

The
DA VINCI CODE
HOAX

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PROLOGUE

Scandals... cover-ups... and murders. Is Christianity the biggest religious cover-up on this planet?

What is the secret that men will kill to protect?

When Friends of the Priory of Sion set fire to his school, principal Greg Ryan was determined to discover the truth. One man was to die before all the facts came out. Greg would stumble upon a dark secret that threatened to destroy a powerful organization.

Was Jesus as “God” decided by a church-and-politics vote to consolidate power in the 4th century?

Did Leonardo da Vinci embed clues in his paintings that Jesus Christ married Mary Magdalene and had children? Does Christianity suppress women?

And why do Christians really observe Sunday – the day of the pagan sun god? Is there a colossal cover-up?

To put it bluntly, is Christianity a colossal hoax?

Greg Ryan would also find himself puzzling over other intriguing secrets:

- Has the Holy Grail been found at last?
- What is this rags-to-riches “royal blood” scandal?
- Why did a housewife bake a book in the oven?
- How did a cloud wipe out a 22,000 strong mob of assassins?

- What are the lost cities of Syria?
- Mass murders and book burnings - why?
- Are there 200,000 errors in the Bible?
- How advanced is the Jesuit plot to eliminate Protestant churches?

Are you ready for this? So take a deep breath and enjoy one of the most amazing TRUE stories on this planet...

1

Friends of the Priory of Sion -

THE CULT INFERNO

“Al, wake up! Someone’s banging down the door!”

Science lecturer Al Coster turned over, sleepily.

“Wake up, wake up!” Gloria shook him now. She switched on the bed lamp.

“What!...what’s going on?”

Al awoke with a start. Then he heard the shouting. Leaping out of bed, he lurched forward. As he neared the door the thumping grew louder. “Al, Al, open up!”

He swung the door open. Greg Ryan was facing him. “Quick. Come with me. It’s been blown up!”

Al rubbed his eyes. “What...”

“The school’s on fire. You’ve gotta come!”

Al threw on a coat and staggered to the principal’s car.

“Your phone out, or something?”

“Sorry, it must have been off the hook,” he replied.

The place was an inferno... Al’s classroom gone... and two others.

“There was a woman lying right there.” Greg motioned toward the aspen tree just outside Al’s classroom. “And a petrol can. Seems she tripped and knocked her head, getting away.”

“Who was it?”

“We don’t know yet. She was rushed to hospital. Badly burnt.”

* * * * *

Al reeked of smoke as he ambled in. Gloria and the kids were having breakfast. “No school today,” he said.

The police had gone to the emergency ward. Allison Meehan was conscious. She would be questioned about arson. After dismissing staff, Greg had notices put up. Soon he was back at Al’s place. And was still there when the police arrived.

“The fire started in your classroom,” said the officer to Al. “Any idea why someone would target your room?”

The principal of Thornton High School glanced at Al. “Do you mind if I speak?” he asked.

Al stood there, still in shock. Greg faced the officer. “Look, I don’t know if this means anything. But this lady Meehan burst into my office the other day. And was she agitated! She wanted me to fire Al. I said no. She was exploding – almost like she had a hate obsession against him.”

The officer eyed Al. “Well?” Al shrugged.

Gloria spoke. “Wait a minute, honey. What about that Holy Grail phone call?”

“Yes, what’s that?” The officer frowned. “Don’t keep anything back.”

“Oh, it’s not much really. I told her I’d uncovered something. And did she fly into a rage!”

“Hold it! What did you say to this woman? Do you have any idea why she might have it in for you? What is it you had uncovered?”

Al tossed a glance at Gloria. She nodded. “Okay, here it is, officer. You know that book *The Da Vinci Code*?”

“Go on,” motioned the officer.

“It’s spawned a fan club here in Thornton. Allison Meehan has founded a group called ‘Friends of the Priory of Sion’. They’ve taken Dan Brown’s book literally and almost made a cult out of it. Meehan calls herself the Guru. Well I happened to say I had uncovered evidence that the Priory of Sion history in *The Da Vinci Code* was a fraud. And did she ignite! My phone could have melted!”

“Anything else?”

“That’s all.”

The officer snapped his notebook shut. “If you remember anything else, phone me.”

As he drove off, Greg turned to Al. “You know what you’ve done? You’ve burnt down the school with your big mouth. Listen man... I’m going into this, boots and all. I’m going to investigate this *Da Vinci Code* – and also your whole silly claim against it. Starting tonight. I want to know what’s going on here.”

“Yeah, come over,” smiled Al.

“Bring Bronwyn with you,” said Gloria. “The children will be going to their grandma for a few days. I’ll have dinner ready at six.”

2

The investigation begins -

THE DA VINCI CODE ACCUSATIONS

“Okay,” teased Gloria as Greg put down his spoon, “you guys go and play in the living room. “We girls will clean up in here.”

“I bought that book *The Da Vinci Code* today,” announced Greg. “No wonder Meehan hates you. It seems Brown’s got a slick argument. And you’re out to spoil it.”

“You could say that,” grinned Al. “I told her it was a big con.”

“Then I insist we go through this,” said Greg. “Point by point. I see this Brown guy makes some serious claims that need addressing.”

“Okay then.” Al moved across to his desk, picked up a pad and pen, then sat down again.

“Good,” said Greg. “Shall we list them?” Al gulped. He saw that the principal had yellow paper markers right through the book. Still standing, he opened it and began flicking through them, silently.

Al watched in silence.

12 *Da Vinci Code* claims

Then Greg looked up. “You know what?” he asked. “It seems to me that this is all about Dan Brown versus Jesus Christ. And if you

ask me, Brown seems more or less plausible. Get your pen ready. I'm going to list these points."

They both sat down.

"Very well," said Greg. "Point 1. 'The Bible is a product of man,... not of God.... History has never had a definitive version' of the Bible." (page 231)

"2. Jesus Christ has a surviving bloodline [the Sang Real] and was a mortal prophet."

"3. An ancient, secret organization called the Priory of Sion has protected this secret and the descendants of Jesus and Mary Magdalene over the centuries.

"4. This organization is connected to the Knights Templar.

"5. The Priory of Sion seeks to re-establish the royal line of Jesus on the thrones of France, other European countries and Israel.

"6. The establishment of Jesus as 'the son of God' was officially proposed and voted on by the Council of Nicaea... Jesus' divinity was the result of a vote... Constantine turned Jesus into a deity.' (page 315).

"7. 'Constantine commissioned and financed a new Bible, which omitted those gospels that spoke of Christ's *human* traits and embellished those gospels that made Him godlike. The earlier gospels were outlawed, gathered up, and burned... the modern Bible was compiled and edited by men who possessed a political agenda – to promote the divinity of the man Jesus Christ and use His influence to solidify their own power base.' (page 317)

“8. Leonardo da Vinci deliberately embedded clues in his paintings to expose the truth about Jesus.

“9. Moreover, powerful men in the early Christian church were so afraid of losing their power to women, that they invented lies to devalue the female.’ (page 322)

“10. The Holy Grail is not just a lost cup belonging to Jesus. It ‘is symbolic of a person.... A woman who carried with her a secret so powerful that, if revealed, it threatened to devastate the very foundation of Christianity!’ (page 322) This woman was Mary Magdalene. ‘Not only was Jesus Christ married, but he was a father... Mary Magdalene was the Holy Vessel. Her womb was the chalice that bore the royal bloodline of Jesus Christ.’ (page 336)

“11. And to cover up this dangerous fact – to hide the Holy Grail - the Church demonized Mary Magdalene into being a prostitute.

“12. Brown says the Bible is sexist in stating that Eve ate the fruit – and thus that she, the first female, brought sin into the world.

“Brown says these are established historical facts. So it boils down to this, Al - that Christianity is a big hoax!”

Al leaned forward. “Yes, Greg, from all that, it sure seems like it.”

Greg placed the book on the couch. “So what did you say to upset that woman? Be specific.”

So much is true

“Look, firstly,” said Al. “some of Brown’s claims are true. For example, that da Vinci understood the PHI proportion in nature. And locations in his story are real... the Louvre Museum... Harvard. Also Da Vinci’s *Mona Lisa*... *The Last Supper*... they

are actual paintings. The Opus Dei is a real organization. And there *was* a cup at the Jesus' Last Supper. The emperor Constantine, Jesus, John, Peter, Mary Magdalene... those were all real people.

“And yes, Constantine did hijack Roman Christianity to accomplish his political aims. And a corrupted Bible was published to help ‘unify Rome under a single religion. And he chose **Christianity** as the official religion simply because he could see that Christianity was on the rise, and he backed the winning horse.’ All true, Greg.

“Then Brown has his Dr Langdon saying, ‘Originally Christianity honored the Jewish Sabbath of Saturday, but Constantine shifted it to coincide with the pagan’s veneration day of the sun.’ Langdon grins and adds, ‘To this day, most churchgoers attend services on Sunday morning with no idea that they are there on account of the pagan sun god’s weekly tribute – **Sunday**.’ (pages 314-315) Again, no dispute. Brown has that right.”

Greg’s head lurched forward. “Then why on earth did you get that woman so mad? Why tell her it’s a big con?”

Brown’s clever pseudo history

“Okay,” said Al, “it is important to notice at the outset that Dan Brown is not a historian and has relied heavily on others’ sources for the so-called ‘historical facts’ in the book.”

“Oh, come on!” argued Greg. “From what I can tell, it sounds like genuine, suppressed history.”

“Good history?” Al rubbed his wrist. “Okay, let’s start with the title – *The Da Vinci Code*. Brown says that Leonardo da Vinci

deliberately embedded clues in his paintings that, when discovered and interpreted correctly, would expose the truth about Jesus.”

Greg looked at Al. “So?”

“There exists no proof anywhere on earth that da Vinci ever purposely inserted symbolism into his pictures for future discovery. You want the truth? That’s not da Vinci’s code at all. It’s ***Brown’s code***.”

“Brown’s code?” sniggered Greg.

“Sure,” smiled Al. “The original source of this ***code*** is not da Vinci, but Mr Brown himself. Brown’s research has been heavily criticised by Mr Justice Smith, the English judge, who became something of an expert on the *Da Vinci Code*, when he presided over the case brought by the American authors of the book *The Holy Blood and the Holy Grail*, against Mr Brown. He has stated:

The reality of his [Dan Brown’s] research is that it is superficial... Mr Brown knew very little about how the historical background was researched. (Mr Justice Smith, April 2006)

Greg sniffled. “How about a few examples?”

“All right. Brown says Versailles is north-west of Paris, when it is south-west.

“The Merovingian French kings (5th to 8th centuries) are described as the founders of Paris. But the truth is, Paris existed in Roman times.

“The book says that the Knights Templar were involved in the designs of Gothic cathedrals. But none are known to have been

involved.

“Brown also claims that a secret monastic order called the Priory of Sion existed from the Middle Ages to protect the royal bloodline of Jesus. This is totally unjustified by any historical evidence. The *Dossiers Secrets* (allegedly documents from the Priory) are admitted forgeries put together by a Pierre Plantard in the 1950s.

“The book claims the Knights Templar were the military wing of the so-called Priory of Sion and that they discovered, then safeguarded, the secret of the bloodline of Jesus. There is ***absolutely no historical evidence*** to justify this claim. The Knights Templar became established around 1099, after the capture of Jerusalem from the Moslems, as the protectors of the pilgrims and of the Kingdom of Jerusalem. They quickly became rich and powerful through donations of land and wealth from Christians in Europe. As a result, the Order became arrogant and began to make its own treaties with people like the Assassins and butchering other Arabs travelling under a flag of truce. When the Crusader kingdom fell, they returned to Europe, but were attacked by King Edward II of England and King Philip the Fair of France, who coveted their wealth and feared their power.

“The current Grand Master of the Temple Church in London says of the *Da Vinci Code*, ‘Historically it’s rubbish.’

“Brown also says much about the Catholic organization Opus Dei. Central to his plot is a murderous monk called Silas. Fact: There are no monks in Opus Dei.”

Greg flushed.

Al looked his colleague in the eye. “Brown is a masterful writer of fiction. And he uses some real people and places as props for his tale. Then he weaves – quite cleverly - a fable around them. If you

bear this in mind and read it as a ‘novel’, you can still enjoy it. But don’t bet on it being true. That will be *dangerous*.”

“Dangerous? What on earth are you saying?”

“Just this. Brown has an agenda.”

“An agenda? Oh, come off it!”

Al looked him in the eye. “The average reader may be unaware of this, Greg. But Brown is promoting a cult.”

“A cult?”

“That’s right. And this cult is so dangerous, it will end up *destroying* lots of people. Many folk will be so caught up in the story, they will be unaware that subconsciously their minds are being conditioned to believe a dangerous hoax.”

“What are you talking about?”

“I’ll get to that. But it will destroy people. And all because of a colossal hoax!”

“A hoax?” responded Greg skeptically.

“Brown’s thriller is not only a hoax. It’s also a thinly disguised *smear campaign* against some innocent people.”

At that moment, Gloria and Bronwyn emerged from the kitchen, bringing some drinks. “What’s this about women?” asked Bronwyn, with a little laugh. “Did I hear you talk about suppressing woman?” The girls sat down.

“Selective hearing,” grinned Greg.

“We’re discussing *The Da Vinci Code*,” explained Al. The author says Christianity is a big con which *seeks to suppress women.*”

Gloria drew her chair closer to her husband’s. The principal fiddled with his collar. “Yes. Christianity conspired to put down women.”

“And Allison Meehan wanted to lift them back up?”

“In the beginning,” said Greg, “it was a matriarchal society. Then Christianity comes along and seeks to suppress women. Yeah, that’s probably right.”

“Of course not! And that’s what I told Ms Meehan,” said Al.

Gloria glanced up with a troubled look. “So Ms Meehan gets angry. And she blows up Al’s classroom?”

Greg stared at Al for a moment. “It seems to me you provoked that woman.”

Al smiled. “Maybe. Do you want it straight?”

“Spit it out.”

“Here’s what I told her. In the BC era, when paganism was dominant, the lives of most women were held in very low esteem. Women had no rights. They were regarded as their husbands’ property. In Greece, Aristotle taught that a woman ranked somewhere between a man and a slave. Plato taught that a cowardly man would be reincarnated as a woman.”

Bronwyn shivered. “So woman was just a number?”

Greg scowled at her.

Al continued. “In China, girl babies were disposed of as a liability. In India, a wife was expected to follow her husband to death on the funeral pyre.”

“Okay,” said Bronwyn. “And Christianity?”

Al leaned forward. “The Bible portrays Esther as courageous, Ruth as loyal, astute and shrewd, Deborah as a judge in Israel. And Jesus’ very first announcement that He was the Messiah was shared with a **woman**. Then Paul declared that neither males nor females have precedence. And that a husband is to give up his life for his wife. (Esther chapters 1 to 10; Ruth 1 to 4; Judges 4; John 4:17-26; Galations 3:28; Ephesians 5:25)

Bron’s eye’s widened. “Really?” She glanced at her husband. Greg felt a sudden surge of uneasiness.

“There’s more,” said Al. “In the time of Jesus, according to contemporary custom, a woman would not be allowed to testify in court. It was said they couldn’t be trusted. But in the New Testament a **woman** is the one to testify regarding the most important announcement in Christian history: Jesus’ resurrection from the dead. Christianity hinges on this event – and a **woman** was chosen for this highest honor.” (Matthew 28:1; Mark 16:1; Luke 24:10)

Bronwyn gasped.

“I ask you, if Christianity was as anti-female as Dan Brown tries to make out, then wouldn’t it have deleted such female-honoring passages from the Bible?”

“Then why does Christianity demonize Mary Magdalene?” challenged Greg. “Making her out to be a prostitute?”

Al smiled. “A prostitute? There’s no evidence at all that the early Christians tried to tarnish Mary Magdalene’s reputation in that way. The Bible doesn’t call her a prostitute. Most historians agree that the reference to Mary as a prostitute did not begin until the 6th century with Pope Gregory I.

“So *The Da Vinci Code* got that wrong. The Bible and Christianity are not anti-women. They teach that men and women are created equal, but different. *The Da Vinci Code*, on the other hand, expresses implicit and explicit anti-male sentiments.”

The anti-female book of Thomas

Greg dug his feet into the carpet. “Whew!” he breathed. “Anyway, I notice Brown promoting a Book of Thomas. Have you read it?”

“Glad you asked.” Al arose and ran his finger along the stack of books. “I actually have a copy of it somewhere here.” He pulled a grey covered book off the shelf. “Ah, here it is.” He sat down and fingered through it. “Listen to what it says:

Simon Peter said to them: “Let Mary leave us, for women are not worthy of life.” Jesus said, “I myself shall lead her in order to make her male, so that she too may become a living spirit, resembling your males. For every woman who will make herself male will enter the kingdom of heaven.” (*Gospel of Thomas*, saying 114)

“What chauvinistic rot!” exclaimed Bronwyn. “Is that a Bible book?”

“Oh man, no! That’s why Brown likes it, I s’pose... it’s not a Bible book. It’s a non-Christian book written in the second century. It mentions Jesus - but it reflects the paganism of that time.”

“Wait a minute, Al,” interjected Bronwyn. “What about Eve? Doesn’t the Bible cast her in a bad light? Doesn’t it say that she, the first female, brought sin and trouble into the world?”

“A common misconception,” said Al.

Greg stiffened. “But *The Da Vinci Code*...”

“It repeatedly *misquotes* the Bible,” chirped Al. “You want it straight? The *instruction* not to eat the fruit was *given to the male*, Adam – before the female was created. (Genesis 2:16-18,22) The greatest disobedience was the failure of the male to give protection, leadership and support to his home. This was not just a woman’s sin. It was primarily a *man*’s wrong.

“The record states that cowardly Adam tried to shift the blame onto Eve. He moaned, ‘*the woman* whom you gave me...’ (Genesis 3:12) But Eve was an accomplice, so their Maker confronted both of them. In fact the Christian book of Romans spells it out as clearly as language can: that sin entered the world through the actions of one *man*, Adam. (Romans 5:17) Come on, is that anti-female?”

“Thanks,” smiled Bron. “That’s straight enough.”

Al looked at them each in turn. “Now there’s something you need to know. I have some *explosive information* that’s crucial to understanding this *Da Vinci Code* issue. Do you have time?”

“Well, the fire’s closed our school,” sighed Greg. “No early morning rising... so shoot away.”

3

The great conflict of the ages -

THE BIG PICTURE

“Al, you referred to some *explosive information*,” said Greg. Information that is crucial if we are to understand the battle that’s going on about the *Da Vinci Code*.”

“That’s right,” nodded Al. “You recall that Shakespeare said, ‘All the world’s a stage. And we are only players’? Or something like that. He was right, you know. History *is* like a play. There *is* a drama going on. The events are all connected.”

“An intriguing idea,” responded Greg. “But can you be sure?”

“The evidence shouts at us!” Al looked him in the eye. “Neither relentless cycles nor blind coincidence control our existence.

“There are *patterns* in the events of human life and history that mock the idea of mere coincidence. You mightn’t like this, but some events almost shriek out that a Superior Intelligence is behind it all.

“If you examine history carefully, you can see the events of history *linked* together, unfolding one by one, in a complex but inevitable sequence, as though pre-planned.

“And you may well wonder, is there a power at work which is not of this world? Is there an interplay of forces being orchestrated to accomplish certain aims?

“If this world is carried along of its own accord, without a ruler,

like a ship without a pilot, why do all things come to pass according to pre-written prophecies?”

Greg stiffened a little. “Prophecies? What prophecies?”

“Biblical prophecies,” said Al, “some even with names and dates.”

“The Bible?” sneered Greg. “I have my doubts.”

“Nevertheless, it is not to be ignored. From an academic and literary point of view, the Bible stands head and shoulders above any other book ever written, yet it has been largely ignored by academia. It has sold over eight billion copies in more than 2,000 languages.”

Pausing, Al noticed a flash of interest in Bronwyn’s eyes. He continued. “In these prophecies, the major events of history, stage by stage, are touched upon... leading up to a final, sudden interruption to human control of this planet.

“And you see history, step by step, move by move, obediently fulfilling those prophecies - often in uncanny detail.

“So I ask, could there be a Supreme Mind guiding events toward the ultimate goal of history?”

Bronwyn and Greg exchanged glances, as Al ploughed on.

“So what is this BIG PICTURE of which you speak?” asked Greg. “I’m curious.”

Step by step events

Gloria poured everyone a drink. “Okay, said Al, “My information sources stem from the oldest traditions of the world.

“The drama is a long-running battle between forces hostile to the Supreme One - forces that have hijacked this planet – and the Creator of Planet Earth, who loves what He has made.

“SCENE 1: At the ruling center of the universe, a being known as Lucifer rebels against the Supreme One. He is expelled, along with the co-rebels who have chosen to join him.

“SCENE 2: the Supreme One appoints man as custodian of this planet. Lucifer slanders the Supreme One and deceives man, who thereby falls under his power. Lucifer (or Satan) then usurps man’s dominion over the earth. From now on he claims the right to represent this planet in all inter-galactic councils.

“SCENE 3: Man, having cut himself off from the Supreme One, the Life-Giver, is now infected with the death virus. But the Supreme One offers man hope; promises a Rescuer.

“SCENE 4: Humanity, almost totally corrupted by Lucifer and his legion, is about to wipe himself out. The Great Flood strikes as a judgment – and a merciful intervention which prevents the total annihilation of the human race.

“SCENE 5: From the survivors, who are loyal to the Supreme One, the human race is given a new start.

“SCENE 6: As descendants of the survivors begin to repopulate the earth, all nations inherit the original promise of the Coming One, whom they await with longing.

“SCENE 7: The Legion of Lucifer devise a parody of the rescue promise, to throw the human race off track. They select a woman by the name of Semiramus, Queen of Babel, whose popular but renegade husband Nimrod has been executed. She and her priests, to solidify their own power base, proclaim that Nimrod was the Promised Rescuer, who had given his life for the benefit of the world. The details of the original prophecy are cleverly applied to

him. This make-believe “rescuer” becomes the basis of a new pagan Mystery religion, which spreads across the world.

