

# **Origins of Destiny**

**Summary Edition**

**By**

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## Origins of Destiny – Bible Summary

The possession of an accurate record of human history is logically necessary in order to develop a rational worldview for a proper understanding of the universe in which man abides. History is prophesy which has been revealed. Prophesy is history which is yet to be. The Bible is a document which not only discloses the divine record of human origins, but speaks to the future and destiny of mankind. So what is this record, and what is the fundamental framework of its message?

The purpose of this booklet is to present a summary of the Bible, with supplementary comments, in order to provide a brief yet comprehensive picture of human history. Additionally, by virtue of the created order in which we live, it will present certain operational features, to aid in understanding our human behavior, purpose and destiny. Although other authors would have chosen to emphasize other aspects of the Bible or secular history, the following represents what I personally wish had been emphasized in my own education from my earliest years.

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. In six days He laid out the entire cosmos which man and other creatures would occupy. After this general introduction, the Bible focuses on mankind specifically. The first man, Adam, is given the task to till and keep the garden, in an area referred to as Eden. Thus man, as well as the animals with him, is provided with a variety of food for his efforts.

In this first exchange between God and man, God acts much like an employer, or boss, telling his servant Adam what he should do, what he should not do (eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil), and setting his salary (food - the literal fruit of his labor). This first relationship has been called the divine

institution of work, labor or responsibility, which specified how we began to serve God in our stewardship over the earth. Thus, this first divine mandate establishes a master - servant relationship between God and man. Mankind is called to serve, and human service is to be consistent with the will of God.

Eventually God made a helper for the man out of his fleshly being. She is referred to as *woman* for this reason since she was taken out of man – Hebrew: Ish (male); Ishah (female). She is to lend support in the divine tasks that God has assigned for man in tending the garden and subduing the earth. Furthermore, this man and woman can reproduce to create an immediate family, which will eventually expand into becoming human communities – the extended family so to speak.

Genesis 1:26-28 summarizes these three divine institutions or universal mandates of work, marriage, and family while Genesis 2-4 gives further historical details as they occur.

“Then God said, ‘Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps over the earth.’ And God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him; male and female created He them. And God blessed them; and God said to them, ‘Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.’ “

Gen. 1:26-28

Herein is the general will of God for all of mankind. God has made man the lord and steward of His earthly creation. Man is

accountable to God for his service, the woman is accountable for her support of the man, and they are both responsible to expand this stewardship effort through creative ingenuity and procreation. Implicit in this summary is the vision of a global Eden where the law and order of man is to rule over the entire earth and its creatures to the glory of God.

### **The Introduction of Death**

Unfortunately, the blissful situation in the Garden of Eden did not apparently last very long. Before the first recorded birth, the man and woman (persuaded by the serpent) sinned against God through eating of the forbidden tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Without recounting the details in the story of this “Fall”, let us focus on how God responded and how His perfect plan would be altered in dealing with this new situation. We have recorded in Gen. 3:

“And the Lord said unto the serpent, ‘Because you have done this, cursed are you more than all cattle, and more than every beast of the field; on your belly shall ye go, and dust shall you eat all the days of your life; and I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; he shall crush your head, and ye shall bruise his heel.’

To the woman He said, ‘I will greatly multiply your sorrow in childbirth, in pain shall you bring forth children; yet your desire will be for your husband, and he shall rule over you.’

Then to Adam He said, ‘ Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree about which I commanded you,

saying, you shall not eat from it; cursed is the ground because of you; in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life. Both thorns and thistles it shall grow for you; and ye shall eat the plant of the field; by the sweat of your brow you shall eat bread, until you return to the ground, from which you were taken; for from dust thou art and to dust ye shall return.’ ” Gen. 3:14-19

A tremendous shift in the environmental economy has taken place, and God finds it necessary to modify conditions associated with His original mandates. These must be endured by the serpent, the man, and the woman. Whatever, the serpent was (and its association with Satan), it is now cursed and apparently transformed into a creature without limbs. Apart from our curiosity about this serpent (or shining one), a startling announcement of prophetic force is given with regard to the seed of the serpent (or Satan) and the seed of the woman. Conservative scholars generally accept this as the first messianic proclamation, the *protoevangel* or proto-gospel. The seed of the woman, Christ, will one day crush the power and authority of Satan; yet He (Christ) shall be bruised or harmed in the process. This universal prophecy begins to unfold throughout history and is also symbolized in other ancient religions.

The woman shall suffer greatly in childbirth, and for any woman who has had children naturally, this truth goes without saying. Her ‘desire for her husband’ has been understood by many to refer more to her desire *to control the behavior or service of her husband* rather than one of emotional or sexual adoration. This is supported by the following contrast of her husband being the one who will rule over her (as well as a similar expression involving this word *desire* when God speaks to Cain following the rejection of his sacrifice in Gen. 4:7).

Adam, who is rebuked for listening to his wife over God's command, will be reminded of this error every day of his life in his efforts to provide food for himself and his family. He will be sharply reprov'd for his transgression by the undesirable thorns and thistles that will often grow instead of his expected produce. Furthermore, he must now exert additional effort and the experience of sweat will accompany his efforts. Finally, the ground he tills will be a reminder of this new reality of death, since he is destined to ultimately become physically undone and perish into dust.

