

THE MIRACLE THAT IS ISRAEL – PART II

“This is what the Sovereign LORD says: I will take the Israelites out of the nations where they have gone. I will gather them from all around and bring them back into their own land. I will make them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel.They will live in the land I gave to my servant Jacob, the land where your fathers lived. They and their children and their children's children will live there forever”. (Ezek. 37:21-22, 25)

In putting down the Jewish Rebellion of AD 70 the Romans had murdered over one million Jews. Jerusalem was virtually destroyed. In AD 135, the Jews revolted again, and this time, Rome took more drastic measures, driving all but a tiny remnant of the population from the Land that had been given to them by God. The centuries that followed were to get only worse. Deuteronomy 28:36-37, had predicted the coming persecution. **“The LORD will bring you and the king whom you set over you to a nation which neither you nor your fathers have known, and there you shall serve other gods—wood and stone. And you shall become an astonishment, a proverb, and a byword among all nations where the LORD will drive you”.** So it came to pass. In the centuries that followed the Jewish nation was scattered among the nations of the world. Their separation and persecution became legendary. Denounced as Christ-killers by some Christian leaders, their economic and social interactions were severely restricted. In much of Europe they were forbidden to own land. In Muslim countries they were subject to the onerous legal restrictions of Dhimmitude: - laws and special taxes imposed on all non-Muslims. They were kicked out of England in the 12th century and Spain in 1492. To make a living they gravitated to the occupations of trade and banking, gathering wealth in the process, aggravating the ignorant prejudices of the masses. Over the course of time this inevitably led to violence such as the Russian pogroms which devastated whole villages. Anti-Semitism culminated in Hitler's Holocaust. Millions were murdered in the camps; - Auschwitz and Dachau and Treblinka and others.

In the meantime, the enemies of Israel overran God's Holy Promised Land. Muslims for the most part, and Crusaders for some, occupied the Jewish homeland. Leviticus 26:32-33 had warned as much. **“I will bring the land to desolation, and your enemies who dwell in it shall be astonished at it. I will scatter you among the nations and draw out a sword after you; your land shall be desolate and your cities waste.”** This was to be a time of punishment. Jesus had put it this way in Luke 24:21. **“Jerusalem will be trampled on by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.”** The Jews would not gain control of Jerusalem again until the 1967 Six-Day War.

Yet Israel was not forgotten in her exile. Though God used Ezekiel to pronounce judgment in his earlier writings, he later used him to offer hope. **“And I will bring them out from the peoples and gather them from the countries, and will bring them to their own land; I will feed them on the mountains of Israel, in the valleys and in all the inhabited places of the country.”** (Ezekiel 24:13) And God gave Israel more than just a promise of nationhood. He promised blessing for the returned nation. Even her fertility would be restored. Isaiah 27:6 reads. **“Those who come He shall cause to take root in Jacob; Israel shall blossom and bud, And fill the face of the world with fruit.”** And so in our day this has come to pass. Today, over 90% of the citrus fruit consumed in Europe comes from tiny Israel. Isaiah 41:18 speaks of that fertility. **“I will open rivers in desolate heights, and fountains in the midst of the valleys; I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water.”** Joel 2:23 comforted them that even the rains would return to a then parched soil. **“Be glad then, you children of Zion, And rejoice in the LORD your God; For He has given you the former rain faithfully, And He will cause the rain to come down for you— The former rain, And the latter rain in the first month”.** And rainfall has increased in Israel at the rate of about 10% each decade, beginning a century ago, when the Zionist movement began to bring Jews back to the Holy Land. God also promised their language would be revived. **“For then I will restore to the peoples a pure language, That they all may call on the name of the LORD, To serve Him with one accord.”** (Zephaniah 3:9) For centuries, Hebrew was a dead language; as dormant as ancient Latin, Greek or Egyptian. Yet beginning in the 1880's, a sickly scholar, Eliazar ben Yehuda, worked for its revival. He began with just the seven thousand known words related to Temple worship and invented thousands more. Modern Hebrew was the result. It is spoken by millions of Jews. It was the vehicle used to unite the millions of exiles pouring into the land from around the world, each with their own tongue.¹

