

# *Legacy of a Father*

*The Evolution of God from the Past into the Future*

**Part 2 of 2**





# *Legacy of a Father*

*The Evolution of God  
From the Past into the Future*

## *Part 2 of 2*



*By*

*Nicholas Paul Ginex*

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## *Acknowledgements*

To my children

And

To those courageous men and women

Who, throughout the ages,

Have faced adversity and death

In their efforts to

Enlighten us with the truth.



*This book has come into fruition only with  
the many wonderful people who have  
entered my life. In some small way, they all  
had some affect in creating the thoughts I  
am fortunate to impart to you. Last, and not  
least, I am ever grateful for Diane, my  
loving wife, who as my partner in life has  
been a very constructive editor.*

## ***PREFACE***

My dear reader, this book presents the 2<sup>nd</sup>-half of ***Legacy of a Father*** self-published on October 16, 2006. The original printing contained an overwhelming amount of history that gave a substantial overview of the start of the Egyptian civilization from the Predynastic Period (5500-3400 BC) to Egypt coming under Persian, Greek, and Roman rule that ended in 395 CE. It embodied a comprehensive history of Egypt that not only presented many of its pharaohs, it revealed how the concept of one-universal god developed, the worship of the God Amen, and how that God inherently influenced the development of the Judaic, Christian and Islamic religions.

Ending with 650 pages, it became apparent that *Legacy of a Father* was much too long, and so, this book remained dormant on my computer. Realizing that the contents of this body of literature had much value to offer discerning followers of a religion and god, its most important finding, how mankind conceived one-universal god, had to be told to believers in God. To satisfy this necessity, I cut the page count down to 361 pages and again, self-published the book in 2007 titled, ***Future of God Amen, A Call to Daughters and Sons of God.***

Soon after, in 2009, I contracted Xlibris Corporation to published the 3<sup>rd</sup> edition of ***Future of God Amen.*** It was the first time I was able to include several complimentary book reviews that increased the total page count to 374 pages. Since this publication, at 74 years of age, ***Legacy of a Father***, with its wealth of Egyptian facts and findings, served as the backbone to write four other books:

***AMEN, The Beginning of the Creation of God***

***Amen, and Jesus' Revelation***

***God, Us and the Universe***

***Allah, We, Our and Us***

## PREFACE

Part 2 of 2 presents the religious beliefs of the Ancient Egyptians, whereby; one learns how the concept of a soul developed, why there are strong beliefs of an eternal life with a creator god, when fear of the endless pain of hell originated for not following the commands of god, and how mankind gradually developed the worship of one-universal god Amen. Part 2 describes how righteous religious leaders transformed the belief in god to create the Judaic, Christian and Islamic religions to maintain a morality needed for their community of people to co-exist.

It is my hope that Part 2 of 2 may enlighten your present understanding and conception of God. It may challenge some of you to open your perspectives and accept fundamental moral and spiritual ideas and concepts introduced by our ancestors. Our existing institutions have sorely neglected to credit religious ideas and concepts to their origins of development. It is not my intent to dissuade you from your present beliefs in the God you worship, but to appreciate why you do accept your God, and why He, though transformed for a unique people, is essentially the same God taught by every monotheistic religion.

In Part 2, we begin to see how the concepts of God have originated within the Egyptian civilization and have been infused into the Judaic, Christian and Islamic religions. A chapter is devoted to each of these religions so that an underlying history reveals how they grew from one another from Egyptian religious beliefs and how, the catastrophic event of war caused the development of the New Testament. The last chapter, a most important one, is provided to present conclusions and recommendations that challenge the leaders of the three basic religions and their followers to effect changes that are sorely needed in our more sophisticated world.

## PREFACE

Together, Parts 1 and 2 provide a history of events that reveal how Egyptian beliefs were emulated by the Hebrews, instilled into their Holy Scriptures, and provided for the development of Christianity and Islam. These books provide a good grasp of the moral, social and cultural elements that have been instilled into the monotheistic religions. Our Egyptian ancestors must be given credit for integrating equality, justice, truth, righteousness, and reverence for a highly respected power. These are the elements that are interwoven and are reinforced in the belief of God.





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## **Part 2 *Evolution of the Universal God***

### **Egyptian Symbol of Truth**



*Hope on, hope ever ! after darkest night,  
Comes, full of loving life, the laughing morning;  
Hope on, hope ever ! Spring-tide flush with light,  
Aye crowns old Winter with her rich adorning.  
Hope on, hope ever ! yet the time shall come,  
When man to man shall be a friend and brother  
And this old world shall be a happy home,  
And all Earth's family love one another !  
Hope on, hope ever.<sup>1</sup>*

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<sup>1</sup> Gerald Massey, *Poems by Gerald Massey*, page 355. This English poet, writer and Egyptologist (1828-1907), dedicated his life to dispel falsehoods and reveal truths clouded by myths.



**Figure 5-1. Nefertari Receives Truth from Isis.**

## ***5.0 Religious Concepts of the Egyptians***

My dear reader, the first half of this book was provided to give you a clear perspective of the Egyptian people, their Pharaohs, and significant events that have come to shape their religion and concept of god. The historic past has been laid out for you to perceive the logical progression of man's development of our monotheistic god. In the following pages, we will examine the concepts that have been conceived by the ancient Egyptians and, in the chapters that follow, we will see how the three basic religions have imbedded these concepts into their belief of the same monotheistic god. We are reminded of some fundamental observations that have surfaced in our search for truth in our god's development, they are:

- *Man learns through the knowledge acquired from the past* and uses it to advance his conceptions and theories about his world in the present. This process applies to the spiritual as well as the pragmatic side of man's human nature.
- *Religions have and will continue to undergo changes* to keep pace with the intellect of the people and knowledge gained about their world.
- *It is clearly apparent that there will be impending changes to our present religions* to cleanse the myths and falsehoods of the past.
- *Man seeks to base his future worship of god on truths* established by our moral experiences and factual findings of our world, eventually extending to the outer reaches of the universe.

The final chapter deals with the religious changes envisioned by the author that will assist man's understanding of himself and his God – it is then that,

*‘Man to man shall be a friend and brother and*

*all Earth's family love one another!'*<sup>1</sup>

### **5.1 *Amen a God and Revered Word***

Religious leaders of the three monotheistic religions, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam have not instructed modern man in the true meaning of Amen. People announce this holy word at the end of every prayer, supplication, expression of thanks, and act of reverence to the god they worship. Yet, very few people know the origin of Amen. Most people are familiar with the *Amen* definition taught by the monotheistic religions, which is the proverbial 'So be it'. The definition of *Amen* in Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary (Copyright 1987) falls far short of the three definitions provided in the Britannica World Language Dictionary (Funk and Wagnall's Standard Edition, 1959 Edition):

**Webster, *Amen*** – Used to express solemn ratification (as of an expression of faith) or hearty approval (as of an assertion).

**Britannica, *Amen* –n.** So it is; so be it. **1.** The word amen at the end of a prayer or hymn, meaning *so be it*. **2.** Any expression of hearty consent or conviction. **3.** A concluding act or word; termination. – *vt.* To say amen to; express hearty concurrence in or approval of. **2.** To say or write the last word of. *Adv. Obs.* Verily; truly. [*< Greek, < Hebrew, verily*]

**Britannica, *Amen* –n.** Christ, the true and faithful witness. *Rev 3:14*<sup>1</sup>

*Note: Christian religious leaders interpret Rev 3:14 as Jesus Christ being Amen. However, Jesus clearly pronounces Amen as*

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<sup>1</sup> Gerald Massey, *Poems by Gerald Massey*, Page 355.

<sup>1</sup> Holy Bible, King James Vers., The Revelation of St. John the Divine. In 3:14, Jesus states: And unto the angel of the church of the Laod-i-ce'ans write; *These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God;*

*the true and faithful witness, which indicates he had knowledge of Egyptian beliefs and their god Amen.*

**Britannica, Amen –n.** In Egyptian mythology, the god of life and procreation represented as having a ram’s head; later identified with the sun-god, as the supreme deity, and called Amen-Ra. Also spelled Amon, Ammon (and Amun, Amoun and Imen).

Before we review the origin of Amen it will be instructive to return to some of the definitions given above because they reveal some perceptions worth investigation.

### **5.1.1 So be it.**

This interpretation of Amen is somewhat wanting because it does not apply in all cases. For example, if we are thanking God for anything that has transpired that gave us peace, happiness, health, or a favorable outcome, to then say ‘So be it’ would be out of place because it implies a future outcome. So be it would be applicable as a supplication for something requested for the future or a prayer that emphasizes a belief in God. When one exclaims **Amen** as a hearty concurrence or approval of something then the connotation *So be it* does not apply but rather a thankful acknowledgement to God is being expressed for the favorable outcome. In this case, **Amen** signifies the name of ‘**God**’ rather than ‘So be it’, in order to convey thanks and acknowledgement to the highest entity.

### **5.1.2 Amen a Revered God**

In Revelation 1:11, Jesus Christ reveals himself to Saint John the Divine and instructs him to write down what he sees and hears into a book for seven churches he specifically names. Jesus shortly refers to the Egyptian god, Amen in Rev 3:14, and indicates that it was **Amen** that has said the things being revealed to John. When, Jesus states that **Amen** “*is the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation*

*of god*” – it must be taken very seriously by his believers. For, if **Amen** was indeed the faithful and true witness at the beginning - he is God the father of all creation. Single-minded religious scholars may try to twist and reinterpret the words of Jesus in an effort to deny his acknowledgement of Amen. This reference to Amen reveals that the reverence formerly given to Amen by Egyptians had never lost its impact even though modern man has reduced its meaning to “So be it”. An Egyptian translation of Amen means “The Hidden One” and was associated with the air we breathe or the God of Air. As such, the Egyptian sensed or felt the air manifesting itself as gusts of wind but the god remains unseen and without form. The true nature of this god is therefore a mystery; unknowable and incomprehensible to human beings.

In summary, the definition for Amen as “So be it” is rather weak. It is a disservice to the intended reverence and adoration of God. In subsection 4.6.2.3 of Part 1, *Amon As the Sole God*, we were able to obtain a better definition of the god Amen as conceived by the ancient Egyptians. Some of their perceptions of god are repeated below to emphasize Amen was highly revered as the one God of all creation.

***Amon As the Sole God*** (100<sup>th</sup> stanza.)

*The first to come into being in the earliest times. Amon, who came into being at the beginning, so that his mysterious nature is unknown. No god came into being before him; there was no other god with him, so that he might tell his form. He had no mother, after whom his name might have been made. He had no father who had begotten him and who might have said: “This is I!” Building his own egg, a daemon <sup>1</sup> mysterious at birth, who created his (own) beauty, the divine god that came into being by himself. All (other) gods came into being after he began himself.*

---

<sup>1</sup> The ancient connotation of daemon is not an evil spirit but rather a spirit of supernatural intelligence, a genius.

*Amon As the Sole God* (200<sup>th</sup> stanza)

*Mysterious of form, glistening of appearance, the marvelous god of many forms. All (other) gods boast of him, to magnify themselves through his beauty, according as he is divine. Re is united with his body. He is the great one who is in Heliopolis*<sup>2</sup> . . .

. . . *The procreator of the primeval gods, who brought Re to birth; he completed himself as Atum, a single body with him. He is the All-Lord, the beginning of that which is. His soul, they say, is that which is in heaven. . . .*

*One is Amon, hiding himself from them, concealing himself from the (other) gods, so that his (very) color is unknown. He is far from heaven, he is absent from the underworld, (so that) no gods know his true form. His image is not displayed in writings. No one bears witness to him . . . He is too mysterious that his majesty might be disclosed, he is too great that (men) should ask about him, too powerful that he might be known.*

To the above perceptions of the Egyptian god Amen, it would be apropos to add the statement by Jesus Christ acknowledging that **Amen** was, *'the beginning of the creation of God'*.

*And unto the angel of the church of the Laod-i-ce'ans write;  
These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness,  
the beginning of the creation of God;*<sup>3</sup>

Jesus statement confirms that Amen was an entity at the beginning of the creation of God and therefore had to be God – not a mere phrase

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<sup>2</sup> James B. Pritchard, ed. by, *Ancient Near Eastern Texts*, Page 3, 'The Creation By Atum'. Note: the great one is Atum. From the text of the 6<sup>th</sup> Dynasty, carved inside the pyramids of Pepi II (Nefer-ka-Re) and Mer-ne-Re, it recalls the first creation when Atum of Heliopolis rose out of the waters of chaos and brought the first gods into being.

<sup>3</sup> Holy Bible, King James Version, The Revelation of John, 3:14.

that we have been misled to believe as, “So be it”. Many of the above perceptions about God are still relevant for us today, but as we have just revealed the truth about the origin of God – there is a dire need for our religious institutions to step forward and revise the wornout conceptions that applied to an ancient world. There are some portions of the Old and New Testament, and most certainly in the Qur’an (Koran), that are not acceptable to our present world. Many portions need to be revised and disposed of as they convey fear of God and the killing of our sisters and brothers in the name of God – a mentality of the lowest order that does not follow the very first command given by God to Noah regarding murder:

*Whoso sheddeth man’s blood, by man shall his blood be shed:  
for in the image of God made he man* <sup>4</sup>.

As clearly stated in Genesis, the taking of a life is not permissible. However, God does state that man shall defend the taking of life by eliminating the person who killed a human being. God, therefore, encourages the righteous to defend truth and justice by equal retribution but God equally makes clear to us that man was made in His own image – to defile His creation, especially through murder in His name, is an affront to God. In spite of His command, today we have people with minds that have been misled; who kill in the name of, or cause for, God. Such distortion of righteousness has been caused by religious leaders who control the hearts and minds of their worshippers rather than imparting truth and wisdom, which embody the elements of justice and peace.

The above exposition provides another example of the need to revise our present scriptures to deal with the more loving aspects of God, the creator of all matter, organic and inorganic. The need for fear to induce belief has been a prevalent need in the early stages of human development. This had to be a consequence of control by the priests

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<sup>4</sup> Holy Bible, King James Version, Genesis 9:6.



and pharaohs to maintain order in the developing nomes and bring together a common unity to strengthen their new civil, political, and religious orders. It is to be noted that the Egyptians did not force their religion upon the people; it was a natural outgrowth of thousands of years of humans learning to live together in an environment isolated from the rest of the world.

Modern man, for the most part, no longer lives in fear of God because the more natural fatherly feelings of love, protection, and moral upbringing to prepare children for the external world have become more dominant. As a father, I would shudder to find my children fear me. I prefer to be thought of as a kind, gentle and loving father who's only thought is to give my children the finest education and moral upbringing that would enhance my legacy to improve the human race and someday effect a better world for mankind.

There are no reasons to nullify or prohibit the many beliefs attributed to the name **Amen** by our Egyptian ancestors. To do so is to continue to falter in ignorance and deceit by depriving recognition of spiritual beliefs that still sound the bell of truth. Our religious leaders of the three basic monotheistic religions have got to embrace the valid Egyptian concepts and beliefs that form the core of their present religious views. They have been in denial of what they have learned from their Egyptian brothers simply because they wanted to form a special religion for their own people. This is fine, but to not keep respect and homage for the first formal religion of the world presents a dismal characterization of such a religion and its religious leaders.

### **5.1.3 The Origin of Amen**

Egypt's first primordial gods of the ennead, which will be introduced in the Section 5.3, 'The Creation Concept and God Defined', did not refer to Amen but dealt with other gods representing physical elements such as the sun, ocean, earth and the heavens. It is not certain when Amen became a conceptualized deity, but the Pyramid Texts, described

below, indicates that by the 5<sup>th</sup> Dynasty, around 2,650 B C, Amon (Amen) became venerated by the priests of Heliopolis as the god of life and procreation. By the 18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty, the start of the New Kingdom, Amon came to be worshipped as the principal god of Thebes, the Capital of Egypt. By the 19<sup>th</sup> Dynasty, Amon was fused with the most powerful god of the Egyptians, Re the sun god – and became **Amon-Re**.

It is not clear when the Egyptian priests first developed their conceptions of creation. It could not have been long after their invention of the calendar that occurred in 4241 BC. Egyptologists have unearthed clay tablets inscribed with hieroglyphics within tombs of the Predynastic Age in Abydos that have been dated around 3400 BC <sup>1</sup>. This medium was replaced with the use of papyrus documents around 2600 BC. This innovation has made it possible for the priesthood to be more fluid and articulate in setting down their conceptual views about creation and the beginning of life. Texts carved inside the pyramids of Mer-ne-Re and Pepe II (Nefer-ka-Re) of the 6<sup>th</sup> Dynasty (2625-2475 BC) depicts the beginning of creation by the first god Atum, born out of the primordial waters, which was the only other existing god, Nun.

It was Atum of Heliopolis who brought the first gods into being. He rose from Nun that existed as a limitless expanse of water. More than an ocean, Nun existed as motionless water around the margins of the world. He had the power to destroy the world and begin the cycle again if mankind no longer respected Re. Not to digress, but it is an apropos time to note that in the Old Testament, Genesis 1: 6-10, God divided the waters from the waters to create the firmament which He called Heaven and these waters existed both above and below Heaven. God then gathered the waters under Heaven and created dry land to form the Earth and gathered the waters to form the Seas.

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<sup>1</sup> From Internet: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Egyptian\\_hieroglyph](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Egyptian_hieroglyph). In 1998 a German archeological team excavating at Abydos uncovered tomb U-j which belonged to a Predynastic ruler.

It is apparent that the Genesis Creation begins with the primordial waters likened to the limitless waters attributed to the Egyptian God Nun. This similarity is striking and not coincidental. There could have been many other innovative ways that God could have created heaven and earth, yet the authors (high priests) of Genesis borrowed the Egyptian concept of primordial waters. Certainly, God could have created heaven and earth without starting with water. Then also, what happened to the waters that were left above the firmament? Perhaps this is the water counted upon for rain from the skies. Thank God for the efforts of those men that have been able to decipher the Egyptian hieroglyphics. The words carved on Egypt's ancient walls of their pyramids, temples and tombs have provided the linkages of human thought that allows us to better understand the development of our monotheistic god.

It should also be noted that Nun had the power to destroy the world and begin the cycle again if mankind no longer respected Re. Doesn't this ring some bells with the myth of God's Flood (or Noah's Flood who was not responsible for the flood) whereby sinners who did not obey His commands were destroyed and the cycle of life continued with survivors on the ark?

The above exposition was provided to clarify that although Amon came into existence as the 'Hidden One', at the end of the 5<sup>th</sup> Dynasty, as verified by the Pyramid Texts below, he was not one of the first primordial gods. Yet, by the 19<sup>th</sup> Dynasty, Amon as the principle god of Thebes, became known as the creator of all gods, matter and life – he even embodied the great god Atum who, as described above, was the first primordial god. Let us revisit the following excerpts that proclaim Amen as “Amon the Sole God” and embodiment of Atum: <sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> James B. Pritchard, editor, *Ancient Near Eastern Texts*, Page 368, Amon as the Sole God, 200<sup>th</sup> stanza.

*The first to come into being in the earliest times, Amon, who came into being at the beginning, so that his mysterious nature is unknown. No god came into being before him; there was no other god with him, so that he might tell his form. . . .*

*The procreator of the primeval gods, who brought Re to birth; he completed himself as Atum, a single body with him. He is the All-Lord, the beginning of that which is. His soul, they say, is that which is in heaven. . . .*

The above excerpts show the flexibility of the Egyptian mind to advance and transform the conception of God into a more highly evolved concept. By the 19<sup>th</sup> Dynasty, the concept of Amon as the sole God now incorporated the concept of a soul. This is a wonderful example of change occurring as the Egyptian priests made their God command a greater morality of mankind and through a righteous life receive the reward to join Him for eternity. It remains for our religious leaders of today to follow this example to change spiritual dogma. Just as Ikhnaton was innovative to consolidate the gods into the conception of one life-sustaining god, there is a need for our religious leaders to be courageous enough to likewise elevate our conception of God in order to keep pace with an ever changing, more civilized and educated populace. Nothing stays the same – to do so, is to be motionless and emulate the state of death.

#### ***5.1.3.1 The Pyramid Texts.***

The Pyramid Texts are religious literature, which reflect ancient Egyptian beliefs. Thousands of lines of hieroglyphics were written on the walls of the early Egyptian pyramids at Sakkara and date back to the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Dynasties (2750-2475 BC) of the Old Kingdom. The texts provide evidence that their initial compositions were written as early as the Predynastic Period (4500-3400 BC); revealed by references to hostilities between the kings of the North (Lower Egypt) and the South (Upper Egypt) that occurred before the 1<sup>st</sup> Dynasty. This

body of text includes drama, hymns, litanies, magical texts, offerings, rituals, prayers, the ascension and arrival of Pharaoh in heaven, and miscellaneous texts. The Pyramid Texts are the oldest sacred texts known and represent the oldest body of theology in the world. Utterances 273-274, Lines 398b-399b, from the Pyramid Texts, reveal that Amen, the 'Hidden One', was known and worshipped by the Egyptians during the 5<sup>th</sup> Dynasty. Within the pyramid of the Pharaoh Unis, are inscriptions on the walls of his tomb that makes reference to Amen, the hidden one (Note: N is where the Pharaoh's name would be inserted):

***The Pyramid Texts, Extract from Utterances 273-274***

398b. N. dawns as the Great One, lord of those with (ready) hands.

398c. He sits, his side towards Geb (the earth).

399a. It is N. who judges with him whose name is hidden,

399b. (on) this day of slaying the eldest (gods).

***5.1.3.2 Many Pharaoh Names Include Amen.***

It was not until the beginning of the 12<sup>th</sup> Dynasty that Amon became the principal god of Thebes under the leadership of the Pharaoh Amenemhet I (2000-1970 BC, includes ten years with his son as coregent). The reverence for their god was highly respected as Egypt entered her second great period of productive development, the Middle Kingdom. After the expulsion of the Hyksos from Egypt by the successful Pharaohs of the 18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty, the reverence for Amon became more pronounced as temples sprang up both in Egypt and in the conquered lands of Palestine and Syria. Reverence for Amon was reflected in the use of Amen in the throne names of twelve Pharaohs between the 12<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> Dynasties. Table 4-4 (Part 1) contains a list of the throne names that incorporate the god Amen or have become part of the Pharaoh's name as a prefix (Amen) or suffix (Amon). After 958 BC, the end of the pharaoh Siamon's reign, it appears that this practice was

no longer followed or was suppressed due to consistent foreign invasions and control.

#### **5.1.4 The Attributes of Amen**

Of the many attributes of Amen listed below, is his development into a sole universal god of Egypt and its neighboring lands, in particular, many Asiatic towns and cities of Palestine and Syria. As Amon (Amen) became the dominant god of Egypt and was introduced into conquered territories, the Egyptian priests began to expand their conception of god as early as the 18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty (1580-1350 BC). This idea of Amon-Re being the creator of all life preceded the introduction of Aton by the Pharaoh Amenhotep IV (later known as Ikhn-Aton or Akh-en-Aton). However, Ikhnaton did conceive his Aton god to be the sole god of Egypt and more importantly, the universal god of the world. He expanded the powers of his god into Syria and Nubia but, of course, he was limited by his geographical knowledge of the earth.

##### **5.1.4.1 Amen, the Universal God.**

The following excerpts are from the Boulaq Papyrus residing in the Cairo Museum and are dated sometime in the 18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty <sup>1</sup>. It indicates acknowledgement and joy in praise of the Amon-Re god in foreign countries that existed in lands as wide as the width of the earth. These lines give the perception of their Egyptian god as Lord to be worshiped in all lands after the successful conquests of Thutmose III. This perception therefore formed even before the High Priests of Amon in Thebes recorded this attribute with increasing frequency during the 19<sup>th</sup> Dynasty.

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<sup>1</sup> James B. Pritchard, edited by, *Ancient Near Eastern Texts*, A Hymn to Amon-Re, Pages 365-367

**A Hymn to Amon-Re**

*The chief one, who made the entire earth. . . .  
Jubilation to thee for every foreign country –  
To the height of Heaven, to the width of earth,  
To the depth of the Great Green Sea!*

Later, Ikhnaton was more specific in praise of his Aton god as the god of other countries and ultimately, the earth. The following extraction clearly states Ikhnaton's perception that god is a universal force for all mankind <sup>2</sup>.

**The Hymn to the Aton**

*The countries of Syria and Nubia, the land of Egypt,  
Thou settest every man in his place,  
Thou suppliest their necessities:*

**5.1.4.2 Amen, the God of Creation.**

In *The Hymn to Amon-Re*, the god of Thebes, Amon-Re is viewed as the supreme god and the force that created and sustains life. The following extracts are provided to emphasize Amen's attribute of creation.

*Hail to thee, Amon –Re, . . .  
Lord of what is, enduring in all things, enduring in all things, .  
Lord of eternity, who made everlastingness. . . .  
Who made what is below and what is above, . . .  
The chief one who made the entire earth, . . .  
Thou art the sole one, who made all that is,  
[The] solitary sole [one], who made what exists. . . .  
Father of the fathers of all the gods,  
Who raised the heavens and laid down the ground,*

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<sup>2</sup> James B. Pritchard, edited by, *Ancient Near Eastern Texts*, The Hymn to the Aton, Pages 370, 371

*Who made what is and created what exists; . . .  
 Maker of all mankind,  
 Creator and Maker of all that is. . . .*

Revisiting *The Hymn to the Aton*, which has been introduced in Section 3.5.4 of Part 1, our eloquent Pharaoh and poet Ikhnaton wrote:

*How manifold it is, what thou hast made!  
 They are hidden from the face (of man).  
 O sole god, like whom there is no other!  
 Thou didst create the world according to thy heart.*

From Ikhnaton's Hymn to the Aton we also have:

*The world came into being by thy hand,  
 According as thou hast made them.  
 When thou hast risen, they live,  
 When thou settest, they die.  
 Thou art lifetime of thy own self,  
 For one lives (only) through thee.*

To the above perceptions of Amen from "A Hymn to Amon-Re" and Ikhnaton's "The Hymn to the Aton", we must reiterate what Jesus Christ told Saint John the Divine to write down some 1,500 years later:

*"write; **These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God;**"*  
*(Saint John's Revelation. 3:14)*

The leaders of the Judaic, Christian and Muslim religions do not agree that they all pray to the same God. The Hebrews and Muslims have unique names for God, respectively Jehovah and Allah (the God). Although Christians honor the name of the Judaic God they avoid



saying Jehovah.<sup>1</sup> Since the formation of the Trinity, whereby Christians believe Jesus is the Son of God; more emphasis is placed upon the name Jesus. The Old and New Testament instructs all people to worship the same God. Can these religions be truthful and honest with each other to acknowledge that they all pray to the same god whose name is Amen? This would be a courageous act of unification indeed!! All people will eventually learn the truth that Amen is the same god we all believe in even though religious institutions have developed traditions and revelations that have divided people in the past and continue to maintain ignorance of God's original name into the present.

It is anticipated without reservation, that in the future people will actively flow into every house of god, be it Judaic, Christian and Muslim. It will be through the efforts of all people to seek the truth by comparing and evaluating these religions that their religious leaders will necessarily succumb to a common worship of their one god, Amen. It was Jesus, in Revelation 3: 14, who acknowledged that it was Amen who was,

*'the true and faithful witness, the beginning of the creation of God.'*

This acknowledgement by Jesus Christ is not a mental aberration in the revelation of Saint John the Divine. An examination of the "The Dead Sea Scrolls" by G. Vermes reveals that the devotees of the Community of God, who followed a strict covenant with their god in the second century BC, were instructed to obey the Priests by saying after them upon entering God's Covenant, *Amen, Amen!*<sup>2</sup> Surely, it is wholly evident that Amen was accepted as the Judaic god and has never lost his Egyptian name in honor of the high reverence He commanded as the God of all creation.

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<sup>1</sup> To avoid speaking and possibly profaning God's sacred name Jehovah or Yahweh, Hebrews omit the vowels and use the consonants to refer to God, which results in the tetragrammaton JHVH or YHWH.

<sup>2</sup> G. Vermes, *The Dead Sea Scrolls in English*, Page 73.

**5.1.4.3 Amen, God of War.**

Amon earned his reputation as the mighty god of war for the many towns and cities captured by Thutmose III. In the capture of Joppa under his leadership, one of his leading army officer's, named Thoth (or Thutti), became a hero in executing a successful plan whereby he killed the enemy's leader and proceeded to have 500 soldiers enter the city by carrying 200 men concealed within 200 baskets, which were said to be tribute – a tactical lie to deceive the enemy. The Papyrus Harris manuscript, said to have come from Thebes, and dated around 1300 BC, tells of Thoth's plan and his heroic efforts. This ingenious plan has fired the imagination of the writer of "Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves". A summary of this story is provided in Subsection 4.6.3.2 of Part 1, *The Taking of Joppa*. It is of interest that Amon is regarded as the Egyptian warriors' strength and the Pharaoh's mighty god that assures his victories. Below is an excerpt from the Harris manuscript that captures the military reliance on their god for victory. Thoth brings the *great staff of King Men-kheper-Re* (Thutmose III) for the enemy king to see and rising to display the staff he says <sup>1</sup>:

*"Look at me, O Enemy of [Joppa! Behold] the King Men-kepher-Re – life, prosperity, health! – the fierce lion, the son of Sekmet! <sup>2</sup> Amon gave him his [victory]!" [And he] raised his [hand] and struck the Enemy of Joppa on the forehead. And he fell down,...."*

**5.1.4.4 Amen, God of Perception.**

This attribute has been identified in the six-hundredth stanza of the hymn entitled, Amon as the Sole God <sup>1</sup>. It is an attribute that connotes omnipotence and omniscience for it is perception that allows

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<sup>1</sup> James B. Pritchard, edited by, *Ancient Near Eastern Texts*, Page 22,23.

<sup>2</sup> Sekmet is the Egyptian goddess of war.

<sup>1</sup> James B. Pritchard, edited by, *Ancient Near Eastern Texts*, Page 369 applies to Subparagraphs 5.1.4.4 and 5.1.4.5.

Amen to comprehend any situation and the power to create by command. The following extracts describe this ability:

*Perception is his heart, Command is his lips.*

*Fate and Fortune are with him for everybody.*

*.....The faces of everybody are on him among men and gods.*

*He is Perception.*

#### **5.1.4.5 Amen Heals and Responds to Prayer.**

This god is regarded as the divine physician and a magical healer who responds to supplications and prayer. The following excerpt is taken from *A Hymn to Amon-Re*:

*Who hears the prayer of him who is in captivity,*

*Gracious of heart in the face of an appeal to him.*

From the Hymn, *The God Amon as Healer and Magician* is another 19<sup>th</sup> Dynasty document, the following lines (reordered without change in content) describes Amen's powers to heal and respond to prayer:

*To him belong eyes as well as ears wherever he goes, for the benefit of him whom he loves.*

*Hearing the prayers of him who summons him, coming from afar in the completion of a moment for him who calls him.*

*He who dissolves evils and dispels ailments;*

*A physician who heals the eye without having remedies.. . .*

*Rescuing whom he desires, even though he be in the Underworld;*

*Who saves (a man) from Fate as his heart directs.<sup>1</sup>*

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<sup>1</sup> Although Fate played a powerful role during this period, god can intervene via prayer and supplication.

**5.1.4.6 Amen, God of Mercy.**

The attribute of mercy by the god Amen is given humble gratitude by a father whose son recovered from an illness brought about by some impious act associated with a cow of the temple. Below is another 19<sup>th</sup> Dynasty document that illustrates the deep respect for Amen and humility of an Egyptian artisan who expresses gratitude for his god's mercy. The inscription was carved on a memorial stela, which illustrates Amon-Re seated on the left and on the right, the father, Neb-Re kneels in worship before the god <sup>1</sup>. Significant lines, presented below, have been extracted from the full text. It begins with praise to Amon-Re:

*Amon-Re, Lord of the Thrones of the Two Lands, the Great God Presiding over Karnak, the august god, he who hears the prayer, who comes at the voice of the poor and distressed, who gives breath (to) him who is weak.*

*Giving praise to Amon-Re, Lord of the Thrones of the Two Lands, Presiding over Karnak; kissing the ground to Amon of the City (Thebes), the Great God the Lord of the great forecourt, the gracious one. May he grant to me that my eyes look at his beauty. To the ka of the Outline Draftsman of Amon, Neb-Re, the justified.*

**The Memorial Prayer**

*Giving praises to Amon. I make him adorations in his name; I give him praises to the height of heaven and to the width of earth; [I] relate his power to him who travels downstream and who travels upstream. Beware ye of him! Repeat him to son and daughter, to great and small; relate him to generations of genera-tions who have not yet come into being; relate him to fishes in the deep, to birds in the*

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<sup>1</sup> James B. Pritchard, edited by, *Ancient Near Eastern Texts*, Page 380, Gratitude for God's Mercy.

*heaven; repeat him to him who knows him not and to him who knows him! Beware ye of him!*

*Thou art Amon, the Lord of the silent man <sup>2</sup>, who comes at the voice of the poor man. If I call to thee when I am distressed, thou comest and thou rescuest me. Thou givest breath (to) him who is weak; thou rescuest him who is in prisoned. Thou art Amon-Re, Lord of Thebes, who rescues him who is in the Underworld, inasmuch as thou art he who is.....when one calls to thee; thou art he who comes from afar.*

*Made by the Outline Draftsman of Amon in the Place of Truth, Neb-Re, the justified.....{Several lines of appreciation}...*

*He says (Neb-Re): Though it may be that the servant is normal in doing wrong, still the Lord is normal in being merciful. The Lord of Thebes does not spend an entire day angry. As for his anger - in the completion of a moment there is no remnant, and the wind is turned about in mercy for us, and Amon has turned around with his breezes. As thy ka endures, thou wilt be merciful, and we shall not repeat what has been turned away!. ....*

*Made by the Outline Draftsman Neb-re (and his) son, the Scribe Khay.*

#### **5.1.4.7 Amen, the Just of Councils.**

The expulsion of the Hyksos from Egypt was not accomplished in a single generation and took a series of campaigns by the Sekenenres (Tao I and Tao II) and two kings of Thebes – Kamose and Ahmose I. It was Kamose who rebelled against a truce which divided Egypt between his Theban rule and the rule of the Hyksos in Avaris. He rejected the advice of his officials and set out to win back the larger dominion embracing Hermopolis (halfway between the Delta and Thebes) to the Delta and shores of the Mediterranean Sea. An excerpt from Kamose's stela, provided below, emphasizes the authority and

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<sup>2</sup> Silent man meaning one who is submissive or humble.

trust in the judgment of Amen. Strategically, Kamose uses this attribute of Amen to strengthen his case to capture Lower Egypt in deference of his officials <sup>1</sup>.

*I went north because I was strong (enough) to attack the Asiatics through the command of Amon, the just of councils. My valiant army was in front of me like a blast of fire.....*

#### **5.1.4.8 Amen, the Lord of Truth.**

One of the greatest attributes of the Egyptian god Amen is reverence for truth. Truth has always been the underlying conceptual foundation that shaped Egypt's morality since Egypt's Predynastic age, over 4000 BC years ago. This moral precept was represented by Maat, goddess of justice, righteousness and truth. So venerated is this moral element that Maat was conceived as the daughter of Re. Truth became the underpinning of their moral upbringing and was instilled into the education of their Pharaohs. Thutmose III exemplified his deep respect for the truth when he detailed the successes of his campaigns. Let us revisit his words:<sup>1</sup>

*I have not uttered exaggeration in order to boast of that which I did, saying, "I have done something," although my majesty had not done it. I have not done anything. . . . against which contradiction might be uttered. I have done this for my father, Amon . . . because he knoweth heaven and he knoweth earth, he seeth the whole earth hourly.*

#### **5.1.4.9 Amen, God of Righteousness and Justice.**

Together, Righteousness and her sister Truth, are the foundations of Justice, without these two elements of morality there can be no justice.

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<sup>1</sup> James B. Pritchard, edited by, *Ancient Near Eastern Texts*, The War Against the Hyksos, Page 232.

<sup>1</sup> James H. Breasted, *A History of Egypt*, Page 320.

In *A Hymn to Amon-Re*, which was written prior to the Amarna Revolution initiated by Ikhnaton, it not only describes the one-god conception it also depicts Amen's attribute for righteousness by stating:<sup>1</sup>

*"The righteous one, Lord of Karnak,  
In this thy name of Maker of Righteousness."*

James H. Breasted in his book, *The Dawn of Conscience*, depicts righteousness as one of the sources of our moral heritage from Ancient Egypt. He comments upon a literary document that was preserved in a stately papyrus roll that dates to the Middle Kingdom, between 2000 and 1800 BC. The story presents a very able-minded peasant who expresses why he should be dealt fairly after his donkeys were taken from him by a vassal who witnessed some of his grain being eaten along a very narrow path on his property. Finding that the vassal was unresponsive to his pleas to return his donkeys, the peasant made several appeals to the Chief Steward of Herakleopolis. Below is one of his most ingenuous appeals from the story, "The Protests of the Eloquent Peasant"<sup>1</sup>.

*Do justice for the sake of the Lord of justice whose justice has indeed become justice, thou (who art) Pen and Roll and Writing Palette, (even) Thoth,<sup>2</sup> being far removed from doing evil; when right is (really) right, then is it (indeed) right. For justice (Maat) is for eternity. It descendeth with him that doeth it into the grave, when he is placed in the coffin and laid in the earth. His name is not effaced on earth, but he is remembered because of right. Such is the uprightness of the word of God.*

The idea of attributing to Amen as Lord of Karnak in Thebes, the *Maker of Righteousness* implies he is a god that is responsible for

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<sup>1</sup> James B. Pritchard, edited by, *Ancient Near Eastern Texts*, Page 367.

<sup>1</sup> James H. Breasted, *The Dawn of conscience*, Page 191

<sup>2</sup> God of writing and legal procedure.

man's desire to be fair and just to his fellow beings. Following is a prayer to Amon for justice in an appeal for assistance where it appears that the rich find favor among the poor. This appeal, written around 1230 BC, comes from the Anastasi Papyrus and in whole reads <sup>3</sup>:

*O Amon, give thy ear to one who is alone in the law court, who is poor; he is [not] rich. The court cheats him (of) silver and gold for the scribes of the mat <sup>4</sup> and clothing for the attendants <sup>5</sup>. May it be found that Amon assumes his form as the vizier, in order to permit (the) poor man to get off. May it be found that the poor man is vindicated. May the poor man surpass the rich.*

*The End.*

The appeal for righteousness, truth and justice comes from the belief that it is God, a higher (out of body) presence that materializes these attributes. This is a natural appeal when one feels little hope or trust in the application of justice by fellow human beings. Worshippers of the three major religions who pray to the same God continue the belief that an outside, unknowable presence will respond to their prayers. This is a noble concept to ascribe the loving nature of human beings and all its attributes to some outside force called god – but it is a misdirected belief. The loving nature of all living creatures is an inherent attribute within them – that is guided by a loving and moral upbringing without the assistance of any outside force.

Mankind's desire for power, wealth and control is part of the social makeup of a civilization as those with a higher mental capacity and aggressive nature are responsible for its growth. What must always be ingrained in all people, be they blessed with more or less mental capacities than others, are the attributes of righteousness, truth and justice. These attributes encourage fairness and charity for those less

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<sup>3</sup> James B. Pritchard, edited by, *Ancient Near Eastern Texts*, Page 380, A  
Prayer for Help in the Law Court.

<sup>4</sup> Reed mats were used by the magistrates and clerks of the court to sit on.

<sup>5</sup> The attendants were probably bailiffs.



endowed than others in natural talent and intelligence. The Egyptian Priesthood and the Pharaohs they indoctrinated were cognizant of the benefits of these attributes to bring order and stability to their growing nomes, towns and cities. Their civilization aspired to become one of the most advanced in the world until their morality and love of righteousness, truth and justice became corrupted by the many outside forces that they could no longer control and eventually succumb to.

### **5.1.5 The Attribute of Love.**

It is noteworthy that the ancient Egyptians did not revere love as an attribute of their god(s), be it Amon-Re raised to a universal god by the High Priests of Amon or the Aton god of Ikhnaton. Their very early conceptions dealt with a need to comprehend the beginning of life, the earth and its oceans, the sun, the air we breathe and the heavens beyond. The Egyptians formulated answers to such overwhelming thoughts by conceiving gods as responsible for these elements. The beauty of the wonders of nature that existed in organic and inorganic form, be they animals, birds, mountains and trees, also were revered and became associated with their local gods.

Once assuming form in their minds, certain gods rose to take on personal attributes that needed to be emulated in mankind, such as righteousness, truth and justice. The basic instinctual need to have a god to protect and defend them, to furnish the necessary waters to produce abundant food eventually led to the higher conceptional need of truth and righteousness. This was a necessary development by the Egyptian Priesthood so that social order can be assured and justice administered for the well-being of their communities. Consequently, these attributes came to be worshipped and praised. But where was the attribute of love? This fundamental attribute has finally taken precedence in many religions today. But unfortunately, love for our brothers and sisters is not fully taught and practiced as religious fanatics do exist and kill innocent people in the name of God.

The dominant attribute of the Judaic, Christian and Islamic God, who is indeed the same God (for there is only one God), is fear; fear that impresses a torturous feeling upon the mind with the daunt image of being consumed eternally by the scorching flames of hell for breaching any of God's commands. Only recently, in our lifetime, have our religious leaders come to emphasize that God loves us. But if we examine the first four of the Ten Commandments (since the others specifically address honor of parents, killing, adultery, stealing, false witness, and covetness) shown as Table 5-1, we find that except for the mercy He gives to thousands that love Him, there is no statement of God's love for His creations or that they love one another.

In all fairness, it is the Son of Man, Jesus Christ that proclaimed love as the final word with regard to the Ten Commandments. His words provided below, are the only commandments that emphasize the word *Love* and therefore break with the tradition of fear. The attribute of love rather than fear was introduced by the Judaic religion in the fifth book of Moses, Deuteronomy 6:5, which is considered by Christians as the first-great commandment. The second law that expresses love was stated in Moses' third book, Leviticus 19:18. These laws were restated by Jesus with the following words: <sup>1</sup>

*Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart,  
and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.  
This is the first and great commandment.*

*And the second is like unto it,  
Thou shalt Love thy neighbor as thyself.*

*On these two commandments hang  
All the law and the prophets.*

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<sup>1</sup> Holy Bible, King James Version, Matthew 22: 37-40.

**Table 5-1. Is Love in the Ten Commandments? <sup>2</sup>**

1. Thou shalt have no other gods before me.
2. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of <i>any thing</i> that is in heaven above, or that <i>is</i> in the earth beneath, or that <i>is</i> in the water under the earth:
3. Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and forth generation of them that hate me; and shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.
4. Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.
5. Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work; But the seventh day <i>is</i> the Sabbath of the Lord thy God; <i>in it</i> thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that <i>is</i> within thy gates: For <i>in</i> six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them <i>is</i> , and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it.
6. Honor thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.
7. Thou shalt not kill.
8. Thou shalt not commit adultery.
9. Thou shalt not steal.
10. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.
11-15. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house-step not on God's altar.

<sup>2</sup> In Exodus 20: 3-26, there are 15 not Ten Commandments that the Hebrew god gave Moses to instruct the children of Israel. Religious leaders have not revealed all the commandments but simplified them for universal use. Simplicity is evident as they rather not reveal the picayunish *Shall Nots* insisted upon by God to Moses. See Exodus 20: 22-26, and Exodus 25, 26 and 27 which deal with “shalts” that describe how to build His tabernacle, altar and furnishings.

As a father, it is with some reservation for me to accept *the first and great commandment* as written. The prerequisite to loving God is the ability to love the human beings around you. Would God accept a righteous human being who has followed His commands but neglected or failed to love the sisters and brothers of His world? God is quite self sufficient whereby He would rather have His creations love one another *before they are worthy* of loving Him. Indeed, the all-powerful God would reorder the Commandments of Jesus to be properly prioritized as:

*Thou shalt Love your sisters and brothers  
of all nations as thyself,  
This is the first and great commandment.*

*And the second is like unto it,  
Thou shalt Love the Lord thy God with  
All your heart, all your soul, and all your mind.*

*Upon these two commandments, hang  
All the law and the prophets.*

Do not judge this writer as being too presumptuous for restating the words of Jesus Christ. No Scripture is that holy that it cannot be improved to accommodate the realities of today and have us perceive a more positive conception of God for tomorrow. Many sins in the Bible<sup>3</sup> and the Qur'an<sup>4</sup> do exist and many laws are archaic whereby they do not apply to modern man. It is time for our religious leaders to *wake up* and be as courageous as the Egyptian Pharaoh Ikhnaton who changed outdated dogma and prohibited the worship of multiple gods. Nothing is so sacred that it cannot be improved to serve mankind, and yes, our future as we gain the potential to enter the universe. If mankind can survive as a civilization and live at least as long as the dino-

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<sup>3</sup> John Shelby Spong, *Sins of Scripture*, released 2005 by HarperCollins Publishers, New York, N.Y.

<sup>4</sup> Irshad Manji, *The Trouble With Islam: A Muslim's Call for Reform in Her Faith*, first published by Random House in Canada and first edition in 2004. Published by St. Martin's Press, New York.

saur, we may find that there is indeed intelligent life elsewhere in the universe. There can be no question that our Scriptures of today will have to be revised to keep pace with the knowledge we accumulate. Someday, our spiritual nature will evolve to establish a legacy that all of God's creations throughout the universe love one another.

For those followers of the Old and New Testament, few have been given the knowledge that it was Jesus Christ, in the last Gospel of John, that simplified the great commandments given above. He stated his new command with not a thou shalt but as a command. His new command emphasized that we all love one another as this author so shamelessly stated above. He was so emphatic, that he stated the last law of God as a command three times:

**John 13:34.** A new command I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.

**John 15:12.** This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you.

**John 15:17.** These things I command you, That ye love one another.

All human beings as well as the lower animals around us have the capacity to love. Love is the dominating attribute of the animal kingdom that enables it to survive and multiply. Certainly, one is correct in maintaining that the aggressive nature to protect and kill another is also a primary instinct of all animals and human beings. However, to say love, kindness, fairness, truth, righteousness and justice are derived from a higher being is nonsense. My dear people, give credit where credit is due. Take pride in your ability to be tolerant, understanding, kind and loving towards others. To extend your hand in friendship, embrace people out of love or desire to help them and show affection is not a sin. These are human qualities that are inherent in all mankind. If you are able to outwardly extend such qualities to others – you are indeed blessed.

In summary, the brief review of the attributes of Amen indicates a highly developed form of God. The perceptions of the Egyptians for their God were highly evolved and formed the basis for their morality and the ability to maintain an orderly structure of their civilization. As Egypt expanded and introduced their Amon (Amen) god into neighboring countries, Amen became accepted and worshipped by foreigners. It would be a natural set of circumstances for the Semites to follow Moses and evolve scriptures based upon what they have learned from Egyptian teachings and writings. The following subsections will reveal that the Egyptian God and many beliefs of their theology have been adopted by the monotheistic religions of our present world.

## **5.2    *Concept of the Soul***

The first civilization to develop the concept of a soul was the Egyptians. Today, many people have assimilated this very complex concept as a natural part of their spiritual beliefs. But, very few people know how this wonderful concept evolved. There is an Egyptian text known as *“The Creation by Atum”* that reveals that Atum, god of Heliopolis, also known as Atum-Kheprer, represented two attributes of the sun, Atum the creator and Kheprer the morning sun <sup>1</sup>. This hieroglyphic text was carved inside the pyramids of Mer-ne-Re I and Pepi II (Neferka-Re). It was during the 6<sup>th</sup> Dynasty, around 2540 BC, that we find that Mer-ne-Re I reign four years and Pepi II as long as ninety years. The text provided an appeal to the god Atum-Kheprer to bless their rising pyramids and to promote immortality throughout the course of eternity.

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<sup>1</sup> James B. Pritchard, ed. by, *Ancient Near Eastern Texts*, Page 3

### 5.2.1 The Ka, the Living Soul of an Entity

*The Creation by Atum* starts with his creation of Shu, god of air and Tefnut, goddess of moisture. It is here where we see Atum endows his creations with a soul – identified as the **ka** below:

*.....thou didst spit out what was Shu, thou didst sputter out what was Tefnut. Thou (Atum-Kheprer) didst put thou arms about them as the arms of ka, for thy ka was in them.*

*(So also), O Atum, put thy arms about King Nefer-ka-Re, about this construction work, about this pyramid, as the arms of ka. For the ka of King Nefer-ka-Re is in it, enduring the course of eternity. O Atum, mayest thou set thy protection over this king Nefer-ka-Re, over this his pyramid and this construction work of King Nefer-ka-Re. Mayest thou guard lest anything happen to him evilly throughout the course of eternity, as thou didst set thy protection over Shu and Tefnut <sup>2</sup>.*

To be endowed with an internal force or spirit called the **ka** from the creator god Atum must therefore have had a very important significance. This vital source, called the **ka**, must be what gives the created object its unique characteristics and/or gives it its special force. Under Note 3 below, scholars of Egyptian history believe that the **ka** represented the alter ego, or a guardian spirit, or the vital force of personality <sup>3</sup>. Since air (Shu) and moisture (Tefnut) do not represent personality of an entity, we may reason that the **ka** may represent the whole that uniquely characterizes, and uniquely identifies, the entity. That is, the mental aspect, temperament, inherent force, and/or attributes that makes the entity think, behave and/or react in certain ways and, uniquely makes up its totality, being, material structure (substance) or existence. Simply put, as applied to human beings, the **ka** represents the total makeup of your body with its various glandular,

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<sup>2</sup> James B. Pritchard, ed. by, *Ancient Near Eastern Texts*, Page 3

<sup>3</sup> James B. Pritchard, ed. by, *Ancient Near Eastern Texts*, Page 3, Note 4

mental and physical functions that make you who you are and ultimately forms your disposition and personality.

As applied to human beings, E.A. Wallis Budge defines the *ka* as an, “abstract individuality or personality which possessed the form and attributes of the man to whom it belonged, and, though its normal dwelling place was in the tomb with the body, it could wander about at will; it was independent of the man and could go and dwell in any statue of him. It was supposed to eat and drink, and the greatest care was usually taken to lay abundant supplies of offerings in the tombs lest the *kas* of those who were buried in them should be reduced to the necessity of leaving their tombs and of wandering about and eating offal and drinking filthy water.”<sup>3</sup>

The word *ka* seems to have surfaced through the recognition of an Egyptian ruler, King Ka, who ruled a generation prior to the 1<sup>st</sup> Dynasty, around 3500 years BC <sup>4</sup>. This king takes us before the reign of King Aha Menes (also known as King Narmer) who is attributed to unifying the two lands of Egypt and marked the start of the 1<sup>st</sup> Dynasty. King Ka was buried in a double tomb at Abydos (just above Thebes), where he is considered to have preceded king Narmer as king of This (or Thinis which was the old Capital of, or city near, Abydos). He may have been the father of Narmer, whose tomb was built in a similar style and size, and placed just 30 meters away. This mention is relevant because it was on some broken pottery within King Ka’s tomb that the symbol for the *ka* was found. Figure 5-2 shows the symbol as two raised arms, and is placed on the head of King Hor who reigned from 1783-1633 BC. One can intuitively conceive that the two arms

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<sup>3</sup> E.A. Wallis Budge, *The Book of the Dead*, Page lxvii

<sup>4</sup> Internet @: <http://www.mazzaroth.com/ChaptFour> An Egyptologist, W. F. Petrie, dated the First Dynasty of Menes as commencing in **4777 BC**; another named James H. Breasted around **3400 BC**, the middle of the age; some others suggest **2850 BC** toward the end. For consistency of dates used throughout this book, the Breasted dates have been used.



French archaeologist De Morgan at Dashur found this fine wooden statue in the tomb of the 13th Dynasty King **Hor I, who reigned from 1783-1633 BC**. This life size sculpture is a masterpiece of its kind among the objects in Egypt's Cairo Museum.

The statue represents the king's *ka*. The *ka* is symbolized by the two up-raised arms on the head of the statue. It is the hieroglyph used to signify the word *ka*.

The eyes of the statue are inlaid with stones and crystals, giving them a realistic and lively appearance. They are outlined with bronze. The nose of the statue is narrow and the slight smile on its face shows that it is pleased.

The body is represented in a striding pose, with his left foot forward. His left arm is pushed forward as well, suggesting that the statue once held a staff that reached the ground. The right arm has a hole in its fist, which indicates that there used to be a *kheryp* scepter (or ankh) in this hand.

Aside from a wig and a belt around the hip, this figure is represented naked. Some holes in the belly, however, suggest that the statue may once have been clad with a loin cloth.



**Figure 5-2. Symbol of a *Ka* Worn by a King.**

[http://www.ancient-egypt.org/kings/1314\\_hor\\_i/wooden\\_statue.html](http://www.ancient-egypt.org/kings/1314_hor_i/wooden_statue.html)

represent the proud acknowledgement of the unification of the two lands referred to as Upper and Lower Egypt.

King Ka is the best-attested Predynastic king that ruled prior to King Narmer. It is conceivable that King Ka may have even ruled over a united Upper and Lower Egypt. This king had the symbol *ka* written within a “serekh” shown as Figure 5-3. It is a box within which the early names of Predynastic Kings were written. He was one of the first kings to adopt this sign with the falcon on its top, accompanied with the plant symbolizing Upper Egypt.



Note: The first mnemonic symbols and semi-cursive hieroglyphics used to identify an Egyptian King appeared within a box. It is called a serekh which was later superseded by the cartouche during dynastic times.

**Figure 5-3. Cursive hieratic script that identifies King Ka.**

<http://www.nemo.nu/ibisportal/0egyptintro/2aegypt/>

It is significant to point out that the symbol of a ka and that of a falcon lends credence to the Egyptians belief of souls very early on because such advanced concepts and their symbols do not become assimilated within a few generations. The ka and falcon symbols accommodate the more advanced theological concepts of a hereafter, a place where the soul of the king would join his god Atum-Re for eternity. It is therefore highly likely that King Ka was a strong supporter of the Priesthood

and religious beliefs that evolved. These concepts became further embedded in the minds of Egyptians as the two lands of Egypt became united. Perhaps it is in commemoration of this powerful king's unification of Egypt that the symbol of the *ka* became venerated as a vital force existing within any living or inorganic thing.

The mind of the Egyptian always had an affinity for questioning and appreciating nature's world, and naturally came to attribute the vital force of a *ka* as existing within nature's wonderful gifts – be it the sun, moon, air, water, trees, a stone, their gods and human beings. We find this mentality for bringing significance to the objects around him reflected in 'The Theology of Memphis', which was thought to have been created during the 1<sup>st</sup> Dynasty in Memphis in honor of the principle god Ptah. The city of Memphis was the place where the Two Lands were united and the Temple of Ptah conceived as the "balance in which Upper and Lower Egypt have been weighed".<sup>5</sup> It is within this text that Ptah, the principle god of Memphis, formed the gods and made them, along with their *ka's*, enter into nature's objects as confirmed below:

### **The Theology of Memphis**

#### **Extract 1: The Ka is Inherent in All Things**

*....Thus it was discovered and understood that his (Ptah) strength is greater than (that of the other) gods. And so Ptah was satisfied, after he had made everything, as well as all the divine order. He had formed the gods, he had made cities, he had founded nomes, he had put the gods in their shrines, he had established their offerings, he had founded their shrines, he had made their bodies like that (with which) their hearts were satisfied. So the gods entered into their bodies of every*

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<sup>5</sup> James B. Pritchard, ed. by, *Ancient Near Eastern Texts*, Pages 4, 5. The Theology of Memphis is a partial translation of excerpts that were intelligible enough to be deciphered from a badly worn stone named after the Ethiopian Pharaoh Shabaka. He ruled Egypt between 712-700 BC and is credited for the effort to preserve ancient text that represented the theology of his ancestors.

*(kind of) wood, of every (kind of) stone, of every (kind of) clay, or anything which might grow upon him,<sup>6</sup> in which they had taken form. So all the gods, as well as their ka's gathered themselves to him, content and associated with the Lord of the Two Lands.*

Upon reading the hieroglyphics that could be deciphered from the 'Shabaka Stone', it becomes apparent that the concept of the ba had not materialized before that of the ka. It appears that only after the idea of judgment by Osiris, to discern the purity of one's heart, did the ba serve to assist in the resurrection of the deceased (more on Osiris in Section 5.5 dealing with the Concept of a Hereafter). The idea of a ba, symbolized as a bird, came as a natural way to unite the ka and thereby allow the soul to become a mobile spirit. This would be a natural progression of the next level of conception by an Egyptian priest whereby the 'worthy or righteous soul' can soar to heaven and live with the gods.

The Shabaka Stone, carved much later in the 7<sup>th</sup> century BC, incorporates concepts of theology from two different periods. It is evident that the theology presents the earliest gods, such as Geb the earth-god who was to make a ruling on the allocation of Upper and Lower Egypt between Seth and Horus. The outcome of Geb's decision was to give Horus, the son of his son Osiris, his entire inheritance – all of Egypt. This portion of the theology served to relate the unification of the Two Lands around 3400 BC. Included with this very significant event that presents the unification of Egypt, is the conception of life and death equated to peace and sin, respectively. This concept would eventually lead to the judgment of Osiris to determine the worthiness of a deceased to enter into the Hereafter.

For the native Egyptian, the ideas of sin resulting in death versus a peaceful life in a Hereafter had developed after Egypt's unification. At first, the privilege of eternal life in a Hereafter belonged to the

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<sup>6</sup> Upon Ptah, in his form of the "rising land."

Pharaohs and had evolved in the Early Dynastic Period (3400 – 2750 BC). However, we see in the following excerpt that the Priesthood had incorporated the concept of good and evil into the Memphis Theology even though this belief was applied to the Pharaohs, as a religious doctrine, no earlier than the Old Kingdom (2750-2475 BC). This concept of eternal life was not extended to the common man until the 18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty.

### **The Theology of Memphis**

#### **Extract 2: Death Versus Life Linked to Sin Versus Peace**

*(Thus justice was given to) him who does what is liked, (and injustice to) him who does what is disliked.<sup>7</sup> Thus life was given to him who has peace and death was given to him who has sin. Thus, were made all work and all crafts, the action of the arms, the movement of the legs, and the activity of every member, in conformance with (this) command which the heart thought, which came forth through the tongue, and which gives value to everything.<sup>8</sup>*

The interpretation of the *ka* representing both a vital force within an entity and a symbol for the unification of the two lands also implies the ‘arms of the Ka’ as a protective spirit. This protective attribute is implied in the lines quoted above from “The Creation by Atum” whereby the protective arms of Atum as ‘*the arms of a ka*’ were put around his creations Shu and Tefnut (5.2.1). This conception of the *ka* as a life force and protector was shown in a bas-relief group of Amen-hotep III in the Great Temple of Karnak. The Pharaoh is followed by his *ka* standing behind him in human form. The *ka* carries the “ankh”, the symbol of Truth in one hand, and in the other the customary staff terminating in a bust of the King. Over his head is engraved, “The Royal Ka, Life of the Lord of the Two Lands.”

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<sup>7</sup> This interpretation appears correct in replacing words that have dropped out of the text. The exact words are therefore uncertain.

<sup>8</sup> Value meaning the dignity, worth or reverence of everything.

The bas-relief of Amenhotep expresses that the *ka* was envisioned as the life force of the king and also guides the king as protector of Egypt. By the time Amenhotep III reigned, the belief in the *ka* had already found its acceptance by the nobility and common man. This is verified by even the common man's belief of sustaining the *ka* after the death of a loved one with food until it is united with the *ba*. The unity of the *ka* and *ba* was believed to become a soul called the *khu* that resides in the spiritual body called the *sahu*. This spirit body would rise to live with the gods for eternity as '*one of the shinning ones*' with the stars. These immaterial parts of the soul will be presented in the following subsections.

### **5.2.2 The Ba, the Soul After Death.**

The *ba* came into existence only after death. It was normally represented in the form of a bird, sometimes with a human head and, it would visit the tomb wherein the mummy lies bearing air and food to the *ka* to whom it belongs. It could move about, but always returned to the body it belonged to. Spells enabled it to *assume any shape it wished*. It partook of the offered nourishment and seems also to have had creative powers <sup>1</sup>. Figure 5-4 shows the *ba* of Tutenkhamon, son-in-law of Ikhnaton who had reign towards the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty.

It was the local priests, and in some cases the survivors, who accomplished the transformation of the deceased into a soul that would live in the Hereafter. In particular, it was the mortuary priest who performed indispensable ceremonies to win, for the deceased, the favor of the gods. The *ka*, which constituted the individual's uniqueness and provided protection during life, passed into the Hereafter under the guidance and protection of the *ba*. Initially, the *ka* was the exclusive possession of kings but eventually, through the priest's role in performing elaborate ceremonies witnessed by the public, the thought of

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<sup>1</sup> Internet: @ [http://www.reshafim.org.il/ad/Egypt/religion/body\\_an\\_soul.htm](http://www.reshafim.org.il/ad/Egypt/religion/body_an_soul.htm)



**Figure 5-4. The Ba of the Pharaoh Tutankhamon.**

[http://www.reshafim.org.il/ad/Egypt/religion/body\\_an\\_soul.htm](http://www.reshafim.org.il/ad/Egypt/religion/body_an_soul.htm)

Courtesy of Jon Bodsworth

possessing a ka became an acceptable belief among all the Egyptians <sup>2</sup>. Since the concept of the ka was associated with creation, it was only after the concept of life after death evolved, that the ba became a fundamental entity used to accommodate this new belief.

### **5.2.3 The Heavenly Being and Spiritual Body.**

The soul, conceived in the Egyptian's mind, consisted of several spiritual entities that were separately distinct from the body. By the 18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty (1580-1350 BC), the more affluent and nobles who could arrange for the maintenance of their dead bodies in a tomb, had utterances performed by mortuary priests to assist in their journey into the Hereafter. By this time, the concept of the soul evolved into a

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<sup>2</sup> James H. Breasted, *The Dawn of Conscience*, Page 49, 50.

more complex form consisting of the ka, ba, khu and sahu. From the Papyrus written by Ani, a scribe (British Museum, No. 10,470, sheet 17), there are references made to the ba and khu. It is not clear just how the khu, defined as a spiritual soul or heavenly being, is related to the ba and ka. It was believed that they dwelled in the sahu or spiritual body.<sup>1</sup> It is therefore the sahu that provides the habitation of the soul. It sprang from the material body, through the prayers which have been said and the ceremonies performed over the dead body by duly appointed and properly qualified priests. Sahu means a spiritual body which has attained the necessary knowledge, power and glory whereby it becomes lasting and incorruptible. This spiritual body could converse with the soul; and could ascend into heaven and dwell with the beautified. In it, all the mental and spiritual attributes of the natural body, the ka, were united to the new powers of its own nature, the ba and khu.<sup>2</sup>

To illustrate how the various entities of the soul, such as the sahu and khu are used by the Egyptian, the following text in its entirety is presented below. It is from the Papyrus of Ani the Scribe (British Museum No.10,470, Sheet 18.).

### **The Chapter of Coming Forth By Day After Having Made the Passage Through the Tomb.**

*Saith Osiris Ani:- Hail Soul, thou mighty one of strength! Verily I am here, I have come, I behold thee. I have passed through the Taut (underworld), I have seen [my] divine father Osiris, I have scattered the gloom of night. I am his beloved one. I have come; I have seen my divine father Osiris. I have stabbed the heart of Suti<sup>3</sup> [I] have performed [all] the ceremonies for my divine father Osiris, I have opened every way in heaven and in earth. I am the son who loveth his*

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<sup>1</sup> E.A. Wallis Budge, *Book of the Dead*, Introduction by David Lorimer, Page lxviii.

<sup>2</sup> E.A. Wallis Budge, *Book of the Dead*, Introduction by David Lorimer, Page lxx and Note 1 on Page 47.

<sup>3</sup> Set, the mighty antagonist of Horus, by who he was slain.



*father Osiris. I have become a **sahu**, I have become a **khu**, I am furnished [with what I need]. Hail, every god, hail every khu! I have made a path [for myself, I] Osiris, the scribe Ani, victorious.*

To further illustrate the liberal use of various aspects of the soul, such as the ba and the khu, some more excerpts are provided. The text came from the Papyrus of Ani the Scribe (British Museum No. 10,470, Sheet 17).

### **The Chapter of Causing the Soul to Be United to Its Body in the Underworld <sup>4</sup>**

*[Hail,] great God! Grant thou that my soul may come unto me from wheresoever it may be,. . . . Let me have possession of my **ba** (soul), and of my **khu**, and let me triumph therewith in every place wheresoever it may be. . .*

*Hail, ye gods, who tow along the boat of the lord (Re) of millions of years, who bring it above the underworld and who make it travel over Nut (earth), who make souls to enter their spiritual bodies,. . . . And behold, grant ye that the soul of Osiris Ani, triumphant, may come forth before the gods and that it may be triumphant along with you in the eastern part of the sky to follow unto the place where it was yesterday; [and that it may have] peace, peace in Amentet (hereafter or underworld). May it look upon its material body, may it rest upon its spiritual body; and may its body neither perish nor suffer corruption ever.*

It is apparent that the component parts of the soul did not all exist at the same time, but took on more advanced concepts over several generations. After the development of the ka concept, it did not take very long for the religious body of priests to enhance and give greater meaning to the soul. The desire to transform the material body of the deceased into a spiritual body that could live in the Hereafter was

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<sup>4</sup> E.A. Wallis Budge, *Book of the Dead*, Pages 279-281.

satisfied by uniting the spiritual entity of the ka with the ba. Eventually, these components of the soul merged with the heavenly attributes of the khu, and finally, all parts of the soul resided in the sahu. This more complete vision of the soul rose as a consequence of the further development of religious worship that conceived the idea of reward for the deceased by living a righteous life. But from a practical standpoint, the concept of a Hereafter served to accommodate the Priesthood and the organized state to establish order throughout the many communities by emphasizing the attributes of truth, morality, righteousness and justice. It would be naive for one to believe that the Pharaoh and High Priest (or Priesthood) did not mutually devise, develop, and put these concepts into practice together.