In addition to these pronouncements Adam and his wife are driven from the Garden of Eden and an armed angel guards against any reentry into this original paradise. However, instead of the leaves with which Adam and his wife used to forge an apron to cover their nakedness, God slays animals and provides them with clothing of animal skins. This is the first sacrifice, instituted by God, to deal with the sinful state of man – innocent life must die to provide a covering for the guilty. The imagery is pregnant with the reality of Jesus Christ, who died for our sin. Furthermore, Adam repents of his anger toward the woman and names her Eve (the mother of the living) in honor of what God will one day do through the seed of the woman to restore humanity to its proper place.

In the course of time Adam and Eve bear children, Cain and Abel. Eve's pronouncement over Cain, her first born, seems to reflect her personal exaltation in her efforts toward "acquiring" a son. However, perhaps her enthusiasm is diminished in time due to Cain killing his brother Abel. The first recorded murder is between siblings and ultimately results in Cain departing from God and moving further eastward from the presence of God.

As Cain and his line begin to build cities, the nature of work, marriage and family begin to change. Metal artificing and the musical arts, along with animal husbandry, are added to the

list with this developing urban lifestyle. Marriage is altered as polygamy begins with Lamech; and his killing of others does not do much to spread familial love. Therefore, the first divine institutions begin to diverge from God's intended purposes. Although the Lord seemingly tolerates or accommodates these distortions as history progresses, there is no scriptural indication that He authorized or desired them. In fact, the stage has been set for a future impending judgment as His original mandates for work, marriage, and family continue to deteriorate.

### *The Noahic Flood*

In the course of time man populates the former world and violence, seeded by a growing self-willed godless influence, spreads across the whole earth. Additionally, there seems to be some kind of alien interference from angelic entities (Sons of God) who take wives for themselves and have unusual offspring. Despite different views, meanings, and details regarding this extremely ancient and abbreviated history from Genesis, two facts are clear. God's purposes and redemptive plan for mankind are being threatened and the Lord is deeply disturbed over the matter. A plan for the global destruction of life begins to emerge and Noah is recruited to build an ark, or barge, to preserve a remnant of both mankind and the animal population.

The first global judgment, called the Noahic Flood, eventually transpires and lasts on the order of one year for the purpose of cleansing the earth. After conditions are suitable to leave the ark, Noah builds an altar and sacrifices some of the "clean" animals that were brought on board in extra supply. The Lord takes note of the sacrifice and responds. He affirms that He will not curse the ground for man's sake or smite living things by a flood again. He establishes the seasonal cycles along with the prior daily and annual cycles. It is also important to take note here of God's continued response to changing conditions and how

previous divine mandates are being modified.

“And God blessed Noah and his sons, said to them, ‘Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth. And the fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth, and upon every fowl of the air, upon all that moves upon the earth, and upon all the fishes of the sea; into your hand they are delivered. Every moving thing that lives; even as the green herb have I given you all things. But flesh with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof, shall you not eat. And surely your blood of your lives will I require; at the hand of every beast will I require it, and at the hand of man. Whoso sheds man’s blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made He man. And you, be fruitful and multiply; bring forth abundantly in the earth, and multiply therein.

And God spoke unto Noah, and to his sons with him, saying. ‘And I, behold, I establish my covenant with you, and with your seed after you. And with every living creature that is with you, of the fowl, of the cattle, and of every beast of the earth with you; from all that go out of the ark, to every beast of the earth. And I will establish my covenant with you; neither shall all flesh be cut off any more by the waters of a flood; neither shall there any more be a flood to destroy the earth.’ And God said, ‘This is the token of the covenant which I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for perpetual generations: I do set my bow in the cloud and it shall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth.

Gen.9:1-13

God reaffirms many of the elements of the original Adamic covenant, but two glaring additions stand out. First, man is now authorized to eat meat as well as the fruit of various plants. However, he must not partake of the blood of an animal, which somehow contains the essence of life. Secondly, the blood of man is even more sacred, and man is authorized to put to death any animal or any man who arbitrarily ‘sheds the blood of’ or murders another man. There is a distinction between *authorized* and *unauthorized* killing. Herein is the seminal establishment of universal human government, based on patriarchal rule, authorizing capital punishment for *perpetual generations*. Verse 9:16 again affirms that this is an everlasting covenant. Despite well-meaning individuals who believe that capital punishment for murder should be avoided or abolished, it is clear that this covenant presents a divine standard for mankind universally. It applies to both Jews and Gentiles to come, currently, and the future. This covenant was made with Noah, the ancient ancestor (as well as Adam) of all mankind since the Flood.

Before we leave Noah and his family, an unusual and tragic event takes place (somewhat clouded by the brevity of the Genesis account). After the first family had settled down and enjoyed the new agrarian order, Noah apparently began to make wine. One day he became drunk and lay naked in his tent. One of Noah’s sons, Ham, somehow ‘saw the nakedness of his father’. When Noah awoke he knew what Ham ‘had done unto him’ and soon he is found cursing Ham’s offspring, Canaan. Without entertaining the variety of proposals set forth for Ham’s actual crime, it is probably more important at this juncture to take note of the prophetic utterance following this event. After the cursing of Canaan to be essentially a slave, Noah prophesies –“Blessed be the Lord God of Shem”. Conservative scholarship identifies this as an indication that the messianic line will be through Shem.