But before all of this could happen, the Jews had to return to the land. This was a people living on every continent, with colonies in every major country on the globe. No other ethnic group had survived more than five generations or about 200 years out of their homeland. The Holy Land had been, to use a modern term, *cleansed* of Jews by the Romans; - first in 70 AD and again in the year 135 AD. They were a people that had rejected their Messiah, and so, by Divine decree had earned punishment. Yet God had promised to be merciful. In fact Ezekiel 37 tells us that God would first gather them to their land in unbelief. That chapter speaks of a great valley of dry bones. It is a picture of the scattered, defeated and lifeless nation of Israel. It is the story of how God will bring His people back to life. Verse 8 describes a people without “**breath**”, or the Holy Spirit, without which there is no belief. But Ezekiel 37:11-14 promises a transformation, “**Then He said to me, “Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel. They indeed say, ‘Our bones are dry, our hope is lost, and we ourselves are cut off!’ Therefore prophesy and say to them, ‘Thus says the Lord GOD: “Behold, O My people, I will open your graves and cause you to come up from your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel. Then you shall know that I am the LORD, when I have opened your graves, O My people, and brought you up from your graves. I will put My Spirit in you, and you shall live, and I will place you in your own land.”** Ezekiel 36:24, 26 confirms that promise. “**For I will take you out of the nations; I will gather you from all the countries and bring you back into your own land....I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh.**” And in the last hundred years, we have indeed seen a population of a primarily secular Jews gather in Israel from all over the world, after eighteen centuries out of the land. It is in just the last several years that we see an increase in spiritual belief. There are growing expectations that the Messiah will soon come, preparations to rebuild the Temple, and a doubling of the Messianic (Christian) Jewish population to about 10,000.² But the return has taken centuries.

Through those centuries, fledgling movements and rabbinic calls for aliyah, (the return of Jews to the Holy Land), had died in infancy. By the late 19th century however, God had moved through history in such a way as to allow the beginnings of Zionism to take root. Beginning in the 1870’s, Jews began to form societies to purchase land in Palestine from the Arab owners. The Arabs were only too happy to get rid of unproductive land and sold it at inflated prices. Then beginning in 1881, anti-Jewish pogroms began to sweep through Russia, with its large population of Jews, contributing to the urgency of the project. Jewish bankers, like the magnificently wealthy and powerful, House of Rothschild, contributed significantly to the project. By 1897, the 1st Zionist Congress was held under the organizing genius of Theodore Herzl. The movement saw the Jewish population of Palestine go from about 25,000 in the 1880’s to around 100,000 by WWI. During the course of that war, the British government announced the Balfour Declaration, promising a Jewish homeland in Palestine. Though the British somewhat backed off their promise after the war, there was no putting the genie back in the bottle.³

It is really an amazing story. Through all that time, a scattered remnant clung to the promises of Scripture that promised a return to the land and a coming Messiah. “**I will bring back my exiled people Israel; they will rebuild the ruined cities and live in them. They will plant vineyards and drink their wine; they will make gardens and eat their fruit. I will plant Israel in their own land, never again to be uprooted from the land I have given them,”** says the LORD your God.” (Amos 9:14-15) But their lament was ‘How long must we wait?’ It is interesting that there is a prophetic answer. Many times, the precision of God’s prophecies cannot be appreciated until after their fulfillment. This is not *self-fulfilling prophecy*: As you will see, it is far too mathematically exact in its nature. Grant Jeffrey, in his book, *The Signature of God*, found one such astounding example.

There is found in the writings of the Old Testament, a prediction of the exact date of the re-establishment of Israel as a nation in 1948. Jeffrey looked at two main passages, in Ezekiel and Leviticus, to find to find the key to that fulfilled prophecy. Now we know that Israel was conquered and taken into captivity by the Babylonians in 606 BC. We know that Jeremiah had prophesied the length of that captivity as being exactly 70 years. “**And this whole land shall be a desolation and an astonishment, and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years.**” (Jeremiah 25:11) History tells us the Jews were indeed released precisely 70 years later by King Cyrus, in 536 BC. Contemporary with these events, Ezekiel was given a revelation that spoke to the final re-establishment of Israel in the last days.⁴ “**This will be a sign to the house of Israel. “Lie also on your left side, and lay the iniquity of the house of Israel upon it. According to the number of the days that you lie on it, you shall bear their iniquity. For I have laid on you the years of their iniquity, according to the number of the days, three hundred and ninety days; so you shall bear the iniquity of the house of Israel. And when you have completed them, lie again on your right side; then you shall bear the iniquity of the house of Judah forty days. I have laid on you a day for each year.”** (Ezekiel 4:3-6)

First of all, we see that this prophecy is aimed directly at the nation or **“house of Israel”**. It pronounces sentence on the Jewish nation as punishment for their sins: 390 years followed by 40 years, - or a total of 430 years. The beginning point for the sentence is the month of Nisan, 536 BC, when the Jews came out of the Babylonian captivity. The problem was that once freed, a majority of the Jews refused to leave or repent. Instead they chose both to remain in Babylon and in their sin which had “...sent them into captivity in the first place”. But notice they had served only 70 years of their sentence of 430 years. Three hundred sixty years remained to be served. So what’s going on here? ⁵