### **5.3    *The Creation Concept and God Defined***

The development of the concept of creation intrinsically involved the concept of god. The Egyptian perceptions of creation that would be responsible by one god had to follow after their assignment of gods to entities they venerated from Predynastic times. The Egyptians had a sense of kinship with life all around them be they creatures, vegetation, or those elements that affected their lives if not in substance but wonder – like the sun, moon, sky, the earth and water. The following subsections will illustrate how the wonderful mind of mankind created a conception of their being and, that it was created by feelings that are of a spiritual nature. That spirit was, and still is today, one of wonder about the world and, how mankind came to exist by a God who created all things.

#### **5.3.1    The Concept of Creation by the God Atum-Re**

When the Priesthood first formulated the concept of creation by their deity cannot be precisely dated but it certainly was defined prior to the founding of the 1<sup>st</sup> Dynasty. It is fair to reason that the concept of a *ka* had to have existed prior to or during the life of the Egyptian King, Ka. The fact that his throne name is distinctly named ‘*Ka*’ leads to the

conjecture that he either supported the soul concept advocated by the priests or, that he was directly involved in its definition with the Priesthood. The Egyptians already believed in spirits existing in animals, trees and such entities as the sun, moon, water and the air they breathe. For several generations, these entities already had the names of personal gods assigned to them. Since the concept of the spirit had already existed, it came to be identified as a soul, which came to be called a *ka*. The identity of the *ka* was very likely developed before or during King Ka's lifetime and would naturally become an important entity in the concept of creation. This reasoning is based upon the Egyptian text, "The Creation by Atum"<sup>1</sup>, which refers to protection provided by the *ka* of Atum-Kheprer<sup>2,3</sup> and the support of the Great Ennead, which consists of the first nine gods. The transformation from totem gods revered in each local town to gods that embodied the creation of all that exists was a great step in the dogma advocated by the Priesthood. It will be instructive to briefly view this belief of creation that came to be accepted not as a myth but their understanding of how everything came into existence.

The concept of the first creation was developed in the city of Heliopolis. This city is located at an advantageous focal point of the Nile Delta where it branches out towards the Mediterranean Sea. There, the Priesthood was a dominant entity as they advanced the idea that it was their city god Atum-Kheprer who, on a small hill that rose out of the waters of chaos (Nun), brought the first gods into being. This was a very perceptive concept as science has come to verify that

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<sup>1</sup> James B. Pritchard, ed. by, *Ancient Near Eastern Texts*, Page 3. The text of The Creation by Atum was found in the pyramids of Mer-ne-Re and Pepe II (nefer-ka-Re) of the 6<sup>th</sup> Dynasty (2600-2475 BC).

<sup>2</sup> The god of Heliopolis was compounded as two phases of the sun, Atum and Kheprer (later Atum and Re), where Kheprer (Khepri) was the morning sun-god rising in the east.

<sup>3</sup> James H. Breasted, *A History of Egypt*, Page 59. The alternate phase of the sun-god Re was Atum, who advances in age to an old man as the sun completes its journey from east to west.

all life emanated from two very important elements: the heat of the sun that was associated with Kheprer and water that was associated with Nun. While on the primeval hill, Atum spat out Shu, god of air and Tefnut, goddess of moisture. It is amazing how resourceful and reflective was the Egyptian mind for without the elements of air and moisture, life could not be sustained. Next, the text indicates that the creator god, Atum, put his own vital force into his first creatures <sup>4</sup>:

*“Thou didst put thy arms about them as the arms of  
a ka, for thy ka was in them.”*

Since the idea of a ka had to have emerged before or during the life of King Ka, who existed a few generations before the start of the 1<sup>st</sup> Dynasty, the Priesthood had over 800 years to merge the concept of the ka with the creation by Atum. During this time, the Priesthood recognized that the sun was absolutely the source that sustained life and therefore came to be identified with their local god as Atum-Re. Within the same text, the Great Ennead is identified as originating in Heliopolis and its complement of gods as being created through the initial efforts of Atum. The first four gods that make up the Great Ennead were created by Atum and it was Heaven (Nut) and Earth (Geb) who created the children: Osiris, Isis, Seth and Nephthys. The nine gods are listed below.

(1) Atum, the creator <sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> James B. Pritchard, ed. by, *Ancient Near Eastern Texts*, Page 3. The ka was the guardian spirit or vital force of a personality. The creator-god Atum put his own vital force into his first creatures, the gods Shu and Tefnut.

<sup>5</sup> Homer W. Smith, *Man and His Gods*, Page 34. The earlier Ennead described by Breasted indicates only two brothers and two sisters were the children of Nut and Geb. However, Smith indicates a papyrus from the 26<sup>th</sup> Dynasty (663-525 BC) relates Horus the Elder as a third brother. Since Egyptian literature has very little concerning Horus the Elder but deals predominately with Horus, the son of Isis and Osiris, the Breasted set of nine gods listed above identifies the Great Ennead.

- (2) Shu, god of air.
- (3) Tefnut, god of moisture.
- (4) Geb (Keb), god of earth.
- (5) Nut, goddess of the sky.

Following are the sons and daughters of Nut and Geb:

- (6) Osiris, god of grain, the Nile and afterlife.
- (7) Isis, Osiris beloved sister-wife, divinity of the fertile black field of the Nile, goddess of love, maternity and magic.
- (8) Seth, (Set) Osiris brother, god of wind & storms, Warrior of Egypt, the great hunter and ruler of northern Egypt.
- (9) Nephthys, goddess and Osiris sister.

The question that arises is whether the gods of the Ennead had been conceived before the creation by the creator god Atum-Re. It is very likely, in a very distant age that preceded several generations into the 1<sup>st</sup> Dynasty, that the elements of air, moisture, sky, grain, wind and storms, as well as the bodies of water, the earth and sun had already been identified as gods. It was man's nature to appreciate his surroundings and felt that spirits existed in every living and nonliving thing, be it a tree, hilltop, birds, and creatures like himself. When he was not able to reflect but only wonder about happenings that could only be explained or attributed to the power of magic, he imagined a personal god Isis, Osiris' wife. Another personal god, Horus, the son of Osiris and Isis, was associated with the falcon and worshipped during the Predynastic period as the greatest god. This position was succeeded by Atum-Re as he became accepted as essential to all life and naturally became the prime god in the creation concept. Osiris and his son Horus are two very important gods that played a strong part in two principle doctrines advocated by the Priesthood: the concept of an afterlife and the concept of the Pharaoh as the Son of God, these concepts will be presented in the following subsections.

Many religious leaders, historians and biblical scholars have referred to the creation as conceived by the Egyptians as a myth. Yes, as our monotheistic religions have advanced into beliefs that many people accept today we tend to look at the more primitive religions as myths. But we must not forget that the religion conceived by Egypt's Priesthood and followed by the community was not a myth – it was a belief that was accepted and furnished food for their spiritual needs. A myth is a story that we tell and retell because it furnishes joy or provides a theme that serves as a lesson we might utilize in the future. One such myth is the Christmas story of Santa Claus. This is a myth nobody believes but the story is retold year after year to ignite the joy and happiness brought to children. The Egyptian religion was not a myth or a fabricated story – it was a set of religious beliefs that would eventually impact our world.

This book serves to enlighten the reader that many Egyptian religious beliefs have gravitated to higher levels of belief and have been integrated into our monotheistic religions. A look at the art, architecture and temples that the Egyptians created are today wonders of awe – all created by a belief in their religion. We have seen many outstanding works of art and sculpture provided in this book and to really appreciate such works one can visit Egypt or find ample pictures in notable books such as, *The Ancient Near East in Pictures* by Pritchard.

One work of art that captures the strong belief in the creation is provided as Figure 5-5. It shows the sky-goddess Nut as a nude woman arched as the heavens over the earth. She is supported by the upraised arms of the air-god Shu, who is represented in human form, with the symbol for 'year' crowning his headdress. At his feet lies the earth-god Geb, with his left arm stretched out along the ground. A ram-headed god, symbolizing strength and fertility, stands on each side supporting one of Shu's arms. Watching are several gods and the deceased owner of the papyrus.



**Figure 5-5. The First Generation of the Great Ennead.**

### 5.3.2 The Creation by Ptah the Memphite God

It is apparent that the first creation concept of Atum originated before the 1<sup>st</sup> Dynasty from Upper Egypt where King Ka successfully defeated the Nubians (refer to Section 5.2.1). By the time the 1<sup>st</sup> Dynasty was established in Memphis, the Priesthood had advanced their theology because it was necessary to justify their town to central importance. To accomplish this aim, the priests proclaimed their Memphite god Ptah as the creator god over all other recognized creatorgods. The text for *The Theology of Memphis*<sup>1</sup> provides political, intellectual and moral ideas that became associated with their god Ptah and the creation concept.

Politically, the priests let it be known in their revised ‘Creation by Ptah’ that the city of Memphis was the place where the Two Lands were united and that it was the temple of Ptah that served as the balance in which Upper and Lower Egypt were weighed. Several paragraphs are reserved in explaining how Horus came to inherit both lands by the graciousness of Geb and thereby effected the unity of Egypt. An extract of the text is given below to emphasize the importance of the ruling kings to unite their kingdoms in harmony. Soon after Geb had granted Upper Egypt to Seth and Lower Egypt to Horus, Geb felt his decision needed to be revised:

*(But then it became) ill in the heart of Geb that the portion of Horus was (only) equal to the portion of Seth. So Geb gave his entire inheritance to Horus, that is, the son of his son, his first born. . . (Thus) Horus stood over the (entire) land. Thus, this land was united, proclaimed with the great name: “Ta-tenen, South-of-His-Wall, the Lord of Eternity.” The two Great Sorceresses grew upon his head (i.e., the crowns of Upper and Lower Egypt). So it was that Horus appeared*

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<sup>1</sup> James B. Pritchard, ed. by, *Ancient Near Eastern Texts*, Pages 4-5.



*as King of Upper and Lower Egypt, who united the Two Lands in Wall Nome,<sup>2</sup> in the place in which the Two Lands are united.*

*It happened that reed and papyrus were set at the great double door of the House of Ptah.<sup>3</sup> That means Horus and Seth, who were reconciled and united, so that they associated and their quarreling ceased in the place which they reached, being joined in the house of Ptah, 'the Balance of the Two Lands,' in which Upper and Lower Egypt have been weighed. . . .*

Intellectually, the creation is not given in purely physical terms as related in The Creation by Atum, rather, their god Ptah brings into being the gods by the use of the 'Word'. First, Ptah is recognized as the Great God that is the heart and tongue of the Ennead and is referred to as Ta-tenen, which means the "the land arising" (out of the primeval waters, so that creation might take place). The following extracts from the Theology of Memphis illustrate the powers given to Ptah to create all things by the spoken Word.

*The gods who came into being as Ptah:*

*Ptah who is upon the Great Throne. . . . ;*

*Ptah-Nun, the father who [begot] Atum. . . . ;*

*Ptah-Naunet, the mother who bore Atum. . . . ;*

*Ptah the Great, that is, the heart and tongue of the Ennead;*

*[Ptah] . . . who gave birth to the gods; . . .<sup>4</sup>*

*There came into being as the heart and there came into being as the tongue (something) in the form of Atum. The mighty Great One is Ptah, who transmitted [life to all gods], as well as to their ka's,*

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<sup>2</sup> The province (nome) of Memphis was named "White Wall".

<sup>3</sup> These two plants symbolically represent Upper and Lower Egypt and the reconciliation between their gods.

<sup>4</sup> The context of these lines infers that Ptah was both Nun, the abysmal waters, and his consort Naunet, and in these capacities, he brought forth Atum, the creator-god of the Heliopolitan theology.

*through his heart, by which Horus became Ptah, and through his tongue, by which Thoth became Ptah* <sup>5</sup>.

*(Thus) it happened that the heart and tongue gained control over [every] (other) member of the body, by teaching that he (Ptah) is in every body and in every mouth of all gods, all men, [all] cattle, all creeping things, and everything that lives, by thinking and commanding everything that he wishes.*

*His (Ptah) Ennead is before him in (the form of) teeth and lips. That is (equal to) the semen and hands of Atum. Whereas the Ennead of Atum came into being by his semen and his fingers, the Ennead (of Ptah), however, is the teeth and lips in his mouth, which pronounced the name of everything, from which Shu and Tefnut came forth, and which was the fashioner of the Ennead.*<sup>6</sup>

*The sight of the eyes, the hearing of the ears, and the smelling the air by the nose, they report to the heart. It is this which causes every completed (thought) to come forth, and it is the tongue which announces what the heart thinks.*

The intellectual presentation that offers an explanation of how the mind (the Egyptian equivalent to the heart) receives stimulus from the senses to evaluate and form thought shows a wonderful development of the process of reasoning by our ancestors from Egypt. This quality of trying to discern and understand life from both a physical and spiritual sense is a prize possession that distinguishes human beings from all other creatures. But what has been developed was the power of creation by the god Ptah through the “Word”. It is an idea that leads us into the writings of the Old and New Testaments as the ‘Word of God’.

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<sup>5</sup> Ptah thought of and created by speech the creator-god Atum and thus transmitted the divine power of Ptah to all other gods.

<sup>6</sup> This portion of the text makes the distinction that the act of creation by Atum was through onanism (masturbation) whereas the creation by Ptah was through the spoken Word. Pronouncing a name was creative. Shu and Tefnut were the first deities to be spoken.

The *Word* was a product of the Egyptian mind through the power of their god, Ptah.

The lines of text that follow introduce the concept of *sin*. True, the Egyptian mind thought in terms of *justice* and *injustice* and was the basis for use of the scales of justice and truth to judge the purity of heart of the deceased.

The central event in the Osirian faith was the weighing of the deceased heart against the feather of truth to determine if the judgment was death by being devoured on the spot or being granted eternal life. However, what has been incorporated in the text to follow is the concept of sin that really developed much later than the Creation by Ptah. A reasonable explanation for this addition is that the text of '*The Theology of Memphis*' was found and deciphered from the Shabaka stone that is dated to about 700 BC. Although it was the efforts of the Ethiopian Pharaoh Shabaka to inscribe the text of an old manuscript on a black basalt slab to preserve some very ancient writings, it appears that the priests, who must have had a strong hand in proof-reading the final product, added the concept of sin that most likely developed around the 12<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> centuries BC. Note how the sin concept was skillfully added in the lines that follow the continuation of text from above.

*Thus, all the gods were formed and his Ennead was completed. Indeed, all the divine order really came into being through what the heart (equivalent to the mind) thought and the tongue commanded. Thus, the ka spirits were made and the hemsut-spirits were appointed, they who make all provisions and all nourishment, by this speech. (Thus, justice was given to) him who does what is liked, (and injustice to) him who does what is disliked. **Thus, life was given to him who has peace and death was given to him who has sin.** Thus, were made all work and all crafts, the action of the arms, the movement of the legs, and the activity of every member, in conformance with (this) command*

*which the heart thought, which came forth through the tongue, and which gives value to everything.*

The lines that follow the text above provide a very good summation of the creation by Ptah. It is provided to give the reader an appreciation for the depth of reasoning and the creativity of the Egyptian Priesthood. The words from *The Creation by Atum* and *The Creation by Ptah* (in *The Theology of Memphis*) were inspired by men and not received as revelations from god. As a tribute to the power and inspiration of Scripture developed by the Egyptian priests, there are glimpses and portions of Egyptian text found in many portions of the Bible's Old Testament.

*(Thus) it happened that it was said of Ptah: "He who made all and brought the gods into being." He is indeed Ta-tenen, who brought forth the gods, for everything came forth from him, nourishment and provisions, the offerings of the gods, and every good thing. Thus, it was discovered and understood that his strength is greater than (that of the other) gods. And so, Ptah was satisfied, after he had made everything, as well as the divine order. He had formed the gods, he had made cities, he had founded nomes, he had put the gods in their shrines, he had established their offerings, he had founded their shrines, he had made their bodies like that (with which) their hearts were satisfied. So, the gods entered into their bodies of every (kind of) wood, of every (kind of) stone, of every (kind of) clay, or anything which might grow upon him, in which they had taken form. So, all the gods, as well as their ka's gathered themselves to him, content and associated with the Lord of the Two Lands.*

The above extracts from *The Theology of Memphis*, referred to as the Memphite Drama, represent a theology conceived by the Priesthood when the 1<sup>st</sup> Dynasty establish its Capital at Memphis. Although this theology was preserved on stone by the Ethiopian Pharaoh Shabaka, who ruled in the 8<sup>th</sup> century BC, its content is much older than that of

the Pyramid Texts; and along with *The Creation by Atum*, they form some of the oldest written records of human thought.

### **5.3.3 Comparing the Concepts of Creation and of God**

The concept of creation and a more succinct definition of god was achieved by the Egyptian Priesthood during the 19<sup>th</sup> Dynasty. In Section 4.6.2 of Part 1, *Egyptian Religion during Ramses II Reign*, many of the religious beliefs of the Egyptians were represented. By 1350 BC, the Egyptian Priesthood had made great strides defining Amon, initially known as Atum, as the sole god. This was a great advance in the dogma developed by the Priesthood and to a great degree was due to the one god concept conceived and developed by Ikhnaton. He had already coalesced and tried to eliminate the multiple gods that the Egyptians worshiped into one god, which was Aton, the god that embodied the sun.

A very courageous attempt by the Priesthood of Amon during the 19<sup>th</sup> Dynasty was the identification of god. They were able to reason or hypothesize that god was unknowable, mysterious of form, and as the beginning of all that is – his image cannot be conceived and no one has ever witnessed him. This is a very commendable conception of god that was added to his already personalized attributes that have been listed in the Subsections of 5.1.4 above.

The commendable aspect of the Priesthood's efforts was their honesty and truthfulness in not being able to comprehend the physical attributes of their god. Yet, in the Old Testament we are told that god created man in his own image (Genesis 9:6). This assertion was a very embolden act by the authors of Genesis to conjure the image of a god in the form of a man. But then this masterful work had its foundations in the Egyptian religion. They conceived their god in the form of a man as a natural consequence of Pharaohs who imagined themselves as 'sons of god'. Veneration was so strong that many Pharaohs even appended the name Amen to theirs – the name of their god we now

utter at the end of every prayer. For centuries, the idea that the Pharaoh was a god would seamlessly lead to the idea that man was created in the image of god; a god however, far removed from their understanding, mysterious and unknown. We know today that the universe is full of galaxies much greater than our own by as much as 10 and 100 times. This would mean that god has created other planets that revolve around billions upon billions of stars with the certainty that some of those planets would be conducive to the evolution of other kinds of life. The Egyptians had it right by not identifying god in the image of a man because it is rather presumptuous and arrogant to limit God in our image when it is very likely other forms of intelligent life exist in other parts of the universe. Unfortunately, the expanse of the universe and knowledge that life forms exist in many galaxies was not known by the authors of the Old and New Testaments.

It appears that the Egyptian conception of God comes closer to the truth than the God perceived in the Old Testament. It is almost the height of arrogance, conceit and vanity to think that of all the life forms that may exist in the universe it is the human being that has been created in god's image. The Christian religions have relegated god as a Father and their worshippers are constantly reminded of that when they perform the sign of the cross. The Egyptians were much closer to the truth in stating that their god was a creator, not a father, and gave his essence (*ka*) to *all* things, which would include not only a stone but the beauty of a butterfly. Why should man believe he is greater than the life and beauty of *all* things that god created around him? True, human beings are gifted with a mind and body to do so much more than god's other creatures and for that reason alone they have the responsibility to respect and sustain them.

The religious beliefs of the Egyptians had advanced to a more sophisticated level as the dogma of the Priesthood evolved from what was learned in the past. For your convenience, they are listed below:

- *The God and His Unknown Name of Power*
- *The Egyptian Concept of Creation*
- *Amon As the Sole God*
- *Mysterious of form . . . . He is the All-Lord, the beginning of that which is.*
- *His soul, they say, is that which is in heaven.*
- *One is Amon. . . . He is far from heaven. . . .*
- *His image is not displayed in writings . . . . No one bears witness to him . . . .*

#### ***5.4 Development of Spiritual Beliefs***

It was within Egypt, human beings, for the first time in the history of the world, developed the concept of a hereafter. This concept was conceived only after thousands of years of man's struggle to tame the environment around him. Before we explore how these and other Egyptian concepts developed, it may benefit the reader to review who were the Egyptians and when their notions of an afterlife begin. A brief history of the African people and their development as one of the first civilizations to conceptualize one universal god has been provided in Part 1, Chapter 2.0. It is recommended that an overview of Egyptian history be reviewed before venturing into how they developed their religious beliefs.

#### ***5.5 Spiritual Beliefs that Led to the Hereafter Concept***

Now that we have some knowledge of where the people of Egypt came from, how they evolved into city-states, the development of a long line of pharaohs and influence of the priesthood, we will examine what spiritual beliefs caused the people to accept the dogma advocated by the priesthood and gave birth to the concept of the hereafter.

### **5.5.1 Commonality of Mortuary Beliefs**

Indigenous throughout the cultures that made up the common people of Egypt were their spiritual beliefs. Long before they settled along the Nile, all these people had the same affinity for the belief in spirits and some idea of life after death as attested by the artifacts, food and weapons left in their graves and tombs. The priests being the most educated in their ability to read, write and articulate spiritual matters in a way that can be digested and accepted by the people – were the proponents that influenced both the leaders and people of their community (clan) with religious doctrine.

As the community grew into small towns and progressed into city states, the need for communication through the written word became an important tool in providing the mechanism for: documenting trade transactions; measuring land ownership; building houses, estates and palaces; planning and implementing irrigation using the Nile source; establishing and enforcing laws of moral conduct; and eloquently writing and articulating the spiritual dogma that would harness the spiritual energy of the people. The need for an organized Priesthood would become a natural consequence of the commonality of the spiritual beliefs felt and practiced by the people.

As the leaders of the community gained more power and wealth there came a greater need for control and protection of their interests. This need required honesty and truth to be an important part of their evolution into a society of people that depended upon each another. The application of truth, expressed as *maat* by the Egyptians, therefore became an essential part of their morality. Both the leaders and priests of the community recognized this attribute as essential to their interests. The task of how to implement it as an honorable trait not only became evident to them but it became an imperative goal. We will explore the advance of ideological concepts that were developed by the Priesthood and adopted by the clan leaders to achieve control of their people through moral standards supported by spiritual beliefs.



### **5.5.2 The Empowerment of the King by His Deity**

Evidence of the Priesthood effectiveness has been depicted on the Qustul incense burner introduced in Part 1, Figure 2-5. As depicted on a fragment of the Qustul incense burner, the Nubian Priesthood had already articulated the belief that their leader was empowered by their animal deity. The royal procession shows the victorious return of a white crowned leader to his palace and in the third boat he is accompanied by their clan god. This idea of protection and power provided by the totem god was only a step away from the Priesthood associating their leader as the offspring of such a god. The conception and enforcement of this next step took place in Egypt's history after the Priesthood had articulated their dogma of how their god created and ruled all that he made.

### **5.5.3 The Osiris and Set Dichotomy**

Two of the oldest gods that ignited the imagination of the Egyptian were linked with the phenomenon of day and night. The sun-god Re, sailing in his celestial barque on a sky of sea, brought in the morning as Kheprer. Towards evening, as Atum, the sun-god settled in the west and entered the Nile beneath the earth. Through a long dark passage with successive caverns, the celestial barque traveled in the night to arrive in the east at early morning. It was in this gloomy passage of the nether world that the Egyptians believed the dead resided and their king was Osiris. As the grain-god, Osiris succeeded the sun-god as king on earth. He was regarded as the benefactor of men and beloved as a righteous ruler. But as recounted below, Osiris was craftily misled and slain by his brother Seth. A popular story, another brother conflict is repeated in the bible, under Genesis 4:8, where Cain killed his brother Abel.

The love between Osiris and Isis was consummated in the womb of Nut. This brother and sister marriage represented the union of the Nile and the fertile land; a marriage that was repeated annually when the

river rose and the earth became green and fruitful from its embraces. This yearly union of Osiris and Isis emulated the epitome of human desire, satisfaction and subsistence. From the valley, softly caressed by the Nile, this union became the source of food providing nourishment of seed into bread and fruit, fish, fowl, and a haven for animals that quenched their thirst in its waters. The Egyptian was constantly reminded of the grain-god's power to revitalize the seed after its growth and harvest. Year after year, seeds would burst into grains, fruits and vegetation by his living spirit embodied in the Nile. As the god of grain and crops, he passed into the bodies of all who consumed the fruits of the earth.

The worship of Osiris as the spirit of the Nile and grain, made him thought of as not only the very essence of life and the Lord of the underworld, but with the Egyptian story that follows – the power of resurrection led to the concept of eternal life, which intrinsically evolved the concept of heaven. These religious concepts were conceived by the Egyptian Priesthood and later applied to accommodate the Pharaoh to join the gods after death based upon the judgment of Osiris. The reader is reminded that the gods of the Great Ennead – and Horus, the son of Osiris and Isis, long existed in the spiritual hearts of the Egyptians several generations before the 1<sup>st</sup> Dynasty and the reign of the pharaohs. As the kings became more powerful and ruled greater Egypt they began to embrace the concept of immortality that would place them among the gods and extend their wonderful lives on earth in the realm of eternity.

The antithesis to Osiris was his brother Seth. Cruel and treacherous, Seth was likened to the spirit of the forbidding desert that borders both sides of the Nile. Ever jealous of his brother, he married his sister Nephthys to mitigate his feelings of inferiority caused by the fruitful marriage of Isis to Osiris and her reputation as a devoted wife and able manager that filled the country with abundance. To his disappointment, Nephthys could not bare a child. For like the sterile desert, Seth brought barrenness to all he touched and she sought fertilization from

another source. It was rumored that she had made Osiris drunk, drawn him to her arms without his knowledge and borne him a son. The child of this furtive union was the jackal, Anubis, who prowled along the edges of the desert, and who stood as sponsor for the dead in the Judgment Hall. This embarrassing invasion of Seth's domain by Osiris ignited an open strife between the brothers.

With such an embarrassing event, the dichotomy between Osiris and Seth became even more transfixed in the minds of the Egyptians: one stood for all goodness and life, laboring to produce abundance; the other came to be associated with evil and death, striving only to destroy. It would be this dichotomy that would later define a sharp line between good and evil in our contemporary religions. He long remained respected as god of war and during the 13<sup>th</sup> to the 17<sup>th</sup> Dynasties was perhaps the national god of the Delta. But by the 19<sup>th</sup> Dynasty his name met with such disdain that it was stricken from all monuments. Shortly thereafter, the nicknames "Evil One" and "Stinking Face" were applied to him. However, even as a prime liar, breeder of mischief and murderer of Osiris, Seth was envisioned as an evil god and not the god of evil. The association of evil to a god or fallen angel was not a belief originated by the Egyptians.<sup>1</sup> The concept of an evil entity that caused human beings to become the offspring of sin was developed within the Old Testament of the Bible and survived with the dogma taught with the New Testament. This born into sin concept is unfortunately advocated by our more advanced monotheistic religions – it is a demeaning theological precept that psychologically belittles the creation and dignity of human beings.

Seth's jealousy and dissatisfaction with the contrast of his image with that of Osiris angered him to devise a plan to eliminate his brother. While Osiris was in Asia teaching men the arts and agriculture, he obtained the measurements of Osiris's body to construct a richly adorned chest. Seth then gave a banquet in Osiris's honor to which he

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<sup>1</sup> Homer W. Smith, *Man and His Gods*, Pages 23, 35-36.

invited seventy-two of his conspirators. When Seth produced the chest at the feast all rejoiced at the sight of its beauty and to this delighted response he promised to give it to the one whom it would exactly fit. All who tried it could not meet the true fit of the chest until Osiris at last got into it and laid down. Quickly Seth and his conspirators closed the cover, nailed it firmly shut, soldered it together with melted lead and threw it into the Nile, which carried it out to sea.

In the oldest record, the Memphite Drama, Osiris is said to have drowned while the Pyramid Texts simply relate that Seth murdered him at Nedyt, which may have been the ancient name for Byblos. The grief-stricken Isis cut her hair, put on mourning robes and fled to the Delta in search of the body of her lord. In the Pyramid Texts, it is said that she found his body there, and the spirit of Osiris visited her secretly so that she bore a son Horus, whom she hid in a basket of rushes.

In the Pyramid Texts legend, Isis was accompanied by Nephthys, and in the form of birds they engaged in a long search. The lamentations of the two sisters were the most sacred expression of sorrow known to the Egyptians. It was told that the waves had washed the chest ashore off the coast of Byblos, where a tree suddenly sprang up and enclosed the chest in its trunk. The king of that country, having admired the tree, had it cut down and placed it as a pillar beneath his house. Isis entered the service of the king as a nurse and drew the chest out from the pillar. She then took it to Egypt where she hid it in the Nile and rejoined her son Horus.

While hunting in the moonlight, Seth discovered the chest and opened it. Recognizing Osiris, he cut the corpse into fourteen pieces and scattered them widely. Isis once more set out on a woeful pilgrimage to recover the body of her lord. She was able to collect all the parts of Osiris and buried them where they were found except his phallus, which had been devoured by the great Nile catfish. Ever after men revered each of the spots as the grave of their benefactor: at Busiris his

backbone was buried; in Abydos, his head was enclosed in a small chest; and at Athribus he was honored with his heart. Somehow, the divine parts miraculously multiplied as Memphis also claimed to be the repository for his head and, the number of his legs claimed to have been found would have sufficed for several ordinary mortals. The innovated Isis used her magical powers to construct a model of the lost phallus. Thereafter, the Egyptians celebrated the feast of Pamyliia, which is commemorated by a procession of a phallic statue and pitchers of water carried from the Nile in his honor.<sup>2</sup>

#### **5.5.4 The Resurrection of Osiris**

A theological innovation of the Egyptian Priesthood was the concept of resurrection. It was an idea that developed as a natural consequence of the rebirth of the beloved god Osiris, who was reborn year after year providing sustenance for the people. The resurrection of Osiris lends admiration and recognition of his son Horus who already had begun to be revered by the kings of Upper Egypt even before the establishment of the 1<sup>st</sup> Dynasty. It is the god Horus that is associated with the symbol of the falcon. As the son of the most beloved god, the people could identify themselves with him on a personal level. That Horus and his falcon symbol existed prior to the 1<sup>st</sup> Dynasty is confirmed in Part 1, subsection 2.2.6 (Nubians, the Stimulus for Egypt's Unity) where it is noted that the falcon was well established as the standard or banner of the Nubians.

When Horus had grown to be a man, he left his hiding place in the rushes to avenge the death of his father. His encounter with Seth immediately initiated a gruesome fight and the outcome left Horus with an eye torn out. Seth was rendered impotent and the vanquished warrior acknowledged Horus as the new monarch of the earth. Fortunately, Thoth, the god of wisdom replaced the eye of Horus and restored sight to it by spitting upon it. Horus then set about re-

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<sup>2</sup> Homer W. Smith, *Man and His Gods*, Pages 36-37.

assembling the dismembered parts of his father's body, which Isis had buried. Completing this task, he prepared under the direction of Anubis, who invented the art of embalming, a mummy that was so skillfully made that it would last forever. This effort fell short of bringing Osiris to life as a warm, breathing body, spontaneous in movement and capable of thought and speech. Instead, he was an immobile, cold, blackish mass, adequate only to assure the continuity of the *ka*.

The inert state of Osiris's body condemned him to vegetate in the darkness of the tomb without pleasure and barely enough consciousness to exist. To bring Osiris back to life again, it took the combined efforts of Isis, Horus, Anubis and Thoth. Thoth played a prime role, as the inventor of magic words and writing, he showed how to inscribe the protective bandages with the proper figures and formulas; how to decorate the body with amulets of special efficacy for its different parts; how to draw on the boards of the coffin and the walls of the sepulchral chamber scenes depicting Osiris's glorious adventures both in this world and the hereafter. The performance of magic rituals by the resourceful Isis successfully enabled Osiris to open his mouth, his eyes and ears, loosen his arms and legs, restore his breath, and start the movement of his heart. Under Thoth's direction, they joined the severed phallus to Osiris body and empowered him to perform its natural function. The final step to Osiris's resurrection was performed by Horus – he gave his father his eye to eat. This act fully resurrected Osiris to life as a living god.

### **5.5.5 Heaven on Earth in the Nether World**

A common disagreement that reflected the discord between the peoples of Upper and Lower Egypt since Predynastic days was who was the sole ruler of both lands. This political discord was cast into the religious realm and became part of the Osiris legend. The issue was so critical to both lands that the priests and very likely the ruling kings disseminated their resolution with the support of the gods by using the

Great Ennead to rule that Horus inherit his father's ownership of the Two Lands. After Osiris was relegated as ruler of the underworld by the Great Ennead, there were several contests between Seth and Horus as to who was the rightful ruler of the two lands. Not long after the resurrection of Osiris, Seth proceeded to file a charge that Horus was not the son of Osiris but a bastard whom Isis had conceived after the death of her husband. This case was brought before the Ennead, a tribunal of nine gods at Heliopolis to settle the dispute. Thoth, acting as Osiris's advocate, completely cleared both father and son. In this instance, the Ennead was presided by Re, the 'All Lord', and Horus was made king of Upper and Lower Egypt. To appease Seth, Re had him join him in the heavens as a thunder-god to live as his son and to speak out in the sky so that men may be afraid of him.<sup>1</sup> In another folk tale, the gods decided that Osiris be made king of the nether world and was 'justified' by the gods. Thereafter, the word 'justified' was applied to the dead to mean innocent, triumphant, assured of immortality, and the resurrected dead were called 'justified of Osiris'.<sup>2</sup>

Osiris was loved by the Egyptians throughout Egypt and was constantly remembered by: his goodness in satisfying their needs with abundant food; his resurrection after overcoming death by the treachery of Seth; the lamentations of Isis and Nephthys that expressed the depths of sorrow felt by the people; the devotion of his son to avenge his death and restore him to life with one of his eyes; the Ennead trials that proclaimed the favorable outcomes on behalf of Osiris and his son Horus. These are all human instances in their religious teachings that were close to life's realities and comprehensible to the humblest people. They could relate in both substance and destiny to the grain that died upon bearing fruit, and with each new season came to life again. The concept of never-ending life became a belief that was possible for the worshippers of Osiris – for if the love

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<sup>1</sup> James B. Pritchard, ed. by, *Ancient Near Eastern Texts*, Page 17, A folk tale entitled, 'The contest of Horus and Seth for the Rule', section XIV. This tale was written in Thebes in the 20<sup>th</sup> Dynasty around the 12<sup>th</sup> century BC.

<sup>2</sup> Homer W. Smith, *Man and His Gods*, Pages 37, 38.

of Isis, the sacrifice of Horus, the wisdom of Thoth and the preservation knowledge of Anubis could give life to Osiris, could they not do the same for them?

By the end of the 5<sup>th</sup> Dynasty, the worship of Osiris spread among the people and later it would advance solar theology. For by this time, religious literature revealed Osiris capable of climbing up the sun's ladder or is ferried in the sun god's bark. It is the oldest religious literature ever found and it fortunately was preserved in the pyramid of Unis (5<sup>th</sup> Dynasty, 2655-2625 BC). With the help of dedicated Egyptologists, much of it has been deciphered and has formed the collection called the Pyramid Texts. Ascension by Osiris to the solar heaven, where the gods resided, was an effort by the Priesthood that would later elevate the nether world to the heavens. However, at this time, the common people, including the kings, still thought of their dead as either dwelling in the tomb or at best inhabiting the gloomy realm of the West, the subterranean kingdom ruled by Osiris. The *Taut* or nether world was not actually subterranean, but lay far to the west beyond the 'Mountain of the Sunset'.

The Egyptians envisioned *Taut* as an extension of the world they lived in. It was conceived as a paradise where wheat grew to three cubits in height and there was never any hunger. A land of happiness, they could go fishing or fowling among the reeds, lounge under the trees which were perpetually green, or retire into their lovely pavilions to tell amusing tales and to play at draughts. Their lives were not entirely free of care. They had found work a necessary function for idle hands, especially when they participated in projects to plan and design the irrigation systems, build temples, palaces and pyramids along the Nile. Their exposure to the arts was extremely gratifying to create paintings, pottery and statues that aroused admiration of their ability to capture beauty and relate the significant events of their Pharaoh. Therefore, even in the nether world they simulated their real world and protected it by building walls around their kingdom to defend themselves against the followers of Seth. In the hereafter, they continued to be productive



by maintaining their canals and dykes, tilling the ground, planting and reaping the grain, and enjoying their next life without pain, want or misery.

Now that Taut was available to the poor they entered it well equipped with *ushabti* figures, which were statues of farmers, soldiers, bakers and the like made of wood, clay or other inexpensive materials. It was possible that these miniature servants would come to life and take up their responsibilities by the citing of proper incantations. The Priesthood had made great strides in devising the chants, litanies and prayers that would safely bring the departed into the nether world and stimulate the servants of labor to do mundane as well as essential work. This collection of magic incantations had been ascribed to Thoth in a collection known as *The Book of the Dead*, but a correct reading of the hieroglyphic title proved to be *Coming Forth into the Day*. It is to be noted that The Book of the Dead was in use since 3000 BC or earlier. Here we find that the deceased and his spirit, called the *ba*, are given the spells to protect their journey to and in the nether world. It is evident that the distinction between the *ka* and *ba* is that: at birth, the person is associated and imbued with the spirit of the *ka*, which defines one's person; and the *ba* enters upon death as its guide and protector.<sup>3</sup>

Prior to the 6<sup>th</sup> Dynasty, the incantations of The Book of the Dead were confined to the kings buried in their pyramids. Thereafter and well into the 11<sup>th</sup> Dynasty (2160-2000 BC), they were written upon the coffins of commoners, frequently with great haste and carelessness. By the start of the New Kingdom (1580 BC) the texts were written on long rolls of papyrus, partly because they were now too numerous to be placed on the coffin and partly because they had to be written inexpensively and quickly in order to meet the great demand.

Upon leaving the tomb, the deceased and his *ba* follow the prescriptions of The Book of the Dead to the letter as they head west into the

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<sup>3</sup> Homer W. Smith, *Man and His Gods*, Pages 39 and 40.

desert. They then cross the land of the sacred sycamores and bypass many dangers to ascend the mountains that surrounded their world. A great river is then crossed with the assistance of a ferryman who carries the deceased with his *ba* and *ka* to the further shore. There the gods and goddesses of the court of Osiris meet them. Together they enter the Judgment Hall and, at the further end, the Lord Osiris sits in mysterious twilight.<sup>4</sup>

On the walls in the tombs of the deceased pharaohs, nobility, and persons who had attained sufficient wealth, or revered for their contributions, such as scribes, was always painted the judgment scene. Over the hundreds of years from its inception, there are many slight variations of the theme that illustrated the weighting of the deceased heart. The heart is symbolic of the deceased conscience that is weighed in the balance against the feather, which is symbolic of Right and Truth. Figure 5-6 illustrates the judgment scene with three panels that presents the key parties participating in the very momentous occasion that centers upon judgment of the deceased. Judgment of the deceased will result in eternal life in the realm of Osiris or be eaten and cease to exist.

In the upper register of Figure 5-6 are fourteen gods who sit in judgment. Although they are not uniquely identified due possibly to the haste in which it was painted, in another scene from the papyrus of Ani the scribe and his wife Thuthu, there are twelve gods who are presented with their individual characteristics and are: Harmachis, the great god in his boat, Temu, Shu, Tefnut, Geb, Nut, Isis, Nephthys,

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<sup>4</sup> Homer W. Smith, *Man and His Gods*, Page 42. Note: Homer only refers to the *ba* on the journey to the west and over the river to the Judgment Hall of Osiris. Yet, as portrayed in Figure 5-9, it is the deceased double or *ka* that stands in judgement before Osiris with the *ba* standing close by. Therefore, the deceased does accompany the *ba*.

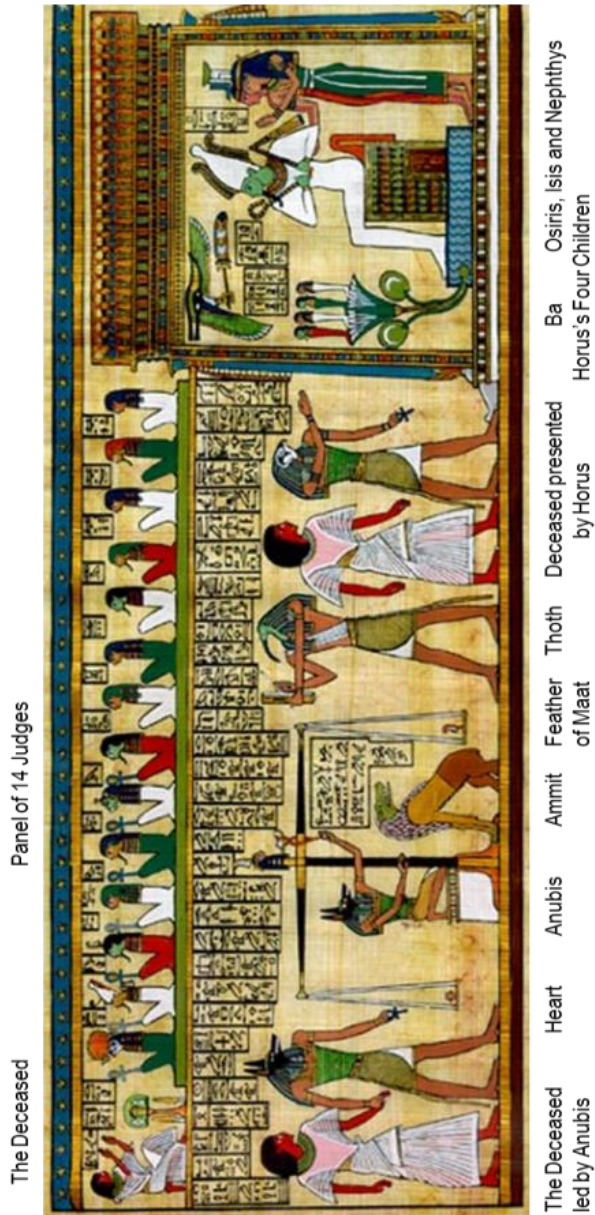


Figure 5-6. The Weighing of the Heart of the Dead.

Horus the great god, Hathor the lady of Amenta, Hu and Sa.<sup>5</sup> Beginning with the upper left-hand corner, the deceased appears before the 14 judges to make an accounting for his deeds during life. The ankh, the key and symbol of Truth, appears in the hands of seven of the judges.

Below in the second register the jackal god Anubis, who represents the underworld and mummification, leads the deceased before the scale. Note again that the ankh, a revered symbol, is held in the hand of Anubis. Anubis then weighs the heart of the deceased against the feather of Ma'at, goddess of truth and justice. In other variations, the goddess Ma'at, not just her feather, is shown seated on the tray. Also note the significance of justice and Truth are emphasized by the placement of Ma'at's head, crowned by the feather, at the top of the fulcrum of the scale. If the heart outweighs the feather, then the heart of the deceased contains evil deeds and Ammit the monster will devour the heart. However, if the feather remains stationary or outweighs the heart, then the deceased has led a righteous life and may be presented before Osiris to join his realm of everlasting life. Thoth, the ibis-headed god of wisdom stands ready with his reed pen and palette to record the outcome.

The weighing of the 'heart' is an appraisal of the character of the deceased and central to this ceremony is the Negative Confession cited in the 125<sup>th</sup> chapter of the Book of the Dead. This chapter consists of three parts: The Introduction, the Negative Confession and a concluding text. The Introduction, which consists of a hymn of praise to Osiris, was said when the deceased arrived at the Hall of double Maati<sup>6</sup> and it includes a number of denials to Osiris, which have been listed

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<sup>5</sup> E. A. Wallis Budge, *The Book of the Dead*, Volume I, Pages 21, 22. The Judgment Scene was contained in papyri of the 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup>, and following Dynasties.

<sup>6</sup> E.A. Wallis Budge, *The Book of the Dead*, Page 355, Chapter CXXV. Note: This is the hall where the goddesses Isis and Nephthys who symbolically represent Right and Truth are seated. Also present are the 42

in Table 4-1 (Part 1). The Negative Confession was recited by the deceased before the forty-two gods in the hall, where an individual denial was spoken to each god and they are listed in Table 4-2. The concluding text was spoken when he came into the underworld. The denials spoken to Osiris and the Negative Confession spoken to each god illustrates the depth of Egyptian morality and the sensibility to respect human life.

In the lower right panel of Figure 5-6, Horus with the revered symbol of Truth (some historians believe it symbolizes life but life is determined by the scales of Truth and Righteousness) leads the deceased to Osiris, lord of the underworld. Above the four children of Horus is the *ba* with out-stretched wings, the soul of the deceased who accompanies his *ka*. *Osiris* sits on his throne, represented as a mummy. On his head is the white crown of Lower Egypt (the north). He holds the symbols of Egyptian kingship in his hands: the shepherd's crook to symbolize his role as shepherd of mankind, and the flail, to represent his ability to separate the wheat from the chaff. Behind him stands his wife Isis (in red) and her sister Nephthys. Together, Osiris, Isis, Nephthys and four children welcome the deceased to the underworld. Another symbolic notion is imparted: Horus represents the personification of the Pharaoh during life; and diametrically, his father, Osiris, represents the personification of the Pharaoh after death. This belief in the power of the gods to grant everlasting life has been extended to all Egyptians who have led a life practicing righteousness and truth.

The belief in life beyond the grave gave rise to an extensive set of mortuary incantations, prayers and litanies that extended the duties and need for the Priesthood. The priests assisted the dead with embalming techniques to preserve the body, maintain offerings at the deceased's tomb and perform the religious ceremonies to safely permit their entrance into the hereafter. Coupled with their beliefs was the ever-

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gods, to each of whom the deceased must address a prescribed negative statement

present belief that their future life will be in the body given them from birth. An eternal life without a body that bore the trials of pain and shared the most wonderful moments of life was inconceivable to the Egyptian; such a belief may be just as true for human beings living today.

Before burial, the embalmed body was subjected to elaborate ceremonies and incantations that relate to the resurrection of Osiris. One of many chants that the priests would recite for the deceased was to effect the opening of the mouth and ears that he might hear and speak in the hereafter. A short extract from The Book of the Dead, Chapter 23, "Of Opening of the Mouth of the Deceased" is provided below:

*The scribe Ani (the deceased), triumphant, saith: -*

*"May the god Ptah open my mouth, and may the god of my city loose the swathings, even the swathings which are over my mouth. Moreover, may Thoth, being filled and furnished with charms, come and loose the bandages, even the bandages of Seth which fetter my mouth; and may the god Tem hurl them at those who would fetter [me] with them, and drive them back. May my mouth be opened, may my mouth be unclosed by Shu with his iron knife wherewith he opened the mouth of the gods. . . . "*<sup>7</sup>

This subsection provided a brief history of how Osiris became the Lord of the Underworld; the settlement of a bitter dispute over who inherited the Two Lands that was once the domain of Osiris; what was the Egyptians conception of the nether world; how the deceased was

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<sup>7</sup> Note the reference made to Thoth. It emphasizes the beliefs that: he was the great master of the use of magical names and formulae; he gave the Word which resulted in the creation of the world; and he supplied Isis with words of magical power that enabled her to effect the resurrection of Osiris (she also resurrected her son Horus after he had been stung to death by a scorpion).

led by his ba into the sanctuary of Osiris; the judgment of the deceased; and the type of ceremonies performed by the priests to safely guide the deceased to the hereafter and revive the functions of his body to enjoy eternal life. In the following subsections, the transition of Horus as a god of power and protection of the king to becoming the god that empowers the king to become the Son of God will be presented. This will be followed by the most audacious dogma agreed to by the Priesthood – that the king upon death becomes the creative and ruling god of the heavens and earth.

### *5.6 Development of the Son of God Concept*

Within this section of the book, we have learned that the Egyptians, as with people in other emerging civilizations, possessed a natural desire to interpret their surroundings and the skies above them. The beauty of nature and the objects that impacted and controlled their lives, be it the sun, water, vegetation, animal life, and the air they breathed evoked awe and wonder that developed an appreciation and, when reason could not be applied, fear and respect that emerged into gods that they could appeal to. This process of interpretation of the world developed a spirituality within many of the early peoples on many parts of our earth. The unique case of the Egyptians was that they developed their spiritual faculties in an isolated region free from interference from other cultures.

At least three thousand years of spiritual growth blossomed as their prehistoric nomes grew into local towns that finally, through a period of stress where the more powerful rulers expanded their territories through internal warfare, Upper and Lower Egypt merged into one united state around 3400 BC. A state that had its development controlled by two entities; the Kings that provided leadership and, the Priesthood that advanced religious doctrine within each principality. The priests articulated their Egyptian beliefs in writing, a new form of communication, which was mastered. After many iterations, as the centuries unfolded to the Exodus by Moses, the priests refined and

shaped the many concepts that are now incorporated in our monotheistic religions. In this subsection, how the emergence of the concept that the king was the son of god will be explored.

### **5.6.1 Horus, a Principle Primeval God**

The earliest surviving documents referred to previously, *The Creation by Atum*, *The Theology of Memphis* and the *Pyramid Texts* reveal that the two objects of nature that had the greatest impact on the spiritual development of the Egyptians were the sun and the Nile. The sun came to be worshipped as a prime god who took on personal form with the name Re. He was imagined as two phases of the sun with the names of Kheprer and Atum. Prior to the Thinite family of kings being supplanted by the Memphite kings, the primeval god Horus was associated with the sun as a newborn child at dawn called Horus-of-the-East, who was a hero in the prime of life at noon to later become an old man named Temu tottering with feeble steps into the sunset.<sup>1</sup> By the 3<sup>rd</sup> Dynasty, in the Delta city On (Heliopolis), Re became known as Khepri (represented by the beetle) and became personalized as Atum emerging, as did Horus, in youthful vigor upon rising, assuming the role as hero during the noon day hours, and as an old man entering the western horizon.<sup>2</sup> In the past, when individual nomes were asserting dominancy over another, Horus from Upper Egypt provided protection and success for the warring kings in battle. He was perceived with the physical attributes of a man and the features of a falcon. Later, the Priesthood announced that Horus was the progenitor of their King and established the belief that he, the King, was the son of god. The other object of nature, the waters of the Nile, surfaced the concepts of creation and rebirth into eternal life, which gave rise to the god of the people, Osiris (Subsections 5.5.3 – 5.5.5).

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<sup>1</sup> Homer W. Smith, *Man and His Gods*, Page 9.

<sup>2</sup> James H. Breasted, *A History of Egypt*, Page 46.



Originally, Egyptians from different nomes associated Re with their own local symbols but the vision of a falcon dominated as the idea of a bird flying high into the heavens easily conjured thought that it was the comrade of the sun. The falcon was given the name Hor or Harakhte, which meant “Horus of the Horizon”. The remarkable find of the Qustul incense burner, a fragment of which is provided in Figure 2-5, illustrates that this symbol existed around 3800 BC and indeed earlier. In the land of Nubia, around the 2<sup>nd</sup> cataract just below Abu Simbel, the falcon was introduced and this symbol gravitated to Edfu and then to Abydos where King Ka was buried in a double tomb (just above Thebes). We have noted in subsection 5.2.1 that this king had the symbol *ka* written within a “serekh”, Figure 5-3, and he was one of the first kings to include the falcon accompanied with the plant symbolizing Upper Egypt.

Therefore, Horus was already a recognized god even though he was not described as one of the first gods of the Great Ennead in Heliopolis as cited in *‘The Creation of Atum’*. Heliopolis, located in Lower Egypt, just below the Delta, was where the Priesthood authored the text of the Atum creation. In this document, carved inside the pyramids of Mer-ne-Re and Pepe II (6<sup>th</sup> Dynasty kings), we find that the sun-god Re is addressed as Atum-Kheprer and no reference is made to Horus. Atum became the prime entity of the ancient text as creator of the gods and we can discern that it was this name that later took on the forms of Amon and Amen, each associated with Re, such as Atum-Re and Amon-Re.

### **5.6.2 The King Becomes Son of Horus**

The kings of Predynastic and early dynastic periods were known as the followers of Horus and they were believed to be the incarnation of Horus. Remembered for avenging the death of his father Osiris, Horus became the god of strength, order and justice. By assuming a divine kingship with Horus who inherited both Upper and Lower Egypt, the King ruled all of Egypt. Table 5-2 reveals seven of the eight rulers

**Table 5-2. First Dynasty Kings named after Horus.**

1	Horus Aha <sup>1</sup>	5	Horus Den
2	Horus Djer	6	Horus Anedjib
3	Meretneith (Djer's mother)	7	Horus Semerkhet
4	Horus Djet	8	Horus Qa'a

demonstrated their reverence by prefixing Horus to their names.

Known from Predynastic times as the god who provided protection and strength on the battlefield, the King assumed Horus's name. More importantly, the King promulgated the belief that he was the son of Horus through the support of the Priesthood. This contention is based upon two obvious facts: first, that the King acquired great power upon controlling the Upper and Lower regions of Egypt as the son of Horus who inherited both territories in the Osiris legend; and second, the King expressed his authority through dogma and scripture written by the Priesthood who created and advocated the beliefs digested by the people. This was a symbiotic relationship between the Kingship of the State and the ever-growing authority of the Priesthood.

We will find in several statements from the Pyramid texts that the authority of the King is revealed in utterances carved within his tomb; utterances that would place him above the gods. Surely, the Priesthood and King had already agreed what would be written on the walls of his tomb to safely secure an everlasting life in the realm of the gods. First, we will examine how powerful the Kings of Egypt had become and its effect on their behavior as they followed religious beliefs to obtain immortality.

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<sup>1</sup> Marie Parsons, <http://www.touregypt.net/featurestories/earlydyn2.htm>.

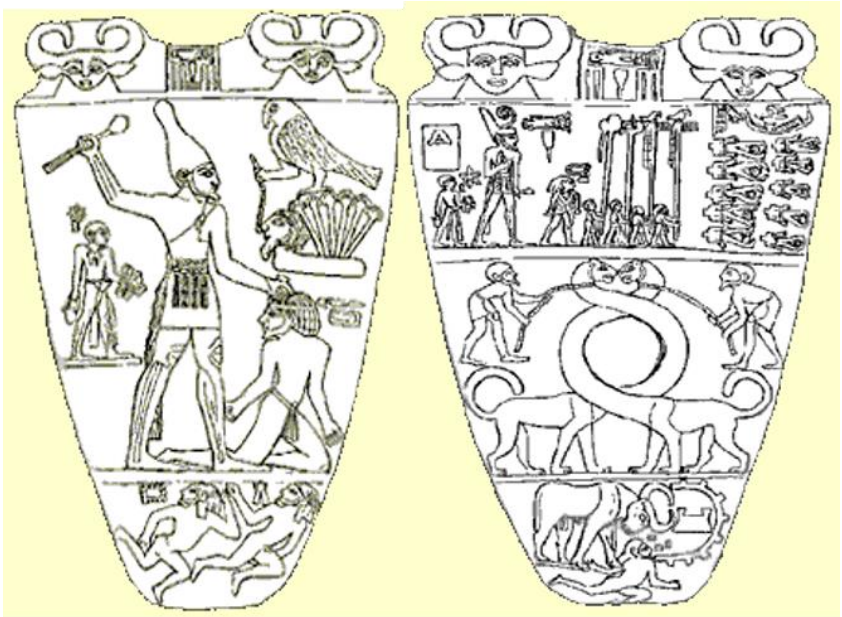
Aha, probably the son of Narmer and his queen was Nithotep. It is thought that he may be King Narmer and his tomb is in Abydos.

### **5.6.3 Power Exerted by the Kings**

Soon after the initial victories of unification by King Ka, who was a product of Upper Egypt and lived in the old Capital of Thinis, a city near Abydos, he was succeeded by King Narmer (Menes). It is believed that he was possibly the father of Narmer as his tomb was built in a similar style and size just 30 meters away. Historians have credited King Narmer for successfully unifying Upper and Lower Egypt and have used this momentous event to identify the start of the 1<sup>st</sup> Dynasty. This cornerstone event has been commemorated with one of King Narmer's own gifts to his god with a 23-inch high dark-green crystalline stone coined the Narmer Palette. This artistically carved stone illustrates the unification of Egypt by showing the King wearing the White Crown of Upper Egypt and on the reverse side, the Red Crown of Lower Egypt.

Provided as Figure 5-7, the front of the palette shows the King wearing the White Crown and to infer strength and power, a bull's tail. The top level, on both sides of the stone, provides the King's name in a serekh which is flanked on each side by a cow's head that identifies one of the oldest known goddesses named Hathor. He wields a mace in his right hand about to smash the face of a kneeling man who may have been an important leader as his name in hieroglyphics is written to the right of his head. Above the victim's head is the falcon symbol of Horus sitting upon the plants of a personified papyrus marshland. Each papyrus blossom represents the numeral one thousand, which signifies that the king had killed six thousand enemies. Below the feet of the King are two naked, fallen Deltaic enemies lying helplessly on the ground.

The reverse side shows the king wearing a Red Crown and holding a mace in his left hand. His right hand holds a flail which symbolizes royalty. He is accompanied by his vizier and a female holding a scepter in her left hand. They are represented on a much smaller scale



**Figure 5-7. The Front and Back of the Narmer Palette.**

*[Http://www.ptahhotep.com/articles/Narmer\\_palette.html](http://www.ptahhotep.com/articles/Narmer_palette.html)*

as they walk toward ten decapitated bodies. The central scene shows the elongated necks of two feline animals being tied together by two persons, which symbolizes unification of the two parts of the country. The bottom level shows a bull trampling an enemy of the Delta to represent the King's strength and power.

Figure 5-7 illustrates the symbol of the falcon and illustrates the King's reverence for Horus as the god of warfare and the powerful association as the father of his success. This religious belief caused the Kings to conceive themselves to be the reincarnation of Horus as his son. The veneration of Horus began long before the establishment of the Thinite line begun by King Ka and King Narmer. King Ka levied taxes in the Nile Delta which indicates his successful conquest of Lower Egypt before King Narmer's reign. The sway of power demonstrated by King Narmer has been recorded on an ivory cylinder

found in the temple of Hieraconpolis. It commemorated his victory over the Libyans who consistently entered Egypt west of the Delta. The Narmer Palette presented above is a testament of the Libyan nomes conquered in the western Delta. On this campaign, Narmer took 120,000 captives, killed 6,000 and plundered 1,420,000 large cattle.<sup>1</sup>

The Narmer conquests did not pacify entry of Libyans from the west or the Bedouins and Palestinians from the east, including constant uprisings from the Nubians south of Egypt. The Kings of Egypt went to war repeatedly to demonstrate their authority and power over these invaders. Following Narmer, King Neterimu smote the northern cities of Shemre and the “House of the North”. Then late in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Dynasty, King Khasekhem named a year of his reign as the “Year of Fighting and Smiting the North”. In this war, he took captive 47,209 rebels and commemorated this victory in the temple of Horus at Hieraconpolis with a great alabaster vase and two remarkable statues.<sup>2</sup>

The authority and power that the Thinite Kings demonstrated as they vanquished their enemies led to leadership and administration of their people and material resources. The expansion of towns and cities invigorated trade within and outside their country and a remarkable development of engineers, craftsmen and artisans, including the administration of their courts and accounting of their wealth, promoted the building of structures that rose with the marvelous imagination inherent in man. With each city that came under the umbrella of the ruling King came the addition of another religious following that fell in line with veneration of the gods revered by the King. The result was the formalized organization of the Priesthood that supported and promulgated the acclamations that the King was the ‘Son of God’. This power of the state and organized religion inbred beliefs that accommodated vanity, pride and arrogance that power so often be-

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<sup>1</sup> James H. Breasted, *A History of Egypt*, Page 47.

<sup>2</sup> James H. Breasted, *A History of Egypt*, Page 47.

stows on its inheritor. The King, through the belief system advocated by the Priesthood, came to desire not just the hereafter on earth envisioned by the Osirian faithful, but to reach the heavens and reside with the gods.

The vision to become a celestial being with the gods caused the King to insure his royal existence to be perpetuated in heaven. He imagined his heavenly life to be an extension of his earthly one so that upon ascending to the throne, he began to amass a fortune to erect a tomb and equip it with all the appurtenances of royalty. This included not only fine wines, maintenance and offerings, cattle, his favorite objects of art and gold – but his vanity led him to sacrifice his queens and servants to accompany him into eternity. Whereas in former times, when the King did not place himself above his follow men and was buried with only his favorite objects, he now took human life to the grave with him. The responsible party to this inhuman outcome was the Priesthood who advocated and supported the concept that the King was a son of god. No idea becomes a reality unless it is cleverly promoted and that was accomplished by the priests within Egypt's organized religion. The adage that power corrupts applies, but it was a religious belief that elevated the King to a god and catered to his vanity - eventually causing him to place himself above his fellow man.

Shown in Table 5-3 are the numerical mix of wives, concubines, nobles, couriers, servants and slaves that the kings of the early dynastic period took into the other world. Some kings also immolated cattle for their journey. This taking of innocent lives upon one's own death is an example of fanatical thinking caused by religious beliefs. Beliefs developed by the Priesthood with good intentions that became compromised by their support of inhuman practices. On a varying scale, the practice of sacrificing human life to accompany the king began prior to the 11<sup>th</sup> dynasty and lasted into the Middle Kingdom. Homer W. Smith, in his 'Man and His Gods', indicated that Hepzefa of Siut was buried with 300 Ethiopians. The website, Tour Egypt, indicated that Nebhetepre Mentuhotep II, an Egyptian pharaoh (2061–2010 BC),

**Table 5-3. Inhuman Deaths by the Kings and Priesthood.**

King <sup>3</sup>	Deaths	Comments
Aha	33	
Djer (Zer)	334	70 were from the royal harem.
Meretneith	41	
Djet (Zet)	174	
Den	?	
Anedjib (Enezib)	64	
Semerkheth (Senti)	137	
Qa'a	?	

sixth ruler of the Eleventh Dynasty, had sacrificed women of the royal family within his mortuary temple. All of the woman appeared to have died young at the same time, the eldest about twenty-two and the youngest only five. Four women bore the title of Royal Court Consort and others may have been priestesses of the goddess Hathor.<sup>1</sup>

#### **5.6.4 The Kings as Gods in Heaven**

As belief in eternal life became more formalized by the dogma advocated by the Priesthood, the King and affluent nobles developed a safer repository that evolved from a simple burial in the ground to a tomb vast in size and made of stone that eventually rose high above the ground. The height depended upon the desire by the deceased to be renowned by his people, accumulated re-sources, time, and the supply of skilled craftsmen.

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<sup>3</sup> Marie Parsons, <http://www.touregypt.net/featurestories/earlydyn2.htm>. Also, Homer W. Smith, *Man and His Gods*, on Page 31 listed the four kings that the author has identified within parenthesis and assumed their relationship to the names given by Marie Parsons.

<sup>1</sup> Tour Egypt, The Mortuary Temple of Mentuhotep II.  
<http://www.touregypt.net/featurestories/mentuhotep.htm>

By the 4<sup>th</sup> Dynasty, the greatest mortuary structure ever built was through the organizational skills of Khufu (2900-2877 BC); located near Cairo, known as the Pyramid of Gizeh. This able King had the planning ability to mobilize the human and material resources that involved the state in erecting a vast, impenetrable and indestructible resting place. For such an enormous project, much credit has to be given to the government under Khufu when we find that his pyramid contained over 2,300,000 limestone blocks, each weighting about two and a half tons. The tasks in quarrying, transporting, and assembling these immense and burdensome blocks must have severely taxed the treasury. The Greek historian Herodotus has written that the pyramid required the labor of a 100,000-men over a period of 20 years. The excellence of the engineers and craftsmen to construct the pyramid to a height of 481 feet and retain the length of 755 feet at each side of its base to an error of less than ten thousandth of a foot is remarkable.<sup>1</sup>

The impact of Osiris's resurrection and indomitable acceptance of life after death had already begun by the 6<sup>th</sup> Dynasty to encourage the common man to improve his resting place with the religious scenes, articles and incantations that the Priesthood improved upon and was once reserved for their Kings. Tombs of the nobility began to be grouped around the colossal pyramids and their masonry structures had become so immense that a King, just a few centuries before, would have been proud to own. Such a tomb of the noble class was built for the vizier of Pepe I (2591-2570 BC) and it contained no less than thirty-one rooms. It was a rectangular structure with its sides slanted at an angle of seventy-five degrees with the ground. With the exception of its rooms, it was solid throughout and reminded the natives of the 'mastaba', which formally served as a terrace or bench before taking on greater height to accommodate the rooms within.

The more-simple mastabas for the common man had no rooms within, only a false door on the east side by which the deceased, dwelling in

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<sup>1</sup> James H. Breasted, *A History of Egypt*, Pages 117, 118.



the west, might enter the world of the living. This false door was finally incorporated into a chapel chamber within the masonry and placed on the west wall of the chamber. On the walls of this chapel bore scenes carved in relief of the servants and slaves of the deceased at their daily tasks on his estate. They were shown plowing, sowing and reaping the harvest of the fields; tending the herds on the pastures and slaughtering them for consumption, creating stone and alabaster vessels; building boats for the Nile; producing all types of things that were necessary for the lord's welfare in the hereafter; and there would appear the towering figure of the noble superintending and inspecting their labors as he had done before his death.<sup>2</sup> These scenes depicted the Hereafter as an extension of their lives on the banks of the Nile and thereby provide a source of knowledge of their lives and customs.

It is noteworthy to observe that the Egyptian's view of the Hereafter reveals a constructive and industrious life that emulates their earthly activities. In sharp contrast, the last monotheistic religion that has evolved, Islam, presents a conception of Heaven that caters to the sensual appetites of men. As we review the similarities of our monotheistic religions, we will find in Chapter 8.0 that the Qur'an Scriptures describes a God that rewards righteous men with a blissful life in Heaven.

### ***5.7 Pharaoh Becomes God of the Heavens and Earth***

The realm of the heavens ruled by Re and the realm of the hereafter ruled by Osiris were in constant rivalry for the status as the supreme god of the Egyptian religion. Both gods were profoundly worshipped by the Egyptian people and although eternity in the heavens was at first reserved for the gods and pharaohs and, eternity in the hereafter on earth was provided for all by the Osirian faith, the concept of a hereafter on earth was elevated to the heavens as the Solar gods took precedence. Heaven became the realm of everlasting life and a belief

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<sup>2</sup> James H. Breasted, *A History of Egypt*, Pages 68, 69.

for monotheistic believers even in today's world. The additional concept of a hell to provide punishment for the rest of eternity, advocated by most monotheistic religions of today (with much less enthusiasm), was not conceived by the Egyptians.