### *The Ancient Old World Order vs. Abraham*

As Genesis proceeds through the genealogies and history of mankind, we come to a signal event which occurred in the plain of Shinar. The people are of one language and function under the leadership of Nimrod, who was of the Hamitic line. They begin to build a city and empire, eventually named Babel (perhaps also thought of as Babylon – phase 1). They eagerly look forward to constructing a tower somehow allegedly to reach unto heaven. Furthermore, they were determined to make a name for themselves (in contrast to calling upon the name of the Lord), and they were seeking to become their own blessing. These people seem to have found their so-called blessing in the safety and security of their city. Much might be said about activities which accompanied their culture such as astrology, attempts to reconnect with fallen angels, or other forms of idolatry. However, even on the surface, it is clear that this entire endeavor is contrary to God’s prior command of spreading out and filling the earth.

Perhaps these people also do *not* believe that God will *not* bring forth another global flood, which they have heard about. Some scholars have suggested that their attempt to build a tower out of brick and slime, or pitch, was an effort in producing a water-proof structure in order to potentially save themselves from another flood sent from God. Whatever, these men had in mind it was certainly a self-willed attempt to direct their own destiny in complete disregard for God’s will.

It soon became apparent that God was troubled at this rebellious development. He planned to thwart this activity in a manner far more efficient and merciful than the one involved with the previous global judgment. Since His true desire is to have mankind spread across the earth, He simply changes their language. Their cultural unity disintegrates and their social-

political experiment falls apart. After the peoples presumably reassemble in their respective language groups they move away from Shinar and disperse as God originally intended.

God chose to confound, or complicate, language (hence the name Babel), and He now begins to implement a new framework for humanity in terms of *nations*. Nations were originally separated on the basis of *linguistics*, not genetics. Although people who migrate over the face of the earth begin to develop certain genetic traits favorable to their geographical environment, all mankind is still one in essence with respect to their original humanity, as made in the image of God. They are kept physically separated for their own protection from any inherent evil that would misdirect or misuse power derived from a godless unity due to our fallen human family. However, when the promised one, the seed of the woman, comes to establish righteousness and rule over mankind, then it will be time to restore the political unity of a redeemed humanity.

At some point, shortly after this initial division of mankind into nations, the Bible records an interesting contrast with regard to the call of Abraham. What mankind attempted, in a corrupt and rebellious fashion, God will achieve through a man called Abram, who is later given the covenant name of Abraham.

“Now the Lord had said unto Abram, Get yourself out of your country, and from your kindred, and from your father’s house, unto a land that I will show thee: And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless you, and curse him that curses you: and in you shall all families of the earth be blessed. So Abraham departed as the Lord had spoken unto him; and Lot went with him: and Abram was seventy and five years old when he departed out of Haran.” Gen. 12:1-3

Note the similar features in the story of Babel with the call of Abraham. The people of Babel choose land in Shinar. God desired that Abram leave to take up residence at another location, the land of Canaan. God will make Abram's name great in contrast to the early Babylonians wanting to make a name for themselves. God will bless Abram and *he* will be a blessing in contrast to the man-made blessing of the city and tower of Babel. Presumably, Babel would have been a worldwide program affecting all of humanity. In Abram it is certain that God intends to bless all the families (nations) of the earth. Furthermore, if anyone attempts to oppose this new program involving Abram, God will see that he is cursed.

This Abrahamic covenant is the fountainhead for both Israel and the Church of Christ. The nation of Israel becomes the *physical, national* manifestation and testimony of God, while the Church ultimately becomes the *spiritual, international* blessing of Abraham through the promised seed, Jesus Christ, to all the families of the earth (precursor to the *True World Order*).

### **Summary of the Divine Institutions**

In the first twelve chapters of Genesis we have essentially summarized the sociological foundations for much of what is entertained throughout the Scriptures and for the rest of human history. These fundamental covenants, divine institutions, or mandates are set forth in the following chart (pg.13) in contrast to those things which would oppose or corrupt God's intentions concerning mankind, before and after the Fall of Adam. At a glance it is easily understood that these mandates, and their alternatives, are as current as they are ancient. However, most do not seriously appreciate (or have never been afforded the opportunity to learn) the significance of the *origins* of these institutions. In fact, much has been done to diminish, depreciate, ridicule, and corrupt the ancestry and influence of the Genesis

record which gives the true account of human history. That which is false has a way of eventually showing itself for what it is (or is not), while the truth alone ultimately prevails.

Once these divine institutions are understood to be the framework through which the world should be seen, many social functions (and aberrations) begin to make sense. For example, since work was cursed by God for man's sake, there is often a sinful reaction regarding the hardship of labor. A further response might be to create various systems of slavery, or involuntary servitude, having others bear one's burden in the production of various goods and services required to live. Another example was the rise of polygamy (Genesis 4) where either lustful pleasure or sexual servitude might perhaps ease the burdens of life. Again, after the Fall, if someone offended you or did not please you, you might be inclined to wound or simply kill them, like Lamech, prior to the Flood.

