

THE MIRACLE THAT IS ISRAEL – PART I

“On that day I will raise up the tabernacle of David, which has fallen down...I will bring back the captives of My people Israel; They shall build the waste cities and inhabit *them*; They shall plant vineyards and drink wine from them; They shall also make gardens and eat fruit from them. I will plant them in their land, And no longer shall they be pulled up from the land I have given them,” Says the LORD your God.” (Amos 9:11, 14-15)

It's been 60 years since the birth of modern Israel: And a beautiful thing it is! Its very existence has been nothing short of miraculous. A nation that was out of existence for 18 centuries; - forcefully scattered from its homeland; - the object of persecution and genocide; - the most despised people in the world: Once again occupied their own land and became a nation once again. It is a marvelous story. Where there were 84,000 Jews in 1922, the population now approaches 7.3 million; - that's even a larger number than live in the US. That God-ordained rebirth has upset many the theologian. It meant that the Scriptures are literally true; - not allegory. The Church was not Israel. Israel IS Israel. Just as God promised, the Jews have returned in unbelief; - to one day experience a national-spiritual rebirth; - as the prophet Ezekiel promised. Yet now we stand on the verge of the Olmert Government signing an agreement that would give much of it back. But here is God's Word on the matter: **“Also I give to you and your descendants after you the land in which you are a stranger, all the land of Canaan, as an everlasting possession; and I will be their God.” (Genesis 17:8)**

Though we Gentile Christians may have forgotten over the centuries, it was Christ Himself who prophesied on the fate of Jerusalem, and this Land and His people. At the time of Jesus triumphal entry into Jerusalem on the first Palm Sunday, Jesus began to contemplate the coming fate of Jerusalem; the city of the prophets in the Land The Father had chosen. What should have been a time of joy was marred by the tragedy He knew was coming. Luke 19:41-44 gives us this account. **“Now as He drew near, He saw the city and wept over it, saying, “If you had known, even you, especially in this your day, the things *that make* for your peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. For days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment around you, surround you and close you in on every side, and level you, and your children within you, to the ground; and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, because you did not know the time of your visitation.”**

That is exactly what happened. In April of AD 70, Roman General Titus began a siege of Jerusalem against the rebelling Jews. The Romans constructed embankments as they systematically starved the city's inhabitants.¹ In the final assault in September of that year the Romans destroyed Jerusalem and killed an estimated 1.1 million Jews. During the destruction, fire was set to the Temple. The fire caused the gold-leaf ornamentation on the Temple ceiling to melt. The melting gold flowed down the walls and settled into crevices within the stones. The Romans pried apart the stones to remove the gold. This specifically and exactly fulfilled Jesus Christ's prophecy that not one stone would be left standing on another.

Jesus was saying that the destruction of the Temple and Jerusalem itself occurred **“because you did not know the time of your visitation.”** Despite clear prophetic warning, Israel had failed to recognize and accept their predicted Messiah. Still speaking to his disciples on the events to come, The Lord detailed more of the fate of Jerusalem. **“But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation is near.... And they will fall by the edge of the sword, and be led away captive into all nations. And Jerusalem will be trampled by Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.” (Luke 21:20 & 24)** Again, that is exactly what happened. The Romans destroyed Jerusalem in the year 70, and again in the year 135. During the two destructions, the Romans killed an estimated 1.5 million Jews. Hundreds of thousands of Jews were taken as slaves to other countries, mostly throughout Europe and parts of Asia.

Jesus in His words was both mirroring and expanding on the prophecies contained in the 9th chapter of Daniel. These shed interesting light on those words. That chapter points to the exact time of **“visitation”** of which Jesus spoke, leaving

no excuse for unbelief. As students of the Scriptures, it should have been apparent to the Pharisees, and rabbis that the time of the Messiah was indeed at hand. Many scholars believe that it was indeed the prophecies found in Daniel that inspired the Magi to seek the Christ near the time of his birth. We know that the Essene community near the caves of Qumran, which gave us the Dead Sea Scrolls, was not the only group expecting Messiah in first century Palestine. The precise nature of Biblical prophecy is what drove those expectations. In fact the precision of Daniel's prophecy reveals the very day of the Messiah's ascendance into His Kingdom. It then goes on to talk about the destruction of the Temple and the fate of the Jewish nation as well as the ultimate triumph of the Messiah. **“Seventy weeks are determined For your people and for your holy city, To finish the transgression, To make an end of¹ sins, To make reconciliation for iniquity, To bring in everlasting righteousness, To seal up vision and prophecy, And to anoint the Most Holy. “Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the command To restore and build Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince, there shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; The street shall be built again, and the wall, Even in troublesome times. “And after the sixty-two weeks Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself; And the people of the prince who is to come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary.”** (Daniel 9:26-24)