It has been noted that *The Theology of Memphis* acknowledged Horus, son of Osiris, as the god that prospered and united the Two Lands. This honorable recognition given to Horus was widespread during the 1<sup>st</sup> Dynasty. However, with the establishment of Egypt's Capital at Memphis, by the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Dynasty, the Thinite family was replaced by the Memphite family. The Priesthood in the Delta region began to emphasize the Solar faith and the by the end of the 6<sup>th</sup> Dynasty, we find that the text of *The Creation By Atum*, carved inside the pyramids of Mer-ne-Re and Pepe II (Nefer-ka-Re) made no mention of Horus. With the ascension of Zoser of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Dynasty, a transition from Horus-Re to Atum-Re became a reality.

King Zoser (Djoser) ruled during the 3<sup>rd</sup> Dynasty (2980-2900 BC) for almost two decades and through the ingenuity of his chief advisor, Imhotep, he had built for his mortuary tomb the first stone pyramid. It was designed by Imhotep initially as a mastaba that was nearly 38 feet high, about 227 feet wide and a bit longer in length. During Zoser's reign he continued to add additional levels until it consisted of six steps that rose to a height of 195 feet. It is believed to be the first large structure of stone made and was encased with beautiful white limestone. This super structure was followed by King Snefru (or Senefru), who built two tombs: one located between Memphis and the Faiyum (called the Red Pyramid) and the other at Dashur (called the Bent Pyramid), an isolated place just south of Giza. The Red Pyramid is the third tallest at 344.5 feet and is exceeded by the pyramids built during the 4<sup>th</sup> Dynasty (2900-2750 BC) by Khufu (Cheops) and Khafre (Chephren) at 481 feet and 447.5 feet, respectively.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> James H. Breasted, *A History of Egypt*, Pages 111-124.

A momentary diversion was taken to recognize the power, leadership and administrative control demonstrated by the Pharaohs from the 2<sup>nd</sup> through the 4<sup>th</sup> Dynasties. It was by their management of wealth and human resources that they built some of the greatest structures known to man. It was a period of unprecedented splendor in Egypt's history as attested by the magnificent monuments built on such a grand scale; such that of the nine pyramids of Gizeh one has survived as one of the seven wonders of the world. By the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> Dynasty, the King transferred his allegiance from being the 'Son of Horus' to being the 'Son of Re'. This transition was successfully accomplished by the Priests of Heliopolis (Delta region) who were progressive enough to author *The Creation by Atum*.

In the vicinity of Memphis, the kings of the 5<sup>th</sup> Dynasty invariably added Re to their coronation name. The old Horus title continued to be used but receded into the past as the new designation 'Son of Re' became the official Pharaonic titular for the reigning pharaohs and remained so throughout Egypt's history. The pyramid became the symbol of Re and the devoted Pharaohs envisioned the heights of these structures as bringing them closer to heaven. However, the vast amount of resources required to build pyramids finally gave way to sanctuaries that consisted of a large forecourt with cultist chambers on each side, a huge altar, and in the rear a tall obelisk that rose from a mastaba-like base. The obelisk was the practical substitution for the pyramid for at its peak sits a pyramid pointing to the heavens.

The above discourse reveals how powerful the Pharaohs became as they elevated their stature above the common man. By being a "Son of God", indoctrinated and supported by a powerful Priesthood, capable of directing the religious beliefs of his people to worship him as a god - his humility had to be undermined and his vanity amplified. So much so, that assurance of his posterity was not satisfied with monuments that reached the heavens. Vanity was soon replaced by arrogance. By the end of the Old Kingdom, some Pharaohs not only claimed to be the Son of Re but upon reaching the heavens they became the god of all

creation. Below are some Utterances from the Pyramid Texts, carved on the walls of their tombs. The Utterances illustrate their belief in obtaining eternal life was not enough – they sought to even take the place of Re-Atum as the universal god of all creation. In the Old Kingdom, the texts appear in the pyramids of Kings Unis, Teti II, Pepe I, Mernere I, Pepe II and Ibi (of 1<sup>st</sup> Intermediate Period). The Utterances extracted below are from *Development of Religion and Thought in Ancient Egypt*<sup>2</sup> and the *Pyramid Texts*<sup>3</sup>.

### **Utterances 173-4** (and 273 are Similar)

***Extract 1:*** Clouds darken the sky, the stars rain down, the Bows (a constellation) stagger, the bones of Aker (hell-hounds) tremble, those beneath them flee in terror at seeing King Unis raise as a Ba (soul), ***a god who lives on his fathers and feeds on his mothers.***

***Extract 2:*** King Unis is lord of wisdom whose mother knows not his name. The honor of King Unis is the sky, his might is in the horizon, like Atum his father who begat him. ***When he begat him, he was stronger than he.***

***Extract 3:*** ***King Unis is the Bull of the sky, who shatters at will, who lives on the being of every god, who eats their entrails.*** Even of those who come with their bodies full of magic from the Island of Flame.

***Extract 4:*** The protection of King Unis is before all the noble (dead) who dwell in the horizon. ***King Unis is a God, older than the eldest.*** Thousands revert to him, hundreds are offered to him. Appointment as ‘Great One’ is given to him by Orion, father of the gods. ***King Unis has dawned again in the sky, [shining] as Lord of the Horizon.***

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<sup>2</sup> James H. Breasted, *Development of Religion and Thought In Ancient Egypt*, Pages 123-139.

<sup>3</sup> Taylor Ray Ellison, <http://touregypt.net/featurestories/pyramidtext.htm>

**Extract 5:** *The lifetime of King Unis is eternity, his limit is everlastingness* in this his dignity of: 'If-he-wishes-he-does, if he-wishes-not-he-does-not', *who dwells in the limits of the horizon forever and ever.*

**Extract 6:** *Lo, their (the gods) souls are in the belly of King Unis, their Glorious Ones are with King Unis.* The plenty of his portion is more than (that of) the gods. . . . *Lo, their souls are with King Unis.*

**Utterance 274** (Since the Utterances are typical, the Name of the Pharaoh is omitted.)

**Extract 7:** He has revolved around the whole of the two skies. He has circled the two banks. *For Pharaoh is the great power, that overpowers the powers. Pharaoh is a sacred image, the most sacred image of the sacred images of the great one. Whom he finds in his way, him he devours bit by bit.*

**Extract 8:** *Pharaoh's place is at the head of all the noble ones who are in the horizon. For Pharaoh is a god, older than the oldest.* Thousands revolve around him, hundreds offer to him. *There is given to him a warrant as a great power by Orion, the father of the gods.*

**Extract 9:** Pharaoh has risen again in the sky. *He is crowned as Lord of the horizon. He has smashed the back-bones, and has seized the hearts of the gods. He has eaten the Red Crown. He has swallowed the Green One. Pharaoh feeds on the lungs of the wise, and likes to live on hearts and their magic.*

**Extract 10:** *Pharaoh's dignities will not be taken away from him. For he has swallowed the knowledge of every god. Pharaoh's lifetime is eternity. His limit is everlastingness.* In this his dignity of: 'If-he-likes-he-does. If-he-dislikes-he-does-not.' *He who is at the limits of the horizon, forever and ever. Lo, their Ba is in Pharaoh's*

*belly. Their Khu's are in Pharaoh's possession, as the surplus of his meal out of the gods, which is cooked for Pharaoh from their bones.*

The above extracts commingle two powerful beliefs: (1) that the resurrected King exceeds the power of even the creator god, Re-Atum and, (2) the King lives off the bodies of the gods absorbing their wisdom by eating their hearts (thought to be the mind by the Egyptians) and assimilating their khu's (souls) by eating their flesh. Emphasis on eating the gods for sustenance was the Priesthood's solution to sustain the King once in heaven. The Solar theology of Re-Atum was exclusive to the Pharaohs and the Gods. Consequently, food that was formally provided by the people, who attained the hereafter on earth in the Osirian theology, was not available for the heavens.

By the 6<sup>th</sup> Dynasty, the priests resolved the dilemma of obtaining food in the solar heavens by resorting to clever assistance from the gods. In the Pyramid Texts, Utterances 128-130, divine nourishment is provided for the King: "Bring the milk of Isis for King Teti, the flood of Nephthys, the circuit of the lake, the waves of the sea, life, prosperity, health, happiness, bread, beer, clothing, food, that King Teti may live therefrom."

The findings that the Kings of Egypt became so powerful that they believed they could attain immortality among the stars and that some Kings believed they could replace the creator god should give us pause. Do we blame the King for becoming so arrogant in believing that he was greater than his creator or do we blame religion as taught by the Priesthood for leading the King into a fantasy world? It is obvious that it was the indoctrination of a theology by the Priesthood that shaped the views and conceptions that formed in the mind of the King. In fairness, the King was the more powerful component and may have ordered the utterances be carved on the walls of his tomb. Although the priests were subservient to the King, they had already shaped his thoughts from an early childhood that he was the Son of

God, which had to inflate his vanity and gradually lead to the development of a distorted illusion of himself and his gods.

What we have learned by reviewing the development of Egypt's religion is that theology, like a scientific hypothesis, is constantly revised and updated in order to serve a useful purpose in society. Throughout Egypt's history, the Priesthood found it necessary to change their theology. The religion that man conceives must continually be revised as certain conceptions become worn out. This is a natural development and a healthy one to appreciate that as mankind's intelligence evolves to better understand the world and our relationship in the world - our conception of god will also change.

A conclusion screams out at us to understand that theology, taught by any religion is subject to change. Change is good; not because mistakes have been made but that improvements are conceived. We have learned that to survive in the modern world we must learn to adapt, to learn other skills as technology continues to push the limits of our abilities. So too, must religion change and evolve to keep pace with the growth of man's knowledge being acquired and enlightening his perceptions of the world. The Egyptian Priesthood had, in the course of many generations, revised their theology whereby they successfully blended Osirian and Solar faiths. Later, we found that a Pharaoh, Ikhnaton, initiated a change in the direction of belief that reduced the multiple god concept to one god. The Priesthood finally got the message and as we have seen in Part 1, 4.6.2.3, the concept of the universal god was well on its way and found its last update in the Hebrew Scriptures.





## **6.0 *Egyptian Roots of the Jewish Religion***

As early as the 1<sup>st</sup> Dynasty, the Egyptians had frequent encounters with foreign intrusions from territories east of the Delta region. The repeated influx of marauding Bedouin <sup>1</sup> were repelled by Egyptian kings during the earlier dynasties and the first invasion into a foreign land was led by Sesostris III of the 12<sup>th</sup> Dynasty. The brief summary outlined below describes the many Egyptian encounters with these Semitic people and others of Semitic origin that migrated from as Far East as Ur off the northern tip of the Persian Gulf westward to the Mediterranean Sea.

Sesostris III came to power after the death of his father, Sesostris II, in 1887 BC. He extended his father's conquests into Nubia and though Egypt did not claim sovereignty in Kush, by his 16<sup>th</sup> year, he had added two hundred miles of the Nile valley up to the 2<sup>nd</sup> cataract (Part 1, Figure 2-4). The gold captured in Kush was so plentiful that it became less valuable than silver. An aggressive pharaoh, Sesostris III led the first invasion into a foreign land that ended with the plundering of Syria. During a reign of thirty-eight years, he vigorously expanded his rule of a kingdom that embraced a thousand miles of Nile territory. After his death in 1849 BC, his coregent son, Amenemhet III assumed the throne. For forty-eight years this pharaoh maintained peace and prosperity throughout his flourishing kingdom. It was his efforts that completed a 27-mile wall along the Faiyum Lake to control the inflow of the Nile during its high periods and regulate the outflow of water to reclaim a total of 27,000 acres for irrigation. A healthy man to his death in 1801 BC, he planned and built a reservoir in the Sinai and the great wall of El Kab. Succeeded by his son, Amenemhet IV, this line of father to son pharaohs ended after his reign of nine years. Without

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<sup>1</sup> James H. Breasted, *A History of Egypt*, Pages 135, 135. The Beduin tribes were a Semitic people that settled in Southern Palestine and the Sinai. Many campaigns were conducted by the Egyptian kings since the 1<sup>st</sup> Dynasty and a decisive victory by Pepe I during the 6<sup>th</sup> Dynasty went as far north as the highlands of Palestine.

the benefit of producing a son, his reign was transferred to his father's daughter, Princess Sebeknefru-Re who ruled only four years. After 213-years, the 12<sup>th</sup> Dynasty came to an end in 1788 BC; it was Egypt's most lustrous and prosperous period and it marked the end of the Middle Kingdom.

During the 2<sup>nd</sup> Intermediate Period (Part 1, Figure 2-1), the 13<sup>th</sup> Dynasty had a short succession of pharaohs that claimed the throne based upon legitimate lineage. However, the fourth succession was interrupted by a 12<sup>th</sup> Dynasty name that was not of royal form. After this usurper, rapid dissolution followed as the provincial lords rose against each other in their bid for the throne. Without any dynastic division, the ceaseless struggles to gain the throne of the Pharaoh culminated into a list of at least 118 names of kings. This unsettled period of warring factions resulted in a lack of administration of the irrigation system, instability in the production of agricultural products, a reduction of the building and craftsmen trades and oppressive taxation. The breakdown of centralized control exposed Egypt as easy prey to foreign aggression.<sup>2</sup>

Before the end of the 13<sup>th</sup> Dynasty, the Abriu, Apiru or Habiru, a sect of Semitic tribes, migrated from Mesopotamia starting as far east as the city of Ur (Part 1, Figure 2-6). They wandered with their flocks according to the cycle of seasons and were culturally superior to such desert nomads as the Bedouin. They spoke a mix of Western Semitic languages of which Hebrew was one. Their exposure to the Sumerian cities along the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers served to advance their interest beyond raising animals. Many became merchants, employees of the government, servants, craftsmen and mercenaries. Others became rich, acquired land and settled down.<sup>3</sup> Although Egypt experienced constant conflict with the Semitic tribes of neighboring Palestine and Syria, they were a civilized people that had developed art and commodities that were actively traded. Egyptian commerce expanded

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<sup>2</sup> James H. Breasted, *A History of Egypt*, Pages 187-208.

<sup>3</sup> Karen Armstrong, *A History of God*, Page 11.

along the Phoenician coast to Asia Minor and reached the island of Cyprus (Crete).

After Moses led the Exodus from Egypt in 1250 BC, they became known as Israelites, after the name given to Jacob by his God (Genesis 32:27-28). Forty years later, the Israelite God commanded and assisted Moses in many warring campaigns to conquer Canaan and the lands up to the Euphrates River. They utterly destroyed and plundered many cities by killing all the men, women and children, and captured all their livestock.<sup>4</sup> In Canaan, the children of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph established the city of Israel. Preceding the Moses Exodus, destructive events to the Jewish people began when Joseph, the son of Jacob, died and a despotic pharaoh enslaved all of Jacob's seed. This pharaoh had succeeded a kind and gracious predecessor that had extended many benefits of authority, power and wealth to Joseph. After the 144 years of bondage in Egypt, freedom was finally achieved with the Moses Exodus in 1250 BC. But not long after, in 1223 BC the Israelites suffered defeat and destruction of Israel by the Pharaoh Merneptah, Ramses II 13<sup>th</sup> son (Refer to Note 4.).

Under Solomon's empire, destruction of Israel occurred again around 926 BC by the Pharaoh Sheshonk I. He ravaged all of Palestine, entered Jerusalem and despoiled it of the wealth accumulated during King Solomon's reign. Then under Sargon II, the Assyrians annihilated Israel as a nation in 722 BC and deported 27,000 of the inhabitants of Israel to Babylon. This deportation caused the assimilation of the Ten Tribes of Israel and their disappearance from history. This was followed by an invasion by the Pharaoh Necho in 609 BC after Scythian hordes weakened Assyrian control of Asia. Necho advanced as far as the Euphrates and having gained control of all Syria and Palestine, he exacted tribute from Judah. Not long after in 605 BC, Nebuchadnezzar the son of the Babylonian king Nabopolassar, met

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<sup>4</sup> Holy Bible, King James Ver., Deuteronomy 2:31-36. Note: Forty years from 1250 BC gives 1210 BC. Here again Historians and the Bible are in conflict since it was 1223 BC that Merneptah conquered Israel.

Necho at the northern frontier of the Euphrates and completely routed his army. In 596 BC, this Babylonian King besieged and captured Jerusalem and deported to Babylon 10,000 captives consisting of prominent families, 7,000 warriors and 1,000 craftsmen (Bible, II Kings 24:14-16). In another portion of the Bible, Jeremiah (52:28-30) cited a figure much lower as being 4,600 over three separate deportments, which occurred over several intervening years.

Repeating Necho's objective to regain control of Syria and Palestine, his grandson Apries dishonored the compact of his father, Psamtik II with Babylon. To cast off the sovereignty of Babylon, the king of Jerusalem, Zedekiah joined a coalition with Apries with the encouragement of the kings of Tyre, Sidon, Moab, Ammon and Judah. Although the Egyptian led forces were successful along the Phoenician coast by overtaking Sidon, Arvad and Tyre, they could not cope with the armies of Asia. In the summer of 586 BC, Nebuchadnezzar's army defeated the Egyptian coalition by razing Jerusalem to the ground, destroying the little Kingdom of Judah, and enforced another deportation of the Jews to Babylon. The Judean nation was annihilated and its captured king Zedekiah was taken to Nebuchadnezzar's camp where he witnessed the slaughter of his sons and then blinded.<sup>5</sup> In spite of these conquests, the religion of the Israelites had proved to invest them with a strong resiliency and has since spread to encompass people from other nations and cultures. Before its devastation in 586 BC, we will review how Jerusalem, a city in Judea, was able to survive through the conversion and forceful support of Josiah, a Babylonian king. This short period of time was crucial in the development of the Old Testament. These people came to be called Jews, which was associated with the land they occupied, Jerusalem and much of Judea. For consistency, the remainder of this book will refer to the Hebrew Religion as the Jewish Religion or Judaism.

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<sup>5</sup> James H. Breasted, *A History of Egypt*, Factual data and dates obtained from: Pages 465, 466 (1223 BC); 529, 530 (926 BC); 549, 550 (722 BC); 582-584 (609 and 605 BC); 584 (596 BC); 586, 587 (The fall of Jerusalem in 586 BC and Zedekiah was blinded after the slaughter of his sons).

The brief history above serves to put into perspective the vulnerability of Israel to foreign aggression and the continuous influx of foreign peoples that disrupted their developing nation. It also serves to illustrate the very close ties between Egypt and a Semitic people that constantly fought for their independence, be it on a conciliatory, coalition, or warring basis. Before we examine evidence that substantiates that the Jewish religion was influenced by and has its roots in the Egyptian religion, it will be instructive to present the character of two of the most revered men in Jewish history, Abraham and Moses. These two men have respectively earned the recognition as the “Father” and “Founder” of Judaism.

### **6.1 *Father of the Hebrew People***

Devout readers of the Old and New Testament were introduced to Abraham in the first book of the Bible, Genesis. Before the end of the 13<sup>th</sup> Dynasty, around 1675 BC, an invasion of the Delta by Semitic people had successfully gained control of Lower Egypt and upon entrenching themselves for 208 years, indelibly stamped the Egyptian language with their unmistakable dialect.<sup>1</sup> These invaders were called the Hyksos and they entered the eastern Delta along with tribesmen led by Shepherd Kings. The Bible reveals that there was a Shepherd King from the city of Ur, a descendant of the Chaldeans,<sup>2</sup> and his name was Terah. Terah had three sons: Abram, Nahor and Haran. Before the journey from Ur, Haran had a son named Lot and died. With Abram, his wife Sarai and Lot, Terah journeyed into Haran, a semibarren caravan center north of the Arabian Desert between the Euphrates and Tigris Rivers (Part 1, Figure 2-6). It was at the age of seventy-five that Abram’s god first spoke to him and promised him the land of Canaan, which included the land between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea (Part 1, Figure 3-1). From this point in the Bible we get to

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<sup>1</sup> James H. Breasted, *A History of Egypt*, Page 214.

<sup>2</sup> Funk & Wagnalls, *Britannica World Language Dictionary*. Note: A Chaldean is relative to an ancient Semitic people of the Tigris and Euphrates Valley, who conquered and ruled Babylon.

learn a bit about the character of Abram that rabbis, priests and mullahs are not proud to share.

### **6.1.1 What We Know and Don't Know About Abram**

In the biblical account of Genesis, we find that Abram gave his allegiance to an El (divinity) whom he called El-Shaddai, a god associated with a mountain. In Abram's first encounter with El-Shaddai he was promised the land of Canaan without any stipulations, a covenant, or a set of moral rules to live by. Although the Bible is not specific about Abram's moral values, we are led to believe that Abram followed the way of El-Shaddai, which was to do kindness, practice justice, and live a righteous life. Teachers of the Bible have also proclaimed that Abram was himself generous, hospitable and forgiving.<sup>1</sup> These are beliefs that cause many worshippers to envision Abram as a humble, wise and venerable old man. Yet, none of these attributes are described in the Genesis account of Abram, who is later renamed Abraham by his god.

The one event that the Bible gives the reader an appreciation of Abraham's compassion and verve was when he questioned his god's decision to destroy the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. Abraham said, "Wilt thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked? Peradventure, there be fifty righteous within the city: wilt thou also destroy and not spare the place for the fifty righteous that are therein?" When his god replied he will save the cities from destruction if there were to be found fifty righteous within the city, Abraham entreated his god to again reconsider and finally, after several negotiated requests from 50 to 45, to 40, to 30, to 20, Abraham got his god to concede to ten righteous people. This account was between Abraham and his god and it is the one event that reveals the compassionate nature of Abraham. But this show of humanity was exhibited with his god and not demonstrated with his fellow human beings. As father of the Hebrew people, the Bible does not portray Abraham with the qualities of humanity,

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<sup>1</sup> John B. Noss, *Man's Religions*, Page 358.

compassion and acts of charity for his fellow men. On the contrary, further examination will show that the Bible portrays a negative picture of Abraham.

### **6.1.2 What was Abraham's Status among the Semites?**

Few people acquainted with the Bible are aware that instead of a venerated and humble man, Abraham was an aggressive Shepherd King and a mercenary. The extent of Abraham's riches and authority over thousands of people within his tribe was so great that when he returned from his first visit to Egypt he had to give Lot the choice to take his flocks of sheep and herds of cattle to Jordan or Hebron in Canaan. Lot went to Jordan near the wicked city of Sodom and Abraham dwelled in Hebron (Genesis 13:1-18).

The mercenary endeavor was his coalition with the Semite kings Chedorlaomer, Tidal, Amraphel and Arioch and their success in battle over the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 14:9-11). When Abraham learned that Lot was taken captive in Sodom, he took 318 of his own trained servants,<sup>1</sup> born within his own tribe, and at night surrounded the enemy, killing many and pursued the rest into Hobah, a city to the left of Damascus (Genesis 14:14-17). In Genesis 23:6, Abraham is addressed as a mighty prince by the Hittite leader Ephron. Thus, we see Abraham as a powerful and respected Shepherd King that had thousands of people under his authority (add the 318 trained captains and their soldiers, the multiple wives, children and servants that belonged to the tribe). In addition to the vast numbers of people and the hundreds of sheep and cattle his herders attended to, Abraham's riches included camels, asses, silver and gold (Genesis 13:2; 24:35).

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<sup>1</sup> The historian Josephus indicates in *The Wars of the Jews*, Book V, Chapter 9, that there were 318 captains with an immense army under each of them.

### **6.1.3 Abraham Deceives the Pharaoh**

After several years in Hebron, the land of Canaan was struck by a grievous famine and Abraham journeyed with his wife Sarai (later named Sarah by his El) and Lot into the upper Delta of Egypt. In accordance with the timeline provided in Part 1, Figure 2-7, it is very likely that this trip occurred during or shortly after the invasion by the Hyksos and Shepherd Kings. It would appear that Abraham's visit took place after the invasion because the preparation for the takeover of Egypt had to require planning, the mobilization of men and horses, the production of warrior armor, swords and battle axes, and large amounts of water and food. Abraham, being a Shepherd King himself, may have participated in such an invasion and returned to Egypt with his family after the campaign was a success. Therefore, the pharaoh that Abraham had intended to meet may have been a Semite leader who now lived on the estate of the vanquished pharaoh and enjoyed the splendor and authority of the throne. Since Abraham was 75 years old when his El promised the land of Canaan for his people, it is possible that at least five years elapsed when he returned to Egypt, which would place his age at 80 years and his wife Sarah at 70 years (Genesis 17: 17 reveals Abraham was 10 years older than Sarah).

What unfolds in Genesis is the following preplanned lie that Abraham had his wife repeat to the Pharaoh in order to protect his life. In fairness, his reasoning is provided below:

*"Behold now, I know that thou art a fair woman to look upon: Therefore it shall come to pass, when the Egyptians shall see thee, that they shall say, This is his wife: and they will kill me, but they will save thee alive. Say, I pray thee, thou art my sister: that it may be well for me for thy sake; and my soul shall live because of thee."* (Genesis 12:11-14)

Abraham's wife complied with his lie and it was his insurance against being killed if the Pharaoh desired her. As a sister, she would be available to any advances on her person. This insurance should not be



necessary if, in fact, the land was now in control by Semites. But because the Semite coalition consisted of Hyksos and Shepherd Kings that may not have known Abraham, this precaution seemed necessary in Abraham's mind. What transpired was that the Pharaoh was pleased with Sarah's beauty and took her into his house. In return, the Pharaoh gave Abraham sheep, oxen, asses, and male and female servants. As for Sarah, she received asses and camels. This deceptive deed was not approved by Abraham's god and the Pharaoh's house incurred "great plagues". The Pharaoh called for Abraham and implored him saying, "What is this that thou hast done to me? Why didst thou not tell me that she was thy wife?" The Pharaoh was wise enough to answer for Abraham and sent him and his wife away with all of their possessions, including his gifts, under the protection of his men (Genesis 12: 14-20).

The deceptive lie perpetrated by Abraham must have proved to be an embarrassment to him for the Pharaoh not only spared his life but allowed him and his wife to leave with all their possessions. What is very disconcerting is that Abraham should place his wife in such a compromising situation where she was available to the sexual advances of a stranger. The outcome proved to be very advantageous for it appears that Abraham's gifts from the good Pharaoh were not relinquished. This episode illuminates the character of Abraham as amenable to falsehoods to achieve a practical solution even at the expense of his wife. It is clearly apparent that Abraham's god was remiss in promising him a nation without imposing a moral code, nor admonishing him for lying.

#### **6.1.4 Again Abraham Perpetuates a Lie**

At the age of ninety, Sarah is again put into a compromising position by Abraham when they journeyed into Gerar, a town between Kadesh and Shur in Canaan. Abraham told Abimelech, the king of Gerar, that Sarah was his sister. Abimelech sent for Sarah and took her into his house. But Abraham's god appeared in the king's dream and threat-

ened that he was a dead man for taking a man's wife. Abimelech rose early in the morning and called all his servants to tell of his dream which caused fear within his whole household. When the king confronted Abraham and asked the same question as the deceived Pharaoh, Abraham said:

*"Because I thought, surely the fear of god is not in this place; and they will slay me for my wife's sake. And yet indeed she is my sister; she is the daughter of my father, but not the daughter of my mother; and she became my wife." (Genesis 20:11-12)*

With this reasoning Abraham had his wife say that he was her brother wherever they went. But this was a compounded lie because earlier in Genesis, 11: 26, we learn that Abraham's father Terah had only three sons. Genealogy is quite specific in the Bible yet there was no mention of any daughters by Terah, which would have been cited even if he had children with another wife or concubine. The outcome of the king's conversation with Abraham was a show of good will and generosity. The king gave Abraham his wife along with gifts of sheep, oxen, male and female servants.

Once again, we find that Abraham used his wife, even at the age of ninety, as insurance to save him from the possibility of being killed by somebody more powerful who desired Sarah. It is to be remembered that Abraham himself was a powerful and rich Shepherd King. For him to put his wife in a compromising situation, when he very likely could have offered many female servants that excelled in youth and beauty is somewhat unbelievable. More astonishing is the fact that the god of Abraham does not severely scold him for lying and compromising his wife to the desires of strangers.

### **6.1.5 Why Does the Covenant Requires Circumcision?**

At the age of ninety-nine, Abraham is visited by his god who repeats the same promise made when he was 75 years old. This time, how-

ever, there is a stipulation with his god's covenant. Stated below, it requires that all males be circumcised.

*And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God (Genesis 17:8).. . .*

*This is my covenant, which ye shall keep, between me and you and thy seed after thee; Every man child among you shall be circumcised (Genesis 17:10).*

Here again, we have a promise made by Abraham's god without any requirement to follow a moral code of conduct. Not even the command that Abraham and his seed shall worship him with all their heart, with all their soul, and with all their might. As a descendant of Noah, the only requirement given by his god besides being fruitful was, to multiply and replenish the earth (Genesis 9:1,7) as stated in Genesis 9: 6. It bears repeating because it is the one violation many leaders have ignored by exhorting their people to shed the blood of their neighbors.

***Whoso sheddeh man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of GOD made HE man.***

It seems remiss for the god of Abraham to promise land already inhabited by another people without insisting upon a moral code to conduct their lives. It was not until Moses walked out of Egypt with the children of Israel that Scripture, called the Book of the Covenant (Genesis 24:7), was written to include not only the Ten Commandments but also all the judgments and ordinances of his god.<sup>1</sup> It therefore seems strange that the promise of land did not include a moral code but rather, only the practice of performing circumcision. But this is not a new and unique requirement. The practice of circumcision has been performed by the Egyptians more than a thou-

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<sup>1</sup> Holy Bible, King James Ver., Ex 24:3-4. The commandments, laws, and judgments written by Moses are in Exodus, Sections 20-23 and 25-30.

sand-years before the Hebrew god imposed it in His covenant with Abraham. But then, we have learned of the practical solutions that Abraham was able to resort to, such as lying and compromising his wife to save his life. It is apparent that when the Hyksos and Shepherd Kings invaded Egypt, they not only dressed and lived as the Pharaohs did - they also took on their practice of circumcision as it was thought to assist in cleanliness.

Another very practical reason for performing circumcision was Semites taking Egyptian women as wives after their invasion of Egypt. The integration and assimilation of Semites with Egyptians became a common matter and to accommodate the marriage of these two peoples – circumcision was a very practical solution. Throughout the centuries that followed, we have found that intermarriage between these two groups of people became a common and acceptable reality. Surely the daughters of Pharaohs were princesses that were highly esteemed and were received in marriage by Semitic Kings including King Solomon who built a palace for an Egyptian princess. Would an Egyptian woman lie with a Semite who was uncircumcised? Abraham, the practical man, foresaw the need to stipulate circumcision of males for his people and it occurred as a natural consequence of convenience rather than a godly command. Does a loving god need to distinguish his people by they cutting off the foreskin of a penis, which is always covered in public anyway or, does God distinguish his people by actions of righteousness, truth and charity?

#### **6.1.6 Use of God for Material Gain**

We have learned that Abraham was a practical and self-serving man. This was evidenced by his desire to preserve his life by compromising his wife to the lusts of other powerful leaders. The Bible does not reveal any gifts of charity or acts of love towards his fellow men. Still, in the Old Testament God commits a promise to Abraham to give unto his seed the land of Canaan from the river of Egypt unto the great river Euphrates for an everlasting possession. This covenant with Abraham

and his seed was made by God without any moral code to follow. Is it somewhat remarkable that Abraham and his seed were promised the land of Canaan without any commandments of love, charity and righteousness? The worship of Semitic gods was prevalent during Abraham's lifetime and the logical answer may be that the Hebrews were not ready to accept the 'One God'. This concept was introduced 315-years later by the Pharaoh Ikhnaton.<sup>1</sup> But even when Moses received the commandments from God, they were not ready to worship Him for they molded a golden calf for their God.

It is with great sadness that this author should announce an indictment against the Father of the Hebrew people - that he used God to invade land occupied by another people. The invasion may have been justified from the very strong possibility that the Hebrews themselves once occupied that same territory, possibly not in total but in part. But would God command the shedding of human blood by ruthlessly acquiring the territory of another people unless they initiated bloodshed first? How is it that the Hebrews violated the very first commandment given to Noah in Genesis 9:6 ? The Bible confirms that God himself kept his promise to Abraham by sanctioning and commanding Moses to invade Canaan.<sup>2</sup> It is a sad reality that aggressive leaders, such as Moses, have used God as justification to kill other human beings. This has been a sickening reality even in our own time. Both religious and world leaders have found it profitable to mislead people in the name of God to acquire power and wealth.

## **6.2 *Founder of the Judaic Religion***

Moses is the most popular name that surfaces in all of the monotheistic religions, and rightly so, for his god not only freed his people from bondage – his god made him the Founder of the Jewish religion. The

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<sup>1</sup> The 315 years is based upon Abraham's first encounter with his God and the year Ikhnaton first assumed the throne (1680 -1375 BC).

<sup>2</sup> Holy Bible, King James Ver., Deuteronomy 1:5-8, 30; 2:31-35; 3:1-7.

first five of 24 books of the Hebrew Bible, known as the Torah <sup>1</sup> or Pentateuch, are attributed to Moses as the word of God. It is after the first book that the Bible describes the events of this extraordinary man. Moses communed with his God on a one-on-one basis and the impact of their relationship assured three objectives. One, to insure his God was worshipped as the sole God that created heaven and earth. Another was to specify a house of worship and all its articles with specific dimensions, colors and materials used to conduct sacrifices for his God and services for his people. The third most important objective was to give his people commandments and rules to worship their God and conduct their lives with a high sense of morality.

Before Moses, there was no Scripture and no commandments given to the Hebrews except for the covenant Noah received from his God. This covenant stated God's sanction for his most proud creation - man. Human beings have consistently violated his sanction and even today many religions and governments have failed to inoculate man's impulse against killing another human being. It appears in Section 6.1.5 above and bears repeating:

*Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed:  
for in the image of God made He man.*

In the following subsections, we will learn what is rarely disseminated about Moses. We have already been introduced to his greatest contribution from his God, the Ten Commandments (Part 1, Table 4-3). However, they are but a subset of 613 commandments or mitzvot given

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<sup>1</sup> The Torah originally referred to the teaching or laws written in the first five books of the Bible. Later, the term Torah came to include the oral law or Talmud, which includes explanations, interpretations, elaborations and extensions provided by rabbis so that the Torah now means the whole of Jewish teaching of what God commands. One would think that God's words needs no interpretation but elaborations and extensions were found to be necessary to keep an ancient document in concert with advances of a more civilized world.

by Moses' god and listed by Maimonides.<sup>2</sup> But this list from the Torah does not contain the commandments that God specified for the items required in the tabernacle to worship him and the manner to conduct animal sacrifices to atone for sins. Such items as the ark of the testimony, the mercy seat above the ark, two angelic cherubims at the two ends of the mercy seat, an alter for burnt offerings, an alter for incense, a candlestick, and a table for vessels, dishes and spoons are specified with precise measurements and commanded to be overlaid or made with pure gold.<sup>3</sup> A review of the commands given in the Hebrew Bible far exceed the 613 commands by Maimonides but may have been omitted by many rabbis for reasons perhaps of economics (gold is not easy to come by) and embarrassment (animal sacrifices for the atonement of sins).

### **6.2.1 What Do We Know About Moses?**

The Hebrews have every right to be proud of Moses for giving them freedom from bondage and development of the Torah through his intimate communion with God. Yet, the rabbis are careful not to venerate Moses too highly for they believe that veneration belongs to God alone as stated in the Shema ("Hear or Listen") below:

*The Lord our God is one Lord: And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.*

Holy Bible, Deuteronomy 6:4-5.

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<sup>2</sup> Maimonides was a great Spanish rabbi who lived during the 12<sup>th</sup> century between 1135 and 1204. His birth name is Moses ben Maimon.

<sup>3</sup> Holy Bible, King James Ver., Exodus. Commands for tabernacle items are specified in Chapters 25-27 and, Chapters 28-30 specify religious observances. Chapter 28 provides mitsvot for garments worn by priests. Chapter 29 has mitsvot for performance of animal sacrifices for atonement of sins. In Chapter 30, mitsvot are given for the holy ointment used to anoint the priests, tabernacle and holy items. Chapter 30 also provides a mitzvah for holy perfume to be used only for the Lord.

Moses, more than any other prophet, has given the world the Book of the Covenant; Scripture that provides the commands of God for our monotheistic religions. Indeed, for this he is a very great prophet. He far exceeds Abraham as a man of God and yet it appears that Abraham is revered or esteemed as much, if not more. Could it be that the rabbis prefer to draw little attention to this giant of a man? There may be reasons for this lack of reverence, which is the possibility that he may have been an Egyptian rather than a Hebrew; and that he committed impulsive acts that are not laudable for a man of God.

There are secularists who believe the story of Moses' infancy is a myth and reject that he even existed. They do not accept events as: Moses rescued by the Pharaoh's daughter by retrieving a basket floating in the reeds of the Nile, the astonishing wonders of the ten plagues and parting of the Red Sea. But the validity of events are not sufficient for rejecting the development of the Book of the Covenant, which served as the core of the first five books of the Bible. The very fact that a vast body of Israelites left Egypt must be taken into account. There is question as to whether the Moses Exodus was a religious revolution, which had to include other racial groups of people to number more than 600,000 thousand men. This number does not include women and children <sup>1</sup>. After Joseph invited his family into Egypt, with approval of the Pharaoh, there were only 215-years that the Hebrews spent in Egypt. To produce a prodigious number that exceeds 600,000 men excluding women and children, says a lot for members of one family to multiply in a foreign land. It is surprising that after so many centuries, the deduction that the Moses Exodus may have included other ethnic people has not occurred to the rabbis.

Let us accept that Moses, a Hebrew baby, was spared from death by being discovered among the reeds by the daughter of the Pharaoh. He

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<sup>1</sup> Holy Bible, King James Ver., Ex 12:37-38. Line 37 indicates 600,000 men, besides children and, women were not even mentioned. Line 38 emphasizes that a mixed multitude went with the 600,000 men, which indicates people other than the Israelites were part of the Moses Exodus.



was, therefore, very likely raised with sisters and brothers in a palace with the finest education any man could receive in Egypt. He had to be learned in geometry, measurements and weights, and acquired skills in the craftsmanship of different materials. More importantly, he was taught how to write, an asset he would later employ to record his conversations with his god. The instruction that had to influence his thinking the most was having been taught the traditions and scriptures of the Egyptian religion. Having been born 28 years after the death of Ikhnaton (Part 1, Figure 2-7), Moses had to be exposed to the novel concept of one god. But here we encounter another questionable account of the Bible. How is it that Moses lived in the Pharaoh's palace for more than three decades and neglects to indicate that Pharaoh's name? Even the name of the Princess who saved his life and gave him the comfort of a mother is omitted.<sup>2</sup> Could it be that the author of this account felt he could not provide these names because, in fact, the story would be found out to truly be a fabrication?

The omission of a Pharaoh's name occurs in two other very important periods during the Hebrews' 215 years sojourn in Egypt. This is surprisingly unconscionable when Moses or the biblical author could accurately remember the names of family members and even kings that formed a coalition with Abraham as a mercenary. Yet, pharaohs who existed for many years and had a profound impact on the lives of the Hebrews are not identified. The Bible relates that Joseph became second in command under the Pharaoh's rule and though he and his family enjoyed the graciousness of the same Pharaoh for over 70 years,<sup>3</sup> the author of the Bible again neglects to name this honorable Pharaoh.

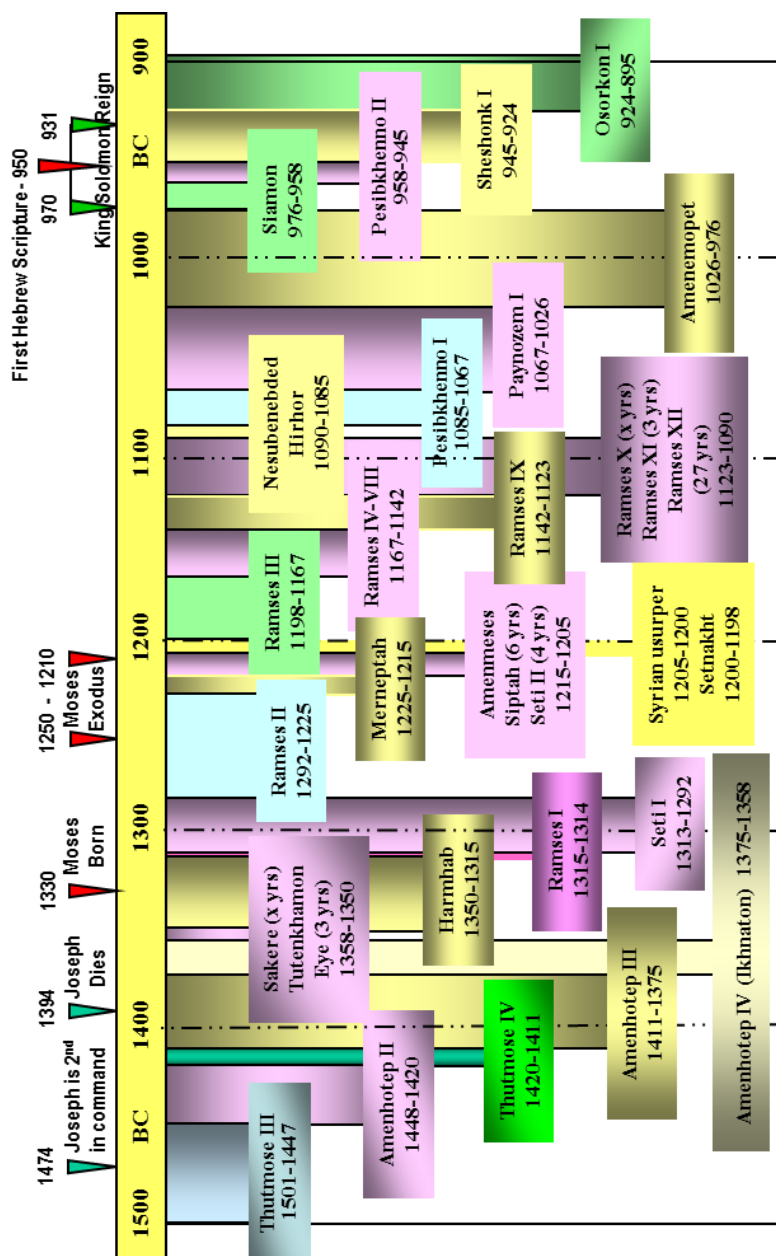
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<sup>2</sup> Flavius Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, Book II, Chapters 9 and 10, the king's daughter was identified as Thermuthis but in both Chapters Flavius did not provide the name of her father, the Pharaoh. Flavius apparently did not know who her father was for lack of documentation.

<sup>3</sup> Holy Bible, King James Ver., Ge 50:22 indicates Joseph died at the age of 110 years and was 39 years old when Jacob and his family came to Egypt.

Figure 6-1 illustrates significant Hebrew events that occurred during the reign of the Pharaohs. This timeline indicates that Joseph's Pharaoh who ruled was Thutmose III. In Section 3.3.5 we learned that this Pharaoh conducted 17 campaigns over a 20-year effort to subdue the Palestinian and Syrian kinglets and warlords. It would be ludicrous to believe this very capable leader needed the advice of a Hebrew named Joseph. Also, the Bible reveals that upon Joseph's death, the Pharaoh who came to power reneged the honorable treatment formerly given to the Hebrews and enslaved them. According to Figure 6-1, this would have occurred under the rule of Amenhotep III. But he was most amenable in his relationships with the Semites of Palestine and Syria. At this time, all the powerful countries: Syria-Palestine, Babylonia, Assyria, Mitanni and Alasa-Cyprus recognized the practical reality to be on friendly terms with Egypt. Here again, the biblical author would be in error. For it would depict Amenhotep III or his son Ikhnaton as the despotic ruler. For these Pharaohs, this is an impossibility.

The other important period was the Moses Exodus. It was at this time that the Hebrews experienced their most memorable events after 144 years of bondage (from Joseph's death to the Exodus). The Pharaoh who ordered the death of every male Hebrew born underwent with his people ten wonders/plagues, the death of all the Egyptian firstborn and finally, his death in the Red Sea along with his army. As memorable and as indelible those events were for the Israelites, again the author of the Bible fails to give the Pharaoh's name. Figure 6-1 shows that the 1250 BC Moses Exodus had occurred around the middle of the most notable ruler, the Pharaoh, Ramses II. How is it possible for the author of the Bible to not name a ruler that was in power for 67 years? The omission of the Pharaoh's name, in three distinguishing periods in Jewish history, does appear to signify an exercise in deception. Could it be that the Israelite priests were so overcome with their mission of righteousness that they fabricated a story to illustrate their god was the sole god that made a covenant with their people?



**Figure 6-1. Hebrew Events During the Reign of the Pharaohs.**

The possibility that Moses was Egyptian has been surfaced by many knowledgeable men starting with the fact that mose (forms Moses with the last “s”) is the Egyptian word for child. The Egyptians use this word to derive a name that infers a proud reference of the father to his child. Some Egyptian kings have named their sons with the attachment ‘mose’ to mean “child of” such as Ahmose, Thutmose I, Thutmose II, Thutmose III, Thutmose IV, Ptahmose the High Priest of Amon, and the vizier to Amenhotep III, Ramose. This observation does not prove Moses was Egyptian because it would be natural for the Pharaoh’s daughter to call the baby Mose without attaching the family name. To attach the family name to Moses would be an affront to her father since, being a Hebrew baby, it would not be acceptable to put the royal throne at risk with the possibility that he could someday lay claim to become king.

As a young prince in the royal palace of the Pharaoh, Moses learned the rudiments of warfare and established himself as a strategic military leader. Appointed General of the Army by the Pharaoh to retake the territories lost to the Ethiopians, Moses demonstrated his sagacity by a stratagem that allowed him to safely march his army over land populated by snakes and thereby surprise his enemy. He had deployed ibis, a venerated bird of the Egyptians that are natural killers of snakes, by placing them in baskets. Upon reaching the habitat of reptiles he let the birds out to kill and devour them. Invading the unawares enemy, Moses army beat them in battle and overtook their cities. They then advanced to destroy the city of Saba, the royal city of the Ethiopians. Tharbis, Princess of the Ethiopian King, saw and admired Moses for his great courage and presented an offer of marriage. The offer was accepted by Moses with the condition that he save the city from destruction.<sup>4</sup> In this bit of history provided by the historian Josephus, no mention was made whether Moses honored this marriage by returning to Egypt with his wife, Tharbis.

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<sup>4</sup> Flavius Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, Book II, Chapter 10, How Moses made War With the Ethiopians.

The conjecture that Moses was Egyptian is not wholly supported by the fact that Moses required his older brother Aaron to speak to the Hebrews. It was simply that he was an educated man with an Egyptian accent who lacked the vernacular of the Semites to be an effective and convincing speaker. To infer Aaron was needed by Moses because he had a speech impediment would be a stretch of the imagination. Moses was reputed to have been an articulate, sagacious and skillful speaker who could readily move the multitude by his discourses <sup>5</sup>. It is very unlikely that a leader and general of Pharaoh's army would have had a speech impediment.

Another possibility exists of Moses being Egyptian. There is the supposition that Moses could have been the son of a prosperous nobleman or an Egyptian priest. Being in close contact with the nobility and certainly versed in Egyptian religion, Moses had to be exposed to the more advanced concepts of god. As revealed in Figure 2-7 (Part 1), Moses was born about 28 years after the death of the innovative Pharaoh, Ikhnaton. As noted in Section 3.5.4, we found that the one god concept, created by Ikhnaton, was put into practice in the city he established, Akhetaton. Just north of this city lies Memphis and the city On (Heliopolis) where the one god concept of Ikhnaton had survived with the more advanced schools of religious thought being taught to aspiring priests. The adage that a good idea cannot die applies and it is very possible Moses was an adherent to this new conception of god. Coming from a noble family, Moses was a man of great leadership abilities, intelligence and planning skills. Through the years he had become so committed to this new concept that he perceived himself as a capable leader to improve the morality of thousands of people by leading the quest to worship and fear this most powerful god. This conjecture was introduced by Sigmund Freud but may not be compatible with Josephus' historical account that Moses was appointed

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<sup>5</sup> Flavius Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, Book IV, From the Rejection of that Generation to the Death of Moses, Chapter 2, The Sedition of Corah and of the Multitude Against Moses, and Against His Brother, Concerning the Priesthood, refer to Passage 4.

General of the Pharaoh's Army. Moses brought up in the palace of a Pharaoh may have greater validity than that of a nobleman because his position as a young prince and his close association with the Pharaoh would make him the more likely candidate to be appointed General of the Army.<sup>6</sup>

The question of whether Moses was Egyptian or Hebrew does not matter. In either case, Moses was an intelligent man who developed a strong interest in religion and a motivating desire to use his talents and abilities that would initiate a religious movement – a new direction that would elevate people to a higher conception of god. Using the Bible's account, Moses was astute to soon realize that he was Hebrew for as he grew older he had to notice his skin tone, body and physical features were not Egyptian. He had to secretly resent that his Egyptian brothers had all the advantages of succeeding to the throne even though he felt he had more natural ability in the use of his mind. There was possibly a need to feel his mother's love which may not have been equally given by the Princess who naturally favored her own born sons and daughters. Consequently, as Moses grew older he associated himself more and more with the Jewish people until one day he came to assist a Hebrew slave and his unconscious resentment caused him to kill an Egyptian taskmaster.

Moses, a highly educated man, had the tools of thought and a virile mind that could not waste away. The religious concepts he absorbed through his Egyptian upbringing had to be put to use. As a natural leader, he was emboldened to lead thousands of people out of Egypt who had also been exposed to the concept of one god. After the death of Ikhnaton, the idea of one god had to germinate in the minds of the elite, the priesthood, craftsmen, artisans and workers who were exposed to the monuments, statues and temples built in his honor. One to two generations elapsed for this wonderful concept of god to disseminate throughout the land. After 108 years from Ikhnaton's death, the

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<sup>6</sup> Sigmund Freud, *Moses and Monotheism*, Pages 31 and 32.

people were ripe for a religious revolution led by the impulsive and energetic Moses.

### **6.2.2 The Impulsive Sins of Moses**

An apologetic sense is felt in my having to reveal the side of Moses that is not laudable for such a great man. Many men have become great because of their courageous actions and/or dedication to years of sacrifice to benefit the human race. Moses was such a man. He had to overcome ignorance and religious traditions practiced by people for many hundreds of years. His frustration and impatience with an undisciplined people who resisted his objectives to worship his god and follow a moral code had caused him to commit impulsive acts that holy men would cringe at and deem as sinful.

In Exodus 2:11-15, Moses came to the assistance of a Hebrew slave being beaten by an Egyptian taskmaster. The resentment harbored by his misgivings of his worth and potential in the royal palace, and mistreatment of one of his people, had angered him to kill the Egyptian. This killing deserves no justification but considering that the god he would learn to know on a personal level had not yet entered his life, there is the sympathetic notion to forgive Moses for this impulsive act of murder.

Another impulsive act by Moses that is not forgivable was his throwing upon the ground and breaking the two tablets of stone written by the finger of God.<sup>1</sup> Before Moses committed this impulsive act he had a lengthy communion with his God. Only three months after leaving Egypt, God himself descended upon Mount Sinai in fire and after the whole mount quaked greatly He announced the Ten Commandments. He then commanded Moses to cite His many commandments, judg-

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<sup>1</sup> Holy Bible, King James Version, Exodus 31:18.

ments and ordinances to the people.<sup>2</sup> After Moses wrote the words of his Lord into the Book of the Covenant, he recited them to his people whereupon they all agreed to be obedient and do what the Lord said.<sup>3</sup> A week later, the Lord told Moses to go up Mount Sinai to receive tablets of stone on which He wrote commandments for Moses to teach his people. Moses communed with his Lord for 40 days and nights.<sup>4</sup>

The Lord told Moses to go down to his people for they have corrupted themselves by turning away from His commands. Angered, God said, “they have made them a molten calf, and have worshipped it, and sacrificed thereunto,” and said, “These *be* thy gods, O Israel, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt.” When Moses returned to the camp he heard them singing and dancing around the calf. The anger waxed hot within him and he cast the tablets on the ground below the mount. It is understandable that such anger should well up within Moses but to toss the tablets, written by the hand of God, upon the ground says very little for his esteem and reverence for his God. The desecration of God’s tablets by Moses after he was told by God to teach his people commandments He had written is not only an affront and violation of God’s request – it is a sacrilege. This impulsive sin may reveal an implication that it was not God but Moses who wrote the commandments. It appears to me that this is the case because Moses did not harbor fear of God nor did he show deep respect for God’s commandments, even with the awareness that they were engraved in stone by the finger of God.

Verification of the impulsive nature of Moses was the order he gave to the children of Levi to kill about 3,000 men.<sup>5</sup> This sinful act occurred shortly after his Lord announced the Ten Commandments, after Moses

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<sup>2</sup> Holy Bible, King James Version, Exodus 19:1, 17, 18. Exodus 20:1-17 (Ten Commandments) and Exodus, Chapters 20 - 23 contains many more commandments and ordinances.

<sup>3</sup> Holy Bible, King James Version, Exodus 24:4-8.

<sup>4</sup> Holy Bible, King James Version, Exodus 24:12-18. Exodus, Chapters 25 through 31 contains many more commandments and ordinances.

<sup>5</sup> Holy Bible, King James Version, Exodus 32:25-28.



wrote the words of his Lord in the Book of the Covenant and recited it to his people, and after he communed with his Lord for forty days and nights. Moses had the benefit of communing directing with his God, writing and reciting His commandments, and yet he violated one of God's prime commands, "Thou shalt not kill". This was one of the *first* commands his Lord gave when He established his covenant with Noah:

***Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made He man. (Genesis 9:6)***

The act of killing 3,000 men was not committed in response to retribution of any people killed – no blood of man was shed. In Exodus 32:27 Moses implicates his God by stating, Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, "Put every man his sword by his side, and go in and out from gate to gate throughout the camp, and slay every man his brother, and every man his companion, and every man his neighbor." Take note that the Bible does not indicate that God commanded Moses to say those words but only states what Moses said. This statement by Moses, that implicates God, is an unforgivable lie. God would not defy His own command, *Thou shalt not kill*, unless the killer had shed another man's blood. Truly, God is consistent and will never violate His own commands. To violate His own command would compromise His integrity and honor to be worshipped as God.

The murder of 3,000 men is not to be taken lightly as a justifiable act sanctioned by God. God had made it very clear that, "Thou shalt not kill" and the taking of a person's life would only be permissible if that person killed another human being. Truly, Moses committed another impulsive and sinful act. This is another instance where the conjecture that Moses, or an over zealous priest, wrote the Bible without any direction or revelation from God. One should pause at this juncture and reflect upon this seemingly impertinent and unholy conjecture. The impulsive acts by Moses gives credence to such a conclusion for he definitely was a man committed to his beliefs and, having written the

words formulated within his own mind, he defended his words to the point of violence. The murder of 3,000 people reveals that all three religions – Judaism, Christian and Islamic religions have, and will, initiate force to take the lives of *nonbelievers and heretics*. This is a shameful reality for followers of all three religions who worship one-universal God. Yet, religious leaders from these religions have ignored and disobeyed God's command: ***Thou shalt not kill***. Perhaps leaders of these religions need to evaluate instruction in their houses of worship to insure they instill love of brothers and sisters of *any* religion that extols a God of righteousness and love. Just as the three religions offer separate paths to abide by God's words to lead wholesome and righteous lives, so do other religions offer different paths to aspire to improve our nature as human beings.

### ***6.3 Judaism has its Roots in the Egyptian Religion***

Now that we have learned more about the 'Father' and 'Founder' of the Jewish religion, we will see for ourselves what many people have suspected but kept to themselves for fear of reprisal. The maxim, 'give credit where credit is due' has always been my credo because I believe in showing appreciation for outstanding work by those who have contributed to a laudable effort. This book is replete with references to the great minds that have brought my thinking to a level of awareness that allows me to share some truths that have surfaced. I am indebted to them and hope these truths will serve to enlighten others to act as courageously as have the people identified in "Reasons for this Book".

Giving credit where credit is due has been lacking in the religious instruction provided by rabbis, priests and mullahs. The adherents of these religions have given no acknowledgement of the influence that the Egyptians have had in the development of their scriptures and indeed – their God. Yet, in all fairness, it was Jesus Christ who

acknowledged the Egyptian God, Amen, when he revealed to Saint John the Devine: <sup>1</sup>

*And unto the angel of the church of the Laod-i-ce'ans write;  
These things saith the **Amen**, the faithful and true witness,  
the beginning of the creation of God;*

It is healthy for the monotheistic religions to be proud of the thread that brings their worshippers to the very beginnings of their beliefs. There will be an acceptance that our God slowly brings us to a higher conception of Him as we evolve into more sophisticated human beings. God is not a static concept but an integral part of the human spirit. He must continue to reveal to human beings the higher levels of consciousness through the righteous teachers in our world. Just as the Israelites learned from, and upgraded the scriptures of the Egyptian religion, so must our scriptures be revised and improved to keep pace with the evolution of humans in a changing world. Below, we will take note of the many ideas, concepts and passages borrowed by the Judaic religion.

### **6.3.1 In the Beginning**

It was noted in Part 1, Section 3.5.4 that the hymn written by Ikhnaton, *The Hymn to Aton*, had cited the line . . . .

Thou Living Aton, the Beginning of Life !

This powerful phrase that associates God to the beginning of life enables the author of Genesis to simply start with heaven and earth and behold, he writes much later in time, around 950 BC:

In the beginning, God created the heaven and the earth.

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<sup>1</sup> Holy Bible, King James Version, Revelation 3:14.

This is a fine example of revising a concept or restating an idea. This idea was already cast by the Egyptians in the 19<sup>th</sup> Dynasty, around 1350 to 1200 BC. In Part 1, 4.6.2.2, under the, The Egyptian Concept of Creation, we learned that the Re-Isis ‘Unknown Name’ myth already developed two wonderful ideas: one, that their Egyptian god was the divine sole god who came into being by himself and two, he made heaven and earth. So, the first line of Genesis is not original but a restatement of what the Egyptians already believed. Let us compare the first line of Genesis with the second line of Ikhnaton’s, *The Hymn to the Aton* and first passage of the Re-Isis myth.

**Genesis 1:1** - *In the beginning God created the heaven and earth.*

**Ikhnaton’s Hymn:** - *O living Aton, the beginning of Life!*

**Re-Isis Myth:** - *The SPELL of the divine god, who came into being by himself, who made heaven, earth, water, the breath of life, fire, gods, men, small and large cattle, creeping things, birds, and fishes, the king of men and gods at one time, (for whom) the limits (go) beyond years, abounding in names, unknown to that (god) and unknown to this (god).*

**What is of further interest is that the Moses God created the same life forms attributed to the Egyptian God in the Re-Isis Unknown Name myth.** Notice the use of the same nouns: heaven and earth, water, birds and fishes, cattle and creeping things, and of course – man.

In Genesis, God created heaven and earth, the waters, birds and creatures of the sea, cattle and creeping things, and man in His image. **The order is not exactly the same as the Re-Isis myth,** but the varieties of life forms are the same. Certainly, Genesis provides a conceptual advance because it does not refer to other gods. Yet, much credit must be given to the authorship of Genesis for the wonderful ideas and phrases of thought that have been borrowed from Egyptian theology and have been improved upon.

The Re-Isis Unknown Name myth offers a truth not understood by the authors of the Old Testament in their development of the *Creation* in Genesis. The focus of Genesis in the Bible was the creation of Adam and Eve and a very laborious and detailed lineage that leads to the twelve tribes of the Hebrew people. The record of births in the Old Testament has in fact lead chronologists and religious scholars to estimate the Creation of heaven and earth to around 4004 BC. But we know factual and empirical evidence exists that prove this date is ludicrous. The Egyptians had a truer understanding that time is not a boundary or parameter in defining when god first existed or when the solar system was first formed. Note the words given in the Re-Isis Unknown Name myth emphasizes limits that go beyond years:

*. . . . the divine god, who came into being by himself, who made heaven, earth, water, the breath of life, . . . . , (for whom) the limits (go) beyond years, . . . .*

The depth of the Egyptian mind in searching truth is astounding for they were wise enough to comprehend that time is unbounded and limitless in their conception of god. It is unfortunate that the Hebrew people so much wanted to be the chosen people of the one god that they inserted with great efforts a lineage that is associated with the creation of Adam and Eve.

These observations surface another reason to acknowledge and honor the Egyptian religion. It is this religion that has provided the ground-work for our monotheistic religions by the very evolution of their god, scriptures and hymns.

### **6.3.2 Born in Sin is a Blasphemous Doctrine.**

Having touched upon the creation story of Adam and Eve above, it is incumbent to clarify the doctrine of original sin; guilt inflicted upon worshippers of the one God. Many Catholic and Christian sects have misconstrued the Judaic scripture that relates the creation of Adam and

Eve. Let us go directly to the scripture of the Bible, Genesis 3:22-23. After Eve and Adam disobeyed God by biting into the apple of the forbidden tree, they were sent out of the Garden of Eden and admonished:

*And the Lord God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever: Therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the Garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken.*

You will note there is no condemnation by God that Adam and Eve will henceforth bare children in sin. God made it clear that because man now has the ability to know good and evil, that he has been endowed with the ability to make choices, and that because he is capable of becoming like God – he was to lose immortality. Adam and Eve were therefore forbidden to live in the Garden of Eden and labor for the rest of their lives. There is no guilt laid upon Adam and Eve and their offspring for eternity!

It would be a foolish God to create man in His own image and then have the children of His creation to be born in sin. It is nonsense and demeaning to profane God's creation and teach that our children are born in sin because they have the wisdom to know good and evil! As a father, I taught my children to have self esteem, not to be so proud as to think they are better than others, to accept all people whether they are gifted with more attributes or born with disabilities and less talents, to be the best they can be, lead their lives discerning truth, admire and practice integrity, and more importantly, their mother and father loves them and will assist them as much as is humanly possible with fairness towards others. This means that as a father nepotism is not to be favored. By example, it is the mother and father who set the standards of their children so that, they in turn, will set the standards for their children. To accomplish these objectives, we could not teach them that they were born in sin. Whether they accept our God of worship,

another religion, or are agnostics and simply believe “It’s nice to be nice”, it is their decision – a decision not founded in guilt and sin but in God’s Word - *love one another*, our sisters and brothers.

### 6.3.3 O Lord, How Manifold Are Thy Works !

This line appears in the Bible, Psalm 104:24. Note that this powerful phrase was borrowed from Ikhnaton’s, *The Hymn to the Aton*, provided in Part 1, Section 3.5.4, which states:

*How manifold it is, what thou hast made!  
They are hidden from the face (of man).  
O thou sole god, like whom there is no other!  
Thou didst create the world according to thy heart.*

This hymn provides another example that proves that there must have been a joint effort by the Egyptian and Jewish priests to preserve the great body of Scripture developed throughout the centuries. What is also commendable about Ikhnaton’s hymn is that his God was for all the people of the earth not just a chosen people. The hymn, under *Universal Creation*, states that for all men upon the earth, the countries of Syria and Nubia, and the land of Egypt, his God sets every man in his place and supplies their necessities. Of course, Ikhnaton’s world was limited to only the lands he was exposed to, but his God was the God of all people. Are you not impressed by the beauty and scope of this Pharaoh’s conception of God? He has truly left a legacy.

### 6.3.4 How Original Are the Ten Commandments?

This author could go on and on with examples of scripture that were originally developed by the Egyptians and found their way into the Hebrew Bible. Such observations in no way belittle the Hebrew Scriptures for the authors were righteous men who were indeed inspired to improve our lives with a moral set of laws. There is no harm in applying what was learned from the past as every generation owes gratitude

to the wonderful concepts, theories, inventions and works of art in literature that becomes our inheritance. The harm exists when plagiarism occurs; not giving credit where credit is due because it is tantamount to stealing.

In Part 1, Table 4-3 the reader has been provided with the Ten Commandments and shown that they were not new to Egyptian law. In fact, in Tables 4-1 and 4-2, we have been apprised of the many more noble and righteous laws that exceed the content of the Ten Commandments. The protestations that an Egyptian would appeal to his gods to be admitted into eternal life were documented as far back as the 18<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> Dynasties (1550-950 BC). However, the observances of their moral and righteous laws were practiced even before being transcribed on papyrus and more than 1400 years before the Moses Exodus. The vizier, Ptahhotep had written many wise instructions for human conduct that emphasized truth, justice, good sense, and humility under his majesty, King Isesi, as early as the 5<sup>th</sup> Dynasty.

#### **6.4    *Evolution of the Old Testament***

Historians estimate that the more likely opportunity in formulating Moses' first book of the Torah was during the reign of King Solomon. The basis for its initial writing had to be the scripture preserved in the Ark of the Covenant; writings that Moses himself wrote in the Book of the Covenant <sup>1</sup>. This book contains the commands and judgments Moses received from his god at Mount Sinai and recorded in Exodus, Chapters 20 through 23 and Chapters 25 through 31.

Biblical scholars believe the Torah (Pentateuch) of the Old Testament was composed by the efforts of at least five major narratives: the J, E, JE, P and D documents. The first four narratives are interwoven as one document forming Genesis and the fifth narrative embodies the Deuteronomic Code. The Book of Deuteronomy became the second book of the Torah to which followed the last three books of Moses. A

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<sup>1</sup> Holy Bible, King James Version, Exodus 24:4-7.



brief summary of the evolution of just the Torah is provided as it forms the basis for the word of God as envisioned by Moses. Scripture that reveals what the prophets proclaimed and other religious writings of the Bible will not be critiqued. The admonitions of prophets to their people and the songs, psalms and Solomon's proverbs are not the subject of this book and may be read in the Bible.

