



A HISTORY OF ANTI-CHRIST PART II - AFTER THE FLOOD



As we address the spirit of anti-Christ that has prevailed in Creation since the fall of Satan, we discover a single underlying theme to its purpose: to denigrate the person of the one, true, living God, YHWH, thus allowing for Satan to be exalted above even God Himself. This is not readily discernible in Isaiah 14:12-14, where Lucifer (equated with the king of Babylon) is quoted as saying nothing more than that he would be *like* the most High:

“How you have fallen from Heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How you, who did weaken the

nations, are cut down to the ground! For you have said in your heart, ‘I will ascend into Heaven; I will exalt my throne above the stars of God. I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High.’”

Although Satan has said that he would be only *like* the most high, that “like” is deceptive. There can be no equality of rule. Either YHWH or Satan must be supreme. For if Satan could attain equality with YHWH then YHWH’s very nature and authority would be compromised. To have

Satan sitting on the throne next to God would mean he has become victorious against God. And that would de facto place him above God. To the victor go the spoils:

When an armed strong man protects his palace, his goods are in peace, but when a stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him, he takes from him all his armor in which he trusted, and divides his spoils. (Luke 11:21-22)

This has been the eons-long conflict between Satan and God. God’s part has been to determine the beginning from the end, and then to implement His plan of redemption for His Creation, establishing it in righteousness as it was from the beginning. Satan’s part has been to thwart God’s plan of redemption, thus rendering God impotent in defending His household.

The final victory does not rest in the battles won and lost, but in whose will has triumphed over that of the other at the last. Throughout the ages God has proven Himself omnipotent, even though Satan has gained the victory in some skirmishes. But we are not so foolish as to think otherwise than this: that God allows Satan to gain victories in order to accomplish His ultimate purpose of bringing His Creation into perfection.

Some would balk at the proposal that Satan can gain any victory at all. But all we need do is witness the increase of evil in the earth to perceive Satan’s victories. Yes, they will be short-lived, and they will eventually be turned to defeat. But in the meantime we must not close our eyes to the reality of

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the battle that rages around us in both the spiritual and temporal realms.

At one point the evil fomented by Satan had attained such dominance over mankind that God saw it necessary to destroy the earth and everything that breathed air, with the exception of Noah and those he saved on the Ark. The Flood was a victory for God. But immediately after the Flood, Satan again began to wage warfare against God's plan of redemption.

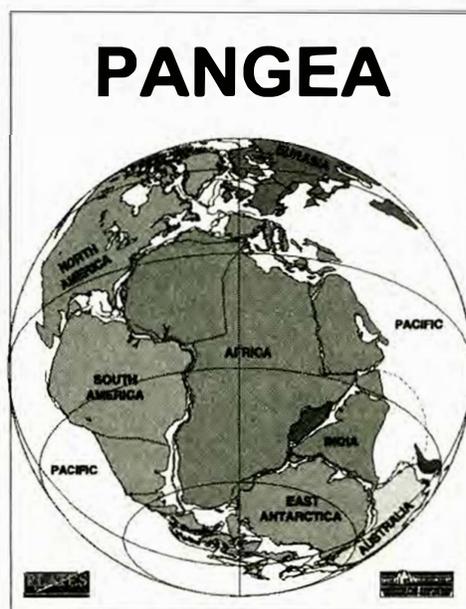
Although Noah found favor in the eyes of God, no such thing was said about his sons. They were saved by virtue of their relationship to Noah, and the need to repopulate the earth after the rest of mankind was destroyed. Within Noah's descendents resided the seed of evil that would again engulf mankind. The intervening millennia from the time of Noah's Flood to the present day testify to this evil and to the ability of Satan to wage effective warfare.

The giants and their progeny that existed on earth prior to Noah's Flood were destroyed, but the angels that had left their first estate had not yet been reserved in chains awaiting the judgment (Jude 1:6). We find in Scripture that the fallen angels resumed their attempt to pollute the race of man (Genesis 6:4), and their descendents were found in the earth even up to the time of Israel's conquest of the Land of Canaan (Numbers 13:33; Deuteronomy 2:11-20; 3:11-13; Joshua 12:4; 13:12; 15:8; 12:17; 18:16). They again produced a race of giants in the earth after Noah's Flood and mankind was again polluted.

Accordingly, God had these fallen angels restrained after allowing them to

work their evil. Their hybrid descendents were destroyed by Israel and other warfare in order to keep them from further polluting the human race. Why God did not prevent such perversion in the first place we cannot speculate upon, except to say that the giants figured in the testing of Israel's faith. It was because of the giants that the Israelites disobeyed God's command to take the land of Canaan under Moses' leadership. For that reason the giants remained in the land until the time of Israel's King David.

As we look at the history of anti-Christ on earth we see that it is essentially the history of mankind. Other than the writings of Moses there is no history of mankind prior to circa 3500-3000 B.C., when writing was invented by the Sumerians in the Middle East. But the dating of this is



an educated guess at best. Scripture places Noah's Flood at around 2400 B.C. The first city, Babel, was built by Nimrod, Noah's grandson through Ham, probably no earlier than 2350 B.C. Anthropologists and Archaeologists place the first cities in Sumer prior to that time (around 3,000 B.C.), but they have erred in the dating of remains from ancient human activity. In many cases they admit that dating can be widespread. For example, the dating of Stonehenge is said to be anywhere from c.3000 B.C. to 1500 B.C.

So either the dating of civilizations is off by about five hundred years, or our dating according to our understanding of Scripture might be off a bit. The important thing is that by the best secular estimates there is no evidence of human civilization prior to the time the Bible says mankind was created. One thing is certain: all who live today are offspring of Noah. Noah's Flood covered the entire earth which, at one time consisted of a single super continent as well as any islands off its coasts.

This super continent came to be known as "Pangea" ("all the earth"), the name given by Alfred Wegner, the father of the theory of continental drift. Wegner cited geographical, geological, and paleontological evidence to support his theory that the earth began to separate into continental blocks some 130-100 million years ago.¹

To those who believe in an ancient earth/universe, it is not a problem to think that the process began that long ago; to those who believe in a young earth/universe, Wegner's theory is evidently flawed. In any case, whether the earth was a single continent or a conglomerate of continental masses joined together, they did not *fully* separate until the time of Peleg, Shem's great-great-great-grandson, approximately 2300 B.C.:

And to Eber were born two sons: the name of one was Peleg, because in his days the earth was divided, and his brother's name was Joktan. (Genesis 10:25)

That land mass split into two major land masses: North and South America in the Western Hemisphere, and Europe, Africa, and Asia in the Eastern Hemisphere. Australia, Greenland and other large portions also split from Pangea. Such a cataclysmic event would have either destroyed any existing civilizations, or seriously set them back in development. This presents good reason to suspect dating of any substantial civilization prior to 2200 B.C.

