

# Beauties of the Truth

A Forum for the Publication of Scriptural Viewpoints  
Thought to be Harmonious with God's Plan of the Ages  
Volume 15, Number 4, November 2004

## *The Great River and the Waters of Life*

### SHILOAH'S SOFT WATERS

Deep beneath Jerusalem there is a stratum of hard, impervious rock sloping gradually towards the southeast. All the rain that falls upon the city and filters into the ground finally gathers upon that unyielding shelf only to reemerge as springs upon the hillsides outside the city. The most famous of these springs is the "Virgin's Fountain" located halfway down the steep sides of the valley of Jehoshaphat. This spring never fails. From Jebusite times when these waters were utilized during sieges until relatively recent times, it has formed Jerusalem's most reliable water supply.

Probably in between the period of David and Ahaz the Israelites built a covered aqueduct just under the ground to carry the water from the Virgin's Fountain to the Pool of Siloam. These waters were to be used especially in times of siege and we read of them in 2 Chronicles 32:11 and Isaiah 7:3. When Sennacherib invaded Judah in the reign of Hezekiah the son of Ahaz (2 Kings 18:13-16) it seems this aqueduct had been blocked up and knowledge of its course lost, for Hezekiah excavated another tunnel through the mountain to carry the water to the Pool of Siloam. By then the spring was inside the city walls (2 Chronicles 32:30, 4-8, Isaiah 22:9, 2 Kings 20:20). In recent days both Hezekiah's tunnel and the remains of the earlier aqueduct have been found.

It was this lost aqueduct to which Isaiah refers in Isaiah 8:6, 7: "Forasmuch as this people refuse the waters of Shiloah that go softly, and rejoice in Rezin and Remaliah's son; Now therefore, behold, the Lord brings up upon them the waters of the river, strong and many, even the king of Assyria, and all his glory: and he shall come up over all his channels, and go over all his banks."

This water of Shiloah coming from the mountain's heart was never failing, always fresh and clear. It was the real Divine Provision for the people, a literal counterpart to the spiritual provision of sustenance, refreshment, and protection. Quietly, unobtrusively, and safe from all attack by enemies, the waters of Shiloah flowed softly to meet the needs

of the city. God's provision is always there; and always effective to meet all his people's needs; to shield them from all harm, if they but exercise faith.

### THE GREAT RIVER TIGRIS

Across the desert, in the land of Assyria, was "the great river, which is Hiddekel [Tigris]" (Daniel 10:4). Nineveh where Jonah preached nearly a century before Isaiah's day stood upon the Tigris. Its tributaries were dammed at various places creating artificial lakes from which canals were cut leading in every direction to irrigate the desert soil. This harnessing of their great river made Assyria one of the most fertile and prosperous countries in the world.

Many Israelites visited Assyria as merchants and brought back reports of its grandeur so different from their own rugged and austere Judea. They compared this earthly beauty — a beauty whose continuance depended upon the dazzling system of Assyrian canals only kept in operation by tremendous labor — against their own modest stream. Yet when the Assyrian labor failed, as all human effort and organization must eventually fail, those skillfully designed canals failed. Today the great dams on the Tigris are in ruins, the canals are full of sand and silt, the fields have become desert

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land, and the river once alive and bustling with activity instead flows sluggishly. In contrast the waters of Shiloah continue to flow as abundant, fresh and pure as in the days of Isaiah. The women of Jerusalem still draw water from the pool and the gardens around the southeast corner of the city are still watered from it.

### ASSYRIA THE INSTRUMENT OF DESTRUCTION

Assyria eventually became the instrument of great destruction to Israel because the people had refused the waters of Shiloah. God brought upon them the waters of the great river — an image for Assyria — to overflow and submerge them. This fulfilled the word of the Lord in Isaiah 8:7, 8: “Now therefore, behold, the Lord bringeth up upon them the waters of the river, strong and many, even the king of Assyria, and all his glory: and he shall come up over all his channels, and go over all his banks: And he shall pass through Judah; he shall overflow and go over, he shall reach even to the neck; and the stretching out of his wings shall fill the breadth of thy land, O Immanuel.”

We find scriptural reference to the invasions of Tiglathpileser, king of Assyria (2 Kings 16:7-10, 2 Chronicles 28:16-20), followed by Shalmaneser and his eventual capture of Samaria (2 Kings 17:3-5, 18:7-11), and lastly by Sennacherib (2 Kings 18:13-19:37, Isaiah 36-37). This is always the fate of the people that turn away from God’s guidance. The waters of destructive trouble overflow them. The stream that was the river of God always remains full of water, but not destructive water. This water always made glad the city of God as Jeremiah saw clearly. When speaking for God he cried: “... my people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water” (Jeremiah 2:13).

How many times since Jeremiah’s day have God’s people repeated that tragic mistake! Isaiah, speaking for God, lamented: “O that thou hadst hearkened to my commandment,” and then comes the regretful voice of the Most High God, sad and pleading, “then had thy peace been as a river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea” (Isaiah 48:18).