The J narrative is the oldest document written around the ninth century BC, placing its origination during the realm of King Solomon, which is illustrated in Figure 4-9. The one letter J is a mnemonic for the name of Moses' God, Jehovah, also known as Yahweh. The E document is emblematic of those narratives where God is referred to as Elohim and is reputed to have originated during the eight century BC in the northern kingdom of Israel. Following are the P or Priestly documents, believed by scholars to have been written by Priests some 200 years after the E documents around 600 BC.<sup>2</sup>

Some clarification is in order concerning the J and E narratives. In Karen Armstrong's book, she indicates that the P document makes Yahweh explain that he really was the same God as the God of Abraham. Abraham's God, known as El, the High God of Canaan, introduced himself as El Shaddai (El of the Mountain), which was one of El's traditional titles. He was a friendly and approachable God whereby Abraham in his conversations with him even challenged God's decisions, such as the reduction from 50 to 10 righteous men to save Sodom and Gomorrah from destruction. In contrast to the mild deity El described in the J narrative, Yahweh is described in the E narrative as a God to be feared. On Mount Sinai, for example, Yahweh appeared to Moses and the Israelites in the midst of an awe inspiring volcanic eruption.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Max I Dimont, *Jews, God and History*, Page 40.

<sup>3</sup> Karen Armstrong, *A History of God*, Page 15. Exodus 19:16-18.

The joint mnemonic JE represents those documents that were combined by Jewish priests who added some of their own handiwork (known as a pious fraud) in the fifth century BC. In these documents, the Moses God was referred to as “Jehovah Elohim”, which is translated as ‘Lord God’.<sup>4</sup> Finally, the fifth major narrative is the Deuteronomic Code. It is referred to as the D documents, which will require a step back into history that takes us to the interim period between the defeat of Israel in 722 BC and the annihilation of the Judean nation in 586 BC.

It is a tribute to the Jewish people of Judah to have survived the onslaught that decimated the Ten Tribes of Israel. This survival was due to the good fortune to have inherited the Assyrian ruler, King Josiah who started his reign in 638 BC, at eight years of age. Josiah was the grandson of the Assyrian King Manasseh who profaned the Jewish god by building altars for the sun and star gods of Babylon and Ninevah both in the inner and outer courts of the temple. He set in place a statue of Ishtar, queen of heaven, to which the people would provide libations, burn incense and bring cakes. Not neglecting some of the Semitic deities, Manasseh also erected altars to various Baals and sacrificed a son by giving him to the fires of the child-devouring Molech.<sup>5</sup> According to Mr. Dimont, a scholar and writer of biblical and historical events of the Jews, he gives the following reasons for King Josiah’s actions. During Josiah’s early accession, he was aware that Assyria’s world empire was weakening and social inequities were corroding the national fabric of the country. He was astute enough to reason that he could not institute social legislation without introducing religious reforms. Knowing that justice and morality were tied in with the Mosaic code he decided not only to effect a more just distribution of wealth but to also purge the temples of idols.

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<sup>4</sup> Max I Dimont, *Jews, God and History*, Page 40.

<sup>5</sup> John B. Noss, *Man’s Religions*, Page 378. Molech, was a god of the Ammonites and Phoenicians to whom human sacrifices were offered.

In *Jews, God and History*, Mr. Dimont writes that Josiah conceived a practical plan to attribute the authority for his social and religious reforms to God. To accomplish his plan, he convened with his High Priests who stood for the same reforms and they edited and fused together parts of the J and E documents into “Holy Scripture”. Upon completion, Josiah staged a ruse that this Holy Scripture was found in a secluded part of the main temple. He immediately announced throughout the land that a book written by Moses at the command of God had been found in the temple and that it would be read aloud to the people. This book came to be known as Deuteronomy, the D document and the second book of Moses.<sup>6</sup>

Another version of the appearance of Moses’ second book is that it had been in the temple since the days of Solomon and was found during its renovation. This version is supported by the Second Book of Kings but does not give a chronological account of the find. The Book of Kings indicates that Josiah in the 18<sup>th</sup> year sent his scribe to the High Priest Hilkiah to have him record the sum of silver collected from the people and use it for the renovation of the temple. Reference to the 18<sup>th</sup> year infers it was the number of years Josiah reigned and not his birthday. Knowing King Josiah began his reign in 638 BC, eighteen years later would place renovation of the temple around 620 BC, which is in close agreement with Mr. Noss’s date of 621 BC. The renovation effort caused the High Priest to declare a momentous find of a book of the law. When shown to the king who read its provisions, he tore his garments and charged his councilors to find out if this book was genuine and a true statement of divine law. Upon its authenticity being verified by the prophetess Huldah, Josiah gathered in the temple all priests, elders, prophets, and all the people of Jerusalem and read the book aloud for all to hear. The king then set upon a campaign to demolish and beat to dust the altars and pillars of all the competing gods against Jehovah in Judah and continued this ravage as far north as

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<sup>6</sup> Max I Dimont, *Jews, God and History*, Pages 61 and 62.

the cities of Samaria and as far south as Beersheba.<sup>7</sup> Purging all temples of idols, forbidding the Baal and Astarte cults, and killing the priests of these cults - Josiah initiated a new social idealism throughout the land. The Deuteronomonic Code called for greater humanitarianism toward slaves and more consideration for the needs of the poor. Although savage and cruel elements still remained for this very primitive era there was a genuine ethical advance toward justice and righteousness.

The social and religious reforms instituted by King Josiah did have its failures, which were due in large part to its great severity that resulted in centralized control of religion in Jerusalem. The king brought into Jerusalem many of the priests from the outside sanctuaries and centralized sacrifices, a priests' unique function. It was held that proper sacrifices could only be offered there. This caused the Jerusalem Priesthood to exercise absolute control over the Mosaic traditions and a vested interest in it. The rural and village Priesthoods were abolished and their people suffered a diminished sense of their God's divine presence, which led many common people to a relapse of their more satisfying rites outlawed by the D Code.<sup>8</sup> However, II Kings 23:25 gives recognition and honors King Josiah with the words: *And like unto him there is no king before him, that turned to the Lord with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his might, according to the law of Moses; neither after him arose there any like him.*

At the close of Babylonian captivity, the Jews were freed and allowed to return to Jerusalem due to the magnanimity of Cyrus the Great in 538 BC. This founder of the Persian Empire made Babylon its Capital and the Jews were given the freedom to pursue their faith. By this time, the Jews of Judea and Jerusalem had possessed a considerable body of folklore, legends and genealogies, the Mosaic and Deuteronomonic writings, and fragments of history, which the priests now arranged into a composite work that formed the first five books of the

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<sup>7</sup> Holy Bible, King James Version, II Kings 23:8, 19, 20.

<sup>8</sup> John B. Noss, *Man's Religions*, Page 379 and 380.

Holy Bible. Though it is contended that much of this work was attributed to oral transmission, the scribes and priestly writers had copied, recopied, reedited, and given new meanings many times as their viewpoints changed with the passing centuries. The final edit occurred about the time of Ezra, around 400 BC.<sup>9</sup> In Section 6.4.4 we will review the development of the priestly state and various factions that vied for dominate control based upon differences in their views of god.

There are some conclusions that this subsection surfaces. Just as the Egyptian civilization developed with two major components responsible for its success, namely the Religious and Ruling (R&R) authorities, so did the Jews survive with their reliance on both the political rule by their kings and religious rule through their high priests. In fact, the R&R entities of the Jewish communities were closely fused together to insure their success. This symbiotic relationship has existed between church and state, or R&R organizations, for many countries into the present and undoubtedly will continue for centuries to come. Some countries like Iran have fused the two components into one while others, like the United States, Italy and Israel, have them exist but with independent autonomy.

The other conclusion has become a maxim; that we learn from the building blocks provided by our ancestors. We have learned that the first five books of the Bible were not inspired and completed by Moses but that he was the spark, through his knowledge of the Egyptian Scriptures, to write the Book of the Covenant that inspired other righteous men to complete the Torah about 850 years later.

#### **6.4.1 Judaism Under the Persian Empire**

In less than fifty years, Babylonia dominance fell under the rule of a new race of people from Persia, the Medes. They were an Aryan (Indo-Iranian) people that established a Capital on the mountainous

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<sup>9</sup> Homer W. Smith, *Man and His Gods*, Page 92.

fringes east of Assyria. An Aryan tribe, they sacked Susa (a province of Iran) in 646 BC and the Mede, Cyrus I became an Assyrian vassal. When Cyaxares became king of Media, a small kingdom south of the Caspian Sea, he conquered the Ashur city of Babylonia in 614 BC. Allying himself with the Babylonian king Nabopolassar they destroyed the Assyrian Capital Nineveh and divided the Assyrian Empire between them. Around 560 BC, the Median king Astyages arranged for his daughter to marry the Persian king, Cambyses I. Later, their son, Cyrus II became commander of the Median army.

In 553 BC, Cyrus II became king of the Persians and rebelled against the Medes. Within three years he captured Media and proceeded west to seize the Lydian capital Sardis in 546 BC. His armies continued west capturing the Greek cities of Ionia. By 538 BC he defeated Babylon and Mesopotamia, made Babylon his Capital, and established the first Persian Empire within eleven years of defeating the Medes. By 530 BC he was known as Cyrus the Great and rightly so for he handed his son Cambyses the new Persian Empire that extended from the Indus River to the Mediterranean and from Caucasus to the Persian Gulf. Cambyses soon added Egypt to his inheritance. To gain a perspective of the extent of Persia's conquered territories and view the interrelationships of the affected countries, Figure 6-2 is provided. Under this Empire, the Jews were under Persian rule for two centuries.<sup>1</sup>

When Cyrus II surveyed the territory of Babylonia he found an unassimilated captive people with ways that were different from their neighbors. Having heard their grievances, he gave them permission to return to Jerusalem. The advantages were: the prospect of gaining their friendship, that the rebuilding of Jerusalem would set up a buffer state between Babylon and Egypt, and they would become a tribute-paying nation as Jerusalem transforms from a desolate land to a profitable source of income. According to Jewish historians, Cyrus: issued a decree giving them privileged status, returned the temple

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<sup>1</sup> Max I. Dimont, *Jews, God and History*, Page 66.



**Figure 6-2. The Extent of the Persian Empire.**

vessels carried away by Nebuchadnezzar in 586 BC, provided funds for the returning expedition to Jerusalem and rebuilding of the temple.

During their Babylonian exile, the Jews prospered and multiplied to about 150,000 and of this total about 40,000 returned to Jerusalem. Unaware of the extent of devastation that awaited them, it would take two migrations before they regained the economic and spiritual strength of a resurrected nation. Upon their first exodus, they immediately set out to erect an altar on the site of the ruined temple. To the joy and weeping of the older folks the foundation stone was laid for reconstruction of the temple. However, apathy set in as the Jews viewed the desolate burnt ruins; encountered other people, the non-exiles, who had claimed the properties of the exiled upper classes; and met the reality that these people not only had lapsed from the Deuteronomic standards but moreover, they intermarried with the Edomites, Ammonites and Samaritans. In response to being treated as religious and social inferiors, the non-exiles withheld cooperation in the Jewish efforts to rebuild the temple and initiate other reconstruction projects. The effect on the Jewish communities was a spiritual and economic depression that so overwhelmed their people that the temple laid untouched for 15 years.<sup>2</sup>

#### **6.4.2 The Pauls who Saved the Jewish Religion**

The answer to the problems faced by the first Jewish settlers was found by two highborn Jews, Nehemiah and Ezra. Both were influential in the Persian court. Nehemiah, a descendant of Zadok <sup>1</sup>, was a cup-bearer to the king, and Ezra was a scribe at the court. Their efforts to stimulate and establish Judaism are similar to the exemplary efforts of Paul, formally Saul of Tarsus and the son of Hebrew parents, who went on many journeys to preach the doctrines of Christianity. To

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<sup>2</sup> John B. Noss, *Man's Religions*, Page 388.

<sup>1</sup> Max I. Dimont, *Jews, God and History*, Page 68. Zadok was the first High Priest appointed by King David. His descendents, known as Zadokites, were highly esteemed and honored by the Jews.



remedy the dispirited climate of the relocated Jews, the Persian King Artaxerxes (I or II?) appointed Nehemiah as governor of Jerusalem with a mission to rebuild the city's walls and to reorganize the community. He set out for Jerusalem with letters giving him the authority of governor and was accompanied with the king's army officers and horsemen. At about the same time in 458 BC, Ezra had convinced the king of the low state of morale within Jerusalem and was given permission to head a second exodus of 1,800 Jews hand-picked from Babylonia to implement a spiritual renewal for the Jews. He firmly believed that a new Jewish consciousness had to be reawakened in his people by reinstituting the Mosaic Law.

The success if Nehemiah's leadership is dramatically told in his autobiography. It was his executive genius and energy that the torn down walls and burnt gates were repaired at last, after lying in ruin for more than 150 years. The spiritual renewal of Jerusalem accomplished by Ezra was his institution of a new theocratic state with power vested in the priests. They enacted the Mosaic covenant but with a self-serving stipulation that caused discrimination of their neighbors, which kindled a negative acceptance of the Jews for years to come. The following quotation from their new covenant became the center of their allegiance to God, which was adopted under oath by the assembly of Jewish worshippers.<sup>2</sup>

*"We make and sign a binding covenant. . . . and take oath, under penalty of curse, to walk in the law of God which was given by Moses the servant of God, and to be careful to observe all of the commands of the LORD our Lord, and his ordinances and statutes; and that we will not give our daughters to the peoples of the land or take their daughters as wives for our sons; and that, if the peoples of the land bring wares or any grain on the Sabbath day to sell, we will not buy from them on the Sabbath or on a holy day; and that in the seventh*

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<sup>2</sup> John B. Noss, *Man's Religions*, Page 389.

*year we will leave the land fallow and refrain from the extraction of any debt.*

*“We also lay upon ourselves the charge to give the third part of a shekel yearly for the service for the house of our God, for the bread that is arranged in layers, and for the regular burnt-offering, for the Sabbaths, the new moons, the fixed festivals, and the holy things, and for the sin-offerings to make atonement for Israel, and for all the work of the house of our God. Moreover, we will cast lots, the priests, the Levites, and the people, concerning the wood-offering, to bring it into the house of our God, . . . to burn upon the altar of the Lord our God. . . . ; and to bring the first produce of our ground and the first of all fruit of every kind of tree year by year to the house of the Lord; also the first-born of our sons and of our cattle, as it is written in the law, and the firstlings of our herds and our flocks, . . . and our first batch of baking, our contributions, the fruit of every kind of tree, the wine, and the oil, to the priests in the chambers of the house of our God; and the tithes of our ground to the Levites, since they, the Levites, take the tithes in all the cities dependent on our agriculture. Now the priest, the son of Aaron, shall be with the Levites, when the Levites tithe, and the Levites shall bring up the tithe of the tithes to the house of our God, to the chambers into the treasure house.”*

The precepts instituted by Nehemiah and Ezra assured the selfpreservation of their people both ethnically and religiously. The innovation of banning intermarriage between Jews and non-Jews was the first such ban on intermarriage in the world. From the continuous ravages of war over the centuries and their years of captivity, experienced several times over several generations, it is understandable that this action was strictly a defense against future dilution of their people and their religion. They were the chosen people of God. But their leaders never articulated what they were chosen for. Did their religious leaders clearly express that they were chosen to be the light of the world by accepting obedience to the one God, Jehovah? This precept was overlooked and never reached their consciousness to expound it in their houses of worship nor was it stated in their commandments.

Their utmost concern was how they, as a people, could survive in a world that could once again threaten their existence.

The action against intermarriage did not sit well with many Jews but their high priests were intent in forging a national religious movement that would have a greater chance for success by omitting other ethnic groups of people who had their own concepts of belief and worship of gods. Still, the restrictive precept against intermarriage by Ezra and Nehemiah had backfired to cause a great deal of discrimination and animosity towards the Jewish people. That stigma has survived into the modern world and this practice has caused them to be ostracized in many parts of the world.

Years ago, as a design engineer, this author enjoyed the acquaintance of an extremely capable engineer who worked as a consultant. He was Jewish and had married a very fine Italian woman. Though their marriage was a genuine relationship of love, this man had to endure the disapproval and disownment of his parents. This parental response clearly revealed it was a reaction due to their instruction within their religion. It appears that the Rabbis were more intent in the preservation of their profession than advocating that their people have been chosen to be an instrument of God. If they were chosen to receive the word of God should not their responsibility be to share and bring His Word to all people? Not to disparage the Jewish people, the reality is that they still continue to renounce intermarriage because of their fear of dilution and still adhere to a concept of self-preservation to ensure their ethnicity. Hopefully, they will someday recognize that they have been chosen by God to serve, if not as an instrument, as a model, whereby all people would eventually be integrated with a moral code that promotes respect and love for all people. Admittedly, this responsibility may be overwhelming, but God did not choose them to save only themselves. The exclusion of people who are not of the same religion has also existed among Christians and Muslims. It is amazing that leaders of the three monotheistic religions teaches the surrender of oneself to God but fail to teach that God would rather have His

children, from all nations, love one another. It's apparent that the whole concept of God is missed when people accept bigotry and killing others instead of loving one another in His name.

### **6.4.3 The Completion of the Torah**

Ezra and Nehemiah enacted another innovation that would forge a national and spiritual unity for the Jews, they decided to not only revise the Book of Deuteronomy but to add to it four other Books of Moses. They directed their priests and scribes to fuse together the most important Mosaic documents, including the Deuteronomy of Josiah into what are known as the Five Books of Moses, namely, Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. From this point in history, these books were regarded as divine and no changes would be made. To commemorate this revered set of books, in the year 444 BC, Ezra and Nehemiah spread the news that on the Jewish New Year's Day, the Five Books of Moses, written by Moses, would be read aloud to all the people. Interpreters were on hand since many of the Jews had forgotten Hebrew and the Aramaic language had become their everyday speech in a land that included dozens of other Semitic nations. The need for interpreters led to the practice of clarifying and explaining obscure parts of the Torah whereby the word *Midrash* developed, which means 'exposition'.<sup>1</sup> This practice would eventually lead to the use of rabbis who came from the ranks of scribes and had a strong grasp of the contents in the Books of Moses.

Another effort by Ezra and Nehemiah was to enforce a strict observance of religious duties, which the Jews performed with increasing loyalty even if they were lax in their reverence of God. The observance of the weekly Sabbath day drew them to the temple in Jerusalem or in the outlying towns and villages where the synagogues sprung as houses of worship. The annual festivals and fasts became ingrained traditions; such as the weeklong Passover, including the Feast of Unleavened Bread that occurred in the first month of the year

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<sup>1</sup> Max I. Dimont, *Jews, God and History*, Pages 69 and 70.

(March or April). In addition, there is the Feast of Weeks or First Fruits) occurring in late spring; the Feast of Trumpets (later called “Rosh Hashanah” or New Year, which is followed ten days later by the fast of the Day of Atonement or Yom Kippur. Five days after Yom Kippur comes the Feast of Booths or Tabernacles, which occur in the seventh month (September or October). Although the pure religion advocated by the prophets could not hold the allegiance of the common people to their faith, these observances did.<sup>2</sup>

#### **6.4.4 Establishment of a Priestly State**

Just over 800 years from the Moses Exodus (1250-444 BC), the Jewish religion was set in scripture. The Torah, the first Five Books of Moses was completed as the result of the reforms of Josiah, the innovations of Nehemiah and Ezra, the devotion of High Priests, and the complement of scribes who eventually gained the status of holy men called Rabbis. The impact of these scriptures was the absorption of divine literature that affected the character of the Jews and formed an identity that coalesced the Jewish nation. The Jewish people now had a religion packaged in scripture that provided the mobility to carry their God to any country and retain their ethnicity. Their strength against all adversity will later prove to be the Torah.

In concert with the development of the Torah and its supplementary writings of the prophets’ warnings, the chronicles and psalms, the High Priest became the supreme authority over the Jewish people. He became not only the ecclesiastical personage but also the civic ruler of Jerusalem. The High Priest was usually a descendant of Zadok, who was said to have descended from Aaron, the brother of Moses. He lived in the temple and under him were the ordained priests who ministered in the temple during religious ceremonies. Also under his authority were the Levites who were in charge of the temple musical services and temple property. Though the High Priest was the chief

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<sup>2</sup> John B. Noss, *Man’s Religions*, Page 390.

administrator, his power was held in check by the Sanhedrin whose members were chosen from the leading families, scholars and intellectuals. This body consisted of 71 members when acting in the capacity of a Supreme Court, and for judging capital offenses, as many as 23 judges were present. For civil cases and matters less offensive, a minimum of three judges was required.

The authority of the High Priest was also vested in the learned profession of the scribes, which provided the groundwork and development of Rabbis. The scribes became a religious class devoted to copying and interpreting the Torah and other sacred writings. Those who developed the talent for preaching became known as rabbis or 'teachers'. They met the growing need for a professional understanding of the sacred books, especially since most Hebrews spoke Aramaic and required an interpreter of the Torah. Additionally, the rabbis helped to decentralize religious worship and fulfill a genuine religious experience in the villages far from the temple. These remote houses of worship became known as synagogues and the scribes that aspired to become Rabbis also became the forerunners of the Pharisees. This decentralized ability of assembly worship was also under the authority of the High Priest for religious doctrines and judicial judgments.<sup>1</sup>

The Jews became 'a people of the Book'. The scribes and rabbis became so reliant on their holy scripture that their interpretations of the written word extended into an endless spinning of meanings that impacted their culture. Attempting to live by the Book, they developed an answer to every facet of their lives and their efforts soon affected not only their eating habits but even their intimate behavior in the bedroom. The commendable part of this exercise in exposition and interpretation was the development of a large body of law that served to guide the Jews not only on a personal level but for administering judgments.

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<sup>1</sup> Max I. Dimont, *Jews, God and History*, Page 80.

An example of endless spinning is given to illustrate how the authority of too many rabbis with power to interpret the word of God could cause abuse of sound thought. The Biblical law that prohibits the eating of meat torn in the field was based upon the hygienic principle that carrion was dangerous as food. The interpreters of this law expounded upon this restraint by questioning that if meat torn in the field was prohibited would not also meat torn in the city? But what exactly was torn meat? If it was not properly slaughtered, it was surely torn. Concern for the proper slaughter of an animal now developed a whole code of law, which formed the practice of *Shehita* (ritual slaughter) to resolve their concerns. Such laws proscribed rules for the type of knife to be used and the manner of using it, rules governing the competency of the ritual slaughterer and his training, the prayers to be recited when the throat was cut and when the blood was covered with ashes. The authority of the rabbis and their propensity to righteously lead their people caused a simple precept to grow into a maze of observances. By not adhering to the added observances, the meat of an animal would not be kosher (fit) for consumption.<sup>2</sup>

#### **6.4.5 Jewish Resistance to Hellenization**

In 332 BC, the Palestinian theocracy centered in Jerusalem came under control of the Greek conqueror, Alexander the Great. He drove the Persian armies out of Asia Minor and Syria and then seized Palestine on his way to the conquest of Egypt. As illogical as it appears, the enormous armies of the Persians were defeated by another Aryan people that emerged from the tiny city-states of Greece. The Persians lost the land battle at Marathon in 490 BC and at the famous sea battle at Salamis in 480 BC, where the Greeks shattered the vastly superior Persian forces. Then in 334 BC, Alexander with 32,000 infantrymen shattered the armies of an empire that had millions of soldiers at its command. The Persian armies were defeated at the River Granicus and then annihilated at the battle of Issus, where Alexander demanded

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<sup>2</sup> John B. Noss, *Man's Religions*, Page 390-392.

the unconditional surrender of Darius III. The Persian Empire ceased to exist and the Jews came under Greek rule.

The personal ambition of Alexander was an altruistic passion to spread Greek culture throughout the Near East and Egypt. To accomplish his objective, he rejected force and embraced the self-evident power of acceptance of Greek thought, dress and education by example. To establish Greek culture as a way of life in the conquered territories, he employed two methods: one, he ordered his officers and men to intermarry with native populations to beget many children and two, he founded many Greek states that emulated Greek art, architecture, colonnaded municipal buildings, open-air theaters, libraries and gymnasiums. Without the use of force, he encouraged Greek, Egyptian, Persian, and Jewish colonists to live in these model cities. Within ten years, he founded 25 Greek cities in the Middle East, with his Capital Alexandria in Egypt.

Alexander expressed respect and favor towards the Jews; he granted them internal political and religious freedom. He encouraged their movement into Alexandria, which numbered up to one million filling two of the city's five sections. The Jews were attracted and influenced by the new breadth of Greek culture that also exhibited an unprecedented tolerance of other religions and races. Resistant and suspicious at first, the Jews accepted the Hellenic colonists and communities built up throughout Palestine. These colonists proved to be friendly, open-minded and peaceful. Within three generations the Jews were freely admitting Greek words into their everyday speech and calling their children by Greek names. The more educated and successful Jews, especially the Jerusalem priests, were more profoundly influenced than the common people. Straying from their devotion to their God, they sometimes left the sacrifices half-burnt on the altar of the temple having rushed off to some stadium to see the Greek athletes' performing their games.



The common people, scribes and rabbis held back and resisted the influences of the Greeks. They tolerated the affects of Greek culture on their language, manners and customs but more to their dismay was its affects upon their morals, ethics, and religion. Greek words crept into their religious writings, their synagogues began to resemble Grecian temples, participation in nude wrestling became commonplace among Jewish males, the young enjoyed the Greek stimulus of intellectual and philosophical discourses that subtly led to questions about the precepts of their religion, the fraternizing at theaters and cabarets enticed the young to the couch of sensual pleasures and eventually the company of courtesans.

Once again, the anti-Hellenistic Jews turned ever more fervently to the Mosaic law contained in their arsenal, the Torah. Their unyielding loyalty to the Torah and that the Davidic line of kings would be restored forged the anti-Hellenizers into a political party. Their members became known as the Hasideans and represented the very conservative Jews, known as the “pious ones” or *hasidim*. The Hasidean party, which had originally formed as a protest against drinking and carousing, now turned against the Epicureans in particular and against all things Grecian in general. As more members joined their party, it gained political strength and came to play a dominant role in the events to follow.<sup>1</sup>

#### **6.4.6 Establishment of a Second Judah**

Upon the early death of Alexander the Great, at the age of thirty-two, his conquered territory was fought by three of his generals, Antigonus, Seleuces and Ptolemy. None were powerful enough to seize Alexander’s Empire and the generals were content to claim portions of Greek territory as follows:

- Antigonus claimed control of Greece;

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<sup>1</sup> Max I. Dimont, *Jews, God and History*, Pages 78-83.

- Seleucus took possession of Asia Minor and Syria founding the Seleucid Empire; and
- Ptolemy took control of Egypt and Palestine founding the Ptolemaic Empire.

Within the Palestinian territory, the Jews were left alone to be governed by their High Priest and enjoyed cultural and religious freedom. Although they continued to pay taxes, they prospered and multiplied within every Greek city in Asia Minor. However, under what appeared to be tranquility to the non-Jews, Palestine had a hatred seething within the Jewish communities against the demoralizing effects of Hellenization. During the many years the Seleucids and Ptolemies fought over the control of Palestine, the Hasidic party had grown into a formidable number of Jews. They tolerated the constant war campaigns between the Seleucid (of Syria) and Ptolemaic (of Egypt) armies for control of Palestine. After more than a century, the Seleucid king, Antiochus III, had succeeded in beating the Ptolemaic army and Palestine was under his control. He continued to give the Jews their internal freedom knowing that they were quite capable of self-government. But the struggle against Hellenization continued.

Under Antiochus III, the Jewish manner of religious worship was still tolerated in Palestine even though he endeavored to unify his empire with a nationalistic drive towards Hellenization. The Jews convinced Antiochus that by bearing arms to lend support against enemy attack and paying taxes they had proved their loyalty and good citizenship. This argument kept statues of the king and Greek gods out of their Temple. However, Antiochus second son, Antiochus Epiphanes, after murdering his brother, inherited the throne in 176 BC. He was strongly nationalistic and felt that the spread of Greek culture should also apply to the Jews. In the selection of appointing governors to rule each province, it was the custom of the Seleucid king to make the appointments. In the case of the Jews, they were fortunate to have self-government until the Hellenized Jewish aristocrats thought it would be to their advantage if they helped Epiphanes in his efforts to Hellenize

Palestine. They prevailed upon Antiochus Epiphanes to appoint as governor a Jewish priest named Jason, a leading Hellenizer in Palestine.

The result was one of dismay to the devout Jews of Palestine. After 125 years under the rule of Ptolemaic and Seleucid kings, Jason accomplished in one year what they were unable to bring about – Hellenization of Palestine. He introduced Grecian statues into the Holy Sanctuary, Jewish priests wore Grecian costumes and serviced Greek cultic rites, in the Temple courtyards naked Jewish boys participated in Greek games, and at pagan festivals Jewish envoys were sent to represent Jerusalem. Anger and resentment rose to a new high and Jews from every strata of economic and social life joined the ranks of Hasideans. But the smothering outrage was not against the tyrannical Seleucids, it was an uprising between the anti-Jewish Hellenizers and the Jewish Hellenizers.

Believing he had achieved Hellenism throughout his empire, Antiochus Epiphanes felt it was time to march against Egypt; while away, rumor reached the Jews that he had been slain in battle with the Romans. The Hasidean party leaders immediately acted to dispose all of the Jewish officials and priests appointed by Antiochus. They killed them all by throwing them over the walls of the Temple, a one-hundred-foot drop. The Greek statues followed over the Temple wall and a systematic massacre of all Hellenizers placed the Hasideans in control of Palestine. After suffering a humiliating ultimatum by the Romans to get out of Egypt, Antiochus returned to Palestine and learning of the insurrection vented his rage and anger on the Jews. He marched his army into Jerusalem and slaughtered 10,000 inhabitants without inquiring into their party affiliations, especially since all his pro-Hellenistic officials and priests were already murdered.

Antiochus had new Grecian statues installed in the Temple and appointed a new set of High Priests. He further invited pagans to settle in Jerusalem to dilute the Jewish population. But he didn't stop there,

out of sheer spite he outlawed the Sabbath day and forbade circumcision. The Hasidean party, whose members were practically wiped out, now received those Jews who took a moderate and even liberal position of Hellenization. An unforeseen event then sparked a second Judaic uprising. Just outside Jerusalem, a Greek official attempted to force an aged Jewish priest to sacrifice to Greek gods. This priest was of the Hasmonean party and his name was Mattathias. Not able to perform this sacrilege he killed the official. Antiochus ordered new reprisals and in response the Jews rose en masse to the defense of Mattathias. A war now ensued with the help of Mattathias's five sons and they became known as the Maccabees. This word was derived from the Hebrew meaning "hammer" as the Maccabees dealt hammer blows battle after battle upon the Seleucid armies. The Jews are credited with a new kind of war, the world's first religious war.

Thinking that the Jewish rebellion was a minor event, Antiochus sent a small expeditionary force to quell the Maccabees and teach them a lesson. The reverse expectation occurred. The Seleucid force was annihilated. To insure victory, Antiochus assembled a large and seasoned army and marched at its head into Jerusalem. His confidence of a successful campaign led him to bring a contingent of slave auctioneers and he circulated posters throughout the empire quoting the latest prices for Jewish slaves. But this vision was shattered as the Jews decimated his army and recaptured Jerusalem. To this day, the feast of Hanukkah commemorates this victory.

Losing many of the battles over a 25-year period, the Seleucids were pushed out of Palestinian soil and Antiochus died never realizing his vision of selling the Jews into slavery. His successor offered the Jews full religious freedom and facing the threat that Jewish forces could enter Syria, the Seleucids also offered them independence which was accepted. In the long and protracted war, four of the five Mattathias sons were slain with Simon being the only survivor. He signed a peace treaty in 143 BC and a new Jewish Kingdom of Judea was established. Its size approached that of King David's after Simon's son added

Idumea (Edom), Samaria and Perea (the region beyond Jordan). The period of independence lasted to 63 BC and might have lasted longer had internal strife not broken out among the Jews and gave rise to divergent parties that envisioned their religion differently.<sup>1</sup>

#### **6.4.7 Development of Three Jewish Parties**

Now that victory over the Seleucids was achieved, the membership of the Hasideans had to contend with three divergent views that eventually led to the formation of three separate parties. These parties reflected different ideas about how closely they should follow the precepts of their religion and to what extent they should divorce themselves from worldly influences around them, namely Hellenization. It will be instructive to review the views of these parties because they inadvertently caused a new movement that resulted in the support and worship of a man that provided the opportunity for non-Jews to enter into their religion. Below are the religious views of the new parties that emerged out of the Hasmonean house. They are: the Sadducees, the Pharisees and the Essenes.

- **The Sadducees.** In Judea it was the priests, or at least the higher orders of the priesthood, who were the internationalists. Since the High Priest was the civic as well as the religious head of the country that raised taxes and collected tribute money, they grew wealthy along with other families whose members were high priests. This high order of priests were routinely engaged in regulating the international relations of Judea. Their function forced them to discriminate between the essential and unchangeable in Judaism and worldly matters that were open to compromise and interpretation. This exposure to worldly transactions and events led to their desire of not deviating from the Torah but cultural innovations that promised to improve relations abroad and living standards at home were to be welcomed. The members of this wealthy and aristocratic class became somewhat

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<sup>1</sup> Max I. Dimont, *Jews, God and History*, Pages 83-86.

‘worldly’ and disassociated themselves from the views of the common people. They believed that they represented the ‘reasonable’ views of their ancient fathers that was embodied in the Torah and held that the “Books of Moses” should be taken literally.

Consequently, in the realm of religion, Sadducees were conservative. They believed that the soul dies with the body and took a very strict view of the law. They rejected other views that emerged from philosophic ideas such as: resurrection of the body to full consciousness in an afterlife; the new apocalyptic forecast of doom of the world; and the popular belief of angels (although angelic cherubs were specified by the Lord in Exodus 25:18-22). In matters of culture however, they were so liberal in absorbing foreign ideas, art and literature that they were regarded as pro-Hellenizers.<sup>2</sup> While the Pharisees were more tolerant in accepting proselytes (Matthew 23:15), the Sadducean party did not accept gentiles. Only members of the High Priestly and aristocratic families of Jerusalem could join the Sadducean party. With the destruction of the Temple in 70 CE, this party lost its authority and religious appeal and modern Judaism basically has its roots in the flexible views exhibited by the Pharisees.

- **The Pharisees.** These former members of the Hasidim, or pious ones, were equally as strict in their interpretation of the Torah as were the Sadducees. But the Pharisees approached their devotion to the Torah with an open mind whereby they continuously interpreted its words for application to the current trends and challenges of the present. They paid particular attention to the expositions, interpretations and commentaries of the scribes and rabbis that embodied their oral tradition. An extensive set of fervent thought was added to the Torah that grappled with laws and rules of conduct that would resolve the needs of their worshippers. Though the words of God are clearly understandable, the scribes and Rabbis extended His words to control almost, albeit, just about every facet of their personal lives.

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<sup>2</sup> John B. Noss, *Man's Religions*, Page 396.

The Pharisees were quite liberal in developing ideas that supplemented and expanded the Torah as the “Oral Law”. One may raise the question that this practice was possibly due to the desire to further the viability of their existence and live up to the image of ‘Teacher’. As they formulated new legislation, regarding personal and judicial laws, it was received as being both God’s and their own. By increasing the Torah, they believed that they were extending His presence in the world and making it more effective. They themselves came to be revered as the incarnation of the Torah; they were more ‘like God’ than anybody because of their expertise in the Law. Such godly notions may have led less humble rabbis to accrue a sanctimonious authority, which has contributed to the ‘spinning’ of meaningless ordinances into the Oral Law. At the end of Section 6.4.4 is an example of a rabbi spinning a meaningless observance and attributing it to God.

The Rabbis developed the idea that God could not be described in human terms with a formula that would have Him appear in the same way to everybody. Rather, He was a subjective experience where each individual envisions a reality of God in a different way according to his temperament, sensitivity and intellect. The Rabbis contend that any official doctrine that attributes the human qualities of our limited nature would limit the essential mystery of an incomprehensible God.<sup>1</sup> This view has enforced the Rabbis’ propensity to ignore God’s command to Noah, “Whoso sheddeth man’s blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made He man.” The Torah’s statement that God created man in His own image became a precept that the Rabbis would rather forget for they strongly believed that the incomprehensible and mysterious nature of God could never be understood – to define God’s appearance into an *image of a man* limits a more godly and spiritual perception.

As a result of the scribes and Rabbis exposition efforts, the Torah became a two-fold body of precepts whose oral form was at times

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<sup>1</sup> Karen Armstrong, *A History of God*, Pages 74 and 78.

more important than the written word of God. Yet, this practice was a healthy one for they subscribed to the principle of religious evolution. They introduced elasticity into Judaism by stressing the Oral Law, which helped to make its people survive extinction in times ahead.<sup>2</sup> They were progressive enough to realize that adaptation is good – change is a necessary feature in improving the word of God in a changing world.

The Pharisees lived with strict observance of diet that emphasized not only what was eatable but also the manner of preserving, preparing and serving food. They relied heavily on reason which increased their interpretations of the Torah into an Oral law. They believed that man has the will given by God to act virtuously or viciously. But they also believe in the immortality of the soul and that under the earth there will be rewards or punishments based upon the righteousness of their lives. Those that are punished will be detained in an everlasting prison, but the righteous shall have power to revive and live again. In concert with punishment and reward concepts, they adopted the sentence of doom that was prophesized by the prophets and believed that God will return and bring in a new age. They therefore embraced the new Messianic concepts involving resurrection of the dead and the last judgment. Until this undetermined time, the Pharisees believed their prime duty is to study and be loyal to the Law, ‘written and unwritten’. They espoused moral obedience, ceremonial purity (avoid unclean persons and things), continued growth and development in wisdom, devotion to prayer, remembrance of the dead, and a strong willingness to die rather than to compromise the holy faith.<sup>3</sup>

- **The Essenes.** The Essenes had no desire for politics and withdrew from secular activities to devote their entire lives to religious contemplation. Retiring from interaction with people of divergent religious and Hellenistic views in the cities, they formed their own separate communities. Members of this Jewish sect lived on the western shore

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<sup>2</sup> Max I. Dimont, *Jews, God and History*, Pages 88 and 89.

<sup>3</sup> John B. Noss, *Man's Religions*, Pages 396 and 397.



of the Dead Sea, about eight miles south of Jericho, in a desolate village called Khirbet Qumran. This Essene settlement existed along the fringe of the hot and arid wastes of Judea. They led an ascetic life in a monastic setting and devoted their energy to creating what would become precious writings that would later surface as the Dead Sea Scrolls.<sup>4</sup>

The Essenes, referred to as the Qumran sect disassociated themselves from the Temple and believed it had become corrupt. They did not envision a Temple built of stone but of the spirit. Instead of the Torah's commanded ceremonies of animal sacrifice to expiate their sins, they sought forgiveness of sins by baptismal ceremonies and communal meals. To maintain purity, they avoided contact with members within their own group of lower order and advocated celibacy. The historian Josephus wrote they were stricter than all Jews in abstaining from work on the Sabbath day. Like the Pharisees, the Essences believed in the immortality of the soul, in resurrection, and the concept of a messiah. They further refined the concepts of reward and fear with the belief that good will overcome evil. This refinement gave greater scope to man's imagination with visions of punishment of sinners in an everlasting hell contrasted with peaceful immortality and the company of God in heaven. These concepts later inspired the Florentine poet, Dante Alighieri to write, "*The Divine Comedy*" in 1308 till his completion near death in 1321. Written in three parts, he ignited man's imagination with his visions of *The Inferno* (Hell), *Purgatory* and *Paradise* (Heaven). As adversity against their physical and spiritual life became overwhelming, all of the Jewish sects embraced the messianic view - a view that was to give birth to the ideas which were to play a dominant role in the lives of John the Baptist and Jesus.<sup>5</sup>

The review of the three parties that emerged after the Maccabees fought for their God and established a second Judea offers a per-

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<sup>4</sup> Geza Vermes, *The Dead Sea Scrolls in English*, Page 11.

<sup>5</sup> Max I. Dimont, *Jews, God and History*, Pages 88 and 99.

spective of the religious views that evolved among the Jews. The Sadducees conservative and literal interpretation of the Torah reflected an older concept of Judaism; whereas, the Pharisees initiated a liberal and new concept of Judaism by adding to the Torah the “unwritten” Oral Law. The Essences divorced themselves from the world to retire to a more devoted sense of spirituality and beliefs. The Pharisees effort to adapt to a changing world with the use of reason is the more commendable aspect of this sect. Although they evolved the new Oral Law by adding commentary and interpretations to the Torah, they were innovative in extending flexibility and elasticity into the Law. But this commendation has its faults as they added a conglomeration of restrictions that guided every aspect of life for their worshippers.

### ***6.5 Judaism Developed the Concept of the Holy Spirit***

As one who was indoctrinated into the Catholic religion, this author often thought of the Trinity. It was easy to comprehend that God the Father sent his Son to extend salvation to non-Jews or the ‘gentiles’ and that this son gave his life for our sins. The Jewish people should be honored that one of their sons became a source of worship for other people even though they may not follow the stringent laws that dictated circumcision and what they eat. The Judaic extension of faith to the gentiles may appear to have been a natural development; but we will learn later in Chapter 7.0 that the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 CE by the Romans was a significant event that led Jewish holy men to initiate a strong following in the birth of a new religion, Christianity. In spite of the devastation of Israel’s territories and loss of countless Jewish lives, history verifies that mankind learns and holds on to those concepts that are powerful and helpful to successfully cope with the challenges of life. In addition to the acceptance of Jesus as the son of God, a third element, the Holy Spirit, became part of a Christian doctrine called the Trinity.

For many people, the Trinity seems to be a nebulous and mystical concept. For God to have a Holy Spirit since He Himself is holy and

omnipresent is somewhat redundant. However, the concept that, instead of God but, His Holy Spirit may enter into one's being does appear more acceptable. The transcendental entity, the Holy Spirit, summons up the perception of being transformed by a spirit that pervades the world and is an extension of God.

This wonderful concept of the Holy Spirit was developed within the Judaic religion before Jesus Christ became part of the Trinity. In 1961, a manuscript found along with the Dead Sea Scrolls, was deciphered by Mr. M. Baillet who believed it to have been written around the middle of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC. This document had the title, *The Words of the Heavenly Lights* and contained prayers and hymns intended for various days of the week. Each of the liturgical sections concluded with the pronouncement, *Amen ! Amen !* It is believed that this document may be ascribed to be the earliest, pre-Essene, stage of Qumran literature. An excerpt from Part V of this document is provided to verify that use of *The Holy Spirit* was common in Jewish prayer before it became an entity of the Trinity and part of a doctrine of the Catholic religion.<sup>1</sup>

*V . . . [they forsook] the fount of living waters and served a strange god in their land. . . . . Thou wert gracious towards Thy people Israel in all the lands to which Thou didst banish them, that they might remember to return to Thee and to hearken to Thy voice [according to] all Thou hadst commanded by the hand of Moses Thy servant.*

*For Thou hast shed **Thy Holy Spirit** upon us, bringing upon us Thy blessings, that we might seek Thee in our distress [and mur]mer (prayers) in the ordeal of Thy chastisement. We have entered into distress, have been [stri]cken and tried by the fury of the oppressor. For we also have tired God with our iniquity, we have wearied the Rock with [our] sins. . . .*

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<sup>1</sup> Geza Vermes, *The Dead Sea Scrolls in English*, Page 204. Derived from Mr. M. Baillet, *Revue Biblique*, Un recueil liturgique de Qumran, Grotte 4: 'Les paroles des luminaires, Pages 195-250.

It is comforting to have learned that *The Holy Spirit* was an idea embraced by Jewish prophets and priests, holy men who felt a strong affinity for the god they worshipped. It was Isaiah (believed to have lived about 700 years before the birth of Jesus Christ) who felt the Spirit of God within him and his reasons that impelled him to preach have been articulated in Isaiah 61 and 62. In Isaiah 63:10-11, *The Holy Spirit* of God is uniquely identified:

**63:10** *But they rebelled, and vexed **His Holy Spirit**: therefore He was turned to be their enemy, and He fought against them.*

**63:11** *Then He remembered the days of old, Moses, and His people, saying, “Where is he that brought them out of the sea with the shepherd of his flock? Where is he that put **His Holy Spirit** within him?”*

This concept of the Holy Spirit of God gives worshippers a feeling of holiness – an association and emotional affinity with their god. The Holy Spirit is descriptive of an attribute, something that pervades space and is a subjective feeling that one may experience. To characterize The Holy Spirit as a third entity (person) of the Trinity may become a philosophical question for it definitely is a quality or force that emanates from God. There is another concept or force that also pervades space and ennobles the human spirit and that is the feeling of love for humanity. To feel holy is a self-seeking desire that promotes a closeness to God but to love is a proactive desire to benefit and improve the lives of people around you. Whereas the Holy Spirit is received from *without*, the Spirit of Love comes from *within* the human makeup of a person. The ability to love others with sincerity and respect has been the driving force for our survival and existence.

## **7.0 Catholicism Evolves from the Jewish Religion**

Just as the Torah of the Old Testament evolved from the initial efforts of Moses, the New Testament is based upon the Gospels of Apostles that brought to light a man named Jesus of Nazareth who has sparked the spiritual nature of mankind. Taking this analogy one step backward, just as Judaism developed from the Egyptian religion that defined the God Amen, Catholicism developed from the Judaic religion by the efforts of Jewish holy men. In Section 6.4, a review of several generations of the Jewish people was given to not only describe how their holy scripture was developed but also, to view the context of the world at that time and review the religious views that developed after the Maccabees successfully established the 2<sup>nd</sup> Kingdom of Judah.

It was significant that we reviewed the development of the three priestly parties or Jewish religious sects that emerged before the birth of Jesus Christ. It provided an understanding of their differences that would eventually ignite internal strife and a bloody civil war within their own communities. A more detailed account of the struggles for dominance and religious control by the Jewish sects is given below. This review will cover events well past the death of Jesus Christ in 30 AD <sup>1</sup> to the destruction of Jerusalem. It will allow the reader to appreciate the degree of discontent and tension in the Jewish communities

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<sup>1</sup> Holy Bible, King James Ver, Regency Publ House, 1978, Page 563.

Clarification is necessary regarding what signifies the end of **BC** and the start of **AD** (now to **CE**). These mnemonics mean “**B**efore **C**hrist” and “**A**nno **D**omini (the year of the Lord)”. Confusion arises as to **AD** meaning the day Jesus was born or his resurrection. Many people have interpreted it as “**A**fter **D**eath” of Jesus Christ. Use of these mnemonics have lost favor for two other reasons: (1) **C**ommon **E**ra (**CE**) is less offensive to atheists and worshippers of other religions; and (2) according to the Holy Bible, Jesus Christ was born between 5 and 4 **BC**. It has become more useful to divide the two eras associated with Jesus Christ with only one common point **CE**, where **BCE** indicates all years before the birth of Christ and **CE** indicates years following the birth of Christ.

before and after the death of Jesus. During his short life of 35 years, his thinking had to be shaped by the views and tensions that existed in the nearby cities and towns. The events he witnessed, the appalling recall of the past one hundred years, and his religious instruction had to cause within him a reaction to the discontent felt by the Jewish people. It was almost a generation after his death, that his apostles, Jewish holy men, were responsible for writing the core of the New Testament, namely, the four gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. John also wrote “The Revelation”; another inspired work in which he reveals the testimony and prophesy of Jesus Christ. These men, through the advocacy of Paul, provided the foundation of Holy Scripture that gave rise to the Catholic religion.

### ***7.1 Prior to the Downfall of the Second Kingdom***

It is necessary that history unfold for us the events that caused the downfall of Judah, the second kingdom. Within the ruling and priestly families of this kingdom, differences became so overwhelming in reaction to their religious teachings and the outside world that three religious sects emerged. Their divergent views in compromising their religion with outside moral and intellectual influences led to a power struggle by two of the proactive sects: the Sadducees and Pharisees who vied for the Kingship and High Priest positions of Judah. Money, always the standard of power, could be raised by the ruling king by taxation. But the High Priest received a steady and voluntary income from the Jewish people as atonement for their souls.<sup>1</sup> This distinction made the holy office a position often taken by the ruling king in the Judah kingdom. The following events briefly highlight the internal strife between the royal families, resulting in the murder of a mother, fathers, brothers, sons and other family relations. Internal conflicts finally caused a collapse of the kingdom as its rule came under a half-Jew, a commoner without any royal blood.

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<sup>1</sup> Holy Bible, King James Version, Exodus 30:13-16. The rich or poor shall not give less than half a shekel for an offering to the Lord and atonement for their souls.

### **7.1.1 Events Leading Up to Herod's Kingship**

After the successful uprising of the Maccabees and a peace treaty with the Seleucids in 143 BC, the three parties that formed took on such divergent views in their religious and political thinking that increased tensions caused a physical break in their devotion to their god. The Sadducees were the party of the aristocrats and priestly class who stood for temple, priest, sacrifice and a conservative view of religion. The Pharisees were the party of the common man led by rabbis and scribes that stood for synagogue, prayer and a liberal view of religion. The third party, the Essenes were a conservative religious party who physically withdrew from the political arena all together and retired to the caves on the western shore of the Dead Sea. With the Essenes living a monastic life, the fight for religious and political power was between the Sadducees and Pharisees. Their differences ignited into a crisis with the murder of Simon Maccabee by his son-in-law.

Simon, the only surviving son of Mattathias, was the High Priest of Jerusalem and governor of Judah. Upon Simon's death, his son, John Hyrcanus was crowned king and appointed High Priest. John managed to offend his party, the Pharisees, when he hired foreign mercenaries to plunder the tomb of King David of 3,000 talents of silver and imprinted coins bearing his name. His party was so enraged that they demanded he give up his office of High Priest. But John switched his party affiliation to the Sadducees and introduced several Hellenizing measures, which further infuriated the Pharisees and increased religious tensions.

A High Priest with ambitious verve, around 135 BC, John extended Palestine's territory by annexing the land of the Idumeans and Galileans. Causing greater discontent among these pagans, he converted them to Judaism by force of the sword. Paradoxically, from Idumean came one of the greatest and maligned ruler of the Jews, King Herod the Great; and from Galilee it was Jesus Christ that preached his Essene doctrines about 160 years later. Fearing a possible attempt on

his life, John made known that his wife was to succeed his throne and his son, Aristobulus I, would obtain the position of High Priest. But Aristobulus, who apparently inherited his father's impulsiveness, murdered his mother, a brother, and imprisoned his remaining brothers to seize the positions of King and High Priest.

Aristobulus, an ardent Sadducee who implemented Hellenization to an extreme, ruled only one year when succeeded by his brother, Alexander Janneus. Janneus was as ruthless as his brother by maintaining control of Palestine and extending its territories to equal the size of King David's rule with the aid of foreign mercenaries. It was during his reign that the schism between the Sadducees and Pharisees reached its breaking point. Civil war between the two parties broke out and ended with a vengeance upon the Pharisees that was reputed to be as bloody as any in history. This strife came to an end when Janneus was succeeded by his wife Alexandria, who proved to be the most capable of the Hasmonean rulers. A rule of nine years that started in 78 BC, she brought in a Golden Age for the Jewish people by her many social reforms. She founded three elementary schools making primary education compulsory for boys and girls. Guided by her brother's advice, who was a rabbi, her actions leaned towards the views of the Pharisees who were the real rulers of the nation and again the vindictiveness of the Sadducees surfaced.<sup>1</sup>

Unfortunately, a family rivalry between two sons of Queen Alexandria, Hyrcanus II and Aristobulus II led to disaster. Upon the Queen's death in 69 BC, Hyrcanus, the older brother and a Pharisee, was appointed High Priest, but he also seized the throne. This caused Aristobulus, a Sadducee, to rebel and with the help of the Priesthood, Hyrcanus was removed from the throne and another civil war broke out. Encouraged by Antipater, an Idumean and the father of Herod who would later become King of the Jews, Hyrcanus was able to obtain support by the king of Arabia, Aretas. Military support was granted with the condition that 12 cities captured by Alexander,

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<sup>1</sup> Max I. Dimont, *Jews, God and History*, Pages 88-91.



Hyrchanus' father, be given back to Arabia. With 50,000 men on horse and foot, Aretas army beat Aristobulus and Hyrcanus reclaimed the throne. Seeking recourse, Aristobulus appealed to the Romans for help in 67 BC. Under Pompey, the Romans had just conquered Syria and his armies were at the border of Palestine. Pompey sent his general Scaurus to hear the appeal and receiving a greater sum of money from Aristobulus he ordered Hyrcanus to relinquish the throne. Aristobulus was reinstated as king and Aretas was commanded to leave Judah or become an enemy of Rome. This outcome emboldened Aristobulus to use his army against Aretas and Hyrcanus. He was successful by slaying 6,000 of Aretas men including Antipater's brother.

Pompey returned from Rome to Judah and was presented with three appeals: one by Hyrcanus to be restored as king; a restatement by Aristobulus pleading that he was the rightful king; and the Pharisees, sick of the whole kingship controversy, petitioned Pompey not to recognize either. Upon hearing the causes of the two brothers and the nation of Judah represented by its high priests, Pompey sent them away and said his decision would be made soon. But Aristobulus impulsively marched into Judah which angered Pompey. To appease Pompey, Aristobulus promised to give him money. But Aristobulus soldiers would not permit this agreement, which caused Pompey to put him in prison. In response, Aristobulus men resisted Pompey's authority and war broke out in Jerusalem with Hyrcanus's army assisting Pompey.

To capture Jerusalem, Pompey had to cross the banks that separated his army from the walls of the temple. Several days passed in raising the banks high enough to bring in their battering-engines to knock down the walls. Purposefully avoiding battle on the Sabbath, the day after the Sabbath, Pompey's forces attacked the temple and over 12,000 Jews were killed. Of this total, some Jews were killed by the Romans, some by one another, others threw themselves down from high precipices, or by burning themselves in their homes, and even the priests died at the altar doing their services in the face of death.

Pompey and a few of his men saw what was in the temple, which was unlawful for any man to see except by the high priests. In the temple, he saw the golden table, the holy candlestick, the pouring vessels, a great quantity of spices and 2,000 talents of sacred money. Pompey did not touch any of this on account of his regard of religion. The next day he gave the order to cleanse the temple and bring what offerings the law required to God.

Pompey appointed the Pharisee Hyrcanus, to be High Priest and ruler of Judah. For the military support Hyrcanus provided through Antipater's consultations, Pompey appointed Antipater to be Governor of Idumea and political advisor to Hyrcanus. Jerusalem was made a tributary to the Romans. The Maccabean Kingdom of Judah was conquered by Pompey in 63 BC and renamed Judea.<sup>2</sup>

Nine inland cities and the maritime cities of Gaza, Joppa and Dora were restored, given back to their own inhabitants in a state of freedom, and joined to the province of Syria. Pompey left the region from the river Euphrates to Egypt under control of his commander Scaurus with two Roman legions. He then left for Rome taking as captives Aristobulus, his two daughters and one son, named Antigonus. Alexander, the other son of Aristobulus, managed to escape.

While Hyrcanus was attempting to rebuild the wall of Jerusalem, Alexander, son of Aristobulus, was intent upon regaining the city and organized an army of 10,000 footmen and 1,500 horsemen. His attack was thwarted by the combined strength of the Roman commanders Gabinius and Mark Antonius, with support of Jewish leaders Antipater, Malichus and Pitholaus. Within the neighborhood of Jerusalem, Alexander met the Roman force and was defeated with a loss of 3,000 men and an equal number captured.

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<sup>2</sup> William Whiston, translation of Flavius Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, Book XIV, Chapters 1-4.

This uprising was followed by Aristobulus and his son Antigonos who fled from Rome and went to Judea. They amassed a Jewish army of 8,000 men but were severely beaten by Gabinus army. About 5,000 of Aristobulus's army were killed and the rest dispersed to save their lives. Again, Aristobulus was sent to Rome and his son Antigonos was set free upon the pleas of his mother to Gabinus.

The tenacity of Aristobulus' sons was not to be dampened; this time it was Alexander who put together an army of 30,000 Jews while Gabinus went to Egypt to restore Ptolemy to his kingdom. When Gabinus returned he tried to pacify Alexander's madness by having Antipater, a prudent man, try to persuade him from proceeding to take Jerusalem by force. But Alexander would not be swayed to abstain from his objective. In the battle that ensued, he lost 10,000 men and Gabinus, having performed successfully in the war campaigns, returned to Rome to support Crassus' government. This same Crassus in an expedition against the Parthians came into Judea and looted the temple. Crassus took the money that was left by Pompey, which amounted to 2,000 talents and also took 8,000 talents in gold. The temple priest offered to give him a solid beam of gold, weighing two and a half pounds worth many 10,000 shekels, if he would leave all the other precious ornaments alone. Crassus took the gold beam and broke his oath, carrying away all the gold that was in the temple. This pillaging of the temple was not to be savored in a life of richly ease. Later, when Crassus made an attempt to overtake Parthis, both he and his entire army perished.

Gaius Cassius, the Roman senator who later formed a conspiracy with Brutus to assassinate Julius Caesar, left Rome following Crassus failed march into Parthia and took possession of Syria. Going through Tyre, he went into Judea and captured 30,000 Jews. He killed Pitholaus who had succeeded Aristobulus and he maintained a friendship with Antipater. It was about this time that Antipater married the daughter of a very eminent man from Idumean, named Cypros. This marriage respectively brought forth four sons and a daughter: Phasaël, Herod,

Joseph, Pheroras and Salome. Regarding Aristobulus, he was set free by Caesar when he had taken Rome. He went to Judea with the support of Caesar to install him on the throne utilizing two of his legions. However, one of Pompey's men prevented that event by having Aristobulus poisoned.<sup>3</sup>

Prior to the defeat of Crassus, Pompey returned to Rome for a three-way meeting with Julius Caesar and Marcus Crassus. They offered him to join an unofficial political alliance known as the First Triumvirate. This trio represented three classes of people: the Roman Senate who support Pompey; the aristocrats who supported Crassus, a financier; and the common people who supported Caesar even though he came from an aristocratic family. Caesar gained popularity with the plebeians by successfully passing an agrarian law that would establish colonies of Roman citizens with the distribution of portions of public lands. This Triumvirate was secretly formed in 59 BC and solidified with Pompey's marriage to Caesar's daughter. Their control of Roman politics faltered after Crassus's defeat and death at the hands of the Parthians in 53 BC. The ambition and jealousies that existed between Pompey and Caesar resulted in civil war by 49 BC. As commander-in-chief backed by the Senate, Pompey was defeated by Caesar in 48 BC at the battle of Pharsalus in Thessaly, Greece. Pursued by Caesar into Egypt, Pompey was subsequently murdered by an assassin.<sup>4</sup>

After Pompey's demise, Antipater was able to persuade Caesar, who now ruled Judea, to have him become administrator of Judea. He made his eldest son, Phasaelus governor of Jerusalem and Herod, now only 15 years of age, governor of Galilee.<sup>5</sup> Though young, Herod had an astute mind and won the hearts of many of the Jews with his courage in slaying the captain of a band of robbers as well as many of

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<sup>3</sup> William Whiston, translation of Flavius Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, Book XIV, Chapters 5- 7.

<sup>4</sup> Internet @ [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/First\\_Triumvirate](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/First_Triumvirate)

<sup>5</sup> William Whiston, translation of Flavius Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, Book XIV, Chapter 9.

the robbers. Prominent Jewish leaders began to envy Antipater for the good-will demonstrated by his sons in running their cities and his deep friendship with their High Priest and ethnarch (governor), Hyrcanus. They also resented Herod's slaying of the robbers without obtaining the condemnation of death by the Sanhedrin and regarded him as being insolent for transgressing their law and ignoring their authority. The Sanhedrin had Herod brought to trial but when he appeared like a monarch dressed with the Roman color purple and a small contingent of troops they were frightened. The Sanhedrin were not used to such display of authority and, like many brought before them for trial, they expected Herod to appear in a black mourning garment exhibiting fear and a submissive continence. Hyrcanus feared that the Sanhedrin were ready to pronounce death upon Herod. He put off the trial to the next day and advised him to leave. Herod went to Damascus and was determined not to appear before the Sanhedrin, if called again. From this point on, the Sanhedrin and principle leaders of Jerusalem deepened their mistrust and hatred for Herod along with their distress that he was not of royal blood, the lineage of David.

After the death of Julius Caesar, slain by Cassius and Brutus in the senate-house, Cassius went from Rome into Syria to receive his army and laid great taxes on several cities, which sorely oppressed Judea. Antipater gained the favor of Cassius by having his sons, Phasaelus and Herod, diligently collect the taxes ordered. Soon after, Cassius got an army along with a fleet of ships and entrusted it under Herod's command as general of the forces in Celesyria. Cassius also made Herod procurator of all Syria and promised that when the war was over, he would make Herod king of Judea. Malichus, a Jewish leader in charge of one of Judea's armies, was against this possibility and by the offer of money, persuaded the butler of Hyrcanus, to poison Antipater at a feast where they all attended. Herod suspected Malichus motive for killing his father was to cause a revolt against the Romans while Cassius was at war with Antony. Malichus succeeded in having Antipater poisoned and Herod anticipated his next act would be to

dispose Hyrcanus and get the crown for himself. Herod stopped Malichus aspirations by having his men kill him.<sup>6</sup>

### **7.1.2 Herod Becomes King of the Jews**

When Antony returned to Syria, Cleopatra met him in Cilicia and won his love for her. There, more than a hundred prominent and eloquent Jews met with Antony to present their cause to remove Herod as procurator. But after hearing both sides, Anthony asked Hyrcanus who would govern the nation best. His reply was that Herod, his son-in-law by marriage to Mariamne, a Maccabean princess and daughter of Alexander (his brother's son), was the better man to rule. This answer coupled with the hospitable friendship he had with Herod's father Antipater, Antony made both Herod and his brother Phasaelus tetrachs (subordinate rulers of Rome over the Jews). Many of the Jews were strongly adversed to this decision whereupon Antony seized and wanted to kill fifteen Jews that Herod was able to pardon. This decision was again challenged in the city of Tyre when a 1,000 Jews met with Hyrcanus and Herod. Not heeding to disperse and go home, the Romans killed and wounded many with the rest fleeing to their homes with a great concern for their lives.

Within two years, Antigonus made a pact with Pacorus, the son of the king of Parthia, and Barzapharnes, a Parthian commander. Parthia had been forming a new empire made up of the former kingdoms of Babylonia, Assyria and Persia. Spreading from the East, this empire was gaining strength from India to the frontiers of Judea. Although the Romans were able to beat the Parthian armies in battle after battle, they never defeated them decisively. To gain rule over Judea, Antigonus promised the Partians 1,000 talents and 500 women if they succeeded in bestowing Hyrcanus rule upon him and killing Herod. Antigonus, Barzapharnes and Pacorus deceived Hyrcanus and Herod's brother Phasaelus as they entered Jerusalem, besieged the king's

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<sup>6</sup> William Whiston, translation of Flavius Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, Book XIV, Chapters 9 and 11.

palace, held them captive, and conspired to snare Herod in their take-over plans. But Herod was able to fight off a great many of his enemies and flee with his wives and family to Idumea.

After Antigonus took control of Jerusalem by force with support of the Parthians, he made himself king of Judea. Having taken Hyrcanus and Phasaelus as prisoners, he cut off the ears of Hyrcanus so, that being maimed, he could no longer by Jewish law be High Priest. Phasaelus attempted suicide by dashing his head upon a stone and Antigonus assured his death by having poison infused into the wound. Herod escaped to Egypt and later sailed to Rome where he met with Antony and Caesar (Octavian, Julius Caesar's nephew later called Augustus after 27 BC). Recalling the friendship and support Herod's father gave them while in Syria, the Senate was summoned to hear his grievances. On the 184 Olympiad,<sup>1</sup> or 41 BC, the Senate decreed Herod should be king of the Jews.

Upon returning from Rome, Herod was able to avoid, and in some cases, fight against ambush attacks planned by Antigonus. Having gotten his family out of the Masada fortress, Herod headed with his army for Jerusalem. Antigonus was successful in defeating six newly formed, unskilled regiments headed by Herod's brother Joseph who was killed and then beheaded in Jericho. Herod avenged his brother's death by overcoming Antigonus army in Jericho and cut off the head of the enemy commander that beheaded Joseph. Three years had passed since Herod was made King of the Jews in Rome and Antigonus besieged Jerusalem to become both King and High Priest. In the same manner that Pompey captured the city in 63 BC, Herod had trees cut down and erected towers to advance an assault. While his army prepared for the advance, Herod went to Samaria to marry the daughter of Alexander to which he had been betrothed. Returning to Jerusalem he joined with Antony's general, Sosius. With Rome's sup-

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<sup>1</sup> Olympiad is an interval of time by the Greeks that represents four years between two successive celebrations of the Olympic games.

port, Herod had an army of eleven legions, 6,000 horsemen and auxiliaries from Syria that totaled about 30,000 men.

The Jews fought courageously holding off the Roman siege for five months. Herod's chosen men and Sosius's centurions took 40 days before they could breach the first wall and another 15 days to break down the second wall. When the outer court and the lower city were taken, the Jews fled into the inner court of the temple and into the upper city. The High Priests requested that they be permitted to continue their animal sacrifices to God, which Herod honored. But seeing that the Jews did not intend to yield, Herod made an assault on the city and both the Romans and Jews that joined Herod's army savagely killed all Jews without discriminating those that were infants, women, young or the aged. Herod became very concerned about the ruthless ravage and destruction of the city. He threatened and used some force to keep the Roman soldiers from entering the temple for only the priests were allowed to see the most holy and revered artifices of the temple. To avoid complete destruction and inheriting a desert for a city, he pacified Sosius and his soldiers by promising them a handsome sum of money, which was given to every soldier; a greater portion to the commanders, and a most royal amount to Sosius. The entire Roman army left the city well compensated.

After more than three years, Antigonius was captured in 37 BC and the city of Jerusalem was under the rule of Herod.<sup>2</sup> Sosius returned to

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<sup>2</sup> Max I. Dimont, *Jews, God and History*, Pages 95-97. Max Dimont indicates Herod ruled 46 years and captured Jerusalem in 37 BC. But Flavius Josephus wrote Herod was 15 years old when his father died in 43 BC. If he ruled for 46 years, then he died in 3 CE at the age of 61 (15+46). But this disagrees with Flavius Josephus who also indicated that Herod lived 70 years.

