Then spake Joshua to the LORD in the day when the LORD delivered up the Amorites before the children of Israel, and he said in the sight of Israel, Sun [8121, sunrise, sunset, pinnacles, battlements, shields as glittering or shining] stand thou still [1826, to be silent, still, wait, be dumb, grow dumb] upon Gibeon; and thou, Moon [3394, moon], in the valley of Ajalon.

(13) “And the sun stood still [1826], and the moon stayed [5975, to stand, to make a stand, hold one’s ground, remain, take one’s stand, to tarry, delay, to arise, appear, come on the scene, rise up or against], until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies. Is not this written in the book of Jasher? So the sun stood still [5975] in the midst [2677] of heaven, and hastened [213, to press, hasten, confined, narrow] not to go down [935, to come, to enter, come in, to come upon, fall or light upon, attack] about a whole day.”

It is likely that the rendering of these verses would follow a battle scenario, and it is showing the inability of the Amorite gods to stop Jehovah. So Joshua 10:12,13 could read as follows:

“Then spake Joshua to the LORD in the day when the LORD delivered up the Amorites before the children of Israel, and he said in the sight (to the thinking minds) of Israel, Sun be silent upon Gibeon, and thou, Moon be silent in the valley of Ajalon. And the sun was silent, and the moon stood its ground until [at the time of the solstice this is a 2-3 hour period] the people avenged themselves upon their enemies. Is not this written in the book of Jasher? So the sun stood its ground in the midst of heaven and was confined not to come upon or attack the whole day.”

Just as Joshua was showing the superiority of Jehovah to Israel, the lesson that there is only one true God was also



Five Kings against Gibeon, Israelites march from Gilgal

for the Amorites, as it had been for the Egyptians at the time of the plagues, There is only one true God. They had a choice of believing in the one true God or continuing to believe in their own gods (Exodus 7:5, Exodus 14:4, Exodus 9:18, 20, 21, Exodus 12:38).

JOSHUA’S SURPRISE ATTACK

Lastly we consider the physical events behind what Joshua asked of God. As mentioned earlier, it seems logical that on the night in which Joshua moved the army to Gibeon, there was a full moon — for they traveled twenty miles and an elevation of 3,400 feet during the night.

The five kings went to attack the Gibeonites, encouraged that their gods gave a sign that the time was right. The kings looked at the celestial signs to determine if they would be successful. Archeologists have found clay tablets which show the elaborate tools diviners used to forecast events using the sun, moon and the hosts of heaven — something that Israel was not allowed to do (Deuteronomy 18:10-14).

Joshua’s words synchronize with the physical events on this day of battle. His purpose was to show Israel the superiority of Jehovah over the Amorite gods. What happened with the sun and moon was important because they are gods to the Amorites. For the moon god, Sin, to be full or near full was considered a positive sign by the Amorites.

We suggest the battle started just at the time of sunrise (Joshua 10:9). Joshua (10:12) says the sun was silent over Gibeon and the moon over the valley of Ajalon. The sun was rising in the east where Gibeon was and the moon was setting in the west were the valley of Ajalon was.

In Joshua 10:9, “suddenly” (Strong 6597) means suddenly or surprisingly, indicating the attack came when the Amorites were not prepared — consistent with sunrise, when the Amorite army might be sleeping or getting up.

“Discomforted” (Strong 2000) means to move nosily, confuse. Notice, it is the LORD that discomforted the Amorite army. Perhaps Joshua attacked with the sunrise behind him, impairing the sight of the enemy amid confusion from the noise of the attack — similar to the Civil War when the southern armies would yell and shout as they attacked to

intimidate and unnerve the enemy and boost their own morale.¹

Right from the beginning, the battle went well for Israel. The enemy was on the run. As they retreated they were pushed towards Beth-Horon. Though Jerusalem would be the nearest city for refuge, the Amorites were moved away from it, westward (Joshua 10:10, 11).

Though the King of Jerusalem brought this confederacy against Israel, Jerusalem was not destroyed at this time — though the other cities of the confederacy were (Joshua 10:28-43, 2 Samuel 5:7, Judges 1:8).

The next important thing is that hailstones fell on the retreating Amorites, and more were killed by the hailstones than by the Israelites! Remember that the Amorites had a god of storms (Addu or Adad), and now they were being killed in a storm.