The answer lies in Leviticus 26. In this chapter, the God of Israel pronounces both promises and punishments for the behavior of the Jewish nation. God addresses the punishments to Israel, **“if you do not obey Me, and do not observe all these commandments”**. (Leviticus 26:14) Repeatedly God warns Israel that if she did not repent, the punishments would be multiplied seven times. **“And after all this, if you do not obey Me, then I will punish you seven times more for your sins.... And if by these things you are not reformed by Me, but walk contrary to Me, then I also will walk contrary to you, and I will punish you yet seven times for your sins.... And after all this, if you do not obey Me, but walk contrary to Me, then I also will walk contrary to you in fury; and I, even I, will chastise you seven times for your sins”** (Leviticus 26:18,23-24,27-28) So we must apply the seven fold punishment to the remaining 360 years of the sentence: $360 \times 7 = 2,520$ years to be served. Ah, but these are Biblical years; - each is 360 days long. Grant Jeffrey did the conversion. It comes out to 2,483.8 calendar years. Starting from 536 BC and counting forward we arrive at May of 1948. It was May 14, 1948, to the sound of a shofar, an ancient ram’s horn, that Israel announced its independence. It was the exact fulfillment of Ezekiel.

That day too saw the exact fulfillment of another prophecy, Isaiah 66:8. **“Who has heard such a thing? Who has seen such things? Shall the earth be made to give birth in one day? Or shall a nation be born at once? For as soon as Zion was in labor, She gave birth to her children.”** As Israel declared its independence on May 14, 1948 the United States issued a statement recognizing her sovereignty. Only hours beforehand, a United Nations mandate expired, ending British control of the land. During a 24-hour span of time, foreign control of the land of Israel had formally ceased, and Israel had declared its independence, and that independence was acknowledged by other nations. Modern Israel was literally was born in a single day. The God of Israel is faithful indeed, Alleluia!

THE EVOLUTION MYTH – PART VII

[A series by guest contributor Pastor Lynn Zank]

Hi folks, yep you guessed it, it’s me again. Today we are going to look at the origin of microorganisms. I’m going to do something a little different, I’m going to take the entire text from a book written by Roger Patterson, called Evolution Exposed, written in July of 2007, and published by answers in genesis.org.

Evolutionists must explain how cells, once they emerge from lifeless matter, diversified into the many life forms we see today. It is supposed that some extinct ancestor of the archaebacteria and eubacteria developed the necessary biologic machinery to survive in diverse situations. There is no evidence for this transformation other than the interpretation of molecular studies extrapolated backwards for billions of years. One major problem for the development of early unicellular organisms is the presence of oxygen in the atmosphere. It is becoming clear that there is no evidence from geology that there ever was a time in earth’s history when oxygen wasn’t present. The earliest fossil organisms are of oxygen-producing bacteria that form structures know as stromatolites; so any previous organisms must come from imagination, not evidence.

As bacteria continued to evolve on the primitive earth, they supposedly developed many complex internal structures, what is called organelles today, and supported them inside membranes. The nucleus formed and became enclosed in a membrane with selective proteins that maintain the integrity of the DNA.

Another popular theory is that the mitochondria and chloroplasts are actually endosymbionts---organisms that were “eaten” by a host, but not digested. Somehow, these ingested cells reproduced in harmony with the host, providing some benefit to each. Eventually DNA was passed from the ingested cell to the nucleus of the host, and the cells became intertwined forever. The fact that there is no real evidence to support this idea is generally ignored. Evidence against this theory is also ignored, because there is no other accepted naturalistic explanation that accounts for the presence of organelles.

As life continued to evolve, multicellular organisms formed as colonies of cells, cooperated for mutual benefit. Exactly how a colony of individuals produced a reproductive method that forms the many different cell types needed is not understood and therefore, is ignored in textbooks. Evolutionists insist that it happened though---because we are here. Multicellular protists,

like algae, were the product of this process of diversification that happened at a time when the earth was supposedly going through many global covering ice ages. The evolution of life was a miracle in itself, but the fact that it happened in an environment that alternated between freezer and oven conditions makes it all the more surprising. Evolutionists suggest that the multiple types of eukaryotic life, from protists to mammals, all arose from a common ancestor, but in several distinct lines. The lines that turned into algae and plants contained chlorophyll and mitochondria, and those that turned into animals contained only mitochondria, or maybe they “lost” their chlorophyll. (It’s difficult being green).