This is one of the most astounding prophecies in all of Scripture. It nails down the exact day the Messiah was to come; - after **“seven weeks and sixty-two weeks”**. Follow this! Daniel was given this prophecy while Israel was in exile. There was no Temple and there was no human reason to believe that one would ever be rebuilt. Yet he was told that the Temple would be rebuilt in 69 weeks, or in the Hebrew, 69 shabuim. Shabuim refers to weeks of years or 7-year periods. And this period of 69 weeks-of-years was to begin precisely when the command was given to **“To restore and build Jerusalem”**. Now we know from the 2nd chapter of Nehemiah, that King Artaxerxes gave a command to rebuild the Temple on the first day of the Jewish month of Nisan, in the 20th year of his reign. British scholar, Robert Anderson, investigated this prophecy in the late 1800s. Using common secular historical knowledge, Anderson found the day of the Decree: March 14, 445 BC. Now sixty-nine weeks-of-years multiplied by seven, gives us 483 years. But the Jews used 360-day years. So he multiplied the 483 years times the 360-day Biblical year. He got 173,880 days. He then counted forward from the day of that decree. It came out to be the 10th of Nisan, or April 6, 32 AD. That, by no coincidence, was the first Palm Sunday. It was the day Jesus rode triumphantly into Jerusalem, accepting and acknowledging His kingship. Exact fulfillment! Now the prophecy in Daniel 9 goes on to tell us that **“Messiah shall be cut off”** at that time; - and He was. It tells us too of the coming destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple. We saw that too.²

Remember, in Matthew 24, Jesus told us that the people would **“be led away captive into all nations”**. In Deuteronomy 28:64-66, Moses wrote, **“Then the LORD will scatter you among all peoples, from one end of the earth to the other, and there you shall serve other gods, which neither you nor your fathers have known—wood and stone. And among those nations you shall find no rest, nor shall the sole of your foot have a resting place; but there the LORD will give you a trembling heart, failing eyes, and anguish of soul. Your life shall hang in doubt before you; you shall fear day and night, and have no assurance of life.”** And Hosea pronounces God's judgment on Israel for unfaithfulness to God. **“Do not rejoice, O Israel, with joy like other peoples, for you have played the harlot against your God.”** (Hosea 9:1) If you recall from above, Jesus had indicted them because they **“did not know the time of your visitation.”** Hosea had announced God's judgment for the sin. **“My God will cast them away, because they did not obey Him; And they shall be wanderers among the nations.”** Deuteronomy 29:23 gave sentence upon the land. **The whole land will be a burning waste of salt and sulfur--nothing planted, nothing sprouting, no vegetation growing on it. It will be like the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, Admah and Zeboiim, which the Lord overthrew in fierce anger.** And Ezekiel 33:28 concurred. **“For I will make the land most desolate, her arrogant strength shall cease, and the mountains of Israel shall be so desolate that no one will pass through.”**

And so, as history has shown, it all came to pass in the centuries that followed. The Jews scattered, establishing a presence on every continent. The land, formerly fertile and luxuriant, had become, in the words of Mark Twain, who visited during the late 19th century, **“A desolate country whose soil is rich enough, but is given over wholly to weeds... a silent mournful expanse.”** But God's judgment was not final. It came with a promise. **“Fear not, for I am with you; I will bring your descendants from the east, And gather you from the west; I will say to the north, ‘Give them up!’ And to the south, ‘Do not keep them back!’ Bring My sons from afar, And My daughters from the ends of the**

earth— Everyone who is called by My name, Whom I have created for My glory”. (Isaiah 43:5-7) Next time we shall see the faithfulness of God’s Word.