Scholars disagree with Josephus that Herod was 15 but was 25 years old when his father Antipater died in 43 BC. If Herod was 25 years of age in 43 BC and ruled 46 years, we find he died around 3 CE at the age of 71 (25+46), which closely agrees with the 70 years by Flavius.



Rome with Antigonus in bonds to be put into a Roman prison. Herod feared that Antigonus might be able to sway the minds of the senate with an appeal that he was of royal birth and indeed the rightful heir to the throne. Antony, a strong supporter of Herod, recognized that Antigonus was a constant threat as a Jewish king and had him beheaded. Herod, half Jew and an Idumean, was now securely King of the Jews and the Hasmonean dynasty, once a proud and glorious kingdom, came to an ignoble end. Only 106 years from the establishment of a second Judah in 143 BC, its downfall was principally the internal differences between the Sadducees and Pharisees. Both parties had made political and religious attempts to respectively control the kingship and High Priest positions, precipitating the end of the kingdom.<sup>3</sup>

In appreciation of Antony's support, Herod took from the wealthy men of Jerusalem their royal ornaments and great quantities of silver and gold and gave it to him and his commanders. Herod's immediate reprisal was to put to death 45 of the principal men that were allied with Antigonus and suspected of conspiracy. Now in solid control of Judea, the Jews first irony of fate reached full circle; the Idumeans who were forcibly converted to Judaism 80 years ago by John Hyrcanus, now ruled the Jews that existed under the Hasmonean dynasty. The second irony of fate was soon to materialize with the life of a man from Galilee who unlocked the doors of the Jewish religion.

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However, Flavius age dates are suspect. If we keep Herod's age at 25 years in 43 BC, then when he captured Jerusalem and had Antigonus killed in 37 BC, he was 31 years old. Since Josephus indicates Herod reigned 34 years from the death of Antigonus in *Antiquities of the Jews*, Book XVII, Chapter 8, he died around 3 BC ( $37-34 = 3$  BC). But that means Herod was only 65 years old ( $31+34$ ) and not the 70 years Josephus estimates as his final age. To compensate for the 5-year discrepancy, many schooled men presume Herod's death to be 2 CE. The events of 37 BC and a 34-year reign are more reliable than Flavius guesses of Herod's age, so that his death in 3 BC is a good estimate.

<sup>3</sup> William Whiston, translation of Flavius Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, Book XIV, Chapters 13 – 16.

It remained for several Jewish holy men to open those doors for believers who placed their faith in the Son of Man, Jesus Christ.

### **7.1.3 Accomplishments of Herod the Great**

Herod's rule brought peace and prosperity to Palestine. He provided for the poor in times of scarcity; when Syria and Palestine was faced with a severe famine he gathered all his wealth and priceless items in his palace and bought corn from Egypt to sustain his people and neighboring countries<sup>1</sup>. He encouraged trade and agriculture, erected a theater in Jerusalem, built a great amphitheater outside its gates, constructed many Roman temples, new cities and public buildings. He also initiated games to be celebrated every fifth year in honor of Caesar, which was not favorably received by the Sadducees and Pharisees. He would invite wrestlers from other lands and men out of other nations to witness the events. He spared no pains to induce those who ran for prizes in chariot races, be they drawn by two, three or four horses, to visit his city. Herod publicly demonstrated both his and Caesar's glorious feats by having inscriptions, made of the purest gold and silver, displayed in the theater and Roman buildings.

For the amphitheater, he stocked a great many wild beasts and lions to be used against each other or men condemned to death. These events were not acceptable to pious Jews for to throw men to wild beasts was an impiety. The statues of men in the Roman buildings and the trophies won at these events caused another source of displeasure for they were imagined to be images, a violation to the observance of their God. The conflicts Herod endured by his people became highly inflamed; for his introduction of foreign customs clashed with their religious laws. He had the good fortune that a conspiracy planned by ten men to kill him at the theater was thwarted by one of his spies. Surviving internal adversities and many wars, Herod had visions of his greatness and took care to imbue elegance in the monuments and

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<sup>1</sup> William Whiston, translation of Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, Book XV, Chapter 9.

buildings he had erected. In countries other than Syria, such as Greece, he erected Apollo's temple at Rhodes at his own expense. It was his desire that his greatness in these memorials would leave some remembrance of his beneficence for future ages.

Herod remodeled the Jewish Temple into a thing of marbled beauty raising it higher and making it more magnificent than it was before. In the fourth quarter of the Temple stood the royal cloisters. Their height above the valley was so immense that looking down upon the battlements below one would get a giddy felling. These cloisters had pillars in four rows with the last row interwoven into the wall. The number of pillars was 162 and the thickness of each pillar was such that it took three men extending their arms to surround it. The heights of these pillars were 27 feet and, upon the roofs of the cloisters were sculptures deeply carved in wood representing many sorts of figures. It took eight years for Herod's remodeling efforts and the Temple itself, located within three enclosures, was built by the priests, which took a year and a half for its completion. The walls of the first enclosure were of finely polished marbled stone and the second enclosure had an inscription embedded in stone that forbade any foreigner to go in under pain of death. In this enclosure, the priests and their wives were allowed to go but further inward another gate stood and the wives were excluded. Finally, the third enclosure contained the Temple where only the priests were allowed to enter. It was here that the priests offered animal sacrifices and burnt offerings to God for the atonement of sins. Herod did not enter any of the three enclosures, because not being a priest, he was forbidden.<sup>2</sup>

In spite of Herod's desire to be honored and respected for his superb projects, he was despised and hated by the Jews for his inhumanity and despotic rule. In addition to the murder of members of the Sanhedrin, he intimidated the High Priests into subservience with threats of assassination; he murdered his rivals, his favorite wife and several of his

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<sup>2</sup> William Whiston, translation of Flavius Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, Book XV, Chapter 11.

sons, including two of his sons from one of his ten wives who was a Maccabean princess. By Saint Matthew's gospel account, Herod is reputed to have ordered the death of all male infants under the age of two all along the coasts and in Bethlehem.<sup>3</sup> His motive was to nullify the prophecy that a king born from the line of David, namely Jesus, could undermine his rule.

Matthew further relates that Joseph and his family moved to Egypt and did not return until the death of Herod. It should be noted that Herod's order to kill male infants is not at all mentioned in Flavius Josephus history of the Jews that describes the rule of Herod in great detail. Josephus made no attempt to omit many of Herod's despicable actions, such as his order, negated after Herod's death by his sister Salome, to have one member of the principal families killed upon his death so that the people of Judea would have reason to mourn, even if the tears were not meant for him. Surely, Josephus, himself a Jew who fought for his nation, would have reported the abominable act of Herod's killing of Jewish infants. His desire to write the history of the Jews with a great regard for truth, even if it denigrates the reverence of Herod's posterity, has been clearly stated in Book XVI of his *Antiquities of the Jews*, Chapter 7, paragraph 1. To verify Josephus desire to write accurately and not hide the truth, he strongly condemned Herod as having a murderous mind and committed a wicked action by having his sons, Alexander and Aristobulus, killed.<sup>4</sup>

None of the other Gospel writers recall the very notorious and unforgettable order by Herod to kill Jewish male infants under the age of two.<sup>5</sup> How is it possible that a horrendous crime against innocent babies, whether the total slain came to five or 1005, was either

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<sup>3</sup> Holy Bible, King James Version, *Matthew*, 2:12-16.

<sup>4</sup> William Whiston, translation of Flavius Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, Book XVI, Chapter 11.

<sup>5</sup> Internet @ [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Herod\\_the\\_Great](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Herod_the_Great). The account of a massacre of infants by Herod is not documented in any other contemporary source including the biography provided by the Jewish historian Flavius Josephus.

forgotten or kept silent by the other Gospel writers who were all Jewish? Another biblical error was made by Saint Luke when he indicated that it was under the Roman governor Cyrenius (Quirinius) when Augustus Caesar decreed to tax all territories within Syria. It was at that time that Joseph took Mary and the baby Jesus from Nazareth in Galilee and went to Bethlehem to be part of the tax census.<sup>6</sup> But the tax decree was given during Cyrenius second term in 7 CE, which would mean Jesus would have been around 11 ½ years old since he was born between 5 and 4 BC.<sup>7</sup> The date that Cyrenius was sent by Caesar to assess the state of affairs in Syria and to sell the house of Archelaus (Herod's son), who was removed from kingship after ten years rule,<sup>8</sup> also agrees with four facts that fit together: Herod died around 3 or 4 BC, Archelaus ruled about ten years, Cyrenius came to Syria about 7 CE, and Jesus had to be at least 11 ½ years old when Joseph took his family to Bethlehem to be part of the tax census.

The Gospels of Matthew and Luke do not agree, and Matthew is the only person that documents the deaths of Jewish infants. It appears that Matthew conjured up a travel event that confuses Bethlehem with Egypt so that a prophecy that stated "Out of Egypt I have called my son" may materialize.<sup>9</sup> The discrepancy between Matthew and Luke about the Egypt versus the Bethlehem trip is compounded by the infant episode, which appears to be a deceptive fabrication in Matthew's Gospel. The concern regarding its validity as being suspect comes about because Herod was dying of cancer for at least a year before his death. Also, his estimated death in 3 BC closely agrees with a note given in Flavius Josephus history of the Jews that indicates Herod died

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<sup>6</sup> Holy Bible, King James Version, *Luke*, 2:1-6.

<sup>7</sup> Holy Bible, King James Version, Published by Regency Publishing House, 1978, Page 563. Jesus was born between 5 and 4 BC.

<sup>8</sup> William Whiston, translation of Flavius Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, Book XVII, Chapter 13.

<sup>9</sup> Bell Publishing Company of New York, *The Lost Books of the Bible*, The First Gospel of the Infancy of Jesus, Chapter 4:23, Page 42.

around September of 4 BC.<sup>10</sup> Since Jesus was born in 4 BC and Herod died in that same year, it is highly unlikely that the dying Herod would be concerned with a prophecy of a child that would come out of Egypt and be king. Finally, the error committed by Saint Luke citing the collection of taxes throughout Syria by Cyrenius infers that his truthfulness is suspect because Jesus would not be an infant but a young boy at 11 ½ years of age.

### **7.1.4 Jews Defeat Arabians under Herod's Leadership**

By 29 BC, the 187<sup>th</sup> Olympiad, Herod became enriched with taxes received within his Judean domain and raised a great army with the intent to either assist Antony in his fight against Caesar for supreme control of the world or, go to war against the king of Arabia. Antony did not take Herod's offer to assist him and this decision may have been partly due to Cleopatra's desire to have Herod go to war with the Arabian king and possibly lose his life or weaken his ability to rule. Herod's army was successful in defeating the Arabians but when they went further into Cana, which is in Celesyria, a province given to Cleopatra by Antony to appease her anger against the death plot Herod planned against his wife, it was Antony's soldiers that attacked Herod's army. Fatigued from their first victory, the Jews were slaughtered by the combined Roman and Arabian forces and fled having suffered a great loss.

In the 7<sup>th</sup> year of Herod's reign, Octavius Caesar and Antony engaged at war. At this time, a severe earthquake in Judea caused the death of 10,000 men that perished with the fall of houses and a great many cattle were lost. Fortunately, Herod's army was camped in the field and they experienced no losses. The Arabians were emboldened to attack the Jews upon hearing of this destruction and after beheading two Jewish ambassadors sent by Herod to negotiate peace terms,

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<sup>10</sup> William Whiston, translation of Flavius Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, Book XVIII, Chapter 4, Note 14.

positioned themselves to attack Judea. With the people of Judea in low spirits and distressed to even consider putting a front to fight the Arabians, it was the leadership of Herod that inspired the Jews to fight courageously. Although the portion of this book is presented to give the reader a sense of the stress and pain that the Jews suffered prior to the coming of Jesus Christ, it is highly important to cite the greater part of Herod's speech to appreciate his respect for God, his mental acuity, sense of righteousness, and love of his people to survive a very formidable situation in their lives.

*"You are not unacquainted, my fellow soldiers, that we have had, not long since, many accidents that have put a stop to what we are about. And it is probable that even those that are most distinguished above others for their courage can hardly keep up their spirits in such circumstances. But since we cannot avoid fighting. . . . I have proposed to myself both to give you encouragement, and, at the same time, some information . . . that you may still continue in your own proper fortitude. I will then, in the first place, demonstrate to you that this war is a just one on our side, . . . it is a war of necessity, and occasioned by the injustice of our adversaries. . . . I will further demonstrate, that the misfortunes we are under are of no great consequence, and that we have the greatest reason to hope for victory. I shall begin with the first. . . . You are not ignorant certainly of the wickedness of the Arabians, which is to that degree as to appear incredible to all other men, and to include somewhat that shows the grossest barbarity and ignorance of God. The chief things wherein they have affronted us have arisen from covetousness and envy, and they have attacked us in an insidious manner, and on the sudden. . . . And whereas observation of covenants takes place among the bitterest enemies, but among friends is absolutely necessary, this is not observed among these men, who think gain to be the best of all things. . . by any means whatsoever and that injustice is no harm if they may get money by it. It is therefore a question with you whether the unjust are to be punished or not? When God himself hath declared his mind that so it ought to be and hath commanded that we ever should hate injuries and*

*injustice, which is not only just, in wars between several nations. For these Arabians have done what both the Greeks and barbarians own to be an instance of the grossest wickedness, with regard to our ambassadors, which they have beheaded, while the Greeks declare that such ambassadors are sacred and inviolable. And for ourselves, we have learned from God the most excellent of our doctrines, and the most holy part of our law, by angels or ambassadors, for this name brings God to the knowledge of mankind, and is sufficient to reconcile enemies to one another. What wickedness then can be greater than the slaughter of ambassadors, who come to treat about what is right? And what such have been their actions, how is it possible they can either live securely in common life, or be successful in war? In my opinion, this is impossible. But perhaps some will say that what is holy and what is right is indeed on our side, but that the Arabians are either more courageous or more numerous than we are. . . it is not fit for us to say so, for with whom what is righteous, with them is God himself, now where God is, there is both multitude and courage. But to examine our own circumstances a little, we were conquerors in the first battle. And when we fought again, they were not able to oppose us but ran away, and could not endure our attacks and our courage. But when we had conquered them, then came the Athenian and made war against us without declaring it. And pray, is this an instance of their manhood? Or is it not a second instance of their wickedness and treachery? Why are we therefore of less courage, . . which ought to inspire us with stronger hopes? Why are we terrified when they have been continually beaten ?. . . True valor is not shown by fighting against weak persons, but in being able to overcome the most hardy. But then the distresses we are ourselves under, and the miseries that have come by the earthquake hath afrightened any one, let him consider, in the first place, that this very thing will deceive the Arabians by their supposal that what hath befallen us is greater than it really is. Moreover, . . . their hope, as to us, that we are cast down by our misfortunes. But when we boldly march against them, we shall soon pull down their insolent conceit of themselves and shall gain this by attacking them. They will not be so insolent when we come to battle,*



*for our distresses are not so great. Nor is what hath happened all indication of the anger of God against us, as some imagine, for such things are accidental and adversities that come in the usual course of things. If we allow that this was done by the will of God, we must allow that it is now over by his will also. . . . as for the war we are engaged in, he hath himself demonstrated that he is willing it should go on and knows it to be a just war. While some of the people in the country have perished, all you who were in arms have suffered nothing, but are preserved alive. . . . Consider these things, and, what is more than all the rest, that you have God at all times for your protector; and prosecute these men with a just bravery, who, in point of friendship, are unjust, in their battles perfidious, towards ambassadors impious, and always inferior to you in valor.”*

The effect of Herod's speech on his people so raised their spirits and strengthened their will that they were disposed to fight with a renewed sense of vigor. Herod had the sacrifices appointed by law performed for their God and immediately organized his army of Jews to fight the Arabians. Knowing that a certain castle was in a strategic place in the enemy's midst, Herod headed directly for it and had to engage in several skirmishes before the Arabs were beaten and made to retreat. The Jews were encouraged at their victory in overcoming the enemy that had, if not a well-trained army, a greater number of men. This quick victory emboldened Herod and his Jews to attempt an onslaught on the Arabs in their dug-in trenches. The Arabs were forced out of their trenches and as they were poorly commanded, their ranks fell into disorder. Though they outnumbered the Jews in hand to hand combat they at length lost 5,000 men and the rest fled the field of battle. After the Arabs had retreated to their fortification they were in dire need of water and sent ambassadors to negotiate peace. But Herod, not forgetting the beheadings of his ambassadors, was of no mind to moderate any terms and desired only revenge. Five days elapsed and 4,000 were taken prisoners while the rest, though weakened with thirst, fought to die an honorable death than survive in misery. This choice resulted in

the deaths of 7,000 more men and the remaining Arabians conceded to make Herod the governor of their nation.

The foresight of Herod to gain the friendship of Octavius Caesar before victory over Antony, was another instance of Herod's ability to sort out where his friendships should be enhanced. He was able to gain the respect of Caesar and proved that he could be trusted by providing food, water and wine for Caesar's soldiers as they were preparing to leave Syria and invade Egypt. Herod earned a cordial friendship with Caesar by riding along with 150 men in splendid armor and presented him with 800 talents. Upon Caesar's conquest of Egypt, Herod went there as a sign of respect and friendship receiving in return the following great favors: 400 Galatians who were Cleopatra's guards; the country Celesyria that Cleopatra had received was restored to him; and added to Herod's kingdom were Gadara, Hippos, Samaria, and the maritime cities Gaza, Anthedon, Joppa, and Strato's Tower.<sup>1</sup>

### **7.1.5 Herod's Ambassadorship with Rome**

By the 28<sup>th</sup> year of Herod's reign, the number of magnificent cities that either were built up or restored with his resources in Syria and other countries had earned him the respect and friendship of many leaders, in particular, Augustus Caesar. More than any other man in the Jewish communities of Syria and Judea, Herod had, by accepting the values, customs and art of Rome within his own country, achieved in an unobtrusive way, the acceptance and high regard by Roman leaders of the Jewish God. Herod's frequent trips to Rome and other countries to assist in their building projects exposed to them his ability to not only express himself honorably but his desire to give to other kingdoms the benefit of his good fortune, which became a reality in the works he erected in their cities. Though a king who became very protective of his very life in Judea for the atrocities he committed, be they warranted or not, he was truly an ambassador that left his mark of greatness by

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<sup>1</sup> William Whiston, translation of Flavius Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, Book XV, Chapters 5 and 6.

the testimonials of buildings, temples and monuments that people were able to gain a living and remember him by.

Unfortunately, the pious people of Judea could not accept the great festivals and sumptuous preparations enjoyed by foreigners who came to see the games that were consecrated to Caesar and celebrated every fifth year. As mentioned before, the buildings and monuments that clearly provoked images of foreign gods also caused concern among the Priesthood. But also, the invitation of foreigners brought into their country the intercommunication of ideas of other cultures and especially Greek thought that taxed the mind and questioned the rationale for the existence of God. Still, this exposure was a healthy one for the Priesthood to prevail against the challenges of external forces for it united the people of Judea into an ever-tighter bond to reject questionable values of the outside world. The negative effect however, was also a rejection of their king, who try as he may to pacify and gain the respect of his people with a more glorious temple than they had before, he could not compromise their hostility and win their hearts.

The most important contribution that Herod was able to achieve, and not given credit for, was his magnanimity and ambassadorship that enabled Roman leaders, in return, to acquire a high reverence for the Jewish God. This was shown in concrete terms by the Roman leader Augustus who wrote an epistle to the governors of all the cities that ill-treated the Jews in Asia and Greece. His epistle was repeated by the appointed governors in Syria to command, at the threat of severe punishment, the following benefits for the Jewish people:

*Epistle of Caesar Augustus: . . . . according to the sentence and oath of the people of Rome, that the Jews have liberty to make use of their own customs, according to the law of their forefathers; . . . their sacred money be not touched, but be sent to Jerusalem, and that it be committed to the care of the receivers at Jerusalem; . . . .they be not obliged to go before any judge on the Sabbath day, nor on the day of the preparation to it, after the ninth hour; . . . any one caught stealing*

*their holy books, or their sacred money, whether it be out of the synagogue or public school, shall be deemed a sacrilegious person, and his goods shall be brought into the public treasury of the Romans.*<sup>1</sup>

The historical writings of Josephus bring to light the reverence and respect that Roman leaders had for the Jewish religion and God of the Jewish people. It serves to justify that this respect, channeled by the fond relations between Herod and the Caesar family of leaders, eventually caused acceptance of the Jewish religion within Rome after it was further promulgated by the disciples of Jesus Christ and advocated by Saint Paul. We will see that in just a few generations of Caesar's epistle, Rome, and many other nations in turn, have come to accept the Jewish monotheistic God for some very obvious reasons:

- The Roman leaders have witnessed the failure of multiple gods in Egypt and the emergence of the sole God, Amen.
- Roman leaders have seen the affinity for people to readily accept the concept of one god.
- Roman and Greek leaders have come to realize the power of spirituality to embolden a people to die for their god in the face of great adversity. This was learned first by the Seleucid Greeks who were overcome by the Jews as they heroically fought for their religious ideas. By 164 BC the Jews recaptured Jerusalem and obtained a peace treaty from the Greeks in 143 BC. There was Herod's victory over the Arabians in 27 BC in spite of massive losses due to an earth-quake and being outnumbered by the enemy. The long, fought war by Rome to capture Jerusalem in 70 AD was another testament of an extraordinary increase of will power by the Jews due to their allegiance to God rather than the authority of men.
- The Jews had scripture that cemented the bond of their people to God. Holy Scripture developed from Egyptian roots and improved

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<sup>1</sup> William Whiston, translation of Flavius Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, Book XVI, Chapter 6.

upon by spiritual men and High Priests of the Jews had more reverence than the myths and adventurous poems of the Greek and Roman gods.

- The Roman leaders endorsed Catholicism as a practical means to unify their people and restore a value system that was sorely needed after the downfall of their government due, in part, to the corrupt and immoral behavior of their people.
- Many emerging governments have found religion as a benefit to implement moral values within their countries and thereby establish stability and control of their people.
- Governments complemented with a religious organization are able to employ God as a tool to unite their people to either encroach upon other countries or defend their own country from adversity. In fact, some governments in our present world presently use God to control the minds of their people. Instead of separate state and religious organizations, they operate as a theocracy. This is strongly demonstrated by those countries that give high reverence and authority to their religious leaders, which is the case with the Islam religion. They do not allow their people to freely choose a government that gives more flexibility for the use of reason. This is evident by their efforts to inhibit the liberal interchange of ideas from other countries.

Only through education can a people become capable of understanding what are the benefits of freedom and are able to rule themselves. It has been demonstrated, that such education must also be tempered by a spirituality that enhances morality. But a theocracy is able to completely control the hearts and minds of a people by suppressing freedom of thought with theological beliefs expressed in their Holy Scriptures. Total religious control provides nothing more than the application of protectionism from the rest of the world and the locking of an individual within a cage - for the mind cannot grow when it is deprived to think in the fertile field of ideas. Tolerable governments that allow

freedom of religion whereby the expression of spiritual practices and moral values are experienced is very healthy; for in the end, the cross-pollination of ideas and change will result in a universal God worshiped by all people.

### **7.1.6 End of BC to the Death of Jesus Christ**

This subsection takes the reader through the years of Jesus Christ's existence. The period after his death will also be presented to gain an understanding of what may have precipitated the writing of the Gospels. History of how the Jews were insistent in preserving their religion and how intent their reverence was to die for their God is extremely important if the modern mind is to comprehend the establishment of not a new religion, but an extension of the Jewish religion. Many people fail to realize that the early Christians were Jews. Foreigners with their concepts of gods were not ready for any conversion to the god of the Jews, including the Romans. We will find that Jesus Christ was an Essene, from the nonpolitical party who avoided the disturbances and seditious actions provoked by the Sadducees, Pharisees and Zealots. Most importantly, the review of history out to the time when Jewish holy men wrote the Gospels and laid the ground work to preserve not only their God, but to open their religion for the salvation of all men is essential and assists in understanding their motivation. The Gospels were written many years after the death of Jesus Christ so that events of the Son of Man, as he always referred to himself, were embellished. It was not until the last Gospel do we find that the author had Jesus state he was the Son of God.

#### ***7.1.6.1 Removal of the Golden Eagle from the Temple***

Towards the end of Herod's reign, he suffered greatly and had difficulty breathing with severe convulsions in all parts of his body. After suffering about one or two years, he finally died around 3 or 4 BC of cancer of the colon.<sup>1</sup> Finding that the king's disease was incurable,

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<sup>1</sup> Note: Refer to the Text and Footnote 2 in Subsection 7.1.2.

two very eloquent and well-versed interpreters of Jewish law, named Judas and Mattbias, excited the young men at their lectures by stating the king committed a sacrilege. The erection of a golden eagle on the gate of their temple was contrary to their religious law, which prohibits the use of any living creature representing God. In the face of the king's reaction of penalty of death for removing the golden eagle, these men and a very large number of Jewish youths were convinced that the virtue of their action, renouncing the pleasures of life for the preservation and observation of the law of their fathers, was an honorable action for the present and generations to come.

With the report that the king was dead, the young men in the middle of the day pulled down the golden eagle and with axes cut it into pieces. With Judas and Mattbias, over forty others were caught by the king's captain. Before being bound and put to death without the benefit of a funeral to mourn by their family members, Judas and Mattbias courageously stated to Herod:

*"Yes, what was contrived we contrived, and what hath been performed we preformed it, and that which such a virtuous courage as becomes men, for we have given our assistance to those things which were dedicated to the majesty of God, and we have provided for what we have learned by hearing the law, and it ought not be wondered at, if we esteem those laws which Moses had suggested to him, and were taught him by God, and which he wrote and left behind him, more worthy of observation than thy commands. Accordingly, we will undergo death, and all sorts of punishments which thou canst inflict upon us, with pleasure, since we are conscious to ourselves that we shall die, not for any unrighteous actions, but **for our love to religion.**"*<sup>1</sup>

The above passage verifies the kind of passion the Jewish people demonstrated for their God. The power of religion has come to be

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<sup>1</sup> William Whiston, translation of Flavius Josephus, *Antiquity of the Jews*, Book XVII, Chapter 6.

recognized by powerful leaders. History has shown that leaders harness such spiritual devotion by employing God as an indispensable tool in the arsenal of defense and aggression towards other nations.

#### ***7.1.6.2 Jewish Leadership Challenge Archelaus Kingship***

When Herod died, his last will designated Archelaus and Antipas, sons by his Samaritan wife, to govern the kingdom. Antipas was to be tetrarch of Galilee and Perea and Archelaus was to rule the rest of the kingdom that included Judea, Samaria, and Idumea. This change in rule afforded the Jews opportunities to test the character of Archelaus. They lamented the deaths of a high priest, Judas, Mattbias, and the many men slain by Herod for cutting the golden eagle into pieces. The Jews were successful in getting Archelaus to appoint another high priest of their choosing to replace Herod's choice, but Archelaus claimed that until he was officially appointed by the consent of Caesar he had to reserve action on their other petitions.

The Jews were not content with Archelaus response, which was to send his general to intercede with the Jews in a private way to pacify them and exhort them to be quiet. But the seditious threw stones at him as he entered the temple denying him the ability to speak and drove him away. Archelaus sent yet others to appease the crowd but the same treatment was imparted to them as well. The feast of unleavened bread (Jews Passover to commemorate the Exodus) was at hand where it is celebrated with a great number of sacrifices and attended by a large multitude of people. Their numbers gave rise to much noise and clamor as many stood in the temple bewailing the rabbis and the many men that had been put to death over removal of the golden eagle and cutting it into pieces. To suppress a possible outbreak of violence, Archelaus sent a tribune to speak with the people and a small armed regiment of a thousand men. This show of force only infuriated the Jews further into sedition as they stoned many of the soldiers, killed some of them and wounded the tribune. Seeing a breakdown of his government was eminent, Archelaus sent his entire



army and horsemen to quell the violence. This action was initiated as the Jews were offering their sacrifices causing more mayhem and at the end of the day 3,000 Jews were killed. Archelaus then ordered a proclamation that they should retire to their homes, to which they complied out of fear.<sup>2</sup>

### **7.1.6.3 Jews Initiate Another Seditious Action**

After Archelaus sailed for Rome to meet with Augustus Caesar, the whole nation of Judea was in tumult. On the approach of the Feast of Pentecost, when thousands of Jews congregate in Jerusalem to celebrate the Torah received at Sinai, a great number of Galileans, Idumeans and many men from Jericho assembled in great numbers. The multitude of Jews became clamorous and reached a tumultuous pitch whereby they organized themselves into three parts to make an assault on the Roman governor Sabinus and his legion of soldiers from Syria. One part seized control of the hippodrome of the temple and the other two positioned themselves at the northern east quarter and western part of the city. Surrounding the Romans on every side they attacked Sabinus's legion of soldiers. Sabinus immediately sent out messengers requesting assistance from Varus, the president of Syria, who took his two legions, four troops of horsemen, and several auxiliary forces, which were supplemented by kings and certain governors. This support was greatly needed as the Jews positioned high up on the cloisters threw darts down upon the heads of the Romans killing a great number. The Jews were routed out of the temple after the Romans set fires to the cloisters. The beautiful gold works fashioned on the beams of their temple were destroyed as burning roofs of wood tumbled down. The numbers of Jews were still a threat to Sabinus as one legion of soldiers, entrenched in the highest tower of the fortress called Phasaelus (after Herod's dead brother), were surrounded and killed.

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<sup>2</sup> William Whiston, translation of Flavius Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, Book XVII, Chapter 9.

The Jews had a measure of success by having burnt down the royal palace at Jericho; set fire to many other of the king's houses in several places of the country; assaulted the palace in Galilee and seized all the weapons there; and attacked a company of Romans who were bringing corn and weapons to the army. But Judea experienced a great many robberies committed by Jews and many leaders rose to claim the status of a king. Though they were able to fight the Romans, the murders they committed upon their own people lasted a long while before they were about to be subdued by the arrival of Varus's army.

On his way to Jerusalem to assist the assault by Sabinus, Varus marched his troops to Samaria and all the cities on route were burnt and people slaughtered. When he reached Jerusalem, the Jews appealed to him and said the number of people brought together was due to the feast and that the war started without the approval of their leaders but by the rashness of strangers and that they were on the side of the Romans giving support against the uprising. Varus may have realized that this appeal was contrived with excuses, for foreigners would have no interest in attending a feast that celebrates a Jewish tradition and initiate a war that would not benefit them. The decision by Varus not to besiege the Jews for their seditious behavior was one of prudence to avoid the deaths of yet more people and soldiers. However, he was able to discover and punish those that were most guilty, which resulted in 2,000 men being crucified. Flavius Josephus did not report how many of the seditious Jews were killed, but if we took a conservative estimate of five times the number crucified, it would number at least 10,000 men.<sup>1</sup>

#### *7.1.6.4 Jewish Tax Revolt During the Years of Jesus Life*

With a no confidence decision by Augustus Caesar, Archelaus reign came to an end after a ten-year rule. At this time, Cyrenius, a Roman

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<sup>1</sup> William Whiston, translation of Flavius Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, Book XVII, Chapter 10.

senator, was sent by Caesar to take an account of the wealth of Judea, which was added to the province of Syria. This task was to levy taxes throughout Syria and it included the assessment and disposal of Archelaus's assets. The events that follow occurred during a significant period in the life of Jesus Christ. As indicated in Subsections 7.1.2, Note 2 and 7.1.3, it became evident that Herod died around 3 BC. Whiston's translation of *Antiquities of the Jews* by Flavius Josephus, concludes his death was in September of 4 BC. Since Archelaus reign started with Herod's death and lasted ten years, that means Cyrenius taxed Judea around 7 CE. These dates allow us to conclude that Jesus Christ was at least 11 ½ years old since he was born between 5 and 4 BC.

When Cyrenius proscribed the taxes throughout Syria via the order of Augustus, the Jews in Judea did not at first oppose it. However, two men, Judas a Gaulonite, and a Pharisee named Sadduc caused the people to revolt asserting that such taxation was no better than an introduction to slavery. Their zealous actions formed a fourth philosophic sect, the Zealots, which was started by Judas the Galilean. They believed that God is their only Ruler and Lord so that liberty from the rule of men was their credo to die for. This belief of the laws of God as greater than those of men was so strong that they were willing to die any kind of death. But their fervor to face adversity in the face of death brought their sect to the height of madness because they would not tolerate civil rules of law imposed by men. The Zealot movement initiated many uprisings to their civil government and laid the foundations of their future miseries. This mindset precipitated the start of many misfortunes: one violent war came after another; the Jews lost the support of their ally, the Romans, that allowed them to practice their religious traditions; many robberies and murders were committed against their principal men by their own people with the pretense that it was for the public welfare; there was the desire of one party to dominate over another causing assassinations among their people; their seditious acts caused by their devotion to the God-given laws of their forefathers resulted in the taking and destruction of many

cities; a famine increased their despair; and finally, their temple to God was burnt down by the Romans in 70 CE.

#### **7.1.6.5 Sedition of the Jews Against Pontius Pilate**

After Archelaus reigned ten years, a number of procurators governed Judea before Pontius Pilate assumed that office. First, there was Coponius who came with Cyrenius from Rome to impose taxes ordered by Augustus Caesar. Then came Marcus Ambivius, followed by Annius Rufus, under which Caesar died and Tiberius Nero, his wife Julia's son, became emperor of Rome. Succeeding Rufus was Valerius Gratus who governed Judea eleven years before returning to Rome and he was succeeded by Pontius Pilate. By adding the rule of Archelaus to that of Gratus and assuming about two years office by Cyrenius, Ambivius and Rufus, a fair estimate as to when Pilate became governor of Judea would be about 27-years (10 + 11 + 6) after Herod died. Since Jesus Christ was born in 4 BC, about one year before Herod's death due to cancer, it is very likely that Jesus was a young man of about 28 years of age when Pilate took office.

It was towards the end of Jesus Christ's life that another seditious act by the Jews was provoked. Not far from Jerusalem, Pilate resided in Cesarea with his army and in honor of Caesar he brought images of Caesar on flags into the city of Judea. For Jews to honor and worship any god other than the god of their fathers was forbidden by their commandments. Of the many procurators sent to Judea, Pilate was the first to bring the images of their god Caesar into Jerusalem. The images were brought in the middle of the night but as soon as the Jews saw them they went in multitudes to Cesarea and interceded with Pilate many days to remove the images. Pilate would not grant their requests and on the sixth day he sat in his judgment seat in an open part of the city where his army was concealed to suppress any uprising. When the Jews again petitioned Pilate, he gave the signal to his soldiers to surround them and threatened punishment by immediate death, unless they desist disturbing him and go to their homes. In

response, the Jews threw themselves upon the ground and laid their necks bare saying they would die willingly rather than transgress the wisdom of their laws. Pilate was so deeply affected by their firm resolution to keep their laws inviolable that he commanded the images to be carried back from Jerusalem to Cesarea.

This is another example of the resistance the Jews gave to any breach of their God-given laws. The willingness to die for their God-given commands was again exemplified in the incident described above. It appears that this mindset was encouraged by the Zealots. How many members of the Sadducee and Pharisee sects joined this philosophy to render one's life for God is not clear. It is certain, however, that the Essens lived an ascetic life and avoided the politics of, and call for, war by the Zealot movement. It is from the Essens that Jesus Christ entered into a world in need of a more peaceful philosophy. However, the time was not yet ripe for holy men, his disciples, to promulgate the salvation of all people into eternal life until forty years after his death. It was just before and after the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 CE, that the religious sects of the Jewish people were scattered and almost eliminated. This realization made it even more than ever a commendable effort upon Jewish holy men to produce scriptures that would form the New Testament.

## ***7.2 The Births of the Virgin Mary and Jesus Christ***

The history provided above should give a fair idea of how deeply Jewish religious beliefs conflicted with the worldly pressures of foreign rule and the extent of its consequences that caused the death of many people and the destruction of their nation. We know that Jesus was approximately 28 years of age when thousands of Jews petitioned Pilate to remove the images from Jerusalem and offered their necks to die rather than violate their laws. The memories of 2,000 Jews crucified after Archelaus assumed the kingship also had an indelible effect on the lives of many Jews and had to have been communicated to Jesus. The tenor of the amount of distrust and discord that simmered

between the Jewish sects and the Romans was a reality that Jesus had to have witnessed as he grew into manhood.

Unlike Ikhnaton who created the concept of one God and produced the highest forms of beautiful and Holy Scripture, and Moses who formalized this concept by recording the commands of God in the Book of the Covenant that precipitated the writing of the Torah, and the prophet Muhammad who wrote the Koran under the intercession of Gabriel - Jesus Christ did not write any Holy Scripture to guide his followers nor write anything that would leave a legacy of his teachings. It remained for Jewish holy men to write, some forty and more years later, several gospels, especially those written by Mark, Matthew, Luke and John that formed the New Testament.

The lineage, birth, and upbringing of Jesus have been vouched by the Gospels, which were written by Jewish men who were his apostles and disciples. One Gospel, attributed to Saint Matthew, takes us to the birth and upbringing of Mary, Jesus' mother.<sup>1</sup> This Gospel relates that Mary came from a royal family from the line of David. Her father, Joachim was from Nazareth a city in Galilee and her mother, Anna, was from Bethlehem. Prior to Mary's conception, Joachim was visited by an angel of the Lord and told that his wife Anna will bare a daughter who will be filled with the Holy Ghost and that her name was to be called Mary. He was told that she was neither to eat nor drink anything which is unclean, nor shall her conversation be among the common people, but in the temple of the Lord. Further, he was told that while yet a virgin, Mary shall bring forth the Son of the most high God who shall be called Jesus, a name which signifies he is the Savior of all nations.

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<sup>1</sup> Crown Publishers, BELL 1979 Edition, *The Lost Books of the Bible*, "The Gospel of the Birth of Mary", by Saint Matthew, Chapter I. This translation was made from the works of Jerome, a Father of the Church of the fourth century.

Having spoken to Joachim, the angel met with Anna and informed her that she was to be the mother of a daughter called Mary and that, after being weaned for three years, she shall be devoted to the service of the Lord in the temple. There, she shall serve the Lord night and day in fasting and prayer, shall abstain from every unclean thing, and never know any man. She was chosen to bring forth the Lord, who by his name and works, shall be the savior of the world. According to Saint Matthew's Gospel, Anna gave birth to Mary, who, after her third year, was raised up in the temple with other virgins. There, she had conversations with angels and every day received visitors from God, which preserved her from all sorts of evil and caused her to abound with all good things. It was in her fourteenth year that she was given and betrothed to a man named Joseph who also came from the house and family of David.

Joseph was advanced in years and after his betrothal he returned to his own city in Bethlehem to prepare his house for the marriage. Mary and her parents returned to Galilee and there she was visited by the angel Gabriel who declared to her the conception of Jesus by the Holy Ghost, devoid of lust, and she will conceive him without sin. Gabriel commenced the visit with Mary by stating:

*"He shall be great, because he shall reign from sea to sea and from the rivers to the ends of the earth. And he shall be called the Son of the Highest; for he who is born in a mean state on earth reigns in an exalted one in heaven. And the Lord shall give him the throne of his father David, and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end. For he is the King of Kings, and the Lord of Lords, and his throne is for ever and ever."*

Not long after, seeing that Mary was with child, Joseph was quite concerned. But being a just man, he was not willing to expose her as a whore, for he was a pious man. Again, the angel of the Lord appeared and said to him:

*“Joseph, son of David, fear not; be not willing to entertain any suspicion of the Virgin’s being guilty of fornication, or to think anything amiss of her, neither be afraid to take her to wife; for that which is begotten in her and now distresses your mind, is not the work of man, but the Holy Ghost. For she of all women is that only Virgin who shall bring forth the Son of God, and you shall call his name Jesus, that is, Savior: for he will save his people from their sins.”*<sup>2</sup>

This Gospel relates the foreknowledge of the births of Mary and Jesus by first the parents of Mary and then again by Mary and her husband Joseph. This prior knowledge of fifteen years before the birth of Jesus has been told by Matthew to ensure the purity and religious upbringing of Mary, a virgin. What is particularly revealing are the obvious efforts by Saint Matthew to ensure that Jesus descended from the house of David by both parents, Mary and Joseph. This is further emphasized when he has Gabriel state to Mary, *“the Lord shall give him the throne of his father David, and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end.”*<sup>3</sup>

This Gospel had to have been written by a holy man or priest of the Jewish faith. Emphasis placed on Jesus coming from the line of David and the house of Jacob via Joseph would not be necessary if the baby Jesus was ***conceived by the Holy Ghost***. A statement in the Gospel of Matthew 1:21 states, *“And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save **his people** from their sins.”* Presented in context above, shows preference by Jesus for only the Jews. This statement is in conflict with statements in The Gospel of the Birth of Mary, Chapters II and III that indicates Jesus as, “the Savior of all nations” and, “the Savior of the world.”

A question to ponder is why did it take more than 30 years after the death of Jesus for his disciples to advocate their belief in him as the

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<sup>2</sup> Crown Publishers, BELL 1979 Edition, *The Lost Books of the Bible*, “The Gospel of the Birth of Mary”, Chapters II – VIII, Page 24.

<sup>3</sup> See Note 2 above (Crown Publishers), Chapter VII, Page 23.



Son of Man, and ultimately, as the Son of God to write the Gospels of Mark, Matthew, Luke, John and many others? Certainly, with the many miracles Jesus performed, such as: curing many from leprosy; giving sight back to the blind; making the cripple and lame whole again; healing great multitudes that followed him; turning water into wine at a marriage in Cana; raising from a dead state the son of a mother in the city Nain; raising from death the daughter of a ruler of a synagogue; walking on water to his disciples who were troubled at sea; curing many men of a disease in the land of Gennesaret; feeding more than 5,000 men, women and children with only five loaves of bread and two fishes; feeding more than 4,000 men, women and children with only seven loaves of bread and a few fish; resurrecting from the dead, after four days, a man named Lazarus in the town of Bethany; and the most marvelous miracle of all; his own resurrection after three days; and soon after, meeting with his apostles before his ascendancy into heaven – had to be highly convincing that Jesus was the savior for mankind.

### ***7.3 What Events Initiated Writing of the Gospels?***

Why did it take so long for holy men to decide to write gospels affirming their Lord? A gospel is defined as good news that is regarded as absolutely true. Yet, it took almost forty years for the gospels to be written to confirm the miracles of Jesus and what he taught to the multitude. To raise the dead on three different occasions and then to perform his own resurrection had to have had an indelible and highly unforgettable effect not only on his disciples but the thousands of people who witnessed his miracles. There is no plausible reason why so many years should have elapsed before writing the Gospels accepted today as the New Testament – at least, not with miracles that bring the dead back to life and the resurrection of Jesus. It appears that a highly motivating event occurred that compelled several holy men to sit down and write, finally, scriptures about Jesus Christ. It becomes apparent that the urgency to write the Gospels occurred to the Jewish Priesthood during the Jewish-Roman war, which started in May of 66 CE. Having

seen their temple destroyed and their religious sects decimated and scattered by 70 CE, it becomes plausible that several priests found it necessary to save their religion through the Essene movement. This was the one Jewish sect that, through their strict observance of God's law, 'Thou shalt not kill', would refrain from being involved in the Jewish-Roman war, but also, would take part in the strong following of Jesus Christ as their messiah.

The conjecture that Jewish holy men were concerned in salvaging their religion as they saw the inevitable destruction of their temple, and the slaughter of thousands of their people, may not be very far from the truth. To explore this belief, it was Jewish holy men that were:

1. compelled to advance the Essene movement by using Jesus Christ as its focus;
2. believed that it was prudent to open their religion to other nations and peoples of the world;
3. needed to minimize the death of their religion caused by the utter destruction of their nation.

It is incumbent that we review further the history of the Jews up through the creation of the four Gospels by Mark, Matthew, Luke and John. The events that led to the writing of these Gospels are highly significant if we are to understand the extent of the devastation to the Jewish nation, the near collapse of their religion, and the complete destruction of a proud people.

#### ***7.4 Destruction of the Jewish Nation in 70 CE***

After the disturbance caused by Pilate, which caused thousands of Jews to risk death by requesting he remove images of Caesar in Jerusalem, Agrippa I, the son of the slain Aristobulus by Herod the Great, had gained the tetrarchy of his dead brother Philip. This came about through his friendship with Caius, who succeeded Tiberius as emperor of Rome in 37 CE. Caius was selected by Tiberius over his

own son before his death and he was able to change Agrippa's life from being destitute to one of power and wealth.

#### **7.4.1 Petronius Supports Jewish Law to Prohibit Statues**

Not long in power, Caius desired to be known as a god and ordered that statues of himself be erected throughout his country and Syria. Whereas previous Roman rulers respected the religion of the Jews, Caius wanted his godly image to be worshiped universally and felt that Judea and the temple of Jerusalem would not be the exception. He sent his commander Petronius with an army of three legions and with many Syrian auxiliaries they marched to Ptolemais, a maritime city of Galilee. The Jews appeared in great numbers to insist that their law prohibits either making an image of God or man in their country, much less their own temple. Petronius replied that he was bound to keep the law of his lord and to transgress it and spare the Jews he himself will perish. He appealed to them saying, "Will you then make war with Caesar?" The Jews said, "We offer sacrifices twice every day for Caesar, and for the Roman people, but if he would place the images among them, he must first sacrifice the whole Jewish nation." At this response Petronius was astonished, and pitied them for their deep devotion of religion and their courage to die for it.

Petronius so respected the allegiance of the Jews for their God that he sent a messenger back to Caius to inform him of the disruption he had made in Judea and the supplications of the Jewish nation, and that unless he had a mind to lose both the country and the men in it he must permit them to keep their law, and countermand his former injunction. Caius was outraged with this message and threatened to have Petronius put to death unless he carried out his order. Fortunately, the ship carrying back Caius epistle was detained by a storm at sea for three months, while other news, that of Caius death by treachery, arrived 27

days sooner and relieved the pressure put upon Petronius that could have lead to his death, and possibly initiate a war with the Jews.<sup>1</sup>

#### **7.4.2 Summary of Seditious Acts Leading to War.**

After the assassination of Caius Caesar in 41 CE, Tiberius nephew Claudius Caesar became emperor and reigned until 54 CE. Having received sound council from Agrippa I to restrain his soldiers from violence against the people of Rome and thereby gaining the confidence of the senate to endorse him as emperor, Claudius bestowed on Agrippa the entire kingdom given by Augustus to his grandfather, Herod. He also added the outlying countries of Trachonitis and Auranitis, including the kingdom of Lysanius, illustrated in Figure 7-1. Agrippa I however, reigned only three years when he died in 44 CE and the Herod domain became a Roman province.

##### **7.4.2.1 Tumults Lead to the Death of Procurator Cumanus.**

After the brother of Agrippa I died in 48 CE, namely Herod, King of Chalcis, his son Agrippa II was given his kingdom to rule while the rest of Herod's kingdom was governed by the Roman procurator, Cumanus. The first calamity Cumanus had to deal with went beyond his control when the Jews assembled a great multitude for the feast of unleavened bread. A Roman soldier who stood guard over the cloisters of the temple displayed himself in an indecent manner by pulling down his garment and exposing his buttocks to the Jews. His language was just as offensive and the whole multitude suffered such indignation that they wanted Cumanus to punish the soldier. But Jewish youths could not be contained before Cumanus could act judiciously. They began throwing stones at the soldiers and raised such a clamor that Cumanus had to send in more armed soldiers. The Jews were beaten out of the temple and the violence and confusion became

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<sup>1</sup> William Whiston, translation of Flavius Josephus, *The History of the Destruction of Jerusalem*, Book II, Chapter 10.



**Figure 7-1. Kingdoms Ruled by the Herods.**

so great that as they ran into the city, the crowd was so great that they squeezed and trod upon one another causing as many as 10,000 people to be killed.

This was followed by another calamity where a soldier, finding the sacred book of the law, tore it into pieces and threw it into a fire. The Jews went to Cesarea to appeal to Cumanus. This time Cumanus acted swiftly and the soldier was turned over to the Jews and executed.

The next calamity resulted in Cumanus being judged by Claudius Caesar as responsible for an uprising that was caused by a fight between the Galileans and the Samaritans, which resulted in the death of a Galilean. When the Jews appealed to Cumanus to punish those who killed the Galilean, he postponed their supplications being concerned with other affairs and the petitioners' redress was not dealt with. This murder eventually led to more violence as a number of Jews marched out of Jerusalem into Samaria killing many regardless of age and setting villages on fire. This was soon followed by robbing, taking property by force, and insurrections over the whole country whereby the Samaritans went to Tyre to appeal to the president of Syria, Ummidius Quadratus. The Jews sent their high priest Ananus and other principle men to meet with Quadratus to accuse Cumanus as responsible for all the disturbances by not acting quickly to punish those who killed the Galilean.

After Quadratus reviewed the controversy, he went to Cesarea and crucified all those whom Cumanus had taken alive. Then hearing the Samaritans appeal, he had eighteen Jews beheaded who led much of the uprising. This whole affair was brought to Rome where Caesar heard both the Samaritans and the Jews. His judgment was a condemnation of the Samaritans, putting three of their most powerful men to death. The fate of Cumanus was severe. He was delivered over to the Jews to be tormented, drawn around the city and then beheaded.

Before Claudius died in 54 CE, after thirteen years and over eight months, he sent Antonius Felix to be procurator of Galilee, Samaria, and Perea. He gave Agrippa II a greater kingdom that included Batanaea, Trachonitis, Gaulonitis, the kingdom of Lysanias, and the province of Abilene, which was governed by Varus of Syria. As his successor, he appointed Nero even though he had a son of his own named Britannicus.<sup>1</sup>

#### ***7.4.2.2 More Discontent under Antonius Felix.***

When Nero became emperor of Rome, he added four cities to the kingdom of Agrippa II, but the rest of Judea, where most of the discontent emanated, was left to the procurator Felix. Robberies and murder of prominent Jewish members was rampant, being committed in daytime and even at feasts held in the midst of the city. They would conceal their daggers under their garments and upon making their kill cry that an outraged act was performed pretending their innocence. The number of men slain became so great that after the death of Jonathan, a high priest, the calamity caused everybody to expect death every hour as if they were on a field of battle except it was highly ominous not knowing who their enemies were. Under Felix's orders, the many robbers caught were either punished or crucified. There were also the Zealots who deceived the people under the pretense of Divine Inspiration to initiate a greater following and effect changes in government. Their seditious acts were dampened by Felix's armed horsemen and footmen who slew a great number.

An Egyptian claiming to be a prophet was able to amass 30,000 men that followed him to the Mount of Olives, a mountain with three summits east of Jerusalem (the mountain closely associated with the last days in the life of Jesus). He intended to conquer the Roman garrison and break into the city. But Felix prevented the attempt by the false prophet with his Roman soldiers and routed the Egyptian

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<sup>1</sup> William Whiston, translation of Flavius Josephus, *The History of the Destruction of Jerusalem*, Book II, Chapter 12.

army killing many and taking others alive for punishment. Not long after this incident, the Zealots exhorted the Jews to revolt and assert their liberty by inflicting death on those who continued in obedience to the Roman government. They organized into several parties and laid in wait to kill people, plunder the homes of the rich and notable men, and set many villages on fire until all Judea was filled with the effects of their madness. These seditious acts occurred day after day and became one of the prime reasons for start of a direct war with the Romans.

Added to Felix's list of disturbances were those Jews who lived in Cesarea together with many Syrians and Greeks. They caused another tumult by claiming that the city was theirs since it was Herod, a Jew who built it. The Greeks and Syrians countered by saying Herod built a Grecian city with statues in the temples and it was therefore not designed for the Jews. Shortly, words led to arms and although the governors on each side punished those for the incitement, they did not desist but became exasperated and more deeply engaged in sedition. Again, Felix sent his soldiers out to tame the violence of the two groups and when they would not obey him, a great many were slain. This sedition continued whereby Felix was forced to send their most eminent men on both sides as ambassadors to Rome to settle their dispute.<sup>1</sup>

#### ***7.4.2.3 Discontent under Festus, Albinus and Florus.***

Felix was succeeded by Porcius Festus as procurator and during the interval of 60 to 62 CE, many of the disturbances in the country were corrected. He caught many of the robbers and put many to death. However, when Festus was replaced by Albinus, the next two years was governed with such tyranny that it had sown the seeds that was to bring the city of Jerusalem to destruction. He burdened the whole nation with excessive taxes and supplemented his greed by allowing

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<sup>1</sup> William Whiston, translation of Flavius Josephus, *The History of the Destruction of Jerusalem*, Book II, Chapter 13.



robbers and other criminals to be redeemed from prison for money. The corruption of his office allowed the enterprises of seditious men to become more formidable whereby even the nation's principle men purchased the license to carry on with their seditious practices.

The tyranny of Albinus was replaced by what became the most barbarous procurator of all, Gessius Florus who also served two years ending his term in 66 CE. He continued the extortion practices of Albinus and received a portion of the spoils obtained by robbers. When Florus came to Jerusalem during the feast of unleavened bread, as many as three million Jews confronted him when Cestius Gallus, the president of Syria, also visited. With sorrowful compassion, they expressed their calamities and accused Florus as the cause of the miserable state of their nation. Florus was gifted at deceit and was able to gain the trust of Cestius. But the boldness of the multitude to expose him only led him to reason that if he were to be brought before a tribunal in Rome it would be to his advantage to convince them that it was the Jews who have caused much discontent and were ready to revolt.

With his ill-conceived plan, Florus did everything he could to augment the discontent of the Jews in order to induce them into a rebellion against Roman authority. After Nero handed down his judgment that the government of the city of Cesarea was to be given to the Grecians, it accelerated the calamities the Jews had to endure day after day. The Jews in Cesarea had a synagogue on land they sought to purchase for many times it was worth. But the anti-Semitism of the owner caused him to plan the erection of other buildings that would narrow the streets used by the Jews to gain access to their synagogue. The Jewish youth went hastily to the workmen to stop all building efforts. Since Florus would not tolerate force, the elder and more prominent Jews offered Florus eight talents to prevent the work. Florus took the money and did nothing but return from Cesarea to Sebaste. He simply let the Jews fight it out with hopes that another seditious act will run its full course. The next day a Greek sought to insight the Jews by sacrificing birds into a vessel at the entrance of the synagogue. This caused

a fight between the Jews and gentiles and the violence was such that the Jews took their books of the law and went to Nabata, which was about 75 miles from Caesarea. Over a dozen of the principle men went to Sebaste to represent the Jews before Florus. They hoped to be treated with decency in light of the eight talents he had received. To further his plan of open revolt by the Jews, he had these men seized and put into prison for carrying the books of law out of Caesarea.

To further incite the Jews, Florus sent his men to collect seventeen talents from the sacred treasury pretending that it was Caesar that requested the sum. This action caused more confusion and increased the flame of discontentment that was ripe for the start of war by their youth who had not yet learned to pacify their passions. At this reaction Florus marched with an army of horsemen and footmen into Jerusalem to show his might and threaten the city into subjection. But the people desired to receive him submissively and hopefully make him ashamed of his show of force. But Florus sent a small force of fifty soldiers to greet the multitude with a message that challenged the Jews to express their love of victory not with words but with their weapons. This arrogant response was very surprising and disconcerting. It engendered fear and much confusion as they retired to their homes.

Florus continued with his heavy-handedness by forming a tribunal and had the high priests and those men of the greatest eminence and power come before him. His purpose was to have the Jews identify those who had reproached him. But the more gifted of reason asked that he ought to provide peace for the nation, forgive the few that were guilty for the sake of the great number of innocent people, and preserve the city for the Romans. This response only provoked Florus to set his soldiers upon plundering the Upper Marketplace and slay those present. The soldiers not only plundered the marketplace, they forced themselves into every house and killed men, women and children of all ages. Even those of a peaceful nature were first whipped and then crucified. The total slain in that one day came to about 3,600. Florus accentuated his barbarity by having all the men of the equestrian order

whipped and then nailed to the cross before his tribunal. Although these men were all Jews, they were formerly treated with Roman respect and dignity.

Soon after the slaughter, Florus desired to rekindle the flames of war by requesting that the most eminent and holy men of the Jews go out to salute the Roman soldiers coming from Cesarea. But Florus had already directed the centurions joining the advancing army not to return the Jews salutation with the hope that it would provoke them to rebel unfavorably. If this would be their response, the soldiers were to use their weapons. The Jews met the soldiers in a peaceful manner and saluted them. When the soldiers did not return the greeting, many of the Jews voiced their displeasure. This was all the soldiers needed to fall upon the Jews with their clubs causing all to flee. Many died by being trampled by the horsemen or crushed by the violence of the running crowd. The multitude ran to the gates of the temple, which caused many more to die as they too were trampled by the on-rushing crowd. But as the people reached higher points of ground they were able to throw darts and stones from the tops of houses at the soldiers forcing them to retreat.

Florus put off his attempt to enter the temple and obtain the many treasures used in the worship of God. He further met with the high priests and Sanhedrim and told them that he was going to return to Cesarea but leave the city with a garrison of soldiers that were not previously involved in the turmoil he created.<sup>1</sup>

#### ***7.4.2.4 Agrippa's Speech to Divert the Jews from War.***

By Flavius Josephus account, Agrippa was in Alexandria while Florus almost succeeded in provoking the Jews to war. Upon his return from Egypt, the high priests, men of power among the Jews and the Sanhedrin met with him and related the barbarous treatment they

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<sup>1</sup> William Whiston, translation of Flavius Josephus, *The History of the Destruction of Jerusalem*, Book II, Chapters 14 and 15.

endured by Florus. Agrippa felt great indignation as did his sister Bernice, who previously tried to dissuade Florus from his mistreatment of the Jews just prior to the mayhem at the Upper Marketplace. To evaluate the disturbances and calamities the Jews suffered, the president of Syria, Cestius, sent one of his tribunes, Neopolitanus to meet with Agrippa. After Neopolitanus surveyed the destruction at the Marketplace and heard the lamentations of the people, he called the multitude together and commended them for their fidelity to the Romans and earnestly entreated them to keep the peace. He then went back to Syria to report his findings to Cestius.

It was at this time that Agrippa appealed to his people with his sister, who was able to be seen in the Asamoneans house that was over the gallery where the multitude gathered. She lent a ray of confidence as Agrippa spoke; for she was highly regarded for her courage to confront Florus and almost lost her life in trying. It is here that Flavius presents Agrippa's speech in its entirety. It reveals that Agrippa had the wisdom and statesmanship of his grandfather, Herod the Great. His knowledge of the extent of the power and scope of the Roman Empire was demonstrated by the large amount of detail given to not only places of Roman control but also the numbers of Roman troops stationed in the various countries and the types of people the Romans conquered. His speech to the Jewish people is noteworthy and portions of it are given below to give credence to his ability for being respected by rulers of other countries. More importantly, the speech indicates the degree of concern by Agrippa to protect his people from their own destruction; for he knew that in pursuing a face-off with Florus, they will ultimately unleash retribution from Rome.

*"Had I perceived that you were all zealously disposed to go to war with the Romans, and that the purer and more sincere part of the people did not propose to live in peace, I had not come out to you, nor been so bold as to give you council; for all discourses that tend to persuade men to do what they ought to do are superfluous, when the hearers are agreed to do contrary. But because some are earnest to*

*go to war because they are young, and without experience of the miseries it brings, and because some are for it out of an unreasonable expectation of regaining their liberty, and because others hope to get by it, and are therefore earnestly bent upon it, that in the confusion of your affairs they may gain what belongs to those that are too weak to resist them, I have thought it proper to get you all together, and to say to you what I think to be for your advantage; so the former may grow wiser and change their minds, and that the best men may not come to harm by the ill conduct of others. . . .*

*. . . I am well aware that many make a tragical exclamation concerning the injuries that have been offered you by your procurators, and concerning the glorious advantages of liberty; . . . But let us take it for granted that the Roman ministers are injurious to you, and are incurably severe; yet are they not all the Romans who thus injure you; nor hath Caesar, against whom you are going to make war, injured you: it is not by their command that any wicked governor is sent to you, for they who are in the west cannot see those that are in the east, nor indeed is it easy for them there even to hear what is done in these parts.*

*Now it is absurd to make war with a great many for the sake of one, to do so with such mighty people for a small cause; and this when these people are not able to know of what you complain: nay, such crimes as we complain of may soon be corrected, for the same procurator will not continue forever; and probable it is that the successors will come with more moderate inclinations. But as for war, it be once begun, it is not easily laid down again, nor borne without calamities coming therewith. However, as to the desire of recovering your liberty, it is unseasonable to indulge it so late; whereas you ought to have labored earnestly in old time that you might never have lost it; . . . .*

*Moreover, ten thousand other nations there are who had greater reason than we to claim their entire liberty, and yet do submit. You are the only people who think it is a disgrace to be servants to those to*

*whom all the world hath submitted. What sort of army do you rely on? What are the arms you depend on? Where is your fleet, that may seize upon the Roman seas? And where are those treasures which may be sufficient for your undertakings? Do you suppose, I pray you, that you are to make war with the Egyptians, and with the Arabians? Will you not carefully reflect upon the Roman Empire? Will you not estimate your own weakness? Hath not your army been often beaten even by your neighboring nations, while the power of the Romans is invincible in all parts of the habitable earth? . . . What therefore do you pretend to? Are you richer than the Gauls, stronger than the Germans, wiser than the Greeks, more numerous than all the men upon the habitable earth? What confidence is it that elevates you to oppose the Romans? . . . Now when almost all people under the sun submit to Roman arms, will you be the only people that make war against them?*

*. . . Alexandria, its length being 30 furlongs and its breadth no less than ten (3.75 miles by 1.25 miles) . . . pays more tribute to the Romans in one month than you do in one year; nay, besides what it pays in money, it sends corn to Rome that supports it for four months (in a year): . . . What remains therefore is this, that you have recourse to Divine assistance; but this is already on the side of the Romans; . . . and how can you then most of all hope for God's assistance, when, by being forced to transgress his law, you will make him turn his face from you? And if you observe the custom of the Sabbath days, and will not be revealed to do anything thereon, you will easily be taken, as were your forefathers by Pompey, who was at his busiest in his siege on those days on which the besieged rested.*

*. . . when the Romans have got you under their power, they will use you with moderation, or will not rather, for an example to other nations, burn your holy city, and utterly destroy your whole nation; . . . those of you who shall survive the war will not be able to find a place whither to flee, since all men have the Romans for their lords already, . . . indeed, the danger concerns not those Jews that dwell here only, but those of them which dwell in other cities also; for there is no people upon the habitable earth which have not some portion of you among*

*them, whom your enemies will slay, in case you go to war,. . . so every city which hath Jews in it will be filled with slaughter for the sake of a few men. . . .*

*. . . .consider how wicked a thing it is to take arms against those that are so kind to you. Have pity, therefore, if not on your children and wives, yet upon this your metropolis, and its sacred walls; spare the temple, and preserve the holy house, with its holy furniture, for yourselves; for if the Romans get you under their power, they will no longer abstain from them, when their former abstinence shall have been so ungratefully requited. I call to witness your sanctuary, and the holy angels of God, and this country common to us all, that I have not kept back anything that is for your preservation; and if you will follow that advice which you ought to do, you will have that peace which will be common to you and to me; but if you indulge your passions, you will run those hazards which I shall be free from."*

After Agrippa delivered his speech, both he and his sister wept. Their tears mollified the violence felt by the people but they still cried out that they would not fight against the Romans but wanted vengeance against Florus. Agrippa replied that they had already made war against the Romans, are still in default in not paying the tribute due to Caesar, and they had cut off the cloisters of the temple from the Antonia tower. The people took Agrippa's advice and went to the temple to rebuild the cloisters and collected from the villages the tribute in default, which amounted to forty talents. They would not however listen to Agrippa's plea to obey Florus until Caesar should send someone to succeed him. This plea only provoked their anger whereby they not only reproached the king but many acted seditiously by throwing stones at him and causing him to leave the city. Before he retired to his own kingdom he advised their rulers and men with power to meet with Florus in Cesarea so that he might appoint those to collect the tribute in default.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> William Whiston, translation of Flavius Josephus, *The History of the Destruction of Jerusalem*, Book II, Chapters 16 and 17.

**7.4.3    How the War of the Jews with the Romans Began.**

Shortly after Agrippa left Jerusalem, seditious Jews that advocated war assaulted the fortress Masada and killed the Romans that were there. The son of the high priest Ananias, Eleazar, who was the governor of the temple, persuaded those that conducted the Divine service to prohibit the receipt of donations from any foreigner and stop sacrifices performed for foreign leaders. To reject sacrifices to Caesar was an affront to the respect of Roman authority, but the murder of Roman soldiers was one of the principle reasons that began the war with the Romans.

Realizing that the seditious act of murder of Roman soldiers had invited Rome to take arms against them, the high priests, principal men of the Pharisees, and men of power assembled the people to express their indignation at the senseless revolt. They admonished the people that their forefathers always received foreign donations and such contributions assisted in the adornment of their temple. To only allow Jews to sacrifice and worship within their temple was an impiety to the gods of foreigners and would cause an offense that could threaten sovereignty of their nation. But the seditious men were not persuaded and even the ministers of the temple would not attend the Divine service but rather prepared for war.

To deter the seditious before Jerusalem would be overwhelmed and controlled, ambassadors were sent to Agrippa and Florus. Florus did not act for he was desirous to see his design for war being kindled. But Agrippa knew he had to preserve the Jews from the Romans, the city and its temple, as well as the integrity of his kingship. His response was to send 3,000 horsemen to the assistance of his people out of Auranitis, Batanaea and Trachonitis. Figure 7-1 shows these territories northeast of Galilee.

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#### ***7.4.3.1 Jews Breach an Oath Made to the Romans.***

The multitude desirous of peace took refuge with Roman guards at Mount Sion, the upper part of the city. The rebels took control of the lower city and its temple. For several days they fought with stones, slings, and hand-to-hand combat. Although the soldiers were skilled and armored they were overpowered by the sedition and driven out of the upper city by force. They then set fire to the house of Ananias the high priest and the palaces of Agrippa and Bernice. To increase their numbers, they also set fire to the archives that held the contracts belonging to creditors, thereby dissolving their obligations for paying their debts and inclining those who were poor to join in their insurrection. The next day following the fires, they besieged the Antonia garrison within two days and killed many of the soldiers. Those that were able to flee to the palace held out in the turrets of the walls and shot at the besiegers.