As far as solid evidence of any significant civilization is concerned, that goes

¹ M. Alan Kazlev, "Pangea," Palaeos, <http://www.palaeos.com/Earth/Geography/Pangea.htm>.

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back no further than the Old Kingdom of Egypt, said to have existed around 2700 B.C. According to scientists, a rudimentary civilization began in Mesopotamia among the Sumerians. This would equate with the area in which Babel was under construction. It would also place the beginning of civilization around the time of Noah's Flood. Allowing for the inaccuracies of archaeological dating, it's possible that Egypt's Old Kingdom actually began around 2200 B.C. while Shem was still living. Considering that Noah's Flood occurred around 2400 B.C., and the continents split off from one another about one hundred years after, the dating of the Egyptian Kingdom could be off by 600 years.

Some may think that it would be impossible for a great kingdom to rise in such a short time since Noah's Flood. However, the exponential growth of the offspring from Noah's son Ham alone (beginning with his four sons Cush, Mizraim, Phut, and Canaan) might well have resulted in tens of thousands, perhaps millions, inhabiting Egypt within a scant 200 years. If each son had an average of only four sons whose firstborn came to them at the age of 16 (common in ancient times) within twelve generations (approximately 200 years) there would have been some 17 million offspring of Ham alone.

We know from Scripture that Ham's offspring dispersed into what became the Land of Canaan. From there they flowed into Africa, first Egypt. The migration of Shem's people was in the opposite direction into the Caucasus and Mediterranean areas. Japheth's tribes evidently spread further to the East as well as to the West and North.

Yet there most likely remained in the Middle East remnants from all three tribes that came out of Noah.

THE FIRST CITIES

It was not long after our first parents were driven from the Garden that man began attempts to overcome the curse that God placed upon Adam and his offspring due to Adam's sin: 1) death; 2) laboring to earn his keep by the sweat of his brow. Ever since that time, both prior to and after Noah's Flood, man has been trying to achieve immortality through his own efforts, and to make a name for himself—to exalt himself above the stars (the servant angels) of God, as did Satan.

This began with the innovation of cities. And it seems fitting that it was the offspring of Ham, who was cursed by Noah for having seen him naked after Noah became drunk, that the rebellion became widespread:

And Noah woke from his wine, and knew what his younger son had done to him. And he said, "Cursed be Canaan [Ham]; he shall be a servant of servants to his brethren."

And he said, "Blessed be YHWH, God of Shem, and Canaan shall be his servant. God shall enlarge Japheth, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant." (Gen 9:24-27)

The first mention of cities in Scripture reveals that Ham's descendants were the builders:

And the sons of Ham: Cush, and Mizraim, and Phut, and Canaan.

And the sons of Cush: Seba, and Havilah, and Sabtah, and Raamah, and Sabtecha.

And the sons of Raamah: Sheba, and Dedan.

And Cush begat Nimrod. He began to be a mighty one in the earth. He was a mighty hunter before YHWH. Therefore it is said, "Even as Nimrod the mighty hunter before YHWH."

And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel, and Erech, and Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar.

Out of that land Asshur went forth and built Nineveh, and the city Rehoboth, and Calah, and Resen between Nineveh and Calah—the same is a great city.

And Mizraim begat Ludim, and Anamim, and Lehabim, and Naphtulim, and Pathrusim, and

Casluhim (out of whom came Philistim), and Caphtorim.

And Canaan begat Sidon his firstborn, and Heth, and the Jebusite, and the Amorite, and the Girgasite, and the Hivite, and the Arkite, and the Sinite, and the Arvadite, and the Zemarite, and the Hamathite; and afterward the families of the Canaanites were spread abroad. (Genesis 10:6-18)

Ham and Japheth produced most of the Gentile nations, but Ham's legacy is especially noteworthy as testified by the genealogy above.

Out of Ham came Nimrod who built several cities, the most notorious being Babel. The very motivation for the building of Babel was to exalt man above God:

And the whole earth was of one language, and of one speech.

And it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar, and they dwelt there. And they said to one another, "Look, let us make bricks, and burn them thoroughly." And they had brick for stone, and for mortar they had slime.

And they said, "Look, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach to Heaven, and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth."

And YHWH came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of men built.

And YHWH said, "Behold, the people are one, and they all have one language. And this they begin to do, and now nothing that they have imagined to do will be restrained from them. Look, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech."

So YHWH scattered them abroad from there upon the face of all the earth, and they stopped building the city.

Therefore the name of it is called "Babel," because YHWH confounded the language of all the earth there. And from there YHWH scattered them abroad upon the face of all the earth. (Genesis 11:1-9)

It is possible that Nimrod's children became polluted with the race of giants. Nimrod was Ham's grandson, and it was he who began to build cities. Out of his loins came the Canaanites (Ham is called Canaan by Noah [Genesis 9:25]), who produced the latter giants, and who became so corrupted that God commanded Israel to destroy every living thing among those who inhabited the Land that He was to give to Abraham and His seed through Isaac and Jacob. It was from the sons of Ham that the Philistines came to be, some of whom were giants.

As righteous as Noah was, his grandsons through Ham became the first human anti-Christians after the Flood. Not much is said about Japheth in this regard except that his offspring would be named among the last-days anti-Christians (Ezekiel 38; Revelation 20:8):

The sons of Japheth: Gomer, and Magog, and Madai, and Javan, and Tubal, and Meshech, and Tiras.

And the sons of Gomer: Ashkenaz, and Riphath, and Togarmah.

And the sons of Javan: Elishah, and Tarshish, Kittim, and Dodanim.

By these were the isles of the Gentiles divided in their lands, every one after his tongue, after their families, in their nations. (Genesis 10:2-5)

Scripture tells us that at the time of the Lord's coming again the world's armies will be gathered at Armageddon to war against Him. The only certain exception is Israel who will be in mourning after looking upon Him whom they had pierced (Zechariah 12:1-14). At that time Israel will be the target of the last-days anti-Christ's rage.