“SCENE 8: As the human race slides into superstition, idolatry and a propaganda campaign to portray the Supreme One as being a harsh, angry God, the Supreme One Himself responds. He establishes an agency through whom to reveal His coming rescue plan more clearly to the world. A bunch of slaves – known as Hebrews - is rescued from oppression in Egypt and established at the crossroads of the world to make His love known to the nations.

“SCENE 9: The Legion of Lucifer work by infiltration to spiritually corrupt the Hebrew nation, as well. Their land is destroyed. And finally many are exiled into Babylon. Their capital city lies in ruins.

“SCENE 10: Some of them later return to their homeland, and begin preparing for the arrival of the promised ‘Rescuer’.

“SCENE 11: One claiming to be this awaited Rescuer enters the human race. The Legion of Lucifer are ready. And an attempt is immediately made on his life.

“SCENE 12: The would-be Rescuer publicly announces his rescue plan. Standing in as a substitute for every member of the human race, he lives what is described as a blameless life.

“SCENE 13: Every attempt by the Lucifer Legion to overcome him fails.

“SCENE 14: Then, promising to bear the penalty for man’s wrongs, he offers himself as a sacrifice to potentially free all from ultimate death. He declares that by this act he is revealing God’s far-reaching love.

SCENE 15: Allegedly defeating death (and thereby guaranteeing victory over death for everyone who accepts His rescue offer), this Deliverer leaves the earth. It is claimed he has returned to heaven to represent Planet Earth – and that Lucifer’s ultimate doom is thus assured. And Lucifer is no longer permitted access to the councils of the universe.

“SCENE 16: The astonishing news of the Rescuer’s self sacrifice and resurrection from the dead sweeps rapidly over the planet. Those who accept it become known as followers of ‘The Way’.

“SCENE 17: The Lucifer Legion’s efforts to destroy the followers of The Way by physical persecution, backfire. The movement explodes all the faster.

“SCENE 18: Switching strategy, Lucifer vows to sap the power of this movement by infiltrating it with his pagan counterfeit.

“SCENE 19: The true followers of The Way withdraw to remote regions, to preserve the integrity of their message, while the infiltrated organized movement imposes its will over the nations of Europe for 1260 years. In 1798 the corrupt system receives a predicted ‘deadly wound’. However [again, as predicted], it recovers and prepares itself for final world control.

“SCENE 20: In the approach to a final showdown, the Legion of Lucifer plan their strategy to drag the world down with them. Lucifer grooms a stable of political and religious puppets. Antichrist’s final world government is launched.

“SCENE 21: A loud cry sweeps the globe for men, women and children to get ready for the glorious return of the Rescuer – who is soon to interrupt human history and take over the planet. This final rescue call dramatically polarizes the human race.

“SCENE 22: Total destruction of mankind by the Lucifer Legion working through their human agents appears imminent. Then the Rescuer intervenes, returning to earth as King of kings and Lord of lords.

“SCENE 23: Lucifer and his rebellious world system is brought to an end. The accepters of the divine rescue plan are delivered.

“SCENE 24: Ultimately a new world is established, in which man’s relationship with his Creator is restored. Death is abolished, There is no more pain, nor sorrow. Eternity begins.

“The message of rescue is simply this: The Rescuer offered Himself to die an agonizing death, in order to give us all a wonderful gift. All a man or woman has to do is accept it – and value it more than anything else in this world.”

Why the hostility?

Smiling, Al looked over the others. “So what’s wrong with that? Yet this is what Dan Brown hates. That’s why he wrote *The Da Vinci Code*. But if it is true, then it must be the most wonderful news this planet could ever receive.

“So why the hostility to it? Here’s why. The trouble is, the Rescuer’s plan runs up against our selfish natures. So our hearts rebel.”

Greg eyeballed Al. “But is it true... or is it a hoax?”

Al smiled. “We shall see. But have you noticed - hostility to the Christian message has become, in some quarters, almost an obsession. In fact, as the *Guardian* newspaper said, the attacks on Christianity by at least one noted atheist ‘are so bad-tempered they give atheism a bad name.’

Bronwyn spoke up. “Well, that figures. I suspect the Bible is either *the most loved* Book in the world, or *the most hated*.”

“You got it, girl,” grinned Al. “Do you know *who’s behind this persistent hostility* through history to the rescue plan? It’s not Dan Brown... or atheists... or even Allison Meehan, who’s just burned the school. Ask yourself, *who has the most to lose* by its message?”

Greg sat up straight. “You’re saying it’s the Legion of Lucifer?”

“Bingo! They’re the ones with the vested interest. They have the biggest motive in the world.”

Bronwyn reached for the crackers. “But why single out the Bible for attack? The world is full of sacred literature.”

“That’s true. But there’s only one source that exposes the Legion of Lucifer. That’s the *Intelligence Report* – the Bible.

“It tells us how our problems began and how they will end. It clarifies the cause of our deteriorating world conditions, and proves to us that the Supreme One is still ultimately in control of human destiny.” Al rested back on his seat. “And boy, does Lucifer hate that!”

“Okay,” responded Greg. “How does all this fit into Dan Brown’s *Da Vinci Code*?”

“It’s easy.” Al brushed a fly off his arm. “You remember Helen of Troy?”

“Sure,” grinned Greg. “The city was invaded because of beautiful Helen.”

Gloria giggled. “Yes, now what really happened? Let me try to recall...”

4

Lucifer's revenge -

THE FURY

Gloria began. “The Greeks were unable to capture the town by storm, so they resorted to trickery. They left as a gift of peace a huge wooden horse outside the city walls, and then pretended to sail away, right?”

“The citizens of Troy wanted to haul the horse into the town and celebrate. But they were warned by their priest Laocoon to be cautious. ‘I fear the Greeks,’ he said, ‘even when they bear gifts’ ...or something like that, right?”

But the Trojans went on with their plans, made an opening in the town walls and wheeled in the wooden horse. Then, to their astonishment, the horse opened – and out poured the armed soldiers who had been concealed with the horse.”

“Spot on, my dear,” Al nodded. “And so by this treacherous infiltration, Troy was captured.”

Straightening up, he stared at Greg and Bron. “You want the truth behind *The Da Vinci Code*? Even if at first you don’t believe what follows, just humor me. I shall expose to you the most ***massive and deadly infiltration plot*** ever devised. And it affects hundreds of millions of us today.

A long term plan

“Let’s start the story with the ‘gate-crasher’ onto Lucifer’s turf – Jesus Christ. When that would-be Deliverer was crucified, it would

seem that he had lost.”

“For 4,000 years the Legion of Lucifer had been preparing, waiting for the visit of the Promised One. They went over every detail of their plan so many times. They were sure they could abort the predicted rescue mission.

“Very carefully they had plotted to murder Him as soon as He entered the human race. If that failed, they had back-up plans. One way or another, they would trap Him into falling under Lucifer’s power. When their initial murder attempt failed, they made further attempts on His life. (In fact, eleven assassination attempts would be recorded by witnesses.)

“Then finally they succeeded – or so they thought. Betrayed by a close disciple, condemned by Jewish church leaders who blackmailed the Roman governor into going along with the deal, the Deliverer was finally assassinated - publicly crucified as an ‘imposter’. How discredited could one be?

Two sides contrasted

“At that moment in history, love and selfishness stood face to face. Here was their crowning demonstration.

Hatred unmasked

“Satan’s unquenchable hatred toward his arch enemy was revealed in the way he carefully planned the betrayal, mock trial and shameful crucifixion.

“As even most skeptics will admit, Jesus had lived only to benefit others. So in putting him to death, Lucifer demonstrated the malignity of his hatred against the Supreme One. He made it evident that the real purpose of his rebellion was to dethrone God - and to destroy the One through whom God’s love was shown.

“This opened the eyes of the universe to his true criminal character. Heavenly beings were horror-stricken that Lucifer, a former one of their number, could fall so far as to be capable of such cruelty. Now every sentiment of sympathy or pity which they ever felt for him in his exile was quenched from their hearts.

“So there is Lucifer, professing to be clothed in celestial light — yet with envy he exercises revenge on an innocent Person, against the One who has, with self-denial and love, come from heaven and assumed the nature of lost mankind.

Another attempt to abort the rescue

“You can read the record yourself. Every utterance and action of the mockers around the crucifixion site was calculated to shame and discourage Jesus. Behind it all was Lucifer’s frantic effort to provoke Jesus into descending from the cross. Or even to trigger a loss of control on Jesus’ part, so that He could no longer be the perfect One, the promised substitute for people who had failed.

“Either reaction would be a failure on Jesus’ part. Either reaction would bring Him under Lucifer’s power... and would abort the rescue plan.

The Rescuer’s determination

“Fortunately for us, the Deliverer was riveted to his promise to save human beings. Even though, had He so chosen, he could have freed Himself. And this is what gets to me, guys – that this raging storm of rejection that howled about His exposed body could not strip from Him the love He bore to a lost world – a world whose only hope lay in the sacrifice they now scorned.

“At that moment He felt totally alienated... and cried out, ‘My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?’

“Yet, He refused to save Himself. He knew that if He gave in to his enemies’ taunts to save himself, mankind would be lost forever.

“Just catch that BIG PICTURE. In the eyes of the universe, see how hideous the Legion of Lucifer now appear! They have committed such a horrible crime against heaven, that heavenly beings shudder with horror.

“If there was any lingering sympathy toward Lucifer, it is now broken. He is finished, as far as the inhabitants of the universe are concerned. He has revealed his true character as a liar and a murderer. Lucifer is discredited. The Rescuer is vindicated.

“What a triumph!

“Yet, how different was this crucifixion as seen on earth! To the eyes of all, Jesus had become a loser.

Lucifer’s final insurance

“And now the Lucifer Legion consolidated their perceived victory.

“Just to make sure Jesus could never arise from the tomb – either with or without the help of his followers - a massive seal-stone was rolled into place against the entrance – and then sealed with the official Roman seal, a seal no human power dared break, the strongest seal of authority in all the world.

“To break the Roman seal was punishable by death. (Jonathan Gray, *Ark of the Covenant*, pp. 294-295. <http://www.beforeus.com/shopcart_ebooks>)

“And what is more, a paid Roman guard was then stationed at the tomb day and night. The Deliverer’s mission had ‘failed’. And they now had Him dead... within Lucifer’s clutches forever!

The third day

“End of story? Not quite! Now comes the third day after. Try to picture yourself there. The night of the first day of the week has slowly worn away. The darkest hour, just before daybreak, has come. Jesus is still a prisoner in his narrow tomb. The great stone is in its place; the Roman seal is unbroken; the Roman guards are keeping their watch.

“And there are unseen watchers. Hosts of the evil Lucifer Legion are gathered about the place. If it were possible, the prince of darkness with his antagonistic army would keep that tomb sealed forever, that holds the Son of God.

“But a heavenly host also surrounds the tomb. Beings that excel in strength are also guarding it, and waiting to welcome the Prince of Life. And suddenly, there is an earthquake, as the angel of the Lord descends. Clothed with radiance from God, this messenger leaves the heavenly courts.

“The bright beams of God’s glory go before him, illuminating his pathway. His countenance is like lightning, and his clothing white as snow. And for fear of him the keepers shake, and become as dead men.

“Now, priests and rulers, where is your guard? Brave soldiers that have never been afraid of human power, are now as captives taken without sword or spear. The face they look upon is not the face of mortal warrior; it is the face of the mightiest of the messengers of God. This messenger is he who fills the position from which Lucifer fell. It is he who on the hills of Bethlehem announced Jesus’ birth.

“The earth trembles at his approach, the hosts of darkness flee and as he rolls away the stone, heaven seems to come down to earth.

“The soldiers see him removing the stone as he would a pebble, and hear him cry, ‘Son of God, come forth. Your Father calls you.’

“As He exits the tomb in majesty and glory, the angel host bow in adoration before Him and welcome Him with praise.

“The decree of heaven has loosed the captive. Mountains piled upon mountains over His tomb could not have prevented Him from coming forth.

Swearing vengeance

“Now that his enemy has broken out of the tomb and left earth, undefeated, Lucifer knows he is ultimately doomed.

“If he was angry before, now he is insane with fury.

“He vows – whatever it takes - to get back at the Deliverer.”

Al paused. He turned direct to the principal. “Now, Greg, if someone wanted to hurt you, but you were personally out of reach, what would be his best shot?”

Greg shuffled. “To get someone who’s dear to me.”

“Right! So think now. Lucifer had missed out. The Deliverer had come, done His job and gone. But He had left behind friends, whom He dearly loved. What would you expect Lucifer to do?”

“Exterminate them, I guess.”

“Right. And he would use the ruling authorities to do it.”

Satan the real god of the Mysteries

“Mighty Rome ruled the world. And she had adopted the ‘Mystery’ religion, Lucifer’s creation, that emanated from Babylon and Egypt. That meant that Lucifer was the secret god of Rome.

“Now get the symbolism. Lucifer’s emblems had always been the serpent and the sun. That’s what the name Lucifer means – Day-star.

“And, according to the fundamental doctrine of the Mysteries, as brought from Babylon to Pergamos to Rome, the *sun* was *the one only god*. (Macrobius, *Saturnalia*, lib. I. cap. 17,23, pp. 65, C, and 72, 1, 2)

“Thus Teitan, or *Satan*, had become the one only god. And Janus was just an incarnation of this same only god. *Now the secret is out... the real name of the supreme great god of Rome.*

“Satan worship was the secret purpose of the Mysteries. This was why the Legion of Lucifer had set up the pagan Mysteries!

“This secret was most jealously guarded. So much so, that when one of the most learned of the Romans, the high-ranking Valerius Soranus, incautiously divulged it, he was mercilously put to death. (Alexander Hislop, *The Two Babylons*. London: S.W. Partridge & Co., 1969, p. 279)

“Eventually *Satan* was regarded with awe and dread under the name of *Pluto*, the god of the underworld, as the great god on whom every person’s destiny depended. To him it belonged ‘to purify souls after death.’ (Taylor’s *Pausanias*, vol. iii. P.321, Note)

“And his other symbol, the *serpent*, was worshipped in all the earth with extraordinary reverence!

“And to claim that one had been born as ‘the serpent’s seed’ potentially attracted great honor to the claimant. That’s why Olympias, the mother of Alexander the Great, declared that her son had not sprung from King Phillip, her husband, but from Jupiter, in the form of a *serpent*! And likewise, the Roman emperor Augustus pretended that he had issued from Apollo in the form of a *serpent*.

Persecution organized

“The bottom line was this: Rome ruled the world. And Lucifer was the unseen ruler of Rome.

“His visible representative, Nero, sat on the imperial throne. And, like his master, Nero thought of himself as like a god.

“‘The Christians refuse to worship me,’ he stormed. ‘I want them killed!’

“Nice man. So the blood bath began.

“Of course, looking ahead, Jesus had warned His followers that they would face suffering, disgrace and humiliation in the centuries ahead. *‘Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted [tortured] and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name’s sake.’* (Matthew 24:9)

Attempt 1: destroy Christianity from outside

“The Legion of Lucifer very well knew that if the news of Jesus being the Deliverer should triumph, then the pagan altars and temples of Rome would disappear.

“Therefore it was war to the death... open season on followers of Jesus. Police were searching for these ‘traitors’ everywhere.

“They had guts. The fiercer the persecution, the bolder the Christians became. The love of Jesus the Messiah kept spreading. It meant more to them than their own lives.

“As thousands were imprisoned and executed, it seemed that others simply sprang up to take their places. Instead of liquidating Christianity, persecution only made it explode.

Attempt 2: destroy it from within

“Lucifer and Co. figured they had better come forward and put an end to this crisis once and for all. They went into another huddle. It was obvious that they had to change tactics. To stop the spread of Christianity, they needed to take it over and defuse it. This meant they would need to undermine the movement from *within*.

“So they changed their *modus operandi*.

“They recognized that a powerful tool in the hands of this movement was the written testimony of witnesses to Jesus’ rescue plan. You can kill people. But you can’t kill what they’ve written. It can spread like a fire.

“So... bring in the corrupters. And install them strategically. A smart plan? It would work like a charm.

Sabotage prophesied

“But was the Supreme One taken by surprise? Not at all. Already, the apostle Paul, under directions from Jesus, had called together a group of elders and warned them that such an attempt was coming. And this is what he told them:

“*“I know that after my departure, false teachers, like savage wolves, will enter in among you, that have no mercy on the flock.*

Also from among yourselves will arise men who distort the truth, to draw away followers after themselves.’ (Acts 20:29,30)

“Paul stated that this sabotage would be engineered by church leaders themselves - and would develop insidiously until a ‘man’ would actually set himself up in the church to rule in the place of God. (2 Thessalonians 2:3-7)

The attack would be on the writings

“In fact, said Paul, the corruption campaign was already beginning to work. (Ibid.)

“Even at that time, some writers were coming out with new manuscripts claiming to be written by Paul, which contained deceptive propaganda. (2 Thessalonians 2:2)

“Not only that, there were men already at work trying to mess up the existing writings. (2 Corinthians 4:2; 2:17)

“John also – the only one of Jesus’ twelve disciples who would die a natural death – was warning his readers. When John wrote, most of the original apostles had been assassinated. John was the only one left. And he had been exiled to the island of Patmos, off the coast of present-day Turkey.

“While he was there, he was showing the Christians which manuscripts were from God. (David Otis Fuller, *Which Bible?* Grand Rapids, MI: Grand Rapids International Publications, 2nd edition, p. 107)

“John knew that after he died, agents of Lucifer’s Legion would move to destroy the Bible.

“Almost his last words were these:

“*‘If any man shall take away from the words of the book of this*

prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.' (Revelation 22:19)

“In fact, they didn’t have to wait long before this prophecy of tampering came true.”

Greg sat glued to his seat. Gloria arose to pour more drinks.

“Are you with me?” asked Al.

“You bet I am!” exclaimed Bron. “Why haven’t we heard this before?” She tossed a glance to Greg. He said nothing.

“Now come the hijackers,” said Al, “Just watch how they move in...”

5

The infiltration plot -

THE TAKEOVER BEGINS

“It was a determined takeover,” explained Al. “Just as predicted, so it occurred.

“Scarcely were Jesus’ apostles dead, than the planned infiltration began.

“In two main centers, Rome and Alexandria, sun worshippers began to *hijack* the Christian groups. Teachers planted themselves in the church, under cover, to promote the pagan spirituality of the Roman Empire.” Al moved across to his bookshelf. “I’ll give you some actual history on it,” he said. “Listen to this, from Mosheim the historian:

Christian churches had scarcely been gathered and organized, when here and there men rose up, who, not being contented with the simplicity and purity of that religion which the apostles taught, attempted innovations and fashioned religion according to their own liking.’ (Johann Mosheim, 1694? – 1755, *Ecclesiastical History*, Vol. 1)

“The historian Neander concurs:

With John the apostolic age of the church naturally closes. The doctrine of the gospel which by him had been still exhibited in its original purity was now exposed, without the support of apostolic authority, to a conflict with a host of opponents, some of whom had

already made their appearance. (Neander, *Planting of Christianity and Antignostikus*, vol. 1, p. 413)

“Carefully and insidiously the infiltrators sneaked in their Luciferian parody of the truth, until, one by one, all 83 aspects of it were imported. Shrewdly, they disguised each of these in ‘Christian’ names.

Jesus team spearheads onslaught into a center of paganism

“Meanwhile, the true Christians were doing their best to ensure the preservation of the original faith.

“After the fall of Jerusalem in AD 70, Antioch in Syria had become the Christian world headquarters. And here the believers were making exact copies of the original manuscripts.

“Then the believers had sent missionaries down to Egypt to teach the citizens of Alexandria, at that time the second largest city in the world.

Egypt was the land of Isis (the “queen of heaven”) and Horus (the sun god). You could say the city of Alexandria belonged to the Lucifer Legion. It was the center of pagan philosophy.

Some of the world’s greatest minds were living there. These men were proud of their wisdom. They called themselves ‘Gnostics’.
(Newman, *Church History*, Vol. 1)

Christianity and Gnosticism

Greg rubbed his neck. “What exactly was Gnosticism?”

“Okay,” replied Al, “but if we first define Christianity... then compare the two systems... it will be clearer. Christianity was a life of Spiritual Transformation, centered on following Jesus. As Paul stated: *‘But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.’* (1 Cor 2:14 NKJ).

“Then, as now, there were two types of believers:

“1. Those whose perception of spiritual matters was limited to the physical senses, reasoning materially.

“2. Those who had made the necessary changes in their lifestyle and thinking that enabled them to become aware of spiritual realities beyond the physical. In the words of one early writer, ‘Happy are the ears that catch the accents of divine whispering, and pay no heed to the murmurings of this world’.

“They lived by faith in Jesus, who had died to save them from their wrongs and had risen from the grave to give assurance of their future resurrection to eternal life. They believed that his indwelling power enabled them to overcome the forces of evil. ***That was Christianity.***

“Among the Gnostics were also many sincere people. They were gripped by frustrations and anger over the pain of an unjust and violent world. This led them to the dreamy ideal of escaping from reality instead of facing it.... going into meditative self-absorption... ethereal speculations... and so on.

“The idea was to cut oneself off from the hindrances of the world and close the door of the senses, close up the mind to the thinking, the teachings, and the many doctrines of this world, and give admittance to the Light.

“The underlying philosophy of the Gnostics was that the physical body is ‘evil’ and must be destroyed for one to be saved.

“They claimed to possess knowledge superior to the simple faith of the masses. They thought that rather than taking the Scripture literally, hidden meanings were to be sought.

“Some of them – the Naassenes or Ophites – venerated the deceiving serpent of Genesis as wiser than God Himself! So the Legion of Lucifer found Gnosticism a useful tool. By a clever mix of truth with error, its followers could be lulled into a false sense of security. You know... a deadly potion may look good, taste good, smell good... so that the arsenic is not perceived.