DATE OF BATTLE

This battle occurred some time after Passover (Joshua 5:10). We suggest it occurred during the month of June. When Joshua told the sun to be silent and stand its ground, perhaps he referred to the time when the sun would be up for the maximum hours of daylight — the summer solstice, the longest day of the year — June 21 or 22 by our calendar.

The word “solstice” is from the Latin *sol* (sun), and *sistere* (to stand still), because at the solstice the sun stands still on its declination. Solstice, Midsummer, or Litha, means a stopping or standing still of the sun. In other words, its apparent movement north and south from our perspective comes to a stand-still. The sun has moved to its farthest point north from the Celestial Equator. To the unaided eye, the sun seems to rise and set at the same location on the horizon for about five days before and after the actual solstice.

The word “midst” in verse 13 (Strong 2677) means “half or middle.” It refers to the path of the sun during the summer solstice where its path is at its highest point and is perceived to be moving through the middle of the sky. At this time of year a full moon may look full to the naked eye for as long as three days.

This phenomenon is documented at the NASA website, which states, “On June 16, 2000, the problem could be even worse than usual. Instead of a dark, sleepy night sky following sunset, the blazing rays of a bright full Moon will come streaming through bedroom windows. This June’s full Moon occurs just four days before the 2000 summer solstice -- the longest day of the year in the northern hemisphere ... Full Moons that occur close to the summer solstice are special because they follow the lowest path across the sky of all of the year’s full Moons” (Dr. George Lebo, a NASA/Marshall Space Flight Center Summer Faculty Fellow).

“Moons seen just above the horizon look much larger than normal. It’s an optical illusion, of course, but it’s still a pretty sight.” Anytime the Moon is full the Sun and the Moon are on opposite sides of the Earth. If one is high in the sky, as the Sun will be near the beginning of summer, the

other must be low. On June 16, the Moon will never climb more than 30 degrees above the horizon as seen from mid-latitude sites in the northern hemisphere” (NASA website science.nasa.gov/headlines/y2000/ast14jun_1.htm)

This also happened in 2008 — full moon was on June 18, and on June 20 (summer solstice), at 11:59 pm, the moon was 91% of its total.

Technically, a full moon occurs the instant the moon’s shadow completely disappears because of its alignment with the earth and the sun. This is known as a lunar phase. Humans cannot determine the exact moment this lunar phase occurs without the aid of a telescope. Thus the moon appears full for 36 hours — 18 hours before and after this lunar phase.

If the battle of Gibeon was at summer solstice, perchance at full moon, this would explain several things — the language used by Joshua in his request to God, the attack of Amorites encouraged by a sign they supposed their gods provided, and moonlight enabling Joshua’s troops to march all night to Gibeon. It would be cooler traveling by night and this was summer in Israel. In the morning Joshua would have the sun to his back when attacking downhill.

SUMMARY

Joshua 10:12, 13, have been much discussed over the centuries. There are many opinions as to what Joshua intended, why he asked what he did of God, and what happened in answer to his prayer. We think the motive for Joshua’s prayer was to strengthen the faith of Israel in their one true God, as superior to the gods of the Amorites.

Why would he have to say in Joshua 10:25, “fear not, nor be dismayed,” and in Joshua 24:15, “and if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD,” if they were a people of great faith in Jehovah? Joshua remembered that Moses said Israel would go back to worshipping idols. So Joshua gave them many testimonies about the one true God.

The perceived advantages of the Amorites — the summer solstice of maximum daylight, and a full moon, suggesting the favor of their gods — became the very things Joshua used to his advantage to exhort Israel to faith in Jehovah.

What one lesson can we learn from this incident in Joshua? “Be strong in your faith of the one true God.” Israel had to believe in God as they went out to battle, for Jehovah would overcome all that lay before them (Deuteronomy 31:6, 7, Joshua 1:5-7).

As we face the battles of life, in order to conquer the things that draw us away from God, we too can trust in God’s words. Whatever God was willing to do for Joshua, He is willing to do for us (1 Corinthians 8:6, Ephesians 6:10-13, Hebrews 13:5, 6).

— Bro. “Rick” Evans, Jr.