In order for events to come to this, it is necessary for mankind to be united in a global community. That has been the most intensively-sought goal of Satan. Thus, from the start of man's repopulating the earth, Satan inspired the Gentiles to build cities and states and nations. As long as men were scattered and without human government on a large scale, there was no way for them to be united against God's Kingdom. The kingdoms of this world are under Satan's control, governed by ungodly men, and must one day be united in a common purpose against our Lord's return. Although God is the ultimate decider of how and when

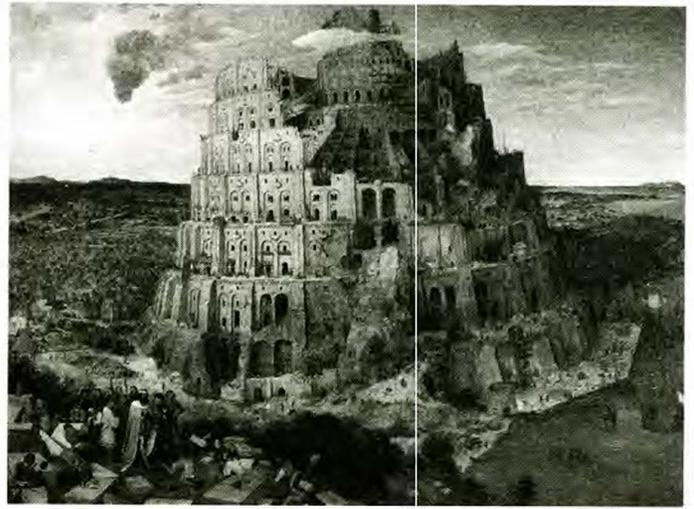
kingdoms rise and fall, He allows Satan to control them in order to test the men's hearts in choosing whom they will follow.

There have been times when godly men have held authority within the nations, but that is a rare exception. And so it must be if God's plan to bring the nations to the place of justified destruction is to be accomplished.

The anti-Christ spirit was alive in Nimrod when he determined to disobey God and to keep men from replenishing the whole earth. When men are confined to small areas such as cities, Satan can more easily deceive them and control their actions. Sin is much more rampant where men are crowded together than where there is room to live. Man's cities are melting pots of iniquity. The more men leave the natural environs of God's creation, the more they succumb to the evils that the world, the flesh, and the devil offer. And the more they pollute God's creation. (In the developed world agriculture is no longer profitable for family farms. Huge, multi-national conglomerates now raise crops that have been genetically altered, contaminated with pesticides and growth hormones, and divested of most of their nutrients.)

As well, a malaise settles over the people as they become accustomed to their more leisurely lifestyle. That malaise translates into loss of faith in the true God, and a reversion back to the paganism that infected all mankind before the Living God intervened. Whereas once the Gospel spread faith in God's redemption throughout the whole world, we are now in a faithless age where only a small remnant hold to God's Word. Even in "Christian" America, the churches are fast becoming faithless, substituting man's wisdom and carnal activities for God's Word and biblical practices.

Does this mean that Christians who live in cities are disobedient to God? Not at all. The whole world lies in iniquity (1 John 5:19). God's people are everywhere, and needed everywhere. We are strangers



The Tower of Babel, by Pieter Bruegel (c. 1525-69)
Kunsthistorisches Museum Wien. Vienna.

and pilgrims in this land regardless where we live. Because someone lives in a rural area makes him no more righteous than someone who lives in a city. It's just that cities are more conducive to ungodliness because of all the trafficking in sin that occurs there. There are many more temptations and pitfalls for city dwellers than there are for country folk.

Today, however, with the long reach of communications, especially television, all forms of evil are brought into the homes of the far-flung regardless where they live. Mankind is linked in a common bond that is largely humanistic and even satanic in its nature due to the anti-Christ influences upon the world system.

Still, from where do the mass communications emanate, but from the cities?

This is the legacy of Babel, the first city to be built by the ancient Sumerians who established the first known civilization, located in lower Mesopotamia (modern Iraq). Sumer, and afterwards ancient Egypt, were the world's first societies to qualify as "civilizations."

From the time of Babel until the advent of Western Civilization, mankind was largely scattered and out of communion with one another. The only contacts they had were through commerce and warfare, with occasional treaties. Each nation was autonomous and ruled by kings, emperors, and the like. Most men comprised two classes: royalty and peasantry. A modicum of industry existed and began to grow as tradesmen developed their own class. These were largely ensconced in the cities.

The great civilizations that arose in ancient times apart from the Holy Land are little addressed in Scripture. But it is clear from archaeological evidence that the God of Creation had been forgotten. All, with the exception of ancient Israel, became entirely polluted with idol worship. Even Israel succumbed to that sin to some degree (though not entirely) under certain unrighteous kings.

The anti-Christ spirit has been behind the building of civilizations extending back in time to Babel. For if the people can be brought into subjugation to ungodly rulers Satan's work is made easier in propagandizing them against the Living God. Yet it has been by God's hand that each major civilization has arisen to bring mankind to the proper place at the end of days.

THE FIRST WAR

The first recorded war in Scripture is found in Genesis 14:1-12:

And it came to pass in the days of Amraphel king of Shinar, Arioch king of Ellasar, Chedorlaomer king of Elam, and Tidal king of nations, that these made war with Bera king of Sodom, and with Birsha king of Gomorrah, Shinab king of Admah, and Shemeber king of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela, which is Zoar.

All these were joined together in the valley of Siddim, which is the Salt Sea.

Twelve years they served Chedorlaomer, and in the thirteenth year they rebelled.

And in the fourteenth year came Chedorlaomer, and the kings that were with him, and struck the Rephaims in Ashteroth Karnaim, and the Zuzims in Ham, and the Emims in Shaveh Kiriathaim, and the Horites in their mount Seir, up to Elparan, which is by the wilderness.

And they returned, and came to Enmishpat, which is Kadesh, and struck all the country of the Amalekites, and also the Amorites, that dwelt in Hazon-tamar.

And there went out the king of Sodom, and the king of Gomorrah, and the king of Admah, and the king of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela (the same is Zoar;) and they joined battle

with them in the valley of Siddim with Chedorlaomer the king of Elam, and with Tidal king of nations, and Amraphel king of Shinar, and Arioch king of Ellasar—four kings with five.

And the valley of Siddim was full of slimepits, and the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled, and fell there, and they that remained fled to the mountain.

And they took all the goods of Sodom and Gomorrah, and all their victuals, and went their way. And they took Lot, Abram's brother's son, who lived in Sodom, and his goods, and departed.

None of the kings or kingdoms are identified as either righteous or unrighteous. Shinar is believed to be equated with Babylonia, Elam was located around the southern area of what is present-day Iran and Iraq (a portion of ancient Persia).

Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, Zeboiim, and Zoar were located in the Valley of Siddim. All but Zoar (to where Lot fled) were destroyed by God shortly after this. These cities had corrupted themselves sufficiently to beg God's judgment. Before God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, along with these other cities, He allowed the pre-Persian kings to conquer them.