“Here is where Gnosticism failed its followers. It missed the one vital ingredient.”

“What was that?” Greg leaned forward.

“It missed the only guaranteed life insurance – that one could be rescued from the power of sin and of death through Jesus’ self sacrifice as man’s substitute – and through nothing else.

“Never mind, Gnostics considered they had it right. To their thinking, those Christians in Antioch were a bunch of nuts.”

“Well, in our day some good folk have resurrected this idea. And they assume that Jesus was never a literal person, or the fulfillment of the Messianic prophecies. They’ve fallen into the trap of assuming that the original teaching of Christianity was merely ‘Christ within’, but that this was later ‘literalized’ and placed in a ‘historical’ setting of Rome's choosing.”

“That rings a bell,” said Greg, “That’s what *The Da Vinci Code* says – that the Jesus God idea was invented by Rome.

Al laughed. “And we call that history? Oh, come on, guys. That’s just the fabrication of minds in dreamland. If the historical Jesus was invented by Rome, then Alice in Wonderland is my aunt. But that claim we shall examine... a little later.

“Actually, there were two kinds of Gnostics: those with no relationship to Christianity, and those who joined and passed themselves off as Christians.

“In these Gnostics, who increasingly gorged themselves on pagan philosophy, the Lucifer Legion found the ideal agents for their subversion of the Jesus movement.

Alexandria... laboratory of poison

“As it was, these brains in Alexandria formed a school of religion and philosophy. They wanted to promote the idea that Jesus was not really the Son of God. And that he did not die to rescue mankind.

“But they had a problem. The Bible manuscripts contained information contrary to their beliefs. So they started making changes, altering and eliminating certain Bible passages to accommodate their ideas. (Dean John William Burgon, *The Causes of Corruption of the Holy Gospels*, 1896)

“Thus, in the second and third centuries there emerged so-called Church Fathers, men such as Barnabus, Clemens and Origen (all of Alexandria) and Justin (of Rome).

“Their writings show the extent to which Paul’s prophecy was coming true.

“Instructors at the college in Alexandria started to blend in pagan ideas and practices, teaching them to their students and writing books on ‘Christian philosophy’. The works of these so-called Church Fathers reflect this mixture of Christianity with pagan philosophy. (Neander, *General History of the Christian Religion and Church*, Vol. 1, p. 657. Mosheim, *Institutes of Ecclesiastical History*, b. 1, cent. 3, pt. 2, ch. 3, para. 5. Farrar, *History of Interpretation*, pp. 162,165. Martin Luther, *Table Talk*, p. 228. Adam Clarke, *Commentary*, on Proverbs 8)

“Tertullian, a Christian historian (AD 160-255), warned his readers to be aware that the Gnostics ‘make no distinction between pagans and believers in their churches.’ (Cited in Adolf von Harnack, *Marcion: The Gospel of the Alien God*, John E. Steely and Lyle D. Bierma, trans. Durham, NC.: The Labyrinth Press, 1990, p. 95)

“It was clear that these Gnostic ‘Christians’ were not the original thing – rather, they were seeking to transform Christianity into one of the pagan Mystery religions so popular in the ancient world.

No secret meaning

“But the truth is this: Jesus had spoken in direct, simple language. There was no mysticism about it. He always made religion easy to understand. That is why ‘the common people heard him gladly.’ (Mark 12:37)

“According to the eyewitness testimony of those who personally met Jesus, Jesus Himself claimed to have come to earth as the divine sacrifice, to save every person from the guilt and penalty of sin. He spelled out *in clear terms* how to please God. His plan of rescue for fallen man was explained so simply that even a child could understand it. In fact, He Himself stated, “Unless you become like little children, you shall not enter the kingdom of heaven.” (Matthew 18:3) Little children understand things exactly as they are said. They don’t try to inject some hidden meaning.

“‘You’ll know a tree by its fruits,’ Jesus had said.

“And what are the fruits of the simple words of Jesus? A *living power*, no less! Understood literally, just as they are, those words have transformed cheats into honest men; murderers into passionate protectors of life; and misers into givers.

“‘I spoke openly to the world,’ said Jesus, ‘and in secret have I said nothing.’ (John 18:20) You don’t have to substitute some hypothetical hidden meaning. People who take the Bible *just as it is* find it works!

Origen of Alexandria changed it

“Now back to Alexandria. Origen (184 to 254 AD), an agnostic, became head of the school in Alexandria. He taught that Jesus Christ was a created being with no eternal existence as God. (*Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Vol. 16, 1936 edition, pp. 900-902. Later editions were changed.)

“Origen made changes in the Bible to agree with his own mystical and allegorical ideas. He chopped passages out of the Bible. He amended it whenever and wherever he felt like it. No sweat!

“So, step by step, through subtle alterations, the message of the self-sacrificing Rescuer was diluted. Jesus the person was downgraded.

“Thus, in re-writing selected parts of the Bible to get their views accepted, the Gnostics were pushing the Legion of Lucifer’s agenda.

“Was the Prince of demons pleased? Was he! He soon had another project for them to promote... Lucifer’s flag day!”

“Fascinating stuff!” exclaimed Greg, glancing at Bronwyn.

Al smiled. “You know that expression, ‘When you are in Rome, do as Rome does’? Would you like to know its origin?”

Bronwyn nodded.

“Well, it happened this way...”

Gloria arose to open the window. “Before we get into all that,” she said, “how about a quick dash down to the beach? I’ll race you.” And she was out through the door.

“Cheat!” shouted Bronwyn...

6

The flag-day contest -

BATTLE TO IMPOSE AUTHORITY

“First down... first back!” beamed Gloria.

“You win,” Greg panted. “Al and I need to get back into shape.”

Gloria brought out a fresh jug and began pouring drinks. Bron smiled. “Thanks, Glory.” She turned back to Al. “What’s this about ‘When you are in Rome, do as Rome does’?”

Al downed his glass and began. “It happened this way. About the same time Origen and his group were inventing things in Alexandria, church leaders in Rome, paganism’s world capital, also began to flirt with paganism.

“First they gleefully soaked up the theories and rituals emanating from Alexandria. Then they demanded that Christian churches all over the empire follow their lead. They saw this as a great way to gain control over those other churches.

“By bribes and intimidation, the bishop of Rome gradually secured pre-eminence. And eventually he claimed to be standing in the place of Jesus Christ.”

“Smooth shifting!” grunted Greg.

Big difference between Christianity and paganism

“Of course, as you must know by now, pure Christianity and

paganism were poles apart.

“A glaring difference was that Christians observed the Sabbath (the seventh day, Saturday).”

“Wait a minute,” interjected Bronwyn. “I thought the early Christians observed Sunday.”

“That’s a popular fallacy,” responded Greg. “But Jesus always kept Saturday – an example which the early Christians followed. And history confirms this.” (Luke 4:16; 23:56; Matthew 24:20; Acts 13:14,42-44; 16:13; 17:2; 18:4)

Al pulled from the shelf a well-worn history book. “Listen to this,” he said, opening it to a place he had marked:

As we have already noted, excepting for the Roman and Alexandrian Christians, the majority of Christians were observing the seventh-day Sabbath at least as late as the middle of the fifth century.... In fact, no ecclesiastical writer before Eusebius of Caesarea in the fourth century even suggested that either Christ or His apostles instituted the observance of the first day of the week. (E.M. Chalmers, *How Sunday Came into the Christian Church*, p. 3)

Bronwyn spoke up. “What was so important about observing Saturday, the seventh day of the week?”

“Simple,” said Al. “Because it was the special emblem of the Creator’s sovereignty over this earth.” (Genesis 2:1-3; Exodus 20:8-11; Hebrews 4:9,10,4)

“By contrast, paganism dedicated Sunday to its supreme ‘god’, the sun (which symbolised Lucifer’s sovereignty). The pagans held that each day of the week was ruled over by a different god, but the

most important god ruled the first day of the week, and that was ‘THE LORD, THE SUN’.

“Actually, Mithraic sun worship was *the greatest pagan rival of Christianity*. So Emperor Hadrian, in AD 135 issued an edict prohibiting the observance of the seventh day Sabbath.

Alexandria and Rome move toward day of the sun

Christians generally disregarded the edict, but in the capital city of Rome, matters were different. Thus in AD 155, a mere twenty years after Hadrian’s edict, Anicetus, leader of the church in Rome was demanding that all Christians keep Sunday holy instead of Saturday.

The behavior of Rome’s church leaders freaked out the Christians elsewhere. So a man named Polycarp, who had been a close friend of the apostle John until John’s death around AD 100, traveled to Rome to protest against the church of Rome’s demand that all other churches observe Sunday. The next year Polycarp was murdered. (Vance Ferrell, *Beyond Pitcairn*. Altamont, TN.: Pilgrim’s Books, 1987, p. 46)

Greg coughed. “How convenient.”

“But don’t a lot of Christians call Sunday the ‘Lord’s day’?” asked Bron.

“Sure. But the question is, where did they get that from?”

“It was the pagan *sun worshippers* – and not the Christians – who *first gave the title* ‘Lord’s Day’ to Sunday.” Al pulled down another history reference book. With his red pen he highlighted a sentence and passed the book around. It read: “Because the sun was god, the Lord par excellence, Sunday came to be called the

‘Lord’s Day,’ as *later was done by Christianity.*” (Agostinho de Almeida Paiva, *O Mitraismo*, p. 3. Emphasis added.)

“Wow!” exclaimed Greg. “What a scandal for Christians to get mixed up in!”

“Actually,” said Al, “Clemens, head of the college in Alexandria, was the first ‘Christian’ to dare call Sunday ‘the Lord’s Day.’ (Benjamin G. Wilkinson, *Truth Triumphant*. Payson, AZ.: Leaves-of-Autumn Books, Inc., 1988, p. 125)

“This man Clemens was beyond the pale. He boasted that he *would not teach Christianity unless* it was mixed with pagan philosophy. (*Ibid.*, p. 47)

“About the same time (AD 190), Victor I, bishop of Rome and Clemens entered into an alliance. The purpose? To drum up support around the Mediterranean basin to make Sunday the prominent day of worship in the church.” (*Ibid.*, pp.47,124,125)

Bronwyn’s eyes opened wider. “You mean that Jesus’ followers should switch from Jesus’ flag day to Lucifer’s flag day? What a brazen move!”

Al nodded. “So were these guys in Rome and Alexandria infected with stupidity? Oh, no, it made perfect sense to those who devised the idea. You see, they had two good reasons:

“1. To make Christianity more *attractive* to pagans.

“2. The persecuting *hatred* that Rome had for the Jews. They reasoned, ‘Let’s disassociate ourselves from appearing as Jews by keeping the same Sabbath day.’” (Vance Farrell, *Beyond Pitcairn*. Altamont, TN.: pilgrim’s Books, 1987, pp. 47-49)

“Oh,” said Greg. “It seems to me that the motive for this change was a very unchristian one – HATE!”

Al nodded. “Undeniably. And as early as mid-second century, we find church Fathers such as Barnabus (of Alexandria) and Justin Martyr (of Rome) displaying a deep antagonism toward Judaism and the Sabbath.

“Justin invented the eight-day theory.”

Bronwyn looked intrigued. “Whatever was that?”

“Justin said that because eight people were saved in Noah’s Ark, then Sunday is the eighth day, and therefore everyone should keep Sunday.” (Justin, *Dialogue* 138, 1)

“You must give him credit for creativeness,” laughed Greg.

Al looked at him. “So where did the change from Saturday to Sunday originate? Not in Jerusalem, the initial headquarters of Christianity, nor in Antioch, the subsequent headquarters. Not ever! It originated under the influence of pagan sun worship and anti-Semitism, *in Rome!* (Samuel Bacchiocchi, *From Sabbath to Sunday*. Rome: The Pontifical Gregorian University Press, 1977)

Resistance against the hijackers

“Only one problem. Most Christians rejected this sell out. Genuine believers were aghast at what they saw occurring. To them, truth was more precious than life itself. So this corruption of the Christian way met with strong protest.

“Prominent among those who worked hard to prevent the alliance with paganism was Lucian, from the Christian college in Antioch.”

Greg’s brow furrowed. “This information is priceless. How did you discover it?”

“We are indebted to researchers such as Dr Benjamin Wilkinson - and others - for some of this information. Wilkinson’s ability as a scholar and researcher came to the notice of Cordell Hull, then U.S. Secretary of State. He issued Wilkinson with credentials which virtually unlocked to him the vaults of the world. This enabled him to examine rare historical documents and manuscripts that are normally locked away from the public.

“And what did Wilkinson discover? Nothing less than one of history’s most massive cover-ups.”

“Cover-up?” Bron’s eyes widened.

“Yes. You see, many of today’s colleges and churches teach that Jesus himself instituted Sunday observance. Also that his apostles kept Sunday and taught that practice to their converts. In other words, that Jesus abolished His own flag day and told His followers to adopt Lucifer’s flag day.”

“Whew!” whistled Greg. “And that’s why churches open on Sunday?”

Al eyed him soberly. “Give me your honest opinion, Greg. When you consider the long-running feud between Lucifer and Jesus, can you really believe that Jesus would abandon his own flag to honor that of his sworn enemy?”

Greg shook his head. “That would be madness.”

Al continued. “You know what? As late as the fifth century, Sunday observance replaced the biblical Sabbath **only** in Rome and Alexandria. (Socrates, *Ecclesiastical History* Book 5, Ch.22. *Ante-Nicean Christian Library*, Vol. 1. Boston, 1887, p. 132) Not only that, for a thousand years after Jesus’ resurrection, **most** Christians in the world, from Ireland to China, continued to observe Saturday, the seventh day of the

week. (Benjamin G. Wilkinson, *Truth Triumphant*. Payson, Ariz.: Leaves-of-Autumn Books, Inc., 1988)

“In the face of this evidence...”

Bronwyn broke in. “What a bombshell!”

“You’ve said it. It simply means that Jesus’ apostles did *not* teach their converts to abandon the Sabbath! *Sunday* observance began in the two centers where *paganism* took over.

Greg nodded. “I find it inconceivable that any honest, modern writer would ignore such evidence.”

“Unfortunately, this gap in knowledge is common among modern writers. Often one mechanically repeats the other, presumably without having examined the original sources.” Al shook his head.

“I think we deserve an explanation from today’s church leaders,” said Bronwyn.

“Well,” said Greg, “I do know this. Yet there is only one safe and true method of research. And that is to take into consideration the whole of the facts, and weigh them one and all, much as evidence is weighed in a Court of Law. Then draw only such conclusions as are warranted by the laws of evidence or testimony, or historical proof.”

Bronwyn shuffled. “So where does Constantine fit into this?”

Emperor Constantine a key player

Al leaned forward. “Listen carefully. In the fourth century, the Roman emperor Constantine saw an enormous political problem looming. Christianity had grown. And the empire was now divided

between Christianity and paganism. His ‘conversion’ to Christianity around 313 AD was a political ploy - to amalgamate both parties and keep the empire united.

“The fact is, this shrewd politician not only preserved his position as the demigod of the Roman Empire, but was able to keep the same Luciferian style of service, days of worship and sun-centered calendar. He continued to live his life by sun worship principles and even minted coins to the sun god, *Sol Invictus Mith-Ra*. And yet he also he considered himself to be a Christian – even though allegedly he had his wife and son beheaded!

“Constantine convened the Council of Nicaea, which blended Christianity and Mithraism (sun worship). The resulting new faith kept the same core of familiar Mithraic festivals, but gave them Christian themes.

“And so it was that on March 7, 321, while still a practising pagan, Constantine passed a law that all should abstain from work ‘on the Venerable Day of the Sun.’ (recorded in the *Code of Justinian*, bk. III, title 12, law 3) In fact, Constantine was never a real Christian. He secretly worshipped the sun god until his death.

“Constantine’s decree marked the beginning of a long, though intermittent series of imperial decrees in support of Sunday laws.” (Vincent J. Kelly, *Forbidden Sunday and Feast-day Occupations*, 1943, p. 29. Catholic University of America dissertation.)

“Then the powerful church in that same city of Rome enacted its own Sunday laws, one of the most famous of which stemmed from the Council of Laodicea in AD 364. (Council of Laodicea Canon 29, *Scribner’s Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, 2nd Series, Vol. 14, p. 148)

Al pulled from his file an actual copy of the Council of Laodicea’s decree.

Christians must not ‘Judaize’ by resting on the Sabbath; but must work on that day, honoring rather the Lord’s day [‘Sun’ day] by resting, if possible, as Christians. However, if any be found ‘Judaizing’, let them be shut out from Christ. (Charles Joseph Hefele, *A History of the Church Councils*, Vol. II, p.316. Edinburgh:T. & T. Clark, 1896)

“And as we noted earlier, it was the pagan sun worshippers – and not the Christians – who *first* gave the title ‘Lord’s Day’ to Sunday.

“How Lucifer’s mob must have been celebrating!

“From time to time more laws were enacted which restricted what could be done on Sunday, and outlawed Sabbath-keeping. Each law became more strict, each penalty more severe.

“That was the master plan, you see... an ambitious scheme to blend all religions into one, of which ‘the sun was to be the central object of adoration’. (Milman, *The History of Christianity*, Vol. 2, pp. 175,176)

“As Webster informs us: ‘What began, however, as a pagan ordinance, ended as a Christian regulation.’ (Hutton Webster, *Rest Days*, 1916, pp. 122-123,170. Dr Webster was an historian teaching at the University of Nebraska.)

“By 380 AD, Christianity – if you could call it that - was the officially established religion of the entire Roman Empire.

“There was a huge influx of pagans, now calling themselves Christians, who had no idea what the term meant.

“Christianity became ‘re-defined’.”

Bronwyn moved uneasily. “What became of all the protesting Christians?”

“Glad you asked,” said Al. “Well, naturally, this caused great confusion among true believers.

“On the Italian peninsula, for example, we find places like Milan, in the center of northern Italy, and most other places, observing the seventh-day Sabbath – while you have Rome the capital requiring its followers to *fast* on the Sabbath.”

“Why was that?”

“So that people would *despise the Sabbath* – and look forward to the next day, Sunday. Anyway, Ambrose, the bishop of Milan commented that when he was in Milan he observed Saturday, but when in Rome he fasted on Saturday and observed Sunday. This gave rise to the proverb, ‘When you are in Rome, do as Rome does.’ We are indebted to Augustine, bishop of Africa, for that priceless snippet of information. (Dr Peter Heylyn, *The History of the Sabbath*, in *Historical and Miscellaneous Tracts*, part 2, London, 1682, p. 416)

“In any case, even 100 years after Constantine’s Sunday law, most Christians, not at all convinced about paganism’s SUN-day, were still observing the Bible Sabbath. Scholasticus was a fifth century historian, who wrote shortly after AD 439. He said:

Although almost all churches throughout the world celebrate the sacred mysteries on the Sabbath every week, yet the Christians of Alexandria and at Rome, on account of some ancient tradition, have ceased to do this. (*Socrates, Ecclesiastical History Book 5, Ch.22. Ante-Nicean Christian Library, Vol. 1. Boston, 1887, p. 132*)

“There you have it again... the odd boys out... *Alexandria* and *Rome*. Because most of the Christian world continued to resist these changes.

“Not to be put off, the church in Rome had its own brilliant solution.”

“And what was that?” asked Greg.

“It was force. To get Sunday observance enforced by law on pain of death.” Al straightened up. “Well, if you control both politics and arms, why waste it? And so Rome progressively wiped out the Bible Sabbath throughout Europe. Then later in Asia and everywhere else that her agents went. (Benjamin G. Wilkinson, *Truth Triumphant*. Payson, Ariz.: Leaves-of-Autumn Books, Inc., 1988)

“Anyway, since this is not our main theme, we won’t go into it. It’s sufficient to know that Rome and Alexandria were the two corruption centers.

“Yes, I see,” said Greg. “And does this have bearing on Dan Brown’s *Da Vinci Code* claim?”

“Indeed, it does. And to our understanding of what happened to the New Testament manuscripts,” responded Al.

“I really want to know,” Said Greg. He looked at his watch. “But before that, there’s some fire business I need to chase up. Should only take a couple of hours.”

“See you back soon?”

“I can’t wait!” exclaimed Greg.

7

Altering the Bible –

THE ALEXANDRIAN CULT

“The Bible *is indeed* an utter fraud!” barked Greg, as he came back in.

Al smiled. “So you’ve been reading more of that *Da Vinci Code* book.”

“You bet! I had an hour to fill, waiting for the insurance assessor.” Greg now looked smug. “Blast it, man! The church has changed everything so we wouldn’t know the real truth!”

“Oh yeah?”

“But now I’ve seen the light. I WOKE UP!”

Al breathed deeply. “You didn’t wake up, Greg. You were SET UP... like a pigeon, and you were too dumb to spot it!”

“What?... What do you mean, I was set up?”

“Look, Greg. You weren’t the first person to fall for the propaganda of the Alexandrian Cult. And you won’t be their last victim.”

“The Alexandrian Cult? What the dickens is that?”

Al straightened up. “If you ask Dan Brown, he’ll be deathly silent. It doesn’t help his case at all.”

“Go on.”

Important: review the Big Picture

“Well, Greg, as I said earlier, there’s a bloody battle going on for the minds of men. It started with our first parents, after Lucifer hijacked this planet.

“You recall how the Creator promised to send a Rescuer, but Lucifer’s Legion came up with a stand-in to impersonate the Promised One – and to blind people from accepting the real thing? This counterfeit ‘rescue’ system wore many masks. But it is summed up in the name *paganism*.

“If you’ll please bear with me, I shall repeat this, because it’s crucial to your question. When the Rescuer came, breaking into Lucifer’s territory, the hijacker tried to overpower Him. But the Rescuer beat him – He lived a blameless life, showed us how to successfully withstand the hijacker’s tricks, then offered Himself as a sacrifice for every person’s wrongs. Having successfully fulfilled this purpose, He then cracked the power of death and told His followers to go and let the world know what had happened.