### LEAD BESIDE STILL WATERS

Can we not see in that eloquent appeal the picture of the waters of Shiloah flowing softly and quietly, but steadily and surely, through their narrow channels so that they might supply all the needs of the people of God in the holy city? Spiritually we may enjoy those waters if we only rely upon them and refuse the waters of the great river that have been gathered together and remain held together by the mind and power of man.

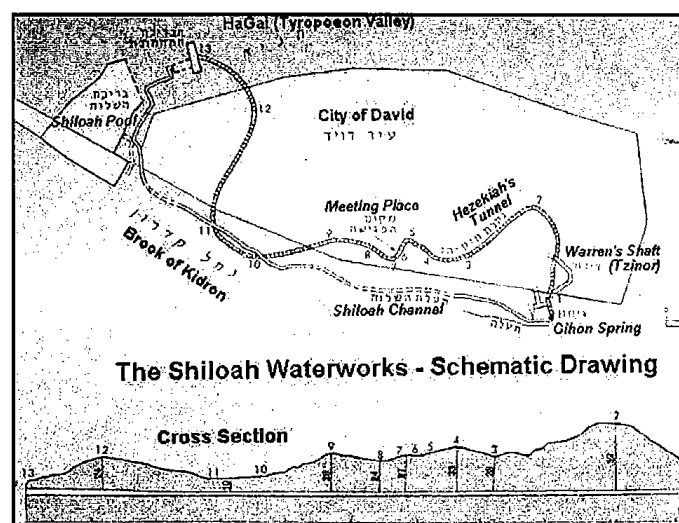
In the 23rd Psalm David sings of his being led by Yahweh beside the still waters, where his soul became restored and where he found the quiet pathways of righteousness. Perhaps he too followed the course of that crystal stream and saw in it a symbol of the Divine sustenance. His soul needed a lesson necessary to fleshly Israel, but more so to spiritual Israel. For we live in a day that offers more attractions and

distractions. Today there are more theories abroad, more subtle reasonings that tend to turn our minds away from “the truth [as it] is in Jesus” (Ephesians 4:21). This is especially so at this time of the world’s trouble and judgment, a time when the most brilliant of human minds are desperately devising programs to restore balance to the world, but not looking for God’s help. Is this why, in the midst of world Judgment, we are reminded in the 46th Psalm of the river of God that will supply all our needs?

“Though the earth be removed ... the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea ... though the waters thereof roar and foam ... though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof,” yet, for all this, “There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God” (Psalm 46:1-4).

Shiloah’s spiritual waters still yield refreshment and strength to all who put their faith in them. “In quietness and confidence shall be your strength” (Isaiah 30:15). In Psalms 65:9, 10, a psalm of praise, David appears to have brought that underground “river of God” into his song. “Thou visitest the earth, and waterest it: thou greatly enrichest it with the river of God, which is full of water.” Verse 10 indicates David had the waters of Shiloah in mind. “Thou waterest the ridges thereof abundantly: thou settlest the furrows thereof ...”

The Hebrew word for “furrow” (S.1417, *geh-dood*; see also Young’s Concordance) signifies a cutting, thus a man-made channel or an aqueduct, of the sort made all over the land to carry precious water without risking its loss by evaporation. “Settlest” (S.5181, *nichath*) means to go down, or to deepen, or descend. This depicts the life-giving water descending or flowing down an excavation towards its beneficent work. This is an apt description of the stream of the Virgin’s Fountain flowing through the underground aqueduct to the Pool of Shiloah.



Pool of Siloam (upper left)

At the continued providence of God thus manifested, David cried with joy: “Thou crownest the year with thy goodness ... the valleys also are covered over with corn; they shout for joy, they also sing” (Psalm 65:11-13).

Spiritually, the background of praise should always be evident. We may not at all times see the river flowing; we may not continually hear the murmur of its waters, on occasion gushing forth from the system of hidden caves under the city. But the river is always there and can never fail, for it comes forth from God.

### MESSIANIC BLESSINGS

Isaiah also praises God for the blessings of the river, but he extends his view far beyond into the Messianic Age. He is not yet finished with those Assyrian canals on which he previously poured such scorn. The prophet knew and declared that the great river would triumph temporarily over the river of God insofar as unfaithful Israel was concerned. But Isaiah also knew that the great river "Tigris" would be rolled back and the river of God come into its own again, in due time.

Then, by a reversal of imagery, he sees the quiet waters of Shiloah expand and increase and invade the territory of the great river and reach all the world with its life giving waters. "Look upon Zion, the city of our solemnities: thine eyes shall see Jerusalem a quiet habitation, a tabernacle that shall not be taken down; not one of the stakes thereof shall be removed, neither shall any of the cords thereof be broken. But there the glorious Lord will be unto us a place of broad rivers and streams; wherein shall go no galley with oars, neither shall gallant ship pass thereby" (Isaiah 33:20, 21).

