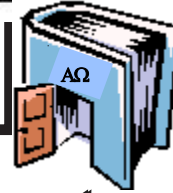


Creation Revelation

Proclaiming the remarkable truths in God's Word
Psalm 119:160

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The Empty Pedestal

*I met the traveler from an antique land
Who said: Two vast and trunkless legs of
stone*

*Stand in the desert... Near them, on the sand,
Half sunk, a shattered visage lies, whose
frown,*

*And wrinkled lip, and sneer of cold command,
Tell that the sculptor well those passions read
Which yet survive, stamped on those lifeless
things,*

*The hand that mocked them, and the heart that
fed:*

And on the pedestal these words appear:

*"My name is Ozymandias, king of kings:
Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair!"
Nothing beside remains. Round the decay
Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare
The lone and level sands stretch far away.*

—Percy Bysshe Shelley, *Ozymandias*

The Image

In the desert near Babylon there is an empty pedestal where an image once stood. In fact, the great city of Babylon has itself receded into memory and the museums of the world. The great kings associated with the empire that commenced with Nimrod have faded in memory until we have only a shell of history to remember them by.

These kings were proud and mighty. The Bible refers to Nimrod as "a mighty hunter before the Lord." Belshazzar, the final ruler (co-regent with Nabonidus) threw a wild party with the combined armies of the Medes and Persians at his gates, secure in his belief that Babylon's walls, nearly 400 feet high and 90 feet thick, would protect him. In defiance to God, he drank from the vessels taken from Solomon's Temple and that very night he lost his kingdom and his life, as foretold hours earlier by the "handwriting on the wall." His enemies had diverted the Euphrates River and marched into the city under the walls through the dry river bed.

Later Nebuchadnezzar came along and conquered most of his immediate world. Nebuchadnezzar would conquer Judah and Benjamin and carry them into captivity, in three succeeding waves, to Babylon for the proscribed seventy years as prophesied by Jeremiah, because of their rebellion to God. Earlier, the ten northern Hebrew tribes were conquered and carried off by the Assyrians.

Nebuchadnezzar placed several puppet kings on the throne in Jerusalem until finally Zedekiah, the third and final puppet king, rebelled. Then Nebuchadnezzar took him, killed his children in his sight, then immediately put out his eyes, and carried him off to Babylon to rot in a dungeon.

Nebuchadnezzar had a grand opinion of his

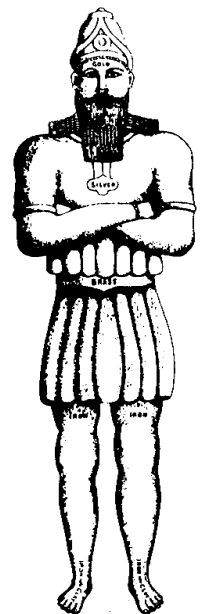


Image from Rev. Clarence Larkin, *The Book of Daniel*, Glenside, PA: 1929.

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accomplishments. In Daniel 4:4 and Daniel 4:30 we see Nebuchadnezzar relishing his possessions:

I Nebuchadnezzar was at rest in mine house, and flourishing in my palace: Daniel 4:4

The king spake, and said, Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty? Daniel 4:30

Earlier Nebuchadnezzar experienced a dream of an impressive statue with a head of gold, its breast and arms were of silver, its belly and thighs of brass, its legs were of iron, and the feet and toes were of iron mixed with clay. Only one man in the empire could interpret the dream.

Daniel had been carried away to Babylon during the first wave that saw Judah's most elite and erudite of the Hebrew young taken to be re-educated in Nebuchadnezzar's Babylonian school system. Daniel was to be a Magi. It was Daniel, full of God's wisdom and knowledge, who would interpret the dream.