“Lucifer’s bid to sabotage the rescue operation had failed. Of course, the Lucifer Legion were furious. They immediately planned an extermination campaign against Jesus’ followers. This involved hunting them, torturing and murdering them. But the numbers continued to explode. So Lucifer plotted another approach to sabotage the Christian movement. And he primed his agents to infiltrate it.

“In Egypt, he set up the Alexandrian Cult.”

“The Alexandrian Cult?” asked Bronwyn.

“Yes. Men like Clemens were groomed for this task. The aim was to sap the Christian message of its power to help anyone - the power of a risen Deliverer. How? By downgrading Jesus to a mere mortal who never rose from the dead.

“So the Alexandrian Cult began tampering with the Christian Gospels to make them more compatible with paganism.”

Greg’s wife sat rapt. “Tell me more,” she urged.

“Glad you’re with me, Bron, The cult’s allies in Rome were a great help. When Constantine ascended the throne, his aims were similar, though his motive was more political: to amalgamate the two strong religions - Christianity and paganism - and keep the empire united. So he looked around for a form of spiritual authority by which he could control the hearts and minds of both parties. He found it in the Bible that had recently been re-hashed by the Alexandrian cult – by one of Clemens’ pupils – Origen.

Origen of Alexandria changed it

“Of course, Origen had changed the Bible to agree with his own human philosophy. He thought he was wiser than the Bible writers. He chopped passages out of the Bible. He amended it whenever and wherever he felt like it.

Constantine adopted the changed Bible

“Origen’s penchant for allegorising Bible events suited Constantine just fine. Such a Bible could be interpreted to suit both pagan and Christian philosophies. So Constantine’s friend Eusebius edited Origen's Bible and Constantine had 50 copies made. This became the basis of the Bible eventually adopted by the church in Rome.

“You’ve probably heard of the *Vaticanus* manuscript (discovered in the Vatican) and the *Sinaiticus* (discovered at Sinai, Egypt). There is evidence that these are survivors of the type of Bible ordered by Constantine. (Price, *Ancestry*, pp. 69,70)

“One problem, however... Wide awake western Christians of that time couldn’t help noticing that this ‘revised’ Bible compared unfavorably with the original, uncorrupted Bible (the ‘Traditional Text’) still used by the Eastern Christians.”

Subsequent policy of suppression

“Those spoilsports! ” giggled Bronwyn. “So what now?”

“Simple strategy,” grinned Al. “Cut off access to the East.

“Rome occupied the strategic gateway to Asia at Constantinople. And those uncorrupted Bibles, along with Greek and Eastern literature, were sealed off from the West. The church of Rome initiated a policy of censorship - and most of Europe was plunged into the Dark Ages.

“Around 400 AD, Jerome gave to the church in Rome another ‘acceptably altered’ Bible of the *Vaticanus* and *Sinaiticus* type, though closer to the Traditional Text. But it did not gain ready acceptance and some 900 years were to pass before it came to be known as the Latin Vulgate.” (Jacobus, *Catholic and Protestant Bibles*, p. 4)

Greg shuffled his feet under the coffee table. “What about the Apocrypha?”

“What’s that?” Bron gave a blank stare.

“Some other books that were *not* considered inspired,” said Al. “They were not added to the Roman Bible until 1546.”

The chief corruption culprits

“So let’s review who the culprits were:

“1. *Clemens* of Alexandria boasted that he would not teach Christianity unless it was mixed with pagan philosophy.

“2. Clemens’ pupil *Origen* allegorised the Bible to make it more compatible with pagan philosophy.

“3. Emperor *Constantine* commissioned a Bible that would help unite pagans and Christians. And at his bidding *Eusebius* edited Origen’s corrupt works.

“4. Later *Jerome* drew on this altered Bible as one of his sources for producing the Latin Vulgate for the church of Rome.”

Greg was deep in thought.

Extent of the Vaticanus corruption

“Would you like to know how much corruption this Roman Bible has undergone?” asked Al.

“Sure would.” Greg looked surprised that Al was going down this track. Al had got the arsonist mad by telling her Brown’s story was a hoax. Yet here he was, it seemed, agreeing with Brown. Where was he headed?

“Well,” said Al, “the Vatican manuscript differs from the uncorrupted Traditional Text (preserved in the East) in 7,578 words. The Sinai manuscript differs from the Traditional Text 8,972 times.

“But interestingly, the Vatican and the Sinai manuscripts disagree between themselves more than 3,000 times in the Gospels alone! As textual critic John Burgon put it:

It is easier to find two consecutive verses in which these two MSS. differ the one from the other, than two consecutive verses in which they entirely agree. (Dean John W. Burgon, *The Revision Revised*. Fort Worth, TX: A.G. Hobbs Publications, 1983, p. 12)

Greg could contain himself no longer. “Hey, look, this is just what I’ve been trying to tell you,” he quipped. “What is going on here?”

Half suppressing a grin - which Greg found mildly infuriating - Al continued. “You may know,” said he, “that it is these very Vaticanus and Sinaiticus texts that are drawn on today in many modern versions - even though they have a fraudulent origin and history.”

“There, I told you,” roared Greg. “The whole thing’s a fraud.”

“Before you get carried away,” responded Al, “let’s keep this in perspective. We’re specifically talking about the Vaticanus manuscript.” Al arose and moved to his filing cabinet. “Ah, got it!” he said, returning to sit down. “Okay, here is what the big radar reveals:

The use of recent technology such as the vidicon camera, which creates a digital form of faint writing, recording it on a magnetic tape and reproducing it by electro-optical process, reveals that B [Vaticanus] has been altered by at least two hands, one being as late as the twelfth century. (Gail A. Riplinger, *New Age Versions of the Bible*. Munroe Falls, Ohio: A.V. Publications, 1994, p.551)

“There you are!” Greg exclaimed. “Just as I said. That’s outright forgery!”

Al smiled. “Listen to this. Vaticanus ‘agrees with the Textus Receptus [Traditional Text] only about 50% of the time. It differs from the Majority Greek in nearly 8000 places, amounting to about one change per verse. It omits several thousand key words from the Gospels, nearly 1000 complete sentences, and 500 clauses. It adds approximately 500 words, substitutes or modifies nearly 2000 and transposes word order in about 2000 places.’ (*Ibid.*)

“Furthermore,” said Al, “linguistic scholars have observed that Vaticanus is reminiscent of classical and Platonic Greek, *not* the Koine Greek of the New Testament. (Adolf Deissman, *Light of the Ancient East*) ‘Nestle concedes he had to change his Greek text when using Aleph & B [Sinaiticus and Vaticanus], to make it “appear” like Koine.’ (Gail A. Riplinger, *New Age Versions of the Bible*. Munroe Falls, Ohio: A.V. Publications, 1994, p.551)

Greg crimsoned. “Are these forgers for real? Who do they think they’re kidding?”

“Something else that may interest you,” said Al. “Codicologists – that is, scientists who study the make-up of ancient book forms - note that Vaticanus was written on vellum scrolls (skin ‘... obtained from animals not yet born’) not papyrus codices, as were used among ‘the early Christians.’ (Bruce Metzger, *Manuscripts of the Greek Bible*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991, p. 14)

Another fact about the Vaticanus

“Moreover, it seems the Vaticanus was not respected even in its day. It was submitted for use in the fourth century – yet the reading of it died out in the fourth or fifth century. So we have the verdict of history against it.

“This raises an awkward question. Since it was not used by anyone for a thousand years, then why its sudden ‘discovery’ in the Vatican in 1481?”

Greg opened his mouth to speak, then closed it again. Gloria just sat there, pretty as a picture. And Bronwyn spoke up. “Yes, why?” she asked.

“Try this,” resumed Al. “Gail Riplinger has researched the whole matter as well as anyone alive. In a 700 page book on the subject, here is her conclusion:

Its immediate use to suppress the [Protestant] Reformation and its subsequent release in 1582, as the Jesuit-Rheims Bible, are logical, considering the manuscript’s omission of anti-Catholic sections and books (i.e. Hebrews 9:14, Revelation, etc.). (Gail A. Riplinger, *New Age Versions of the Bible*. Munroe Falls, Ohio: A.V. Publications, 1994, p.552)

Greg snorted, “Riplinger? Never heard of her.”

“Riplinger has done postgraduate work at Harvard and Cornell Universities, authored six college textbooks, and was one of fifty educators worldwide selected to be in an international edition of *Who’s Who*.

“And after extensive research concerning this Vaticanus manuscript, Riplinger declares that ‘It agrees essentially with Origen’s Hexapla, omitting the deity of Christ frequently and making other Gnostic or Arian alterations.’ “(*Ibid.*)

Greg reached for the cookies. “There you are, didn’t I say this Bible thing was a fraud?”

“You did refer to another Bible manuscript,” prodded Bronwyn... was it the Sinaiticus, or something?”

Sinaiticus corruption

“Yes,” replied Al, “the Sinaiticus. You’d think it would *have to* be better than the corrupt Vaticanus, eh?” Al shrugged. “Sorry. Here is what Princeton professor Bruce Metzger informs us. He says that ‘a good many correctors (as many as nine) have been at work on the manuscript... Tischendorf’s edition of the manuscript enumerates some 14,800 places where some alteration has been made to the text.’ By ‘the use of ultra-violet lamp, Milne and Skeat discovered that the original reading in the manuscript was erased... [in places].’ (Bruce Metzger, *Manuscripts of the Greek Bible*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991, p. 77)

There are about 9000 changes in this text from that of the Majority and Traditional Text, amounting to one difference in every verse. It omits 4000 words from the Gospels, adds 1000, repositions 2000 and alters another 1000....

The fact is that some pages were written on sheepskin and some on goatskin is a telling sign of its part-Christian, part-heathen character. (Gail A. Riplinger, *New Age Versions of the Bible*. Munroe Falls, Ohio: A.V. Publications, 1994, pp.552-553)

“A dead giveaway!” croaked Greg.

Bron spluttered, “I’m ready to faint...”

Disagree with each other

“Very well,” said Greg, “So how do the Sinaiticus and Vaticanus compare to the other manuscripts that have survived?”

Al faced him straight on. “Here is the sad truth: they do ***not*** agree with the majority of manuscripts.” (Bruce Metzger, *Manuscripts of the Greek Bible*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991, p. 78)

“As Riplinger puts it:

Not only do they disagree with the Majority of manuscripts, but they do not agree with each other. The 8000 changes in B and the 9000 changes in Aleph are not the same changes. When their changes are added together, they alter the Majority text in about 13,000 places. This is two changes for every verse. Together they omit 4000 words, add 2000, transpose 3500, and modify 2000. (Gail A. Riplinger, *New Age Versions of the Bible*. Munroe Falls, Ohio: A.V. Publications, 1994, p.554)

“In fact, they disagree with each other a dozen times on every page. And to make matters worse, they disagree 70 per cent of the time and in almost every verse of the Gospels. As notes Burgon:

It is easier to find two consecutive verses in which these manuscripts differ than two in which they agree. (Dean John W. Burgon, *The Revision Revised*. Fort Worth, TX: A.G. Hobbs Publications, 1983, p. 12)

“Just as I’ve been saying,” said Greg, “it’s a fraud.”

“I know, I know,” responded Al. “You’re dead right.”

“What!” blurted Greg. “You agree with me? Then how come you got that Meehan woman so angry she’d blow up your classroom?”

“We’ll get to that... later.” Al promised. “But first let me point out that today, in the twenty-first century, we are being lumped with supposedly new, modern translations. But these are no more than a resuscitation of the Vaticanus and Sinaiticus that have been so long

discredited. And learned men are seeking to palm them off upon a busy and careless age, as though they are new revelations.

“Can you believe this? We’re talking about *mistakes* that were long left behind, now *being revived* in the NIV and other ‘new’ versions! What confusion! And what deceit! But there’s more to this that meets the eye. I tell you, the guys pushing this are just puppets. There is a master plan, my friend. Like it or not, we are dealing with the long term agenda of the Lucifer Legion.”

“So,” said Greg, “Admit it. *The Da Vinci Code* is right! Constantine’s men did corrupt the Bible so nobody can know the original!”

“Yes, at first thought that might seem so. But here’s the good news! The New Testament writings were so important to Christians everywhere that it was virtually impossible to mess them up and get away with it. You see, throughout the Christian world all scrolls would need to be changed simultaneously - along with countless memories - just to make one single change. Also Scripture memorization was common.

Other manuscripts preserved pure

“Now here’s the key factor. During the time when the Scriptures were being corrupted in Alexandria and Rome, the *original* text (which would later be known as the Traditional Text or the Received Text), was *preserved* carefully *in numerous other places* which the corrupters could not reach.”

“Brown didn’t mention these,” objected Greg.

Why don't the critics mention these?

Al looked at him. “Do you know why? I can think of two reasons. Either he didn't know about these untainted copies, or else he wasn't honest enough to admit their existence. Ignorance... or dishonesty. Take your pick.

“During the Dark Ages, these unchanged Bibles were out of the reach of most Europeans. In Europe, a major suppression was under way. But elsewhere, the pure text was being revered and used.”

And older than Vaticanus and Sinaiticus

Greg fidgeted. Then, as if to recover the attack, he said, “But Vaticanus and Sinaiticus are the oldest Bibles. And if the oldest have been corrupted...”

“Hold it there!” said Al. “The truth is that the Peshitta Syriac version produced in Antioch was translated in the second century. It *predates* Vaticanus and Sinaiticus by 150 years. So, for starters, it has antiquity on its side.

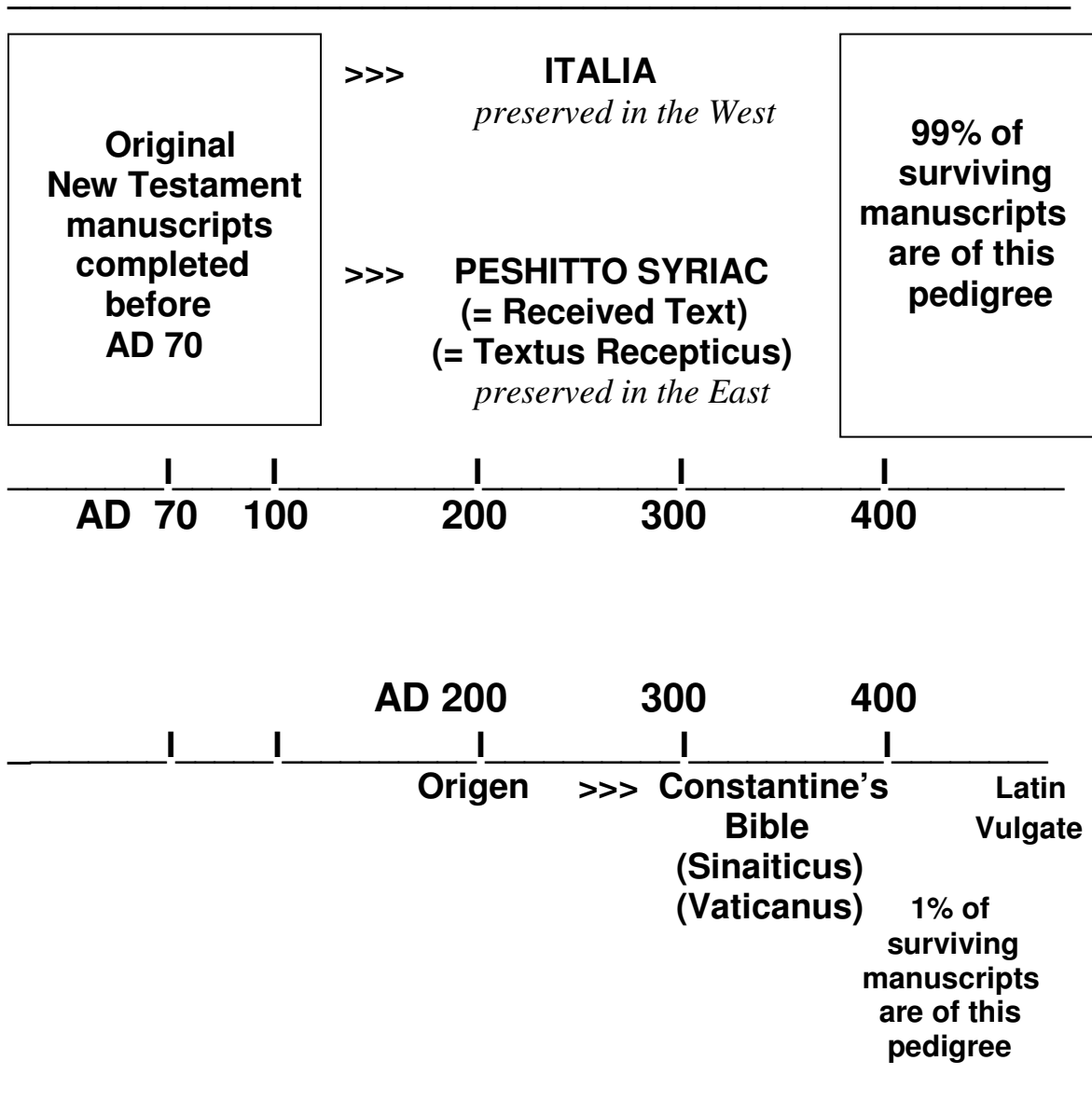
“And later you will discover how wonderfully this was preserved.

Al glanced at the clock.

“I get the hint,” Bron said. She shot a quick glance at Greg.

He studied his wrist. “Eleven thirty-eight. Hey, man, this stuff gets you in.” He arose. “Tomorrow then?”

“Yes,” responded Gloria. “Come over for a swim, then lunch.”



A matter of life and death...

Bronwyn slipped on her jacket. "Wild dogs won't keep me away."

* * * * *

As he rolled into bed, Al's mind was racing. "I need to warn Greg," he mumbled. "This *Da Vinci Code* - a great yarn it may be. But there's poison in it."

Gloria yawned. “What do you mean, honey?”

He turned and stroked her hair. “Darling, millions of trusting men and women are being exposed to something they don’t understand. And I fear that uncountable lives will be wrecked by it. There are some serious charges floating around. They cannot be ignored.”

Gloria turned to sleep. As Al lay beside her, he mentally tabulated issues that needed to be faced:

1. Was Jesus as the Son of God INVENTED by the Church?
2. Did the Bible writers manipulate history?
3. Were some earlier gospels suppressed?
4. Did Jesus have children by Mary Magdalene?

The principal and his wife were in for a few surprises...

8

Were some earlier gospels suppressed? -

THE “SECRET” BOOKS

Greg leaned back sideways in the window bay, his knees upward, as he tossed some chunks of bread to five quails scratching in the lawn.

He turned and said, “Al, these last couple of days I’ve learned things that could destroy the church. It seems that what we were taught about the Bible is just plain rot. The New Testament version of Jesus is a fabrication.”

“Oh?”

“Yes, there are some hidden documents that prove it.”

“Tell me more.”

“It happened at the Council of Nicaea. You’ve already agreed that Constantine was a rogue. But last night there was something we didn’t address. Constantine and a group of bishops got together to make up the present Bible. More than eighty gospels were considered for the New Testament. But the church turned them down and then destroyed them. How about that?”

The girls were in the kitchen, so Al sat in a reclining chair facing Greg. Nine more quails had landed on the grass to compete for the crumbs. And two thrushes had joined them. He loved watching their antics.

Missing books of the Bible?

“So, Greg, what are these other gospels you’re talking about?”

“They’re called the ‘secret gospels’ – that’s what Constantine’s mob threw out. You haven’t heard of them?”

Something flicked on in Al’s cortex just then and he knew what Greg was getting at. One balmy winter’s day in December 1945, a peasant near the Egyptian town of Nag Hammadi came across some old scrolls and texts. They were part of an ancient library. And they included poems, myths, mysticism, and what some had called “secret gospels”... the Gospel of Thomas, the Gospel of Philip, the Gospel of Mary, the Gospel of Truth, the Testimony of Truth, and some others.

“Yes,” explained Greg. “Those books are said to highlight glaring discrepancies and fabrications in the modern Bible.”

Al heard. And if Greg was right, millions of Christians were in serious trouble.

“Those books,” said Greg, “they’re the earliest Christian records.”

“The *earliest*?”

“They were written before the New Testament.... written by Jesus’ original followers, the original Gnostics. And they do tell a different story from what’s in the Bible. They show Jesus as a good man, but only mortal, that’s all. But after that, the New Testament writers came along. And they ‘stole’ Jesus from that original sect. They suppressed those early Gnostic texts, so as to concoct the idea that Jesus was the Son of God!”

“You’re saying there was a conspiracy?” asked Al.

Greg tossed a few more scraps to the birds, then turned back to Al.

“Yeah. Something like that.”

“This claim is based on those texts from Egypt?”

“Well, yes. For example, the Gospel of Thomas. It’s earlier than the New Testament books – earlier than Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.”

Al thought for a moment. Indeed, he did recall the discovery of these Egyptian texts.

But the scholars who first began the study of these documents did not make such claims as Greg was now voicing. In fact, one expert on the Gospel of Thomas had said in 1961, “[The Gospel of Thomas’s] character is so far removed from the four canonical Gospels that it cannot be put on a par with them.”(Bertil Gartner, *The Theology of the Gospel According to Thomas*. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1961, p. 11)

“There’s also a *hidden* document,” added Greg.

“Hidden document?”

“Yes. And it will show Jesus was a mere mortal... never rose from the dead.”

“What document is that?”

The hypothetical “Q” document

“It’s called ‘Q’.”

“Have you seen this ‘Q’ document?”

“No, not I”

“Has anyone else seen it?”

“Well, no.”

“Then where is it?”

“Well, frankly, it seems no one knows.”

“So how on earth, Greg, do you know it exists?”

“Well, it’s like this. They looked in the Bible, at Matthew’s Gospel and Luke’s Gospel. And they saw that long sections were similar. So they decided that both Matthew and Luke must have been using some other common scroll. And that they had both copied their material from it. And the point is, that particular passage in both Matthew and Luke does *not* mention Jesus’ death and resurrection.”