Those "broad rivers and streams" are the ship channels Assyria used both for agriculture and transportation of men and goods. Isaiah compares these with the quiet little stream bubbling out of the hillside below the temple. Isaiah's words signify that when Jerusalem is pronounced "Holy to the Lord" he will cause the quiet waters of Shiloah to become great rivers and canals, overspreading all the land and bringing life wheresoever they come (Joel 3:17, Zechariah 8:3, 14:20-21). But there will be no ships. The "galleys with oars" and "gallant ships" were the merchant ships and war galleys of Assyria's day. The prophet plainly declares that the evils of commercialism and militarism will have no place in this new land of living waters which the Lord God is to bring forth.

### EZEKIEL'S VISION

The waters of Shiloah will one day flow forth to meet the needs of all the world. Ezekiel, in his vision of the Millennial Temple (Ezekiel 47:1-12), saw waters emerging from underneath a sanctuary at the south side of the altar, flowing eastward, and emerging again under the outer wall at the south side of the east gate. It is remarkable that the literal stream has its source in some undiscovered subterranean recess deep down below the place where Solomon's Temple stood on Mount Moriah. Even today it emerges below the city wall, halfway down the side of the valley, on the south of the Eastern Gate. From there it flows into the Virgin's Fountain and onward to the Pool of Siloam.

Ezekiel's description accurately depicts the stream that actually exists at Jerusalem and we cannot avoid the thought that he had that well-known stream in mind when he saw the vision. As he looked, the prophet saw this stream going outward into the country, growing wider and deeper all the time until at last, as a mighty torrent, it reached the eastern sea, the Dead Sea. Here it healed those salt-laden waters so that they too became fresh and pure: "Everything shall live whither the river cometh" (Ezekiel 47:9).

As he continued to look, he saw trees on both sides growing rapidly and coming to maturity. Trees whose leaves never faded and whose fruit was born continually. The fruit was for food, and the leaves for medicine, for healing the nations. The source of virtue that resided in both fruit and leaves was the river of life, in which the trees were rooted. This mighty flood eventually will encompass all the world and reach every man. These blessed waters of Shiloah flowing out from the sanctuary will become a river of the water of life to which all are invited (Revelation 22:1, Zechariah 14:8,9, Isaiah 28:17, Matthew 10:26).

At this time the Great High Priest, head and body, as depicted in the Tabernacle type, will emerge from the Sanctuary in the garments of glory and beauty. Raising both hands and by the authority of Him that liveth forever this High Priest will invoke the healing benediction to Israel first and through them to the nations (Isaiah 52:9, 65:18-19, 66:10-12, 2:3, Jeremiah 3:17).

As Pastor Russell notes: "[The] Law ... in due time will serve its purpose to bring them [Israel] to Christ. Though it brought only a remnant of them at the first advent, it will bring them as a people at the Second Advent, and as a people they will be a first-fruit among the nations. Ultimately every blessing promised to Israel, except those pertaining to the elected classes, will have, not only its actual fulfillment in that people, but also its antitypical fulfillment in all the families of the earth. Under that government 'God will render to every man according to his deeds — glory, honor, and peace to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile; for there is no respect of persons with God' (Romans 2:6, 10, 11)" (A298).

What will this blessing be? It shall be the fullest accomplishment of Number 6:24-27: "The LORD bless thee, and keep (or preserve) thee, The LORD make his face to shine upon thee, and be gracious to thee, The LORD lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace ... And they shall put my name upon the children of Israel; and I will bless them."

All are invited to come, all are urged to partake of the water of life freely. "The Spirit and the bride say, 'Come.' And let him that heareth say, 'Come.' And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely" (Revelation 22:17, 21:6, Isaiah 55:1).

What a great honor and blessed privilege to be accounted worthy to be part of the Great High Priest and reign with him, ministering the water of life to the world of mankind. What an unprecedented blessing and joy awaits this poor

groaning creation in the Millennial reign of the Christ. As 1 Chronicles 16:31-34 says (cited from Psalms 96:10-13): “Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice: and let man say among the nations, Yahweh reigneth. Let the sea roar, and the fullness thereof: let the fields rejoice, and all that is therein. Then shall the trees of the wood sing out at the presence of Yahweh, because he cometh to judge the earth (in righteousness) and the people with his truth.”

The waters of Shiloah will flow to all eternity, for life can only be sustained by the continuing power of God. Then man will depend upon God for life, he will look to God for life, and that life will come ceaselessly, abundantly, and surely out of the sanctuary where God dwells. It will reach God’s entire material creation. The waters will never cease, for man himself will never cease to be. God’s will shall be done on earth even as it is done in heaven and the earth shall then be gloriously beautiful (Numbers 14:21, Isaiah 11:9, Habakkuk 2:14, D656).

As it is written: “As truly as I live, the whole earth shall be filled with the glory of Yahweh.”

— David Skein

## Solomon’s Splendor Affirmed

“Thy wisdom and prosperity exceedeth the fame which I heard” (Queen of Sheba to King Solomon, 1 Kings 10:7).