THE EVOLUTION MYTH – PART VI

[A series by guest contributor Pastor Lynn Zankl]

Hi Folks, Today we are going to look into a deep subject, we are going to look at the subject of “The Origin of Life”, (with the music of the “Twilight Zone” playing in the background). Probably the most argued point between creationists and evolutionists. How did life begin??? “Research on the origin of life seems to be unique in that the conclusion has already been authoritatively accepted, . . . What remains to be done is to find the scenarios which describe the detailed mechanisms and processes by which this happened. One must conclude that, contrary to the established and current wisdom, a scenario describing the genesis of life on earth by chance and natural causes which can be accepted on the basis of fact not faith has not yet been written.” [1] The idea that nothing, no process of life can begin by any other means than what can be found or explained naturally, has become a big dilemma for the evolutionist. No laws of nature allow complex living, information-containing systems to develop from the random interactions of matter. Yet this is what evolutionists believe, because in order for there to be evolution, that’s what had to have occurred. The creationists believe, on the other hand that an intelligent God created all of this. That He being God understands all the complexities of the science of life, because He created them, and that He knows how to put them together in order to bring forth and sustain life. The evolutionist is always telling the creationist to leave your faith out of my science, but, I want to submit to you, which takes more faith, to believe that an intelligent God created all this, or to believe that a dead rock somehow brought forth an amino acid, which brought forth DNA, which brought forth an organism, which brought forth a fish, which brought forth an amphibian, which brought forth a reptile, which brought forth a monkey, which brought forth a man, each all by themselves acting naturally.

Our High School textbooks have something to say about the origin of life. Life on earth may have come from other planets where there is life. [2] Life may have originated in deep-sea thermal vents or bubbles in the ocean. [3] Life began with RNA that acted as enzymes and information templates.[4] Ok a very scientific sounding explanation, but where did the RNA come from, and what gave the RNA the information to even act as an enzyme?

Information, though, is a very interesting word there. Information can be described in this context as, an encoded, symbolically represented message conveying expected action and intended purpose. [5] In the human genome our DNA is the same for every human being, yet, every human being’s DNA is encoded individually, the structure of the DNA is the same, but the encoding is different. No two humans have the same fingerprints, no two have the same iris in their eyes, no two have the same DNA encoding. With billions of human beings presently on the earth, how can we be so much the same and yet individually different, and think that that vast individual encoding came by mutation over billions of years?

During the 1800’s Thomas Huxley stated in defense of evolutions “billions of years” that a group of six monkeys, if given the right amount of time and material could type out the 23rd Psalm by punching keys randomly. Mathematics is an observable science, mathematically taking a 50 key typewriter, to cover letters, numbers and punctuation, the chance of typing “THE” is one in 50 x 50 x 50 (50 to the third power), or one in 125,000. At the rate of one stroke per second that would take 34.72 hours. For the phrase “THE LORD” the chance becomes 50 to the eighth power and requires 1,238,663.7 years at one stroke per second. To complete the entire Psalm would require 9.552 X 10 with 1016 zeros after it, years, to be accomplished, Evolutionist say that the universe is about 15 billion years old, there isn’t enough time for the monkeys to type out the 23rd Psalm, let alone for nature to develop the amount of amino acids to make the complexity of one DNA molecule. Harold J. Morowitz, Professor of biophysics at Yale, has calculated that the formation of one E-coli bacteria in the universe at one in 10 to the 100 billionth power [6] and yet there are billions of E-coli bacteria. We must also understand that natural selection cannot be the culprit that caused life to form from matter, because natural selection can only work on a completed organism. Hey, until the next time.³

THE MAHDI IS COMING ! THE MAHDI IS COMING !