Thou, O king, sawest, and behold a great image. This great image, whose brightness was excellent, stood before thee; and the form thereof was terrible. This image's head was of fine gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass, 33 His legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay. Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces. Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshingfloors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth. This is the dream; and we will tell the interpretation thereof before the king. Thou, O king, art a king of kings: for the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory. And wheresoever the children of men dwell, the beasts of the field and the fowls of the heaven hath he given into thine hand, and hath made thee ruler over them all. Thou art this head of gold. And after thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee, and another third kingdom of brass, which shall bear rule over all the earth. And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron: forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all things: and as iron that breaketh all these, shall it break in pieces and bruise. And whereas thou sawest the feet and toes, part of potters' clay, and part of iron, the kingdom

shall be divided; but there shall be in it of the strength of the iron, forasmuch as thou sawest the iron mixed with miry clay. And as the toes of the feet were part of iron, and part of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong, and partly broken. And whereas thou sawest iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men: but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay. And in the days of thee kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever. Forasmuch as thou sawest that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold; the great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter: and the dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof sure. Daniel 2:31-45

The image was made up of gradually inferior metals indicating that the progress of human government would be declining. This flies in the face of the social evolutionary theory of mankind progressively getting better and better. We may have progressed technologically, but we have moved our blood lust appetite from the Roman Coliseum to the movie and television screens. Simulated murder and mayhem is big business, while allowing millions to watch modern gladiators maim each other on the floor and grounds of our sporting arenas. We are essentially no different than the Roman citizen screaming for the blood of the Christian martyrs.

World Empires

The first kingdom, represented by the head of gold, was Nebuchadnezzar's own Babylon (605-539 BC). Babylon was called "the golden city" in Isaiah 14:4. Nebuchadnezzar had established an empire of gold.¹¹

That thou shalt take up this proverb against the king of Babylon, and say, How hath the oppressor ceased! The golden city ceased! Isaiah 14:4

This empire went into decline following the death of Nebuchadnezzar and was finally overthrown by the Medo-Persian Empire (539-333 BC) represented by the arms of silver. This empire had a system of taxation and accumulated a vast store of silver. It too declined and was overthrown by the first Japheth kingdom,² the world kingdom of the Greek Alexander (333-160 BC). This third kingdom was represented by the torso of brass. Alexander's army was outfitted by brass helmets, breastplates, shields, and swords.³

Eventually Rome (160 BC - 500 AD) sprang on the scene, depicted by the legs of iron. Rome divided into two parts, the Western and Eastern division with centers in Rome and Constantinople.

Rome began to deteriorate and crumbled into strong and weak factions, eventually being divided up into separate empires, but maintaining the Roman identity. Various of these were prominent such as the British, Belgium, German, French, Portuguese, Dutch, Spanish, Russian, Grecian, Byzantine, and Italian colonial empires.⁴ All of these were of the Roman Empire. Today we see most of these represented in the European Union. Rome has never disappeared.⁵ The German leader became the "Kaiser" and the Russian leader became the Czar. Both Kaiser and Czar are derived from the Roman "Caesar."⁶

The legs of iron depicted Rome's great strength. These legs took up half the height of the image indicating that the Roman Empire would outlast all the others. The Babylonian Empire of Nebuchadnezzar lasted about 70 years, the Persian about 200 years, the Greek about 180 years, and the Roman more than 500 years. In fact, Rome in a disunited state has survived to the present time, only waiting to be united once more.⁷

The ten toes of iron and clay indicate that the final stage before the return of Christ to set up his kingdom would be a mixture of strong and weak nations, a revived Roman Empire in these last days. Many have attempted to revive Rome, such as Napoleon and Hitler, but all have failed.

After World War II the nations set up the United Nations to unite mankind under a banner of world government. Today emphasis is focusing on establishing power in this body to lead the world. Europe has formed its alliances with the various European nations under European Union. The United States is entering into agreements of cooperation through treaties like NAFTA to form open borders in this hemisphere. Consolidation of Asian countries will complete the third leg of the goal of the Trilateral Commission of uniting the world into three interrelated economic zones controlled by a world body. Control of these bonded nations is proving difficult to manage, as national sovereignty is difficult for individual nations to relinquish.