“So these modern scholars accepted the material that Matthew and Luke both *share*. But then rejected *everything else* Matthew and Luke said?”

“Yeah...I guess so.”

“Interesting,” hummed Al. “Yet no such ‘Q’ scroll has ever been found?”

There was a moment of silence. Greg said nothing.

“Oh, come on. Has it?”

“No.”

Al chuckled. “Then as far as anyone on earth knows this ‘Q’ scroll doesn’t exist.”

Al repositioned himself. “So these scholars guessed it into existence. Then they called it ‘Q’. Then they reasoned that this ‘Q’ is older than Matthew or Luke... in fact, the earliest Christian writing.”

Greg straightened. “That’s right.”

“So you’re telling me that these scholars took these extracted verses from Matthew and Luke - and in their minds made them into an imaginary new book, called ‘Q’. Then from this they made up their own new picture of Jesus?”

“And this imaginary ‘Q’ that no one’s ever seen, it doesn’t talk about Jesus’ death and resurrection. Therefore it must be older than the Bible. And because your Gospel of Thomas does not mention Jesus’ death and resurrection, either, then it too must be older.”

“That’s it,” said Greg. “No resurrection mentioned. That’s the way to understand who Jesus was... just human.”

“Interesting, Greg. But I see two major problems.”

“Huh?”

“Well, firstly, no one on Planet Earth has ever seen ‘Q’. Evidence for it is zilch... zero. Greg, let’s face it. This is *an imaginary book* that exists purely in someone’s head. No manuscript named ‘Q’ has been found in Egypt ... or anywhere else.”

“You could call it a hypothetical book.”

“Very well, Greg, let’s think about something solid, like the pyramids... 4,000 years old. Just suppose we could turn the Cheops pyramid upside down and balance its enormous weight on one small stone slab. Tell me, how long would it stand before it toppled of its own weight? A day or two?”

“You’d be silly to try.”

“Exactly. But this is what you and I are being asked to believe about ‘Q’. Someone has just turned upside down the 2,000 year structure of recorded history. And balanced it on one imaginary document no one has ever seen!

“In reality, there is no need for ‘Q’ to exist at all.”

“What are you getting at?”

“Well, you see, there’s a very simple explanation for the material Matthew and Luke share. Luke himself, at the beginning of his book, refers to witnesses. He says he used material from these witnesses (Luke 1:1,2) – one of whom was Matthew, whom he knew to be a faithful witness about certain things. There it is, from the horse’s mouth.”

“Did Luke say that?”

Al smiled. “Isn’t the simplest and most ordinary explanation usually the correct one? But tell me more about what these scholars are claiming.”

Which came first – the “secret gospels” or the New Testament?

“Well, basically they say that two versions of Christianity developed alongside each other. The Gnostics started Christianity, then the New Testament writers came along with their own version.”

“But with no ‘Q’ document, what evidence do they have?”

“There’s the Gospel of Thomas. It’s said to be older than the New Testament Gospels.”

“Why older?”

“Because it agrees with ‘Q’ “ replied Greg. “Like ‘Q’ it doesn’t mention Jesus’ resurrection.”

“You mean to say it’s *older* because it agrees with a *non-existent* book?”

Greg squirmed. “Boy, that sounds a bit stupid, doesn’t it?” he conceded with a weak smile.

“Well, Greg, about those *other scrolls* that were dug up *with* the Gospel of Thomas? I understand that *not one of them* has ever been *dated early* as is claimed for Thomas. Evidently, this cannot be done, or else some Gnostic scholar would have tried it.

“So it boils down to this: the claim of an ‘early’ date for a ‘Gnostic-style’ Jesus stands or falls with that Gospel of Thomas.”

Greg thought for a moment. How was he going to respond to that? “Well, Brown says that the *Dead Sea Scrolls* *also* show Jesus to be merely human. What do you say to that?”

“Nice try, Greg. It is true that in the scrolls is mention of somebody termed the Teacher of Righteousness and another person called the Wicked Priest. The former man founded the Essene sect. However, these terms are code names for persons unknown. There is no proven connection with Jesus Christ or with any other identifiable person. Another unfortunate foul up”

Al sniffed. “Anyway, do you smell something?”

“What have the girls have cooked up now?” Greg turned his head.

9

Jesus-as-God concocted later? -

OUTSMARTED IN THE SEANCE

“Potato soup.”

“Yes, Bron says it’s one of your favorites,” smiled Gloria.

As the sipping began, Greg threw in a teaser for Al.

“What I’m saying is, Jesus was human – just that and nothing more. But those men Peter, Paul and their group hijacked the Jesus story. And they re-wrote history to make Jesus the Son of God. Then they suppressed the Gospel of Thomas and those other Gnostic books.”

Al wiped his lips. “You mean they invented stories to make Jesus into the Son of God?”

History re-written by the winners?

“Yes. Your New Testament is the Jesus story re-written by those ‘winners’ whose ideas conquered.”

Bronwyn nodded. Greg leaned back, feeling a touch of triumph.

Al looked him in the eye. “**When** would you say they became **winners**? As early as AD 70?”

“No, no, no, not that early. They were an unpopular minority at that time.”

“Spot on. They were persecuted by both fellow Jews and Romans. However, I shall submit to you that the New Testament books were all written before AD 70 – *while* they were being persecuted. How on earth could they be ‘winners’ re-writing history at that early time? What are you talking about?”

Just then, a gust of wind surged through the open door, scattering Greg’s notes across the floor. They both lurched forward to retrieve them.

Al continued. “I was about to say, Greg, that in those days there was no rational reason to be known as a follower of Jesus Christ. It meant to lose your job, lose your friends, family, your home... even your life!

“And why? Because *at that very same time* they were telling the world that Jesus was the Son of God. Yet all they had to do to escape death was to deny it. These were ‘winners’?”

“You’ve got me there,” Greg grinned, refilling his bowl.

Would you die for a lie?

“So,” pressed Al, “why would a man endure such punishment? If Jesus’ followers knew he was NOT divine, why didn’t they simply confess their deception and spare themselves such agony?

“They could have avoided needless suffering if they had only been willing to say Jesus was a mere man. But look what they were willing to suffer.” Al pulled a sheet out of his desk. “Look, I compiled this some time back. Just get an eyeful of it:

- Barnabus was stoned to death on June 11, 58 AD at Salamis, Cyprus;
- Thomas was martyred on December 21, 60 AD in Madras, India;
- Simon the zealot was crucified on May 10, 61 AD at Caistor, Lincolnshire, Britain;
- James was hurled down, then clubbed to death at Passover of 61 AD in Jerusalem;
- Matthias was killed by a mob in 64 AD in Judea;
- Jude Thaddeus was martyred on October 28, 66 AD in Armenia;
- Peter was crucified on June 29, 67 AD in Rome;
- Paul was beheaded by Nero on June 29, 67 AD in Rome;
- Mark was brutally murdered on April 25, 68 AD in Alexandria;
- Bartholomew was killed on August 24, 68 AD at Albanopolis;
- Matthew was martyred on September 21, 68 AD in Ethiopia;
- Andrew suffered martyrdom on September 21, 68 AD in Patras.

Stephen was stoned in AD 34. Another James was beheaded. These men included Jesus' original twelve disciples and some others that joined them near the beginning.

“And there were thousands of others. The apostle John was the only one who died a natural death.

“And why? All because they were claiming Jesus to be the Son of God.

“You want evidence, guys? There it is. These men *did not revise history. They kept affirming* what they believed to be true. And those early Christians who accepted their testimony *did not revise*

history. They affirmed it. And the later bishops, *did not revise history. They affirmed it.*

“To them it was *not* just a great con story. They were willing to *pay* with their own blood. Would you die for something you knew was a lie?”

Bronwyn shuddered. “Not me.” Getting up, she tiptoed into the kitchen to help Gloria bring out the main dish.

A few minutes later the girls were back.

Jesus’ divinity INVENTED by the LATER church?

“I was about to say,” said Al, “that if any person was in a position to identify the original belief concerning Jesus, it was Paul. Paul wrote from around AD 48 to AD 60... which I shall confirm shortly.

“Now, Paul stated that what he preached was the same as what the very earliest Christians believed. And he specifically names Peter, John, and James, Jesus’ brother as those who possessed the original Gospel. He calls them ‘pillars’, that is, the foundational, eyewitness figures. And he says that on them Jesus had built the new movement. (1 Corinthians 9:5; Galatians 1:19; 2:8-9; 1 Corinthians 15:3-5; Matthew 16:15-18; Ephesians 2:20)

“Think carefully about this now.

“So who did Paul believe Jesus was?”

“Let’s eat first,” suggested Gloria. “Then we can all get into that.”

* * * * *

The dishes wiped, Gloria and Bron lay back in their comfortable seats. Greg rolled down to sprawl onto the floor. And Al stretched across facing him.

Al handed Greg a New Testament and he began thumbing through it. “Paul’s own writings. That’s where we need to go,” said Al.

Greg set his pad on the carpet and got ready to take notes. “*So who did Paul believe Jesus was?*”

He began jotting down some references:

As early as the fifties, Paul described Jesus as

- “being in very nature God” (Philippians 2:5-11).
- He called Jesus “his [God’s] Son” (Romans 1:3),
- “one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things came” (1 Corinthians 8:6),
- and that “he is the image of the invisible God... by him all things were created” (Colossians 1:15-16).

“And Paul wrote when?” queried Greg.

“In the early fifties.”

“How can you prove such an early date?”

“I’ll share it with you soon. But my point is, here were New Testament writers expressing their belief that Jesus was totally and wholly divine in nature. They said they were eyewitnesses to Jesus. And what had Jesus taught them about Himself? That He was God’s only Son; that He alone could save men; that He would judge the world and raise the dead, and so on. (John 3:16,34-36; 5:27-29)

Lucifer's four words

Al raised himself off the floor, straightening his back. "Someone's been lying to you, Greg," said he, "and that makes me not a little angry, you being my friend and all."

"But why would anyone lie about this? For what gain?" Greg eased back his shoulders to stretch.

"Listen carefully, all of you," said Al. "This is no joking matter. There's a bloody battle going on for the minds of men. Lucifer's first four recorded words after he hijacked this planet said it all."

"And what are they?"

"His first grand entrance was in a séance, when he spoke these words through a serpent: 'Yea, hath God said...?' His aim was to place doubt in Eve's mind about God's truthfulness.

"Those four words pushed Eve into defying her Maker... and the human race has been paying for it ever since with pain, sickness, wars and death.

"Lucifer has been using those same four words to destroy faith in the words of God right through history.

"It is cosmic feud. But it is nearing its climax."

"A feud!" exclaimed Greg.

"Nothing less, man. There's more than human agencies involved here."

Greg's eyes widened. "You've got my attention."

The “secret gospels” reveal Lucifer’s imprint

“Now, Greg, back to your so-called ‘secret gospels’. I won’t go into the fact that they contradict one another. What’s important is they share the same Luciferian aim.”

“What are you saying?”

“Well, firstly, these Gnostic writings despise all created things, in particular, marriage, motherhood and sexual distinctions... saying you must be liberated from such earthly constraints.

“Not for me,” giggled Gloria. Bron cast a cheeky look at Greg.

“Secondly, notice these clues to their origin,” Al said. “It doesn’t take a brain surgeon to recognize where those books came from.

“1. They mock the Creator. In all 52 texts dug up at Nag Hammadi, the most common theme is their rejection of the Genesis creation account. These texts frequently mock the Creator (Yahweh) as a blind fool. They mock God, who happens to be the enemy of - who else but *Lucifer!*

“2. They teach that one is also free from any law because the foolish Creator made up the law. The law of God is hated most intensely by whom?... *Lucifer!*

“3. The Gnostic believes there is no sin. Rather, the Fall of our first parents was really liberation. Liberation from God, the enemy of... *Lucifer!*

“4. They teach that the *serpent* who tempted our first parents *speaks wisdom*. That’s written in the text called Testimony of Truth. In it we read the Garden of Eden story from the serpent’s point of view. God is portrayed as a jealous, raging man, while the

serpent is seen as the hero – the speaker of divine wisdom. Wisdom from whom? *Lucifer!*

“5. Jesus, according to the Gnostic teaching, comes not to free us from sin, but to free us from our ignorance. And the knowledge is simply this – *we are divine*. And in that first séance who was it that said, “*You shall be as gods*”? That’s right... *Lucifer!* (Genesis 3:5)

“Could it be plainer? This philosophy betrays the stamp of *its author – Lucifer*.

“Beyond doubt, those Gnostic ‘gospels’ came from the mastermind of *Lucifer* himself. The Gnostic movement was set up by the Legion of Lucifer to discredit the Creator’s rescue plan.”

Al straightened his back. “This is serious stuff, man.”

“Great Scott!” exclaimed Greg. “This is dynamite!”

Gnosticism a valid form of Christianity?

“I ask you, then,” said Al, “Is Gnosticism a valid form of Christianity that was deliberately suppressed?”

Greg shook his head. “Seems Brown got that wrong.”

Al continued. “But don’t just take my word for it. Why not let a Gnostic himself give the final word?” Al moved back along the shelves, searching for a book. “Ah, got it!” he said after a minute or so. “Listen to this, guys. Duncan Greenlees, a modern Gnostic, has no desire to be associated with Christianity. So his evaluation of Gnosticism is objective. Listen:

Gnosticism is a system of direct experiential knowledge of God... the Soul and the universe;... in the early

centuries of this era, amid a growing Christianity, it took on the form of the Christian faith, while rejecting most of its specific beliefs. Its wording is therefore largely Christian, while its spirit is that of the latest paganism of the West. (Duncan Greenlees, *The Gospel of the Gnostics*. Madras, India: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1958, p. vii)

“You see? By Greenlees’ own definition, Gnosticism is a *pagan reaction to the Christian Gospel*. Of Luciferian origin? You’d better believe it.”

The Jesus Seminar group

Bronwyn poured everyone a drink. “Have you heard of an organization called the Jesus Seminar?” she asked.

“What about it?” responded Al.

“Well,” smiled Bron, “its cofounder John Dominic Crossan also denies that Jesus bodily rose from the dead. He says Jesus was buried in a shallow grave, dug up by dogs and eaten. (See Richard N. Ostling, “Jesus Christ, Plain and Simple,” *Time*, January 10, 1994, pp. 32-33)

“Of course,” said Al, “he has stockpiles of evidence to support his claim? Sadly, the Jesus Seminar is the same pseudo-christian philosophy, in a new garb. Greg, would you like to jot these down?” Once more Greg took up his pen. Al tabulated some points on the Jesus Seminar:

“1. *They have the wrong motive.* They acknowledge that their assessment of Jesus is colored by an aim to create a new ‘fictive’ Jesus to fit modern man. (Robert Funk, “Opening Remarks,” *Foundations and Facets Forum* 1, no. 1, March 1985, p. 12) This biases them against any facts that cut against this aim.

“2. *They use the wrong procedure for their voting.* They attempt to determine truth by *majority* vote. Majority vote –a reliable indicator? Didn’t the majority once believe the earth was flat?

“3. *They base their voting on the wrong books.* Their voting is based in part on that hypothetical ‘Q’ book that no one has ever seen, another non-existent book which they call Secret Mark, and a so-called Gospel of Thomas from the second century. They rate these as fitting their idea of Jesus better than the historically attested New Testament Gospels.

“4. *They make wrong assumptions.* For example, they presuppose that miracles are impossible – discounting the fact that if God exists, miracles are possible. They also assume - mistakenly - that *original* Christianity was influenced by the Mystery religions. (This second notion is solidly shattered on Book 3 of this series, *Stolen Identity: Jesus Christ – History or Hoax* <<http://www.beforeus.com/stolen-id.php>>)

“5. *They use the wrong dates.* They first *assume* that the New Testament Gospels consist of *later* myths about Jesus. Having thus assumed, they then impose unjustified late dates for them – an assumption that goes against manuscript evidence, as we shall soon discover. An unproved assumption is again their cue.

“6. *They come to conflicting conclusions.* (See Appendix P) They have *no real agreement* among themselves as to who Jesus really was.”

“Well, they may be sincere,” observed Greg, “but their approach seems rather pathetic to me.” Greg shuffled. “But Al, I think you’re also wrong... about the New Testament being written early. Except for Paul’s writings, it was probably written as late as the second century.

“Good question, Greg. Let’s see...”

10

Gospels written early or late? -

CRUCIAL TIMING

“Brown says it in *The Da Vinci Code*.”

“What does he say?”

“That the Bible Gospels were concocted up to 100 years after the alleged events – by men who craftily inserted later myths that had developed about Jesus. And those writers palmed off their pseudo reports as the work of Jesus’ original disciples.”

“Greg, that’s a serious charge against those writers. What do you say, shall we examine this as in a court of law?”

“That would be an interesting approach,” breathed Greg.

Benefit of the doubt: to the manuscript or the critic?

“Okay, we should first bear in mind Aristotle’s dictum: *‘The benefit of the doubt is to be given to the document itself, not arrogated by the critic to himself.’* It is to be accepted that a document is genuine, unless there is good reason to believe otherwise.

“In our country isn’t a man considered innocent till proven guilty? Would it be fair to apply this same ruling to the New Testament

writers? No classical scholar would doubt the authenticity of the classical authors. So may we ask, why treat the New Testament writings differently?

Greg muttered. “It would be honest to treat them all by the same rule.”

“Then, let’s start with observations by some erstwhile critics. Did you know that many of the liberal scholars are being forced to consider earlier dates for the New Testament?” Al lumbered to his library, retrieved some books and spread them out on the floor.

New Testament written HOW EARLY?

“William Fox Albright was one the world’s foremost Middle East archaeologists. First, let’s note his testimony:

We can already say emphatically that there is no longer any solid basis for dating any book of the New Testament after about A.D. 80, two full generations before the date between 130 and 150 given by the more radical New Testament critics of today. (William F. Albright, *Recent Discoveries in Bible Lands*. New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1955, p.136)

“Later, with more evidence in, this former liberal scholar said:

In my opinion, every book of the New Testament was written by a baptized Jew between the forties and eighties of the first century (very probably sometime between about A.D. 50 and 75). (*Towards a More Conservative View*, p.3; also in an interview for *Christianity Today*, 18 January, 1963)

“Dr. John A. T. Robinson was known for his role in launching the ‘Death of God’ movement. However, his later research convinced

him that the whole of the New Testament was written before the Fall of Jerusalem in AD 70. (John A.T. Robinson, *Redating the New Testament*. London: SCM Press, 1976)

1. Quoted by other first century documents

“Again, if the New Testament was not written until later, then how come other **first century** works were quoting from it? For example, *The Epistle of Barnabus*, *The Didache*, Clement’s *Corinthians* and Ignatius’ *Seven Epistles*. Clement lived from 30 to 95 AD, and Ignatius (70 to 110 AD) knew the apostles and quoted directly from 15 of the 27 books. Polycarp (born 70 AD) was a disciple of John and quoted from the New Testament.”

2. The crucial timing of Paul’s testimony

Al took a gulp, and put down his glass. “Among the earliest New Testament writings are Paul’s. Of course, no recognized scholars and historians dispute that **Paul** was a real person, a historical figure, who ***lived at the same time as Jesus***. This convinced rabbi knew the early Christians well enough to attempt their extinction. In the late thirties, he converted to Christianity. He became a leading Christian apostle to the non-Jews, and eventually he was executed for his faith by Nero in **AD 67**. ***These facts*** are historically ***accepted by foes and friends*** alike.

“So if you want to know what the earliest disciples of Jesus ***really*** believed, Paul is ***the most historically dependable authority to consult***. What is more, Paul’s writings comprise the backbone of the New Testament.

“Time-wise, his life and work ***overlaps the very beginnings of the Christian movement***. That Paul wrote from around **AD 48 to AD 65**, no recognized historians and scholars will deny. Paul’s dates

are so well established that few modern scholars even bother to mention the fact.

“For example, one of the most radical scholars, Hendrikus Boers of Emory University, states casually that Paul’s argument in 1 Thessalonians is ‘fully in line with other examples of inter-Jewish polemic *in the forties* of the first century A.D.’ (See George Lyons, *Pauline Autobiography: Towards a New Understanding*. Atlanta, GA.: Scholars Press, 1985, p. 203. Emphasis added.)

“Both critical and conservative scholars widely accept that Paul’s book known as 1 Corinthians was written by no later than AD **55 or 56**. This is a bare quarter century after the crucifixion in **AD 31**.

“Professor Kevan concurs. He says:

[Paul’s] epistles constitute historical evidence of the highest kind. The letters addressed to the *Galatians*, the *Corinthians*, and the *Romans*, about the authenticity and date of which there is very little dispute, belong to the time of Paul’s missionary journeys, and may be dated in the period **A.D. 55-58**. This brings the evidence of the resurrection of Christ still nearer to the event: the interval is the short span of twenty-five years. Since Paul himself makes it plain that the subject of his letter was the same as that about which he had spoken to them when he was with them, this really brings back the evidence to a still earlier time. (Ernest F. Kevan, *The Resurrection of Christ*. London: The Campbell Morgan Memorial Bible Lectureship, Westminster Chapel, Buckingham Gate, S.W.I., June 14, 1961, p. 6. Emphasis added.)

“Even critics admit that Paul wrote his 1 Corinthians 15:1-6, which relates Jesus’ death and resurrection, by about **AD 55**. This was just 24 years after Jesus’ death. And Paul says more than 250 witnesses of the resurrection were still alive when he wrote. (chapter 15:6)

“Internal evidence for this early date is strong: 1- The book repeatedly claims to be written by Paul (1:1, 12-17; 3:4, 6, 22; 16:21). 2- It reveals parallels with the book of Acts (***60 to 62 AD***).

3- From beginning to end there is a ring of authenticity to the book. 4- Paul mentions 500 who had seen Jesus, most of whom were still alive. 5- The contents harmonize with what has been learned about Corinth during that era.