(1) Editor’s note: such tactics have been typical throughout world history. They are called a “shout,” or *keleusma* in the New Testament (1 Thessalonians 4:16).

Rooted in Deep Waters

“In the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert” (Isaiah 35:6).

In the biblical narrative, the word *yuvah* (Strong 2988) which appears three times in the Bible seems to have lost its original nuance and it is recognized as meaning a stream of some kind.¹ In modern Hebrew, it refers to a perennial stream, and so it has generally been understood by commentators and translators. But two of the passages in which the word appears refer to trees whose deep roots allow them to draw water from the water table.² All three passages make more sense if a *yuvah* is the sudden flood that appears in a dry wash after a storm.

ISAIAH 44

Rereading the Bible with this knowledge, we find that in the arid to semi-arid environments of the Kingdom of Judah, there was a good understanding of desert hydrology. For example, Isaiah 44:3-5 may be translated as:

Even as I pour water on thirsty soil,
and rain upon dry ground,
so will I pour My spirit on your seed,
My blessing upon your offshoots.
And they shall grow in among grass
like willows by *yavals* of water.
One shall say “I am the Lord’s,”
another shall use the name of “Jacob,”
another shall mark his arm “of the Lord,”
and adopt the name of “Israel.”

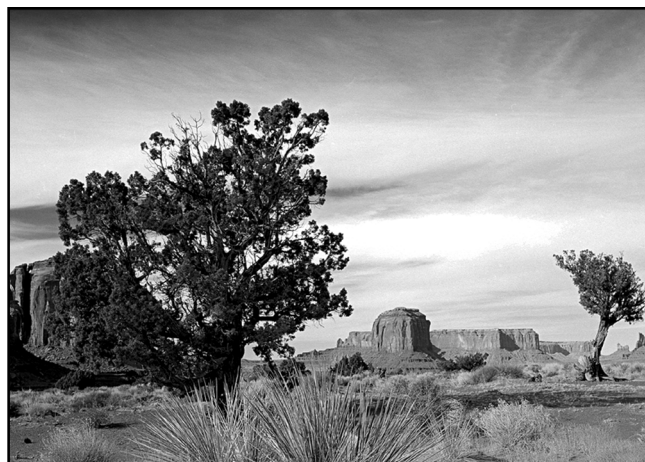
A reader familiar with the desert washes immediately recognizes the image of willows growing among the grass along washes. After most storms, precipitation is retained in soil near the surface and evaporates. Water table aquifers are recharged by major storms that deliver so much water that the upper soil is saturated and the excess infiltrates into underlying rocks. The recurrence interval of such storms can be years. The deep-rooted tree remains green when the grass that sprouted up so quickly after the flood has long since turned brown. The simile can then be paraphrased as follows:

I will pour out My spirit as suddenly and overwhelmingly as a rainstorm in the desert. After such a storm, the willow does not fade like grass, but is kept green for many years by the ground water that recharges in the storm. Your offspring will be like the willow and not the grass; they will draw spiritual sustenance from that sudden outpouring for years afterward and remain faithful to Me.

JEREMIAH 17

A *yuvah* appears also in Jeremiah 17:5-8, again associated with deep-rooted trees.

Cursed are they who trust in man ...
They shall be like an *arar* in the Arava,
which does not sense the coming of good,



Trees in the Desert

it is set in the scorched places of the wilderness, in a barren land without inhabitant.

Blessed are they who trust in the Lord,
whose trust is the Lord alone.

They shall be like a tree planted above water,
sending down its roots by a *yuvah*:
it does not fear the coming of heat,
its leaves are ever fresh;
it has no care in a year of drought,
it does not cease to yield fruit.

This passage is well known to English speakers from the King James version where the tree is planted “by the waters” and “spreadeth out” its roots. But translators working in 17th-century England might easily have overlooked nuances of desert hydrology. In the arid to semiarid environments of Judea, surface water supplies are generally vulnerable to drought, and fresh leaves and fruit in years of drought summon the image of a phreatophyte, which draws its water from below and not (or not directly) from the flood that passes by. Taken word by word, the Hebrew is compatible with either translation (the preposition is equivalent to the English “by” or “above”; and the tree literally “sends out” rather than “spreads” its roots, with the direction not specified), but “above water, sending down its roots” communicates a picture that is more consistent with the environment.