It is my opinion that the peace-keeping actions of the UN forces, such as those in Bosnia, and the military actions against Iraq, are actions against nations or areas that are failing to unite in the world effort to submit to world government. It would appear that Saddam Hussein is not following the game plan of the New World Order.

The New World Order

That we are attempting to unite the world into a global government seems clear. On January 16, 1991 President George Bush addressed the nation to announce the allied military action in the Persian Gulf:

"This is an historic moment. We have in the past year made great progress in ending the long era of conflict and cold war. We have before us

*the opportunity to forge for ourselves and for future generations a **new world order**—a world where the rule of law, not the law of the jungle, governs the conduct of nations. When we are successful—and we will be—we have a real chance at this **new world order**, an order in which a credible United Nations can use its peacekeeping role to **fulfill the promise and vision of the U.N.'s founders**."*⁸

And again on January 29, 1991 President George Bush addressed a joint session of Congress on the State of the Union:

*"I come to this House of the people to speak to you and all Americans, certain that we stand at a defining hour. Halfway around the world, we are engaged in a great struggle in the skies and on the seas and sands. We know why we're there: We are Americans, part of something larger than ourselves. For two centuries, we've done the hard work of freedom. And tonight, we lead the world in facing down a threat to decency and humanity. "What is at stake is more than one small country; it is a big idea: a **new world order**, where diverse nations are drawn together in common cause to achieve the universal aspirations of mankind—**peace and security**, freedom, and the rule of law. Such is a world worthy of our struggle and worthy of our children's future.*

*"The community of nations has resolutely gathered to condemn and repel lawless aggression... With few exceptions, **the world now stands as one**."*⁹

Paul has something to say about the New World Order:

*For when they shall say, **Peace and safety**; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. 1 Thesalonians 5:3*

Senator Barry M. Goldwater in his book, *With No Apologies*, wrote:

*What the Trilaterals truly intend is **the creation of a worldwide economic power superior to the political government of the nation-states involved**. As managers and creators of the system they will rule the world."*¹⁰

In the same book Senator Goldwater went on:

*In my view, the Trilateral Commission represents a skillful, coordinated effort to seize control and consolidate the four centers of power: **political**,*



*monetary, intellectual and ecclesiastical.*¹¹

He is referring to control of government (political), banking (money), education (intellectual), and religion (ecclesiastical).

What then is the New World Order? Nebuchadnezzar's ambition was world-empire. Today we are reassembling the nations again in humanistic defiance to God.

First - The world political system is unifying through the United Nations (**One-World Government**).

Second - The leaders of the various religions are attempting to unify the major religions of the world (**One-World Religion**).

Third - The world's money powers are attempting to remake the world's economic systems (**Global Economy**).

Fourth - The world's **intellectual establishment** is attempting to **mold the minds** of the world's citizens **into a global allegiance** (Anti-Nationalism; Anti-Patriotism; Globalism).

Together these are termed The New World Order.

The Kingdom of Righteousness

In Daniel 2:35 we find that the stone became a great mountain. In prophecy when mountains are not named they are then to be interpreted as kingdoms or empires. Christ, as represented by the rock, will become a great kingdom that will last forever.¹²

Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshingfloors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth. Daniel 2:35

Rebellious man will never succeed in establishing a New World Order that will be everlasting. Only the Kingdom of God is everlasting.

And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever. Daniel 2:44

Forasmuch as thou sawest that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold; the great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter: and the dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof sure. Daniel 2:45

During this revived phase of the Roman Empire God Himself will set up his kingdom. This stone that was cut from the mountain without hands indicates a divine act, just as Christ was born without an earthly father. The kingdom would be established as in Isaiah 32:1, 2:

Behold, a king shall reign in righteousness, and princes shall rule in judgment. And a man shall be as an hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land. Isaiah 32:1, 2

The revived Roman Empire represented by the ten toes must be in place at the time of Christ's return because we see that the Rock breaks the whole image, including the iron mixed with clay.¹³ But, this happens during the final stage of the last Gentile empire because, as we saw in Daniel 2:34, "the rock smote the image upon his feet."

Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces. Daniel 2:34

Christ is that spiritual Rock:

And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ. 1 Corinthians 10:4

Christ is that Rock:

Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes? Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder. Matthew 21:42-44

Christ will return to establish His kingdom:

And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever. Revelation 11:15

Nebuchadnezzar and Jesus both represent absolute government, one unrighteous, the other righteous.¹⁴

*When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: And before him shall be gathered **all nations**: and*

he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: Matthew 25:31, 32

At the time of Christ's birth the Roman Empire was still intact. The disintegration occurred gradually during the first few centuries of the Christian era. The Roman Empire began about 200 BC. It began to break into pieces about 500 AD and continued until 1945 through the Roman colonial system. After 1945 the British and others began to release their colonies and a New World Order was begun with the establishment of the United Nations.¹⁵

The New World Order will eventually fall, its shattered visage scattered over the sands of time, its pedestal empty, but Christ's kingdom will stand forever on a pedestal of solid rock, the Rock. Ω

² John Phillips, Jerry Vines, *Exploring the Book of Daniel*, Neptune, NJ: Loizeaux Brothers, 1990, p.44.

³ Japheth is one of the three sons of Noah. He became the father of the European nations.

⁴ Phillips, Vines, *Exploring the Book of Daniel*, p. 45.

⁵ Noah W. Hutchings, *Daniel The Prophet*, Oklahoma City, OK: Hearthstone Publishing, Ltd., pp. 67, 71.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 63.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 60.

⁸ Phillips, Vines, *Exploring the Book of Daniel*, p. 99.

⁹ Taken from the speech texts in *The American Freedom Library*.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ As quoted in: A. Ralph Epperson, *The Unseen Hand*, Tucson, AZ: Publius Press, 1985, p. 232.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 239.

¹³ John F. Walvoord, *The Prophecy Knowledge Handbook*, Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1990, p. 451. Edgar C. Carlisle, *A World "Church" is Planned For 2000 A. D.*, privately printed, 1994, p. 16.

¹⁴ Jeremiah, *The Handwriting On The Wall*, p. 136.

¹⁵ Hutchings, *Daniel the Prophet*, p. 76.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 67, 68.

things this day in a dream because of him. Matthew 27:19. Claudia Procula to Pontius Pilate, Jerusalem, 32 AD.

Much of the history of Pilate is based on tradition. Except for his unfortunate role in the crucifixion of Christ and the histories of Josephus we would probably know very little about the man. He was a Roman equestrian (knight) of the Samnite clan of the Pontii from which his name Pontius is derived. He would have been considered to be above middle class, but not an aristocrat.¹ He seems to have had friends in high places and was appointed to be prefect of Judea through the intervention of Sejanus who was a controlling influence over Tiberius Caesar.² Pilate was not well liked and it appears that he shared his mentor, Sejanus', low regard for the Jews.³

Philo indicates that he stirred up the Jews by dedicating some gilt shields in the Palace of Herod, in Jerusalem.⁴ Josephus tells us that he did this "to abolish the Jewish laws."⁵ These gilt shields carried the image of Caesar, violating the Jewish laws.⁶

The Jews rose up demanding that Pilate remove the images. After surrounding the crowd with his army, threatening death, Pilate finally relented and had the images removed from Jerusalem to Caesarea, only after the Jews threw themselves on the ground, exposing their necks to the soldiers, indicating their willingness to die. The protestors remained on the ground, immovable, for five days and nights.⁷ Philo records that the images were only removed after Pilate received orders from Tiberius.⁸

There was an incident where a multitude of Jews was enticed to assemble on Mount Gerizzin, where supposedly the sacred vessels of the temple were hidden. Pilate prevented them from going there, and slew many. This incident was reported to Vitellius, the president of Syria, who ordered Pilate to go to Rome to answer to Caesar. Pilate arrived in Rome only to find Tiberius Caesar had died.⁹

