



A SERVICE FOR MEMBERS ONLY.

*Covenant Answering Service*



Produced by The Federation of the Covenant People,  
P.O.Box 830, Honeydew, 2040, SOUTH AFRICA.

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Issue No. 2

**QUESTION:** A student in Canada has written: "I have been studying the Book of Exodus critically and by this, I mean, intelligently, and have found that in quite a few cases I run into a blind alley. I'll not bother you with all my problems – I'll try to sort them out for myself – but you provide some directional information on Exodus 4:24? To me, the idea of God commissioning Moses, with the help of Aaron, to liberate Israel from Egypt and then, when Moses takes off in obedience, the Lord seeks to kill him, seems to me totally out of character. What is the answer?"

**ANSWER:** In looking at the overall context in which this subject falls, it would appear that verses 19 through 26 are parenthetical for the following reasons. If one considers the first verse of chapter three and follows the account to the end of the eighteenth verse of the fourth chapter, one finds that this deals with the call of Moses (Ex. 3:4); the purpose of this call (Ex. 3:6-10); the hesitancy of Moses to accept the commission (Ex. 3:11,12); the self-revelation of the LORD (Ex. 3:13,14); the pattern and purpose of the liberation of Israel (Ex.

3:15-22); Moses' objections to the commission (Ex. 4:1-13); Aaron appointed to assist (Ex. 4:14-17) and Moses' acceptance of all that had been said to him. "And Moses went and returned to Jethro his father in law, and said unto him, Let me go, I pray thee, and return unto my brethren which are in Egypt, and see whether they be yet alive. And Jethro said to Moses, Go in peace" (Ex. 4:18).

Verse 18 reads: "And the LORD said unto Moses in Midian, Go, return into Egypt: for all the men are dead which

sought thy life.” This is followed by a reminder to Moses to “do all those wonders before Pharaoh, which I have put in thine hand” which, in turn, is followed by the LORD’S Message to Pharaoh: “Thus saith the LORD, Israel is my son, even my first-born: And I say unto thee, Let my son go, that he may serve me: and if thou refuse to let him go, behold, I will slay thy son, even thy firstborn.” This is followed by the situation which causes the problem. “And it came to pass by the way in the inn, that the LORD met him, and sought to kill him.” The reason for this, as is explained in the next two verses, is that the son of Moses had not been circumcised and as explained by Dr. Scofield: “Moses was forgetful of the very foundation sign of Israel’s covenant relation to Jehovah. On the eve of delivering Israel he was thus reminded that without circumcision an Israelite was cut off from the covenant.”

This explanation immediately poses a question. Zipporah, Moses’ wife, without any apparent urging by her husband, seizes a sharp stone and circumcises her son with the comment: “A bloody husband thou art, because of the circumcision” — after which Moses was allowed to continue into the wilderness to meet up with Aaron. Now, while this account tells of the circumcision of Moses’ son — apparently Gershom and not his other son Eliezer — there is absolutely no scriptural evidence which *categorically states that Moses was ever circumcised*. More, Zipporah and her circumcised son and the other who was not circumcised, returned to Jethro and remained with him until Moses, after the exodus, joined them at Rephidim (Ex. 18:2-6). This is indeed strange — Moses, who was not circumcised, went down to Egypt and delivered Israel while his son, bearing the so-called sign of the covenant, remained in Midian. Another strange feature is that Moses’ two sons dwindle into total obscurity and play no real role in Israel’s history. The whole episode, as most commentaries confirm, is very strange and few attempt to find a logical explanation for it.

The first point which seems to be out of place in the account of Exodus 4:24 is that most translations indicate that the LORD *tried* to kill Moses. While Moffat’s transla-

tion omits verses 19 to 26, the Jerusalem Bible states “Yahveh tried to kill him” while Young’s Literal Translation states: “Jehovah seeketh to put him to death”; the Berkley Version states: “. . . the Lord was at the point of taking his life”; the New English Bible states: “. . . the Lord met Moses, meaning to kill him”; while the Revised Standard Version has it that: “. . . the Lord met him and sought to kill him.” Ferrar Fenton has translated this as: “But while he was upon the road at a resting place, a CHIEFTAIN met him and attempted to kill him.” The notion of the LORD attempting, seeking or meaning to kill Moses is ambiguous — the LORD, if He decides on a specific action does not lack the indecision which appears in these versions of the text. Therefore, as there appears to be unanimity in most translations about “trying” to kill Moses, one is thrust into the area of attempting to identify WHO tried to kill him.