After the global judgment of the Flood, the institutions of government and nationalism (meant for the restraint of evil) made possible further corruption, by increasing *public* servitude or slavery for the advantage of a few and the disenfranchisement of the many. Once this is clearly understood it really does not matter as much what system of government or economic theory you hold to or say you support. These ideals can be eventually manipulated by those of unscrupulous character to serve their personal ambitions resulting in harm to others. Although a particular philosophy of government or economics may have merit, moral character is more fundamental than philosophy in the day to day operation of these institutions within a society. Despite how many levels of checks and balances one may employ within a given political structure, the moral character of those who operate within the system is crucial. Sadly, the true nature of man is that of sin. Man generally does not seek to subdue the earth as often as he seeks to subdue his fellow man.

**The Divine Institutions**  
**vs.**  
**Godless Alternatives**

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| I. Work, Labor, Capital<br>(Gen. 1:26, 28; 2:15) | I. Sloth, Slavery,<br>Usury (Gen. 3:6)          |
| II. Marriage<br>(Gen. 1:28; 2:22-24)             | II. Divorce, Sodomy,<br>Polygamy (Gen.4:19)     |
| III. Family<br>(Gen. 1:26-28)                    | III. Murder, Abortion,<br>Racism (Gen. 4:8, 23) |

----- *AFTER THE NOAHIC FLOOD* -----

- |                                    |   |
|------------------------------------|---|
| IV. Government<br>(Gen. 9:6)       | IV. Anarchy, Tyranny,<br>Statism (Gen. 4 & 6)       |
| V. Nationalism<br>(Gen. 11:7-9)    | V. Internationalism<br>(Gen. 11:1-6)                |
| VI. Israel/Church<br>(Gen.12:1-8→) | VI. Antichristianity,<br>Anti-Semitism<br>(Gen.11→) |

With this understanding we ultimately see fallen man as an idolater, with his greatest idol being himself. Ironically, in his self-styled godhood he must still seek to somehow influence, manipulate, cajole, or coerce others to serve his will or desires to accomplish what he is too ignorant or incompetent to achieve on his own (out of the essence of his own being). This is a pathetic counterfeit of the Infinite, Personal Creator who formed and fashioned the heavens and the earth. Can you name any society where this sort of manipulative contamination has not existed despite the noble ideals upon which it were founded? Monarchy, or dictatorship, has usually been the historic norm for human societies, and the punctuated attempts at republics or democracies usually degenerate in time toward the rule of single monarch or elite. Only informed citizens who work to fulfill their responsibilities with respect to the creation mandates established by God can hope to secure the blessings of liberty for themselves and their posterity. Sadly, this tends to be lost in time due to the sinfulness which plagues us.

Much of America is constantly bombarded with an evolutionary, humanistic perspective of the past which generally serves to disorient and confound any proper understanding of current events (in light of the past) and the sinister, occult influences which are often present in directing them. Hollywood, various forms of media, and the internet contribute to alternative fantasies, which have seemingly displaced the traditional influence of the church. With regard to human history, it is apparent that if the understanding of our origins is corrupted then our perspective of our destiny will also be corrupted. Only Genesis provides the authentic record of our origins and a sociological framework permitting us to integrate, interpret, and navigate through the fragmented reality of our modern world.



### *The Patriarchal Period to the Nation of Israel*

In the course of time, Abraham spawns a new line of patriarchs. Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Judah, Joseph, and Moses (more appropriately classified as a judge) are in primary focus until the nation of Israel is founded, initiating a partial fulfillment of the Abrahamic covenant. Suffice it to say that the life stories and recorded trials of each of these men have singular importance, but their lives collectively point to the coming of the chosen nation of Israel

What has happened during the first two millennia of human history becomes a significant problem for future generations. People no longer live as long as the antediluvian patriarchs, which averaged more than 900 years. Even the line of this chosen family is quickly diminishing through each successive generation: Shem (600 yrs); Abraham (175 yrs); Isaac (180 yrs); Jacob (130 yrs); Joseph (110 yrs). Man is literally running out of time. His opportunity, time-wise, in coming to grips with the meaning of life, his origins and his destiny is shrinking. In a few more generations the average age of men will exponentially slide well below 100 years. God, of course, has had a plan to erect a nation dedicated to preserving a record of His truth.

For the moment I will bypass the story of the Hebrew people who became enslaved in Egypt and were delivered by God through the hand of Moses. Their deliverance from 400 years of bondage, the miraculous judgment upon the tyranny of Pharaoh, and the giving of the Mosaic Law should have hopefully delighted them so much as to have made them become wonderfully obedient servants of the true and living God. However, forty years in the wilderness show them to be spiritually sluggish as they embark on this new divine enterprise. Has it not been the same with the Church of Jesus Christ even while possessing a better covenant?

In the course of time, a significant number of the Hebrews (second generation) eventually enter the promise land of Canaan and conquer a sizable portion of this territory consistent with divine will. Finally a beachhead, a *physical* testimony to the sovereignty of God is established in the earth to bear witness of the wisdom, beneficence, and preeminence of Almighty God. The nation of Israel is preeminent in its nationhood and it shall be responsible for recording, maintaining, and transmitting the *oracles* of God for its own sake as well as for any sojourner desiring to enquire as to the nature of their national existence. These oracles (think Torah) not only provide the basis for Israel as a nation, they are anchored in the historical reality of Genesis, which is the common history for all of mankind.