ABRAHAM

Even the righteous chosen of God were instrumental in allowing anti-Christ to gain victories through the ages. One such righteous—the most notable man chosen by God to inherit the Kingdom of Heaven—was Abram from Ur of the Chaldees. Abram was a Syrian, a "Shemite," chosen by God and renamed Abraham ("father of the Faithful"). Through the telling of Isaac's marriage to Rebekah, the Bible reveals Abraham's Syrian roots:

And Isaac was forty years old when he took Rebekah to wife, the daughter of Bethuel the Syrian of Padan-aram, the sister to Laban the Syrian. (Genesis 25:20)

Rebecca was the daughter of the Syrian, Bethuel, son of Abraham's brother Nahor. Among His instructions to Israel, YHWH said:

"And it shall be, when you have come into the land which YHWH

your God gives you for an inheritance, and possess it, and dwell therein, that you shall take of the first of all the fruit of the earth, which you shall bring from your land that YHWH your God gives you, and shall put it in a basket, and shall go to the place which YHWH your God shall choose to place his name." And you shall go to the priest that shall be in those days, and say to him, 'I profess this day to YHWH your God, that I have come to the country which YHWH swore to give to our fathers.'

"And the priest shall take the basket out of your hand, and set it down before the altar of YHWH your God.

"And you shall speak and say before YHWH your God, 'A Syrian ready to perish was my father, and he went down into Egypt, and sojourned there with a few, and became there a nation, great, mighty, and populous.'" (Deuteronomy 26:1-5)

This Syrian father, of course, was Jacob, the grandson of Abraham.

Over the centuries the Syrians have been among Israel's greatest enemies, serving in the anti-Christ's camp to destroy God's chosen nation. This animosity began with the conflict between Ishmael and Isaac:

Now Sarai, Abram's wife, bore him no children, and she had a handmaid, an Egyptian, whose name was Hagar. And Sarai said to Abram, "Look now, YHWH has restrained me from bearing. I plead with you, go in to my maid; it may be that I may obtain children by her." And Abram heeded the words of Sarai.

And Sarai, Abram's wife, took Hagar her maid the Egyptian, after Abram had dwelt ten years in the land of Canaan, and gave her to her husband Abram to be his wife.

And he went in to Hagar, and she conceived. And when she saw that she had conceived, her eyes despised her mistress.

And Sarai said to Abram, "My wrong is upon you. I have given my maid into your bosom, and when she saw that she had conceived, I was despised in her eyes. YHWH judge between me and you."

But Abram said to Sarai, "Look, your maid is in your hand; do to her as it pleases you. And when Sarai dealt harshly with her, she fled from her face.

And the angel of YHWH found her by a fountain of water in the wilderness, by the fountain in the way to Shur. And he said, "Hagar, Sarai's maid, from where did you come, and where will you go?"

And she said, "I flee from the face of my mistress Sarai."

And the angel of YHWH said to her, "Return to your mistress, and submit yourself under her hands."

And the angel of YHWH said to her, "I will multiply your seed exceedingly, that it shall not be numbered for multitude." And the angel of YHWH said to her, "Look, you are with child, and shall bear a son, and shall call his name 'Ishmael,' because YHWH has heard your affliction. And he will be a wild man; his hand will be against every man, and every man's hand against him, and he will dwell in the presence of all his brethren."...

And Hagar bore Abram a son, and Abram called his son's name, which Hagar bore, "Ishmael." (Genesis 16:1-15)

It is said by some that Abram displayed a lack of faith in heeding Sarai's plea to bear a son through Hagar. But God had not told Abram prior to this that he would have a son by Sarai. Abram used his reason to think that God's promise would be fulfilled through Hagar. Granted, his reasoning was flawed, but his faith cannot be impugned because he believed God for a son, regardless of how that son might be born. It was common for the patriarchs to have several wives and concubines, so Abram did not sin in taking Hagar as his second wife. Yet his

tory bears out the evil that came through Ishmael's seed—an evil that has warred against God's people almost from the beginning. Ishmael is credited with being the patriarch of today's Arabs. His mother Hagar was an Egyptian, as was his wife. Thus, the Arabs, both Christians and Muslims, rightly look to Abraham as their father. But the anti-Christ spirit throughout the millennia pitted Abraham's children by Hagar against his children by Sarai, the latter being the heirs to the promises of God.



Sacrifice of Isaac by Caravaggio 1603.
the Uffizzi Gallery, Florence, Italy

THE SPREAD OF CIVILIZATION

It was during Abraham's time that the great civilizations of the ancient world began to come into existence. On every continent the effect of man's migration from Babel was felt. The great civilization in Egypt was followed by others which, in many cases, reflected the influences of Babel. In Asia arose the cities of the Indus Valley in what would become the nation of India. The Chinese dynasties began and spread their influences throughout Asia and its islands.

In the Mediterranean, King Minos established the Minoan civilization which flourished on the Greek island of Crete. The first empire was established when King Sargon of Akkad conquered neighboring Sumer and other lands in the Middle East.

In the Americas no such progress was seen as yet, but the Maya of Central America began to form villages among their agricultural bases.

As mankind migrated further from his roots he also strayed further from the faith of Noah. Every ancient civilization developed spiritual communities of priests and priestesses who gained control over the minds of the people. Most began as primitive superstitions revolving around birth, death, and nature. But they also carried with them some of the truths of Noah's faith. God had revealed to Adam that He would send a Redeemer for mankind. The idea of a Redeemer is found in many religions, and there are even similarities of theology.

It is no accident that the ancient Babylonians regarded their goddess Ishtar as a virgin who gave birth to a redeemer son, Tammuz, who was killed and then resurrected to new life. This myth is repeated in several of the world's religions.

Noted theosophist Manley Palmer Hall offers a comprehensive account of the Savior-God myths of ancient religions:

The myth of *Tammuz* and *Ishtar* is one of the earliest examples of the dying-god allegory, probably antedating 4000 B.C.... Being the esoteric god of the sun, Tammuz did not occupy a position among the deities venerated by the Babylonians, who for lack of deeper knowledge looked upon him as a god of agriculture or a vegetation spirit. Originally he was described as being one of the guardians of the gates of the underworld. Like many other Savior-Gods, he is referred to as a "shepherd" or "the lord of the shepherd seat." Tammuz occupies the remarkable position of son and husband of Ishtar, the Babylonian and Assyrian Mother-goddess. Ishtar—to whom the planet Venus was sacred—was the most widely venerated deity of the Babylonian and Assyrian pantheon. She was probably identical with Ashteroth, Astarte, and Aphrodite. The story of her descent into the underworld in search presumably for the sacred elixir which alone could restore Tammuz to life is the key to the ritual of her Mysteries. Tammuz, whose annual festival took place just before the summer solstice, died in midsummer in the ancient month which bore his name and was mourned with elaborate ceremonies. The manner of his death is

unknown, but some of the accusations made against Ishtar by Izdubar (Nimrod) would indicate that she, indirectly at least, had contributed to his demise. The resurrection of Tammuz was the occasion of great rejoicing, at which time he was hailed as a "redeemer:" of his people.²

Corresponding allegories to Ishtar and the "Dying-God/Redeemer," Tammuz, are those of Isis and Osiris in Egypt, Astarte and Adonis in Greece, and Venus and Apollo in Rome, to name a few. These, though coming later in history, drew from more ancient myths that migrated with the dispersion from Babel.