The phreatophyte is contrasted with the *arar*, a plant of some kind that grows in the Arava, the rift valley between the Dead Sea and the Gulf of Aqaba. One would hope to find usable water beneath such a topographic low. But the near-surface ground water of the Arava is often saline, requiring desert vegetation to survive on precipitation extracted from the soil zone after rainfalls.

The person who turns away from God, the prophet suggests, will suffer similar disappointment.

ISAIAH 30

A third appearance of *yuvah* is in Isaiah 30:25-26, which might be translated as:

“And on every high mountain and on every lofty hill, there shall appear channels [with] flash floods [*yuvals*] — on a day of heavy slaughter, when towers topple. And the light of the moon shall become like the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall become sevenfold, like the light of the seven days, when the Lord binds up His people’s wounds and heals the injuries it has suffered.”

This passage is not intended as an account of natural phenomena; all that can be said is that a sudden flood fits in with the cataclysmic events it describes. Linguistic evidence supports the interpretation of these verses as referring to phreatophytes and ephemeral watercourses. The word *yaval/yuval* seems linked to the Akkadian (Mesopotamian) verb *abalu*, used regularly to denote the flow of water, generally in reference to a flood or ephemeral flow.

The Chicago Assyrian Dictionary (Roth 2005) gives 16 examples of the use of *abalu* to denote flow; 11 refer explicitly to flood or ephemeral flows, and none refers unambiguously to base flow. This word also may be echoed in the Arabic verb *wabala* (“to shed heavy rain, cloudburst”) and the nouns *wabl* and *wabil* (“cloudburst”). More distant cognates include the Hebrew root *abel* (Strong 58) which means “to dry out” or “to become a desert” (Isaiah 33:9, Jeremiah 12:4), the noun *mabbul*, which is the biblical term for the deluge in the time of Noah, and the Akkadian noun *babil*, meaning flood.

This evidence, while admittedly sparse, points more to a *yuval* as a flood in a normally dry stream bed than as a perennial stream. Phreatophytes make other appearances in the Bible, where the *yuval* is not mentioned. On the feast of Sukkoth, for example, Jews take leaves of three trees: the palm, the myrtle, and the willow. All three are phreatophytes; the holiday comes at the end of the dry season, when in the desert only phreatophytes would have green leaves. The willow, indeed, is specified in Leviticus 24:40 as *arvei nakhal*, which is usually translated as “willows of the brook” but could equally well mean “willows of the wash.”

What is today the specialized experience of those who study the desert and its water resources was the everyday life of the farmers and herders of ancient Israel. A careful reading of the Bible shows how much of the hydrologic cycle could be deciphered by those who observed their surroundings as carefully as Isaiah and Jeremiah.

— Richard Doctor

(1) Ross, Benjamin, “Phreatophytes in the Bible,” *Ground Water Journal*, Volume 45:5 (September-October 2007), page 652-654.

(2) The technical designation for such deep rooted trees is “Phreatophytes” from the Greek “well” and “growth.”

Blessed is the man [whose] ... delight is in the law of the LORD ... he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water.”
(Psalms 1:1-3)

Tyre and Sidon, Unrestrained Capitalism

(Continued from previous issue)

PROTESTANT WORK ETHIC

But today, why is there such a difference between *Western* Christendom looking to Rome and *Eastern* Christendom looking to Constantinople?

There are a multitude of reasons to be sure. But what opened the door to commerce in Western Christendom was the challenge for Papacy that came with the unbridled neopaganism of the Renaissance and then the counterbalancing nearly fatal crisis of the Protestant Reformation. Europe struggled in a desperate clash of civilizations.

From that eve of All Saints Day, October 31, 1517, when Martin Luther nailed up the 95 theses on the door of Wittenberg church, through the Peace of Westphalia that set the modern map of Europe in 1648, civil war raged through *Christendom*. Civilization changed course, and it was no longer un-Christian to engage in commerce.

Where religious freedom, freedom of thought, and freedom from want permits thoughtful reflection to flourish, there commerce also flourishes. Writing on this subject, Pastor Russell observes (Volume Four, page 72):

“Through the influences of the Word of God, direct and indirect, the Christian nations have made great advancements in civilization and material prosperity in every line, so that in wealth, comfort, intellectual development, education, civil government, in science, art, manufacture, commerce and every branch of human industry ...”