A Jewish leader named Manahem, a Galilean who formerly under Cyrenius proclaimed that only after God are they subject to the Romans, broke into the Masada fortress. Figure 7-2 shows a layout of Jerusalem and Manahem took from king Herod's armory all the arms for his robbers and his people. Many of the Roman soldiers who saw they could not force their way through the multitude of robbers ran to the royal towers called Hippicus, Phasaelus and Mariamne. But Manahem and his party were able to kill many before they could reach the towers. The next day, the high priest Ananias and his brother Hezekiah were found concealed in an aqueduct and killed by the robbers. Manahem became so enamored with his successes that he went to worship in the temple in a pompous manner with royal garments. But Eleazar, Ananias son, was able to persuade his people that Manahem was barbarously cruel and an insupportable tyrant. They made a violent assault on Manahem and his guards in the temple and those that were caught were slain. Manahem and his captains under him were tortured with many sorts of torments and killed.

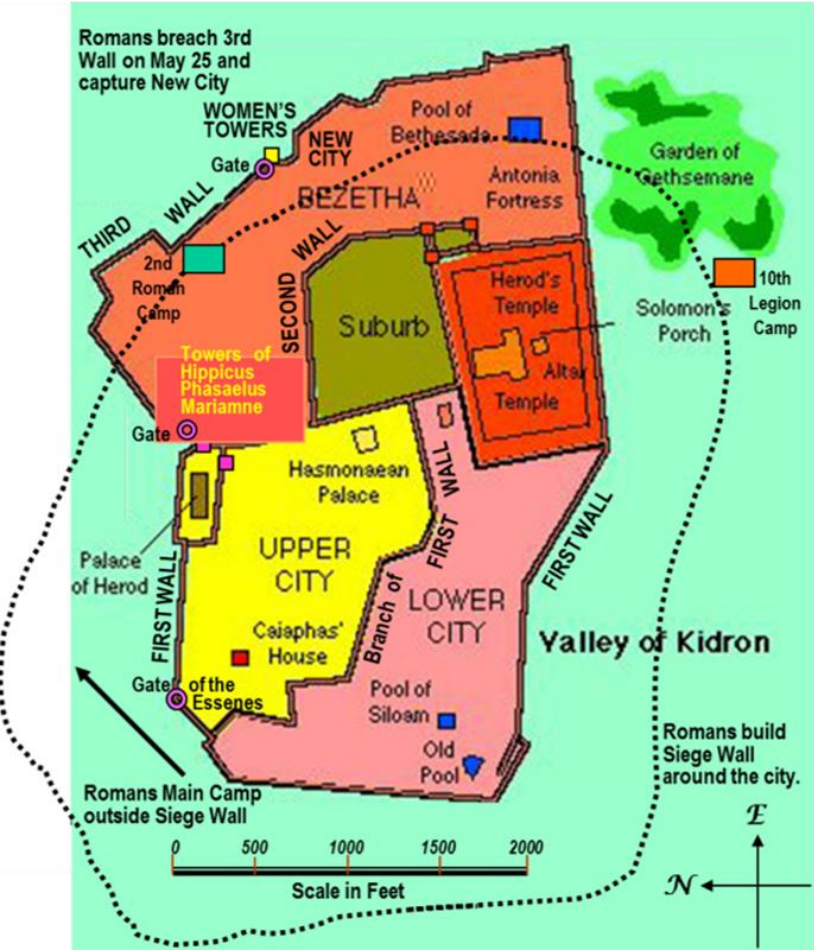


Figure 7-2. 4 1/2 Month Siege of Jerusalem in 70 CE.

A most sacrilegious event occurred on the Sabbath day and it was compounded by Eleazar's men by not keeping an oath of truce made to the Roman general, Metilius. Surrounded in the fortress, Metilius requested he and his men have their lives spared if they stop fighting and give up their arms. Eleazar and his men assured Metilius they would comply with his request to spare their lives. But after the soldiers came down and had given up their shields and swords, Eleazar's men violently attacked and barbarously murdered every soldier, except for Metilius. He was spared after he pleaded for mercy, promised to become a Jew and be circumcised. Although only a small portion out of a total Roman legion was killed, the prospect of war with the Romans was now certain. The more moderate Jews were greatly depressed for they foresaw that they were just as likely to be punished for the abomination that polluted the city on the Sabbath - a day for divine worship.

#### ***7.4.3.2 Jews are Killed in Neighboring Cities and Countries.***

On the same day the Roman soldiers were slain on the Sabbath, the people of Cesarea, under the leadership of Florus, killed all of their Jewish inhabitants; a total of 20,000 men, women and children. The Jewish nation was so enraged that they went on a rampage by killing people in their neighboring villages and cities. They attacked and laid waste the villages of the Syrians and the cities of Philadelphia, Sebonitis, Gerasa, Pella, Scythopolis, Gadara and Hippos. In the region of Gaulonitis they destroyed some of the cities and likewise laid waste the city Kedasa belonging to the Tyrians; destruction was extended to Ptolemais, Gaba, Cesarea and further south to Sebaste (Samaria), Askelon, Anthedon and Gaza. In addition to the slaughter of people, the Jews burnt down their homes and plundered their belongings.

Not all Jews in neighboring cities were eager to join the seditious mobs willing to risk war with the Romans; they were more in sympathy with supporting Agrippa and preferred a more prudent approach that would

not compromise safety and loss of life. The Jews in Scythopolis were one such people that preferred not to join the madness that spurred their seditious brothers to slaughter innocent people and destroy their homes. But they were deceived by the cunning Jews who commanded them to demonstrate their fidelity by leaving the city and retire to a nearby grove. In the night of the third day the seditious Jews took the advantage to cut their throats while many lay unguarded and others were asleep. This deception caused more than 13,000 people of Scythopolis to be killed and all their goods stolen within the city. The insensitive murder of these people incited other cities to rise up against the Jews living among them causing the deaths of 2,500 in Askelon and 2,000 in Ptolemais. This reaction was duplicated against Jews in Hippos, Gadara and other cities because they either hated or feared them.

Even in the city of Alexandria, Egypt, the Jews were hated and envied from the time Alexander the Great gave them privileges equal to the Greeks for their assistance in defeating the Egyptians. In addition, the Jews were given the right to settle apart from the rest of the populace, so that they might live without being polluted by the gentiles. Perhaps, without any intent of causing resentment, the Jews inadvertently ostracized themselves from their fellow human beings and this too brought upon them an inner hatred by their neighbors. The privileges given the Jews by Alexander were honored by the Roman emperors and continued into the present. But now, with disorder becoming endemic throughout Syria and Palestine, the Greeks became more vocal in their aversion of the Jews. Perceiving that the Greeks and Jews were near the brink of a great calamity, the Alexandria governor, Tiberius Alexander, activated two Roman legions (about 6,000 men per legion) that were in the city who were joined by 5,000 other soldiers from Libya.

The soldiers were commanded to enter that part of the city called the Delta and not only were they permitted to kill the Jews, but to plunder them of their belongings and set fire to their homes. With little arms they had, the Jews resisted the onslaught but once broken, they were

destroyed unmercifully; some were caught in the open field and others forced into their houses which were plundered and burned. Without regard to infants or the aged, blood was spilled over the land and over 50,000 Jews were killed.

#### ***7.4.3.3 Jews Defeat the 12<sup>th</sup> Roman Legion led by Cestius.***

Noting that the Jews were everywhere up in arms, in mid-October of 66 CE, Gaius Cestius Gallus, governor of Syria, joined his 12<sup>th</sup> Roman legion from Antioch with King Agrippa's troops. Only three weeks had passed when the king was forced out of Jerusalem and a Roman garrison murdered by the rebels after they broke an oath of truce. This coalition, supported with additional infantry, cavalry, archers, and non-Jewish auxiliaries from the native cities brought the force total to more than 35,000 men. Without Agrippa as guide and director, Cestius took the initiative and marched from Ptolemais into the city Zabulon in Galilee. Found to be deserted, the soldiers plundered and set fire to the city. They returned to Ptolemais but being absorbed in plundering the city, the Jews drew upon their courage and attacked the unsuspecting soldiers. This surprise attack by Jewish rebels resulted in 2,000 dead soldiers.

Cestius marched from Ptolemais to Cesarea and sent a large part of his army to Joppa. They were given the order to take the city but if there was resistance to wait for his arrival. The inhabitants, unprepared to fight or even leave the city, offered no resistance and the soldiers killed entire families, plundered and burnt the city. The number slain by Cestius soldiers was 8,400 people. This destruction was duplicated in the city Narbatene, which resides close to Cesarea. After these events, Gallus, Cestius commander, was ordered to enter the strongest city in Galilee, Sepphoris. Fortunately, the soldiers were greeted with acclamations of joy and the seditious rebels ran away to the mountain called Asamon. The soldiers pursued them but lost about 200 men as they were attacked with darts from higher ground. But the soldiers soon surrounded the mountain and gaining higher ground were able to beat

the rebels who were at a disadvantage with light armor and less men. Those that concealed themselves, and others that tried to escape, were caught and more than 2,000 rebels were slain.

After his attack in Sepphoris, Gallus retuned with his army to Cesarea but Cestius marched his troops into Antipatris then to the city Lydda, which was found deserted. The people had gone to Jerusalem to observe the feast of tabernacles. The few that stayed were slain and the city burnt before marching on to camp at a place called Gabao, six and 1/4 miles from Jerusalem. When the Jews learned that the Romans were approaching their city a great multitude left the feast and although it was on the Sabbath, they engaged the Romans with such violence that they caused the soldiers to break ranks. They rushed into the midst of the army and were able to kill 515 soldiers while only losing 22 of their valiant men. Cestius had his troops retreat into Beth-horon and while taking three days to regroup the Jews seized the elevated parts of the city. King Agrippa sent two ambassadors to persuade the rebels to desist fighting or convince the soberer men to separate from the party. To no avail, one ambassador was killed before even speaking and the other barely escaped with his life.

Observing the order and disciplined approach of the Romans, the seditious Jews retreated into the inner part of the city and into the temple. Cestius army was free to set a small part of the city called Bezetha on fire and proceeded to camp in the upper city at the walls of the royal palace. The Romans attacked the walls for five days and being unsuccessful tried to break into the temple at the northern quarter of the wall. After being repulsed several times with darts and arrows from the cloisters above, the soldiers used their shields to gather in ranks below the wall and with such protection were ready to set fire to the temple gate. This opportunity caused a horrifying fear in the seditious rebels whereby many ran out of the city and others were ready to admit Cestius into the city as a benefactor. But apparently, Cestius was not aware of the Jews despair of success or how many

were ready to accept him; without any justifiable reason, he decided to withdraw his assault and retreat from the city.

This retreat emboldened the Jews to pursue the Romans and attack their rear killing a number of footmen and horsemen. Cestius made another error by camping one night at Scopus so that by morning the rebels were able to again attack their rear and their flanks with darts. The Romans were heavy with armor and were afraid to break ranks whereas the Jews wore light protection and had the freedom to disperse and attack at advantageous terrains. Their greatest success came at mountain passages that were narrow where they could rain darts at the soldiers below. The Romans were forced to camp two days in Gabao but this caused the rebels to reconnoiter further and dauntingly pursue them. As the Romans marched into Bethhoron they became highly vulnerable as they descended into narrow passages so that their ranks broke down and the disorder that followed caused the deaths of 5,300 footmen and 380 horsemen. Cestius was able to escape during the night after leaving 400 of his soldiers to be used as a ploy by showing their banners in the morning hours as if their whole army were ready to fight; these men were also killed without mercy.

After defeat of his 12<sup>th</sup> Roman legion, Cestius sent ambassadors to Nero to inform him of the distress Syria was under and that Florus was partly responsible for provoking the war. Regarding many of the Jewish citizens, many left the city as if it were a sinking ship for they could foresee the calamity that was soon to follow. When the people in Damascus learned of the defeat the Romans suffered, they set about to slaughter the Jews that were among them. Many were already placed together out of suspicion they had of them and within an hour's time, 10,000 unarmed Jews were killed without anybody to stop them. However, those rebels who had pursued Cestius, gathered in great numbers in the temple and appointed a great many generals to prepare for war. Among the generals chosen was Josephus the son of Matthias, a Hebrew by birth, a priest, and the author of commendable books that serve to enlighten the past: *Antiquities of the Jews* and, *The*

*History of the Destruction of Jerusalem.* Josephus was one of the first to be assigned as a commander and was also made governor of Galilee and Gamala, the strongest cities in that region.

A very capable general, Josephus had walls built around many of the cities and amassed an army of 100,000 men, all armed with old weapons they had collected together. A planner, whose nature was to anticipate future events, he strengthened his army by dividing it into manageable pieces under the command of chosen officers and instructed his men in the finer ways to support each contingent on the field of battle. Moreover, like a father, he strengthened their morality, courage, and belief in themselves as soldiers' equal to any Roman. Being a man of good will towards the people he was entrusted to protect, he was envied by other powerful Jews who sought to gain his authority not only for the sake of power but for the wealth they can amass for themselves. Josephus had to flee several times to avoid the anger provoked by the multitudes promulgated by malicious lies against him. His ability to strategically and cleverly evade deceitful plots against his life enabled him to regain the trust of the people he governed.

The affairs of Judea were very tenuous as many Jews who preferred peace were silenced by fear of death as reprisal. The insidious killing of Jews by Jews was a common matter. Unable to reason with the seditious zealots by calling for restraint and lay aside their preparations for war, the high priest Ananus, and his party were murdered. They were one of many examples of intolerance by the zealots in opposing any compromise towards peace.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> William Whiston, translation of Flavius Josephus, *The History of the Destruction of Jerusalem*, Book II, historical data from Chapters 17 – 22 apply to Section 7.3.3 and its subsections.



#### **7.4.4 The Capture of Galilee, Peraea, Samaria and Judea.**

While Vespasian and his son Titus organized their army in the coastal city of Ptolemais, the Roman commander Placidus was determined to capitalize upon his overtaking Galilee and marched furiously to Jotapata, one of the strongest fortified cities under Josephus command. Being informed of Placidus advance, the Jews at Jotapata prepared their attack with a greater number of men. Being the only force between the Romans and their families, they fought courageously causing the Roman army to break up and abandon the city in a disorderly retreat. Protected with only light armor, the Jews avoided hand-to-hand combat and while only losing three of their men, they killed seven Roman soldiers and wounded many.

Vespasian followed Placidus retreat with a highly organized, well equipped army made up of footmen, horsemen and archers. His legions were supplemented with a whole multitude of mercenaries and together they showed such a powerful presence that as they came within view of Galilee, the enemy became so overwhelmed with fright that many left the city while others submitted themselves peacefully. When word reached Josephus, who was camped in the city of Garis that lies near Sepphoris, his men dispersed and fled even before the Roman army came into view. Josephus and his key men left for Tiberias (refer to Figure 7-1.). He already knew that any success of winning this war was an impossibility.

##### ***7.4.4.1 Jews Slain for Glory Rather than Attain Life.***

Soon after the retreat by Placidus from Jotapata, Vespasian marched his army into the city of Gadara and took it without a fight for the Jews had already left. Some youths that remained were slain, others were acquired as slaves, and the surrounding small cities and villas were burned to the ground. The object of Vespasian's strategy was to conquer Jotapata, a city that reputedly had the strongest security with its fortified walls and greater numbers of men. A further incentive was

news provided by a deserter that Josephus had left Tiberias and had taken command for the Jews in Jotapata. To cut off any escape by Josephus from Jotapata, Vespasian sent Placidus with a thousand horsemen to surround the city.

The taking of Jotapata was no easy task for this city was built on a high precipice with valleys on its sides that were not only deep but very steep. The upper most part of this fortified city was on the north side that ends obliquely onto a plain. All around this walled city were mountains which made it unapproachable without contending with man-made banks and towers that gave the Jews a superior advantage over any enemy advance. The initial assault by the Romans was repelled by the courage that armed the Jews. They had neither the skill nor the strength of the Romans; but with their lives and that of their families at stake, they were determined to fight furiously to the death.

Vespasian had to resort to several military tactics before he could get his army to breach the walls of the city. Each tactic was countered by the ability of Josephus's resourcefulness and leadership to direct his courageous men and repel the many attacks attempted by the Romans. Vespasian first set against the Jews his archers and slingers who were capable of throwing stones and javelins at great distances. At intervals when the arrows were spent, the Jews made sallies outside the walls and with lighter armor were able to hit and retreat repeatedly for five days.

Vespasian ordered trees cut down and stones gathered to raise a bank against that part of the wall affording the greatest accessibility. Although the Romans used hurdles (shielded protection) while they worked at raising the bank, the Jews constantly impeded their progress and wounded many with darts and massive stones from above. Vespasian then had 160 engines set in place to sling stones and had his Arabian archers rain a shower of arrows above the walled towers. Still, the Jews made their sallies out of the fortress to pull away the hurdles that covered the workmen and killed many that became

exposed. As the bank was getting higher, Josephus had his men build the wall another 30 feet higher with a good number of towers that were fitted to its battlements. The Jews then resorted to use of fire onto the banks and together with their ongoing sallies out and back into the fort, Vespasian decided to relinquish the bank buildup and starve them into submission. This strategy did not work because Josephus fooled the enemy into thinking they had no lack of water by having his men wet their clothes and hung them out to dry in full view.

Josephus considered leaving the fortress to try to mobilize reinforcements from other nearby cities in Galilee. But he conceded to the lamentations of the old men, women and children who felt their only hope to be delivered from any great misfortune would be through his leadership and demonstrated ability to direct them against the overwhelming strength of the Romans. Perceiving the despair he and his people were under, he said to them, "Now is the time to begin to fight in earnest, when there is no hope of deliverance left. It is a brave thing to prefer glory before life, and to set about some such noble undertaking as may be remembered by late posterity."

Not made clear by Josephus to the citizens was what was the noble undertaking that glory meant more than life? Taking a step back to understand the motives of the Jews to fight to the death, we are reminded that it was religious leaders, zealous youth and seditious men who stimulated the war with the reasons of freedom from authority of a foreign power and the right to worship their God. Then too, there was also the resentment by the Jews to be ruled by the Herods and their descendants, for they, in spite of great leadership, prosperity and peace with the building of cities, and rebuilding their Temple in marbled beauty - they were not full-blooded Jews. A long-held requirement by the religious leaders and prominent men was that positions of authority, such as a ruler or high priest was to be given to

those that had the birthright qualifications of David, Solomon and the Levite priests.<sup>1</sup>

It appears that the more salient reason that stimulated the war was the religious component could not compromise and accept foreign influences and that provoked the Jews eventually to violence. It may be that when a people takes pride in their past heritage such that their religion excludes their neighbors, it creates an illusion of being a cut above other people. This was confirmed by their exclusion of heathens and gentiles, which not only set them apart from their neighbors but caused people from other nations to repudiate them. For every action, there is a reaction. It is an unfortunate realization that the one command given to Moses in Leviticus 19:18, and again by Jesus Christ one generation prior to the Jewish-Roman war, to '*love thy neighbor as thyself*' was not embraced by the Jews. The idea of being a chosen people inextricably led to an unanticipated ostracism from the rest of the world. Exclusion of their neighbors into their house of worship did not exhibit love of thy neighbor. The Jewish priests and rabbis' neglected to expound that they were the chosen people to be the light of the world by worshipping a God that endorses love. Lack of propounding this command and keeping their God to themselves resulted in resentment and hate that had to slowly breed within their neighbors. What was the glory of death over life? Was it belief in their God, desire for freedom, or pride and arrogance?

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<sup>1</sup> Holy Bible, King James Version, published by Regency 1978, Dictionary, Page 36. The Levites were charged with care of the Tabernacle and the Temple. They were set apart for this service on behalf of the children of Israel. On the settlement of Canaan, they were assigned 48 cities scattered over the whole country and provided fields for the pasture of their cattle. In David's reign, they were divided into four classes: (1) Assistants of the priests in the sanctuary; (2) Judges and Scribes; (3) Gatekeepers; (4) Musicians. The 3<sup>rd</sup> book of the Old Testament, Leviticus, deals mostly with priestly legislation and practice of the law among the people. Emphasis is placed upon Israel's separation from all heathen influences so that the nation may retain its religious purity.

Returning to Vespasian and his annoyance of the Jews unrelenting sallies, he determined to use the battering ram to demolish a portion of the wall and gain entry into the city. The Jews countered by filling sacks with chaff that was hung down to soften the blows of the battering ram. But the soldiers got long poles and tied sharp hooks at their ends to cut the ropes used to descend the sacks. This time the Jews set fire to the machines, the hurdles and the Romans as they tried to advance on the raised banks. The materials for the fires were soon depleted and the Jews, though weary from defending themselves, continued in spite of the enemy's advantage of being able to relieve their men with fresh replacements. As the Romans appeared to gain a greater foothold ascending the wall, Josephus ordered his men to pour scaling oil upon the soldiers below. Trapped in their armor of head-pieces and breastplates, the hot oil ran down their bodies causing them to leap and roll in excruciating pain. Many soldiers fell down from the bank and a great many were wounded and slain by darts thrown by the Jews. The Jews had a successful day for they lost only six men but carried off more than 300 wounded.

Not to be outmaneuvered, Vespasian gave orders to erect three towers that were protected on all sides with plates of iron to eliminate the threat of fire. From these towers, his men could find their targets more easily with darts and arrows while a barrage of stones and arrows were released from their lighter engines. This strategy worked well as the Jews could not easily avoid the darts, arrows and stones. After a few days under heavy assault, many fled hastily out of the city only to be killed. On the 47<sup>th</sup> day of the siege, the Romans had raised the banks higher than the wall. A deserter informed Vespasian that the Jews were worn out with constant fighting and by the last watch of the night they fell asleep till early morning. Vespasian felt he could not trust this informant from past experience of the devious lies that already caused the death of one of his prize commanders; but he knew he had the advantage to enter the city during the night while his enemy sought to rest their weary bones.

Titus with a few of his 15<sup>th</sup> legion men were first to enter the city and cut the throats of those on watch but asleep. He was followed by Placidus and his men who entered the very middle of the city while a great many Jews were still asleep. When the multitude were up they realized the city was taken and a great slaughter ensued. The Romans had not forgotten what pains they suffered during the siege and spared no lives. They pitied none as they drove people down the precipice of the citadel and killed with wanton intent. Many Jews, even those chosen men that were with Josephus, got together in the utmost parts of the city and killed themselves with their own hands than suffer the indignity of death by their enemy. Except for infants and women who numbered 1200, the number slain in the taking of Jotapata in the entire campaign came to 40,000 Jews.

The above deaths in Jotapata were supplemented with excursions by Trajan and Cerealis, commanders of the 10<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> legions, who respectively invaded Japha that lay near Jotapata and Mount Gerizzim in Samaria. Trajan killed a great number of Jews who were trapped by the gates of the first wall being shut by the Romans and the gates of the second wall closed shut by their own citizens. All died cursing not the Romans, but their own people until 12,000 were killed. Trajan sent messengers to Vespasian to have Titus, his son, finish the victory he had gained. Titus arrived to demolish the city by taking 2,130 women and infants captive and killing another 3,000 men.

Cerealis entered Mount Gerizzim with 600 horsemen and 3,000 footmen. The Samaritans were destitute for water as they became inflamed with the violent heat at the higher elevation of the mountain. The commander exhorted them to come under the security of his protection and save themselves; for he assured them that he would lay down the arms of his men and secure them from harm. Yet, the suspicious nature of the people prevailed and not surrendering peacefully, Cerealis ordered his men to attack killing 11,600 Samaritans.

#### **7.4.4.2 Was Josephus a Traitor or an Instrument of God?**

Soon after the destruction of Jotapata that resulted in the deaths of 40,000 Jews, Vespasian learned Josephus was concealed alive in a cave with forty other eminent persons. Two Roman tribunes, messengers sent by Vespasian, came to Josephus and exhorted him to meet with their commander under their protection. The Jews who were with him cried out, “. . . We ought to take care that the glory of our forefathers may not be tarnished. We will lend thee our right hand and a sword; and if thou wilt die willingly, thou wilt die as general of the Jews; but if unwillingly, thou wilt die as a traitor to them.” They immediately brandished their swords to attack him at the thought of his yielding to the Romans. At this threat, Josephus began to rationalize as a philosopher saying,

*“Oh my friends, why are we so earnest to kill ourselves? And why do we set our soul and body, which are dear companions, at such variance? . . . It is a brave thing to die in war; . . . but if they (Romans) admit of mercy, and would spare their enemy, how much more ought we to have mercy upon ourselves, and to spare ourselves? For it is a foolish thing to do that to ourselves which we quarrel with them for doing to us. . . . Now self-murder is a crime most remote from the common nature of all animals, and an instance of impiety against God our Creator; nor indeed is there any animal that dies by its own contrivance, or by its own means, for the desire of life is a law engraven in them all; . . . And do not you think that God is very angry when a man does injury to what he hath bestowed on him? For from him it is that we have received our being, and we ought to leave it to his disposal to take that being away from us. The bodies of all men are indeed mortal, and are created out of corruptible matter; but the soul is ever immortal, and is a portion of the divinity that inhabits our bodies. . . . the souls of those whose hands have acted madly against themselves are received by the darkest place in Hades, . . . ”*

The above reasons, and many others that appeal to a reasonable mind, were given to his associates. Still, desperation had shut their ears for they were still intent to die and were irritated at Josephus. From every quarter, he was threatened with swords in their hands, calling him a coward and ready to kill him. Josephus remained composed by appealing to their names and was forced to calm them as if they were wild beasts ready to turn upon him. But he prevailed as their swords eventually dropped from their hands and they found themselves either not willing or unable to kill him.

When brought to Vespasian and his son Titus, Josephus predicted that he would be the next Caesar and emperor of Rome. At first, Vespasian felt Josephus only said the prophecy for his own preservation. But upon learning from other reports that Josephus predicted the fall of Jotapata on the 47<sup>th</sup> day and that he would be caught alive by the Romans, Vespasian was convinced that the prospect of his good fortune was true since Josephus had spoken the truth on other occasions.

The above excursion was purposely presented to reveal the nature of Josephus and dispel allegations that he was a coward and traitor of the Jewish people. More of his thoughts can be derived by referring to Chapter 8 of his 3<sup>rd</sup> book on “The Wars of the Jews.” However, it is of interest to take note of the spiritual nature of Josephus and his treatment of his understanding of the soul; the condemnation of self-murder; and the belief in an underworld called Hades. It appears that the question regarding glory in death and its forgiveness by the Creator has a great deal to do with whether one kills to preserve life from a predatory enemy who has initiated the killing of innocent lives or, causes an enormous impiety by killing oneself and/or others using God as a righteous motive. The distorted mind forgets the commandment of God, “Thou shalt not kill.”, which came after one of his very first commands to Noah:

*Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made He man (Bible, Genesis: 9:6).*



#### *7.4.4.3 Vespasian takes Joppa, Tiberias and Tarichaea.*

Out of the demolished cities a great many of the Jews that were dispersed had gathered and rebuilt the city of Joppa, which was left desolate by Cestius. Bordering the sea, they took up the profession of piracy and made the seas unnavigable to shippers from Syria, Phoenicia and Egypt. Upon learning of this disruption occurring upon the Mediterranean, Vespasian sent his footmen and horsemen to Joppa. The news of the Roman advance sent the Jews off to their ships where they could be out of reach; but they encountered a violent wind aptly called the Black North Wind. The ships were broken upon the rocks and were dashed against each other causing many to be carried by the waves and smashed against the rocks. Those that came to the shore were killed by the sword and those that succumbed to the treacherous sea numbered 4,200 dead. The city of Joppa was therefore taken a second time without opposition and demolished.

To refresh his army, Vespasian accepted the invitation to attend a feast by King Agrippa and see his kingdom. When Agrippa related that uprisings were taking place in his cities of Tiberias and Tarichaea, Vespasian decided to invade them. A contingent of fifty horsemen was sent to Tiberias to offer the Jews terms of peace; but upon arriving and dismounting their horses, they were attacked. The soldiers ran away on foot leaving the horses for the Jews who rejoiced as if they had taken them in battle rather than trickery. The loss of the fifty horses caused much irritation to Vespasian but he held his anger in check knowing that King Agrippa wished to preserve the lives of his countrymen. The senior men of the city came to apologize for the sedition by the few men that had already left for Tarichaea. As in most cities, a large number were not advocating war but wanted only peace for their families and the preservation of their homes. King Agrippa was pleased to find that his people in the city of Tiberias greeted the Romans with acclamations of joy, calling Vespasian their savior and benefactor.

Above Tiberias, Vespasian set up camp for an advance to the city Tarichaea, which, like Tiberias, lies at the bottom of a mountain and is protected on both sides by fortified walls and has ready access to the Lake of Gennesareth. As the Romans attempted to build a wall around their camp, the Jews made a sally upon them dispersing the builders and breaking the half-started wall into pieces. The Romans quickly ordered their troops and pursued them whereby they were forced to seek refuge upon their ships. A multitude of Jews went to the plains before the city and Vespasian sent his son Titus with 600 chosen horsemen after them.

Titus saw that the number of Jews put his 600-force at a disadvantage but knowing that the skill of his men mounted on horses could overcome the disparity, and eager to win the admiration of his father, he motivated his men with a speech before initiating an attack. He emphasized that the Jews bravery was due to boldness and rashness, but the effects of such madness compounds their lack of skill and discipline. With an additional 400 horsemen sent by Vespasian and 2,000 archers that seized upon the mountain to repel those that were upon the walls, Titus rushed with the fury instilled in his men against the Jews gathered upon the plain. The resistance could not hold up for long as the horsemen thrustured their lances into standing men and many others were trampled under hooves.

With this attack, many Jews retreated back into the city where a great slaughter ensued. Many others were slain as they ran down to the lake to board the ships for refuge. The lake measured about 5 miles wide and 17.5 miles long so that Vespasian had to get vessels readied to pursue those upon the lake. The offense of the Jews was with stones thrown against archers' darts and they were overwhelmed as the Romans boarded their ships. Using their swords, the Romans killed those that did not leap into the water but those that jumped into the lake either drowned or had their heads and hands cut off. The lake became full of dead bodies and red with blood adding to the total dead in the city, which numbered 6,500 Jews. Of those that were taken

captive, including those that did not participate in the fighting: 1,200 were killed, 6,000 strong young men were sent to Nero to dig through the Isthmus, 30,400 were sold as slaves, and a number given as a present to King Agrippa, which he also sold as slaves.

#### ***7.4.4.4 The Siege of Gamala and Surrender of Gischala.***

After the capture of Jotapata by the Romans, many Galileans who still could not accept defeat fled to Jerusalem and others retreated to the other side of Lake Gennesareth into Gamala. This city was protected by a wall built by Josephus and appeared to afford some safety as the citizens were able to resist the army Agrippa had sent to besiege it for several months. The access to Gamala presented greater difficulty than that of Jotapata as it was built upon the rough ridge of a high mountain. The incline was so steep that the houses were built very close together in order to support each other and the city gave the impression that it would fall down upon itself. The immense height of the city and its narrow streets made any approach by invaders a formidable challenge.

When Vespasian arrived, he dispersed his men around the city as was practical and had his men fortify their camp on the mountain. King Agrippa came close to the walls of the city to beseech the citizens to surrender peacefully but was hit by a stone on his right elbow. His men quickly surrounded him and they retreated to the Roman camp. As with previous battles, the Romans first leveled the roads and raised the banks to afford ready access at the walls for their machines, which were used to heave stones and shoot arrows. As this affront took place, the battering rams were used to brake down the walls and the Romans poured through. But this first attempt was repulsed by the greater number of people who beat them back from every side and those who were above them. Unable to retreat by the force of their own men rushing forward, many soldiers were forced to enter into their enemies' houses. The unbearable weight of the soldiers caused one house to fall and started a chain reaction of houses falling upon the

soldiers beneath. A great many Romans perished and many were wounded with this unexpected catastrophe.

The Roman retreat and embarrassment of having many soldiers die from fallen homes and killed by an enemy who then had the advantage of narrow streets to overwhelm those caught in the dust with stones and swords from the fallen men caused Vespasian to motivate his men with a speech. He reminded them that in spite of the misfortune endured they were a highly capable and trained army. The courage of the people of Gamala soon became short-lived as they realized that their provisions were low. Many fled the city through valleys difficult to monitor and subterranean caverns. As the Romans dressed their wounds and made ready for their next incursion, Vespasian sent Placidus, one of his commanders with 600 horsemen to capture those Galileans that found refuge on Mount Tabor, a fortress that sits on an elevation of 3.75 miles with a plain that extends 3 and 1/4 miles; all enclosed within a wall also erected by Josephus. Placidus offered a proposal of peace and the Jews accepted it only as a trick to set up a surprise attack. But Placidus was astute enough to have had an alternate plan of action. He and his men retreated into the plain far enough to get the Jews out into the open but then reversed his horsemen and returned the attack. His horsemen were able to cut off the Jews retreat and killed a great many. Those that escaped fled to Jerusalem while the people of the country came to peaceful terms.

Meanwhile, the Romans at Gamala gained entry by killing some guards at a tower during the night and another tower was made to fall by removing five of its strongest stones. The noise caused such a disturbance that many of the Jews ran away. The Romans well remembered their former misfortune that when they were joined by Titus who took 200 of his chosen horsemen and some footmen, they ignored the lamentations of the women and children who ran to Titus and were killed indiscriminately. Vespasian came to assist the on-slaughter with his whole army as many people ran to the citadel. With nowhere to escape, blood ran down over all the lower parts of the city. Many men,

despaired of escaping threw their children, their wives, and themselves down the precipices into the valley beneath. In Gamala, the Romans killed 4,000 but those that killed themselves by throwing themselves into the valley below numbered 5,000 men, women and children.

The last remaining city yet to be taken in Galilee was the small city of Gischala. Many people were desirous of peace and were ready to send ambassadors to surrender their city, but the Zealots contained greater numbers that belonged to the corrupt band of robbers, which had infiltrated into leadership roles. Through the cunning ability of John, a son of the Levi family, the people were swayed to join his rebellion, which brought a seditious multitude under his authority. Vespasian sent Titus with 1,000 horsemen to capture the city but withdrew his army to enjoy rest and recreation at Scythopolis while he retired with two of his legions to Cesarea. He knew his army required time to refresh themselves and make ready to take Jerusalem. This would be a very strong challenge since it was the royal and principal city of the whole Jewish nation and he expected their resistance to far exceed the courageous and bold efforts experienced in the cities already taken. Jerusalem was naturally strong with thick walls surrounding its city and well numbered with fighting men, many of whom fled from other cities that were captured by the Romans.

When Titus reached Gischala, he made a sincere effort to gain the city on peaceful terms rather than force. He was already satiated with the blood of Gamala's people and pitied the innocent lives that only desired peace. At the city wall Titus spoke convincingly why the people should lay down their arms but it was the seditious robbers who spoke for the people who were unable to be heard under threat of sever reprisals. John the Levite answered that he was content with the proposal of peace but that they be granted leave to celebrate the Sabbath, which happened to be that very day. In good faith, Titus had his army camp a good distance from Gischala in a small Mediterranean village populated with Tyrians. It was a prime choice for safety

reasons since these people had animosity against the Jews and was always at war with them.

To Titus dismay, he learned that he was tricked by John, Son of Levi, who took his men and encouraged a large number of inhabitants to leave the city in the middle of night for Jerusalem. John and his band of robbers fled with such haste that many of the women and children fell behind and became apprehensive that the Romans were nearby. They beseeched their husbands to turn back and while some succumbed to their cries many others were encouraged by John to prevail and save themselves. When Titus arrived the next day, he was greeted by the people with acclamations of joy and received as their benefactor. They entreated him to spare them and were willing to identify those that conspired with John. But Titus was predisposed to capture John and immediately sent part of his horsemen to overtake him. Leading the exodus, John was already out of reach but 6,000 men, women and children who could not keep pace were killed and 3,000 others were captured by Titus horsemen.

#### ***7.4.4.5 Vespasian Invades Gadara, Jericho, and all Judea.***

A review of Figure 7-1 will illustrate Vespasian's strategy in conquering all of the Jewish inhabited cities within Herod's kingdom. The Roman army had taken the entire northern part to the southern boundaries of Galilee and now they descended to capture the territories above and below Jerusalem. Soon after John the Levite fled into Jerusalem, he started to exercise his authority and became a threat to his own people. Reports of civil disorder within Jerusalem of seditious zealots controlling the authority of their eminent men and high priests became a common occurrence. They not only robbed the rich, more egregious was their suppression of any disagreements with their agenda. Without conducting a hearing, Jews who would not join the cause of the zealots were imprisoned, tortured and put to death by the sword.

The zealots, under John's tyranny, overran the small cities below Jerusalem and took the fortress Masada, which housed a repository of weapons for war. Besides plundering many small villages they ran people out of their homes and left the villages desolate. In the small city Engaddi, people were dispersed out of their homes and as many as 700 women and children unable to run away were killed. As the zealots increased their force with other robbers that deserted the cities captured by the Romans, Vespasian marched his army into Gadara in 68 CE on the 4<sup>th</sup> of March.

Gadara, a city populated with many rich citizens, had one of their eminent men send a message to Vespasian, which expressed their desire to surrender for peace. When the seditious party learned who wrote the message they killed him in anger and fled the city knowing that the people of Gadara dominated the political scene. With acclamations of joy Vespasian was received by the people who pulled down their walls around the city to show their good faith to avoid war. Vespasian sent his commander Placidus with 500 horsemen and 3,000 footmen to pursue the fleeing zealots. At a village called Bethenabris, the Romans caught up and cut off the flight of the fugitives forcing them to retreat to the walls of the village. The Roman assault killed many zealots at the wall and upon entering the village many of its people were killed while others fled to the city of Jericho. Unrelenting, Placidus horsemen followed them as they fled along the river Jordan and with nowhere else to run except along the riverbanks, they were trapped.

The Roman footmen arrived at Jericho and with an initial round of arrows they followed with hand-to-hand combat that left 15,000 zealots slain and 2,200 taken as prisoners. This success was followed by Placidus leading his army to capture Abila, Julias, Bezemoth and the neighboring small cities and villages along lake Asphaltitis (Dead Sea).<sup>1</sup> He then had his soldiers' board ships to kill those that fled to

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<sup>1</sup> Whereas Josephus estimates the lake as 580 x 150 furlongs (73 x 19 miles) it measures 46 miles long by 3 to 10 miles wide. The lake is fed by the

the lake. This assault had given the Romans total control of the entire territory of Peraea as far as Machaerus with the added bounty of collecting many sheep, oxen, asses and camels from the nearby villages. Vespasian then marched his army along the west coast taking the cities of Lydda and Jamnia and entered the strongholds of Idumea. There, he seized two villages, Betaris and Caphartobas, and laying waste to much of the mountainous country his soldiers killed above 10,000 people and carried into captivity above 1,000.

Vespasian had now acquired control of all the cities and villages around Jerusalem and set up strongholds at Jericho and Adida placing garrisons in each. To the city Gerasa, under the command of Lucius Annius, Vespasian sent a body of horsemen and footmen. The city was taken after killing 1,000 young men; families were taken captive and his soldiers plundered their homes. The adjoining villages were also plundered and burnt down as the men of power ran away with their families. Having gone into all of the mountainous country and the plains, by June of 69 CE, the Romans captured all of Judea so that those within the city of Jerusalem could not leave. Before Vespasian established complete control of the city, the Jews were faced with the uprising of another tyrant more bloodthirsty and dangerous than John the Levite. It became a sorry set of circumstances when these madmen contended for power and control within the city walls.

#### ***7.4.4.6 Three Jewish Factions Fight within Jerusalem.***

After John, son of Levi, barely escaped Titus and his horsemen upon fleeing from Gischala he entered the city gates of Jerusalem. When the people inquired what had happened that they were hot and short of breath, he masked his flight from the Romans by saying he thought it more reasonable to use his men and weapons in defense of their royal city, which was more strongly fortified then expose themselves to the

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Jordan River and, because it contains no outlet it has a high salt content of about 33 percent. The water at the northern portion of the lake is reportedly sweet and vegetation near its banks more fruitful.



hazards of Gischala, a small and weakly armed city. At this time, the Jews within Jerusalem and those that fled from many of the conquered cities had many misgivings about their prospects of survival in direct combat with the Romans. There was a bitter contest between those that were fond of war and those that desired peace.

John was able to encourage the youth to support the idea of freedom and join his party of zealots at the dismay of the more aged and prudent men who clearly envisioned the destruction of their city and strongly advocated peace with the Romans. John, a man used to obtain right through might with the swift use of a sword, was able to terrorize the people and gather a strong following of seditious men. These men robbed the rich and defenseless people in cities that succumbed to their lust to kill and take precious items rather than work for them. Using the weapon of fear, John was ruthless against any persons advocating surrender and resorted to cutting the throats of those who had the audacity to challenge his party's desire to fight the Romans. To command authority over the people of Jerusalem, John and his zealots appointed their own high priests; men who had no qualifications for such office and were puppets for further control of their wicked undertakings.

The complexity of life within Jerusalem became a city of torment for those who were desirous of peace. John permitted his band of zealots to do whatever they desired, which included: robbing without restraint, searching the houses of the rich, murdering men, abusing women and indulging in feminine wantonness until they were fully satiated, putting on women's garments and besmearing themselves with ointments, painting their eyes and imitating the lusts of women, being intolerably unclean and pursuing unlawful pleasures, having their faces look like the faces of women but killing with their right hands, outwardly appearing effeminate but drawing their swords from under their finely dyed cloaks and attacking everybody they felt justified or inclined to kill.

The people could no longer tolerate the tyranny of John and his followers and encouraged by the president if the Jewish Sanhedrim Symeon, son of Gamaliel, and Gorion, son of Josephus, they assembled together and began to realize that they were formidable in numbers to inflict punishment on their tormenters. At the assemblies, bitter reproaches against the zealots were voiced by the very esteemed high priests, Jesus son of Gamalas and Ananus son of Ananus. Ananus induced the people to action and entreated them to: not wait for the Romans to protect their holy places; not wait for their enemies to pity them; to rise out of their misery and turn against the beasts that strike them. He let them know that: though they cannot bear other nations to be lords over them yet they bare tyrants of their own country; the Romans have given donations to the temple yet their own people have plundered the city and slaughtered their men. With this encouragement, the people became more and more numerous and after several skirmishes resulting in loss of lives on both sides they overwhelmed the robbers who retreated from the first court and upon entering the inner court of the temple they shut the gates.

Like most honorable and great men who esteem ethical virtues, and are more likely to trust even corrupt men, Ananus took John into his confidence and made him not only sit in his assemblies where plans against the zealots were adopted, but he also made John an ambassador to negotiate with the zealots in possession of their temple. John was therefore sent to take the assembly proposals to stop further pollution of the temple and prevent any of their people to be slain therein. Instead, the devious John told his zealots that Ananus had convinced the people to send ambassadors to Vespasian to take the city peacefully. With this lie, he gained support of his proposal to seek some foreign assistance to save their own lives. This resulted in a letter sent to the Idumeans requesting their aide to revolt from the leadership of Ananus who was betraying their metropolis to the Romans, that they were in custody of the temple to preserve their liberty, and that unless they would come immediately to their assistance the city would be in the power of the Romans.

Upon receipt of the letter, the Idumeans quickly mobilized an army of 20,000 armed men and came to the walls of Jerusalem. At first the people were apprehensive in letting this large number of non-Jews into their walls for protection, but after Jesus, the eldest of the high priests, spoke to the Idumeans he conceded that although he preferred peace with the Romans before death, because they have made war upon them and fought them – he preferred death with reputation before living in captivity under them. To his lengthy speech, which lost the attention of most of the Idumeans who were in a rage at not being greeted warmly and let through the gates of the city, he related the many atrocities that the zealots inflicted upon them and that they not support the zealots but judge for themselves the many injustices and seditious wrongs the zealots inflicted upon the people. But Simon, son of Cathlas, one of the Idumean commanders, took the position that they have come to preserve the freedom that the people were willing to betray by surrendering their city to the Romans. He also was insulted to see the gates of the city shut against them, one of the nations that are the most nearly related to the Jews. Simon then asserted they have come to preserve the house of God, will fight for their common country, will oppose by war any attack from abroad as well as those within the walls that betray their fight for freedom. This negative answer inferred support for the zealots and the gates of the city were kept closed to the Idumeans.

At night, a severe storm came upon the city and the Idumeans, with the noise of the wind and thunder, were able to use saws to cut the bars of the gates to pieces. Upon entering the city, the Idumeans held back from falling upon the people to release the zealots out of custody within the temple. United together, they became a barbarous enemy of the people driving their swords into the bodies of men, women and children until the outer temple was overflowed with blood. In one day, 8,500 Jews laid dead in heaps.

The Idumeans were not satiated by their slaughters; they plundered every house and killed those whom they felt were their enemies. As

they found it needless to go on killing the rest of the populace they sought and killed the high priests. Standing on the dead bodies of Jesus and Ananus they jested over the speeches they made to the people. Their impiety saw no bounds as they cast their dead bodies away without burial to be food for dogs and wild beasts. After they were slain, the zealots and Idumeans fell upon the people like a flock of profane animals and cut their throats. The youth and noblemen were first bound and tortured in hopes that many would join their party. This approach was not successful and another 12,000 of the best of the Jews were killed.

The final atrocious act was the killing of the most eminent of the citizens, Zacharias, son of Baruch (cited in the Gospel of Matthew 23:35). He was accused by an ad hoc tribunal for betraying the people by sending proposals of peace to Vespasian. The seventy judges upon lack of evidence declared Zacharias not guilty and choose to die with him. Two of the zealots in a rage fell upon Zacharias in the middle of the temple and killed him; further impunity was added by throwing his body from the temple into the valley below. The judges were merely struck upon their backs with the flat of swords and their lives were spared. By this time the Idumeans were displeased by what they had done and were feeling a sense of repentance for having come to the city. Seeing they had shed the blood of their own countrymen they thought it time to put a stop to their grievous crimes and desist from subverting the laws of their forefathers. To the surprise of the people and the zealots, the Idumeans retired from Jerusalem and returned to their homes.<sup>1</sup>

Just prior to Vespasian's control of the entire Jewish nation, excepting Idumaea and the city of Jerusalem, in April of 69 CE another Simon, son of Giora, mobilized men within Idumaea by proclaiming liberty to those in slavery and a reward to those already free. After uniting the

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<sup>1</sup> William Whiston, translation of Flavius Josephus, *The History of the Destruction of Jerusalem*, historical data from Books III, IV and V, Chapter 1, apply to Section 7.3.4 and its subsections.

most warlike of the Idumean people he was in command of 25,000 men and went to battle with the zealots in Jerusalem. An all-day battle, it was a standoff as to who won and both parties retired to their sanctuaries. Upon returning to Idumaea, Simon had the support of an Idumean traitor and fooling his opposition in believing that he had a greater army was able to increase his forces by up to 40,000 men. Within Jerusalem where John's party held control, many of the Idumeans separated themselves from him and out of envy of his power and hatred for his cruelty killed many of the zealots and drove them into the temple. After this assault, the Idumeans consulted with the high priests and agreed that in order to overthrow John they should admit Simon into the city. As Simon entered the city the people hailed him with joyful acclamations as their savior and protector; little did they know they had admitted a second tyrant into the city. The people benefited from Simon's support for his party was able to take control of the city and drive John's zealots into the temple. The battles that occurred between the two parties resulted in many wounded and dead men, a count of which was not given by the historian Josephus.

The sedition of the two parties was compounded by yet another sedition, which was initiated by Eleazar, the son of Simon. Angered by John's insolence and murdering attempts upon the people, he revolted from John's party with the objective of gaining his power and control. With the support of many zealots and eminent men of power, Eleazar seized upon the inner court of the temple. This third faction was able to counter John's party from above while John had some advantage of fighting Simon's party that had control of the lower and upper portions of the city. Assaulted on both sides, John savagely fought without restraint and forgot that their real enemy was the Romans. They set fire to the houses that held the provisions of corn. Simon's party retaliated in like manner and so much corn was burnt that they eliminated the necessity to hold out against a siege for many years. The three parties of Jews not only killed and wounded many men on each side, they vented their madness on the people who, being

most sane, were powerless spectators that were prevented from running away by threat of death.

As the zealots were consumed with sedition against their own people, Vespasian had to restrain his soldiers from beginning a siege on the city. He convinced them that God acts as a general better than the Romans by having the Jews destroy each other with their own hands and that it was in their own interest to sit still as spectators and avoid hand-to-hand combat as long as they persist in murdering themselves.<sup>1</sup>

#### **7.4.5 The Fall of Jerusalem and Destruction of its Temple.**

In June of 69 CE, after taking control of all the surrounding cities and villages in Judea, Vespasian returned to Cesarea and began to prepare his men to march directly to Jerusalem. At that time, he was informed of Nero's suicide, which occurred June 9<sup>th</sup>, 68 CE. This news caused him to delay his campaign until he could learn who came to power and if his forces may be required to serve another purpose. Death of the Roman emperor caused the suspension of a takeover of Jerusalem for a period of about eighteen months as Rome underwent a tenuous rule by three short-lived emperors, Galba, Otho and Vitellius. With the strong support of Vespasian's army, they proclaimed him as the rightful emperor in July of 69 CE. Knowing he had to bring order and establish his authority he transferred command of the Jewish war to his son Titus and headed for Rome. By November of that year, Vespasian became emperor of Rome and Vitellius was beheaded on December 20th.

As commander and field marshal of the Roman army, Titus welcomed the support of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Augusta Legions from Alexandria under the command of Tiberius Alexander, who was governor of Egypt and a strong supporter who encouraged Vespasian to accept the opportunity

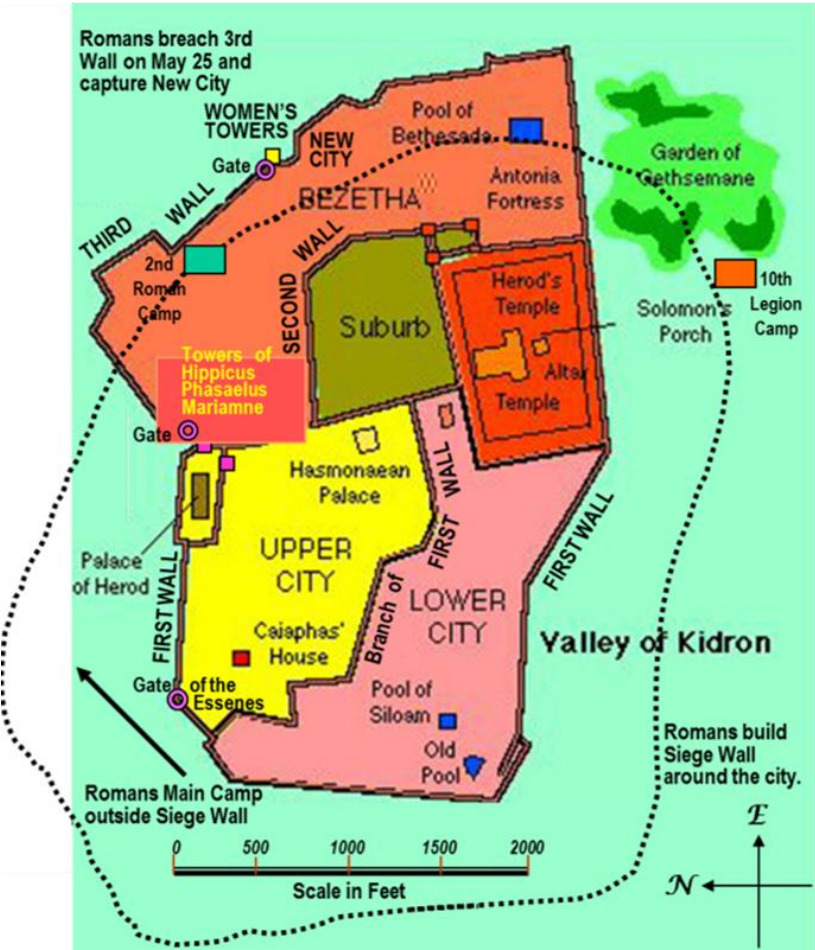
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<sup>1</sup> William Whiston, translation of Flavius Josephus, *The History of the Destruction of Jerusalem*, historical data from Books III, IV and V, Chapter 1, apply to Section 7.4.4 and its Subsections.

to be Emperor of Rome. He was also a counselor to Titus and was appointed General of the Army under him. His army was increased by the 12<sup>th</sup> Legion from Syria and 3,000 legionaries that marched west from the Euphrates River, which was formerly guarded by them. The 5<sup>th</sup> Legion was to meet with his army along with the 10<sup>th</sup> Legion that came through Jericho. Besides the Roman legions of trained men, many auxiliaries came from the kings in Syria. In April of 70 CE, Titus led the 12<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Augusta legions out of Caesarea towards Jerusalem and camped north of the city. Figure 7-2 shows the main Roman camp, which lies opposite the First Wall of the Upper City.

The following events provide a timeline that encompasses 4½ months of combat, from April 14<sup>th</sup> when the Romans were attacked as they were setting up their encampments to the complete destruction of Jerusalem on September 8, 70 CE. The history of the Jews and the behavior of the three seditious factions as related by Josephus offers an insightful account of the downfall of the Jewish kingdom and its people. What becomes evident about the Jewish war was that it was precipitated and fought by seditious men; the parties of robbers and murderers, who were as much a threat to the Jewish people as the Romans. The party under the command of Simon bar Giora consisted of 10,000 Jews and 5,000 Idumeans. John's party totaled 6,000 men and was joined by 2,400 zealots, which was the third party under the command of Eleazar. Where John held the temple and its battlement towers, Simon held the upper and lower cities up to the Women's Towers at the Third Wall. It remains a sad fact that the fall of a Jewish nation is remembered by the ruthless and abominable acts of seditious parties rather than men who fought honorably for a united cause.

**April 14, 70 CE:** Titus and his legions are unexpectedly attacked as they set up their encampments. Twice, Titus courageously assisted his men in jeopardy by putting down the sallies of the Jews. The main camp was ¼ mile north of the Hippicus tower. The 10<sup>th</sup> Legion camped on the south, opposite the temple.



**Figure 7-2. 4 1/2 Month Siege of Jerusalem in 70 CE.**



**May 7, 70 CE:** Romans get possession of the Third Wall on the 15<sup>th</sup> day of the siege and captured the New City. Titus camped within the city not far from the Phasaelus tower.

**May 12 – May 16:** On the fifth day after Titus took the Third Wall, the Romans entered the Second Quarter with 1,000 men and Titus tries to negotiate peace. The seditious Jews see this offer as a sign of weakness and having greater numbers of men attacked the Romans. At a disadvantage with the only retreat through the narrow entry at the wall, the Romans were driven out of the Second Quarter. By the 4<sup>th</sup> day, the Romans regained control of the Second Quarter and demolished the entire wall.

**May 29 – June 2:** Romans complete raising the banks along the walls and placed their engines close to the walls within range to hurl large stones weighing as much as 70 pounds as far as 1/4 mile and further. The seditious parties of John and Simon lay aside their hatred and unite to sally out beyond the walls to destroy the raised banks and torch many of the stone machines. Returning after assessing the bank destroyed at the Antonia tower, Titus came upon the enemy with his chosen troops and the Jews retired back into the city. The Romans were despondent after an embarrassing loss of men, engines, and the success of the Jews in demolishing the raised banks.

**June 3 – June 5:** Titus orders his men to build a wall around the entire city and erect 13 garrisons along its circumference. This siege wall was completed in three days. With no way of escaping or bringing food into the city, famine within the city took its toll on whole families. The streets of the city were full of dead bodies of the aged, women and children. Not to endure the stench of the dead, their bodies were thrown from the walls into the valleys beneath. Meanwhile, Titus had his men gather materials up to 12 miles from the city to raise the banks at the Antonia tower.

**Period to July 1:** Due to the stores of corn burnt by the seditious parties, famine caused more deaths than those who died in battle. A Jew named Manneus, that monitored a gate entrusted to his care, reported to Titus that 115,880 dead bodies passed through the gate between April 14 and July 1. Eminent citizens reported that more than 600,000 dead were thrown out the gates and many other corpses were shut up in very large houses. A starving mother was reduced to killing, roasting, and eating the dead body of her son.

**July 1 – July 3:** The Romans assaulted the Antonia tower and though stressed from above by enemy darts and arrows, used their battering rams and removed four major foundation stones. That night the tower wall collapsed but John's party had built an inner wall that, though not as strong, presented another obstacle for the Romans. Recognizing the hazards his men faced to ascend the tower, Titus gave an encouraging speech that death by the sword was better than by disease and those that survive will be rewarded by commanding others that are now his equals.

**July 5 - July 6:** At night a dozen Romans ascended the Antonia tower and killed the guards. Sounding the trumpet, a dozen Romans climbed the tower and fought the seditious Jews up to the entrance of the Temple. The Jews, in greater numbers, fought valiantly. Due to the narrow path into the Temple the first ranks of soldiers incurred hand-to-hand combat with their swords. After the 9<sup>th</sup> hour at night to the 7<sup>th</sup> hour the next day, the Romans gave up taking the Temple and only maintained possession of the tower.

**July 17:** Pressured by ongoing battles with the Romans, the Jews discontinued offering a Daily Sacrifice to their God. Titus again sent Josephus to speak with the Jews to offer peace and thereby save their lives and their city. He desired that the Holy Temple remain intact and wished the seditious parties would desist from polluting the holy house with the blood of both foreigners and Jews. He appealed to them saying, "I do not force you to defile this your sanctuary; and if you will

but change the place whereon you will fight, no Roman shall either come near your sanctuary, or offer any affront to it; nay, I will endeavor to preserve you your holy house, whether you will or not.” The seditious Jews response was: they vowed to fight to the death rather than accept peace, liberty and absolution of their insolent practices.

**July 22 – July 24:** The seditious Jews set the north-west cloister that joined the Antonia tower on fire and this started the burning of the sanctuary. Later, the Romans set fire to an adjoining cloister.

**July 27:** The seditious Jews staged a trap at the western cloister of the Temple by combining bitumen and pitch with dry material. Many Romans, without orders from Titus to enter, rushed into the cloister to fight but were surrounded by fire and perished. The next day the Romans burnt down the northern cloister.

**Aug 8 – Aug 9:** After unsuccessful attempts to scale the walls of the Temple with ladders, Titus gave orders to set the Temple gates on fire. After two days, Titus commanded the fire be quenched and prepare a road to easily march his soldiers in. The seditious Jews attempted several sallies at the east gate on the outward court of the Temple but were driven back by Roman horsemen causing their retreat into the inner court of the Temple.

**Aug 10:** While some soldiers under Titus orders tried to quench the fires at the Temple gates to preserve the Temple, the seditious Jews and Romans fought. One soldier threw a torch into one of the Temple rooms and the holy house caught fire. Titus was unable to restrain the soldiers who, by this time, were full of anger and hate for the Jews. As the Temple burned, vast amounts of money and gold were plundered. Without regard to age and gender, men, children, women and priests were slain, numbering 10, 000 dead.

**Aug 20:** The Upper City was so steep that Titus ordered banks be raised around it thereby allowing easy movement by his army. At this

time, several Idumean commanders agreed to surrender and sent five men to inform Titus. But Simon learned of it and immediately killed the five men and imprisoned the commanders. Still, a great number of the Jews risked death by Simon as being deserters and fled to the Romans. Titus softened his proclamation to kill deserters and allowed above 40,000, consisting of whole families, to be saved and many others were sold into slavery.

**Sept 7, 8 – 70 CE:** Upon completion of the banks, the Romans brought their battering rams and as soon as parts of the wall fell and some of the towers yielded, the tyrants fled in terror before the Romans got over the rubble. The tyrants left the towers that afforded them greatest protection for fear of famine forced them to flee into the Siloam valley in the Lower City. The Romans took the last wall without any bloodshed and without much resistance they went through the lanes of the city with their swords drawn and killed great numbers of people. The houses into which many Jews fled and houses that were full of entire families that died by famine were set on fire consuming homes and bodies. By the next day, the whole city was covered with dead bodies and its lanes covered in blood. During the entire Jewish – Roman war, over 1,100,000 people died and 97,000 were captured.<sup>1</sup>

Table 7-1 is in close agreement with Josephus's numbers and is provided to emphasize the extent of Jews killed and captured in the cities, towns, and villages of Syria, Palestine, and Egypt. The devastation of the Jewish nation motivated their religious leaders to salvage their belief in God by creating Scripture that is now known as the New Testament. This conclusion is evident because the Gospel of Mark was written just prior to, or at the start of, the Jewish-Roman War and the Gospels of Matthew, Luke, and John were written at least 10 or more years after the war (Section 7.5).

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<sup>1</sup> William Whiston, translation of Flavius Josephus, *The History of the Destruction of Jerusalem*, historical data from Books V and VI apply to Section 7.4.5.

**Table 7-1. Jews Slain and Captured in Jewish-Roman War.**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Roman or Jewish Leadership</b>	<b>Affected Villages and/or Cities</b>	<b>Jews Slain</b>	<b>Jews Captured</b>
Prior to Jewish-Roman War in 66 CE	Roman procurator, Gessius Florus. Enraged seditious Jews.	Jerusalem (Upper Market Place) Cesarea Syrian villages, Philadelphia, Gerasa, Sebonitis, Pella, Scythopolis, Hippos, Gadara, Kedasa, Ptolemais, Gaba, Cesarea, Sebaste (Samaria), Gaza Askelon and Anthedon .	3,600 20,000 15,000	
	Seditious Jews response to those slain in Cesarea.	Scythopolis (Jews slain) Askelon and Ptolemais Hippos, Gadara and other cities.	13,000 4,500 6,000	
	Alexandria Governor, Tiberius Alexander	Delta in Alexandria, Egypt	50,000	
October, 66 CE Through March, 68 CE.	Syria Governor, Gaius Cestius Gallus.	Joppa Narbatene Sepphoris in Galilee	8,400 5,000 2,000	
	People retaliate after Jews defeat 12 <sup>th</sup> Roman Legion.	Damascus	10,000	
	Roman General, Vespasian and son Titus. Commanders Trajan and Cerealis. Titus came later.	Jotapata, under the command of Josephus Flavius. Japha	40,000 12,000 3,000	1,200 2,130
	Cerealis soldiers. Vespasian	Gerizzim in Samaria	11,600	
	Vespasian and Titus.	Joppa Tiberias	4,200 7,700	37,500
	Vespasian and Titus. Titus	Gamala Gischala	9,000 6,000	3,000

**Table 7-1. Jews Slain and Captured in Jewish-Roman War.**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Roman or Jewish Leadership</b>	<b>Affected Villages and/or Cities</b>	<b>Jews Slain</b>	<b>Jews Captured</b>
March, 68 CE through June, 69 CE.	Zealots under John the Levite. Vespasian commander, Placidus.  Vespasian  Vespasian commander, Lucius Annius	Cities below Jerusalem (Engaddi). Bethennabris, a village of Gadara. Abila, Julias, Bezemoth and other cities along the Dead Sea. Lydda, Jamnia, Betaris and Caphartobas. Gerasa	700 15,000 2,000 2,000 10,000 1,000	2,200    1,000 2,000
June, 69 CE up to April, 70 CE.	John the Levite aided by 20,000 Idumean soldiers. Zealots again kill Jews.  Three seditious parties within the Temple: John the Levite, Simon bar Giora the Idumaeen, and Eleazar, son of Simon.	Temple of Jerusalem. Jews not willing to join seditious zealots were killed. Also killed were the high priests Jesus, Ananus and Zacharias, son of Baruch (cited in Matthew 23:35). John fought both Idumaeen parties, which not only killed many of their own but also the powerless Jews that were prevented from running away.	8,500 12,000  4,000	
April 14, 70 CE to the destruction of Jerusalem, Sept 8, 70 CE.	Titus supported by several legions commanded by Tiberius Alexander, governor of Egypt and legions from Syria. Together, they attacked the Jewish Temple in Jerusalem.	Deaths by famine in Jerusalem Temple. Deaths thrown out the gates and shut up in very large houses. Roman soldiers burn Temple and Jewish-Roman War ends.	115,880 600,000 10,000	20,000
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b><i>Estimates are in close Agreement with Flavius Josephus.</i></b>		<b>1,012,080</b>	<b>66,830</b>

### **7.5    *The Gospels Validate Jesus and His Word***

Section 7.4 provides a history of the downfall of the Jewish nation. Within Jerusalem, it is astounding that the four-year war resulted in the deaths of over 1,100,000 people and the capture of 97,000 that were either sold as slaves or sent to the Roman provinces to die by the sword or killed by wild beasts in their sport arenas. Of these numbers, Flavius Josephus indicates that many of the people were not only citizens of Jerusalem, many came from Galilee, Samaria, Judea, Perea and other remote regions to participate in the feast of unleavened bread or Passover. During the observance of Passover many were constrained to stay in Jerusalem when the war started. But it must be remembered that as Vespasian and his armies systematically conquered all of the cities and villages in Galilee, Samaria, Peraea, Judea, the entire Mediterranean coast and parts of Idumaea, whole families fled to Jerusalem because it was one of the most fortified cities and contained their most eminent leaders, be they kings, high priests and powerful men.

The number of people that observed Passover in Jerusalem have been estimated by Flavius Josephus as being 2,700,200, which was extrapolated by the number of lambs sacrificed between the ninth and eleventh hour of the Passover. This number was based upon the law requiring at least ten feast together with each sacrifice and since there were 256,500 sacrifices, some including more than ten people, the number appears credible. This number provides an estimate of the worshipers that Josephus identifies as pure and holy. But when one considers the numbers of people that fled into Jerusalem for protection from the conquering Romans, this estimate can readily be as high as 3,000,000 people that were caught up in the famine, slaughter and destruction of Jerusalem.