Our buddy, the Big A, President Ahmadinejad is at it again. He's been insisting since 2005 that it's the job of his government to create the chaotic conditions necessary to allow for the coming of the Mahdi, or Islamic Messiah. [Now the Mahdi, - or Twelfth Imam, - has been hidden since the 10th century, - and will according to Islamic eschatology appear at the end of time to usher in an era of Islamic justice.⁴ At that time he'll join the Islamic Jesus, - Issa, - who will tell the world that he's is not God's Son. The two will then conquer Jerusalem and reign from there for 7-years, - just like the Antichrist of Christian prophecy. So the Muslim Messiah exactly mirrors the role of Ol' AC as presented in the Scriptures.] Now once again, Ahmadinejad is claiming that the Mahdi is already with us. He says, "The Imam Mahdi is in charge of the world and we see his hand directing all the affairs of the country... We must solve Iran's internal problems as quickly as possible. Time is lacking. A movement has started for us to occupy ourselves with our global responsibilities, which are arriving with great speed". (I guess that means making nukes, threatening Israel and feeding the insurgency in Iraq.) Making a case for Iranian sanity, the country's religious leaders are firmly renouncing the Iranian President's positions.⁵ But he continues to hold both his positions and power, as he works for the Mahdi's return.

Then, a little closer to home, there's this; - from a page 3, quarter-page advertisement in my hometown paper, *The Buffalo News*. According to the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, "The long-awaited Messiah has indeed arrived". His name is Mirza Ghulam Ahmad Qadiani; - and he offers us "Divine Guidance for Establishing Peace in the Latter Days"; - and in an interesting echo of 1Thessalonians 5:3, - God ordained "peace and security". His disciples will be explaining all this at the Millennium Hotel on May 25th.⁶ I'm not sure if this is the same guy that Ahmadinejad has in mind.

If that's not scary enough, here's something from the editorial pages of the *conservative* paper, the *Washington Times*. Daniel L Davis recounts the dangerous interrelationship between the diminishing supply of oil and the rising demand for that product on the one hand, - with the effects that shortage is having on the supply and price of food, and the specter of famine and social / political unrest in which it results, on the other. He then concludes with these thoughts. "This is not the time for more talk and half-measures. Facts on the ground demand urgent, robust and sustained action at the highest levels of government.... Someone must step up and lead before a crisis of global proportions is thrust upon us and our only option is the implementation of draconian damage-control measures. Pray such a leader surfaces soon".⁷

The words are chilling. It is the teaching of almost all of the major religious systems, - Islam & the New Age included, - that the Latter Days will be ushered in by a compounding chaos. Jesus told us that His own return would be preceded by "birth pains", (Luke 24:8),- wars and "famines and earthquakes in various places" that would increase in frequency and intensity. Is it strange then that on the eve of the 60th anniversary of the prophesied rebirth of Israel we would see an 7.9 earthquake in China that may have taken 50,000 lives and a cyclone in Myanmar whose toll could reach 125,000 ?⁸ Jesus also told us that this would be a time of "false christs" (Matthew 24:24) luring the fearful with their message of "peace and safety" and that one would rise above the others, - and this one, the Antichrist himself, "shall magnify himself in his heart, and by peace shall destroy many". (Daniel 8:25) And those that perish would do so "because they received not the love of the truth". (2Thessalonians 2:10) All in a time of growing chaos...much like our own!

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¹ John MacArthur, The MacArthur Study Bible, Thomas Neslon Bibles, 1997, - notes for Luke 19:43-44, pg 1,554-1,555

² The Innocents Abroad, Mark Twain, 1869 p. 361-362,

³ Evolution Exposed, Roger Patterson, 2007, Page 133, answersingenesis.com

2 Biggs, A. et al, Biology, The Dynamics of Life (Florida Edition), Glencoe/McGraw Hill, New York, 2006, Page 388, answersingenesis.com

3 Campbell, N., B. Williamson, and R. Heyden, Biology: Exploring Life (Florida Teacher's Edition), Pearson Prentice Hall, Upper Saddle River, New Jersey, 2006, Page 359, answersingenesis.com

4 ibid, Page 358

5 Evolution Exposed, Roger Patterson, 2007, Page 138, answersingenesis.com

6 ibid, page 146

⁴ Mike Shuster, Iran's President Renews Interest in 'Hidden Imam', Morning Edition, NPR, May 30, 2006

⁵ Ahmadinejad - The Mahdi (hidden imam) is directing Iran, Breitbart, May 7, 2008

⁶ This from an advertisement on pg 3 of the May 4th, Sunday edition of the Buffalo News

⁷ Daniel L Davis, The Coming Crisis, [Editorial] Washington Times, May 5, 2008,

⁸ Myanmar approves new constitution..., AP, May 15, 2008