“Not just 1 Corinthians, but also two other of Paul’s writings, 2 Corinthians and Galatians are likewise well attested and early. Some of Paul’s letters are dated as early as ***AD 49***. And his understanding that Jesus is God does not evolve through his various writings. It was settled in his mind before he began his letters.

“And you can check this yourself, Greg. Paul, the most prolific of all writers about Jesus, nowhere mentions any alleged ‘original Gnostic believers’. Not anywhere. It boils down to this, my friend. The ***Gnostic claim to precede the Christian movement*** is not serious history. It is a ***piece of fiction*** that cannot be substantiated.

Paul agrees with the Gospels

“All three books include facts that agree with the Gospels. For example:

- Paul refers to Jesus' virgin birth (Galatians 4:4), sinless life (2 Corinthians 5:21), death on the cross (1 Corinthians 15:3; Galatians 3:13); resurrection on the third day (1 Corinthians 15:4), and post-resurrection appearances (1 Corinthians 15:5-8).
- Paul speaks of the hundreds of eyewitnesses who could verify the resurrection (1 Corinthians 15:6).
- Paul rests the truth of Christianity on the historicity of the resurrection (1 Corinthians 15:12-19).
- Paul also gives historical details about Jesus' contemporaries, the apostles (1 Corinthians 15:5-8), including his private encounters with Peter and the apostles (Galatians 1:18-2:14).

3. Book of Acts

“And something else. Paul's best friend was a man called ***Luke***. Paul said of him, ‘***only Luke*** is with me.’ Luke wrote the book of Acts and the Gospel of Luke. Logically, if Paul is credible, one should at least give Luke a fair hearing.

Critic forced to change his mind

“Sir William Ramsay is reputed to be one of the greatest archaeologists of all time. ***Initially***, he assumed that the New Testament book of Acts was a fraudulent product of the mid-second century AD. ***However***, his research led to him reluctantly to admit that ‘***Luke's history is unsurpassed in respect of its***

trustworthiness.’ (W. M. Ramsay, *St. Paul the Traveller and the Roman Citizen*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1962, p. 81)

“There is powerful evidence that the book of Acts was written no later than the *early 60s*. In fact, noted historian Colin Hemer produces evidence that Luke wrote Acts *by AD 62*. (Colin Hemer, *The Book of Acts in the Setting of Hellenic History*. Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1990)

“How did he work that out?”

“For one thing, it does *not* mention several monumental events that would certainly have been included, had Acts been written *after* they occurred.”

“What events, Al?”

“Well, firstly, in Acts, the crucial event of the fall of Jerusalem in 70 is not mentioned. Secondly, there is no hint of the outbreak of the AD 66 Jewish War nor of the serious deterioration of the relations between the Jews and Romans before that time. Thirdly, neither is there any hint of the deterioration of Christian relations with Rome during the Nero’s persecution of the late 60s.

“Also, the prominence and authority of the Sadducees as described in the book of Acts reflects a pre- AD 70 date, before the collapse of their political cooperation with Rome.

“Moreover, Luke paints non-significant details of the culture of an early, Julio-Claudian period.

“But more telling is this: The areas of controversy described in the book of Acts presume that the temple was still standing. The book deals with issues that were especially important prior to AD 70, but not later. In the book of Acts, the *Jerusalem Temple* plays a central role in the nation of Israel. Luke writes as if the Temple is still an important part of Jewish life.

“The destruction of Jerusalem and its Temple - and the burning of Rome and the subsequent persecution of Christians - would have had an enormous impact on the young Christian community – yet neither of these pivotal events is mentioned in the book of Acts – nor in any of the New Testament writings.

“The action in the book of Acts ends with events *very early in the 60s*, yet the description in Acts 27 and 28 is written with a vivid immediacy. It is also an odd place to end the book if years have passed since the pre-62 events occurred.”

Al paused. And continued. “Let’s go further. The book of Acts *ends* on a strange note - Paul living under *house arrest*. Isn’t it strange that Luke does not record the deaths of his two chief characters, Peter and Paul? What would you say was the most plausible reason for this?”

Greg cleared his throat. “Well, I suppose it’s logical that Peter and Paul were still alive when the book of Acts was written.”

“Now,” said Al, “about *the murdering* of those Christian leaders. There is no mention of such an important event as the death of James at the hands of the Sanhedrin around *AD 61*, which is recorded by Josephus in *Antiquities of the Jews*

(20.9.1.200). Nor the murder of both Paul and Peter in **AD 67**. Surely their deaths were momentous events for the early Christian community. Yet we find *none of these deaths referred to* in ANY of the 27 canonized books of the New Testament. And as for Acts, it's the most comprehensive historical record we have of the early Christian movement. There can be but one explanation - that these records were all written *prior to* these events – most likely **before 61 AD.**"

"Okay, how old are the four Gospels?

"Well, that erstwhile liberal scholar Dr John Robinson places Matthew at **AD 40 to after 60**; Mark at about **45 to 60**; Luke at before **57 to after 60**; and John at from **40 to after 65**. (John A.T. Robinson, *Redating the New Testament*. London: SCM Press, 1976)

"This would mean that they were all composed within the lifetimes of eyewitnesses and contemporaries of the events. Assuming the basic integrity and reasonable accuracy of the writers, this would place the reliability of the New Testament beyond reasonable doubt, wouldn't you say?

4. Gospel of John

"Certainly *John's Gospel* (the **LAST** of the four) was written *prior to AD 70*. Internal evidence supports this. For example, John states: '*Now there IS in Jerusalem... a pool... called Bethesda.*' This landmark, along with others mentioned by John *as still*

existing, would most likely have been destroyed by the Roman armies under Titus in AD 70.

Greg rubbed his nose. “And the other Gospels?”

“Much the same,” said Al. “The Gospels of Luke, Mark and Matthew *prophesied the fall of the Jerusalem Temple* which occurred in AD 70. But not the fulfillment. Isn’t this very strange - that they all predict this major event *but do not record it happening*? Why do they not mention such an important milestone?”

Al’s eyes roved from Greg to Bronwyn.

“Well,” said Bron, fingering her hair, “I guess that event had *not yet happened* when they wrote.”

5. Book of Luke

“That’s the girl,” smiled Al. “But let’s go on from here. Consider Luke’s Gospel. This was written by the same author as the book of Acts. The style and vocabulary of the two books betray a common author.

“The book of Acts (*AD 62*) is the *second* of a two-part work authored by Luke, so this means his *Gospel of Luke* was written first - before Acts (cf. Luke 1:1 and Acts 1:1) – and less than thirty years from the death of Jesus. These books are contemporary to persons who witnessed Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection. Which is just what Luke claims in the prologue to his Gospel:

Many have undertaken to draw up a record of the things that

have been fulfilled among us, just as they were handed

down

to us by those who were eye-witnesses and servants of the

word. Therefore, since I myself have carefully investigated

everything from the beginning, it seemed good also to me to

write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus,

so that you may know the certainty of the things you have

been taught. (Luke 1:1-4)

“And since Luke presents the same information about who Jesus is, what he taught, and his death and resurrection as do the other Gospels, is there any reason to reject their historical accuracy?

“Now listen, Greg.” Al’s voice breathed excitement. “***Paul*** (writing between AD 48 and AD 60) ***quotes from Luke’s Gospel***. (Paul’s 1 Timothy 5:18 quotes Luke 10:7). Again, this shows us that Luke’s Gospel was completed in Paul’s lifetime. (And Paul was dead by AD 67.)

6. Book of Mark

“Furthermore, since Luke drew some of his information from the *Gospel of Mark*, it makes sense that Mark was even earlier.

“You’ve heard of the Dead Sea Scrolls, found in the Qumran Caves of Israel in 1947. The contents of Cave 7 had been dated from *BC 50 to AD 50*.

“Using the accepted methods of papyrology and palaeography, Jose O’Callahan identified among the scrolls of that cave, a fragment of the Gospel of Mark (fragment 7Q5), which he dated to have been written in *AD 50*. (See Appendix N.) He also discovered fragments of Acts and other epistles and dated them to have been written slightly after *AD 50*. (Norman Geisler, *Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Books, 2002, p. 530)

“For the Essenes to have possessed a copy of Mark’s Gospel about Jesus at so early a date, it must have already been in circulation prior to their obtaining that copy. (Elva Schroeder, *Whatever Happened to the Twelve Apostles?* Norwood, South Australia: Peacock Publications, 2003, p. 125; Dr Carsten Thiede, *The Jesus Papyrus*)

“It was also a strong tradition that Mark took the news of Jesus’ death and resurrection to Alexandria within 15 years after the event, in *46 AD*. (*Ibid.*) If this be so, it would appear quite reasonable for Mark to have written his report as early as *45 AD* - while eyewitnesses to that event were still alive! (See also Appendix N.)

“However, even without the Dead Sea Mark manuscript - which some of our critic friends are dying to discredit - *the cumulative evidence* still places the New Testament within the first century, and during the lives of eyewitnesses.

7. Book of Matthew

“Likewise, the *Gospel of Matthew* was early. When Matthew gives his report, the important AD 70 destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple has not yet occurred. *This milestone event is still future.*

“However, both Matthew and Luke do mention Jesus’ prediction of this event: ‘*WHEN you see Jerusalem **SURROUNDED BY ARMIES**, you will know that its desolation is near. So flee from the city quickly.*’ (Matthew 24:15-19; Luke 21:20-24)

“In the autumn of AD 66, Cestius Gallus, Roman legate of Syria, marched against Jerusalem to put down a rebellion. His troops surrounded the city, then withdrew for a brief period.

“THE CHRISTIANS SAW THIS AS THE SIGNAL JESUS HAD PREDICTED. As the Zealots opened the gates and set out in pursuit of the retiring Romans, the believers knew THEIR MOMENT HAD COME. Latching on to Jesus’ warning of 35 years earlier, every Christian fled out through the open gates at the proper time.

“They fled to Pella, on the other side of the Jordan Valley, and thereby escaped the destruction of Jerusalem, in which more than a million died. Even *Encyclopedia Judaica* acknowledges that ‘Prior to Jerusalem’s siege by Titus (in 70 CE), its Christian community fled to Pella.’

“Tell me, Greg, was this just coincidence? You have the population of Judea expecting Jerusalem to be a safe place from the Romans, so from all over the countryside they are pouring *into* it, yet on the other hand the Christians are fleeing *out* of the city - so not one of them perishes? How did those Christians know?

“And again, does Matthew report this triumphant escape and the pivotal AD 70 destruction of Jerusalem as accomplished? No. *These events are still considered to be future.*

“Of course the usual people will make the usual noises against Matthew’s early date. Why? Because they fear the implications. But there’s no escaping the fact, Matthew bears the characteristics of that pre-70 AD period and not later.”

Greg shuffled impatiently. “How early is the oldest surviving copy of Matthew?”

“So early, it’s uncanny. On Christmas Eve, 1994, an ancient manuscript was discovered in Magdalen Library, Oxford, where it had lain unidentified for almost a century. It turned out to be a fragment of Matthew’s gospel (Matthew chapter 26, to be precise).

“This Magdalene Manuscript has been analysed by Dr Carsten Thiede, and written up in his book *The Jesus Papyrus*. He made a sophisticated analysis of the handwriting of the fragment. To do this, he employed a special state-of-the-art microscope. This enabled him to differentiate between 20 separate micrometer layers of the papyrus, measuring the height and depth of the ink as well as the angle of the stylus used by the scribe.

“After this analysis Thiede was able to compare it with other papyri from that period. There were, for example, manuscripts found at Qumran (dated to **58 AD**). There was another at Herculaneum (dated *prior to 79 AD*) a further one from the fortress of Masada (dated to between **73 and 74 AD**), and finally a papyrus from the Egyptian town of Oxyrynchus.

“Well, the Magdalene Manuscript fragment matches all four. In fact, it is almost a twin to the papyrus found in Oxyrynchus, which bears the date of **65 to 66 AD**. Thiede concludes that this papyrus

fragment of St. Matthew's Gospel was written no later than this date, and probably earlier.

“And what does that suggest?” Al looked his colleague in the eye. “Simply this, that we have either a portion of the *original* Gospel of Matthew, *or an immediate copy* written while Matthew and the other disciples and eyewitnesses to the events were still alive. This would be the oldest manuscript portion of the New Testament in existence today, one which co-exists with the original writers!

As close as 6 years after Jesus

“So there exists a strong case that *all the New Testament Gospels* were written as early as *AD 40 to 60-plus*. This would place the first written records *as close as nine years* after Jesus died!”

“Did you say only nine years!!!” Greg sat up with a start.

Al gave a long pause. Then he straightened up and looked Greg straight in the eye. “How about six years!”

“Six years!”

“Yes,” said Al. “It is considered that Matthew’s original book (if he first wrote it in Aramaic) was written around **37 AD**. This would place the Greek Matthew just a few years later at the most. *Its Hebraisms* suit the earliest period of Christianity. As a matter of fact, although the date Matthew wrote his Gospel has been much discussed, no convincing reason has been offered for discrediting the traditional date of **37 AD**. That’s just 6 years after the key events! ...only 6 years.

“Greg, let’s be fair with this information. The *reasons for accepting it* are much more credible than reasons for rejecting it.” Al spoke slowly. “Do you want to know why critics are *forced* to

date the Gospels later?”

“What do you mean, FORCED??”

“Their *anti-supernatural bias* forces them into a corner... They don’t want to admit that the fall of Jerusalem (AD 70) could be accurately predicted by Jesus 40 years before it occurred. *It’s a philosophical objection, not one based on the evidence.*

Later church issues unknown by Gospel writers

“Another fascinating pointer to the early timing of the Gospels is the *absence of ‘church’ concerns* or propaganda. Had the early Christians cooked up the contents of the Gospels, we would have expected them to have put into the mouth of Jesus matters which were of burning concern to themselves, at the time they wrote. Yet the fact is that, even though circumcision became such a *contentious issue* in the early Church, it *never gets a mention* in the Gospels. A telling reason for us to conclude that those Gospels were written *before* this circumcision issue emerged.

“It’s evident that the New Testament writers preserved history honestly, without injecting into it any personal bias.”

Gloria suddenly cut in. “How about a drink?” There was a murmur of assent as she filled the glasses one by one.

After a few gulps, Greg settled in again with a question...

11

Gospels written early or late? -

FANTASTIC CLAIMS ABOUT RONALD REAGAN?

“Look,” said Greg. “Despite this early dating, there’s a time gap between Jesus and the writing of the Gospels... several years during which the accounts would be memorized and transmitted orally. My question is, Was the oral tradition passed on accurately?”

“Yes, that’s what I’d like to know,” cut in Bronwyn. “Surely oral memory cannot accurately preserve accounts from person to person for many years.”

Could the facts have been remembered accurately?

Bron then stretched back and eyed Al carefully.

“A good question,” conceded Al. “So how reliable is the memory?”

“Do you know, even the most radical of New Testament scholars (such as Professor Dennis Nineham) will assure you that the oriental memory was ‘wonderfully retentive’. Oral recall was far more important in ancient societies, particularly Judaism. All of Jewish education consisted of rote memory. Entire books were memorized, word for word.”

“Whole books!” gasped Bronwyn. “I...”

Al nodded. “And add to that the easy-to-memorize structure of many of Jesus’ sayings. Jesus used teaching forms that encouraged memorization.

“But even if he did not, the nature of Jewish society was to memorize. We must not measure by our Western mindset the tremendous capacity of the Oriental memory. And there are sufficient parallels in Judaism to show that the disciples could have transmitted the stories of Jesus *word perfect*.

“Yes, not only was oral transmission quite adequate for the task of preserving Jesus’ words and deeds, but there is good reason to believe that the disciples – and sometimes even the audiences – of Jesus took notes during or immediately after his words and deeds. There was a wide use of shorthand and the carrying of notebooks in the Graeco-Roman world. Circulating of lecture notes was common practice.”

“Shorthand? Lecture notes? Two thousand years ago?” Greg sat up startled.

“That’s right, pal.” Al grinned, enjoying their surprise. “And this almost guarantees that VERY early written records of Jesus’ sayings and deeds existed.” (See more in Appendix I.)

“But,” said Greg, “You’ve heard of Robert Funk, founder of the Jesus Seminar? He says that the real authors were unknown. Living much later, they simply attributed their documents to known persons who had lived earlier – the point being that *none of Jesus’ followers wrote books*.”

Al smiled. “Which is easier – to make assertions or to supply evidence? The fact is, Jewish boys were educated until they were

twelve. Therefore Jesus' disciples probably already knew how to read and write. In the first century there were great numbers of people with scribal skills. Many of them would have heard Jesus speak and become followers. It is not improbable that these folk took notes. And some of these may very well have been included in Luke's comment: 'MANY have taken in hand to put together an account of Jesus' life.' (Luke 1:1)

"Matthew was a tax collector. His occupation required a very complex system of record-keeping. He would have been proficient in the three languages of Palestine: Hebrew, Greek, and Aramiac.

"It is known that in Egypt at that time there were 111 kinds of tax, and many of the tax-collectors knew shorthand. Matthew's livelihood was earned by interviewing tax-payers and discussing their affairs (usually in Aramaic), then writing up his reports in Greek. He had a lifelong habit of noting things down and of preserving what he had written."

Unbroken chain

"In any case, guys, Christianity's development can be traced as an unbroken growth time-line from Jesus. There were no time gaps.

"I think you will agree with this observation by Josh McDowell, a former skeptic:

When an event takes place in history and there are enough people alive who were eyewitnesses of it or had participated in the event, and when the information is published, one is able to verify the validity of an historical event. (Josh McDowell, *Evidence That Demands A Verdict*. San Bernardino, Ca.: Here's Life Publishers, Inc., 1986, p.189)

"Let me ask you, Greg, is it likely that a book, describing alleged events that occurred in the same city *publicly* only 10 to 40 years

previously, could have been widely accepted if the accounts of abnormal events in it were false or mythical?”

Greg scratched his arm. “I grant you, that couldn’t succeed.”

“And why?” said Al.

“Why? Because the *memory* of all elderly persons concerning events of even 40 years back, is still *perfectly clear*.”

“Absolutely right,” responded Al. “Who could today publish a biography of Richard Nixon, full of anecdotes about *public* events which were blatantly untrue. They would be contradicted at once. They would not be accepted and passed on as true.

“Just so, there was no way the New Testament writers could have got away with pure fabrication of public events. As Luke himself records, there were plenty of eyewitnesses.

“The assertion that the New Testament Jesus is just a myth will not bear close scrutiny.

“This calls for intellectual honesty. The evidence makes perfect sense – enough to assure us that the Jesus account is not founded on delusions or clever fables, but on historical events. And however unusual they may be, these are indeed the greatest events that have ever happened in the history of the world.

“That’s what history is - a knowledge of the past based on *testimony*.”

Greg stiffened. “I’m not sure I agree with that definition.”

“Do you believe Lincoln lived and was President of the United States?”

“Yes.”

“But do you know anyone who has personally seen Lincoln? We know only by testimony.”

Greg slumped. He knew Al was correct.

No time for a myth to grow

After a moment, he lifted his eyes. “Okay, Al, but all of that talk about Jesus claiming to be God...couldn’t his enthusiastic followers later have put those words into his mouth?”

Al laughed. “Hi, man, could a mere myth really have gained such acceptance and had the impact it did, without a basis of truth in it? For this to have happened would be as fantastic as for me to write a biography of, say, Ronald Reagan - and in it say he claimed to be God, to forgive peoples’ sins, and to have risen from the dead. Oh, come on! Such a story is so wild it would never get off the ground - because there are still too many people around who knew Reagan!

“Historians agree it takes about two generations, or eighty years, for legendary accounts to establish themselves.”

Greg nodded. “Okay, that makes sense. But I do have trouble with stories like the virgin birth. It seems to me that such tales may have evolved gradually and been added to the record.”

Al swiped a fly off the arm rest. “The virgin birth is indeed an extraordinary event. It goes way beyond our precise understanding. And there is ***no way*** that any human being can tell the Creator what He can do and cannot do, especially when it comes to entering His own creation. It is best to humble one’s self and discuss the subject with awe and patience.”

Greg snorted. “But no one could prove a virgin birth that occurred 2,000 years ago.”

“You’re right,” conceded Al. “Yet logic and careful thought indicate it to be true. Why? Because if God the Creator exists, then surely He who made the atom knows how to control it.

“If a divine Being existed prior to His entrance into this world, would He need a human father? He needed only to take on human form through the vehicle of a human mother. A virgin birth would be natural for such a Being. If God became man, then one would expect Him to have an unusual entrance into this life. Certainly it is the only type of birth consistent with the identity and character of such a God-man.

“But, apart from that, there remains one unavoidable fact - that substantial myths could never have developed *in such a brief time*... and while there were eyewitnesses alive to correct the error. The *early* dating of the Gospel writings allowed *no adequate time for the growth of such a myth.*”

“You can be sure that hostile witnesses would have served as a corrective if false claims about Jesus were going around.

“On the growth of legends, there is an interesting statement by Dr Sherwin-White of Oxford University... hold on.”

Al reached over to drag his briefcase off the coffee table. He started rummaging through some papers. “Yes, here it is, Greg. Dr Sherwin-White, by the way, is a respected Greco-Roman classical historian. See this? He insists that the passage of two generations was *not even enough time* for legend to develop in the ancient world and wipe out a solid core of historical truth. (A.N. Sherwin-White, *Roman Society and Roman Law in the New Testament*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1978, pp. 186-193)

“Take the resurrection claim. If Jesus was merely a man and didn’t rise from the dead, then no resurrection legend could have got off the ground so quickly. But the news of Jesus’ resurrection was being broadcast far and wide *within that same decade!* And thousands were accepting it.

“Again may I say, the Gospels were written so early that there was *no time* for a myth – if that’s all it was – to develop.

“They were widely circulated during the lifetimes of eyewitnesses to the events of Jesus’ life. I say it again, if any information was faulty, those eyewitnesses could easily have corrected it.”