Indeed, the growth of commerce from the Protestant countries is such a clear phenomenon of history that there is a name attached to it: *The Protestant Ethic*.¹² This claim is annoying to Catholics even today.¹³

COMMERCE AND NATIONALISM

At least one historian has said that the high-water mark for western civilization is a date of great import to the Lord’s people, because of the link of commerce and nationalism. Oxford historian Arnold Toynbee, author of the celebrated 12-volume *Study of History*, observes the following regarding industrialism and nationalism¹⁴ (*emphasis added*):

“... Conditions of our Western Society have already become *profoundly different* from those which were in the ascendancy during the century ending about AD 1875 ... Down to about 1875, the two dominant institutions of *industrialism and nationalism were working together* to build up the Great Powers. *After 1875 they began to work in opposite directions* — industrialism increasing the scale of its operations beyond the compass of the greatest of the Great Powers and feeling its way towards a world-wide range, while nationalism, percolating downwards, began



Modern image of Tyre

to implant a separate consciousness in peoples of so small a caliber that they were incapable not only of forming Great Powers but even of forming minor states possessed of full political, economic, and cultural independence.”

This trend was just in its infancy in Pastor Russell’s day, although he does address it in his writings (Volume Four, page 146):

“The American people are being aroused to a sense of danger to their liberties, and to action in view of such danger, with the energy which has been their marked characteristic in every branch of industry and every avenue of trade, though the real causes of their danger are not clearly enough discerned by the masses to direct their energies wisely. *They only see that congested wealth is impoverishing the many, influencing legislation so as to still further amass wealth and power in the hands of the few, and so creating an aristocracy of wealth whose power will in time prove as despotic and relentless as any despotism of the Old World.*”

THE CURRENT SITUATION

The following title would have been inconceivable at the start of the 20th century; Martin Wolf, a lecturer for the Cato Institute writing in the January 2001 issue of *Foreign Affairs*, entitles his article, “Will the Nation-State Survive Globalization?” Wolf begins this way:¹⁵

“A Specter is haunting the world’s governments — the specter of globalization. Some argue that predatory market forces make it impossible for benevolent governments to shield their populations from the beasts of prey that lurk beyond their borders. Others counter that benign market forces actually prevent predatory governments from fleecing their citizens. Although the two sides see different villains, they draw one common conclusion: *omnipotent markets mean impotent politicians.* Indeed, this formula has become one of the clichés of our age. But is

it true that governments have become weaker and less relevant than ever before? And does globalization, by definition, have to be the nemesis of national government?” *(emphasis added)*

He argues do not worry, things will work out. This will be for the benefit of the few in the short term (who these fortunate ones are is not elaborated) and for the benefit of all in the long term. After asking these questions he closes with:

“Finally, as the world economy continues to integrate and cross-border flows [of economic goods] become more important, global governance [of the economy] must be improved. Global governance will come not at the expense of the state but rather as an expression of the interests that the state embodies.”

THE SECOND CONQUEST OF BABYLON

This sets the stage for the second and destructive fall of Babylon. The language of the judgment on Babylon in Revelation shows cooperation between Babylon and the merchants of the earth among whom Tyre would be pre-eminent. Babylon and Tyre appear linked as allies:

“Who hath taken this counsel against Tyre, the crowning city, whose merchants are princes, whose traffickers are the honourable of the earth?” (Isaiah 23:8).

The carefully planned rebellion of Babylon against their Persian overlords took place nearly two generations *after* the conquest of Cyrus when the Persians were engaged in an unsuccessful assault on Greece launched from Tyre.

Since, at the time of the writing of Revelation, *both* cities Tyre and Babylon were shells of their former glory, Revelation must be referencing the second conquest of Babylon after their rebellion during the era of Mede and Persian dominion. At this time these two cities were citadels of power and allies; hence, this fall of Babylon, when its gates and walls were destroyed, falls into the intertestamental period between the Old and New Testament (479 BC). This second conquest was accompanied by smoke and burning.