Notwithstanding the fact that most translations say that this was the LORD, it is incomprehensible that the LORD would have been satisfied with the circumcision of *only one son* who was then returned to his grandfather while the uncircumcised Moses was permitted to journey on to Egypt. It should be noted that Ferrar Fenton uses the word CHIEFTAIN when identifying the would-be assailant while in the Book of the Jubilees, written between 135 and 105 B.C. and certainly excluded from the canon of the Old Testament, one finds that it was a “prince Mastêmâ” or the “prince of the Mastêmâ” who sought to kill Moses but who was satisfied when Zipporah circumcised her eldest son. This “Mastêmâ” in the Book of Jubilees, is a synonym for the “adversary” who, as is averred in this non-canonical Book, impersonates the LORD God of Israel in order to destroy the people whom He had formed for His world purposes.

Thus, in summing up this question, one has two alternatives to face. (1) That the verses 19 to 26 are some scribal interpolation at some later stage as is suggested by Dr. Moffat in his translation or (2) that it was indeed the “adversary” who sought to deter Moses from undertaking the journey back to Egypt but who realised that he

would let nothing — not even the physical mutilation of one of his sons — stop him from fulfilling his Commission.

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**QUESTION:** Questions from two Members on the same subject are (1) "How could Jeremiah have carried the Ark containing the Law written on stone all on his own" and (2) "It would appear that the Second Coming of CHRIST will be heralded by an earthquake which will reveal the ARK to all mankind — especially to the true Israelites. Of course, I could be well off the mark."

**ANSWER:** It should be borne in mind that insofar as the history of the Ark of the Covenant is concerned, the last Biblical reference to it is in 1st Kings 8:6 — "And the priests brought in the ark of the covenant of the LORD unto his place, into the oracle of the house, to the most holy place, even under the wings of the cherubims." There is however, a later reference in Jeremiah 3:16 but as this is a comment on people's attitude to the Ark, it has little to offer by way of its history.

In the general conflagration which destroyed both Jerusalem and the Temple (2nd Kings 25:9), although the chapter has a comprehensive list of the objects which were removed to Babylon, no mention is made of the Ark itself. Jeremiah, it will be recalled, enjoyed a privileged position after Jerusalem had been captured by the Babylonians (Jer. 39:12) and although it is not stated, it is quite possible that he, with the help of others, removed the Ark into one of the chambers which honey-combed Mount Moriah. The help of others was absolutely vital for it will be recalled that four Levites were required to carry the Ark — the gold with which it was overlaid making its weight such that no one man could carry it.

The account in 2nd Maccabees 2:1-8, so it is claimed in 188 B.C. tells the story of Jeremiah and the Ark and from the New English Bible translation of the account, one finds that Jeremiah had help in its transportation. Being warned by the LORD, Jeremiah "... went away to the mountain from the top of which Moses saw God's promised

land. When he reached the mountain, Jeremiah found a cave-dwelling; he carried the tent, the ark, and the incense altar into it and then blocked up the entrance." From this, it is patently obvious that Jeremiah could not have carried the three items on his own and as one continues with the account, one finds that: "Some of his companions came to mark out the way, but were unable to find it." These "companions" were obviously those who assisted him and even though they must have placed the Ark, the tent and the incense altar in the cave, it was obviously done in such a way as to cause confusion in their minds as to direction and location. When Jeremiah found them trying to mark the trail as it were, he warned them that they would not find it and that the LORD would reveal the hiding place at a time in the future when He would gather His people again. Thus, in answer to the question, Jeremiah *had* assistance in hiding the Ark but it was done in such a way that those "companions" were bewildered by the journey and could not identify the exact location.