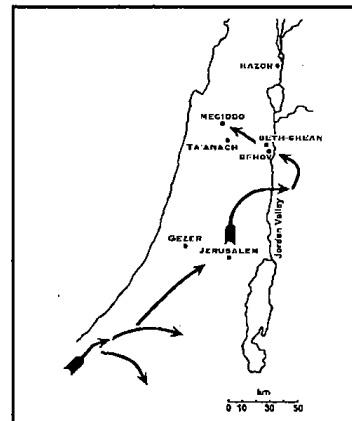
Archaeologist William Dever of the University of Arizona in Tucson adeptly observes that, “In the current Israeli-Palestinian conflict, people are increasingly invoking archaeology in support of their cause.”<sup>1</sup> In this regard, Solomon’s wisdom and riches recently have been called into question and become part of this argument. In the mid-1990s, a handful of “revisionist” scholars, archaeologists such as Israel Finkelstein of Tel Aviv University,<sup>2</sup> rocked the establishment with an audacious alternative that claimed biblical accounts of Solomonic splendor were mostly “hype.” In contrast, the Bible reports Solomon’s prosperity as legendary even far from Israel in Sheba. While we respect the obligation of the scholarly community to evaluate archaeological evidence so that the clearest light possible is shed upon the scriptural record, it is gratifying to learn that recent excavations in Israel negate these revisionist claims.

Hendrik Bruins of Ben-Gurion University and Johannes van der Plicht, University of Gronigen who determined dating, worked in cooperation with archaeologist Amihai Mazar of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem to reaffirm the Bible account of Solomon’s splendor.<sup>3</sup> The new dates from Tel Rehov, a major Iron Age site in northern Israel, favor the Biblical view that King Solomon was both real and powerful. “The implications are enormous for recreating the his-

tory of ancient Israel,” says archaeologist Lawrence Stager of Harvard University. Researchers led by Amihai Mazar of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem based their conclusions on olive pits and charred grain from one of Tel Rehov’s three “destruction layers” — strata marking times when Rehov was ravaged before being rebuilt. The results which are reported in the same journal place the layer between 940 and 900 BC. Mazar and colleagues say the dates place the devastation at the time of a whirlwind plundering tour of Palestine by the Egyptian Pharaoh Shoshenq.<sup>4</sup>

The Bible adds another key detail: According to the books of 1 Kings and 2 Chronicles, the pharaoh (whom the Israelites called Shishak) launched his invasion five years after Solomon’s death. If Mazar and colleagues are right, the destruction layer at Rehov — along with contemporary layers that archaeologists have identified at other sites — gives a definitive glimpse of Solomon’s realm. That information may make clear which of two radically different versions of Solomon fits the facts. The mainstream view, Stager says, holds that the great leader Solomon transformed the “rather rustic” early 10th century BC Israel of his father David into a sophisticated kingdom, with architecture and a material culture to match.

The proposed alternative “Low Chronology” supported by Finkelstein disputes the claims to Solomon’s glory, and places his reign nearly a century later in the 800’s BC. Now this “Low Chronology” fails under the scrutiny of this latest investigation. Rehov with its fields of grain and olives was a well-planned 10-hectare urban center whose material culture connects it with sites of Solomonic ruins.



Campaign of Pharaoh Shishak, five years after Solomon.

The carbon-14 date. Dever says, strongly bolsters the case for, “a historical Solomon and a real ‘United Monarchy’ in the 10th century.” Harvard University’s Stager claims that Mazar’s study, “puts the nail in the coffin” of Finkelstein’s theory.

— Richard Doctor

(1) Holden, C., “ARCHAEOLOGY: Dates Boost Conventional Wisdom About Solomon’s Splendor,” *Science* (Vol. 300, Issue 5617) 11 April 2003, pp. 229-231.

(2) Balter, M., “CHRONOLOGY: The Two Tels: Armageddon For Biblical Archaeology?,” *Science* (Vol. 287, Issue 5450) 7 January 2000, p. 31.

(3) Bruins, H., J. van der Plicht, and A. Mazar, “<sup>14</sup>C Dates from Tel Rehov: Iron Age Chronology, Pharaohs, and Hebrew Kings,” *Science* (Vol. 300, Issue 5617) 11 April 2003, p. 315.

(4) Within the scholarly community this military campaign is believed to be a well-documented historical event that both Egyptian records and biblical writings date at about 925 BC.