“Greg, be clear on this. The idea of a fully divine Jesus who worked miracles and rose from the dead – we can be *certain* this was proclaimed *during the very first decade* of Christianity. It was not some legend that arose decades later.”

Al studied Greg’s face. The principal was nodding. Al continued.

“Getting back to that Magdalene Manuscript of Matthew’s Gospel (prior to 66 AD). Here is something quite pertinent. This early document uses holy names for Jesus in its text, such as the diminutive “IS” for Jesus and “KE” for Kurie or Lord – that is, “Lord Jesus”. (*The Times*, Saturday, December 24, 1994) This points to the godhead of Jesus being recognised *in the first century* – hundreds of years *before* Constantine’s council of Nicea in 325 AD.”

Al looked Greg in the eye. “Now, let’s get to the point. Shall we place the so-called Gnostic gospels under the same scrutiny?”

“Okay, man, go for it.”

12

Gnostic books written early or late? -

THE CHICKEN AND THE EGG

Al grinned at the principal. “No wonder Meehan burned down the school! She couldn’t stand what I’m about to share with you.”

“I’m still sore about that,” barked Greg, “about the school fire.”

“Yeah... I know. Anyway, we’ve just seen that the *early* origins of the New Testament are rock solid. But how different for the Gnostic texts! - mid-second century, at the earliest.”

“Tell me this,” interjected Greg. “Why, then, do some critics say the Gospel of Thomas is among the earliest, say 50 to 60 AD, and that the New Testament books came later?”

Al smiled. “If one wants to deny Jesus’ resurrection, wouldn’t a manuscript that omits the resurrection become first choice for the earliest document – to imply that the New Testament resurrection stories were a later invention?”

“But the critics have a history of not getting things quite right. Thomas and the other Nag Hammadi scrolls date to AD 150 or even later. That’s when Gnosticism began to flourish. The AD 175 date is accepted for the one known as the Gospel of Philip (in which Jesus is supposed to kiss Mary Magdalene on her lips) and a similar date for the Gospel of Mary (which claims a leading role for Mary Magdalene).”

Greg's eyebrows lifted. "Mid-second century?"

"That's right. The Christian chicken came *before* the Gnostic egg."

"Prove it," Greg demanded, his voice cracking with emotion. "Because those Philip and Mary books... well, Brown insists they're older than the New Testament Gospels."

The Da Vinci Code

Al cleared his throat, then reached for the drink jug. "Regard *The Da Vinci Code* as a brilliant work of fiction and that's fine. But if you imagine it to be real history..." He laughed and took a sip. "Oh, come on, some of Brown's other imagined 'earlier gospels' actually *quote from the New Testament Gospels*. That of itself shows they were written later. As for the Gospel of Philip, it was written *away, way after* the New Testament.

"At the very earliest, it is dated around **AD 175**. (Walter Burkert, *Ancient Mystery Cults*. Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 1987, p.69) Or worse, the official translator of the Gospel of Philip in the Nag Hammadi collection suggests a date of about **AD 250**! (James L. Garlow and Peter Jones, *Cracking Da Vinci's Code*. New York: Doubleday, 2003, p. 186) Still other scholars date it from about **AD 350**. (*The Record*, Warburton, Australia, May 20, 2006, p. 5)

Greg scratched his ear. "I notice that another old book has been in the news lately... the so-called Gospel of Judas. Is that another of those Gnostic books?"

"You've got it!" retorted Al. "It does reflect themes that are consistent with Gnostic traditions – novel ideas that were multiplying from the second century onward."

Marcion, 2nd C. forerunner of Gnostics

“Greg, there’s something you should know about those Gnostic gospels. In the first century, some New Testament prophecies were being circulated throughout the Roman Empire warning that “false teachers” were coming, generally of a Gnostic kind. (See Colossians 2:16-19; 1 Timothy 4:1; Acts 20:29-30; 2 Peter 2:1; 1 John 2:18-19)

“And history shows that these predictions began to come true in the middle of the second century. Around AD 140, Marcion, a church leader from Pontus, in what is now Turkey, had been censured for adultery. So how did he respond? He repudiated the idea of marriage and childbearing and declared the Old Testament and its laws out of date. Then in AD 144, he went to Rome, set up an alternative community, and allowed into it only single people.”

“That’s a recipe for eventual extinction,” groaned Greg.

Al smiled. “Quite simply, Marcion denied the essentials of Christianity. He even created his own Bible! This comprised the Gospel of Luke and ten of Paul’s letters, all of them “cleansed” of Old Testament influences.

“Yet Marcion acknowledged that the books he rejected or modified were accepted by the church. He also acknowledged that they had been written by the early apostles (in the first century).

“Marcion had been excommunicated from the church, so he had every reason to say the worst of it. If there were any forgeries in the alleged writings of the apostles, he had a grand opportunity to discover – and expose - them. He traveled through all the countries and cities where the apostles had preached, and to where their writings had been sent. And he never found one single person who suggested to him that the New Testament writings were not genuine. *Marcion knew that they were written by the men who*

claimed to write them. However, Marcion believed his theology was right and that of the apostles was wrong.”

Greg shuffled. His brain was churning over.

“Have you heard of a man called Polycarp?” asked Al.

“Not that I can remember.”

“Polycarp lived from AD 69 to 155. He had been a personal friend of the apostle John. Well, when Polycarp met Marcion, he called him ‘the first-born of Satan’. (James Robinson, *The Nag Hammadi Library in English*. New York: Harper and Row, 1977)

“Where are you leading?”

“My point is, this ‘first-born of Satan’ – a wayward Christian - was among the first of the Gnostics. Historians call Marcion a “proto-Gnostic”, because his system was not nearly as developed as those that emerged later to produce the kind of literature discovered in Nag Hammadi.

“As it turned out, the Gospel of Truth, the Gospel of Thomas, and so on, were among these Gnostic books that developed *after* Marcion’s time. It is worth noting that Marcion did not cite the Gospel of Truth or the Gospel of Thomas. Had these books existed, Marcion could have based his whole argument on this so-called original teaching of Jesus. These books would have fitted so perfectly with what Marcion taught.”

“Greg, the crucial factor is...”

“Timing,” butted in Greg.

Bronwyn nodded. “Yes, it’s which came first... Christianity or Gnosticism. I see that.”

“You’ve hit it!” said Al. “We are agreed. *Timing* is everything. So, then, what does the *hard evidence* show about timing?:

“1. The New Testament Gospels were written quite early in the first century, between *AD 40 and 70*.

“2. The so called ‘hidden gospels’ of the Gnostics did not develop until *AD 150 to 350*.

“Gnosticism was *a reaction* to the Christian message. And it was cemented by its own writings.”

Gloria arose. “Before we go further, how about a drink? I bought the freshest oranges today.”

She vanished into the kitchen. Greg heard the frig door opening and closing. Then the sound of liquid pouring into glasses. Soon she was back.

“Thanks, Gloria. Looks like this hot weather has really set in,” said Greg. He took a gulp, then put down his glass. “Anyway, let’s get back to the matter at hand.”

The challenge

Al smiled. “The issue is quite simple, really. Was Jesus God? Was he crucified? Did he rise from the dead?

1. *Yes*, say first century eyewitnesses.
2. *No*, say second century Gnostics and their 21st century disciples.

“To suggest that these Gnostic Gospels, written between 100 and 300 years after the time of Jesus, are a more accurate account of his life... such a notion is fanciful.”

Al saw Bronwyn straining to speak. “Yes, Bron?”

“I’ve heard it said that Jesus did not die on the cross, but went into a coma. That he regained consciousness, went to India, had children, and died about 100 years old.”

“Yes, I know,” replied Al. “But ask yourself, Bron, Can people who assert such things supply eyewitnesses to support their claims? Or *contemporary* letters? Letters by the eyewitnesses?”

“Of course, it boils down to this. Either Jesus was whom He claimed to be – the long-predicted Deliverer, who was to sacrifice His life for every human being, then rise to break the power of death for us. Or else He was a fraud, a deceiver, an evil imposter.”

[NOTE: This is discussed in Book 3 of this series, *Stolen Identity: Jesus Christ – History or Hoax?* chapters 22 to 38. <<http://www.beforeus.com/stolen-id.php>>]

Al repositioned himself. “If Jesus finally *died* in India, then mankind has no hope. However, there is no historical information what-so-ever that places Jesus in India. Most ‘documentation’ comes from psychic messages (such as *The Aquarian Gospel of Jesus Christ* and the readings of Edgar Cayce) and they conflict with each other. The only evidence that even claims to be historical was supposedly viewed by Nicolas Notovich in 1887 in a monastery in Tibet. The alleged scrolls about the prophet Issa have never been produced and the monks who were supposed to have them denied any knowledge of either the scrolls or Notovich. In any case, Jesus would have little affinity with the idol worshiping religions of the East. In his ministry, he *taught Judaism, not Hinduism*. Theologically, his teaching was completely antithetical to the world view of eastern religions. His theology was

thoroughly grounded on a Hebraic concept of God and reality. Jesus constantly referred to the Old Testament, indicating His respect for the Law and the prophets and the unseen Creator God. In fact, He kept the Law impeccably. He never quoted or even alluded to the *Vedas*.

Lying “scholars”

“Why is it that some scholars just can’t tell fact from fiction? And they glibly quote others just as misinformed as themselves. Starting from an anti-supernatural bias, they have turned the quest for the historical Jesus into a powerless piece of fiction.

“Let’s inject a bit of common sense here. These scholars are *centuries removed* from the Jesus they speak about. But those who wrote the New Testament bore testimony *close to the events*.

“Tell me, who is more likely to know the truth? A number of eyewitnesses, reporting independently of each other... or biased, faulty scholars living 2,000 years later? If your life depended on it, who would you consider it safer to believe?”

Bronwyn’s eyes sparkled. “Give me *first-hand testimony* any day!”

“That’s being smart,” said Al. “Unless you can prove they’re lying, your own integrity is at stake if you refuse to believe their testimony. Testimony of those who say they *met* Jesus... *ate* with him... *worked* with him. And the first hand testimony of *a living power that works today*. You can’t do better than that.

“Anyway speaking of testimony... Were the bishops GUILTY of turning a mere man, Jesus, into God, as Dan Brown charged in *The Da Vinci Code*? Let’s be careful, and approach this from another angle...”

13

Did 4th C. bishops invent the canon? -

GUILTY OR NOT?

“Whew!” Greg sighed. “I really need some cool air. I’ll take a walk down to the beach and think about this. But don’t go on without me, you guys. I’ll have some other questions when I get back.”

Al’s house was on a hill, at about 300 feet elevation. At the back, it looked to the mountains, clothed in subtropical forest and cut by a valley, through which meandered a stream. In front, it looked out over the sea. Often as the sun was setting, he and Gloria were treated to a brilliant display of changing colors.

Greg’s walk to the beach would take barely five minutes. From there he might stroll along the tree-lined coast north or south.

“See you soon,” he called back from the door. “I just need to do some thinking.”

“We’ll be here,” shouted Gloria.

Twenty minutes later, Greg breezed back up the hill. “My, was that fresh air a shot in the arm! I’m sparking on all cylinders again. And have I got some tough questions for you, man!”

“Great,” responded Al. “Fire away.”

Greg sank back in his seat.

“As I said last night,” he began. “Brown insists that the Bible was edited and changed in the fourth century by men with a political agenda. They wanted to promote Jesus Christ as God, and use his influence to solidify their own power base.”

Al scratched his head. “He says that the dogma of Jesus’ divinity did not arise until the reign of Constantine *in the 4th century?*”

“Yeah - that the true author of the Christian Church was really Constantine. And today’s Christian teachings were settled when Constantine murdered all who did not endorse his opinion.”

Greg’s voice was intense. “So, according to Brown, Constantine commissioned and financed a new Bible, pieced together from pagan myths and fanciful writings of earlier church leaders. It omitted those gospels that spoke of Jesus’ *human* traits and embellished those gospels that made him godlike. And all other texts that did not agree with his version were destroyed.”

“You mean,” asked Al, “that the bishops needed a God-Jesus as a tool to consolidate their power over the people?”

“Yes. So they accepted some books that would help them, and rejected the rest. And so came the Bible. What’s that term for its list of books?”

“The canon.”

Bronwyn spoke. “Canon? What does *that* mean?”

Canon simply means ‘*standardized*’,” said Al.

Greg nodded. “Yeah, that’s it... the recognized list of books. And

that fourth century date *makes Christianity an utter farce!*” Greg was steamed up now.

Canon established much EARLIER

“Oh, come off it, Greg. You should know by now, a *fourth century* date is out of the question,” retorted Al.

“But some books chosen, others rejected – how can you prove Brown’s not right?” Greg demanded.

“We spoke of Marcion. As early as *150 years before Constantine*, Marcion himself had already raised the issue of the canon. He confirmed that a recognized list of books very close to our New Testament was already in circulation during the latter part of the *second century*.

“In fact, as a reaction to Marcion’s list, the New Testament was *essentially consolidated* in the *second century*. When challenged by Marcion’s heretical teaching, the church in the West responded by officially defining the extent of the canon. It already existed, you see. The list was published in AD 170. At that time it was known as the *Muratorian*. The church merely published for the sake of clarity, once and for all, a list which it had always believed to be true.

“And Origen, who lived around AD 185-254, in his commentary on the book of Joshua, names all 27 New Testament books.”

“Second century?” spluttered Greg.

“But the canon existed even earlier.” Al sipped his drink. “In fact, the Peshitta (Syriac) group of New Testament books was finalized well before the end of the *first century*. This is the oldest known canon. It is one of the most accurate and reliable translations of the

New Testament. And it was not compiled by the Western or Roman church, but by Eastern or Syriac churches. It contains all the books we know today, and in the same order, except for Jude, 2 and 3 John, 2 Peter, and Revelation. The book of Revelation was missing simply because it hadn't been written. And the other books were still being circulated as letters from the apostles.

“You see, the recognised books were accepted as early as the *first century*.”

Greg shuffled, uneasily. “Can you prove the acceptance was that early?”

“Sure can. Come on, everyone, let's open this book we're talking about.”

Al arose and lumbered over to the bookshelf. He returned with a stack of Bibles.

“One for you, you, you and me,” he smiled, passing them around. “You'll see the internal evidence is in the New Testament itself.”

Greg clicked his pen, ready to take more notes. “Oh bother, the ink's run out.”

Gloria found him a pen. Soon they were turning the pages. Greg hastily jotted down a few points:

- In the first century, the “words of... prophecy” were already being read in public worship side by side with the Old Testament texts. This indicated they had canonical authority in the churches. (Colossians 4:16);
- The apostle Peter referred to Paul's writings as “Scriptures”. (2 Peter 3:16);

- Luke's Gospel was referred to as "Scripture" by Paul. (1 Timothy 5:18; see also Luke 10:7);
- Paul used the word *kanon* ("rule") when referring to the apostles' fundamental teaching, which was to be followed and obeyed. (Galatians 6:16).

Al looked up. "Greg, may I ask, what do you think created the Christian movement in the first place?"

"Beats me. What was it?"

The canon *CREATED* the church

"Well, pal, it was the message found in these very same books of the first century. That's what launched Christianity."

"The *fourth century* men did not create the canon. They merely recognized what was already there.

"The canon created the church.

"Away back in the *first century*, the canon of books was already known and accepted throughout the Christian world. Church councils, far from *giving* any authority to the books, rather *bowed* to their authority. And these books already contained clear affirmation of Jesus' God nature."

Greg pondered for a moment. "I see," he said after fingering through. "Those books were already accepted and in use!"

Later global textual unity impossible if canon didn't already exist

Al took another sip from his glass. "Something else. The Christians were scattered across vast distances, separated by months of travel,

right? And they were often forced underground by persecution. Did they have telephones?”

“Of course not,” grinned Greg. “And no faxes... no radio... no Internet.”

“So consider this... Not only were there many thousands of Greek manuscripts, all containing the same identical books, but the Gospels all show *the same titles*. German scholar Martin Hengel presents a good case that these titles were appended when the Gospels were first completed and circulated together, ‘between 69 and 100.’ (Martin Hengel, “Titles of the Gospels,” *Studies in the Gospel of Mark*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1985, pp. 64-84)

“It is known that by the second century scores and scores of copies of these Gospels already existed. And by the fourth century hundreds, perhaps thousands, of copies. To change them, to make them *all identical* (as they are) at that late stage, would have been logistically impossible.

“Think now. That *list of books* had to be assembled more or less at the beginning, *before* Christianity spread out. Later would have been too late, for them to have that same *identical* grouping.

“The importance of the New Testament writings to Christians everywhere made it virtually impossible to deliberately make changes. Just to make one single change, all scrolls throughout the world would have needed to be changed simultaneously – along with countless memories. (Scripture memorization was common.)

“If scribes had added even just the titles *later*, how on earth would all these scattered copies show the same titles now... as they do?

“Only one thing makes sense, Greg. The list of books recognized as authentic – including their titles – had to be circulating in common agreement almost from the start.”

How was the canon decided?

“Now I’m confused,” said Greg, “Brown says ‘history has never had a definitive version of the book [the Bible].’” (Dan Brown, *The Da Vinci Code*. Australia: Griffin Press, 2003, p. 313)

“Is that guy for real?” retorted Al. “First he says the Bible was *defined* by Constantine. Then he says it *never was defined*. It’s a good thing Brown is not a historian, because he would have himself in a knot.”

“Okay,” pressed Greg, “Just how was the list of books decided?”
 “Paul tells us. He says that the church was ‘built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets.’ (Ephesians 2:20)

“One of the qualifications of an apostle was that he was an eyewitness of the resurrection of Jesus. (Acts 1:22) Anyone who lived after that time was termed a ‘false apostle’. (2 Corinthians 11:13)

“Hence Jesus’ followers recognized as canonical only those books written by eyewitnesses or from firsthand information.

“When Paul’s credentials as an apostle were challenged, he responded, ‘Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus our Lord?’ (1 Corinthians 9:1) Indeed, he is listed with the other apostles as the last to have seen the resurrected Christ. (1 Corinthians 15:6-8)

“So in recognizing the correct books, here are the questions they asked:

“1. Does a book *agree* with the core books already unanimously accepted as canonical? That is, does it harmonise with the Old Testament, which reveals God as the sovereign Creator and Deliverer? And does it harmonise with the history of Jesus: His birth, death, and resurrection?

“2. Is the book from the pens of the earliest apostles and their fellow workers? In other words, is it an historical *witness* of Jesus?

“3. Does this book have the same “*ring of truth*” and *mark of divine inspiration* as the others? Such a question was not an attempt to impose a book as “inspired”, so much as to recognize books that had imposed themselves by their intrinsic inspiration into the life of the church. It was believed that God’s Holy Spirit would have inspired the writings, then guided in their discerning of what had been inspired. In essence, if God inspired His Word, He also protected it.

“If the all-knowing and all-powerful God inspired those writings, he will preserve them. God completes what he begins.

A mass of quotations from it

“Historically, there is *an unbroken, straight line* from the teaching of Jesus in the thirties to the writings of Paul and the other apostles in the mid to latter half of the *first century*.

“And something else. Before Constantine’s fourth century ever dawned, there were masses of quotations from the New Testament already published by early Christian leaders. Dean Burgon in his research found, in all, **86,489** quotes of it from early Christian writers- all from *before the council of Nicea* in 325 AD. His index of these consists of 16 thick volumes now in the British Museum. (Norman L. Geisler and William E. Nix, *A General Introduction to the Bible*. Chicago: Moody Press, 1968, pp. 353-354)

“So extensive are these quotations that the New Testament *could virtually be reconstructed* from them without the use of New Testament manuscripts.

“Sir David Dalrymple sought to do this, and from the works of second and third century church writers he found the *entire New Testament quoted except for eleven verses*. (Josh McDowell, *Evidence That Demands a Verdict*. San Bernardino, CA., Here’s Life Publishers, 1986, pp.50-51)

“So you could throw the New Testament manuscripts away and still reconstruct it with the simple help of these letters.”

What really happened in 4th century?

“May I ask,” said Bronwyn, “what, then, really happened in the fourth century?”

“Okay,” said Al, “back, then, to our earlier question:

“Did Constantine’s new Bible *omit* those gospels that spoke of Jesus’ *human* traits and *insert* other books that made him *godlike*?

“Some folk are kidding themselves. You see, because Christianity was a missionary movement from the beginning (Matthew 28:19-21), its scriptures were immediately translated into the known languages of that period. And so many of these manuscripts have survived.

“Just suppose I wanted to corrupt or forge them. How on earth could I call in from the very limits of the Roman Empire every last copy to make the necessary alterations? And change every single one so that there would be the uniformity which we find witnessed in these old manuscripts today?

“Not only that, but numerous copies of the New Testament were in outlying areas *well beyond the reach* of Constantine.

A way of checking

“How do you know that?”

“Because two uncorrupted groups of manuscripts have survived. These furnish *an independent means of checking* what was in the earliest list of books, the canon.”

“Very well then,” challenged Greg. “So what *did* Constantine do?”

“Constantine *did* have something to do with a new Bible – he adopted Origen’s corrupted Bible. And he ordered 50 copies of it to be made. As we noted earlier, one of these is believed to be the Vaticanus.”

Constantine’s corrupted Bible did the opposite from what Gnostics claim

“Okay, about this Vaticanus. Does it play down Jesus’ human traits and make him godlike?”

“Not on your life. It agrees essentially with Origen’s Gnostic Hexapla. It frequently omits the deity of Jesus and makes other Gnostic alterations!

“Which is the opposite from what Gnostics and the *The Da Vinci Code* want us to believe!

“As we have noted, Origen the Gnostic simply used the already accepted books (the ones in our New Testament) and altered them. And Constantine adopted Origen’s altered version. So you might say that in practical terms *Constantine and the Gnostics were allies*. Constantine with his corrupt Bible endorsed what the Gnostics had done!”

“Clearly, Constantine was *never guilty* of throwing out any ‘secret gospels’. He just kept the same list of books that already existed – but in corrupted form. He threw out no books. The canon had never included any Gnostic ‘secret gospels’.