In considering the second question in this context namely, the possibility of the revealing of the Ark at the time when the Mount of Olives splits (Zech. 14:4), while this is a possibility, it must remain in the realm of speculation. While on this subject of speculation, the following should be of interest to those who find the contents of the Ark both absorbing and intriguing.

Attention has already been drawn to 1st Kings 8:6 — the account of the placing of the Ark in "the oracle" of Solomon's temple. Verse 9 in the same account relates: "There was nothing in the ark save the two tables of stone, which Moses put there at Horeb, when the LORD made a covenant with the children of Israel, when they came out of the land of Egypt." Thus, according to this account, only the "tables of stone" occupied the cavity within the Ark. *Remembering that this is speculative*, attention is now directed to what could have been included with the "tables" at a time when devastation and destruction threatened the temple.

Just 35 years prior to the destruction of Jerusalem and during the reign of Josiah, Judah entered a period of reconstruction

and at the king's command, the temple was renovated under the supervision of Hilkiah the high priest. During these operations, the high priest found "the book of the law in the house of the LORD" (2nd Kings 22:8) — an incident which suggests that life lived in the kingdom of Judah, the kingdom of Israel had already been removed into Assyria, was based on the opinion of the priesthood and *not* on the "book of the law". Resulting from the discovery of this "book", one finds Josiah initiated reform. "Moreover the workers with familiar spirits and the wizards, and the images, and the idols, and all the abominations that were spied in the land of Judah and in Jerusalem, did Josiah put away, that he might perform the words of the law which were written in the book that Hilkiah the priest found in the house of the LORD" (2nd Kings 23:24). If it is borne in mind that this took place just 35 years before that same temple was destroyed in the Babylonian invasion, one surely asks what happened to it subsequent to its discovery?

Jeremiah, who figures very prominently in the events which characterised the end of the kingdom of Judah, began his ministry during the reign of that same Josiah and would, theoretically, have been familiar with the fact that the "book of the law" had been found. Indeed, when Josiah was killed in the battle of the valley of Megiddo, "Jeremiah lamented for Josiah" (2nd Chron. 35:25) — a lamentation for the loss of one who had attempted a reform in Judah according to the Law of the LORD. During the reign of the four succeeding kings in Judah, no further mention is made of the "book of the law" — indeed, as the record shows, they had no inclination toward implementing it — and it is quite possible that the "book" remained unread and accumulating dust in some nook within the temple. When one considers the list of items which were taken from the temple just prior to its destruction, while incidentals are mentioned, no reference is made either to the "book of the law" or the Ark of the Covenant and one is left to speculate as to their fate.

It is of course, quite probable that the "book of the law" was burnt — indeed this appears to be the source for the lamentation

recorded in the apocryphal 2nd Esdras 14:21 — but on the other hand, the possibility exists that this did not happen. If one considers Jeremiah's faith in the Promise of the LORD to restore the land which is to be seen in his purchase of the field of Hanameel, it will be seen that he was instructed to take the title deeds to this field and "put them in an earthen vessel, that they may continue many days. For thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Houses and fields and vineyards shall be possessed again in this land" (Jer. 32:14,15). If personal title-deeds were important enough to have them secured for future use by placing them in an "earthen vessel" — and one should remember that Jeremiah believed this — would he neglect so valuable a document as the "book of the law" which would be imperative as Israel's future need?

It will be recalled that 30 days intervened between the taking of the city and its destruction by fire (2nd Kings 25:3-8) and Jeremiah had free access to the temple during this period by the imperial decree (Jer. 39:12). Knowing that the "book of the law" was in existence and knowing that it would be needed at some future time, it is surely logical to assume that he would have done something about it. He *could* have recovered it and he *could* have placed it within the Ark of the Covenant — after all, the complete National Constitution — not just the Commandments — would be necessary for the time when the Law was to go forth from Zion and the Word from Jerusalem (Mic. 4:2).

It is therefore quite possible that when the Ark is again revealed, Israel, not the spurious counterfeit which masquerades as the Covenant People, will have its unperverted and unpolluted Constitution restored to it.