Unbelievers use this fact to impugn the Gospel of Jesus Christ as merely a retelling of these ancient myths. But although all these false gods are products of pagan myths, Jesus is a historical person. And His death, burial and resurrection are well-documented. In truth, the ancient pagan myths developed as corrupted versions of God's promise. In this way God's truth was corrupted by the anti-Christ spirit and transformed into earthy, hedonistic religious systems which allegorized these myths as representative of nature and the "cycle of life."

Whether or not the mother-goddess was actually the earliest attempt to give expression to the concept of deity, as we have seen, her symbolism was the most prominent feature in this aspect of prehistoric religion in the Upper Palaeolithic Age with its sculptured 'Venuses' and other emblems in the decorated caves. Subsequently, this life-symbol became the central feature in the cult of the Great Mother in the Ancient Near East, the Aegean, Crete and Western Asia, and when the king was identified with the sky as the source of transcendental vitality and beneficence, the queen was equated with the earth as the immanent principle es-

sential to the bestowal of providential bounty.

As the Great Mother became more clearly defined, and consciousness of the duality of male and female in procreation was recognized increasingly, from being the Unmarried Mother personifying the divine principle in maternity she became associated with the young god as her son and consort. Then, while she remained the crucial figure, the goddess cult assumed a twofold aspect in the ancient respective roles of creative energy, the one female and receptive, the other male and active. From Neolithic times onward phallic emblems were increasingly prevalent, though maternal imagery was predominant in Western Asia and the eastern Mediterranean, where in the first instance the male god was subordinate to the goddess.³

It is commonly believed that these allegories of death and resurrection allude to the apparent "death" of nature during the winter and the "resurrection" of nature during the spring. Pagan rituals that revolve around this belief are evident in virtually every religion, including some aspects of Christianity. However, these are merely the exoteric, or apparent, aspects of religion, made available to those outside the initiate class. The esoteric, or hidden, meanings are explained by Manly Palmer Hall:

There are, however, but few mature minds in the world; and thus it was that the philosophic-religious doctrines of the pagans were divided to meet the needs of these two fundamental groups of human intellect—one philosophic, the other incapable of appreciating the deeper mysteries of life. To the discerning few were revealed the esoteric, or spiritual, teachings, while the unqualified many received only the literal, or exoteric,

interpretations. In order to make simple the great truths of Nature and the abstract principles of natural law, the vital forces of the universe were personified, becoming the gods and goddesses of the ancient mythologies. While the ignorant multitudes brought their offerings to the altars of Priapus and Pan (deities representing the procreative energies), the wise recognized in these marble statues only symbolic concretions of great abstract truths.

In all cities of the ancient world were temples for public worship and offering. In every community also were philosophers and mystics, deeply versed in Nature's lore. These individuals were usually banded together, forming seclusive philosophic and religious schools. The more important of these groups were known as the Mysteries. Many of the great minds of antiquity were initiated into these secret fraternities by strange and mysterious rites, some of which were extremely cruel. Alexander Wilder defines the Mysteries as "Sacred dramas performed at stated periods. The most celebrated were those of Isis, Sabazius, Cybele, and Eleusis." After being admitted, the initiates were instructed in the secret wisdom which had been preserved for ages. Plato, an initiate of one of these sacred orders, was severely criticized because in his writings he revealed to the public many of the secret philosophic principles of the Mysteries.

Every pagan nation had (and has) not only its state religion, but another into which the philosophic elect alone have gained entrance. Many of these ancient cults vanished from the earth without revealing their secrets, but a few have survived the test of ages and their mysterious symbols are still preserved. Much of

- 2 Manly Palmer Hall, *The Secret Teachings of All Ages: An Encyclopedic Outline of Masonic, Hermetic, Qabbalistic and Rosicrucian Symbolical Philosophy, Being an Interpretation of the Secret Teachings concealed within the Rituals, Allegories and Mysteries of all Ages* (Los Angeles: Philosophical Research Society, 1962), p. XXXV.
- 3 *World Religions From Ancient History to the Present*, Ed. Geoffrey Parrinder (New York: Facts on File Publications, 1983), p. 33.

the ritualism of Freemasonry is based on the trials to which candidates were subjected by the ancient hierophants before the keys of wisdom were entrusted to them.⁴

So while the uninitiated in paganism work themselves over to appease their gods for healing, good crops, fertility, or any number of petitions, the shamans, witchdoctors, and priests, are exercising their spiritual prowess to attain to a higher consciousness.

To the initiated, the myths of the Mother-Goddess and the Dying God symbolize the descent of the human spirit into ignorance, which reaps misery and sorrow upon the imprisoned consciousness. The secret doctrine cures the disease of ignorance for the initiated, and the human spirit ascends again to its divine source, and gains immortality in one form or another, depending upon the particular philosophy.

This is the basis of Gnosticism, and is as ancient as mankind. For those initiated into the Mysteries, knowledge equals salvation, but only if that knowledge is applied to one's life. The hidden knowledge of the Mystery religions is really satanic in origin, granting to man the ability to rise above the mundane. That hidden knowledge is what has been behind man's civilizations from ancient times. The arts and sciences that allow man to build his monuments to the human spirit, even to reach into space, have been allowed through the system of universities to be spread to the uninitiated as well. Yet behind all of the advances attained by the uninitiated, are those who remain hidden, directing the course of human history according to the desires of their master, Satan.

This isn't to say that many or even most of those initiated into the Mysteries are conscious of their satanic influences.

Already predisposed to rebel against righteousness, mankind embraced the occult sciences that underpinned their religious societies believing that they were working for a greater good. They were (and are) largely ignorant of the path to

spiritual destruction upon which their philosophical/religious leaders are taking them.

Witchdoctors, shamans, and similar practitioners of satanic arts controlled not only the people, but the leaders of the budding nations. Kings ruled in accordance with what their seers told them the stars determined. Fate took the place of faith. The satanic influences among the religious leaders of the various civilizations guided them into supernatural knowledge of science. Gaining insights into nature through astronomy, the elements of the universe—the sun, moon, and stars—became not only objects of worship, but astrological guides which determined courses of action. Divination took many forms, but most all forms can be found among all civilizations. There is little difference between the shamans of the American Indians, the witches of the Celts in the British Isles, the witchdoctors of Africa, or their counterparts in China and India.

While civilizations rose and fell throughout the millennia, these satanic arts continued to influence leaders of even the most "advanced" of those civilizations.

These all ensconced the anti-Christ spirit within the nations, and turned men further from the truth of YHWH. This was Satan's design: to erase from men's consciousness any knowledge or remembrance of the God of Adam and Noah.