In Section 7.3, it was brought to light that it took almost forty years, from the death of Jesus, before Jewish holy men were stimulated to write scripture to energize a religious movement based upon the teachings of Jesus Christ. His teachings were orally communicated rather

than committed to writing and this may have been due to Jesus predicting an apocalyptic end of the world in his generation; for which reason, scripture would not be necessary.<sup>1</sup> What is very curious is that it took the start of the Jewish-Roman war before Mark, Matthew, Luke and John were motivated to write their Gospels. But there were other influences that precipitated the development of these Gospels and that was the beliefs of the Essenes and Paul the apostle, which led to the birth of the Christian church.

### **7.5.1 The New Faith of the Essenes and Paul**

The destruction of the Jewish nation was overwhelming. No other nation in history had so many people perish in one city as in the siege of Jerusalem. From the brief history provided in Section 7.4, the seditious Jews themselves are as much accountable for the many deaths as their conquerors. Throughout the cities and villages of the Jewish nation, the Jews were forced out of their lands, their homes and synagogues were burnt to the ground, and their population decimated by the sword, famine and captivity. Of the four sects: Sadducees, Pharisees, Essenes and the Zealots, - the one sect that was more likely to survive in greater numbers were the Essenes. Known as a peaceful sect that avoided the politics and power struggles of the other sects, they were devoted only to their God and fighting other men was abhorred. Living outside the populated cities and villages, they existed in the mountainous regions on the western shore of the Dead Sea.

The Essenes observance of God's commandments, in large part, caused them to be regarded as a peaceful people and they were principally ignored by the Roman armies. The Essenes were opposed to animal sacrifices, practiced baptism as a rite of cleansing following

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<sup>1</sup> Holy Bible, King James Version, Mark 13:23-32; Matthew 24:34; Luke 21:32. Jesus foretells that his generation shall not pass until the world's end and he returns in great power and glory. He also emphasizes that those in Judaea flee to the mountains, which infers the destruction of Jerusalem (Mark 13:14; Matthew 24:16; Luke 21:21, 24).



confession and repentance of sins, and waited patiently for the messiah. Many Essenes became followers of Jesus teachings, which foretold the world's end and coming of the messiah. This following of Jesus from Nazareth in Galilee was increased by the many adherents obtained by the missionary efforts of Paul (Note 1 in Section 7.5.1). He was born into a wealthy Jewish family from the town Tarsus in Cilicia and formally named Saul (Tarsus resides on the north coast of the Mediterranean Sea). He went to a university in Cilicia and was taught Stoic and Cynic philosophies. He eventually became a strict Pharisee and learned Jewish Law from the highly respected rabbinic teacher, Gamaliel. Prior to his conversion by Jesus on a road leading into Damascus, as a Pharisee, Paul had fiercely persecuted many Christians.

Fanatically antichristian, it was in the year 35 CE Paul was struck blind on his way to Damascus to persecute alleged Christians. He was cured of his blindness by the disciple Ananias, was baptized, and withdrew from the world to meditate three years in Arabia. Paul went on several missionary journeys over the periods 49 to 56 CE. His mission to make many Christian converts was driven by his beliefs in the “Lord-ship of Christ Jesus” and the “freedom of the spirit”. Stately eloquently by John B. Noss, the following extract is provided:<sup>1</sup>

*“He came to know the freedom of the spirit during the early days of his conversion. The Christians of Syria and Cilicia were for the most part uncircumcised and without the knowledge of the Jewish Law. In his great hunger to know the secret of true righteousness, Paul had long held the Law (the Torah) to be the one and only condition of a good life enjoying the Lord’s favor. But now he was surprised and delighted to discover that those who followed Christ were, quite apart from the Law, more profoundly good than those who obeyed the Law. The righteousness that was in Christ was greater than the righteousness that was from the Law. The reason was that Christ changed a man’s*

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<sup>1</sup> John B. Noss, *Man’s Religions*, Pages 441, 443.

*inward disposition and gave him the right relationship to his fellow men and to God, so that he did what was right from the heart, without having to refer constantly to outward legal requirements. Love was the fulfillment of the Law. Therefore the weary bondage of the Law could be cast aside for the freedom of the spirit. There was no further need, Paul declared, for circumcision, dietary restrictions, and distinctions between clean and unclean."*

It was Paul that developed basic theological concepts that enabled Christianity to win many converts from both the Jewish and the gentile world. He broke with his formalized Judaic beliefs by not endorsing the strict beliefs of the Sadducees and Pharisees, which included circumcision, refusal to sit at a meal with the unclean (those not circumcised), and carefully follow the dietary restrictions of the Torah. His greatest departure was to reduce Jewish Law, which was expanded by the rabbis and scribes, into the two basic commandments of Jesus: to love God and your fellow beings.

Paul's diversion from the Torah initiated a serious conflict with the Judaic Priesthood but their anger was provoked by his profound belief that Jesus was a *divine being* who possessed the image or likeness of the invisible God from which all things were created by Him and for Him.<sup>2</sup> Added to this belief was Paul's introduction of the view that individuals can redeem themselves from sin and death by uniting themselves by faith to Jesus Christ.<sup>3</sup> He further taught that through the teachings of Jesus they have access by one Spirit to the Father.<sup>4</sup> The views held by Paul was expressed far and wide in his missionary work and have been documented in many epistles written for the Romans, Corinthians (I and II), Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Thessalonians (I and II), Timothy (I and II), Titus, Philemon and Hebrews. Such a prodigious output coupled with his extensive travels

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<sup>2</sup> Holy Bible, King James Ver., *Paul's Epistle to the Colossians*, 1:15-16.

<sup>3</sup> Holy Bible, King James Ver., *Paul's Epistle to the Colossians*, 1:13-14. *Romans*, 6:4-11.

<sup>4</sup> Holy Bible, King James Ver., *Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians*, 2:17-18.

induced a great following of converts from the Phoenician coastline of Syria towards the western part of the Mediterranean Sea into Sicily and Rome. Just as Moses was the founder of Judaism, Paul may be considered the founder of the Christian religion.

Although Paul had the greatest impact in the conversion of gentiles and Jews to the Christian faith, he was preceded by many other leaders who successively organized new Christian churches in Antioch, Alexandria and Rome. Rapid expansion of Christian churches sprung up all along the coasts of the eastern Mediterranean. Around 56 CE, he ran afoul among the Jews when he collected funds for the poor and brought it to a church in Jerusalem. The Jews mobbed him and caused his arrest. As a Roman citizen, he appealed to Caesar and was imprisoned in Rome. Two years later he was again arrested in Rome. After writing many letters to churches and individuals he was beheaded in 62 CE by order of the emperor Nero as a troublesome character, a disturber of the Roman peace.

Just as the Christian church was becoming a reality, the Jews began to be drawn into a war with the Romans by their over zealous religious sects who formulated the Zealot movement. There were many astute Jewish priests who foresaw the inevitable dangers that were to unfold by the Zealots bid to rid the Jewish nation of Roman authority. As the Romans conquered all of Galilee and began to surround the city of Jerusalem, many prudent and wise Jewish priests tried to dissuade the Zealots from their fight for freedom but were either ignored or put to death. The older and wiser Jewish priests foresaw that their entire nation was going to perish as their authority was now in the hands of madmen – Jews who already exhibited the height of atrocity by killing their own people.

The greatest identifying feature of the Jewish people is their religion; their belief in the one God as received by Moses and embodied in the Torah. The pending outcome of the war posed a pressing need to revisit their scriptures and extend it to encompass the teachings of

Jesus. By 68 CE, there would be no doubt that the Jewish nation would be torn apart by the war. The Jews were also confronted with the ever-growing sect of the Essenes who were attracted to the messianic message of Jesus and accepted the entry of gentiles into their one God belief. If not acknowledged by the formal Priesthood in Jerusalem, it became apparent to the Essene sect that the legacy of their one God would continue to live by incorporating the teachings of Jesus and the religious concepts and interpretations developed by Paul. True, some of the Gospels were written by followers of Jesus who may have had no connection with the formal training of the Sadducee and Pharisaic priests. But we must not forget that they were written by Jewish holy men. They were grounded in the extraordinary restrictions of the Torah. However, Paul's teachings surfaced a whole new revelation; the salvation of man from sin and his unity with God through belief in Jesus.

### **7.5.2 The Gospels of Mark, Matthew, Luke and John**

It is held by most religious theologians that the first three gospels were based upon a source document referred to as "Q", which stands for the German word *Quelle* (meaning source). Matthew and Luke wrote independently of each other but because they contain nearly 200 verses that are nearly identical, the conclusion that they used a third document appears valid. Mark's Gospel has only 30 verses that do not appear in Matthew and Luke, for which reason Mark also must have had the good fortune to make use of the Q document or, may have in fact have been the original creative document. Existence of the Q document is inferred by analysts of theology since there is no actual surviving copy. But it would seem natural that the followers of Jesus Christ had some unofficial writings that his disciples remembered and recorded up to 20 or more years after his death. Many theologians believe that the Q document was a very early "sayings" gospel. It included many of Jesus statements but little about his life. These theological analysts conclude that it was a pre-Christian document because [they believe Jesus birth, selection of 12 disciples, crucifixion and resurrection were](#)

not mentioned. These suppositions may or may not be true, but they agree that this document does present Jesus as a charismatic teacher, a healer, a humble man filled with the spirit of God who possessed the wisdom of a sage.<sup>1</sup>

Due to the widespread impact of Paul's ministry and availability of his epistles, many of his views about how the life of Jesus affects man's relationship to God supplemented the Q document in the creation of the Gospels. More importantly, and usually over-looked is the influence of the Essene sect on the initial establishment of Christian beliefs and traditions. One of the greatest finds in archaeology was the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls. These scrolls contained old Hebrew manuscripts and validated the religious beliefs and practices of the Essenes. Among these scrolls were found some very important documents that date back to about 200 to 100 years BCE. The manuscripts that particularly reveal the Essenes religious creed and rites are those given the titles: *Manual of Discipline*, *Habakkuk Commentary*, *The War of the Sons of Light with the Sons of Darkness*, and the *Zadokite Fragments*. These documents reveal that the Essenes believed in a messiah called the "Teacher of Righteousness" who died a violent death by the Sons of Darkness. They referred to themselves as the 'Elect of God' and their religious community as the "New Covenant". Their members were initiated through baptism and they had a protocol that closely follows the seating of the Last Supper.

Many similarities existed between Jesus and the Teacher of Righteousness who met his death around 65-53 BCE. He preached penitence, poverty, humility, love of one's neighbor, chastity and like Jesus, he observed the Law of Moses. Revered as the divine Messiah of God and Redeemer of the World, he became the object of hostility by the Pharisees and Sadducees and was condemned to death. Like Jesus, this teacher was believed to be the supreme judge at the end of the world. He founded the Essene church whose worshippers fervently

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<sup>1</sup> Internet: [http://www.religioustolerance.org/chr\\_ntbl1.htm](http://www.religioustolerance.org/chr_ntbl1.htm)

awaited his glorious return.<sup>2</sup> Their essential rite was the sacred meal ministered by other priests. We are therefore indebted to the Jews, or at least one major sect of the Jews, for setting the stage for accepting Jesus as the messiah and formulating the basic rites of baptism and communion performed by many Christian denominations today. These facts are not acknowledged by either the Jewish or Christian religions for the former would not want to receive credit for the development of Christianity and the latter would feel the impact of their New Testament would be lessened if it was known that the Christian church already had its beginnings with the worshipping Essenes and not totally based upon Jesus.

In summary, several influences contributed to and sparked creation of the Gospels that make up the New Testament, they are:

- The Hebrew Bible, Tanakh (Old Testament), that embodies: the five Books of Moses (according to tradition) or Torah; *Nevi'im*, the Prophets; and *Kethuvim*, the writings.
- The Essenes, a peaceful sect, refused to join the war efforts of the Pharisees, Saducees and Zealots. They strongly believed in the coming of a messiah, baptism, and the communion of bread.
- The Essene Teacher of Righteousness was revered as the divine Messiah of God and Redeemer of the World. This reverence resurfaced with the birth of Jesus, born to redeem the sins of man.
- Christian churches were founded by many Essene leaders who preceded Paul by founding new Christian churches in Antioch, Alexandria, and Rome. Before Paul's evangelism, many Essene churches rapidly expanded all along the coasts of the eastern Mediterranean.

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<sup>2</sup> Max I. Dimont, *Jews, God and History*, Pages 130-133.

- Paul had the greatest impact in the conversion of gentiles and Jews to the Christian faith, but his efforts were complemented by the many Essene leaders who successively organized new Christian churches.
- The early sayings of Jesus captured by the Q document(s).
- The strong influence of Paul's writings that explain the purpose of Jesus by emphasizing that through his intercession with the Father one can be redeemed from sin. The restrictions and rites of animal sacrifice, circumcision, and dietary laws are superseded by the overriding command to love one another; and through belief in Jesus and living by his Word, one can attain salvation of everlasting life.
- The inevitable defeat of the Jewish nation, the decimation and captivity of their people initiated an urgency by the Hebrew Priesthood to preserve their religion and most precious legacy - the belief in one God.
- The urgency of preserving the Jewish belief in one God was fulfilled by the Essenes who accepted Jesus as the messiah.
- The first Christians were Jews from the Essene sect. They were the Jews who established the first Christian church.
- It was Jewish holy men that created the Gospels of Mark, Matthew, Luke and John based upon the Q document, teachings of Jesus, and the religious concepts of Paul.

It was Paul that interpreted the teachings of Jesus and formulated religious precepts based upon his death. Two precepts he advocated was that circumcision was just as unnecessary as the adherence to Jewish dietary laws in the worship of God. But the most crucial precept was the teachings of Christ; whereby his pronouncement to love one another as he loved us would replace the Torah's abundant sets of

commands that included animal sacrifices, the specific requirements for vestments worn by the priests, the requirements for building their house of worship for God, as well as the articles required within the temple used to worship their God. To examine the extensive set of commands received by Moses from God, many of which are archaic for worship in the modern world, the reader is referred to Exodus, Chapters 20 through 23, and Chapters 25 through 31. Whereby Jesus's first two precepts promulgated by Paul caused much consternation among the Sadducees and Pharisees, the final schism between the conservative Jews and emerging Christians was the substitution of the word of God revealed in the Torah by Paul's revelation - that mankind could know God through Jesus Christ.<sup>2</sup>

As the Christian church grew, there came a need to develop a uniform and coherent scripture. The first attempt to bring order to the chaotic multitude of more than 50 written gospels was around 170 CE. This initial list was referred to as the Muratorian Canon. It was not until 395 CE that the New Testament was formed with those texts that provided continuity about Jesus and reflected the religious concepts developed by Paul. The other gospels were banned and possession was not only heresy, but heresy punishable by death.<sup>3</sup> The New Testament consists of four Gospels listed below and includes *The Revelation* by Saint John the Divine. Listed in the order of their creation, the dates are given in ranges because scholars and theologians can only provide estimates.

The Gospel of Mark	66-70 CE
The Gospel of Matthew	80-90 CE
The Gospel of Luke	80-95 CE
The Gospel of John	90-120 CE

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<sup>2</sup> Max I. Dimont, *Jews, God and History*, Page 142.

<sup>3</sup> Max I. Dimont, *Jews, God and History*, Pages 148, 149.



### **7.5.2.1 The Gospel of Mark.**

Most theologians and scholars agree that the Gospel of Mark preceded Matthew, Luke and John. Not an apostle of Jesus, John Mark assisted Paul on some of his missionary work and is believed to have written the recollections of Saint Peter.<sup>1</sup> It was written in the language of common people at a time when there was great tension between the conservative Jewish Christians centered in Jerusalem and the more liberal Christians that followed the precepts of Paul. Mark's Gospel succinctly states the embodiment of all of Jesus' teachings. His words were not new; he restated Moses Law presented in Deuteronomy 6:4-5, known as the "Shema", along with the ever-popular command given in Leviticus 19:18. What is significant is what has been added to the Torah verses by Mark and is provided below in ***Bold Italics*** for your inspection:

*Mark 12:29 Jesus answered, **The first of all commandments is,***

*Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord (Deut 6:4);  
And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with  
all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength (Deut  
6:5): **this is the first commandment.***

*Mark 12:31 restates Leviticus 19:18 as:*

***And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor  
as thyself (Lev 19:18). There is none other commandment  
greater than these.***

It is the last line spoken by Jesus that simplifies the whole of Moses' Laws given in Exodus, Chapters 20 through 23, and Chapters 25 through 31. This is an astounding concept that love of human beings replaces all of the laws received by Moses from God. Is it possible that God Himself, through Jesus, was willing to simplify all the law; not only what He provided directly to Moses but also the extensions, explanations, new insights, and interpretations of the scribes and

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<sup>1</sup> John B. Noss, *Man's Religions*, Page 447.

rabbis, which now constitute the Talmud and Midrashim?<sup>2</sup> We will see that the Gospel of Matthew drives the nail deeper to emphasize that the restated commands of Jesus replaces the multitudinous commands, and in many cases, outdated commands of the Torah and laws of the Talmud.

### 7.5.2.2 The Gospel of Matthew.

Matthew is identified as a tax collector (publican) and a disciple of Jesus in Matthew 10:3, Mark 2:14 and Luke 5:27. The son of a Levi, he was highly knowledgeable of the Torah and he made it clear that Jesus was from the line of David by enumerating, at the very start of his Gospel, a genealogy that starts with Abraham. Created after Mark, the Gospel of Matthew may have been purposely placed at the beginning of the New Testament by the Church Fathers because it associates Jesus as descending from the revered family of men that have communicated with God.

Another worthy mention is that in three chapters, the whole of Jesus teachings, less the many parables he is also noted for, is presented in Matthew, Chapters 5 through 7. Within Chapter 6: 9-13 is embedded one of the most holy prayers recited in the Christian churches and its denominations, the *Our Father*. But it is in Matthew 22: 37-40 that

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<sup>2</sup> The Talmud, known as the “Oral Torah” provides the flexibility of Judaic Law to keep pace with changes that take place in each age. As new challenges present themselves, interpretation and reinterpretation may be required based upon new conditions in life. Midrashim is a compilation of Midrash stories, explanations, incidents and antidotes that illuminates how one may understand a moral truth or law in the Torah. Both the Talmud and Midrashim are provided by esteemed rabbis to supplement the Torah. Its benefits of this supplementary scripture are commendable but the Talmud and Midrashim have expanded the written Word of God; consequently, one must be introduced to its intricacies by a competent teacher (Louis Jacobs, *The Book of Jewish Belief*, Page 20). As a reaction to the added rabbinic laws, restrictions and judgments, it was Jesus who simplified and captured the whole of God’s Word by stating there are no greater commandments than the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Commandments.

takes “*the greatest commandments*” stated in Mark to an even higher level, for he has written:

*On these two commandments  
hang all the law and the prophets.*

Here, Matthew places the two commands as the progenitor of all the law written in the Torah and causes the greatest break between the conservative and liberal Jews. Matthew follows Chapter 22 with the chastisements Jesus makes against the Scribes, Rabbis and Pharisees (23:1-39). He then predicts the destruction of Jerusalem in his generation and cautions them with the following reprimand:

**23:38**    *Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.*

**23:39**    *For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.*

The Sadducees, Pharisees, Rabbis and Scribes that make up the set of conservative Jews are admonished by Jesus that until they acknowledge he came in the name of the Lord - God will not bless them. This New Testament offers an alternative for all Jews. However, it is a most difficult decision because it appears to require acceptance of Jesus as the Son of God. However, one may also interpret, “Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord,” as being God, not necessarily Jesus. The great religious institution of the Jews could not easily extend their one God belief to include a Son of God. In the first three Gospels, Jesus always claimed that he was the Son of Man. He was from the line of David, a Jew, so that their precious identity as being the chosen people of God would not be compromised. The deeply embedded belief of the worship of one God has prevented conservative Jews and established Rabbis to extend their vision and accept any man can be a Son of God. As a people, they cannot be faulted for holding on to their legacy; part of it is pride as being the chosen people of God, indoctrination in the one-god believe of the Torah, and the difficulty to

accept change. Ikhnaton had experienced the same reaction when he coalesced the many Egyptian gods into one God.

It is to be noted that the destruction of Jerusalem had already taken place since Matthew's Gospel was created between 80 and 90 CE. It may be that Jesus predicted the destruction of Jerusalem as occurring in his generation but not the end of the world. During the war, the seditious Zealots killed several of their most esteemed high priests, such as Jesus, the son of Gamalas and Ananus the son of Ananus. The atrocious act of killing one of the most eminent of their citizens, Zacharias, son of Baruch, is also mentioned in Matthew 23:35. This event agrees with the account given by Flavius Josephus and is presented in Subsection 7.4.4.6. The event of Zacharias death, described by Matthew and Josephus, further substantiates that the Gospel was written a few years after the Jewish-Roman war. Since this was an important document for the multitude, it would have required review and approval by Matthew's peers, so that it was very likely released several years after the destruction of Jerusalem.

### *7.5.2.3 The Gospel of Luke*

The Gospel of Luke very closely follows Matthew. It contains the events whereby Jesus healed the sick, raised the dead, taught his doctrine and presented parables. They both identify the disciples of Jesus, the Lord's Prayer, the death of Zacharias, and his admonishments to the Sadducees and Pharisees. What is missing is the genealogy of Jesus as stemming from the line of David. But Luke is much more forgiving than Matthew regarding the greatest commandments stated by Jesus. Matthew had Jesus answer the question posed by the Sadducees and Pharisees, "Master, which is the greatest commandment in the law?" Jesus reply, stated above in 7.5.2.2, ended with, **"On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets"**. Luke took an approach that was politically correct. First, instead of having the Pharisees and Sadducees ask the question, he had an unidentified lawyer ask, "What shall I do to inherit eternal life?" Jesus

requested the lawyer to provide the answer, which was the two-great commandments. Jesus reply was, **“Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live.”** Luke carefully omitted the political statement, **“On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets”**. Apparently, much friction had arisen since Matthew’s version was heard and Luke felt it wise not to further infuriate the conservative Jews.

Of great significance in Luke’s gospel is the statement made by Jesus after his resurrection when he speaks to his disciples. Here, for the first time, in Luke 24:47, Jesus states:

**And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.**

Note that Jesus says **“in His name”** rather than “my name”, which means he was referring to his Father. Jesus made it clear that his mission was to save sinners through belief in God. Jesus referred to God the Father just as any other child who believed in God.

#### ***7.5.2.4 The Gospel of John.***

John Zebedee, his father, and younger brother James were fishermen on the Sea of Galilee. Called by Jesus to be one of his disciples, he witnessed the crucifixion and was later charged by Jesus to care for his mother Mary. John was engaged in missionary work with Peter and founded many churches in Asia Minor. It was much later in life that he wrote the fourth Gospel, three epistles and the ‘The Revelation’. There is no clear evidence that John wrote The Revelation as he was later known as Saint John the Divine. However, most conservative church leaders believe he is the same John who wrote the 4<sup>th</sup> Gospel. He lived to an extremely old age and died about the year 100 CE.

The Gospel of John takes on a very different approach given in Mark, Matthew and Luke. He omits the genealogy and doctrines of Jesus,

identification of the twelve apostles, the Lord's Prayer, many of his miracles and parables, the destruction of Jerusalem, and the two great commandments. For the first time, we learn that Jesus brought back to life a man named Lazarus after he was dead for four days. Such an astounding miracle would not have been forgotten by the writers of the first three Gospels; but they made no mention of this. It appears that a miracle of this magnitude could not have left the memories of Mark, Matthew and Luke - unless it never happened. The approach taken by John was to elevate Jesus to not only be the Son of God but to be one with God. [Throughout the first three Gospels, Jesus had always stated that he was the Son of Man. For the first time, in John's Gospel, Jesus refers to himself as the Son of God.](#) This is the most popular Gospel among conservative Christians because we will see that it confirms many of the concepts adopted by the Christian Church.

At the very beginning of John's Gospel, it takes on the essence of Genesis, the first chapter of the Torah. In John 1:1, he introduces the Word and equates it with God by writing: *'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God'*. But then, in John 1:2, he states, "The same was in the beginning with God." which infers the Word as an entity. A lot of poetic license is presented here for interpretation. This mysterious opening infers that the Word was later to represent Jesus as confirmed in John 1:14, *"And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth."* But a controversy now arises about exactly what is the Word? Is it the commandments and content of the Torah, namely the first five books of Moses, or is it the doctrine of Jesus Christ given in the New Testament? The Word, be it the Torah, the New Testament, or both, was not conceived at the beginning of time for, without God's creation of all that is and mankind, it had no purpose. One must therefore give pause to the inspirational and poetical feelings that compelled John to state the first lines of his Gospel.

This opening of John's Gospel is critical, for it sets the framework to present the beliefs that have been adopted by the church. As indicated

above, John did exceptional missionary work and established many churches throughout Asia Minor. His Gospel therefore expresses new beliefs not previously stated by Mark, Matthew and Luke. What are these new beliefs of God?

### **7.5.3 The New Beliefs Stated in the Gospel of John**

This author has added section 7.5 to clearly highlight how new Christian beliefs in God have been conceived. Few people are knowledgeable that it is the last Gospel of John that significant beliefs in God have been introduced and amplified by the Christian Priesthood.

#### **7.5.3.1 *Son of God.***

The idea of Jesus as the “*true light, which lighted every man that cometh into the world*” as initially expressed in John 1:7-12 is a beautiful concept. John then focuses on Jesus as being the Son of God in John 1:34,49 where John the Baptist and Nathanael (a friend of Philip who is a disciple of Jesus) respectively state: “this is the Son of God” and, “thou art the Son of God”. However, John now does what none of the first three Gospels did, which is for Jesus to explicitly state that he is the Son of God. For the first time, in John 3:18, 5:25, 9:35, 10:36 and 11:4, Jesus states he is the ‘Son of God’. John therefore deviates from the Gospels of Mark, Matthew and Luke by having Jesus pronounce that he is the Son of God. This is contrary to Jesus’ humble nature as he always stated in the first three Gospels he was the Son of Man. Jesus knew he was a man of God to reveal His Word. As a man and advocate of truth, he could not promote a lie by stating he was the Son of God. His purpose was to simplify the Law and spread God’s Word to all people so that they could believe and love God. So, what is the Word?

**7.5.3.2 The Word for Salvation of Mankind.**

John's Gospel emphasizes that Jesus gave his life for mankind to have eternal life through belief in him. The Gospels of Mark, Matthew and Luke stresses the resurrection of Jesus but does not express the doctrine why he gave his life for mankind. In John 10:7,9,11,15 and 16 presented below, Jesus clearly states he offered his life to be the door of salvation for his people and the world.

*Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep. I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture. I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for his sheep. As the father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep. And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also must I bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one-fold, and one shepherd.*

To have worshippers of the Christian faith understand the humility of Jesus and that he truly believes he is not God but an instrument of God, it is necessary to repeat what Jesus cried out and said:

**John 12:44-47.** *He that believeth on me, believeth not on me, but on Him that sent me. And he that seeth me seeth Him that sent me. I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in the darkness. And if any man hear my words, and believe not, I judge him not: for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world.*

The above statement is a most beautiful and thought-provoking doctrine by Jesus. He clearly states his mission in this world as a Man of God. God embraced Jesus as his son on Mount Tabor when he said, *"This is my beloved Son: hear him."*<sup>1</sup> John's Gospel states Jesus' mission was to simplify the Law given to Moses so that mankind may know God and be saved. **Jesus embodied all the laws in the Old and**

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<sup>1</sup> Holy Bible, King James Ver., Matthew 17:1-9, Mark 9:1-8, Luke 9:28-36.



New Testament into a succinct command that may be thought of as the **“Word.”** For it is the following command that will “save” the world from hate, bigotry, violence, and the killing of our brothers and sisters, God’s children in this world. He was so emphatic, that he announced the new and last commandment from His Father three times:

***John 13:34.** A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also **love one another.***

***John 15:12.** This is my commandment. That ye **love one another**, as I have loved you.*

***John 15:17.** These things I command you, that ye **love one another.***

John equates the Word with Jesus who has pronounced the **Word** as – **love one another**. A simple and beautiful command that Jesus gives mankind to save the world and themselves.

#### **7.5.3.3 Other Sons of God.**

A most beautiful concept was introduced in John 1:12. It is the belief that those who receive Jesus and believe in his name will be given the power to become ‘Sons of God’.

***John 1:12.** But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.*

This powerful revelation is further confirmed by Jesus in:

***John 14:12.** Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and **greater works** than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father.*

These are marvelous words coming from Jesus. It substantiates that he was a Son of Man and that men who believe in him will do even **greater works** than he. Jesus exhibits his greatness as a teacher of

righteousness for he makes it clear that other ‘Sons of God’ can evolve and do the works that he did. Jesus made no distinction in his ‘*New Command*’ between male and female in John 13:34. Surely, he would endorse revising the gender from “he” in John 14:12 to “they”. Let’s revisit that passage:

***John 14:12 Revised.*** *Verily, verily, I say unto you, **They** that believeth on me, the works that I do shall **they do** also; and **greater works** than these shall **they do**; because I go unto my Father.*

In the Scriptures of our three monotheistic religions, an emphasis has been placed on using the male gender. Even in houses of worship, the female has been (or is still) separated as if she was not coequal to the men. Education of the females in today’s world has shown that they are man’s most wonderful counterpart and outstanding partner. It is necessary to revise John’s Gospel so that both daughters and sons can be embraced by God:

***John 1:12 Revised.*** *But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the **sons and daughters** of God, even to them that believe on his name.*

When Jesus states that any man can do the works that he did, “and greater works than these shall he do”, he is clearly saying that there will be other ‘Sons of God’. What he is implying is that the beliefs of God and his Word is not static and set in concrete. There is the promise of change by those who are driven by God to further have us love Him and his creation – our brothers and sisters from all nations throughout the world. Let’s review this belief in John 14:11-17.

***John 14:11-14.*** *Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works’ sake. Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father. And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that I will do, that*

*the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it.*

Right after these verses, Jesus speaks of the Holy Spirit, the third entity of the Trinity.

#### **7.5.3.4 Concept of the Trinity Deserves Clarification.**

A most profound belief is that of the Holy Spirit, which in essence, is the Spirit of God. This entity that dwells within mankind as stated by Jesus in John 14:15-17.

*John 14:15-17. If ye love me, keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you forever: even the Spirit of Truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.*

Through Jesus, John introduced another beautiful belief, that of the Holy Spirit, the “*Spirit of Truth*.” Jesus refers to the Holy Spirit as another Comforter that dwells with you and shall be in you. However, two centuries after John’s Gospel, the Christian Priesthood has caused much confusion by developing the belief that the Holy Spirit is part of a new concept to describe God - the Trinity consisting of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. This concept caused a dispute between the original Essene church believers and the new power of the Christian churches that wanted to raise Jesus to the level of God. This dispute over the nature of Christ led the Roman emperor, Constantine the Great, to convene the Council of Nicaea (in modern-day western Turkey) in 325 C.E. At that time, Christian religious leaders were promoting the belief that Jesus and the Holy Spirit are fused with the One God. This has been what initially may have been a noble attempt by the Church to raise Jesus, the Son of Man, to the level of a God. In the passages below, Jesus does not claim to be God’s son but does emphasize that the Holy Spirit can enlighten and teach those who follow his Father’s Word.

**John 14:24-26.** *He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings: and the Word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me. These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you. But the Comforter, which is the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.*

**John 14:28.** *I go unto my Father: for my Father is greater than I.*

The above words spoken by Jesus clearly indicate three distinct entities: the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. He does not say he is the Son of God or is an extension of God. Jesus makes it known that his Father is greater than he and it is only through the Father that he is given the Word. Jesus also stated, "*he that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do.*" This statement infers that Jesus was a Son of Man and that there will be other Sons of God that will do greater works than him. This means that by righteous actions, other sons (and daughters) will become children of God and reaffirms what was stated in John 1:12 given above. Therefore, Jesus became a Son of God through his works and was not with God at the beginning of creation. This is further emphasized by Jesus when he says, "my Father is greater than I".

The third entity, the Holy Spirit, is the Comforter Jesus speaks of. The Holy Spirit entered into Jesus from the conception of Mary, his mother. Yet, in the spirit of truth, Jesus always proclaimed he was the Son of Man. Many Christian church teachers have stated that all three entities form one God called the Trinity. This interpretation has caused much confusion and apprehension among peoples of the world. It is more believable that there was but one entity that created the entire universe. But John causes a mystery and much confusion however, when he begins his gospel with the intensity of Genesis by saying, "In the beginning was the Word". This is poetically nice to say, but is not the truth. The Word, as professed by Jesus, came much later and, according to the Church, supersedes the Torah. John's approach is politically incorrect. The Word of Truth was conceived by

the Egyptians through the formalized god Amen, developed further by Moses' Covenant, which became the Torah; and in the New Testament, Jesus refined the Word into three simple words – *Love one Another*.

The Holy Spirit is an extension of God. This spirit pervades the universe. Those that understand the basic command to love all the brothers and sisters of all nations throughout the world are candidates to be Sons and Daughters of God. This was the Word and was simply stated by Jesus in John 15:12, "*That ye love one another, as I have loved you.*" It appears that the concept of the Trinity is nebulous and mysterious because it combines entities that are both physical and transcendental. We have embodied in the Trinity: the unknowable, incomprehensible, omnipotent God; a physical man that became a Son of God; and the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth, that pervades the universe.

The Trinity presents a confusing concept that was developed by the Church to establish the godliness of Jesus. John's Gospel does not fuse these three entities into the total embodiment of God. The Word that was taught by Jesus was to love one another. This command is to be honored whether Jesus was a Man or a God. During Jesus' lifetime, the idea of men being worshipped as Gods was very popular. The entire line of Caesars during the Roman Empire were regarded as Gods. As with the Egyptian Pharaohs, leaders of nations have found that people are motivated to obey and act through the authority of a God. John's mission was to raise a humble and wise man to that of a God so that greater authority is given to the Word and, the promise of salvation into eternal life. It should be clear however, that Jesus was the Son of Man embraced by God as His son.

#### ***7.5.3.5 Born in Sin is a Blasphemous Doctrine***

In the Genesis of the Old Testament, we find that Adam and Eve are the parents of all the races of mankind. However, it is here that the

Church has introduced the doctrine of original sin. It is important to clarify the doctrine of original sin as defined by the Catholic Church. The sin committed by Adam and Eve was disobeying God's command not to eat the fruit from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. Many Christian sects have misconstrued this act as the reason why all God's children are born in sin. Because Adam and Eve disobeyed God, the Catholic Church has defined Original Sin and claims this: <sup>1</sup>

*Sin became universally present in the world. Besides the personal sin of Adam and Eve, original sin describes the fallen state of human nature which affects every person born into the world, and from which Christ, the "new Adam" came to redeem us.*

Let us go directly to the Bible, Genesis 3:22-23. After Eve and Adam disobeyed God by eating the forbidden fruit, they were sent out of the Garden of Eden and admonished:

*"And the Lord God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever: Therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the Garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken."*

You will note there is no condemnation by God that Adam and Eve will henceforth bear children with the stain of original sin. God made it clear that because man now has the ability to know good and evil, that he has been endowed with the ability to make choices, and that because he is capable of becoming like God – he was to lose immortality. God therefore forbids Adam and Eve to live in the Garden of Eden and sends them to labor for the rest of their lives. However, He does not burden Adam and Eve with the punishment of

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<sup>1</sup> Promulgated by Pope John Paul II, *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed., Page 890.

passing on the origin of sin to their children for disobeying His command stated in Genesis 2:16.

“And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, *Of every tree of the Garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.*”

Only a foolish God would create mankind in His own image and then have their children born with the stain of original sin. It is demeaning for the Catholic Church (Note 1) to teach that, “*original sin describes the fallen state of human nature which affects every person born into the world.*” As a father, I taught my children to have self-esteem, not to be so proud as to think they are better than others, to accept all people whether they are more or less gifted than they, to be the best they can be, to lead their lives discerning truth, and admiring and practicing integrity. More importantly, I taught them that their mother and father loves them and will assist them as much as is humanly possible with fairness towards others. This means that as a father nepotism is not to be favored. By example, it is the mother and father who set the moral standards for their children so that they, in turn, will repeat those standards for their children. To accomplish these objectives, we could not teach them that they were born in sin. Whether they accept our religion, another religion, or are agnostics and simply believe “It’s nice to be nice,” it is their decision – a decision not founded in guilt and sin but in God’s *Word - love one another*, our sisters and brothers.

In John 18:37, Jesus answered Pilate’s question, “Art thou a king then?” Jesus answered, “*Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice.*” This passage clearly presents the mission of Jesus, which is not to die for the forgiveness of sins but to believe and follow *His Word to love*

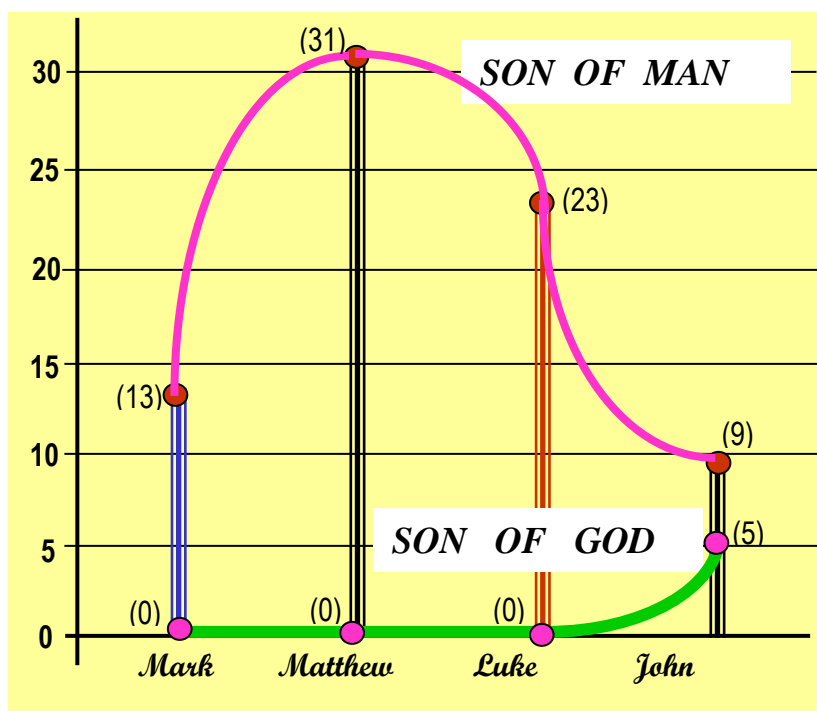
**one another.** Jesus advocated and taught the sole truth that by loving one another you emulate righteousness and be accepted by God.

#### **7.5.4 Jesus refers to Himself as Son of God Only in John.**

The life of Jesus is documented in the Gospels of Mark, Matthew, Luke and John. Everything we know about Jesus has been revealed through these Gospels. Several other Gospels have been written to glorify Jesus and establish that he was destined to be the Son of God. Section 7.2 gives a summary of a Gospel by Matthew that describes the birth of Mary. This Gospel foretells the birth of Mary and then the birth of Jesus, which occurs about 15 years later. This is an attempt by Matthew to enlighten worshippers of the purity and religious upbringing of Mary, her conception as a virgin by the Holy Spirit, and that Jesus descended from the house of David by both parents, Mary and Joseph.

The Gospel of Matthew was therefore an effort to give evidence to the virgin birth and that a Son of God from the house of David was to be born. The story also relates that Mary was brought up in the Temple from the age of three. By establishing Jesus parents came from the line of David, and Mary had religious instruction in the Temple from the age of three, it becomes obvious that Jesus came from a very religious background. Jewish holy men, writers of the Gospels, established the birth of Jesus as a Son of God through the intercession of the Holy Spirit. Yet, contained within these Gospels has been the lasting legacy of Jesus' truthfulness. In the first three Gospels of Mark, Matthew and Luke, Jesus always referred to himself as the Son of Man. Not until John's Gospel do we find Jesus say he was the Son of God. Apparently, around 30 years after the Gospel by Mark, the Church grew stronger and John became emboldened to make Jesus a God. In Figure 7-3, the four Gospels are identified and the number of times Jesus referred to himself as the Son of Man and the Son of God.





**Figure 7-3. Jesus uses Son of God only in John.**

The Son of Man stated by Jesus occurs 13, 31, 23, and 9 times in Mark, Matthew, Luke and John, respectively. However, Jesus never refers to himself as the Son of God until the last Gospel. Certainly, since Jesus stated that he was the Son of God in John 5 times, there should have been no reason for Jesus' modesty in the other three Gospels. All four Gospels do confirm Jesus' commitment to Truth. When Pilate asked Jesus, "Art thou the King of the Jews?" his reply was, "Thou sayest it." Note that Jesus is very clear that Pilate said it and not him. Jesus was wise not to answer with a firm "Yes" because it would not have changed the outcome. But it should be further noted that Pilate did not pose the question as, "Art thou the Son of God?"

The concept that Jesus had global authority for all mankind did not develop until John wrote the 4th Gospel.

The more remarkable differences in John's Gospel from the others is what occurred after Jesus was resurrected. Though there are differences between all of them, the most obvious differences occur in John's Gospel because they are totally new. The well-known Thomas story where Jesus had Thomas touch his hands and the wound in his side stating, "blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed." was never mentioned in Mark, Matthew and Luke. This was an event that validated the physical resurrection of Jesus and yet, the first three Gospel writers failed to mention it. John also introduces another new encounter where Jesus shows himself to his disciples at the Sea of Tiberias (West shore of the Sea of Galilee). His disciples had no luck in catching fish but Jesus told them to cast the net on the right side of the ship and they were rewarded with 153 fish. This event serves to burn itself into one's memory because it involved not just talk, sight, smell, touch and hearing, but physical activity. Psychologists know that memory is greatly enhanced when an event includes motion or activity. Yet, in spite of the disciples dining with Jesus after the great catch of fish, only John remembers this event. Certainly, the other Gospel writers would want to relate these memorable events to confirm the authenticity of Jesus' resurrection. Unfortunately, they were not consistent. Did they forget or, did these events after the resurrection of Jesus never happened?

John's Gospel raises Jesus to be a Son of God and justifies his action with his most profound statement written in John 1:12:

*But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the Sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.*

This revelation of John gives the justification for Jesus, the Son of Man, to become or earn the title, Son of God. It is a beautiful revelation because it states that anybody who follows God's Word can

become a Son of God. This wonderful revelation, however, lacked acknowledgement of God's love for His daughters. It appears that even the Scriptures of the Judaic, Christian and Islamic religions sorely neglect to include His daughters – a foolish oversight.

The Gospels of the New Testament does reveal and confirm that Jesus was the greatest prophet and teacher. He was a humble, yet spiritually wise man who made it clear that he represented his Father by pronouncing His Word – *love one another* in three verses of John (13:34, 15:12 and 15:17). Let it be known, Jesus was strongly emphatic by stating *the Word of God as a commandment, “love one another.”* Unlike other prophets of God, he never killed in the name of, or cause for, God. Reflect upon the words of Jesus below; they confirm he was a humble and spiritual teacher - a man that gave his life for humanity:

***John 8:28-29.*** *When ye have lifted up the Son of Man, then shall ye know that I am he, and that I do nothing of myself; but as my Father has taught me, I speak these things. And He that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please Him.*

Truly, if you were God, would you not embrace Jesus as your son?

## 8.0 *Islam Evolves from Judaic and Christian Beliefs*

In the early part of the 7<sup>th</sup> century, the religious beliefs of Judaism and Christianity gave birth to another religion; for a people that needed to be unified both nationally and spiritually. In the Arab peninsula that lies between the Persian Gulf and the Red Sea, many Bedouin tribes grimly struggled for survival in the arid land now known as Saudi Arabia. However, at the southern end of this large land mass lays Yemen, a rain bathed area that became famed among the Greeks and Romans for its frankincense and spices. The north Arabians were long-haired, wiry nomads, who spoke pure Arabic. Thousand of years in this hostile land caused them to protect themselves in tribes where they formed strong bonds against other predatory tribes. Their law was simple; in retaliation of the murder of any one of their members they will kill a member of the opposing tribe, whether or not that member actually committed the crime. Their more fortunate neighbors to the south were characterized as round-headed, hook-nosed people who were farmers and horticulturists and spoke with a Semitic dialect, with Ethiopic words that sounded strange to northern ears.

The northern Arabians had many contacts with their neighbors above them and never knew a conqueror. But they constantly raided their brethren to the south who lived in the partition of land known today as Yemen. These southerners were blessed with fertilizing rain and sun, which allowed them to grow prosperous through trade of their marketable spices. The increased wealth of individuals encouraged the growth of towns and cities that were garnished with gardens and green fields. Along the coast of the Red Sea, two cities began to flourish as their trade routes became the connecting link between the southern spicelands and the markets of the Mediterranean world. These two cities, Medina and Mecca, grew and prospered. Foreign ideas began to penetrate the Arabian Peninsula from the more advanced cities in Judaea and Syria. Merchants from these countries and other lands that gained access from the Red Sea had exposed them to the wonders of

advanced civilizations, other religions and moral values. The foreign influence of their trading partners caused the many centuries of a harsh, nomadic life to slowly change the Arabians as their world became stimulated by different interests, ideas and values. It is into this frame of time that Muhammad ibn Abdallah, a member of the Quraysh tribe in Mecca was born and later established Islam.<sup>1</sup>

### **8.1 *The Religious Arabian Culture prior to Islam***

In those regions where commercial centers materialized, such as in Mecca and Medina, the introduction of Jewish and Christian beliefs secured a foothold. Slowly, native converts to these faiths abandoned their primitive beliefs and accepted monotheism. However, a great majority of Arabs throughout the Arabian Peninsula still worshipped many ancient gods and goddesses. Some of the older tribal gods were venerated within natural objects, such as pillar like stones, noteworthy rocks, caves, springs and wells. But there was widespread veneration of astral deities. In particular, the Moon-god was worshipped during ancient times in Ur and Harran, even before Abraham. Assyrians, Babylonians, and the Akkadians took the word Suen and transformed it into the word Sin as their favorite name for the Moon-god. Sin is a name essentially Sumerian in origin, which had been borrowed from the Semites. In ancient Syria, this god was also known as Hubal and was represented by the moon in its crescent phase. The sun goddess was the wife of Sin and the stars were their daughters. The Moon-god and/or his symbol has been depicted in Persia and Egypt on wall murals and on the heads of statues.

For the Arab, the Moon-god was the greatest of all gods and while they worshipped 360 gods at the Ka'ba in Mecca, the Moon-god was their chief deity. The Ka'ba (literally 'the cube') is a meteorite that is worshipped as the "black stone that fell from heaven during the days of Abraham". It is the holist Arabian site where Muslims from far and

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<sup>1</sup> John B. Noss, *Man's Religions*, Pages 508-509.

near go on a pilgrimage to offer near it sacrifices of sheep and camels. As part of their ritual, they run around the Ka'ba seven times and kiss it in the hope of obtaining God's blessing. One Meccan belief was that the great patriarch Abraham, while on a visit to his outcast son Ishmael, had built the Ka'ba and imbedded the Black Stone in it.

Mecca was built as a shrine for the Moon-god and, together with his three daughters, al-Lat, al-Uzza and al-Manat, this city became the most sacred site of Arabian paganism. The Moon-god had become so ingrained in Arabian culture that the symbol of Islam is the crescent moon; it sits on top of their mosques and minarets, is found on the flags of Islamic nations, and Muslims fast during the month which begins and ends with the appearance of the crescent moon.<sup>1</sup> In addition to the Daughters of God, there were lesser spirits, namely, angels and various sorts of jinn, some friendly, others hostile and demonic. The angels were morally irreproachable and of a beneficent nature. The jinn, according to fable, were created from fire two thousand years before Adam and could appear at will to human eyes or remain invisible. They could assume animal or human forms and have sexual relations and progeny. The friendly jinn were beautiful in form and kind in disposition. In contrast, the desert-ranging jinn struck terror in the hearts of Arabs and were active agents of evil.<sup>2</sup>

## 8.2 *Who was Muhammad?*

Muhammad was born in 570 CE to a noble Arab tribe of the Quraish called the Banu Hashim or Hashimite clan. According to tradition, his father died before his birth and his mother died when he was six years old. He then became the ward of his grand-father, 'Abd-al-Muttalib, and then of his uncle, Abu Talib. His tribe and family were responsible for the hospitality and welfare of the pilgrims who came to

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<sup>1</sup> Internet: <http://www.pakistanchristianpost.com/sdetails.php?id=52> by Yeshua Network Communication, Allah-the Mood God, The Archeology of the Middle East. Also, <http://yeshua.co.uk>

<sup>2</sup> John B. Noss, *Man's Religions*, Pages 509-510.

Mecca. Their responsibility included sharing with the rest of the Quraish tribe the honor of trustee of the Ka'ba, its idols, its Black Stone, and the nearby sacred well. As such, Muhammad's religious beliefs were that of his community, which was the worship of the Moon-god Hubal and his three daughters, al-Lat, al-Uzza and al-Manat. Their beliefs incorporated tolerance for the multitude of tribal gods and goddesses, the mysterious jinn, angels and Satan. But also, Muhammad had to be influenced by the religious concepts introduced by the Jews and Christians. After 500 years from the death of Jesus, the basic concepts of heaven, punishment in hell, and the coming of a Messiah at a day of judgment found their way into Mecca by religious converts. Exposure was inevitable by the influence of Jews and Christians in caravans passing through Mecca, the foreign merchants that traded in Mecca, and attendance of Jews and Christians at the commercial fairs, where representatives of these faiths used to address the crowds.

It should be clarified as to the beliefs existing between Jews and Christians regarding heaven and hell before further discussion of the fears these beliefs developed within Muhammad's mind. Jews do not have a physical conception of hell or heaven. From Louis Jacobs book,<sup>1</sup> he describes how the Rabbis regard Heaven:

"We speak of eternal bliss in the nearness of God in the Hereafter, but the truth is that this experience is bound to be unintelligible to us, since we believe in this world of matter. The Rabbis say that we can only have a 'foretaste' of it, say, when we observe the Sabbath and experience the Sabbath delight that is 'out of this world' literally. Maimonides (a most revered Jewish Rabbi, theologian and philosopher, who lived between 1135 and 1204) observes that to try to grasp the nature of eternal bliss in the Hereafter while we are still in this world is like a person born blind trying to grasp the nature of color. God alone knows what is in store for the righteous."

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<sup>1</sup> Louis Jacobs, *The Book of Jewish Belief*, Pages 234-236.

The Jewish conception of hell is also articulated by Maimonides as a concept that should not be taken literally to mean that the wicked are punished in fire. According to many Jewish thinkers, Hell is the state of a person who rejects the good and finds, upon dying, that God is still remote. Maimonides seems to suggest that “Hell” does not mean torment at all but simply that a thoroughly wicked soul is annihilated, feeling no pain but simply passing out of existence so that it cannot enjoy the bliss reserved for the good. For the Rabbis, Heaven and Hell are seen to be pure speculation about a state unlike anything we can experience in this life, but which people have tried to describe as best they can with the language they have. The Rabbis also believe it is the Torah that gives the greatest joy so that they conceive Heaven as the place or state in which God himself teaches the Torah to the righteous. This is an illogical conception for, once in Heaven for leading a righteous life, there should be no need for pure souls to be continually instructed after they have attained the grace of God.

It must be remembered that Maimonides gave his interpretations of heaven and hell about 600 years after the life of Muhammad so that the physical concepts of the bliss in heaven and the pains of hell, envisioned by Muhammad, were very different and very real.

Intelligent, sensitive, and a man of reflection, Muhammad had the advantages of being grounded in the many religious beliefs that were practiced by the worshippers who lived and visited Mecca. He also had a cousin named Waraqa and a poet Umaiya (born Abi'l-Salt) who were versed in the traditions of the Jews and Christians. After his marriage to Khadija, fifteen years his senior, Muhammad had the leisure to reflect upon the multitude of religious beliefs. They became difficult to adhere to as the challenges of new Jewish and Christian beliefs began to impress his thinking. His wife, who was a rich Qurayshite widow, mothered him and her love encouraged him to explore the perplexities and incompatibilities of the mix of religious beliefs he was exposed to. During his marriage, she bore him two sons that died at birth and of their four daughters only Fatima survived him.



His moments of private reflection were energized by those who were brought close to him by marriage. Khadija's cousin, the blind Waraqa, may have been a Christian and a useful source of knowledge concerning matters of faith and conduct. His adopted son, a slave-boy called Zaid was a Christian and he had also adopted his cousin 'Ali, the son of his uncle Abu Talib. Muhammad thought that the last day and last judgment might be near. This onerous thought began to preoccupy his mind with Christian fears that conjured up visions of the torments of hell, which caused him to wander off into the hills about Mecca and privately reflect on the future. Since his marriage to Khadija in his mid to late twenties, he spent many years in reflection and solitude to search for a Creator that would guide him to a meaningful and contented life. At the age of 40 he began to spend longer periods of thinking and meditation. It was then that he received his first revelation that became part of the Qur'an. Constant reflection had to have brought about his revelation as he endured a period of spiritual stress. This stress affected Muhammad's psyche as he contemplated upon the common belief of both Jews and Christians that there would be a last judgment and a punishment of idolaters in everlasting fire.

### **8.3 *The Qur'an was Imparted by an Angel of God***

Near the cave of Hira, a few miles north of Mecca, Muhammad was visited by the angel Gabriel and received his first revelation, which was cited in the Qur'an as Sura (Chapter) 96. Muhammad was fearful that his vision of Gabriel was not real and he hurried home to his wife to relate what was said. Khadija consoled him as being honest and Allah would never put him to shame. It is clear, by his wife's response that Muhammad had already believed in the concept of one God. He was again revisited by Gabriel in Sura 53 where the authenticity of his experience is defended by Gabriel not to Muhammad but to his followers. Note however, that Gabriel's reference to **We** implies an entity,

other than Gabriel, that finds it necessary to defend Muhammad's sanity by stating:<sup>1</sup>

**Sura 53:** *We cite the Pleiadas (a conspicuos cluster of six stars in the constellation Taurus visible to the average eye) as evidence, when it will draw close, that your companion, Muhammad, has neither erred, nor has he gone astray. He does not speak out of his own desire; the Qur'an is pure revelation sent to him; taught him by the Lord of mighty powers, whose powers are manifested repeatedly and Who has established Himself firmly on the Throne.*

Muhammad is the only prophet who received the words of God by an angel to form Holy Scripture. In the past, this prime responsibility was always imparted by God directly, as was the case with Moses and Jesus. This does not dilute the authenticity of God's words but the angel Gabriel neglects to state, "My Lord says" but uses instead '*We*', which implies a multiple entity, or group, authorized to speak for God. Throughout the Qur'an, God is constantly associated with entities other then Himself with such pluralistic forms; this observation will be discussed below.

### 8.3.1 What the Qur'an Reveals.

It is incumbent that truth-seeking people read the Qur'an to gain a full understanding of its content. This chapter serves to give you a brief summary but you owe it to yourselves to judge the sanctity and substance of this Holy Scripture. First, I must caution you to obtain one of the earliest translations by a well-respected Muslim. You will find that many English translations published over the past thirty years have modified the text. The changes are subtle and reduce the impact of the Qur'an in an effort to be politically correct in a world where people have become more discerning. I have deliberately obtained *The Qur'an* that was first published in 1893 by Muhammad Zafrulla

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<sup>1</sup> Suras of the Qur'an are arranged in the order of their length rather than when they were received. An arbitrary decision not intended by Allah.

Khan.<sup>1</sup> A truly honorable Muslim, he offers a deep understanding of Arabic scholarship, Islamic learning, and a capable command of the English language. His English translation appeared in 1970 and was reprinted in 1981, 1991 and 1997. His text renders a strictly faithful translation of the Qur'an and offers clarity and precision for the reader. It was published by:

Olive Branch Press  
(An imprint of Interlink Publishing Group)  
99 Seventh Avenue, Brooklyn  
New York 11215  
ISBN 1-56656-255-4

Review of the many Qur'an Suras below reflect the author's objective analyses and, in all cases, provide one-for-one wordings in order for the devoted Islam follower to appreciate fairness of thought.

The first revelation, Sura 96, given to Muhammad by the angel Gabriel,<sup>2</sup> sets the tone for the rest of his revelations. Presented below are several observations that this Sura reveals.

### ***8.3.1.1 The Qur'an Begins with Intimidation and Fear.***

After many years of reflection, the Christian fears of a last judgment and the punishment of idolaters in hell surfaced in Muhammad's first revelation. Such revelations have occurred to men who have had a deep conviction of god through community exposure, intensive study and inward reflection. As with Muhammad, this was true with Ikhnaton, Moses and Jesus. It was the tenor of their bodily and mental makeup, a sounding board so to speak, that compelled their god to reveal morality and righteousness for his creations. But note, in Sura

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<sup>1</sup> Muhammad Zafrulla Khan was the foreign minister of Pakistan in 1947. He became the president of the 17<sup>th</sup> Session of the UN General Assembly and later served as Judge of the International Court of Justice at The Hague, of which court he became President.

<sup>2</sup> Muhammad Zafrulla Khan, *The Qur'an*, Introduction, Page xii.

96, instead of propounding love of one's brothers and sisters throughout the world, Allah only reflects the fear that stressed Muhammad's mind and advocates dragging sinners by their forelock into hell. Before any conclusions are brought to your attention, in fairness, this Sura is provided in its entirety for your review.

**Sura 96:** *In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Ever Merciful.*

*Recite in the name of thy Lord who created everything. He created man from a clot of blood. Recite, for thy Lord is Most Beneficent, Who has taught by the pen, taught man that which he knew not.*

*Man does indeed transgress, because he considers himself self-sufficient. Surely, unto thy Lord is the return. Knowest thou him who obstructs a servant of **Ours** when he stands in Prayer?*

*Tell me, if he who prays follows the guidance and enjoins righteousness, and he who obstructs rejects the truth and turns his back on it, what will be the end of this last one? **We** will surely drag him by the forelock, the forelock of a lying, sinful one. Then let him call his associates, **We** too will call **Our** guardians of hell.*

*Then follow not him, but prostrate thyself and draw nearer to **Us**.*

This first revelation is concerned with righteousness that is not defined and is preoccupied with the fear of punishment rather than the reward of heaven. Note however, that it also introduces an entity or 'Group' with the use of plural pronouns.

### **8.3.1.2 Sura 96 Introduces the "We, Our and Us" Group.**

The devout reader is quickly introduced to the idea that man considers himself self-sufficient and will transgress from belief in God. But instead of acknowledging the retribution coming from God, the Qur'an introduces the entity **We**, **Our** and **Us**; a group of men that speaks for Allah. Instead of one God, a plural form is introduced. This multiple entity becomes evident with the admonition, "**We** will surely drag him by the forelock, the forelock of a lying, sinful one." This cannot be

our Most Gracious and Ever Merciful God because He does not need **We** partners or associates. If God is the most powerful entity in the universe, there is no need for any assistance by some **We Entity or Group**. Most importantly, God would never reduce Himself to that of an animal by dragging one of His creations by the forelock of his hair. This statement brings to light that there is a **Group** of Muslims that are taking the actions of God into their own hands. The **We Group** announces themselves again by stating, “Then let him call his associates, **We** too will call **Our** guardians of hell.” This verse line refers to those people who pray to other religions (associates infers in the Qur’an to the Trinity concept which incorporates three entities and deviates from the ‘One God’). It is the **We Group** that challenges the godly associates with their guardians of hell. The last line of the Sura states: “Then follow not him, but prostrate thyself and draw nearer to **Us**.” Draw nearer to God would be more accurate for God needs no **Us** accomplices.

Does this Sura beckon people to follow God or the **We Group**? There is no reason to be drawn to **We** or **Us** but only to **God**. To convince the reader that the **We Group** is an entity other than God, let us examine a few verses in Sura 22. It will not be necessary to belabor this observation for the Qur’an is replete with statements by the **We Group**.

**Sura 22:35-38:** *We have appointed the sacrificial camels also as the Signs of Allah, for you. In them there is much good for you. So pronounce the name of Allah over them when they are tied up in lines; and when they fall down on their sides slaughtered, eat thereof yourselves and feed the needy, those who are content and those who are distressed. Thus have **We** subjected them to you that you may be grateful.*

Nowhere in the Qur’an does God command that camels be sacrificed to him as a way to glorify Him. After 500 years since the revelations espoused by Jesus and the Gospels, whereby the sacrifice of animals is not a requirement to honor and pray to God, the Muslims have taken a

step backward by continuing this practice. It is apparent that the tribal religions still observed strong ritual practices of the past and that Muhammad continued some of them. Note that the **We Group** is actively engaged in serving animal sacrifice; they appoint or select the camels for sacrifice and provide their meat for the needy so that they may be grateful. This was an expedient way of accommodating the thousands of pilgrims that came to Mecca to worship God. It appears that the **We Group** has a very strong influence on directing the Muslims in many aggressive activities. It will become evident in Section 8.4 that the powerful **We Group** are religious leaders who aggressively converted people to Islam. At first, the Qur'an served a noble purpose to unify the Arab tribes in Saudi Arabia, but greed and power has led the **We Group** to force Islam throughout the civilized world by the sword. Either believe in Islam or die as a disbeliever.

#### **8.3.1.3 *The Book of Warnings, Chastisements and Retribution.***

The Qur'an contains warnings, chastisements, admonitions and threats of punishment in hell for disbelievers. Instead of building upon and fulfilling the Holy Scriptures of the Torah and Gospels, the Qur'an takes issue with the Jews and Christians as unworthy worshippers and even goes as far as to abrogate or cause to be forgotten the previous commandments of God. This point of view is stated below in:

***Sura 2:106-108.** Whatever previous commandment **We** abrogate or cause to be forgotten, **We** reveal in this Qur'an one better or the like thereof: Knowest thou not that Allah has full power to do all that He wills?*

The above statement belittles God's all-knowing capability by challenging His previous commandments as being candidates to be abrogated or forgotten. This is an affront to God's wisdom and infallibility with the revelations given to Moses, Jesus, and the prophets of God. If God's commands are subject to being abrogated or forgotten, then He has failed in His wisdom to direct humanity on its moral and righteous path. This Sura is unquestionably directed once again by the **We**

**Group** who arrogantly believe that they have the authority to speak for God. Whenever God delivers his revelations in other Scriptures, they have always been prefaced by “The Lord has commanded” or a direct statement as, “Thou shalt” without the involvement of **We, Our or Us** entities – nebulous substitutes for God in plural form.

#### **8.3.1.4 The Qur'an Sanctions Fighting and Killing.**

In Sura 2:217-219, there is a defense for fighting and killing people who incite disorder by denying God or profane the sanctity of the Sacred Mosque. This view is introduced and sanctioned in the following verse:

***Sura 2:217-219.** Fighting is ordained for you, while it is repugnant to you. It may be that you dislike a thing which is good for you, and it may also be that you prefer a thing and it may be the worse for you. Allah knows all and you know not. They enquire from thee about fighting in the sacred month, Say to them: Fighting in it is a great evil; but to hinder people from the way of Allah and to deny Him and to profane the sanctity of the Sacred Mosque, and to turn out its people therefrom is a much greater evil in the sight of Allah; and disorder is a worse evil than killing.”*

Who states disorder is worse than killing? The **We Group** or God?

In Sura 7:5-7, the **We Group** reveal themselves as responsible for the destruction of many towns in the name of Allah who is Most Gracious and Ever Merciful – a contradiction of a perfect and loving God.

***Sura 7:5-7.** Little is it that you heed. How many a town have We destroyed! **Our** punishment came upon their dwellers by night or while they slept at noon. When **Our** punishment came upon them all they could utter was: We are indeed wrongdoers.*

This and the following Sura again emphasizes the killing of disbelievers; people who did not spill blood but simply believed in their

own God. Note the planned strategy of killing innocent people while they are asleep or at play. Also note that the **We Group** attributes this atrocity to the “design of Allah”.

*Sura 7:97-100. We afflicted them suddenly with chastisement, while they perceived not the cause thereof. If the people of those towns had believed and been righteous, We would surely have bestowed blessings upon them from heaven and earth, but they rejected the Prophets, so We seized them because of that which they did. Do the people of these towns now feel secure against the coming of Our punishment upon them by night while they are asleep? Or, do they feel secure against the coming of Our punishment upon them in the forenoon while they are at play? Do they feel secure against the **design of Allah**? None feels secure against the **design of Allah**, except those that are losers.*

The above Suras violates one of the Ten Commandments given to Moses, “Thou shalt not kill.” Under no circumstances should a Book of God convey the killing of our sisters and brothers in the name of, or by the design of, God. The excuses given in the above Sura to rationalize such killing presents a ruthlessness and disregard for God’s creations. It is another example of the **We Group** speaking for God. God cannot be inconsistent with His commands. If God is found to be inconsistent, He could no longer be a God. In fact, the very first commandment given by God regarding killing was stated to Noah even before Abraham and Moses:

*Whoso sheddeth man’s blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man.*

God makes it clear that the sanctity of his creation, human beings, is to have utmost reverence for He made man in His own image. Killing another human being is an abomination that God does not ordain or sanction. God would be inconsistent by allowing killing in His name. It can only be the **We Group**, not God, who is responsible for reflecting this diversion from God’s command in both the Tanakh and New Testament.



*Sura 5:34-35. The appropriate penalty for those who wage war against Allah and His Messenger and run about in the land creating disorder is that they be slain or crucified or their hands and feet be cut off on alternate sides, or they be expelled from the land. That would be a disgrace for them in this world, and in the Hereafter they shall have a great punishment; except in the case of those who repent before you obtain power over them. Take note that Allah is Most Forgiving, Ever Merciful.*

The above Sura is an edict by the **We Group** to disgrace those who create disorder by cutting off their hands and feet on alternate sides or kill them, unless they repent. Note that the level of disorder is war against Allah; but does it speak against the people who believe in another religion, or is it against all disbelievers, or is it against Arabs who do not believe in the Islamic God? The retribution is arbitrary and harsh by the **We Group**. Nowhere in this Sura is it stated that **God has commanded** this barbarous manner to protect His sanctity. There is ample reason to believe that the indiscriminate maiming and killing of human beings in God's name is the work of madmen who comprise the **We Group** and not the Most Forgiving and Ever Merciful God. The Qur'an has many such Suras that do not indicate the **command** is by God.