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## JEWS AND GALILEANS

QUESTION: "Revelation 2:9 and 3:9 speak of 'Jews' who say they are and are not. Is it given in the original as 'Jews' or is it perhaps 'Israelites' translated as Jews?"

Obviously it should read 'Israelites and are not.'" A second question in the same letter is: "In Acts 2:7 we read of people saying to one another, 'Behold, are not all these which speak Galileans?' – are these Galileans 'lost Israelites' visiting Jerusalem for the festival?"

**ANSWER:** The significant feature about the Galileans was that the Lord Jesus Christ dealt with them in a way markedly different from His attitude toward the Judaeans. He certainly condemned them for breaking the Law and called on them to repent but insofar as the Jews were concerned, He accused them of acting exactly as Satan acted – murdering and lying and being instinctively opposed to the Truth (John 8:44,45). He certainly separated the Jews from being His Israel flock (John 10:26) – a feature significantly absent in His dealings with the Galileans.

A careful sifting through the history of Israel as the northern kingdom fell, will reveal that the people living in the region of Galilee were firstly "lightly afflicted" by the Assyrians and then "more grievously" although certainly not totally removed. Isaiah, who provided this history (Isa. 9:1) and identified the people as being of the tribes of Zebulon and Naphtali, later added that when "the glory of Jacob shall be made thin" a remnant, "two or three berries in the top of the uppermost bough", would be left in the land (Isa. 17:4-6). These were the Galileans – a true remnant of the northern kingdom of 10-tribed Israel.

In considering the momentous statement recorded in the second and third chapters of His Revelation, one is thrown into a very sensitive area and one which is controversial in the extreme. However, as the accusation against the Jews was made by the "Word incarnate in the flesh", He Who is TRUTH Personified, it would be "ducking the Truth" if one ignored what He said. "I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews and are not, but are of the synagogue of Satan." The word "blasphemy" here is translated from "*blasphemia*" which means "calumny" – a false and malicious misrepresentation – which centres on the claim to being "*Ioudaios*" or literally "of Judah". Thus, the accusation was that

people were projecting a "Judah identity" which in fact was a false and malicious misrepresentation – how did it all start?

In considering Psalm 83 which tells of an anti-God conspiracy, it should be noted that the main objective in this conspiracy was to "cut them off from being a nation" – the "them" in this instance, being the literal Covenant seed of the patriarchs. At the time of the First Advent this had been achieved for the Jews, with their Talmudic doctrine which claimed God's Purpose as being the creation of a universal brotherhood of faith, were people comprising seventeen different entities – see Ezra 4:9 and 9:1 – who had been proselytised into Pharisaism thus making the population of Judaea a *nation* but not of the Covenanted children of Israel. The fact that they chose the name of Judah to cover their masquerade shows a lamentable lack of perceiving the Israel arrangement for while the "house of David" of the tribe of Judah was selected as the "chief ruler", the birthright belonged to Joseph (1st Chron. 5:2). They failed to see that Judah's importance was circumscribed by the fact that that tribe produced the Davidic line and once this had been established, the tribe, per se, was no different than any of the other tribes. Joseph, on the other hand, did not have its birthright status circumscribed by any such development.

There is, however, another reason why they chose the name of Judah and that derives from the separation of Israel into two unequal kingdoms in the day of Rehoboam, the son of Solomon (1st Kings 12:16-20). According to Jeremiah (Jer. 3:8) the majority northern kingdom headed by Ephraim the son of Joseph (Gen. 48:13-20) was given a "bill of divorce" – the conditions of which (Deut. 24:1-4) made it impossible for any of that kingdom to return from captivity. On the other hand, although Judah "played the harlot also" and too went into captivity, its return to Canaan was not prohibited as that kingdom was never given a "bill of divorce". Here indeed was an opening and the "conspiracy" used it to good effect.

