

The New Testament Corroborates the Old

“No prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.”
—II Peter 1:20,21

THERE ARE MANY WHO, while expressing themselves as having considerable confidence in the narratives of the New Testament, feel that the historical records of the Old Testament are largely fictional stories or myths. Those who share this viewpoint may readily think of Jesus as having spoken the truth on the various subjects which he discussed. We are glad of this, for we believe we can present evidence that Jesus and the apostles of the New Testament themselves had faith in, and confirmed, the many disputed records of the Old Testament.

In Luke 3:23-38 the genealogy of Jesus is traced through a long line of ancients, including a number of the well-known personalities of the Old Testament, along with Seth, who was “the son of Adam, which was the son of God.” Thus Luke clearly confirms the Old Testament record that Adam not only was the first man, but that he was the direct creation of God, an earthly “son of God.”

In Romans 5:14 the Apostle Paul writes, “Death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam’s transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come.” Here Paul assures us of his belief in Adam and of the manner in which death came into the world through his disobedience. Adam willfully sinned against the divine law and was condemned. This condemnation, and death itself, were inherited by his progeny even though they may not have sinned with the same degree of willfulness as did Adam. They were born in a dying condition.—Ps. 51:5

This continued unabated until Moses, at which time God gave the one small nation of Israel an opportunity to gain life through obedience to his law. Referring to the Law given to Israel, the Scriptures state that “the man which doeth those things shall live by them.” (Rom. 10:5; Lev. 18:5) Paul explained that while the Law was designed to give life, it failed to do so because of the imperfection of the people.—Rom. 7:10

The Apostle Paul again refers to Adam in I Corinthians 15:22, which reads, “As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.” This also confirms the Genesis record that death came into

the world through the transgression of Adam. Here the additional thought is given that the opportunity to enjoy everlasting life “in Christ” by obedience to divine law will, in God’s coming kingdom of righteousness, be just as far reaching as has been the penalty of death which was imposed as a result of Adam’s sin.

We quote further from Paul: “The first man Adam was made a living soul.” (I Cor. 15:45) These words are taken directly from Genesis 2:7, where we are told that God formed man of the dust of the ground, breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and “man became a living soul.” Then Paul speaks of the “last Adam,” who he says, “became a life-giving spirit.” (*Revised Standard Version*) In these few words, we have set forth the basis for God’s great plan of the redemption and restoration of mankind through Christ.

“Adam was first formed, then Eve.” (I Tim. 2:13; Gen. 1:27; 2:21-23) Here again we note the full confidence Paul had in the details of the Genesis account of creation. He also informs us that “Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression.” (I Tim. 2:14) The great deception which the Adversary perpetrated upon mother Eve was that she would not die if she partook of the forbidden fruit. (Gen. 3:1-4) Satan’s lie that death would not result from disobeying God’s law has deceived essentially the whole world ever since it was first told to Eve. It is the basis of all the “no-death” theories that have existed throughout the ages down to our very day.

In Jude, verse 14, we are informed that Enoch was the seventh generation from Adam. Surely

Jude had confidence in the genealogical record of Genesis. Thus, we find that Adam's name appears in seven different places in the New Testament. These references confirm the fact that he was the first man; that he came under sentence of death because he transgressed God's law; and that all his progeny share in this condemnation.

Jesus also confirms the Genesis record of creation, but without mentioning Adam by name. In Matthew 19:4,5, *Revised Version*, Jesus refers to the creation of man, saying, "Have ye not read, that he which made them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and the twain shall become one flesh?"—Gen. 2:24

In another reference to the Book of Genesis, Jesus mentions Abel, one of the sons of Adam. In a reminder of the trouble which would come upon the Israelites of his generation, Jesus said, "That the blood of all the prophets, which was shed from the foundation of the world, may be required of this generation; From the blood of Abel unto the blood of Zacharias, which perished between the altar and the temple: verily I say unto you, It shall be required of this generation."—Luke 11:50,51

Abel and the sacrifice which he offered to God are mentioned in Hebrews 11:4, which reads, "By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh." Is the story of Cain and Abel a myth? Jesus and the writer of the Book of Hebrews did not believe so!

THE FLOOD ACCOUNT CONFIRMED

Jesus believed in the Genesis account of the Flood. When describing conditions in the earth at the time of his return and second presence, he said, "As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all." (Luke 17:26,27) If Jesus was mistaken concerning the Flood, then we could have little or no confidence in any of his teachings. However, Jesus was not mistaken, as archeologists have since confirmed through evidence found of a catastrophic flood thousands of years ago.