The knowledge of YHWH remained almost exclusively within the family line of Abraham, and then only through the lineage of Isaac and Jacob. Isaac's brother Ishmael, and Jacob's brother Esau, were not faithful in maintaining the faith of their fathers. Scripture demonstrates that every branch of every godly patriarch, except those to whom YHWH revealed Himself, specifically the lineage that would produce the promised Seed—the Redeemer, Jesus Christ—fell wholly into the anti-Christ's camp.

Some outside that lineage remained faithful to their patriarch's faith, but their numbers were few. In most cases where remembrance of YHWH remained, they mingled faith in YHWH with their

own brand of paganism. This is why idols were found among Abraham's descendents even through Isaac and Jacob.

Yet God allowed these things because of man's ignorance. He saw that man was enslaved to his own sin and that the anti-Christ spirit of Satan knew how to manipulate that sin nature. Thus God determined that He would provide the Redeemer who would reconcile to Himself all who believe in Him.

We see how God's supernatural intervention has been required throughout the ages in order to assure that His redemptive plan would be accomplished. Without His supernatural power holding together the weak-willed among His chosen people, all of mankind would have again been totally engulfed in rebellion as before Noah's Flood. The vast majority of man's efforts in the fields of science, art, literature, and religion are geared for the glorification of man. Satan is too clever to ask man to worship him at this point in time. Although a few have done so, virtually all of mankind has taken to worshipping nature, which includes mankind itself:

Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things.

Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonor their own bodies between themselves, who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen. (Romans 1:22-25)

Following the pattern of Satan, man has sought to exalt himself above the stars of God, making a god of himself.

Nearly all major religions teach that, whether in this life or in the life to come, man will either become a god, or will meld with the "Universal Mind," or achieve some sort of exaltation to deity other than what Scripture promises: to be

resurrected to stand as joint heirs with Jesus Christ in a New Heaven and a New Earth—not as gods, but as sons of the only true God. Even among many Christian sects man is expected to be exalted to the status of godhood.

Man strives for immortality through his own efforts. The revelations of fallen angels have played a major role in helping man achieve longer life and comfort in this life. Consider how miniscule is the portion of man's achievements that truly glorify God. Compare that miniscule portion to the vast majority that glorify man and, in some cases, Satan.

It is to be expected that mankind would stray from God's truth and succumb to Satan's devices. Thus, the history of the nations is a history of rebellion against God—a plunging into darkness that would remain so for millennia until the light of the Gospel would penetrate and bring salvation to all nations.

For this reason the true battleground for the anti-Christ has always been, and will always be, in the midst of God's people. The history of Israel, then, reveals the anti-Christ at work to destroy God's plan of redemption. Until Israel became a nation of sufficient size to be reckoned with, Satan did little against God's chosen patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Their families were too small, and their influence in the world at large virtually nil. It was in Egypt that Satan began to get serious in his war against God's chosen people and His plan of redemption.

ISRAEL IN EGYPT

Most believers in Jesus know the history of Israel in Egypt, how God preserved Joseph and exalted him second to Pharaoh. How his brothers came to him for provisions, not knowing it was he whom they had sold into slavery.

When, some 400 years later, Israel became a nation too great for the Egyptians to tolerate in their midst, the stage was set for the Exodus, and for the persecution by anti-Christ through the person of Egypt's Pharaoh at that time. The events that led Pharaoh to kill the newborn sons of the Hebrews were orchestrated by the anti-Christ spirit. Here we see God's supernatural intervention at work to save Moses so that he might one day deliver Israel out of Egypt. The harsh treatment of the Hebrews was meant by Satan as a way

to destroy them. But God meant it as a way to get them out of Egypt. As long as they had a good life in Egypt there would be no reason for them to follow God's leading from there so that they could enter into the Promised Land. It takes drastic action to move an entire nation.

Having failed to prevent Israel's deliverer from being born, and, in fact, having unwittingly raised the deliverer in his own palace, Pharaoh was faced with the prospect of losing the labor force provided by the Hebrews. Rather than befriending the Hebrews, Pharaoh determined to enslave them, thus sowing the seeds of his own destruction.

MOSES

About the time of Moses, the great empires of the ancient world began to form through which the anti-Christ further enslaved men's minds.

In Asia, Hinduism began to overtake the consciousness of the people.

In the northern countries the Celts began to gather in communities ruled by the Druidic priesthood.

In the Americas the first known civilization there rose among the Olmec Indians. They built temples to their gods and carved enormous sculptures. The Mayas and Incas of Central America developed their civilizations, building their mysterious pyramids, much the same as those of Babel and Egypt. Throughout the world false religions flourished.

This was a natural progression set in motion by Satan's spiritual emissaries. But it was among the Hebrews that the anti-Christ's real spiritual warfare was concentrated. It was his purpose to destroy the Hebrews in order to negate God's promise of the Messiah. But God had other plans. It was He who hardened Pharaoh's heart so that he would not let Israel go.

It appears as if Satan is unable to control or grant wisdom to those he manipulates. Pharaoh, unaware of his role in the anti-Christ's scheme, wished only to enslave Israel, not to destroy them utterly. That is, until Moses successfully completed God's plan of redemption for the nation and took the Hebrews out of Egypt with great power. Only then did Pharaoh seek to bring Israel back into bondage or, failing that, utterly destroy them. Having agreed to let God's people

go, Pharaoh was seduced by Satan into thinking that, in spite of all he and his nation had endured in trying to hold on to the Israelites, he could still challenge Israel's God.

At the same time the anti-Christ was working in Pharaoh to chase after Israel, there were many anti-Christ's within the Israelites' camp who stirred up the people against the deliverance at hand:

And when Pharaoh drew near, the children of Israel lifted up their eyes, and, behold, the Egyptians marched after them, and they were very afraid. And the children of Israel cried out to YHWH.

And they said to Moses, "Because there were no graves in Egypt, have you taken us away to die in the wilderness? Why have you dealt with us this way, to carry us forth out of Egypt? Is not this the word that we told you in Egypt, saying, 'Let us alone, that we may serve the Egyptians?' For it would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians, than that we should die in the wilderness." (Exodus 14:10-12)

Even after beholding the parting of the sea which allowed them to cross on dry ground, and seeing Pharaoh's army destroyed at the hand of God, the anti-Christ's among the people murmured against Moses at every difficult turn of events.

God's power to protect and guide Israel, evident in the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night, did not dissuade the anti-Christ's from trying to wrest control from Moses. They found fault with all Moses did, thus finding fault with the God who delivered them. The manna wasn't enough; the water from a rock wasn't enough; even the provisions for life and protection from every evil on their journey wasn't enough. Their love of Egypt was greater than their love of freedom in Christ:

And when the people complained, it displeased YHWH. And YHWH heard it, and His anger was ignited. And the fire of YHWH burned among them, and consumed them that were in the farthest parts of the camp.