Israel is blessed with a perfect balance of human freedom under God's law with God as their king. Nevertheless, their failure in compliance and God's long-suffering mercy are predominant themes in much of Scripture up to the judge and prophet, Samuel. It is during the time of Samuel that an unfortunate shift occurs: the people desire the establishment of an *earthly* king over Israel.

Samuel is a very prominent individual theologically. He is the last of the judges, which began with Moses. Positionally, he is a prophet, a priest and a judge – precursor to the prophet, priest and king fulfilled in Christ. Yet, the decision of the people to establish a human king, so that they could be *like all the other nations*, does not sit well with Samuel (and even less so with God, whom the people have rejected). In the end the people get their king. Needless to say, Saul proves to be a disappointment (as will the coming deceptive global government for the Gentile nations).

Eventually, God selects a man, after His own heart, from the tribe of Judah to be king over Israel. David is beloved, and despite his moral failures, Israel is preserved and a special covenant is made between God and David promising an eternal dynasty.

David is a popular character for most preachers who direct us in identifying with this king who has a heart after God. However, I would like to emphasize a bigger picture in the manifest destiny of the Sons of David who will extend his rule. David's preservation of the nation makes possible a new chapter in history, and in one generation a son of David will rule over an empire which will influence the entire world. This empire reflects an active fulfillment of the Abrahamic covenant in blessing all the families of the earth.

### **A Global Empire of Extensive Influence**

Although the Solomonic Empire receives little notice in much of modern history, the Bible gives a stirring account of the genius of Solomon and his international fame. Specifically, we read from I Kings 5:29-34:

“And God gave Solomon wisdom and understanding exceeding much, and largeness of heart, even as the sand that is on the sea shore. And Solomon's wisdom excelled the wisdom of all the children of the east country, and all the wisdom of Egypt. For he was wiser than all men; than Ethan the Ezrahite, and Heman, and Chalcol, and Darda, the sons of Mahol: and his fame was in all nations round about.

And he spoke three thousand proverbs: and his songs were a thousand and five. And he spoke of trees, from the cedar tree that is in Lebanon even unto the hyssop that springs out of the wall: he spoke of beasts, and of fowl, and of creeping things, and of fishes. And there came of all people to hear the wisdom of Solomon, from all kings of the earth which had heard of his wisdom”

I Kings 5:29-34

Here we find the Solomon is not just a wise and just ruler, but an intellectual, a “Renaissance Man”, who possesses a profound understanding of many things. He is an expert in Botany and Zoology; and he is a philosopher and a musical playwright. The book of Proverbs also includes comments from economics to Meteorology. Overall, he is a remarkable individual and the rest of the world comes to understand this.

Eventually, the ancient world develops comparable respect for Solomon's intellectual capacity to the extent that the kings of the earth, or their envoys, make pilgrimages to hear this great king of kings. The story of Solomon and Sheba is but one episode, which was probably repeated in several encounters, that royalty from other nations experienced while meeting with King Solomon. There is little doubt that the multitude of his wives and concubines were offers to cement foreign alliances with Israel and to curry favor with this wisest of all kings. Although speculative, I do not believe it is too much of a stretch to consider that Solomon had a significant cultural influence on virtually all the nations on earth, as well as they unfortunately had on him. The Bible focuses upon Solomon's moral failure in the manner in which he conducted his international affairs, particularly in his intermarriage with pagan women (an act forbidden by Moses). Yet, it is reasonable to conclude that *true* religious ideas flowed in the opposite direction toward the Gentiles. Briefly stated, the nation of Israel under Solomon had a significant, almost evangelical like, impact on ancient religious thought. This influence can be seen in the fragmented content of many pre-Christian religions.

### **Transition to the Time of the Gentiles**

Solomon was great, and his failures equally great. His accumulation of foreign wives turned his heart from God and idolatry became accepted in Israel. Solomon's accommodation of these foreign women were politically, economically, and spiritually costly

for the nation of Israel as a whole. Moving beyond Solomon, the Bible discusses the initial political division of the nation of Israel between Jeroboam in the North (referred to as Israel) and Rehoboam, Solomon's son, in the South (referred to as Judah). From this time on the Holy Scriptures focus on the fragmented and diminishing reign of kings in both Israel and Judah, who either did or did not do what was right in the sight of the Lord. Eventually, according to the judgment of God (discussed in Leviticus 26), both regions of the nation are dispersed and taken captive by the Babylonians. Israel has fallen and the "time of the Gentiles" is ready to begin.

The Bible turns our attention to a number of Gentile empires as well as the nation of Israel. As one will see later in Daniel, the historical sequence of Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome will play a significant role in ancient history as well as our modern era. However, if Israel was to be the light to the nations, what happened when the glorious light of Israel grew dark? What was the international and spiritual impact when the oracles of God, which flowed from the Solomonic empire, were reduced to a trickle? If the true witness of the God of Israel ceased to be transmitted throughout the earth from the nation Israel, what took its place?