In another incident that infuriated the Jews, Pilate spent "sacred treasure," called Corban (sacred money dedicated to God in the treasury of the temple) to build aqueducts to bring water to Jerusalem. When the Jews protested, he mingled his Roman soldiers without their uniforms, among the protesters. He then signaled from his tribunal at the appropriate moment and his soldiers began beating the protesters with staves. Many died.¹⁰

There were present at that season some that told him of the Galilaeans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. Luke 13:1

This incident may have been the cause of the enmity between Pilate and Herod, which appears to have been resolved at the trial of Jesus.¹¹

And the same day Pilate and Herod were made friends together: for before they were at enmity between themselves. Luke 23:12

Pontius Pilate - Appointment With Destiny

When he was set down on the judgment seat, his wife sent unto him, saying, Have thou nothing to do with that just man: for I have suffered many

Pilate had been appointed procurator of Judea, replacing Valerius Gratus, in 26 AD. As procurator he commanded the Roman Garrison in Judea which included about 120 calvary and about 3000 men.¹²

Pilate "was a man of a very inflexible disposition, and very merciless as well as very obstinate."¹³ This man had an appointment with destiny on a spring day in 32 AD.

Pilate's wife was Claudia Procula, of equal or slightly higher social status.¹⁴ It may have been through her family that Pilate met his benefactor, Lucius Aelius Sejanus, the prefect of the Praetorian Guard.¹⁵

It was to Pilate that the Jewish priests turned to carry out their desired death sentence on Jesus. They charged him with being a "malefactor".

*Then led they Jesus from Caiaphas unto the hall of judgment: and it was early; and they themselves went not into the judgment hall, lest they should be defiled; but that they might eat the passover. Pilate then went out unto them, and said, What accusation bring ye against this man? They answered and said unto him, If he were not a **malefactor**, we would not have delivered him up unto thee. Then said Pilate unto them, Take ye him, and judge him according to your law. The Jews therefore said unto him, It is not lawful for us to put any man to death: That the saying of Jesus might be fulfilled, which he spake, signifying what death he should die. John 18:28-32*

The other charges were that Jesus was perverting the nation, forbidding the people to pay their taxes to Caesar, and calling himself Christ the King.

*And they began to accuse him, saying, We found this fellow **perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Caesar, saying that he himself is Christ a King.** Luke 23:2*

Pilate questioned Jesus and determined that he was guiltless, nevertheless, he would eventually acquiesce to the demands of the mob and the fear of Caesar.

*And from thenceforth Pilate sought to release him: but the Jews cried out, saying, **If thou let this man go, thou art not Caesar's friend: whosoever maketh himself a king speaketh against Caesar.** John 19:12*

Pilate finally asked a question of which he waited for no reply, "what is truth." To Pilate, this was a stoical question. Reason, rationality, and perception were for him truth. The deep spiritual truth that Jesus was referring to was beyond his comprehension. For Pilate, the world itself was reality and truth.¹⁶

After the incident of Mount Gerizzin, Pilate was

ordered to Rome in 36 AD, where Eusebius indicates that he ended his life by his own hand.¹⁷

In the apocryphal literature we find accounts of Pilate's death. In one account he was executed, at the command of Caesar, by cutting off his head. In another, Pilate slew himself with a dagger.¹⁸

In one tradition, he was exiled to the south of France, near Vienne on the Rhone River. In yet another story he resided on a mountain known as Mount Pilatus near Lake Lucerne. In a fit of depression over what he had done he drowned himself in the Lake. In another version he and his wife resided in a village on the slopes of Mount Vesuvius, where he drank heavily. Eventually he and his wife were killed by the eruption of the volcano in 79 AD.¹⁹

Happily, this story may have a happy ending after all. The most substantial evidence points to another tradition. Tertullian called Pilate a "Christian by conscience" in his book *Apologeticus*. In that book he included a letter from Pilate which commended the Christian faith. Origen indicated that Pilate's wife was a convert to Christianity. The Ethiopian Church recognizes both Pontius Pilate and his wife as Saints. The Greek Church recognizes only Claudia Procula as a saint.²⁰

It may be after all, as early Christian writers indicate, that both Pontius Pilate and Claudia Procula were put to death as Christian martyrs. Whatever is true, in their appointments with destiny, they both had very much to do with "that just man" called Jesus.²¹ Ω

¹ Robert W. Faid, *A Scientific Approach to More Biblical Mysteries*, Green Forest, AR: New Leaf Press, 1994, p. 40.