In Revelation there are two groups who stand afar off — the kings and the merchants who see Babylon’s fall, but do not recognize the full impact of that fall until its final hour. We read of this in Revelation 18:2, 9-11:

“And the merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over her; for no man buyeth their merchandise anymore” (Revelation 18:11).

These two groups, the kings and these merchants, are seen *standing a far off*, and therefore the scriptures are telling us they must be distinct from Babylon.

EMERGING REGULATION OF GLOBAL FINANCES

Wall Street Journal, January 29, 2009, page A10, “G-20 — *On Track for Changes in Financial Regulation.*”

LONDON — Leaders of the world’s largest economies are on track to complete an “ambitious and far-reaching” agree-



Spring blossoms in Tyre

ment on changes to the regulation of the global financial system, a senior U.K. Treasury official said ... These include setting up global “colleges of supervisors” to monitor international banks, expanding the membership and mandate of the Financial Stability Forum and reforming the International Monetary Fund to increase developing countries’ representation on its executive board ... French President Nicolas Sarkozy has called on leaders to use the reforms for “re-founding capitalism.”

Under mystic Babylon, the governance was through a College of Cardinals. Under mystic Tyre, emerging governance by a “College of supervisors” will watch over the interests of the economy. The language of Ezekiel 28:2 suggests the emergence of a very strong leadership at some future crisis.

From Ezekiel 28:12 it is clear that this Song of Tyre comes from the great Adversary, the king of Tyrus. He is but changing tactics in how to traffic in the souls of men. None of these plans will bring mankind closer in harmony to God. The Lord promises that the wisdom of Tyre and its unrestrained growth, its amorality and lack of concern for the human wreckage it leaves behind, shall fail:

“Tyrus, and Zidon, though it be very wise. And Tyrus did build herself a strong hold, and heaped up silver as the dust, and fine gold as the mire of the streets. Behold, the Lord will cast her out, and he will smite her power in the sea; and she shall be devoured with fire” (Zechariah 9:2-4).

COMMERCE REFORMED

Should we all become disciples of St. John Chrysostom?

We find that our Lord illustrated the responsibilities of active discipleship by using parables about being actively engaged in “doing business” with our “pounds” and “talents.” Reasoning on this, the desire and interest for commerce is both good and laudable.

But we have the more sure word of prophecy in Psalm 45:10-14. Verse 12 has a special promise that commerce, now reformed, restrained, and in the service of righteousness, will be a welcome part of the Kingdom joys:

“And the daughter of Tyre *shall be there* with a gift; *even* the rich among the people shall intreat thy favour” (Psalm 45:12).

SUMMARY

Tyre was world leader in commerce, consecrated to “Human Power and Cleverness” and “Sex.” Tyre in antitype suggests a commerce-driven life without the restraints of divine principles. Tyre and Babylon (Christendom in antitype) had a shifting relationship over time.

Through the influences of God’s Word, direct and indirect, Christian nations have made great advancements in civilization. Two dominant institutions of industrialism and nationalism worked together to build up the Great Powers. After 1875 they began to work in opposite directions. This new order’s attraction for the kings of the earth is characterized as a “song,” a passionate public expression of belief.

Omnipotent markets mean impotent politicians. And this means trouble.

Babylon’s second conquest was accompanied by smoke and burning — the merchants stand afar off. The Lord promises that the “wisdom” of Tyre shall fail, along with its unrestrained greed, its amorality, and lack of concern for the human wreckage it leaves behind.

We have the “more sure word of prophecy” in a special promise that Tyre’s daughter — commerce, now reformed, restrained, and in the service of righteousness — will be a welcome part of the Kingdom joys.

Antitypical Babylon and Tyre have different methods but the same object — to traffic in “the souls of men.”

As the Lord’s wrath is directed against this false system of “worship,” not worship of God, but worship of gain, we recognize that there are many good and even noble, but deceived, of mankind in the harlot’s embrace.

“Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness?” (2 Peter 3:11). David found a picture of God’s grace and covering of sin through Christ Jesus providing a justification before an awesome God who cannot look upon sin. In Psalm 51:6-13 David sings, “Your desire is for what is true in the inner parts: in the secrets of my soul you will give me knowledge of wisdom. Make me free from sin with hyssop: let me be washed whiter than snow.” May the Lord give us all grace sufficient for these days!

— Bro. Richard Doctor

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