#### **8.3.1.5 The Qur'an Advocates a Party to Forbid Evil.**

In Sura 3, the **We Group** advocates a party or organization whose business it is to invite goodness, enjoin equity and forbid evil. This pronouncement, extracted from verse 3:105 reads:

*Sura 3:105. Let there be from among you a party whose business it should be to invite goodness, to enjoin equity and to forbid evil. It is they who shall prosper.*

This Sura provides a definitive statement and confirms that a **party of Muslims**, the **We Group**, is empowered to enforce their will in the

name of God – hence, the killing of human beings who will not be converted to Islam, or are disbelievers.

### 8.3.1.6 *The Qur'an Encourages Suspicion and Animosity.*

A negative plea to Muslims towards people who are not of the Muslim faith is provided in the Sura below.

*Sura 3:119. O ye who believe, do not take outsiders as your intimate friends, they will not fail to cause you injury. They love to see you in trouble. Their hatred has been expressed in words, and that which they design is even more virulent. We have made Our commandments clear to you, if you will understand.*

Here again, the **We Group** speaks for God and does so to cause suspicion and animosity towards non-Muslims. This is a way to insulate Muslims from receiving new ideas that will challenge the will of the **We Group**. The objective of the **We Group** is to sanitize all information that will empower their people to think for themselves. This is an agenda practiced by the Taliban who tailor education of their children to be constrained only to fundamentalist Islamic views; additionally, education is restricted to men at the exclusion of women and news from the outside world via internet, television, phones and books is prohibited.

It is to be noted that the **We Group**, throughout the Qur'an, has neglected to clearly state God's commandments in a body of verses like the commandments given to Moses and embodied in *The Book of the Covenant* (Exodus 24:4-7). It would have been gracious and honorable for Muhammad to have at least referred to God's commandments given in the Torah. Could this have been an unfortunate oversight? Surely, God would have wanted His commandments to be passed down to the rest of His children.

**8.3.1.7 *The Qur'an Advocates Terror Against Unbelievers.***

Sura 3:150-152 is a call by the **We Group** to strike terror against unbelievers in the name of God. This is another abrogation of God's command to love one another. This Sura states:

***Sura 3:150-152.** O ye who believe, if you obey those who have disbelieved, they will cause you to revert to disbelief and you will become losers. Indeed, Allah is your Protector and He is the Best of helpers. We shall strike terror into the hearts of those who have disbelieved because they associate partners with Allah, for which He has sent down no authority. Their abode is Fire, and evil is the habitation of the wrongdoers.*

Note that the above statement is directed at Christians who associate Jesus with God as His beloved Son (Mark 1:11, Matthew 3:17, Luke 3:22, John 1:32-34). Jesus is a proclaimed prophet of God; yet, this Sura claims that God's authority does not support Jesus. The Qur'an therefore undermines Jesus as a prophet of God. The Qur'an further dishonors the wisdom of God; Jesus was God's prophet sent to simplify the Law (Torah) and bring people from all nations together through belief in His Word.

It appears that the Muslims have failed to recognize that Jesus was the Son of Man who, through his actions of righteousness, became a Son of God. That is, Jesus was embraced by God as a son. He did not emanate from God but from the genes of a man and a woman. Section 7.5.3 above presents this profound concept. It is beholden for Muslims to read the Gospel of John and reflect upon the important revelation, cited below, that stresses there will be other Sons of God, in addition to Jesus.

***John 1:11-12.** He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the Sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.*

**8.3.1.8 *The We Group Incites Hatred Towards Jews and Christians.***

The following passages from Sura 4:47-48 and Sura 5:52-54 are not consistent with a God who is Most Gracious and Ever Merciful. It is most inflammatory for a Book of Holy Scripture to advocate violence and murder of human beings from any nation. The religious teachers of the Qur'an have failed to acknowledge that God has revealed Himself to various people of different lands at different times, which depended upon their needs to develop a higher sense of morality, righteousness and truth. The Suras below condemn Jews and Christians as a whole and fail to acknowledge that many of these people are extremely devoted to God – the same one-God of the Muslim people. Instead, the Qur'an fails to give credence to the Old and New Testaments and advocates, as shown below in Sura 9:29, that Islam is “*the true religion*”.

***Sura 4:47-48.*** *O ye who have been given the Book, believe in that which We have now sent down, fulfilling that which is with you, before We destroy your leaders and turn them on their backs or cast them aside as We cast aside the people of the Sabbath. The decree of Allah is bound to be carried out.*

***Sura 5:52-54.*** *O ye who believe, take not the Jews and the Christians as your helpers, for they are helpers of one another. Whoso from among you takes them as helpers will indeed be one of them. Verily, Allah guides not the unjust people. Thou wilt see those whose minds are diseased hastening towards them, saying to themselves in justification: We fear lest a misfortune befall us. Maybe, Allah will soon bring about your victory or some other event from Himself favorable to you. Then will they become remorseful of that which they keep hidden in their minds. Those who believe will say concerning them: Are these they who swore the most solemn oaths by Allah that they are entirely with you? Their works are vain and they have become the losers.*

**Sura 9:29.** *Fight those from among the People of the Book who believe not in Allah, nor in the Last day, nor hold as unlawful that which Allah and His Messenger have declared to be unlawful nor follow **the true religion**, and who have not yet made peace with you, until they pay the tax (tribute) willingly and make their submission.*

Can this be a Book of God that advocates violence and death to Jews, Christians and unbelievers? Again, it is the **We Group** who is responsible for this outrageous declaration against God's children. God alone will exact punishment for those who murder, hurt, deceive and cheat others – not a **We Group**. What is not understood by many Muslims is that an unbeliever of God may still love and assist all children of God. Believers of God may be worse hypocrites in their inability to love and assist those in need – it is therefore a wrongful act to fight and kill disbelievers and atheists.

An egregious error is the statement that Islam is **the true religion**. It should be obvious to intelligent men that God has revealed Himself to different peoples at different times, which is dependent upon their level of perception and need to follow the precepts of righteousness, truth and justice. Development of religion started with the Egyptians, continued with the Hebrews, became available to all people via Christianity, and the Muslims found God through the teachings of these religions. It is therefore a truth that there are many paths to follow the Word of God. The dictum that *Islam is the true religion* is a sign of arrogance that had to have been advocated by the **We Group** – not by God.

### **8.3.1.9 The We Group Commands Muslims to Kill for God.**

In Sura 5:67-69, the **We Group** takes it upon themselves to command their people to kill themselves and others for the cause of Allah. The Qur'an speaks for itself below:

**Sura 5:67-69:** *If We had commanded them: Kill yourselves in striving for the cause of Allah or go forth from your homes for the same*

*purpose: they would not have done it except a few of them; yet if they had done what they are exhorted to do, it surely have been the better for them and conducive to greater firmness and strength. We would then bestow upon them a great reward from Ourselves, and We would surely guide them along the straight path.*

Once again, the **We Group** acts over the authority of God and sanctions the killing of human beings in his name. They even provide an inducement by bestowing a great reward for those who kill themselves in order to kill others. Spiritual people believe it is God who will punish those who mistreat the brothers and sisters of any nation. The Qur'an is replete with verses that allude to a religious party of fanatical men. Men who believe they represent God's cause and will go to extremes to convert disbelievers even if they disobey God's command – *Thou shalt not kill*. Unfortunately, the message of love and peace for their brothers and sisters of any nation is missing in this Holy Scripture.

### **8.3.1.10 The Qur'an Incites Anger and Creates Enemies.**

Sura 63 incites mistrust and hate of those who are of another religion. In particular, the Jewish and Christian faiths are treated with animosity because first, these religions were the progenitors of Islam and secondly, they appear to compete with Islam over whose God is the truest or mightiest. The result is an effort to malign the worshippers of other religions. A few lines from this Sura reads:

**Sura 63:4-5.** *When thou seest them (Jews being accused of being disbelievers) their persons please thee; and when they speak thou dost lend ear to what they say. They appear as if they were blocks of wood propped up. They imagine that every warning of chastisement relates to them. They are the enemy, so beware! Ruin seize them! . . . It is the same for them whether thou ask for forgiveness for them or not, Allah will never forgive them. Surely, Allah guides not a rebellious people.*

Again, the Qur'an speaks for the We Group in terms that are not endearing and respectful of others who are either not Muslims or of another religion. The Qur'an portrays a resentful God who will "*never forgive them*"; a contradiction to the first line of every Sura, which states:

*In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Ever Merciful.*

This introductory verse in Sura 63, and indeed in every Sura, presents an inconsistency of a benevolent, forgiving God by the statement, "Allah will never forgive them." Only when people have read the Qur'an in its entirety will they realize that this Scripture does not advocate love, peace and charity for the brothers and sisters of all nations. Rather, it is replete with what God loves, such as God loves the benevolent, God loves those who are clean and pure, God loves those who turn to him often, God loves not confirmed disbelievers and arch-sinners, etc. A Computer Internet search of the Qur'an on the key word "Love" will confirm that nowhere in the Qur'an does it state the command God revealed in the Hebrew Bible and restated by Jesus in the New Testament: *thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself*.

#### ***8.3.1.11 The Qur'an Does Not Clearly Cite the Ten Commandments***

The Qur'an reveals that the Ten Commandments are not equivalent to God's original set revealed to Moses and written by the finger of God (Exodus 31:18). Additionally, the Qur'an presents the Ten Commandments disjointedly in Suras that are dispersed throughout the Qur'an. The revelations received by Muhammad from the angel Gabriel had introduced modified versions of the Ten Commandments. The variations of the Qur'an's Ten Commandments causes a disservice to the followers of Islam by not providing a consistent understanding of what God expects from his children. It would seem that Muhammad's ultimate concern, before his Cpmpanions later joined together all of his revelations into a body of Scripture, was to unify the Arab tribes into a nation. Table 8-1 provides a comparison of the Ten Commandments given in the Qur'an with those received by Moses from God. The

**Table 8-1. The Ten Commandments in the Qur'an.***C = Command and S = Statement*

<b>1. Exodus 20: 3</b> Thou shalt have no other gods before me.	<i>C</i>
<b>Sura 47: 19</b> Know, then, that there is no god other than Allah, and beseech for the . . .	<i>S</i>
<b>2. Exodus 20: 4</b> Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, . . .	<i>C</i>
<b>Sura 42: 11</b> There is nothing whatever like unto Him.	<i>S</i>
<b>3. Exodus 20: 7</b> Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain;	<i>C</i>
<b>Sura 2: 224</b> Use not Allah's name for your vain oaths, making them an excuse for refraining from doing good and working righteousness and promoting public welfare.	<i>S</i>
<b>4. Exodus 20: 8</b> Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days thou shalt labor, and do all thy work: But the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God: . . .	<i>C</i>
<b>Sura 16: 124</b> The penalty for profaning the Sabbath was imposed only on those who had differed about it, and thy Lord will surely judge between them on the day of Judgment concerning that wherein they differed.	<i>S</i>
<b>Note:</b> The Qur'an does not abrogate the Sabbath and endorses God's penalty if it is profaned. It was on the seventh day that God rested from creating the heaven, earth, sea, and all that is within them. On this day, he blessed the Sabbath and hollowed it.	
<b>5. Exodus 20: 12</b> Honor thy father and thy mother.	<i>C</i>
<b>Sura 17: 24</b> Thy Lord has commanded that ye worship none but Him and has enjoined benevolence towards parents. Should either of them attain old age in thy lifetime, never say: Ugh; to them nor chide them, but always speak gently to them.	<i>C</i>
<b>6. Exodus 20: 13</b> Thou shalt not kill.	<i>C</i>
<b>Sura 5:33</b> On account of this <i>We</i> prescribed for the children of Israel that who so kills a person, except for killing another or for creating disorder in the land, it shall be as if he had killed all mankind.	<i>S</i>
<b>Note:</b> This command by the party of leaders specifically identifies the children of Israel.	
<b>Sura 17:33</b> Do not destroy the life that Allah has declared sacred save for just cause.	<i>S</i>



**Table 8-1 cont. The Ten Commandments in the Qur'an.**

*C = Command and S = Statement*

<p><b>7. Exodus 20: 14</b> Thou shalt not commit adultery. <span style="float: right;">C</span>  <b>Sura 17: 32</b> Do not even approach adultery; surely, it is a foul thing and an evil way. <span style="float: right;">S</span></p>
<p><b>8. Exodus 20: 15</b> Thou shalt not steal. <span style="float: right;">C</span>  <b>Sura 5: 39</b> Cut off the hands of the man who steals and of the woman who steals in retribution of their offence as an exemplary punishment from Allah. <span style="float: right;">S</span>  <b>Note:</b> This command is given by the <i>We Party</i>. Would God inflict such cruel punishment?</p>
<p><b>9. Exodus 20: 16</b> Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor. <span style="float: right;">C</span>  <b>Sura 2: 284</b> Conceal not testimony; whoever conceals it is one whose heart is certainly sinful. <span style="float: right;">S</span>  <b>Sura 4: 136</b> O ye who believe, be strict in observing justice and bear witness only for the sake of Allah, even if it be against your own selves or against parents or kindred. <span style="float: right;">S</span>  <b>Note:</b> Both <i>suras</i> are given by the <i>We Party</i> since God does not command them.</p>
<p><b>10. Exodus 20: 17</b> Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor any thing that is thy neighbor's. <span style="float: right;">C</span>  <b>Sura 4: 37</b> Worship Allah and associate naught with Him, and be benevolent towards parents, and kindred, and orphans, and the needy, and the neighbor who is a kinsman, and the neighbor who is not related to you, and your associates and the wayfarer, and those who are under your control. <span style="float: right;">S</span>  <b>Note:</b> This statement appears to be by the <i>We Party</i> and does not address the sin of coveting another's possessions; instead it expresses kindness toward others.  <b>Sura 4:33</b> Covet not that whereby Allah has made some of you excel others. <span style="float: right;">S</span></p>

comparisons reveal that indeed, some of the commands are statements rather than explicitly stated by God; and, in some cases, appear to have been stated by the *We Group*.

### **8.3.1.12 *Command of Love Given in the Holy Scriptures is Missing.***

The Qur'an mentions Jesus as a prophet of God. Yet, missing from this Holy Scripture is the new commandment of love given by Jesus, the Son of Man. Without this new commandment, many believers of God are easily led astray to hate and violence towards their sisters and brothers throughout the world. From the Gospel of John 13:34, Jesus stated:

*A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.*

In John 15:12-13, Jesus repeats this commandment:

*This is my commandment, That ye love one another as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.*

Did Muhammad love the sisters and brothers of the world and ultimately give his life for mankind? The greatest prophet of all was Jesus, a man of peace. He never advocated violence and murder in the name of God. Can this be said of Moses and Muhammad? The Muslims are brothers and sisters of God and they must not be deprived of a command given by this wonderful prophet. Jesus was indeed a man of God and said in the new Testament he was the Son of Man, not God. The Muslims should understand that God embraced Jesus, a man, as a loving son, because he spread *His Word – to love one another*. As indicated by Jesus himself in John's Gospel, other men can do even greater works than him, which implies others may become Sons of God.

**John 14:12.** *Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father.*

There are wonderful insights that Jesus provided as a teacher of love and of God. The misunderstandings about Jesus has been a fault of religious leaders by not truly revealing his teachings because they were insistent in making him a God. Many religious institutions believe that moral beliefs can only be promulgated when the messenger has had a revelation from, or is, a God. This belief is false – one need only believe in God and the sanctity of life.

### **8.3.1.13 *The Qur'an Uniquely Describes Heaven.***

Of the Scriptures provided within the Old and New Testament, it is only the Qur'an that gives its worshippers a clear idea of heaven. One would think that Scripture following the Torah and the New Testament would follow their example by not describing God's domain of Heaven. Since God is incomprehensible to describe, how is it possible for the Qur'an to describe Heaven? The Suras cited below appeals to the senses of men with very little mention of rewards for the opposite sex. Surely, Scripture revealed by god would provide equal glorification of both men and women but the verses below substantiate that the Qur'an focuses only on the appetites of men and their fantasies.

**Sura 18: 28-32.** . . . *Those who believe and work righteousness shall have their reward; We suffer not the reward of those who act virtuously to be lost. They will have Gardens of Eternity beneath which rivers flow, wherein they will be adorned with bracelets of gold, and will wear green robes of fine and heavy silk, reclining upon raised couches. An excellent reward and a delightful resting place.*

**Sura 22: 24-26.** *Allah will admit those who believe and act righteously into Gardens beneath which rivers flow. They will be given bracelets of gold and pearls to wear, and their raiment therein will be of silk.*

**Sura 47: 13-20.** *The Garden promised to the righteous has rivers of water that is not corrupted; and rivers of milk of which the taste changes not; and rivers of wine, a delight for those who drink; and*

*rivers of pure honey. They will have all kinds of fruits therein, and forgiveness from their Lord. Can these be like those who abide in the Fire and are given boiling water to drink with tears out of their bowels? . . . .*

**Sura 55: 47-62.** *But for him who fears to stand before his Lord there are two Gardens (which, then, of the favors of your Lord will you twain deny?) having many varieties of trees (which, then, of the favors of your Lord will you twain deny?) and two springs flowing full (which, then, of the favors of your Lord will you twain deny?) and of every type of fruit two kinds. Which, then, of the favors of your Lord will you twain deny? They will recline on couches above carpets the linings of which will be of thick brocade; and the fruits of the two Gardens will be hanging low within easy reach. Which, then, of the favors of your Lord will you twain deny? Therein will be chaste maidens of modest gaze, un-touched by man or jinn (which, then, of the favors of your Lord will you twain deny?) as if they were rubies and small pearls. Which, then, of the favors of your Lord will you twain deny? Can the reward of goodness be anything but goodness? Which, then, of the favors of your Lord will you twain deny?*

**Sura 55: 71-79.** *Therein will be good and beautiful women (which, then, of the favors of your Lord will you twain deny?) blackeyed, guarded in pavilions (which, then, of the favors of your Lord will you twain deny?) untouched by man or jinn (which, then, of the favors of your Lord will you twain deny?) reclining on green cushions and beautiful carpets. Which, then, of the favors of your Lord will you twain deny? Blessed is the name of thy Lord, Master of Glory and Honor.*

**Sura 56: 2-41.** *When the Event comes to pass, the coming of which no one can avert, some it will bring low and others it will exalt.*

*When the earth is shaken violently, and the mountains are crumbled into dust . . . you will be divided into three groups: those on the right. . . and those on the left. . . and those who are foremost – they verily*

*are the foremost. They will be honored ones, dwelling in the Gardens of Bliss; a large party from the early believers, and a few from the late-comers, reclining on couches inwrought with gold and jewels, facing one another. They will be waited on by ageless youths, carrying goblets and ewers and cups filled out of a flowing spring, neither causing headache nor inebriating, and such fruits as they choose, and the flesh of birds as they may desire.*

*They will have as companions, maidens with lovely black eyes, pure as pearls well guarded; a recompense for what they did. They will not hear therein any vain or sinful talk, but only salutation: Peace, peace.*

*Those of the right; how fortunate will those on the right be! They will be amidst thornless lote-trees, and clustered bananas, and extensive shades, and falling water, and varieties of fruit, endless and unforbidden. They will have noble spouses, whom **We** specially created, and made virgins, loving and matching in age, for those in the right. They will be a large party from the early believers and a large party from the late comers.*

*Those on the left; how unfortunate will those on the left be! They will be in the midst of scorching wind and scalding water, and in the shadow of black smoke, neither cool nor agreeable. . . .*

The above Suras have been provided for the reader to appreciate what the Qur'an contains regarding Muslim beliefs of reward in the Islam hereafter. These Suras exhibit a strong contrast to the hereafter envisioned by the ancient Egyptians. Their hereafter was an extension of their lives on the banks of the Nile where they continued to live in constructive and industrious ways. The Qur'an, on the other hand, elucidates a hereafter that portrays an idle and sensual life that caters to the selfish desires of men whereby they: enjoy the affection of beautiful virgins, blackeyed beautiful women untouched by man or jinn; have as companions maidens with lovely black eyes, pure as pearls; have noble spouses, whom the **We Group** specially created and made virgins, loving and matching in age; drink out of goblets filled from a

flowing spring that does not cause inebriation; wear green robes of fine and heavy silk; recline on couches inwrought with gold and jewels; lie on green cushions above carpets the linings of which will be of thick brocade; are given bracelets of gold and pearls to wear; drink from rivers of wine and rivers of pure honey; are waited on by ageless youths, carrying goblets and ewers and cups filled out of a flowing spring.

The contrast of the perception of Heaven between the ancient Egyptians and Muslims is striking. One view is noble and seeks only to continue a resourceful life utilizing their minds and bodies; whereas, the other view reflects a mentality whereby they only desire to satisfy their physical and sensual needs.

From reading the above Suras, it is apparent that the Qur'an is very repetitive for a great work of literary art. But then, worshippers of any religion will defend their faith and regard their Scripture on a very high level of competence because they believe it was received as a revelation from God. Many people do not know what Islam Scripture contains and it would be a worthy and commendable effort for them to read the Qur'an. Likewise, there are many Muslims who are tolerant of other religions and seek to gain a better understanding of Judaism and Christianity, which may be gotten by reading the Torah and the Holy Gospels.

### **8.3.2 Muhammad Uses the Qur'an to Spread Islam.**

The perceptive and intelligent Muhammad had grown up in a diversity of religious traditions and multiple tribal customs. Many years after he received revelations from Allah's angel, it became clear to him that to accomplish an objective to unify the Arab tribes, he had to put in writing the moral messages and social laws he received into a book called, "The Qur'an." In the beginning, Muhammad met with resistance as he appeared in the streets of Mecca and the courtyard of the Ka'ba. His warnings to the Meccans of a divine judgment day, the predictions of the resurrection of the body, and an everlasting fire in

hell received a very poor reception. The Meccans had already accepted the concept of one god and the final judgment was slowly absorbed as the prerogative of a powerful god. What greatly disturbed the Meccans was Muhammad's claim to be a prophet. Such a claim implies a position of leadership and authority whereby he could assert dominance over the whole community. As a result, Muhammad's following during the first four years was small and consisted of only 40 people, which included the male believers, their wives and slaves.

As the persistent Muhammad continued to recite his revelations, the hostile members of the Qurayah tribe tried to break up crowds who listened with interest at such ominous news. The Ummayyads, a hostile sect of the Quraysh, issued a ban against the Hashimites, the tribal branch that Muhammad belonged to. Such resistance caused Muhammad to reside with his powerful uncle, Abu Talib in a part of town that was in the hills of Mecca for over two years. After the death of his wife Khadija and his uncle, he moved to Taif, which was about sixty miles southeast of Mecca. There, he was in a limbo and hopeless state until 620 CE when he met with several men from Yathrib. They had a lengthy conference and agreed that he could serve to mollify a blood feud between two of their Arab tribes, the Aws and the Khazraj. This secret agreement was well kept until 622 when it was going into effect. But when the hostile Ummayyads learned of the agreement they attacked Taif intending to capture Muhammad. To their dismay, he already fled and reached Yathrib; a 300-mile trip to the north in eight days that normally was an eleven-day journey.

After several years in Yathrib, Muhammad established himself as a prophet of Allah and was given such unrestricted power over the town that its name was changed in his honor to Medina (*Madinat an nabi*, the City of the Prophet). There, he had built the first mosque, instituted weekly then daily services, the taking of alms for the poor and support of his objective – the spread of Islam. Muslims in prayer at these services assumed the prostrate position, which at first was directed towards Jerusalem but after the Jews in Medina conspired

against him, the direction was changed to face Mecca. Now Muhammad's objective became more of a reality and to acquire for his followers arms and increase the treasury he led a small force to surprise and slaughter a Meccan caravan. Only a decade since his first revelation and Muhammad initiated his first engagement for conquest by warring with Mecca. He was successful in his attempt but the Meccans later prepared for a grand assault with 10,000 men against Medina. With the advice of a Persian follower, Muhammad executed a brilliant strategy of digging trenches at key points, this caused the Meccans to give up the battle to capture Muhammad. Not to be outdone, in January of 630 CE, Muhammad with a force of 10,000 men was able to have Mecca surrender after they severely cut their trade routes.

Muhammad's objective in unifying the Arab tribes with a consistent morality, social code of conduct, and a new spiritual message that prepares Muslims for Allah's judgment had materialized. He established himself as the 'Prophet of Allah' and reached the stature of being the greatest chief in Arabia. One of his first acts was to reverently honor the Black Stone and after riding seven times around the Ka'ba shrine, he ordered the destruction of the idols within it and the scrapings of the paintings of Abraham and the angels from the walls. He allowed use of the Zamzam well and restored the boundary pillars that defined the sacred territory around Mecca. Nearby opponent tribes were conquered by the sword and tribes far off were sternly invited to send delegations to offer their allegiance. In 632 CE, Muhammad had met with sudden death (assassination or health not known) but had achieved the start of a theocracy that governed and united the Arab tribes.<sup>1</sup>

It is to be noted that the Qur'an was not revealed to Muhammad in a short period of time as it was to Moses who quickly transcribed what he heard from God in the Book of the Covenant (Exodus 24:4-8). Rather, Muhammad, who had not learned to read or write, had com-

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<sup>1</sup> John B. Noss, *Man's Religions*, Pages 513-516.



mitted his revelations from the angel Gabriel to memory. It was some twenty years from Muhammad's death that the first official compilation of his revelations was made. The editors put the longest Suras at the beginning and the shortest at the end. The Qur'an contained Suras that were accumulated over many years. It was also used to protect the honor of Muhammad by providing a sanction for his marriage to his son's divorced wife. In Sura 33 (37-40), a decree by Allah is announced, "that there should be no constraint in the minds of believers in the matter of marrying the wives of their adopted sons after they had divorced them." What is surprising in this Sura is its first line that states:

*Sura 33: 37-40. It is not open to a believing man or a believing woman, when Allah and His messenger (Muhammad) have decided a matter, to exercise their own choice in deciding it. Whoso disobeys Allah and his messenger, falls into error. . . . Then, when Zaid had carried into effect his decision concerning her, **We** joined her in marriage with thee, so that there should be no constraint in the minds of the believers in the matter of marrying the wives of their adopted sons after they had divorced them. Allah's decreed is bound to be fulfilled. . . .*

The above passage places Muhammad at an equal status with God in the determination of a decree rather than being stated by God alone. But also, what makes the decree questionable is the fact that it is usually the angel Gabriel that speaks to Muhammad not God. It appears that this decree was added to the Qur'an to not only sanction this particular case for marriage, but to protect the respectability of Muhammad by his people - for it specifically cites the adopted son's name, Zaid. This decree is another example of a **We Group** in power to protect Muhammad's name and arbitrarily act on Allah's behalf.

It is clear that when Scripture contains specifics on behalf of individuals rather than a whole people, such as Muhammad marrying the divorced wife of his adopted son, Zaid, it had to have been written by

men without the guidance or revelation of God. But this Scripture should not be faulted for the Tanakh (Hebrew Bible) also contains specific laws and ordinances that deal with nonreligious but practical matters such as: how to conduct monetary transactions; the manner in which to slaughter animals for consumption; and what kinds of food they are allowed to eat. Likewise, followers of the Qur'an are provided specific commands that are not given by God; especially this Sura, which was designed to retain the honor of their prophet, Muhammad.

#### ***8.4 Islam Spreads by Conquering Other Countries***

No other religion has grown as rapidly as Islam. Through the conquest of other countries and offering the people a choice 'they can not refuse' - conversion or death, Islam has grown to claim over 1.79 billion Muslims worldwide.<sup>1</sup> Many sects have emerged but all adhere to the Qur'an. Two dominant sects have become readily identified as the Shia and Sunni, with smaller extreme fundamentalist sects appearing that aggressively fight for Islamic dominance, such as the Taliban, Hizballah, Hamas and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) Movement. The key difference between the Sunnis and Shiites is that the former believes in a democratic choice of their leaders not by birth but by their capability to teach Islam and are called Caliphs; the latter believe that their leaders, called Imams, should be related to Muhammad's family.

The Shiites number around 10 - 15% of all Muslims and the Sunnis are the largest sect; but the Taliban and other extremist groups are not easily quantified because they operate on a terrorist level. The Taliban is a relatively new sect that first appeared on the political scene of Afghanistan in September 1994 and controls 90% of its people. They are harsh fundamentalists that employ strict theocratic rule and control of its people by searching their homes to destroy any television sets,

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<sup>1</sup> Internet: <http://www.islamicpopulation.com/> Data derived in 2006.

radios, cassettes, photographs, and books; education for their women is limited as well as the exposure of foreign ideas to their men.

Hizballah, the Party of God <sup>2</sup> is a militant terrorist organization that operates on a political level to extend and protect the Islamic faith. To prohibit a stable democracy for the people of Lebanon, they have provoked Israel into a terrorist war with the aim of converting Lebanon into a theocratic Islamic state. This Party of God has induced Israel into war because its success in running a democratic government, coupled with any success by Lebanon in also establishing a non-theocratic government, would compromise and weaken Islamic power and wealth. This Hizballah movement is strongly supported by Syria and Iran with military weapons and money. They financially reward the parents of those that commit suicide with the sole purpose of killing innocent people. Islamic countries feel threatened by any political system that encourages education and the free exchange of ideas from other cultures.

Over the past two decades, the Hizballah and Taliban desire for total Islamic rule have been supplemented by other militant fundamentalist Islamic organizations known as Hamas and the PIJ Movement.<sup>3</sup> The goal of the PIJ is the liberation of all of Palestine, destruction of the state of Israel, and its replacement with an Islamic state for Palestinians. All of these organizations are united in destroying the democratic state of Israel. Hamas has clearly stated in their Preamble of the Hamas Covenant in 1988 that,

*Israel exists and will continue to exist only until Islam will obliterate it, as it obliterated others before it.*

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<sup>2</sup> A Statement of Purpose by Hizballah may be obtained via Internet @ <http://almashriq.hiof.no/lebanon/300/320/324/324.2/hizballah>

<sup>3</sup> The mnemonic PIJ contains the word Jihad which stands for a struggle in the cause of God or good against evil. Jihad has become mostly associated with armed fighting in the name of God, or Holy War.

As in the past, when the Arab tribes unified to establish an Islamic Empire, they all functioned to ensure viability of their Islamic religion based upon the Qur'an. The land Israel acquired from Palestine is a main objective of Hamas as stated in Chapter III of their Covenant. It states:

*Palestine is an Islamic Waqf (sacred possession) consecrated for future Muslim generations until Judgment Day. It, or any part of it, cannot be renounced; it, or any part of it, cannot be abandoned. . . . This is the law governing the land in Islamic Sharia (Holy Law) and this holds true for all lands that Muslims have conquered by force.*<sup>4</sup>

The last sentence of the above statement is reminiscent of the '**We Group**' mentality and authority that surfaces in the Qur'an. Palestine did become an Islamic possession after the Muslims conquered Jerusalem in 638 CE and Caesarea in 640 CE. But the Jews had already built their Jewish Temple in Jerusalem after Moses led the Israelites out of Egypt around 1250 BC. It was rebuilt during Solomon's reign and remodeled by Herod the Great to become a marbled beauty more magnificent than it was before. To say the city of Jerusalem is a sacred possession of Islam, rather than Israel's, diminishes the fact that the sacred land of the Muslims is in Mecca – the birthplace and heart of Islam. It is in Mecca, not Palestine, where every Muslim, at least once in a lifetime, man or woman, is expected, unless it is impossible, to make a pilgrimage (a hajj). Instituted by Muhammad, thousands of pilgrims enter Mecca annually during the sacred month of Dhu-al-Hijja to circle the Ka'ba seven times and kiss or touch the Black Stone.<sup>5</sup>

It is towards Mecca that religious Muslims reserve time each day for five acts of devotion and prayer. The first comes at dawn, the second at midday, the others at mid-afternoon, sunset, and after the fall of

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<sup>4</sup> Internet @: <http://www.fas.org/irp/world/para/docs/930400.htm>. Link to: The Threat of Islamic Fundamentalism – Background Material.

<sup>5</sup> John B. Noss, *Man's Religions*, Pages 523-525.

darkness or at bedtime. The devotee typically rolls out his prayer rug, stands reverentially and offers certain prayers; bows down towards Mecca with hands on knees, to offer to Allah praise and declarations of submission to His holy will. The worshipper then straightens up, still praising Allah, then falls prostrate placing his head to the ground while still glorifying God. Then he sits down reverentially offering a petition and finally prostrates himself once more. Throughout, the sacred words '*Allah akbar*' (*God is the Greatest*) is repeated again and again.<sup>5</sup> It is without question that the sacred land of the Muslims is in Mecca, a city within Saudi Arabia, not in Palestine. The above *Sharia* (*Holy Law*) by Hamas does not show honor and reverence for the birthplace of Islam by claiming "*all lands that Muslims have conquered by force*" are their sacred possessions. This show of force shows disrespect for God's covenant with the people of Israel – especially since they conquered Canaan (Palestine) and built their holy temple in Jerusalem long before the Muslims – a span of about 1,570 years.

The above terrorist organizations and Islamic countries that support them foresee a very real threat by the modern world; countries with free political, nontheocratic systems of government that enjoy the freedom of expression of all ideas, concepts, and philosophical views. The Qur'an has served Arabs to establish an Islamic Empire by force and continues today to preserve the traditions of Islam. All free people pray that their Islamic fears, which cause repression of peoples' rights through extremist religious views, will give way to intellectual freedom so that Muslims can develop their God-given capabilities and respect the religions of other nations.

#### **8.4.1 Muslim Conquests under the First Caliph.**

The Qur'an's greatest purpose, designed by Muhammad, was the moral elevation and unification of the Arabic tribes who worshipped multiple gods, to believe in Allah, the one God. After the death of

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<sup>5</sup> John B. Noss, *Man's Religions*, Page 522.

Muhammad in 632 CE, the two sects that evolved were the Sunnah and Shiah in a power struggle for Muhammad's leadership authority. The first three Caliphs were elected by the majority of Muslims and they were unrelated to the genealogy of Muhammad until the fourth Caliph, Ali ibn Abi Talib, who was his cousin and son-in-law.

The Companions were the first to choose Abu Bakr as their first Caliph. He lasted only one year but accomplished two things: he conducted the Riddah wars which brought many tribes to submit to Islam, and secondly, united tribal forces to initiate the first organized assault on the outside world. He amassed three armies, totaling 10,000 men, whose ranks were swollen to twice that number, and invaded Syria via three separate routes.<sup>1</sup>

#### **8.4.2 Muslim Conquests under the Second Caliph.**

The second Caliph, 'Umar, served ten years, 634-644 CE, and directing the great general Khalid ibn al-Walid, he altered the destiny of the Near East by capturing the city of Damascus after a six-month siege in 635 CE. The Byzantine Emperor Heraclius released a 50,000-man force to drive Khalid's army away but in the smothering heat and dust, an environment Bedouins were used to endure, he retreated. Khalid won a decisive victory in which, Theodorus, brother of Heraclius and general of the Christian forces, was killed. The whole of Syria, up to the Taurus Mountains was conquered. The Muslim victories added Jerusalem in 638 CE and Caesarea in 640 CE. The whole of Palestine then surrendered to the Arabs, which cut off Egypt from needed aid; they too were conquered after a three-year effort from 639 to 641 CE. The Arabs pushed on into North Africa, subjugating at least half of it, and on the other side of the Mediterranean they acquired Spain. Back in the Near East, the Muslims attacked the fabulously rich cities of Iraq in 637 CE and then subdued Persia from 640 to 649 CE. This conquest took longer because its inhabitants were non-Semitic, well uni-

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<sup>1</sup> John B. Noss, *Man's Religions*, Page 526.

fied, and firmly Zoroastrian. It took a 12-year campaign (640-652) in the northwest to bring the greater part of Asia Minor to subjection.

The success of the Muslim armies was due, in part, to their expert use of the cavalry and high mobility of Arab horse and camel transport. But equally, the religious dedication of the Muslim warriors was acceptance of their Prophet's word that by winning a battle in Allah's cause they could keep four-fifths of the booty and if they died, they would go to paradise. Added to the rich fortunes of war was the wonder and discovery of the earthly paradises of rich metropolis cities lying ready for their taking in the ancient lands that were the "cradle of civilization". To the young Muslims that had little exposure to the art and architecture of many beautiful cities, many had to be animated of the exciting prospects of learning Greek and Persian arts, philosophies, literature and sciences. Deprived of any formal education, the Muslims were ripe for the beckoning fields of learning as yet unharvested by their hungry minds and spirits.

The vast amount of territory acquired under 'Umar's rule precipitated an on-going stream of tribute money that poured into the treasury at Medina. Muhammad could never have dreamed of so much wealth. 'Umar, who lived very simply, determined to distribute it in the form of yearly stipends to Muhammad's widows and dependents <sup>1</sup>, the Companions, and in lesser amounts, the Arab warriors and tribesmen received \$10 to \$30 (the warriors also received the 4/5<sup>th</sup>'s booty). In order to keep the Arabian Muslims together as a military unit, he forbade any Arab to acquire lands outside the Saudi Arabia peninsula. He did not tolerate people who would not convert to Islam; he dispossessed and drove from Arabia resistant members of other religions, especially Jews, Christians and Zoroastrians.

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<sup>1</sup> Muhammad's favorite wife, Aisha, was assigned 12,000 dirhems, or about \$2,400 dollars.

**8.4.3 A Muslim Empire by the 4<sup>th</sup> Caliph.**

The 3<sup>rd</sup> Caliph, ‘Uthman, a son-in-law and close associate of Muhammad, was chosen and served the office from 644 to 656. An Ummayyad, he allowed the pressures of his family to appoint so many Ummayyads to high office that the ensuing scandals led to his assassination in Medina by dissatisfied Muslims. He was succeeded by ‘Ali ibn Abi Talib, another of Muhammad’s sons-in-law and father of two boys who were Muhammad’s only male descendants. When Ali became the 4<sup>th</sup> Caliph in 656 CE, the Shiah referred to him as the first Imam or leader of the ummah (Muslim community). Competing for this office was the governor of Syria, Muawiya, an Ummayyad who was busily establishing himself as the chief Caliph contender in Egypt, Arabia and Yemen. ‘Ali remained disappointingly passive after marching west to confront Muawiya, and his army became so disgusted with his procrastination to settle the issues by arbitration that they had him murdered; this event would deepen the schism between the Sunnis and Shiites. By 661, Muawiya seized the caliphate and centralized in Damascus. He ruled a Muslim Empire that extended itself over an enormous territory, stretching from India to Spain.<sup>1</sup>

In just 29 years from the death of Muhammad (661-632 CE), the Muslims had established an Empire. The first caliph had been concerned only with spreading Islam among the Arabs in Saudi Arabia. Motivated by power and wealth, by 750 CE, the Muslim leaders forced conversion to Islam not only in the Byzantine and Persian empires, but as far west as Spain and all of North Africa, including its east coast down to the island Madagascar, and further east to the northern half of India. Figure 8-1 illustrates the extent of the Islamic Empire started by the Prophet Muhammad, expanded under the first four caliphs, and extended its territory by the Umayyad caliphs through 750 CE.

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<sup>1</sup> John B. Noss, *Man’s Religions*, Sections 8.4.2 - 8.4.3, Pages 526-528.



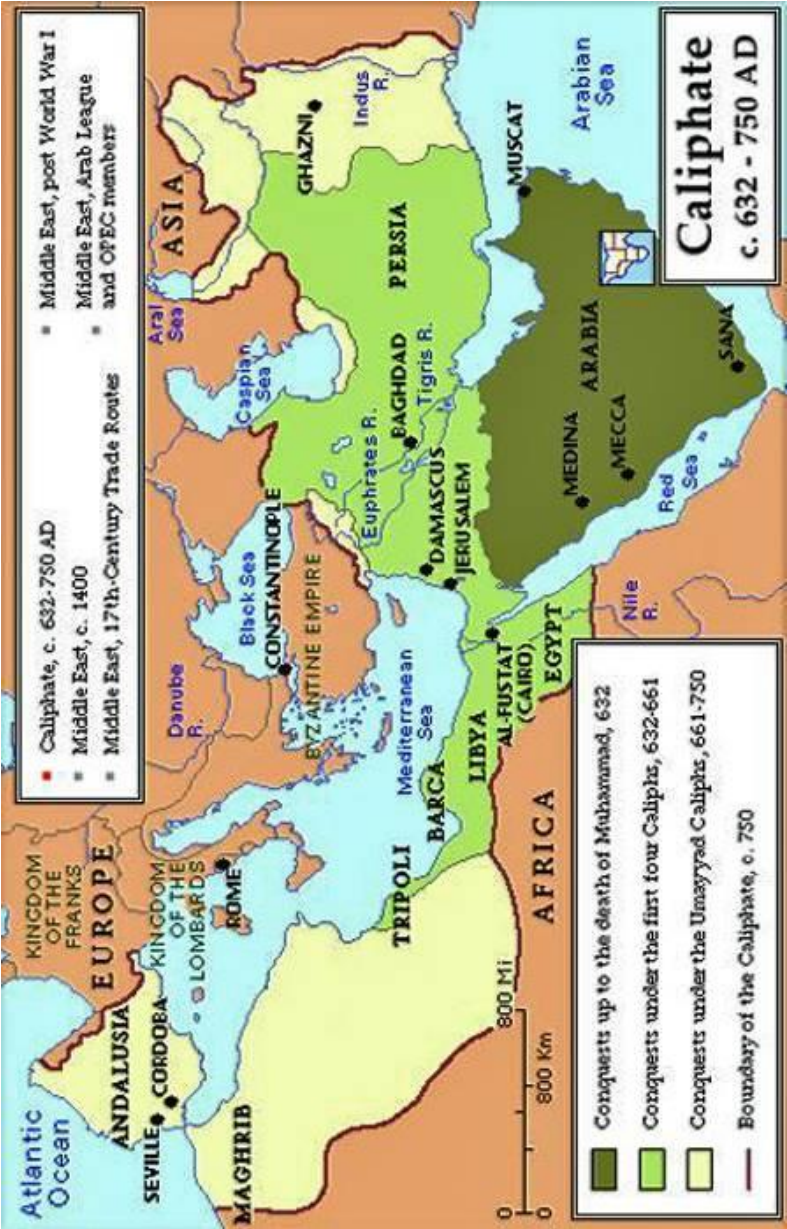


Figure 8-1. Rise of the Islamic Empire from 632 – 750 CE.

A greater schism between the Sunnis and Shiites occurred when the grandson of Muhammad, Husayn ibn Ali had seized the caliphate after the death of his father 'Ali. He refused to accept the Ummayyads who held the caliphate majority and was killed by a small band of supporters by the Ummayyad Caliph, Yazid, in 680 CE in modern Iraq. Since this event, all Muslims regard this immoral slaughter of Husayn with horror and he has become a particular hero to the Shiites.<sup>1</sup> This event has ignited the desire for power and political interests between the Sunnis and Shiites. Even today, it has continued to cause Muslims to kill Muslims in a civil war reminiscent of the split between the conservative and liberal parties of the Jews, which resulted in their ultimate destruction by the Romans.

### 8.5 *The Qur'an, its Beauty and its Flaws*

The greatest attribute of the Qur'an is displayed when it is recited. Its Arabic language exudes hypnotic sounds that ring with a poetic rhythm transforming the listener into a divine state of worship. Muslims say that when they hear the Qur'an chanted in the mosque they feel enveloped in a divine dimension of sound. Yet, Muslims often say that when they read the Qur'an for its substantive content they feel they are reading a different book because nothing of the beauty of the Arabic is conveyed. This is particularly so when the Qur'an is translated into other languages. It contains many repetitive Suras that tend to border on boring, as it seems to go over the same ground over and over again.<sup>1</sup> A coherent development of its moral code and social ordinances is intertwined with too many passages that repeatedly pronounce warnings, chastisements, admonishments, punishments and violence against nonbelievers.

The Qur'an, as does the Old and New Testament, presents a personal God who does everything that a human being does: He loves, judges, punishes, creates and destroys as we do. Later, Rabbis and religious

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<sup>1</sup> Karen Armstrong, *A History of God*, Pages 158 and 159.

<sup>1</sup> Karen Armstrong, *A History of God*, Pages 140 and 144.

leaders elevated God to be a symbol of transcendence that goes beyond comprehension of material reality; He becomes incomprehensible as man cannot conceive how God brought into existence an immense universe with billions of galaxies and their many billions of stars. The Qur'an however, creates a *highly personal God* that has passionate human likes and dislikes. As described in Subsection 8.3.1, Allah provides (via the intercession between Gabriel and Muhammad) warnings, chastisements, admonitions, and the command to fight and kill unbelievers in His name. But the Qur'an further personalizes God by describing His heaven in physical terms that cater to the insatiable desires of men. Table 8-2 lists the many human qualities of what God loves and is replete with duplications. However, as eloquently stated by Karen Armstrong,<sup>2</sup> when God is used on a personal basis to serve as a model of perfection for admirable human traits, He can also be used in a destructive manner.

*“A personal God can become a grave liability. He can be a mere idol carved in our own image, a projection of our limited needs, fears, and desires. We can assume that He loves what we love and hates what we hate, endorsing our prejudices instead of compelling us to transcend them. When He seems to fail to prevent a catastrophe or seems even to desire a tragedy, He can seem callous and cruel....A personal God can be dangerous, therefore. Instead of pulling us beyond our limitations, “He” can encourage us to remain complacently within them; “He” can make us as cruel, callous, self-satisfied and partial as “He” seems to be. Instead of inspiring the compassion that should characterize all advanced religions, “He” can encourage us to judge, condemn and marginalize. It seems, therefore, that the idea of a personal God can only be a stage in our religious development. The world religions all seem to have recognized this danger and have sought to transcend the personal conception of supreme reality.”*

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<sup>2</sup> Karen Armstrong, *A History of God*, Pages 209 and 210.

**Table 8-2. The ‘Loves’ of God in the Qur’an.**

<i>Sura</i>	<i>What God Loves and Does Love in the Qur’an</i>
2.195, 3.134, 3.148, 5.13 5.93,	Allah <b>loves</b> the doers of good.
2.205, 5.64, 28.77	Allah does not <b>love</b> mischief-making.
2.222, 9.108	He <b>loves</b> those who purify themselves.
2.276	Allah does not <b>love</b> any ungrateful sinner.
3.32, 30.45	Allah does not <b>love</b> the unbelievers.
3.57, 3.140, 42.40	Allah does not <b>love</b> the unjust.
60.8	Allah <b>loves</b> the doers of justice.
3.76	Allah <b>loves</b> those who guard (against evil).
9.4, 9.7	Allah <b>loves</b> those who are careful (of their duty).
3.146	Allah <b>loves</b> the patient.
3.159	Allah <b>loves</b> those who trust.
4.36	Allah does not <b>love</b> him who is proud, boastful;
16.23	Allah does not <b>love</b> the proud.
31.18	Allah does not <b>love</b> any self-conceited boaster;
57.23	Allah does not <b>love</b> any arrogant boaster:
4.107	Allah does not <b>love</b> him who is treacherous, sinful;
8.58	Allah does not <b>love</b> him who is treacherous.
4.148	Allah does not <b>love</b> the public utterance of hurtful speech unless (it be) by one to whom injustice has been done;
5.42	Allah <b>loves</b> those who judge equitably.
49.9	Allah <b>loves</b> those who act equitably.
6.141, 7.31	He does not <b>love</b> the extravagant.
22.38	Allah does not <b>love</b> any one who is unfaithful, ungrateful.
61.4	Allah <b>loves</b> those who fight in His way in ranks as if they were a firm and compact wall.

In today's world, we are witnessing the very danger described by Karen Armstrong – the condemnation and marginalizing of people whose beliefs in God, even the same God, are practiced in a different way. Radical, fundamentalist religious leaders have become fanatical men that use the Qur'an to judge, condemn and marginalize those people who practice another religion and teach many Muslims to classify them as infidels. Such a low regard for how other people worship their God has resulted in the loss of lives by beheadings and murder of innocent human beings in the name of Allah. Eventually, these brutal actions can only bring shame on a people who have been led astray by religious leaders who only seek expansion of power and wealth. This is truly unfortunate, for the Muslims are like all other people; they are inherently loving and good but are taught mistrust and hate.

It would be unfair to cast any aspersions on Muslims; they are a product of the warnings, chastisements, admonishments, punishments and violence advocated in the Qur'an. Just as many Muslims desire peace, justice and truth, there are those who also believe that all people have a right to worship the God of their religion. For God has created many paths to share His Word and rejoice in the gift of love for all His children – the sisters and brothers of our world. Muslims will eventually be bold enough to join with other monotheistic religions to improve Holy Scripture.

As a spiritual book, the Qur'an has failed to promulgate the commandment cited in both the Old and New Testaments, "thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself"; it does provide however, Sura 4:37, stated above as the tenth commandment (Table 8-1). As the most recent Scripture revealed to the prophet Muhammad, righteous people would expect that God would have repeated His last command announced by Jesus and extend it for all His children - that ***we love one another***, our brothers and sisters from every nation. Every religion must ingrain this command into their children – failing to do so, that religion is a sham.



## **9.0 *God of Future Generations***

My dear reader, I have taken you on a journey that hopefully has given you the grounding to understand the development of our monotheistic god. There should be no apprehension or shame in exploring the past to gain a better understanding of the God you may worship. People from many civilizations have had the human spirit to try to understand their world. Awed by nature's beauty, they manifested their appreciation by venerating its wonders and elevated their reverence to a higher form of worship.

It has been for me, a marvelous journey. I learned and now appreciate so much more the achievements of courageous and righteous men, covered in this writing, who have led the efforts to improve the morality of their people. You can now understand why I have elected to put the image of one of our greatest men on the front cover of this book. Ikhnaton, a pharaoh who received the best education in Egypt, had the sensitivity, perception, and fortitude to establish his concept of one god by courageously eliminating the worship of many gods in Egypt. Not too soon after, the Egyptian Priesthood adopted his concept and developed Scripture for the god whose name we pronounce at the end of every prayer - Amen.

The God many believe in today has been revealed by the spirit of man through his imagination and love for the God he created in his own image. The philosophical question of who created the universe, the appearance of the first atom, and the enormous amount of matter, galaxies and stars - lead our minds to ponder the wonder of it all. Our world has become much larger than it was to the minds of men 4,000 years ago. Today, we are prone to realize that there is other intelligent life in the billions of galaxies in our universe. This leads us to not only revere life on our planet, but to eventually love and respect alien life that may come into our lives in the future. Our future depends, first, on how much we love all the sisters and brothers in our world.

**9.1 *Our Ability to Revise and Improve Religious Beliefs***

We have learned that the evolution of our monotheistic God took thousands of years and underwent many changes. This should come as no surprise for in each generation, our previous ancestors have handed down beliefs that we have been fortunate to benefit from and improve upon. This has been true in the scientific and technical spheres whereby we have learned to substitute light and communicate at the speed of light. This is also true of our religious heritage. It has become obvious by many great religious historians, Egyptologists, and the great minds listed in the bibliography, that the holy hymns of the Egyptians have initiated the Torah, which led to the writings of Old Testament and, after the Jewish-Roman War, the Christian Gospels, which was followed by the Qur'an. Review of these documents revealed that many passages are out of date and many, that once served to unite a unique people, are no longer applicable. We have only to turn to the Torah where the passages dealing with ancient animal sacrifices and detailed prescriptions on how to build a place of worship, an altar, and its accessories are no longer practiced (refer to Exodus 23, 25-31).

We have also reviewed many passages from the Qur'an and found that its main purpose, as carried out by Muhammad and his followers, was to unite a people that had a multitude of gods and unify them both spiritually and as a nation. But these god-fearing people have taken their gift and carried it to an extreme by conquering other people and converting them not by love but by the sword. Today, the Muslim sect, called the Taliban, is a disgrace to their people as they murder innocent human beings and restrict their people from developing their god given capabilities.

The New Testament is also not immune to criticism. One has only to read John Shelby Spong's book, 'The Sins of Scripture'. We are apprised of the pain suffered by Jews because of anti-Semitic references in the Bible. This pain has been extended to homosexuals by negative references. Women are still regarded as second-class citizens



whereby, even today in the Catholic Church, they are not considered capable of being priests and delivering valuable insights in a sermon. Still worse, the apple myth has blamed Eve for man's downfall from the grace of God. Yet, we are wise and grateful enough to look to our mothers to raise, guide, discipline, and love us.

Change is essential for our religious institutions to keep pace with their worshippers as they acquire more education and the ability to inquire and seek meaning in their lives. To keep worn, outdated passages of their Holy Scriptures, our present religions will only become a further embarrassment to discerning and intelligent people. By not acknowledging the need for change, their religious myths will be ridiculed and their institutions laughed at because their words no longer provide the guidance and spirituality people so much desire. Can our religious institutions, be they of Jewish, Catholic or Islamic origins, afford this outcome that is sure to develop in the future? There are many brilliant minds in our world today that would gladly assist in the reformation of our religious scriptures. But will our religious leaders entrusted with the responsibility of leadership be courageous enough to improve their Holy Scriptures? Are they so indoctrinated that they cannot penetrate their hearts and minds to find truths and words of love that can guide the morality of their worshippers?

As a man who has learned to love all people, the sisters and brothers of our world, I know there is hope for change. Human beings are born with the gift to love; it is the one gift that insures their survival. In the following pages are recommendations not only meant for our religious institutions but also for our sisters and brothers of all nations. It is only a start for much needed change. Surely, there are men and women who have the talent and gifts to help implement these recommendations and commend many more to improve the morality and spiritual nature of mankind.

## **9.2 Conclusions and Recommendations for the Future**

- ***The Three Basic Religions Worship the Same God.***

This obvious conclusion makes it incumbent upon religious leaders of the Jewish, Christian and Islamic faiths to be truthful and loudly proclaim there is only one-universal God that created all there is.

- ***The Name of God is Amen.***

God has been conceived by men in stages to different groups of people. The one-god concept was even known prior to Ikhnaton in the form of a creator of all things. But man was so closely attached to and awed by the wonders of nature that he continued to worship the gods of the past. To break away from the past and develop the first one-god concept by eliminating the worship of multiple gods was a feat that could only be accomplished by a man in power; that man was the Pharaoh Ikhnaton. Then, prior to the Moses Exodus, the Egyptian Priesthood then took Ikhnaton's writings and formalized it into Scripture that defined the god Amen. It is no wonder that we still pronounce his name at the end of a prayer. Even Jesus, in John's *Revelation*, 3:14, acknowledged Amen:

*“And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the **Amen**, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God.”*

Religious leaders of the three basic faiths must put aside their selfish reasons to have their people believe their God is unique to them only. It is the name Amen that has survived over 3,000 years and is the name that reigns over Jehovah and Allah. As a case in point, Allah is not the name of a god but an Arabic word for God. When the three religions concede that God was first called Amen— then they will acknowledge truth and proclaim God's name. The definition for Amen, “So be it”

was formulated by religious leaders who lacked a factual history of God and should be revised.

- *The 3 Basic Religions Must Open Their Doors to All People.*

By having the same God, the leaders of Jewish, Christian and Islamic religions are obligated to open the doors of their houses of worship to all those who believe in that same God. To restrict their temples, churches and mosques to only those who subscribe to the practices and rites of their religion is to prohibit the children of God to seek, inquire, and learn more about the God they worship. The religious leaders that are proud of their practices and the dogma they teach will surely welcome the sisters and brothers of any nation. If not, their religion is nothing more than a sham, a cult for arrogant human beings that believe their beliefs are better than the beliefs of their sisters and brothers of other ethnic groups and countries.

- *People Must Go to Each Others House of Worship.*

We have acknowledged the obvious conclusion that the 3 basic religions all teach righteousness in the name of God. God has made Himself known to different groups of people at different times so that they could benefit in accepting the Holy Spirit of compassion and love. Today, followers of Judaic, Catholic and Islamic religions, have an opportunity to visit many different houses of worship. By doing so, several benefits will be derived:

1. Worshippers will learn other aspects of their God and how He has revealed Himself to his children.
2. Worshippers will learn why religious doctrines have been received differently for different peoples, which is to serve their needs for moral direction.

3. By attending the services of different religions, the people world-wide, will be able to learn to appreciate their differences in how they worship the same God.
4. Rabbis, priests, ministers, caliphs, imams and mullahs of Judaism, Christian and Islam religions will be able to teach sisters and brothers from different nations about their prophets and Holy Scriptures.
5. The sermons from the religious leaders will be given more significance because, like businesses in competition with each other, they must reach within their beings to bring out relevance in their Holy Scriptures to their congregations.
6. Finally, the tolerance and respect people give to each other's religious institutions will, in time, cause them to merge with a unified conception of their God and His doctrines.

It is inconceivable that any house of God will prohibit the sisters and brothers from different nations, creeds and beliefs from attending their holy services. However, from a practical view, because arrogance and bias will exist both with religious leaders and their followers, the following approaches are recommended:

- *Sisters and brothers of different nations must attend different houses of worship in groups of fives and tens.*
- *Where a language barrier exists, obtain an interpreter from the house of worship you visit.*
- *Show appreciation for attending another house of God and receiving instruction by giving a donation affordable to you.*

People who are proud of their religion will be willing and honored that you, and others, are interested in learning more of their religious practices and teachings. Dear people, do break down religious barriers of ignorance with the above recommendations so that, – *The sisters and brothers from all nations will love one another.*

- *Religions Must Update and Improve their Holy Scripture.*

The revision of outdated dogma is not sacrilegious or blasphemous as our strict religious leaders would like people to believe. In Subsection 4.5.3.2, we found that the 100<sup>th</sup> and 200<sup>th</sup> stanzas of *Amon As the Sole God* verified that the Priests of Amon had updated their religious scripture after Ikhnaton had introduced the concept of one god around 1370 BC. When will present-day religious leaders become receptive to the needs of a more civilized world by getting their greatest minds to revise scripture that was written as long as 3,000 years ago? Religious men have sat on the laurels and revelations of men who were inspired in an ancient world. Where are the courageous minds of Ikhnaton, Moses, Jesus and Muhammad who set out to establish doctrine meant to direct humanity on a path of righteousness, compassion and love? Surely, there are wonderful people who have the ability to take today's scripture and enhance it with the needed changes the world of the future cries out for.

- *Don't Wait for a Prophet for Inspired Revelation.*

Sons and daughters of God need not be prophets to communicate with God or be inspired to seek truth that reinforces morality. There are highly capable people with loving hearts and brilliant minds that can revise the Holy Scripture of the Judaic, Christian and Islamic religions. The man that introduced the concept of one God and made it a reality was Ikhnaton. He was an educated man with sensitivity and creativeness who was not inspired from without but from within his own heart and mind. To wait for someone to be informed in a dream-like state of mind is fruitless and ridiculous. The greatest innovations and inventions in music, medicine and the technical spheres were conceived by hard work and thought that logically builds upon itself until thought becomes a reality.

- *Much of Holy Scripture is Valuable – Build Upon It.*

The scriptures of the Judaic, Christian and Islamic religions have many common themes and the benefit of preserving the best to create a more meaningful whole presents a marvelous opportunity. Moses learned much scripture from the Egyptians as an adopted son of an Egyptian Pharaoh. He condensed many of the instructions and laws that Egyptians confessed with in order to enter eternal life and put them into the Torah. Of the many ‘thou shalt’s’, Jewish leaders further reduced them to the Ten Commandments familiar to many of us. Jesus came along and he simplified the Law for the entry of many more sheep to join the fold of the chosen ones. Muhammad was inspired to use the ‘Book (Torah)’ given to Moses and, through an angel, created the Qur’an as a new ‘Book’ of righteousness. He and his religious leaders used the Qur’an as an instrument to forcefully unite the multiple Arabic tribes, and people from other countries, into an Islamic nation. These holy men used the conception of God of a former people to make it applicable to their own people. So, you see, history confirms that inspired men of scripture do learn from their predecessors and adopt what they have learned for their own people.

Today, you would think that the three religions pray to a different God. This is not just a sad reality; it’s a shame that our religious leaders have not united the sisters and brothers of our world with love. The religion that advocates terror and the murder of innocent lives has got to take a real look at their Holy Scriptures and see if, in fact, the rhetoric and teachings precipitate violence and hate. If so, wake up and make an honorable effort to correct what was once well intended guidance but now an abomination to the word of God. Of Ikhnaton, Moses, Jesus and Muhammad, only Ikhnaton and Jesus were men of peace and love. Let us remember that Moses killed over 2,000 of his own people and invaded Canaan. Muhammad converted many people in the towns and cities within his own country by the sword and his imams went on to conquer other lands with the threat of convert to Islam or death. The recommendation here is clear, much of Holy

Scripture is outdated and it would serve the basic religions to build upon much of what men of peace and love have taught to bring sisters and brothers closer to God.

- *Some Important Revisions Needed in the Holy Scriptures.*

The most obvious changes and additions that are required in the scriptures of our religions are:

1. **Killing of human beings on a one-for-one or genocide basis is forbidden.** Any leader or person that advocates the taking of life must be immediately put on trial as a danger to the rest of us. Incitement to kill must swiftly be met with imprisonment. The people of any nation have this responsibility to eliminate murder.
2. **Women are to be treated co-equal with men.** The idea that the man is the authority of a family unit because he emulates God the Father is an infantile notion. Many men do not match the intelligence and sensitivity of many fine women. The myth that Eve is responsible for man's downfall and ushered in the concept of original sin is to be rescinded. A book of scripture that denigrates our most beautiful counterpart and partner in this world must be corrected. The apple myth was conjured up by inadequate men who only desired power and control of material things including women.
3. **Respect all of God's creations.** This includes not only the mentally and physically deficient, but also those who prefer to love others who are of their own gender. As long as those who wish to love one's own gender do not induce others who are meant to love the opposite sex - they should not be deprived of that love. God has made human beings differently to serve a purpose and to harm these beings would be unacceptable. Beings who are fortunate to love the opposite sex are blessed with being able to explore the marvelous intimacy of another gender. If a one-gender choice is made by two people and

they are truly committed to a sincere and loving relationship – let them be and find your own happiness.

- *Education and Science are Essential Elements to Know God.*

The most wonderful gift God has endowed mankind is an inquiring mind. Without it, we could not possibly possess the spirit to come to know Him. If not ingrained at home, the idea of being all you can be, to tap into your abilities and creative talents to make any father and mother, and your creator proud, is what should be taught by every religion. It is through education and the sciences that we not only learn to understand ourselves better, we also eliminate ignorance by exploring our world. The benefit will be a greater appreciation of how He has created life throughout the universe and someday, if we are truly blessed, we may come face to face with intelligent aliens. It is knowledge we must seek. Fear and the repression of knowledge can only lead to disbelief in God because the human spirit will be reduced to arrogance. Through our exposure to understanding the wonders of God's universe we are sure to develop a greater veneration of our God. By extending our perception of God beyond our heaven and earth to the expanse of the universe, all life will be revered and our God becomes greater.

*Hope for the Future - Sons and Daughters of God.*

My journey in the writing of this book has revealed a very profound concept, which has been overlooked in the many sermons I have attended. It will serve you well to revisit John's Gospel, 1:12, wherein he states that anyone can become a Son of God.

*But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the Sons of God, even to them that believe on His name.*

Then in John 14:12, Jesus himself confirms that those who believe in him will do even greater works:



*Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go to my Father.*

This is a wonderful statement whereby Jesus makes it known that greater works shall be done by those who believe in him because he must go to his Father. Jesus was therefore a Son of God not in a genetic sense but spiritually; for he was the product of the genes of a man and a woman. He was, as he so often stated, the Son of Man. It was his love of God and the dissemination of His Word that he simplified all the Law for all the sisters and brothers of this world. Jesus stated in John 13:34, the great new commandment:

*A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.*

There is therefore hope in our world that all religions recognize that Holy Scripture is not encased in concrete. There will be Sons and Daughters of God who will come to meet the task of revising and improving the Holy Scripture of the three basic religions that venerate the same God. It would be even more beneficial and easier for all the monotheistic religions, having the same God, to jointly form one Holy Scripture that will serve mankind for future generations. If this challenge is ignored by our present-day religions, they will eventually fail in delivering the true spirit of God. They will not only stagnate, crumble and die, people will no longer believe in the spirit that is a part of humanity. Worse yet, people will see these religions as worn out institutions and perhaps, laugh at and ridicule what should have been our salvation to elevate humanity to a higher level of consciousness, righteousness, and truth.

Anyone searching for the truth that enhances mankind to love others is a viable candidate to update our Holy Scriptures. The Word (Scripture) has been developed and revised so many times that our religious

leaders, educated and groomed to guide the spirit of humans, have a need to adhere to the **last great-command** from a man of God – *love one another*. This, my dear readers, is the **Word of God** reduced to the words of Truth. Religious leaders have a mandate and a responsibility to use their God given gifts to continue to improve spiritual and moral dogma. Let us hope that they realize that God gave mankind the gift of free will so that the spiritual and intellectual attributes of humans can grow. Our religious institutions must heed the call to provide the insights and perception needed to enlighten the spirit of human beings by promoting *the Word*. Who will dedicate a part of their lives to become the Sons and Daughters of God?

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## ***Author Bio***

***Nick enjoys his  
seventy-first  
birthday  
August 27, 2006***



Photo taken to  
celebrate his first  
self-published  
book,  
***Legacy of a Father***

Photographer: Jennifer Schwartz

Nicholas P. Ginex is a graduate of New York University with a BEE degree and an MBA in finance from Adelphi University in New York. A retired Engineering Manager, he has provided Configuration Management planning and controls for successful development and deployment of hardware and computer software products at top aerospace and commercial companies. His organizational, logical and writing skills produced management project plans, specifications, procedures, design and supporting documents for the successful operation of entire engineering projects.

While writing *Legacy of a Father*, he sang and played his guitar at senior care centers and nursing homes for their enjoyment. The smiles on their faces and joy in their eyes have been his greatest reward. His love for his children and desire to inform them about the god Amen motivated him to write this book. He hopes others will benefit by learning more about God and their purpose in life.

*Author Bio*

A detailed Author Bio is provided in Part 1 of 2, *Legacy of a Father*. The founder of the Iran Politics Club (IPC), Dr. Ahreeman, has hosted numerous articles and books on the IPC website and created an Index,

<http://iranpoliticsclub.net/authors/nicholas-ginex/index.htm>,

so that the writings of Nicholas Ginex are available for readers around the world.



*My very best wishes for the success of our*

*Daughters and Sons of God*

*Nicholas P. Ginex*