² Pontius Pilate, *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, electronic version, 1994-1999.

³ Faid, *A Scientific Approach to More Biblical Mysteries*, p. 41.

⁴ C. D. Yonge, Translator, *The Works of Philo*, Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 1993, p. 784.

⁵ William Whiston, A.M., Translator, *The Works of Josephus: Antiquities of the Jews*, Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 1987, Book 18, Chapter 3, p. 478.

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 479, 480.

⁷ *Ibid.* Whiston, *The Works of Josephus: The Wars of the Jews*, Book 2, Chapter 9, pp. 608, 609.

⁸ Yonge, *The Works of Philo*, pp. 784, 785. Emil Schurer, D.D., M.A., Rev. John MacPherson, Translator, *A History of the Jewish People in the Time of Jesus Christ*, Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., First Division, Vol. II, p. 86.

⁹ Faid, *A Scientific Approach to More Biblical Mysteries*, p. 46.

¹⁰ Whiston, *The Works of Josephus: The Wars of the Jews*, Book 2, Chapter 9, p. 609.

¹¹ Faid, *A Scientific Approach to More Biblical Mysteries*, pp. 42, 43.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 41.

¹³ Yonge, *The Works of Philo*, p. 784.

¹⁴ Faid, *A Scientific Approach to More Biblical Mysteries*, p. 40.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ *Nature and Scope of Stoicism*, *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, electronic version, 1994-1999.

¹⁷ Christian Frederick Cruse, Translator, *The Ecclesiastical History of Eusebius Pamphilus*, Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, reprinted June 1990, p. 57.

¹⁸ Frank Crane, Intro., *The Lost Books of the Bible and The Forgotten Books of Eden*, World Bible Publishers, Inc., 1926, 1927, pp. 279, 281.

¹⁹ Faid, *A Scientific Approach to More Biblical Mysteries*, pp. 46, 47.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 47.

²¹ *Ibid.*



THE ESSENCE OF CHRISTIANITY

While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal. 2 Corinthians 4:18

Lloyd-Jones admonishes that, "There is nothing more fatal than for the natural man [unregenerated; unborn-again] to think that he can take the Beatitudes and try to put them into practice."⁶ Being born-again is a requisite for becoming a Christian.

Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; and have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him: where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all. Colosians 3:9-11

Regeneration (born again) consists of an initial change (a commitment) followed by an on-going (life long) process. We can say with assurance, "Jesus is really Lord!"

The Old Man and the New Man

To appreciate the regeneration process we need to consider that man consists of two parts, the material part (outer man) and the immaterial part (inner man). The material part consists of his body. The immaterial part consists of the human spirit and soul.⁷ **The essential man is spirit.**

*God is a Spirit: and they that worship him **must** worship him in spirit and in truth. John 4:24*
Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you. John 16:13, 14

But the natural man [without the Holy Spirit] receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually [man's spirit] discerned. 1 Corinthians 2:14

The things of the Spirit are not communicated through the soul (mind). The ignorance of the natural man "never so strongly shows as it does in those who are called men of learning...dosed with the drugs of flattery and sin...He may say, 'I am free from all the religious extremes of weak and narrow souls...void of superstition, the disease of fools...' Natural man is free from holiness, from the religion of the heart, and from the whole mind which was in Christ."⁸ Natural man "awakes...in a moment...by degrees, the eyes

The Code of Christian Conduct

The Sermon on the Mount, according to Barclay, is the "essence of the teaching of Jesus to the inner circle of His chosen men."¹ It is their ordination. John Stott comments that the entire sermon presupposes an acceptance of the Gospel and that the key verse, Matthew 6:8, teaches them to be different.²

Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him. Matthew 6:8

The Sermon is a blueprint for Christian conduct; and as such would reflect our relationship with the Father and His direction in our lives. For the true disciple this code is not optional, they are the minimum requirements.³ It is therefore a code of conduct for the true disciple. Only the true disciple could put it into practice and that practice would imply doing the Father's will (a right relationship). We must realize that it is not intended to be a "new legalism," but a "new relationship."⁴ The Sermon is not intended to present a legalistic code or a basis of discipleship, but represents the expected fruits resulting from seeking and responding to our new relationship with God and others.⁵ Therefore we walk in who we know we are in Christ because of who He is and of what He has done on our behalf. It becomes for me the natural thing to do.

You Must Be Born Again

Jesus said that we "cannot see the Kingdom of God" unless we first be "born again." Therefore, the Sermon cannot be understood apart from a realization of what it means to be born-again (born of the Spirit). Jesus (in the Sermon) is talking about living our lives in the kingdom of heaven (spirit realm). We must be different. We must fix our eyes on the spirit realm, God's realm.

Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. John 3:3

Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. John 3:7

"You must be born-again!"

of his understanding are opened.”⁹ “The inward, spiritual meaning of the law of God now begins to dawn upon him.”¹⁰ He realizes that he has been living in rebellion against God. In his struggle

he repents, accepts the sacrifice of the cross, is regenerated (born-again) and submits to Jesus as his Lord, entering into a personal relationship with Him.

We Must Be Different

Paul says in his epistle to the Romans:

Don't let the world around you squeeze you into its own mould, but let God re-make you so that your whole attitude of mind is changed. Romans 12:2a (JBP)

According to Bishop Fulton Sheen, “The unthinking often say the Sermon on the Mount constitutes the ‘essence of Christianity.’ But let any man put these Beatitudes into practice in his own life, and he too will draw down upon himself the wrath of the world.”¹¹

The “wisdom of God is foolishness to the world...Occasionally it is branded as downright lunacy and distraction.”¹² Receiving warning the non-Christian, thinking himself wise, “would say that his head (the Christian’s head) was out of order. Much religion has surely made him mad!”¹³

Do not be swayed to walk and think as the world thinks. The message of the sermon may seem contrary to man’s nature or the world system, but as Paul says:

For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God. For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this world? Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom: But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness; but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God. Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men. For ye see your calling,

brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: But God hath chosen th foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: That no flesh should glory in his presence. But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: That, according as it is written, he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord. 1 Corinthians 1:18-31

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¹ William Barclay, *The Gospel of Matthew*, Vol. 1, Philadelphia, PA: The Westminster Press, Rev. ed., 1975, p 84.

² John R. W. Stott, *The Message Of The Sermon On The Mount (Matthew 5-7)*, Leicester, England/Downers Grove, Illinois: Inter-Varsity Press, 1978, pp 18, 19.

³ Robert Guelich, *The Sermon on the Mount: A Foundation for Understanding*, Dallas, Texas: Word Publishing, 1982, p 28, 30.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p 30.

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp 30, 31.

⁶ D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Studies in the Sermon on the Mount*, Leicester, England: Inter-Varsity Press, Vol. 1 and Vol. 2, 1959, 1960, p. 117.

⁷ Floyd H. Barackman, *Practical Christian Theology*, Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1992, pp 262-268.

⁸ John Wesley, *The Nature of the Kingdom*, Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House Publishers, 1979, pp. 14, 15.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p 16.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p 17.

¹¹ Fulton J. Sheen, *Life of Christ*, New York: McGraw-Hill, 1958, p 115.

¹² Wesley, *The Nature of the Kingdom*, p 61.

¹³ *Ibid.*



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Topics will have a primary focus on the Defense of Scripture, including Creation (Genesis), Humanism, and Prophecy (Revelation). Other topics of interest may be presented. Questions, comments, and suggestions are encouraged.

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