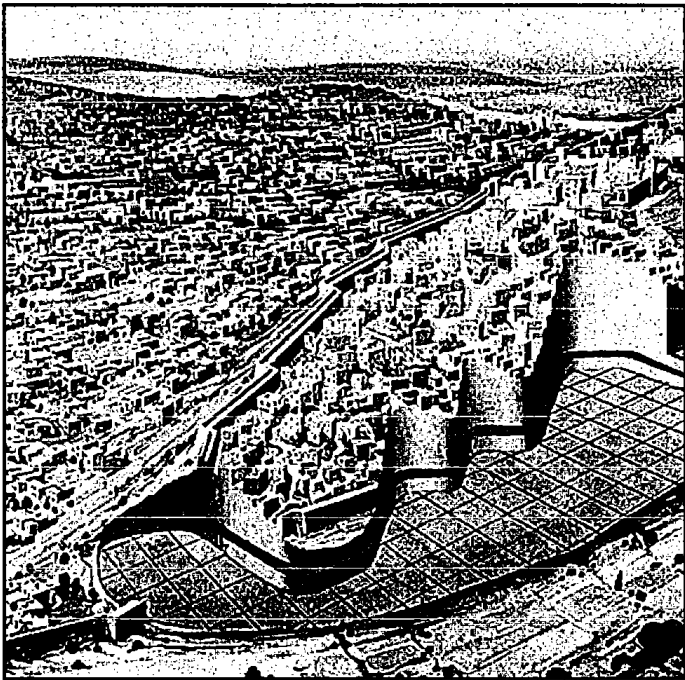
# Hezekiah's Song of Trust

*"I will defend this city, to save it, for mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake" (2 Kings 19:34).*

Sandwiched in between two wicked kings, Ahaz and Manasseh, Hezekiah was a reformer king in Judah. Although wavering at times in his faith, all in all he was one of the most remarkable rulers over the southern kingdom.

Among the biblically recorded incidents in his reign was his defense of the city of Jerusalem from the siege of the city by Sennacherib of Assyria. In preparation for the impending onslaught, he "strengthened himself, and built up all the wall that was broken, and raised it up to the towers, and another wall without, and repaired Millo<sup>1</sup> in the city of David, and made darts and shields in abundance" (2 Chronicles 32:5).

He also constructed the "Tunnel of Hezekiah," a 1,750 foot conduit that snaked under the Ophel ridge, connecting the spring of Gihon outside the eastern walls with the Siloam tunnel just inside the eastern double wall. Then he built a fortified house over the Gihon, thus providing an ample supply of water to the residents of Jerusalem while denying the same to the besieging army (see cutaway illustration).



*Cutaway of Hezekiah's Tunnel*

## PSALM 46 — A SONG OF VICTORY

Psalm 46 is ascribed by many as being composed by Hezekiah as an expression of assurance that God would give the victory over the invading army. It consists of three verses and a refrain,<sup>2</sup> each marked by the Hebrew word *Selah*, meaning "pause," not so much a pause in the instrumental

music, but for the singer to pause and note the connection between two related thoughts. While sometimes used anti-thetically to denote a contrast, it is more often used, as in Psalm 46, in the synthetic sense of adding a further development of thought. These refrains occur after verses 3, 7, and 10, with the first being a reprise of verse 1.

The heading for the Psalm rightly belongs as a subscription of Psalm 45, as do all titles beginning with "To the Chief Musician." It is not a "title" at all but a post-script note to the compiler as to where to file the tune, by designating which groups of musicians were to perform it.

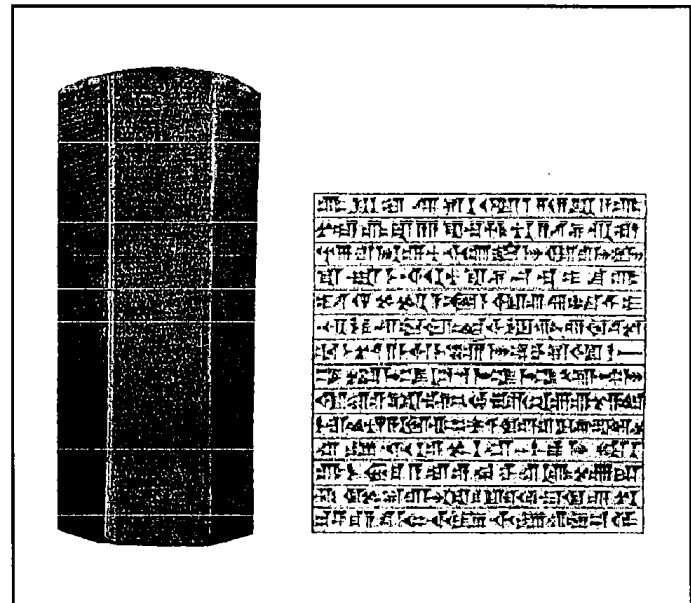
The theme of the three stanzas can be expressed thusly:

- (1) Verses 1-3 — An expression of supreme confidence in God's delivering power.
- (2) Verses 4-7 — Describes their current situation in poetic and metaphoric terms.
- (3) Verses 8-11 — The voice of Jehovah declaring the intentions of God.

## THE FIRST STANZA

The song begins with the refrain that may have been sung again after verse 3. It is a simple statement of confidence: "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble." It was with this assurance that he could utter the words of 2 Chronicles 32:7, 8: "Be strong and courageous, be not afraid nor dismayed for the king of Assyria, nor for all the multitude that is with him: for there be more with us than with him: With him is an arm of flesh; but with us is the LORD our God to help us, and to fight our battles. And the people rested themselves upon the words of Hezekiah king of Judah."