Ezra, of course, records that 42 360 of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin returned under the decree of Cyrus who had destroy-

ed Babylon and that it is from this return that the Judaeans or Jewish nation derived its origin. However, in verifying this from the writing of the prophets, one runs into a few snags. In the first instance, if one considers Isaiah's writing, it will be noted that he indeed wrote of Cyrus who is called both "shepherd" and "anointed" and who would be responsible for rebuilding both Jerusalem and the temple but *nowhere is it said that Judah would do this*. Thus then, the edict of Cyrus recorded in Ezra 1:2 is in accord with prophecy but — the identification of Judah with this *is not*. Jeremiah, who witnessed and wrote of the destruction of Jerusalem and the captivity of Judah, recorded the following. "Therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts; Because ye have not heard my words, Behold, I will send and take all the families of the north, saith the LORD, and Nebuchadnezzar the King of Babylon, my servant, and will bring them against this land and against the inhabitants thereof and against all these nations round about, and will destroy them... And this whole land shall be a desolation and an astonishment; and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years" (Jer. 25:8-12). The next verse continues: "And it shall come to pass, when seventy years are accomplished, that I will punish the king of Babylon (not Nebuchadnezzar), and that nation, saith the LORD, for their iniquity, and the land of the Chaldeans, and will make it perpetual desolations..." Nowhere in this chapter does it state that Judah or any of the other nations would be returned to their own land — the whole emphasis is on the fact that after 70 years, *Babylon would be punished*.

In turning to Daniel 9:2, it reads: "In the first year of his reign I Daniel understood by books the number of the years, whereof the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah the prophet, that he would accomplish seventy years in the desolation of Jerusalem..." This is not what Jeremiah wrote — *he wrote of seventy years before Babylon would fall* with absolutely no reference to a return by Judah. Furthermore, Isaiah's reference to Cyrus and the rebuilding of Jerusalem and the temple did not require Judah's presence for what purpose was to be served by rebuilding

the temple when the Ark, its main purpose, had been lost? There can of course, be very little doubt that someone did return after Babylon was destroyed but it is highly unlikely that it was Judah or Benjamin. Equally, there can be very little doubt that a remnant of Judah and Benjamin did return but at a much later period. In the apocryphal "*Letter of Jeremiah*", the prophet wrote: "Once you are in Babylon, your stay there will be long; it will last for many years, up to seven generations, but afterward I will lead you out in peace and prosperity." This would appear to indicate a captivity lasting up to 280 years and would point to the period round about 324 B.C.

Did such a return take place? It is very difficult to say because the Bible is totally silent on those years. However, with the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls in 1947, one is able to piece together the history of a community or communities which were antagonistic toward the Jews and who were persecuted by them. Unfortunately access to the Scrolls was cut off in 1967 and as far as is known, no further research has been done on them. What *is* known *could* be attributed to true Judah but because of the unavailability of the Scrolls, much vital evidence is lost.

Piecing the whole story together, Judaea was populated by people claiming to be of "Judah" but who, the Lord Jesus Christ, accused of being false and malicious in their claim. They were and are not Israel. Conversely, if the meagre information gleaned from the Dead Sea Scrolls is correct, the Essenes, who became active in the 2nd Century B.C. *could* have been a remnant of Judah and Benjamin who returned only to find the pretenders very much in control. This story is to be enlarged on in *The Covenant Message*.

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**QUESTION:** "Both my sister and I have accepted that the 66 Books in the Bible are inspired by the Holy Spirit. We have held that EVERY word is inspired of God but our Bible-study is showing something

different and although our Minister glosses over our points raised in this connection, we are far from satisfied. Can you help?"

**ANSWER:** With the passage of time and as one spends more and more time in looking for a reason for the faith that is within us, it has been found that we cannot "prove all things" because of obvious discrepancies which are in the Bible for all to see. It has of course, been argued that when discrepancy *is* found it is our perception that is at fault and not the Scripture as, for example the account of the Lord's visit to Jericho recorded in Matthew 20:29-34, Mark 10:46-52 and Luke 18:35-43. It has been argued that these are not three different accounts of the same event but rather three accounts of three visits by the Lord to the city. While the possibility does exist that this may have been so — although it is very difficult to find corroborating evidence to justify three separate visits by our Lord — while this may have been the case, let us find a single event about which there can be no such opportunity for scriptural gymnastics. The story of the end of Judas Iscariot will serve here for none can possibly claim that he died twice — and yet we have two different accounts of his death.