And the people cried to Moses, and when Moses prayed to YHWH, the fire was quenched.

And he called the name of the place “Taberah,” because the fire of YHWH burned among them.

And the mixed multitude that was among them fell to desire, and the children of Israel also wept again, and said, “Who shall give us flesh to eat? We remember the fish, which we ate in Egypt freely, the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlic. But now our soul is dried away; there is nothing at all, beside this manna, before our eyes.” (Numbers 11:1-6)

It was this attitude of despair at losing their perceived blessings in Egypt—even though in slavery—that led the congregation to implore Aaron to fashion a golden calf, emblematic of the gods of Egypt, when Moses was long on Mount Sinai receiving the Ten Commandments from YHWH:

And when the people saw that Moses delayed in coming down out of the mountain, the people gathered themselves together before Aaron, and said to him, “Up! Make us gods, which shall go before us, because as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him.”

And Aaron said to them, “Break off the golden earrings, which are in the ears of your wives, of your sons, and of your daughters, and bring them to me.”

And all the people broke off the golden earrings which were in their ears, and brought them to Aaron. And he received them at their hand, and fashioned it with a carving tool, after he had made it a molten calf. And they said, “These are your gods, O Israel, which brought you up out of the land of Egypt.”

And when Aaron saw it, he built an altar before it; and Aaron made proclamation, and said, “Tomorrow is a feast to YHWH.”

And they rose up early the next day, and offered burnt offerings, and brought peace offerings, and the people sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play. (Exodus 32:1-6)

Amazing, is it not, that even Aaron was seduced into believing that he could fash-

ion an image of YHWH that would resemble a calf? Yet so powerful is the anti-Christ spirit that it will lead even the godly to believe they are serving God when they are, in truth, serving the flesh. The people did not claim to be worshipping any other god than the God that led them out of Egypt. Yet it is strange that they would want to have an idol to worship while continuing to complain about the God that led them out of Egypt. It is clear that they were merely looking for an excuse to exhibit the hedonism that lay beneath their façade of holiness.

More important, they were looking for a god to lead them back to Egypt. Thus, they formed a golden calf. In Egypt, Pharaoh was worshiped as a god, symbolized



Moses with the Tablets of the Law
by Rembrandt

by a calf. With Moses away, the people longed for Pharaoh to replace him. Had anti-Christ succeeded in getting the people to return to Egypt he would have gained a great victory, at the least delaying God's plan of redemption. But God has His timetable, and no one or nothing can prevent Him from accomplishing what He has purposed to do in the time He has allotted to do it.

Is there much difference between the ancient Israelites under Moses and those today who profess (and even take pride) that they are sons of God? In many churches is not a different Jesus proclaimed—a “Jesus” that allows for all forms of unseemly (even hedonistic) behavior under the pretext of worship? A “Jesus”

who does not care about sin as much as He cares about the environment or civil rights? A “Jesus” who accepts those engaged in sinful lifestyles under the pretext of “love”? A “Jesus” who compels his people to bark like dogs crawl like serpents, and roar like lions? A Jesus who changes His mind about what is truth?

Among God's people today are found many golden calves that lead them back to the world from which they had at one time escaped. May we not learn from Israel's folly that resulted in the destruction of thousands of souls in their camp for this blasphemy?

May we not also learn from Israel's complaining against God? We were told by the Lord that our journey to the final Promised Land would be fraught with hardship and persecution:

“Should the world hate you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you.

“If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.

“Remember the word that I said to you, ‘The servant is not greater than his lord.’ If they have persecuted Me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept My saying, they will keep yours also. But all these things they will do to you for My name's sake, because they do not know Him who sent me.” (John 15:18-21)

Yes, we know intellectually that the world hates us. We know that we are merely pilgrims in a hostile land. We know that we are in the world but not of the world. But do we not often long for our former lives when, perhaps, life was easier and there were no spiritual demands placed upon us? Do we not sometimes long for the slavery of Pharaoh which can guarantee us the comforts of the world? Is the anti-Christ spirit not at work in our own hearts at times to destroy the work that the Lord has placed in our hands?

Lest we think that this spirit cannot work in God's people, let us remember how even Aaron and Miriam murmured against Moses, bringing upon themselves God's wrath. There may have been no

evil intent in their hearts, but all men's hearts are deceptively wicked and must be guarded at all times. To say otherwise would be to say that we have no sin, thus making God a liar (1 John 1:5-10).

Because we, as believers in Jesus are indwelt by the Holy Spirit does not mean that we have escaped the penchant to sin. It merely means that we have His conscience within us to guide us away from sin. Let us remember Paul's admonition on restoration of a brother in Christ:

"Brethren, if a man is overtaken in a sin, you who are spiritual restore such an one in the spirit of meekness, considering yourself, lest you also be tempted." (Galatians 6:1)

"And if any man does not obey our word by this letter, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed.

"Yet do not count him as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother." (2 Thessalonians 3:14-15)

The choice to sin or to obey resides within us. To give in to sin is to give in to the anti-Christ spirit. To long for the pleasures of the world is to long for the slavery of Egypt. And to succumb to the pride of life is also to give in to the anti-Christ spirit.

So it was with Aaron and Miriam. Their prior steadfast support for Moses meant nothing to God when their pride got the best of them. It fell to Moses to ask God not to destroy them.

And Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses because of the Ethiopian woman whom he had married, for he had married an Ethiopian woman.

And they said, "Has YHWH indeed spoken only by Moses? Has he not spoken also by us?" And YHWH heard it.

(Now the man Moses was very humble, above all the men who were upon the face of the earth.)

And YHWH spoke suddenly to Moses, and to Aaron, and to Miriam, "Come out you three to the tabernacle of the congregation." And they three came out.

And YHWH came down in the pillar of the cloud, and stood in the door of the tabernacle, and called Aaron and Miriam, and they both came forth.

And He said, "Hear now my words: If there is a prophet among you, I YHWH will make Myself known to him in a vision, and will speak to him in a dream.

"My servant Moses is not so, who is faithful in all My house. With him I will speak mouth-to-mouth, even openly, and not in dark speeches, and he shall behold the person of YHWH. Why then were you not afraid to speak against My servant Moses?"

And the anger of YHWH was kindled against them, and He departed.

And the cloud departed from off the tabernacle, and, behold, Miriam became leprous, white as snow. And Aaron looked at Miriam, and, behold, she was leprous.

And Aaron said to Moses, "Alas, my lord, I beseech you, do not lay the sin upon us, wherein we have done foolishly, and wherein we have sinned. Let her not be as one dead, of whom the flesh is half consumed when he comes out of his mother's womb."

And Moses cried to YHWH, saying, "Heal her now, O God, I beseech You."

And YHWH said to Moses, "If her father had but spit in her face, should she not be ashamed seven days? Let her be shut out from the camp seven days, and after that let her be received in again."