The "sea" to which Hezekiah refers is an apparent reference to the hordes of Assyrians that had overrun so much of Israel and the "mountains" may have reference to the 46 cities which the invading king had claimed to conquer with some 200,150 people in the famous Cylinder of Sennacherib.



*Sennacherib's Cylinder with the Original Text*

The waters roaring speak of the boastful claims of Sennacherib's spokesman, Rabshakah, the emissary who was sent to discourage the Israelites from putting up a resistance to the besieging troops. Hezekiah's bold and confident response was an adequate rebuttal to this attempt at psychological warfare and the residents of Jerusalem waited for God to give them deliverance.

### THE SECOND STANZA

The second strophe begins by mentioning an unnamed river whose running waters made glad the "city of God," Jerusalem. Among the definitions of the Hebrew *nahar* (Strong's 5104), translated "river," given by Brown, Driver, and Riggs, is an underground stream. The word *peleg* (Strong's 6388), translated "streams," is given as "channel" in the same source. The water supply for the Holy City came from the spring Gihon just outside the eastern wall. Inasmuch as there are no year-round, free-flowing rivers in Jerusalem, only the small seasonal brook of Kidron, it seems not unreasonable that the river of Psalm 46:4 was none other than the one-third-mile tunnel that Hezekiah's stonecutters had carved. Assuring them of an adequate supply of fresh water, this river during the siege of Sennacherib certainly did "make glad" the residents of the eternal city.

The tunnel diverted the waters of the Gihon springs from the Kidron valley, south along the Ophel ridge of Mount Zion and then westward under the slope to a cistern known as the Upper Pool. From there a channel was dug to join it to the Pool of Siloam, virtually making it one large reservoir (Isaiah 22:11).

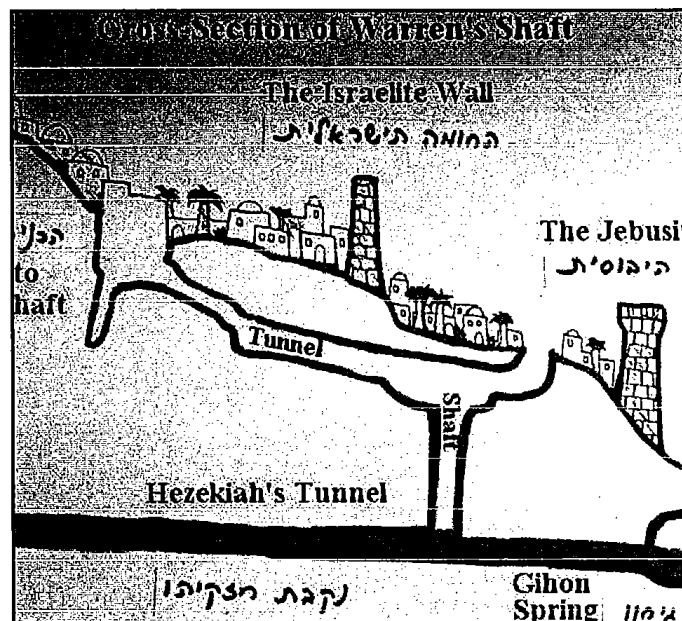
An inscription describing the precision of the tunnel workers digging the serpentine channel from both directions and meeting in the middle was found in 1927 (see illustration below). A translation of it is given by Robert Coote in his book, *Siloam Inscription*, and reads as follows:

"... the tunneling; and this is how the tunneling was completed: As [the laborers employed] their picks, each crew toward the other, and while there were still three cubits remaining, the voices of the men calling out to each other [could be heard], since it got louder on the right [and left]. The day the opening was made, the stonecutters hacked toward each other, pick against pick. And the water flowed from the source to the pool [twel]ve hundred cubits, (despite the fact that) the height of the rock above the stonecutters' heads was one hundred cubits."



Hebrew Inscription

This gave the city access to the water not only by the new enlarged Pool of Siloam, but also by the more arduous gutter route from higher up the mount which is now called Warren's Shaft after the archaeologist who unearthed it. The schematic below displays these two access routes.



Warren's Shaft

Hezekiah's assurance that God would help her "right early" (literally, "at the turning of the day") proved to be prophetically accurate. Then "the angel of the LORD went out, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians an hundred fourscore and five thousand: and when they arose early in the morning, behold, they were all dead corpses" (2 Kings 19:35).

The raging and proud boasting of the Assyrian generals meant little as long as God was with Judah. He gave the command and these strong powers of earth melted under his mighty hand. Once again the refrain bursts forth, "The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge." In the words of Alfred Lord Tennyson:

Like the leaves of the forest when the summer is green,  
That host with their banners at sunset were seen:  
Like the leaves of the forest when autumn hath blown,  
That host on the morrow lay withered and strown.  
And the might of the Gentile, unsmote by the sword,  
Hath melted like snow in the glance of the Lord.