As we consider the religious development in ancient civilizations during Israel's decline, an interesting analogy from the creation/evolution debate, could be used to illustrate the developing situation in ancient history. Evolutionists have generally been puzzled by an "event" in the fossil record referred to as the *Cambrian Explosion*. This describes the fact there is virtually no record of life present in so-called Precambrian strata, and yet relatively complex forms of life abruptly exploded in the Cambrian period which followed. This is inconsistent with Darwinian gradualism and would imply some sort of *catastrophic* event. Similarly the development of religion, or religious ideas, in the ancient world did not actually occur in any gradual evolutionary fashion as some have suggested. In fact,

as the following table illustrates, a significant number of pre-Christian religions may have developed rather abruptly within a period on the order of only 300 years.

Zoroastrianism	~ 600 BC
Jainism	~ 600-530 BC
Confucianism	~ 550-500 BC
Buddhism	~ 550-500 BC
Shinto	~ 500 BC
Taoism	~ 500-300 BC

Although the ancient Babel, Sumer, and Egyptian religious systems preceded the religions listed; nevertheless, this rise is relatively abrupt compared to any view of gradualism for religious ideas in human history. Following the loss of Solomon's influence, this religious context becomes easier to understand in explaining why many religions have similar teachings. In light of the fall of Israel, nations of the world were groping in darkness due to the absence of Israel's divine blessing. As these Gentile cultures grew and developed, their religions were partially derived from Solomon's influence as well as earlier oral Genesis traditions. Both Middle and Far Eastern religions/philosophies still reflect some of the thought provoking and proverbial character of Solomon's wisdom.

In the wake of Israel's decline, God proclaimed that Israel and Judah would be taken captive by the Gentiles. By 586 BC Babylon is in control of Israel and continues to transport many of its citizens to Mesopotamia. Among these captives, we find Daniel.

In the book of Daniel we find that four major empires will successively rise and fall. These are Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome (in cryptic form). Each of these empires will bear rule over Israel, as well as much of the ancient civilized world (at least in the old world). As these empires rose and fell, each one learned from its predecessor how to better rule over and manage the

expanding territories that were inherited or conquered. From what Daniel records, each empire had special characteristics in its development, symbolized by various creatures in Daniel's visions. Instead of focusing on the particular prophesies, or advancing more unsubstantiated guesses as to the prophetic significance of each, let us simply examine documented history to discover what it would have been like to have lived during the time of these empires. In this we might find better clues as to the Biblical meaning for these particular empires when referenced in the Scriptures.

Despite the idolatry of various religious practices, permit me to focus on some significance cultural features observed by secular historians, as well as the Scriptures, that characterize the four empires which the Lord reveals to Daniel. Again, had we lived in these empires these would impact our daily experience as follows:

- Babylon – economic manipulation
- Medo-Persia – political bureaucracy
- Macedonia – humanistic philosophy
- Rome – idolatry of statism

Babylon was a regional empire which existed in Mesopotamia (between the rivers), the land from which Abraham came. Babylonia became a high water mark of ancient idolatry and the city of Babylon is often spiritually contrasted with Jerusalem. The Babylonians had also picked up some ideas from the Egyptian grain storage economy and apparently began to use paper money or notes as debt obligations backed by its grain stores (and perhaps other resources). In the ancient world Babylon became an economic power and a tremendous commercial center which traded in virtually *everything*, included slaves. The area was absorbed with pagan notions like astrology, and temple prostitution was required for all females, high born or poor. Additionally in fact, this form of sanctified sexuality became, sadly enough, a

tremendous economic benefit, which was practiced by individual families where even husbands sold the virtue of their wives and daughters to travelers for profit.

Medo-Persia, as has been observed, was in a very real sense the first *real* empire. Unlike Babylonia, Assyria, or Egypt, Medo-Persia had an extensive geographical reach which spanned from India to North Africa and up into modern Turkey. The multicultural mass of peoples and societies, in a variety of environmental settings, provided a unique administrative challenge, which lead to the development of an extensive political bureaucracy. The satraps, prefects, governors, counselors, judges, ad nauseum listed in the book of Daniel testify to the extension of political management which occurred in this empire. No longer was the whim of a single monarch the absolute power, but it was replaced with a more abstract form of authority: the Law of the Medes and the Persians. As long as various people and cultures within the empire were compliant with a general set of orders (as well as paying the appropriate tribute), their various religious practices or cultural affections were permitted.

Macedonia, or Greece, was characterized by an advanced form of humanism, influenced by history and development of secular philosophy. Although kings and monarchs remained (which was concluded in the reign of Alexander), a new emphasis upon the significance of the individual man was developing throughout Greece. Apart from Israel, no other culture (that I know of) advanced and encouraged the significance of the individual man and his singular responsibilities or achievements. Prior to this (again, apart from Israel) the bulk of humanity operated as common servants or slaves to perform the will of a Monarch and/or his elite.

Alexander, somewhat like Napoleon much later, charged off with his "Macedonian civil code" to conquer the East and

spread the philosophy of the Hellenized West. Although the exploits of Alexander were phenomenal, the humanism of the Greeks would ultimately prove to be as frail as humanity itself. In time Alexander tended to compromise, made cultural concessions with Persian society, and ended his life on a deathbed in Babylon. Ironically, he dies at about the same age as Christ, and his legacy seems to epitomize the man who had gained the world but lost his soul.