The Genesis record of Abraham, and the promises God made to him, are likewise discounted by many modern schools of thought. Here again, Jesus believed in Abraham, and referred to him several times. On one occasion he observed, "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad." (John 8:56) Abraham's vision of Christ's day was the result of the promise God made to him, that through his "seed" all the families of the earth would be blessed. (Gen. 12:3; 22:18) Evidently Abraham understood that this seed of promise would be someone who would rescue the race from sin and death and bring blessings to all the people. This, which Abraham saw by the eye of faith, we now know has been the very mission of the great Messiah, Christ Jesus, who died and rose again as man's Redeemer.

Paul confirms this viewpoint, also mentioning Abraham. He says, "Now to Abraham and his seed

were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ.” (Gal. 3:16) Then, in Hebrews 11:8-10, we read, “By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went. By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.”

Paul wrote that God preached beforehand the gospel unto Abraham—the good news being contained in the promise that through the Messiah all the families of the earth would be blessed. (Gal. 3:8) This same gospel, or “good tidings,” was proclaimed by the angel who announced the birth of Jesus: “Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.”—Luke 2:10

If Abraham was merely a legendary character, then no promises were ever made to him. This would mean that the first promise of the gospel is a fraud. In that case Jesus was deceived if he supposed that Abraham actually did exist and looked forward to the coming of a “seed” which would bless all mankind. In such a case, we would have no foundation at all in the Bible for “the gospel of Christ, ... the power of God unto salvation.”—Rom. 1:16

Jesus and the apostles corroborate the existence of Abraham by their many references to this “Friend of God,” who is the father of the faithful.

(James 2:23; Rom. 4:11,12,16) Abraham's name appears in the New Testament more than seventy times. One of the very important references is in Hebrews 2:16, where we are informed that Jesus "took on," or "came to help" Abraham's seed. (*International Standard Version*) This he did by becoming that seed, through which all the families of the earth will, in due time, be blessed.—Gal. 3:16; Acts 3:25,26

Another incident recorded in Genesis with which Abraham was associated was the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. The Apostle Peter refers to this. He said that God, "turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes condemned them with an overthrow, making them an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly."—II Pet. 2:6

Genesis records the experience of Abraham offering his son Isaac in sacrifice. Hebrews 11:17-19 refers to this. "By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, Of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called: Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure."

In the Book of Acts we find Stephen, the first Christian martyr, confirming the story of Joseph and the jealousy of his brethren which caused them to sell him into slavery. God was with Joseph, Stephen said, and "delivered him out of all his afflictions, and gave him favour and wisdom in the sight of Pharaoh king of Egypt." (Acts 7:9,10) We can say that nearly every prominent person and incident in Genesis is confirmed in the New Testament.

JONAH

One of the Old Testament accounts which has been classified by the critics as a fantasy of the first order is the one pertaining to Jonah and the account which states that he was swallowed by a “great fish.” (Jonah 1:17) Jesus, however, believed this report to be true, and he spoke about it, as we find in this passage: “Then certain of the scribes and of the Pharisees answered, saying, Master, we would see a sign from thee. But he answered and said unto them, An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the Prophet Jonah: For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the whale’s belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.”—Matt. 12:38-40

Jesus then added, “The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and, behold, a greater than Jonah is here.” (vs. 41) From this it is evident that Jesus had the complete story of Jonah in mind, and believed it. The “sign” of Jonah is the fact that as Jonah was saved from the belly of the great fish, so Jesus would be raised from the dead. Few of the Israelites of Jesus’ day believed this sign. They denied that Jesus had been raised from the dead, even as the critics now deny that Jonah was swallowed by a great fish, and that after his deliverance he preached to the Ninevites and led them to repentance.

THE MANNA

Jesus, in confirming the fact that he would give his life that the dying race might be restored to life,

referred to his flesh, his humanity, as “bread which cometh down from heaven,” and used the manna which fell in the wilderness to sustain the Israelites as an illustration. (Exod. 16:12-35) We quote Jesus’ words: “I am that bread of life. Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.” (John 6:47-51) Thus does the Master confirm another of the great miracles recorded in the Old Testament.