In considering Matthew's account first (Matt. 27:3-10), it will be noted that Judas repented and returned to the chief priests and elders asking that they accept the thirty pieces of silver which he had earned for his betrayal of the Lord. They refused and so: "... he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself." The chief priests then took the money and because "It is not lawful for to put them into the treasury, because it is the price of blood. And they took counsel, and bought with them the potter's field, to bury strangers in." This is followed by a reference to the prophecy "spoken by Jeremy the prophet" in which he is reported to have written: "And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him that was valued, whom they of the children of Israel did value; And gave them for the potter's field, as the Lord appointed me." However, if one checks through the writing of Jeremiah, no such reference will be found,

whereas Zechariah 11:12,13 does refer to this. Thus, at the outset in Matthew's account one finds an error — if it was intended to be Zechariah *and* Jeremiah, why, if we are dealing with "inspired scriptures", is there no reference to Zechariah as well?

Be that as it may, let us note the highlights here again. Firstly, Judas repented and wanted to return the "blood money" but this was refused. He then cast it down in the temple and went out and hanged himself. Now, in turning to the record of the death of Judas recorded in the Acts and as Peter is said to have presented this, it will be found that *Judas*, not the priests, purchased the field, with absolutely no reference to either Jeremiah or Zechariah, after which, "... falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out". There is undoubtedly a great difference between being "hanged" as is recorded by Matthew and "falling to the ground and bursting asunder" as was recorded by Luke in the Acts.

Some of course, would claim that it really doesn't matter — after all, Judas died and that it makes no difference how he died. This is true, but if the 66 Books in the Bible are the inerrant Word of God, it must be admitted that something went awry here. This is just one of the many "tares" which have been sown in the "field".

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**QUESTION:** "... I personally cannot see any difference between Communism's 'one world ambition' and the objectives of the Christian Church which is 'one world religion'. Is this really what Christ came to teach?"

**ANSWER:** One must exercise the greatest caution when dealing with what men say and teach concerning the Advent of our Lord. If we look at the Epistle to the Hebrews — particularly the first chapter — we note that it says: "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son...". This, of course, sets the

seal of Authority on those who spoke for God and we find that the prophets of the Old Testament were thus authorised as was our Lord in the New. No such thing as a universal religion is found in the writing of the prophets nor, if we get rid of theological opinion and theological interpolations, do we find that our Lord supported this. Note again that there are only two who were authorised to speak on behalf of the Father – the prophets and the Son Himself. No one was authorised to speak on behalf of the Son and yet this is precisely what has happened and of which our Lord Himself warned (Matthew 24:5).

“Go ye into all the world, and preach this gospel to every creature” (Mark 16:15) is the basis for Christian one-worldism and we find considerable controversy raging over the authenticity of Mark’s account from verse 9 to the end. Now, Grisbach, Tischendorf, Moffat, Bagster’s Companion

Bible, the Revised Version, Ferrar Fenton and Westcott, and Horts Greek New Testament all stated quite categorically that the relevant verses are *not in the original* and are the additions made by some 2nd Century scribe. Our Lord Himself said that He had *only come to the “lost sheep of the house of Israel”* (Matt. 15:24) and yet in Mark’s account, He is made to say something quite different – a theological addition which was very much in keeping with the doctrine of proselytism which began as soon as the Lord had Ascended into heaven. Christ’s condemnation of the “doctrine of the Nicolaitanes” (Rev. 2:15) which is a condemnation of proselytism, is a clear indication that He made no such statement as is accredited to Him in Mark’s Gospel. In a nutshell, our Lord never advocated nor supported the notion of a “one world religious order”.

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*SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT:*

**RECOMMENDED READING**

**WHO OR WHAT IS AN ISRAELITE –**

This work reveals who are the true  
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