Rome eventually comes forth and consolidates the humanism of the Greeks with the monarchal past of the eastern empires. This uneasy marriage, which began for a time as a republic with individual respect for Roman citizens, nevertheless degenerates into a new humanistic class of ruling supermen, the Caesars. They are ultimately worshipped as monarchs or virtual gods as in the past. The ruthless military power of the state is the final civil standard and Rome is the final monstrous beast represented in Daniels visions. Even though the first coming of Christ supplanted the worship of Zeus (Jupiter) and Caesar, the dream of a global secular humanism is not dead. What will ultimately transpire in history has yet to be seen.

The progressive growth of centralized government and secularization can be felt today in our western culture. The burden of debt and economic collapse seem ever present, and political leadership appears more interested in supplanting God than of rediscovering His truths. Modern society has become a monstrous chimera of these ancient empires, possessing most of their traits. However, like Daniel's visions and the testimony of history, a Rock from heaven came down and began to demolish the humanist idolatry of the ancient world. Will Christ return again to destroy the Phoenix which has seemingly arisen from the ashes of these ancient empires?

### *The Time and Call of Christ*

Around 30AD Jesus began His ministry in Israel. The Gospels of the New Testament are the narratives of His life and teachings. He lived as a humble citizen, fulfilled the Mosaic Law, performed miraculous acts of healing, etc. and was put to death as His growing influence became an embarrassing threat to the powers that governed the nation at that time. His rejection and crucifixion became the door through which all of mankind could potentially be redeemed, and His resurrection was the testimony that Death itself had been conquered.

It has been said that for millennia the king of the gods, Zeus or Jupiter, (by whatever name, perhaps modeled after Nimrod, or even Satan) held metaphysical sway in the cultural affairs of ancient civilizations. As we have seen in our summary examination of Daniel's four empires, this had become the international influence in the ancient world. Jesus Christ began to replace this influence. In fact, this is the commission of the church. All authority has been granted to Jesus, for it is Christ alone who is the King of kings and Lord of lords.

His establishment of particular disciples, who became the apostles, primarily concerns us during this so-called church age. As the life of Jesus demonstrated the standard of righteousness which alone could conquer Death, we learn from the apostles the practical guidelines for our lives as Christians. The law of Christ is our spiritual way, and only through His truth may we live life more abundantly. Yet what determines the content of His way and His truth? Many who would follow Christ preach one thing or another; but what is it that we can know for sure?

The ongoing debate regarding Christian love versus the Law of Moses is not new, and it is certainly a topic addressed in the

epistles. However, since Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever, His standard for righteousness existed before the Law, during the Law, and since the Law. Many debate the words of Paul and James as to whether the Christian is justified by faith alone or by works, but many of these discussions miss the mark. Furthermore, varieties of Christian sects have risen through the centuries which emphasize one precept or doctrine, and then another, exalting some set of guidelines as the central organizing principles to which the church should primarily adhere. Despite the various episodes in church history, neither law, nor principles, nor precepts are central to the Christian faith; it is simply the truth, the Truth that *is* Jesus. It is the truth that Jesus is both the Creator and Savior. From this, everything follows. It is the deep understanding that who Jesus is and whatever He says is the ultimate standard for everything. The Bible, through the agency of the Holy Spirit, is what Christ as God has spoken consistent with God the Father. It is the awareness that everything has been created by Him and we are to see the reality of His glory in all of creation.

With regard to the ongoing debate over whether the Mosaic Law was “done away” with the coming of Christ, we should understand that *the creation* has not been done away with. The perpetual covenants of Genesis still stand as the testimony of Christ’s will as the Creator of the universe (and its creatures) that He chose to redeem. This understanding was prior to the coming of either Moses or the nation of Israel, which did nothing but advance and preserve the continued program of the person, work and will of God. The Mosaic Law at its best was the standard for law and order for a nation, and even at its “worst” would remain as the best pedagogical testimony and shadow of the eternal realities of Almighty God.

In Christ’s own words, “You must be born again”. You must be “recreated”. You must be transformed, and then transitioned from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of light. YOU CANNOT DO THIS. You did not create, or birth yourself, at the beginning of

your life; neither can you recreate or cause yourself to be “born again”. We are all caught up in a universe which is dying, and in the throes of this death we are dying also. Our greatest need is to become a new creature, a new creation, in preparation for a new heaven and new earth which is coming. You can only appeal to the Creator who desires to redeem you, cleanse you, sanctify you, or in short - to save you. Don’t think about working to merely adhere to some religious “system” in order to save yourself (which is impossible). Cry out to Jesus Christ, the Savior, *to recreate you*. He stands at the door. Beyond this, as newborns, we learn to grow in His person, His work and His will as affirmed in the whole of the Bible, through the Holy Spirit who abides in us.

### *The Last Days*

We are able to trust the Bible because it has proven to be historically comprehensive, scientifically accurate, and prophetically confirmed. Although a number of scoffers would contest all or part of those characteristics, the integrity of the Bible has prevailed despite the perennial siege of naysayers who eventually pass away. However, even with this confidence one witnesses a broader degree of uncertainty as Christians attempt to discern future events from the Scriptures.