The most striking feature of this part of the evolutionary story is the lack of evidence. Life supposedly started hundreds of millions of years before the first fossils were formed. An understanding of how the three domains of living things (archaeobacteria, eubacteria, and eukaryotes) are related has changed significantly. The rapid appearance of multicellular life seen in the Cambrian explosion produces more questions than answers, and the lack of fossil evidence does not support the claims made advanced into the forms we see today.

Another major event at this point in the evolutionary storyline is the arrival of sexual reproduction. No effective hypothesis can explain the origin of sexual reproduction. The evolution of sexual reproduction is rarely mentioned in textbooks or given more than a just-so statement of fact that it happened. How two individuals of the same species could have acquired the mutations that would have led to the passing of only one half of their chromosomes, in a very complex process known as meiosis, and then mated at the exact same time and place in evolutionary history is nothing less than a miracle. The advantages of sexual reproduction are often provided as evidence for evolution, but the mechanism is rarely explained. Just because something would be an advantage does not mean that it would develop.

Starting with the Bible as a foundation, the interpretation of the existence of single-celled and multicelled organisms is simple. Their apparent similarities point to a divine Creator, not a common ancestor. As we learn more about the complexity of living things and the record that is left in the rocks, it becomes more clear that life did not evolve from simple to more complex organisms, but that they were created to reproduce “after their own kind”. Until the next time.

BIRTH PANGS INDEED !

It’s time for the world, - and even the Church to wake up! As nuts as it may sound to some, we may indeed be living in the times of the opening birth pangs of which Jesus spoke. Let’s look at just a few areas.

Earthquakes & Natural Disasters – The US reported 368 tornados in the US in January & February. That’s 125 more than the previous record.⁶ A headline in ABC News: Experts: Twisters Getting Larger, Deadlier.⁷ The Red Cross believes that the death toll for the Burma cyclone could close in on 128,000.⁸ Meanwhile earthquakes have been increasing exponentially. Hal Lindsey reports that the USGS recorded 7 major earthquakes in 1969, and just 44 for the entire decade of the 70’s. The increase is such that since 2000 there have been 109 such temblors with an astounding 25 of them coming since January.⁹ In Chile, the Chaiten volcano is on the verge of erupting.¹⁰

The Black Horse of Famine – The UN has identified a wheat fungus , Ug99, that could infect up to 90% of all the world’s wheat and reduce crops of that grain by 70% or more. Major crop failures have occurred in Europe, Argentina, and a large swath of Africa.¹¹ As food supplies tighten, Japanese officials are warning of a “rice’ n’ pickle diet”.¹²

A Cultural Free-Fall – The latest cultural disaster was the ruling by the Californian Supreme Court to overturn the voters 61%-majority-approved decision to limit marriage to “one man and one woman”.¹³ The court’s decision brought rejoicing to the over 100,000 gay couples in the state. Opponents are feverishly working to get a constitutional amendment on the ballot for November.¹⁴ Add to that the announcement that a sitting Episcopal Bishop intends to marry his same sex partner.

Christ Himself warned us of such days. **“Watch out that no one deceives you...There will be famines and earthquakes in various places. All these are the beginning of birth pains.”** (Matthew 24:4, 7)

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- ¹ Grant R Jeffrey, *The Signature of God*, Frontier Research Publications, Toronto, 1996, pg 178-180
 - ² Number of Christian Jews in Israel Doubles to 10,000, *Christianity Today*, UK, April 30, 2005
 - ³ Mideast Web .org
 - ⁴ Grant R Jeffrey, *The Signature of God*, Frontier Research Publications, Toronto, 1996, pg 158
 - ⁵ Grant R Jeffrey, *The Signature of God*, Frontier Research Publications, Toronto, 1996, pg 159
 - ⁶ Hal Lindsey, Last-days 'birth pains' have begun, *World Net Daily*, May 16, 2008
 - ⁷ Ashley Philips, Experts: Twisters Getting Larger, Deadlier, *ABC News*, May 16, 2008
 - ⁸ Myanmar Raises Official Cyclone Death Toll, *CBS News*, May 15, 2008
 - ⁹ Hal Lindsey, Last-days 'birth pains' have begun, *World Net Daily*, May 16, 2008
 - ¹⁰ New rumbling from Chilean volcano worries experts, *Reuters*, May 15, 2008
 - ¹¹ Hal Lindsey, Last-days 'birth pains' have begun, *World Net Daily*, May 16, 2008
 - ¹² Japan fears rice' n' pickle diet as food supply slows, *Reuters*, May 16, 2008
 - ¹³ California Supreme Court overturns gay marriage ban, *AP*, *Breitbart*, May 15, 2008
 - ¹⁴ Lisa Leff, Opponents push for constitutional amendment..., *AP*, May 16, 2008