### THE THIRD STANZA

The last verse of this ode to victory echo the words of Jehovah himself. "Be still and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen; I will be exalted in the earth" (verse 10). The numerous sieges of the Assyrian invasion had finally come to an end. The foe that man could not defeat was like dust in the hands of Israel's God. Truly he had made the Assyrian wars to cease. He had broken the bow asunder and burned the chariots with fire. It was not for the

sake of the wayward Israelites, but as our theme text so aptly phrases it, “I will defend this city, to save it, for mine own sake, and for my servant David’s sake” (2 Kings 19:34).

### THE ANTITYPE

The Bible speaks of a time when an overwhelming enemy force will once again surround Israel, a time when God says “I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle” (Zechariah 14:2). But he assures them as he assured Hezekiah, “Then shall the LORD go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle” (Zechariah 14:3). Then it will be as irrelevant as to how many nations the invading forces have subdued, as was Sennacherib’s boast of having conquered 46 cities in ancient Israel.

The great mountain kingdoms of the past 3000 years will be cast into the sea of a disenchanting and anarchic populace and become as islands (mountains surrounded by a sea) until finally, in the final plague of Revelation, every island will flee away and the mountains be not found (Revelation 16:20).

Israelites indeed, those who have faith in God, will not fear for they will have a river whose streams will make them glad, they will have their spiritual Hezekiah’s tunnel — the word of God.

As the waters from that tunnel emptied into the newly dug “upper pool” which was then connected by a channel to the previously constructed Pool of Siloam, so the fresh waters of the New Testament will be joined to explain the previously revered words of the Old Testament. With hearts ready for news of their Messiah, he, as the promised Michael of Daniel 12:1, shall deliver his ancient people. What refreshing news from that ever-springing fount of divine promises. Then Israel will join in the glorious refrain, “The LORD of hosts is with us, the God of Jacob shall be our refuge.”

As God has helped his spiritual people with an heavenly resurrection at the turning of her morning, so he will also help his natural people at the dawn of their new day. Then will be fully ushered in that grand Millennium of which it is written, “Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning” (Psalms 30:5).

No matter how loudly the heathen rage, they are no match for the commanding voice of Jehovah. His is the voice of which Zephaniah wrote, “The great day of the LORD is near, it is near, and hasteth greatly, even the voice of the day of the LORD: the mighty man shall cry there bitterly” (Zephaniah 1:14). The returned Christ echoes that same voice (1 Thessalonians 4:15).

That battle will be the final warfare when man turns his mighty munitions against fellow man. When “he maketh wars to cease” (Psalm 46:9) the vast military-industrial complex, if there still be one, will be turned into useful production, beating “their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning hooks” (Isaiah 2:4).

When God shall again smite the foes of Israel as he smote the vast invading Assyrian forces in Hezekiah’s day, the song of victory will reach its final crescendo. “So the house of Israel shall know that I am the LORD their God from that

day and forward. And the heathen shall know that the house of Israel went into captivity for their iniquity: because they trespassed against me, therefore hid I my face from them, and gave them into the hand of their enemies: so fell they all by the sword” (Ezekiel 39:22, 23).

Once again the grand refrain is sounded, “The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge.”

Selah — pause and think about it.

— Carl Hagensick

(1) “A fragile 2.23-acre section of fill, known as the Millo, constructed by the Jebusites, increased the settleable area of Jebusite Jerusalem (later, city of David) by roughly 26%, from 35 to 48 dunams [8.64 to 10.87 acres], and markedly improved their defenses in the area of the Gihon Spring. The very nature of the Millo’s design, however, required its continuous maintenance. Any undermining of its underlying retaining walls risked the collapse of the whole system. This made the Millo vulnerable to adverse weather, earthquake, and enemy action.” (Germano, Michael Perry, *The Ancient Church of the Apostles*, 2003).

(2) See *Notes on the Bible of John Meggison*, Psalm 46

## With Many Thanks

The editors of this journal express their deep thanks to Bro. Jerry Leslie for his many years of devoted service to this publication, thereby promoting its uplifting influence among the brethren. This thanks is no doubt echoed by our many readers, specially those who know Bro. Leslie personally, and attest to the spirit of 2 Timothy 3:10 in his life and service to the King of Kings. Bro. Jerry is now concentrating his attention on other areas of service. His good wishes are expressed in the following from his pen.

“It has been our pleasure to be associated with *Beauties of the Truth* for 14 years since its inception in its current format in October 1990. The lofty mission detailed in that first issue has been an inspiring cause for each issue. However, it is time for me to move on to other endeavors in our life. We will continue striving to lift up the standard for Zion. We encourage all to ‘Prove all things; hold fast that which is good’ (1 Thess. 5:21). In the one hope, Brother Jerry Leslie.”

## Pray Without Ceasing

The Apostle says, “Pray without ceasing.” That is, he teaches men to have the remembrance of God in all times and places and circumstances. If you are making something you must call to mind the Creator of all things, if you see light, remember the Giver of it, if you see the heavens and the earth and the sea and all that is in them wonder and praise the Maker of them. If you put on your clothes recall Whose gift they are and thank Him Who provides for your life. In short, let every action be a cause of your remembering and praising God, and lo! you will be praying without ceasing and therein your soul will always rejoice!