The book of Revelations, or the Apocalypse of St. John, is the only book within the New Testament that is primarily dedicated to future prophecy, which is to say – things to come. There are a number of schools of thought regarding how this material should be interpreted, usually *as a function of time*. For example, preterists see the events in Revelations as having been essentially fulfilled by 70AD. Historists see these events as being ongoing throughout the last two thousand years of church history. Futurists see the events of Revelations as beginning to be fulfilled in our own day, while the spiritualist camp is the only group which sees these events as setting forth spiritual principles independent of any particular time frame.

For the moment let us briefly consider the broadest message of Revelations apart from our angst over some temporal framework. Revelations is a progressive unfolding of the glorification of Jesus Christ and His coming to judge the entire world for its wickedness and rebellion against God. In the briefest sense, the world has stood against the universal plan or ordinances of God (as set forth in the divine institutions mentioned earlier) by creating a global socio-economic and cultural chimera as an idolatrous engine to further its rebellion. Christ will come again to finally quell this uprising which has proven (or will prove) itself to be irredeemably opposed to the worship and service of the divine Creator and Savior. Despite a myriad of details on *when* this did or will happen, I believe this represents the overall message from this prophetic book. Jesus Christ brings divine judgment to the world and a new heaven and a new earth will eventually ensue.

Apart from the standard eschatological positions which generally absorb the interests of many, we are still left with how Revelation applies to us today and the future, even if the preterist had been the intent of John. The modern expression “what goes around comes around” is as Biblically true as it is culturally observed. Even, as alleged, if Nero was *the* antichrist that John had in mind and the Fall of Jerusalem (characterized as Babylon) was the apocalyptic judgment (a view to which I do not personally hold), people have not stopped being evil or even attempting to conquer the world. People have still been sinful in the same general ways that they were prior to 70 AD. Personally, I think a more relevant question is how I should appropriately avoid, insulate and/or separate myself from these kinds of evil since I am “in the world, yet not of it”. Furthermore, how do I resist, confront, challenge, or neutralize evil in order to appropriately “resist the devil and make him flee”. These, I believe, are the more fundamental concerns. I even believe the Law of Moses, as well as the rest of Scripture can help here.

At times I marvel at how fellow believers will advance their personal restraint of vice (don’t smoke, drink, or chew or hang with girls that do) as moral ideals and yet entangle themselves with debt, bureaucratic approval, or other forms of secular advancement which seem to me to be more vexing to the spirit. To be sure, God will indeed call His people to infiltrate every arena of human endeavor, as well as into every continent, in order to advance the cause of Christ. Yet do Christians take such risks in light of a specific calling or do they just do as the world expects them to. Business as usual, and other “worldly” procedures, may tend to advance an antichristian agenda by default.

Slothfulness or slavery, divorce or sexual perversion, and the lack of (or prevention of) the appropriate pattern for parent-child relationships destroy the family, which is foundational for every society. Abuses in government, at every level, destroy the integrity of a civilization. Finally, the rejection of God’s redemptive plan for mankind and society darkens understanding, meaning, purpose, value, and the future for any culture or society. Eventually at some point, that culture, that society, that civilization, will die.

The world has correctly analyzed the global problem and sees the need for a competent elite or monarch. Jesus Christ is the only competent and worthy candidate who is able to fulfill that role for the blessing of all mankind. Unfortunately, the world will approve and follow one who seeks to usurp the place of the infinite, personal Creator over men. He will not succeed. It is the great hope of Christians, that at some point in history, Christ will return to claim His rightful place to rule over a new humanity. May He help us endure until He returns.

# Appendix A

Contrasts in Social Organization for  
Israel and the Nations

## National Israel vs. Gentile Nations

<u>Israel</u>	<u>Gentiles</u>
1. <b>Divine Law (system of law)</b> Ex 20+ Deut 5+	1. <b>Systems of Men</b>
2. <b>Agrarian Emphasis</b> Num 26; 33:54 Josh 13-22	2. <b>Urban Emphasis</b>
3. <b>Private Property</b> Josh 13-22 I Kings 21	3. <b>Collective Property</b>
4. <b>Emphasis on Family</b> Num 26 Josh 13-21	4. <b>Emphasis on State</b>
5. <b>Family Inheritance</b> Num 16-36 Josh 13-24	5. <b>State (Public) Domain</b>
6. <b>Civilian Execution/Militia</b> Lev 20,24	6. <b>Professional Military</b>
7. <b>Fixed Tax (Tithe)</b> Lev 27; Num 18; Deut 12,14	7. <b>Arbitrary Taxation</b>

# Appendix B

## Mystery of Iniquity (The Empires of Daniel)

1. Babylon - Economic Manipulation  
Regulation of economic behavior through debt (extension of Egyptian storage economy); Temple prostitution was mandated for females for economic reasons. As debt increases private property (and private initiative) will be lost.
2. Medo/Persia - Bureaucratic Regulation  
Extensive multicultural empire leading to greater divisions in political management; Relied on bureaucratic licensing, permitting, fee structures, etc. over daily activities to control culture.
3. Greece - Humanistic Philosophy  
Cultural shift toward a more secular view of life and socio-political interaction based on reason. Reason is valuable but it should be based on divine propositions, not finite human knowledge.
4. Rome - Military Statism  
All glory and authority rests on the power of the state; the state, or emperor, becomes God. Force is the operative principle: Might makes Right.