MOSES

Moses, like Abraham, is one of the outstanding personalities of the Old Testament, and over and over again Jesus either quotes from him or refers to him. Moses, in fact, is referred to eighty times in the New Testament, more than any other Old Testament figure. He was the great lawgiver of Israel, having written what the Bible refers to as “the book of the law.” (Gal. 3:10) In the past, critics have claimed that the art of writing was not known in Moses’ day. Now, however, it is realized that writing was known and practiced long before the days of Moses. Jesus knew this and adds his testimony to the authenticity of Moses’ writings.

Speaking to two of his disciples after his resurrection, comforting them with the fact that his death had been foretold, and therefore was not a miscarriage of the divine plan, Jesus quoted from the prophecies. He said to them, “O fools, and slow

of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.”—Luke 24:25-27

After Jesus left the two disciples, and they realized that it had been the resurrected Jesus who had been speaking to them, they said to each other, “Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?” (vs. 32) We can well imagine the feelings of these two disciples when they became convinced of Jesus’ resurrection, and that his suffering and death were parts of God’s plan which had been foretold by the prophets. May our hearts likewise burn within us more and more as the evidence abounds that the entire Word of God is truly a firm foundation for our faith.

DANIEL

One of the favorite prophets for attack by the critics is Daniel. Here again Jesus disagrees. He said, “When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place.” (Matt. 24:15; Dan. 12:11) Here we have Jesus not only referring to Daniel, but also quoting from his prophetic record.

Daniel 12:1 speaks of a “time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation.” Although he does not mention Daniel by name, Jesus refers to this prophecy, speaking of “the time of trouble” as “great tribulation.” He says, “For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of

the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened."—Matt. 24:21,22

The Book of Hebrews also confirms incidents recorded in the Book of Daniel. The account of the three Hebrews in the fiery furnace is well known to Bible readers, as is also the experience of Daniel in the lions' den. Critics would like us to believe that these are merely fanciful stories with no foundation in fact. However, the writer of Hebrews knew that they were real. In this book the apostle presents a number of the experiences of the faithful ones of old, referring to them as those, "Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, Quenched the violence of fire." It was Daniel who "stopped the mouths of lions," and the three Hebrews in the fiery furnace who "quenched the violence of fire," all "through faith" in the miracle-working power of God.—Heb. 11:33,34

Throughout this same chapter of Hebrews, we find confirmation of many other incidents recorded in the Old Testament. Given in brief statements, it shows how these ancient heroes demonstrated their faith in God and in his ability to care for them. Paul mentions Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Sarah, Joseph and Moses. Of Moses the apostle says that he forsook Egypt, "choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season."—vss. 25-27

By faith, we are told, the Israelites "passed through the Red sea as by dry land," and that "by faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compassed

about seven days.” Then Paul speaks of Gideon, who defeated the hordes of the Midianites; and of Rahab, Barak, Samson, Jephthae, David, Samuel and the prophets.—vss. 29-32

In the Old Testament we have the records of two mothers whose children were awakened from the sleep of death. One was the son of a widow, and the other was a Shunamite woman’s son. One miracle was performed by Elijah, and the other by Elisha. (I Kings 17:19-23; II Kings 4:32-36) Paul refers to these two miracles with the simple statement, “Women received their dead raised to life again.”—Heb. 11:35

Paul knew that these miracles of the Old Testament would be followed during the Messianic kingdom by much greater miracles—even the resurrection of all the dead. Speaking of the faithfulness of the Ancient Worthies, he indicates that their inspiration to faithfulness was their hope of “a better resurrection.” In Acts 24:15 Paul speaks of this better resurrection as the resurrection of the “just,” and asserts that the faithful of the past who had hope toward God, believed that there would be a resurrection, “both of the just and the unjust.”

What a great miracle that will be—the resurrection of all mankind! This will not be accomplished in a day but will be the work of the entire thousand-year kingdom of the Messiah. (Rev. 20:6) The “just,” the faithful ones of Old Testament times, will be the first to be restored to life, as “princes in all the earth.” (Ps. 45:16) These will then cooperate in the glorious work of that kingdom, assisting in the recovery and restoration of the “unjust” of mankind back to righteousness and favor with God, through

the holy influences and conditions of the kingdom then in effect under the rulership of Christ.

There are many other quotations and references in the New Testament to the people and events of the Old Testament. However, we believe we have referred to a sufficient number of these to establish the fact that Jesus and the apostles of the New Testament indeed believed that the Old Testament was the inspired Word of God. In this day of increasing chaos and distress in the world around us, it is especially comforting to realize that the testimony of the entire Scriptures is harmoniously built on the message of the gospel of Christ, which holds out such a glorious hope for all mankind.