— Peter the Damascene, middle of the 12th Century  
*Legends say he owned no books but borrowed and read voraciously.*

# Antiquity of the Pentateuch

The integrity of the Old Testament is treasured by brethren of “like precious faith” (2 Peter 1:1). The circumstances of its production, and the authority by which it comes to us in its present form, is of interest to many.

The early narratives in Genesis were assembled by Moses from extant written records which accumulated from the most ancient times as part of the historical treasure of the Israelites. The evidence for this is intrinsic in the narratives. Percy Wiseman, father of the now aged but distinguished Donald Wiseman, published a book in 1936 titled *New Discoveries in Babylonia about Genesis*. In this interesting analysis, he suggests that Genesis chapters 1 through 36 are composed of 11 fundamental narratives, ending with the following texts.

Genesis 2:4, “These are the generations of the heavens and of the earth.”

Genesis 5:1, “This is the book of the generations of Adam.”

Genesis 6:9, “These are the generations of Noah.”

Genesis 10:1, “These are the generations of the sons of Noah, Shem, Ham, and Japheth.”

Genesis 11:10, “These are the generations of Shem.”

Genesis 11:27, “These are the generations of Terah.”

Genesis 25:12, “These are the generations of Ishmael.”

Genesis 25:19, “These are the generations of Isaac.”

Genesis 36:1, “These are the generations of Esau.”

Genesis 36:9, “These are the generations of Esau.”

Genesis 37:2, “These are the generations of Jacob.”

The word “generations” in these instances is from the Hebrew *toledeth*, which the NIV version renders as “account.” Wiseman suggested these eleven narratives are the product of the ones whose names appear in each case. The first one, without a name, would have been Adam’s account of what he received from God.

## HIGH DEGREE OF AUTHENTICITY

In this case the early accounts contain information received first hand, recorded in the appropriate medium of the culture, passed down as part of the historical and revered treasure of the family. The patriarchs Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were all wealthy men with a large retinue of attendants. Their companies were bands of traveling culture. They had the ability and motive to retain the sacred records of bygone eras.

These patriarchs knew they were heirs of special covenants from God. All the more would they be careful to maintain their sacred lineage and history. Jacob would have taken this record with them into Egypt. These became the national archives of the 12 tribes of Israel, taken with them again at their later Exodus from Egypt.

Moses, who was schooled in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, then an advanced culture (relative to the day), would have known how to read cuneiform scripts and Egyptian papyri. He would have had the necessary secretaries for the work. His position gave him the esteem and respect necessary for this work to be accepted by the Israelites. Moses would have been uniquely qualified to compose Genesis from his source documents. Thus the received tradition of ancient times, that Moses was the compiling author of Genesis, is reasonably supported.

## ISAAC NEWTON

The mention in Genesis 36:31 of rulers in Edom “before there reigned any king over the children of Israel” suggests some editing followed the inauguration of Saul, probably by Samuel, who arranged the early books in the form now extant. Here are the interesting inferences drawn by Sir Isaac Newton on the subject, which we quote at length.

“Since the Pentateuch was received as the book of the Law, both by the two tribes and by the ten tribes, it follows that they received it before they became divided into two kingdoms. For after the divisions they received not laws from one another, but continued at variance. ... The Pentateuch therefore was the book of the Law in the days of David and Solomon. The affairs of the Tabernacle and Temple were ordered by David and Solomon according to the Law of this book, and David in the 78th Psalm, admonishing the people to give ear to the Law of God, means the Law of this book. For in describing how their forefathers kept it not, he quotes many historical things out of the books of Exodus and Numbers.

“Genesis 36:31 [implies] that book was not written entirely in the form now extant before the reign of Saul. The writer set down the race of those kings till his own time, and therefore wrote before David conquered Edom. ...

“[The Pentateuch and Joshua] were public books, and therefore not written without the permission of Moses and Joshua. And Samuel had leisure in the reign of Saul, to put them into the form of the books of Moses and Joshua now extant, inserting into them certain portions, such as the race of the kings of Edom. ...

“All these books have been composed out of the writings of Moses, Joshua, and other records, by one and the same hand, after the beginning of the reign of Saul and before the eighth year of David. And Samuel was a sacred writer, 1 Samuel 10:25, acquainted with the history of Moses and the Judges, 1 Samuel 12:8-12, and had leisure in the reign of Saul, and sufficient authority to compose these books. He was a prophet, and judged Israel all the days of his life, and was in the greatest esteem with the people. The Law by which he was to judge the people was not to be published by less authority than his own, the Law maker being not inferior to the judge. And the book of Jasher, which is quoted in the book of Joshua, Joshua 10:13, was in being at the death of Saul, 2 Samuel 1:18.” (*The Prophecies of Daniel and the Apocalypse*, Isaac Newton, page 4-6).