And Miriam was shut out from the camp seven days, and the people did not journey until Miriam was brought in again. (Numbers 12:1-15)

God's favor rests with His anointed, not with those who follow His anointed except to the degree that they obey Him. Jesus Christ is God's anointed Messiah. Disobedience to Jesus' commands places us in the anti-Christ's camp, even if temporarily, until we repent.

During the Israelites' journey in the wilderness there was a band of particularly anti-Christ people who consistently and determinedly sought to undermine Moses' authority.

Now Korah, the son of Izhar, son of Kohath, son of Levi, and Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab, and On, the son of Peleth, [all] sons of Reuben, took men, and they rose up before Moses, with certain of the

children of Israel, two hundred and fifty princes of the assembly, famous in the congregation—men of renown, and they gathered themselves together against Moses and against Aaron, and said to them, "You take too much upon yourself, seeing all the congregation are holy, every one of them, and YHWH is among them. Why then do you lift up yourselves above the congregation of YHWH?"

And when Moses heard it, he fell upon his face.

And he spoke to Korah and to all his company, saying, "Even tomorrow YHWH will show who are His, and who is holy; and will cause him to come near to Him—even him whom He has chosen will He cause to come near to him.

"Do this: you take censers, Korah, and all his company, and put fire in them, and put incense in them before YHWH tomorrow. And it shall be that the man whom YHWH chooses, he shall be holy. You take too much upon yourselves, you sons of Levi."

And Moses said to Korah, "Listen, I ask you, you sons of Levi: Does it seem but a small thing to you, that the God of Israel has separated you from the congregation of Israel, to bring you near to Himself to do the service of the tabernacle of YHWH, and to stand before the congregation to minister to them? And He has brought you near to Him, and all your brethren the sons of Levi with you. And do you seek the priesthood also?

"For which cause are both you and all your company gathered together against YHWH, and what is Aaron, that you murmur against him?"

And Moses sent to call Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab, who said, "We will not come up. Is it a small thing that you have brought us up out of a land that flows with milk and honey, to kill us in the wilderness, except you make yourself altogether a prince over us? Moreover, you have not brought us into a land that flows with milk and honey, or given us inheritance of fields and

vineyards. Will you put out the eyes of these men? We will not come up."

And Moses was very angry, and said to YHWH, "Do not respect their offering; I have not taken one ass from them, nor have I hurt one of them."

And Moses said to Korah, "You and all your company be before YHWH—you, and they, and Aaron, tomorrow. And every man take his censer, and put incense in them, and bring yourselves before YHWH—every man his censer, two hundred and fifty censers, you also, and Aaron, each of you his censer."

And every man took his censer, and put fire in them, and laid incense on them, and stood in the door of the tabernacle of the congregation with Moses and Aaron.

And Korah gathered all the congregation against them to the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and the glory of YHWH appeared to all the congregation.

And YHWH spoke to Moses and to Aaron, saying, "Separate yourselves from among this congregation, that I may consume them in a moment."

And they fell upon their faces, and said, "O God, the God of the spirits of all flesh, shall one man sin, and will You be angry with all the congregation?"

And YHWH spoke to Moses, saying, "Speak to the congregation, saying, 'Get yourselves away from around the tabernacle of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram.'"

And Moses rose up and went to Dathan and Abiram, and the elders of Israel followed him.

And he spoke to the congregation, saying, "Depart, I ask you, from the tents of these wicked men, and touch nothing of theirs, lest you be consumed in all their sins."

So they got up from the tabernacle of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, on every side. And Dathan and Abiram, and their wives, and their sons, and their little children, came out and stood in the door of their tents.

And Moses said, "By this you will know that YHWH has sent me to do all these works, for I have not done them of my own mind. If these men

die the common death of all men, or if they are visited after the visitation of all men, then YHWH has not sent me. But if YHWH makes a new thing, and the earth opens her mouth, and swallows them up, with all that belong to them, and they go down quick into the pit, then you shall understand that these men have provoked YHWH."

And it came to pass, as he had made an end of speaking all these words, that the ground that was under them broke asunder, and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up them and their houses, and all the men that belonged to Korah, and all their goods.

They, and all that belonged to them, went down alive into the pit, and the earth closed upon them, and they perished from among the congregation.

And all Israel that were round about them fled at their cry, for they said, "Lest the earth swallow us up also."

And there came out a fire from YHWH, and consumed the two hundred and fifty men that offered incense. (Numbers 16:1-35)

Korah was Moses' cousin, the son of Moses' father's brother, Izhar. No doubt he was deluded by the anti-Christ spirit to think that because of his position he should have as much authority as did Moses. Again, the anti-Christ spirit did not seek greater authority, but merely authority on par with God's authority. But, again, there can be no parity with God's authority.

As an additional slap in the face of God, Dathan and Abiram claimed that Egypt was the land which "flowed with milk and honey," as if to say that God had led them astray.

Had these anti-Christ's succeeded in overtaking Moses, they would have at worst destroyed Israel and negated God's promise; at best they would have hindered greatly the fulfillment of that promise. But God would not allow them to succeed.

After putting up with one rebellion and complaint after another, Moses brought the people to the Promised Land. Yet because of their fear and continued rebellion they were not allowed to enter in:

And they returned from searching out the land after forty days. And they went and came to Moses, and to Aaron, and to all the congregation of the children of Israel, to the wilderness of Paran, to Kadesh, and brought back word to them, and to all the congregation, and showed them the fruit of the land.

And they told him, and said, "We came to the land where you sent us, and surely it flows with milk and honey, and this is the fruit of it. Nevertheless the people are strong that dwell in the land, and the cities are walled, and very great, and moreover we saw the children of Anak there. The Amalekites dwell in the land of the south, and the Hittites, and the Jebusites, and the Amorites, dwell in the mountains, and the Canaanites dwell by the sea, and by the coast of Jordan."

And Caleb quieted the people before Moses, and said, "Let us go up at once, and possess it, for we are well able to overcome it."

But the men that went up with him said, "We are not able to go up against the people, for they are stronger than we." And they brought to the children of Israel a bad report of the land which they had searched, saying, "The land, through which we have gone to search it, is a land that eats up its inhabitants, and all the people that we saw in it are men of great size. And there we saw the giants, the sons of Anak, who come from the giants, and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight. (Numbers 13:25-33)

The anti-Christ's among the Israelites again murmured against Moses and accused God of leading them to their deaths. For their unfaithfulness in heeding the words of the naysayers, God led Israel through the wilderness until all of the original sojourners had died, with the exception of Moses, Joshua, and Caleb. Upon Moses' death only Joshua and Caleb entered into the land with a new generation of Israelites.

In our next installment we will see anti-Christ at work in Ancient Israel's struggles against her enemies as she dwelt in the Land. ❖