“Yes, Constantine *did* create a religion that represented a mix of Christian and pagan practice. But, no, he *did not* rewrite the New Testament.”

“Boy, does that blow them out of the window!” said Greg. “My hat off to you, Al. You’ve done your homework.”

Al smiled shyly.

“But hold it...” said Greg. “I’m not through yet. What about Brown’s claim that Jesus married Mary Magdalene, and had children... with a royal bloodline existing today? Brown says Mary carried with her this secret – a secret that could devastate the very foundation of Christianity!”

Just then Greg’s cell phone broke in. He spoke for a moment to someone, then looked at Al.

“Sorry, there’s someone needs me.” He turned to Bronwyn. “Would you like to stay? I should be back within the hour.”

As he arose, Gloria looked at her husband. “Did you hear what Greg said, that Jesus had blood children? That I must hear!”

14

Jesus and Mary marriage cover-up? -

THE “ROYAL BLOOD” HOAX

Screech..... thud.....splash....

Bubbles rose from the sea where the vehicle had plunged in.

Within seconds half a dozen men and women were huddled on the bank, staring... helplessly.

One of them pressed numbers on his mobile phone.

“Come fast!” he shouted. “There’s a man down there.”

About ten minutes later, Greg, returning to Al’s place, drove by. A crowd had gathered. Six police cars. Traffic was being redirected.

Greg pulled over and got out. “What happened?”

“Drunk driver. He probably couldn’t see the edge too well,” someone replied.

“There were two cars coming around the corner toward him. He swerved,” said another.

“There was a car coming toward him. It was over the center of the road,” chirped one lady.

“He was just a youth. Not experienced on this narrow road,” said someone else. He went between the trees and straight over.”

“I was out walking,” explained one lady. “I saw it happen. A blue Toyota appeared to edge him off the road.”

Greg eased back into his car. How differently people see the same event, he thought. They all saw it happen. Their accounts are so different... yet possibly all true!

Up at Al’s place, they sat out under the trees, looking toward the bay. Greg commented on the accident. And then they got down to the topic Greg was there for.

Jesus’ “secret marriage”?

“Talk about scandal!” exclaimed Greg. “Al, this has to be the biggest scandal of all time! Jesus married one of his woman disciples and had children! And this truth was covered up by the church.”

“Oh, Greg...”

“Yes, so it’s claimed.”

“Greg, tell me, what’s the central piece of ‘evidence’ produced by Brown’s characters in favor of the belief that Jesus and Mary Magdalene were married?”

“It’s Leonardo da Vinci’s painting, *The Last Supper*.”

“Would you please show me the ‘evidence’? Here, I’ll make it easy for you.” Al got up and pulled from his shelf a book on the master paintings. Thumbing through it, he opened to a page

portraying Da Vinci's famous painting. "Please show me," he requested, passing the heavy book to Greg.

Greg leaned forward. "See?" he said, pointing. "The figure on the left of Jesus. That figure was always assumed to be a youthful John, but really it has feminine characteristics."

"Mmm...interesting," said Al. "Look, Jesus has just told his disciples that one of them will betray him. This painting shows their consternation at this news."

Greg looked at Al. "According to Brown, this figure to the left of Jesus is not the disciple John, but Mary Magdalene, and this is evidence that they were married. The beardless, slightly effeminate nature of the figure is proof of this."

"An interesting thought," murmured Al. "But, sorry old man, this view is *not* held by most art historians. They point out that Leonardo painted a number of male figures, including a portrait of John the Baptist in a similar way. An early sketch for the painting labels the figure as John. In any case, do you really think a painting by an artist who lived 1,400 years after Jesus can be described as proof of the marriage of Jesus? Look again, carefully. In the painting Peter is leaning over to ask John who the betrayer might be – *exactly as the New Testament tells us*. Art historians agree."

Greg turned the page. "What about this other painting by da Vinci – the *Mona Lisa*? Brown says *Mona Lisa* is intended to be an anagram of *Amon* and *Isis*, Egyptian gods."

"Just this, Greg. The Italian version of *Mona Lisa* would have been *Madonna Lisa*, which would not give the same result."

"Greg, just think about this. Brown's whole claim is phony. He claims that Leonardo was a Grand Master of the so-called Priory of

Sion and that he therefore used these two paintings to send coded messages on the idea that Jesus married Mary Magdalene. But in any case, if (as I shall show you soon) there was no Priory of Sion, then Leonardo da Vinci was not its Grand Master and had no cause to put such a coded message into the pictures.”

“Okay, that’s a fair point. But I’m told there are hidden documents that would point to persons alive today who are descendants of Jesus and Mary.”

“What, *more* secret documents?” teased Al.

“That’s right.”

“And you’re suggesting that these ‘secret’ documents – and not the Bible - hold the true account?” Al grinned. “Oh boy! So the Bible writers *did* manipulate history,” he laughed.

“Brown reckons the Christian church has suppressed this evidence. If known, it would destroy Christianity. And I spoke to some other guy. He agrees.”

“Say, Greg, you do move in learned circles! And I presume you’re talking about the non-biblical Gospel of Thomas, Gospel of Peter, The Gospel of Mary, The Gospel of Philip, and some other books that go with them. Am I right?”

“Yes, and they reveal Jesus’ marriage to Mary.”

“These amazing books written at least *a century later*? Have you personally studied these books?”

“You know how busy I am.”

Writings say Jesus married Mary?

“I know those books,” said Al. “The so-called Gospel of Philip is used to suggest that Jesus married Mary Magdalene.” Al pulled down a volume and fingered through until he found this reference:

And the companion of the Lord Jesus [was] Mary Magdalene... *loved* her more than all the disciples and used to kiss her often on her mouth. The rest of the disciples said to him: ‘Why do you love her more than all of us?’ (Gospel of Philip 250 AD)

“This passage,” said Al, looking direct at his friend, “is usually quoted as shown here. However, the words underlined DO NOT APPEAR in the original text! And in any case, this was written nearly 250 years after the time of Jesus!

“And even more noticeable is the complete omission of any claim that Jesus and Mary were married in the Gnostic so-called Gospel of Mary which claims to be her story!”

“You mean...” Greg’s voice trailed away.

“So let me assure you,” said Al, “there’s nothing in those books to support Brown’s claim. Mary appears rarely in them. And when she does, it’s usually as a close disciple of Jesus. Sometimes she is portrayed as one who shares special knowledge that Jesus revealed first to her. That’s all. Nothing more.” Al scratched his chin.

“I understand,” conceded the principal.

An agenda

“But surely Brown must have some evidence?” suggested Bronwyn.

“Not a shred of evidence. It’s all about stripping Jesus of his uniqueness, and especially his deity. There are folk who want a Jesus who was a mere human being, one with spiritual insight, but otherwise ordinary. So they come up with this supposed marriage of Jesus to convince others that he really wasn't God in the flesh, but only a mortal man.”

Not married - reasons

“Actually, there are good reasons for believing that Jesus was not married.

“1. Celibacy was not uncommon amongst Jewish rabbis. As Jesus said: ‘There are eunuchs... who have made themselves eunuchs [that is, have not married] for the sake of the kingdom of heaven.’ (Matthew 19:12)

“2. The apostle Paul does not mention that Jesus was married, in a passage where it would have been obvious to make reference to it. (1 Corinthians 9:4-6) Paul is talking about other disciples, such as Peter, travelling about with a wife. If Jesus had been married, Paul would logically have mentioned it.

“3. Jesus’ life was wholly devoted to a singular purpose.

Jesus’ unique and single purpose

“It boils down to understanding who Jesus really was. Jesus’ single purpose in coming to earth was to save human beings. He was *riveted* to this. *Everything* in his life was kept subordinate to that purpose, the great work of rescue which he had come to accomplish.”

“But would that necessarily demand him to be single?” asked Bronwyn.

“Sure, Jesus could have married and maintained his sinless, human-divine nature. But he was here for one reason – and his *unique calling* was incompatible with marriage and family life.

“Now listen to this carefully. Jesus deliberately had no earthly father. He entered the human race through a mother, in order to become human. But with no earthly father, he remained God.

“Since the first man and woman alienated themselves from God, the human race had been degenerating – morally and physically. Why would the pure, undefiled, sinless Son of God link up with a degenerated woman to produce children of sinful blood?

“Apart from that, it boils down to evidence. We should look at the best evidence we have when we make our historical judgments. Wild theories based on unreliable assertions invented centuries later might make for entertaining fiction, but nothing more.

“What, then, is the evidence from eyewitness accounts? Simply this - that Mary was a close follower of Jesus. With the other disciples, she did accompany him on his journeys, learned from him, and remained faithful to him even in his darkest hour when his male disciples fell away. Then she was the first to see him after the resurrection, and to announce to others the good news that Jesus is risen. That’s all.

“What is significant is Jesus' intentional inclusion of Mary, in a day when Jewish teachers almost never had female disciples or taught women. That is a striking example of Jesus’ bid to elevate women above the prevailing status.

“Well!” exclaimed Greg. “It seems *The Da Vinci Code* got that wrong, too. Brown hinted that Christian ideology put women down.”

Warts and all told

Al smiled. “Well, you were kind enough to share with me your thoughts. And if those Gnostic books were true, then the Bible writers faked history. But tell me, if those Bible writers were trying to manipulate the facts, then why on earth did they record so many shameful failures of their ‘star’ players?”

“What?” Greg looked taken aback.

“Well, in the Bible you read of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob lying and deceiving; Moses committing murder and giving into a burst of anger; David covering up an affair with a married woman by having her husband killed; the treachery, pride and cowardice of other respected figures.

“It presents the history of the Israelites as a humiliating record of ingratitude, idolatry, unbelief and rebellion... something the Jews would never want naturally to chronicle in this way.

“Peter is recorded as frequently saying and doing very foolish things; the mother of James and John showing selfishness on their behalf; Paul getting into an unresolved feud with Barnabas. The Gospel writers portray their own faults and the faults of the apostles. And they record the disorder of the churches... all that.”

“Is that really so?”

“Check it yourself. Now, if the Bible was re-written or tampered with, to make its cause look good, wouldn’t it have made sense to delete these stories? Wouldn’t they rather have inserted stories to bolster the reputations of the heroes?”

“Yeah, I guess so.”

“But, in reality, the Bible *tells both sides* of the story. It does not try to cover up any blemishes in its real live story. It exposes them. Does that sound like they had an agenda to twist the truth?”

“No, I’d have to call that unbiased history.”

Al smiled. “Thanks for being honest. You remember Hannibal, that illustrious Carthaginian general of about 200 BC? In one of the perilous campaigns he lost an eye. In later life, two artists were commissioned to paint his portrait. And so anxious were they to hide this physical defect of their hero that neither painted a true likeness. One painted him full-faced but gave him two good eyes, while the other produced a profile, carefully selecting the side that had the good eye! While the intention was kind, the finished result was a deception.”

Bronwyn spoke up. “A very human action, if you ask me.”

“My point is, that rather than cover up things, the Bible tells the whole story, just as it is. That’s *honesty*.”

* * * * *

No deceptive collusion

“But,” protested Greg, “that story of Jesus - perhaps they contrived to make it up.”

“Oh, Greg... Think now, pal. These were ordinary men doing ordinary work. They were not priests, or religious leaders, or scribes. Mark was a simple shepherd, Matthew an unpopular tax collector, Luke a doctor. Do you think they would actually sit down together and try to hatch such a plot and carry it out to the death? Could you persuade four of your friends to sit down and

write four different accounts of an incident stretching over 89 chapters and many thousands of words? And even to die for it?”

Contradict each other?

“Okay, then,” said Greg, “how would you respond to the charge that the Gospels *contradict* each other?”

Al looked at him. “Rather, you could say they’re complimentary.

“Remember that car accident down the hill? And how you asked each of those eyewitnesses what happened? Each gave you a different story. Yet weren’t they all telling the truth? And by putting their different accounts together you got a pretty full picture, right?

“Just so. Those Gospel writers all claimed to be eyewitnesses of Jesus. Suppose they all said the exact same thing in the exact same way, you might legitimately suspect collusion.

“But what do you find?

“1. They included material that reflected badly on themselves.

“2. They diverged in their accounts.

“3. And importantly, their basic testimony about Jesus’ death and resurrection *can be dated early*.

“History re-written to suit an agenda? You’ve got to be kidding! Those Gospels are honest accounts – and the best hypothesis we have to explain *what truly happened*.

The court of law test

“How would the New Testament stack up in a court of law? Let’s ask one of history’s greatest legal minds, Simon Greenleaf. This

former Harvard law professor is author of a book on legal evidence. (Simon Greenleaf, *A Treatise on the Law of Evidence*. Boston: c.C. Little and J. Brown, 1842) Greenleaf carefully applied the laws of legal evidence to the Gospel accounts. And here was his verdict.” Al reached for his file:

Let the witnesses be compared with themselves, with each other, and with surrounding facts and circumstances; and let their testimony be sifted, as if it were given in a court of justice, on the side of the adverse party, the witness being subjected to rigorous cross-examination. The result, it is confidently believed, will be an undoubting conviction of their integrity, ability, and truth. (Simon Greenleaf, *The Testimony of the Evangelists*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1984 [reprint of 1874 edition], p. 46)

The Priory of Sion and the Holy Grail

Greg thought for a while... then nodded. He took a deep breath and spoke again. “You know why I was called away on the phone? It was about our mutual lady Meehan. Her Friends of the Priory of Sion are now hopping mad with me. I can handle that. But it does bring me back to that Priory of Sion – what do you know about it?

“The Priory of Sion is mixed up with the Holy Grail legend,” said Al.

“Since the fire I’ve been trying to find out what I can,” said Greg. “Brown says it’s one of the oldest secret societies in existence, started in 1099. The story goes that the Knights Templar had discovered some documents under the ruins of Solomon’s Temple. So this Priory was entrusted with guarding the secret of the true Holy Grail. And the secret is really that Mary Magdalene carries Jesus’ child in her body – so she’s the real Holy Grail!”

So it's back to Mary Magdalene again. Is that what you're saying? And the holy cup – the Holy Grail – is Mary Magdalene's womb?" Al suppressed an urge to laugh. "Oh Greg..." He reached for a cheese cracker. "Don't you realize that the story rests on a hoax?"

"You told Allison Meehan it was a hoax, I know. But it can't be!... Look, it's been written up in various magazines. How can you call it a hoax?"

"No offence, Greg. But I presume you want the truth?"

Greg sat there fuming.

"Very well," said Al, "this is how it happened. Dan Brown, author of *The Da Vinci Code*, relied on a 1982 publication, *Holy Blood, Holy Grail*, for his information on the Priory of Sion. He draws much of his conjecture from *Holy Blood, Holy Grail*. And, in turn, the authors of *Holy Blood, Holy Grail* relied on documents provided them by a man named Pierre Plantard."

"Plantard? Who in the world is he?"

"Just an anti-Semitic Frenchman who spent time in prison for fraud in 1953."

"Fraud?"

"Bang on. Anyway, the very next year, Plantard, with three other men, started a small social club. They called it – are you ready for this... the ***Priory of Sion*** - naming it after a nearby mountain. Their club's 'cause' was the call for more low-cost housing in France.

"Anyway, three years later the club dissolved. But Plantard held on to the name.

“Then, throughout the 1960s and 1970s, Plantard *created* a series of documents. These documents ‘proved’ that a bloodline existed, descending from Mary Magdalene, through the kings of France, down to our day.

“And lucky, lucky! The bloodline included Pierre Plantard!

“He began using the name Plantard de Saint-Clair, saying that the Saint-Clairs were direct descendants of the line of Jesus and Mary.

“Then in 1993, Plantard’s name came up in the spotlight of a political scandal. The scandal involved Roger Patrice Pelat, a close friend of Francois Mitterand, who was at that time president of France.

“You see, Plantard had, in one of his documented lists of the Priory of Sion, listed Roger-Patrice as a Grand Master of the Knights Templar.

“Plantard was called before the court to testify. Under oath he admitted that he had *made up* the whole Priory scheme.”

“You’re kidding!” exclaimed Greg. “You mean this whole darned thing is founded on a fraud!” Greg’s eyes suddenly blazed. He never liked to be tricked.

“That’s the raw truth,” said Al. “Anyway, the court ordered that Plantard’s house be searched. And guess what they found! This will rock you, man. They found further documents that proclaimed Plantard to be the true king of France. Well, the judge gave Plantard a stern warning. Then he dismissed the man as a harmless crank.” (<http://priory-of-sion.com/psp/id22.html>)

“What!” shrieked Bronwyn. “If only that judge had known how far the impact of Plantard’s fraud would reach!”

“In any case, there are quite a number of books that elaborate on that hoax of Plantard’s. But I suppose they’re not as exciting as a conspiracy thriller.”

“Well!” exclaimed Greg. “Talk about dumb. I’ve been the dumbest. That guy Brown has played me for a sucker. I took this story of the Jesus-Mary Magdalene bloodline to be true. How many millions of others are being duped? So this *Da Vinci Code* thing is greater fiction than I suspected!”

Al sat there, his wide smile defusing Greg’s anger.

“Come on, you’re not dumb,” he said kindly. “We all get taken at times.”

The alleged Holy Grail

“And there was I...” Greg spoke a little more calmly. “Look, when that *Da Vinci Code* book talks about Da Vinci’s fresco, *The Last Supper*, it says that Da Vinci depicted Mary Magdalene as one of the disciples. It says Mary was Jesus’ companion, which it says means spouse. And that Mary Magdalene is the Holy Grail... the receptacle associated with Jesus... because she was the recipient of the seed of Jesus. And his royal bloodline lives today. To think I was taken in so easily by this. More fool me.”

Again Greg was simmering. He leapt up, nervously pacing the floor... across and back again.

“Blast it, man. That guy tricked me! The tale was so cunningly spun! But... sources that outright lied? Boy, that makes me mad!”

Al felt a surge of compassion. “If it’s any comfort, Greg, you’re not the only one.”

“Yeah.” Greg sat down, still fuming.

“How about another drink for all?” suggested Gloria, picking up the jug.

“Thanks.”

“It’s not so bad,” soothed Al, as Gloria poured. “Sure, you’ve been taken in by a hoax. But now you’re onto true history... with good evidence. Isn’t that what you wanted in the first place?”

“Sure,” mumbled Greg.

“The truth is,” said Al, “that Dan Brown does spin an interesting yarn. And from those phony sources (after all, who’s going to find out?), he tells a conspiracy tale like no other.

“But have you noticed how he has woven something else into his ‘code’ - the return of *goddess worship*? Again, there’s a trade mark of the Lucifer Legion... Their agenda is to restore paganism into our culture.”

I see it,” murmured Greg. “And what better way than through a best seller, to condition the masses!”

Bronwyn moved to speak. “Yes?” invited Al.

“Well, what is the Holy Grail – really?”

Al munched on a cheese cracker. “Jesus Himself identified it... during the Last Supper.” He opened a Bible and handed it to Bron. “Here, why don’t you read it?”

She read:

“And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; For this is my blood of the new testament [covenant], which is shed for many for the remission [forgiveness] of sins.” (Matthew 26:26-28)

“Would you explain that?” She returned the book to Al.

“Yes,” said Al. “Jesus was simply saying that the goblet of grape juice that he passed around at the Last Supper symbolized that he, the sinless One, was going to pour out his blood for sinful men and women. So the Holy Grail is all who would receive the benefit of his blood poured out on the cross. It was not a limited biological physical seed of Jesus, as Brown tries to make out. It was a multi-ethnic, global, spiritual fellowship made up of all who receive forgiveness through the blood of Jesus.”

“So the Holy Grail is a spiritual thing,” said Bronwyn, “a spiritual reality? I think I get it.”

“Can you recommend any websites where I might discover more?” Greg felt for his pen. Al moved over to his computer files.

“Okay, here are three,” he said. “Hope they are some help.”

Greg carefully scribbled them down:

www.jimgarlow.com

www.cwipp.org

www.breakingthedavincicode.com

And suddenly Al’s phone rang...

15

Tracing uncorrupted manuscripts -

HIDDEN AND SAFE

Al moved slowly back into the living room. His face was ashen.

Gloria froze.

Greg stared. "Is everything all right? You look like you've seen a ghost."

"That was the police," replied Al. "That car that went into the sea? The driver had my address and phone number taped to his dashboard. They want me to go in."

"Oh dear!" gasped Gloria.

"Do you think you should phone your lawyer?" asked Greg.

"I'll first see what they want." Al felt for his car keys.

Greg stood up. "Come on, Bron. "We'd better get home."

* * * * *

"Mr Coster," said the officer. "I'm Detective Hancorp. Thankyou for coming." He motioned Al to sit. "Do you know a man called Dean Barker?"

"Never heard of him."

The officer frowned, his eyes riveted on Al. “You don’t know him?”

“As I said.”

“Think again... Dean Barker.”

“No.”

“Are you sure you’ve never heard that name?” He stared Al straight in the eye, waiting for a response.

Al twitched nervously. “No – can’t say I have.”

Hancorp gave a dubious look. “Mr Coster, that man seemed to know you.”

“What do you mean... *seemed*?”

“Dean Barker is dead.”

“Dead?”

“Oh, so you *do* know him?”

“No, I was just shocked. Who is he?”

“He had your details. And our information is that he may have been deliberately run off the road. Perhaps someone wanted him out of the way. And you don’t know him?”

Al’s muscles turned rigid. “Who was he?”

Hancorp arose and opened the door. “Shelly, ask Beauworth to

come in.” Leaving the door open, he returned to his desk and studied Al.

A large, well-fed officer joined them. Hancorp turned to him. “Tell Mr Coster what you know about Barker.”

Beauworth looked Al up and down. “It seems you’ve been keeping some interesting company,” he began. “That woman Allison Meehan. And now Dean Barker. One seriously burned, the other drowned. Both having contact with you.”

“I never met him,” repeated Al.

Hancorp reclined in his chair. “Coster, can you explain this coincidence?”

Al’s jaw dropped. “Gentlemen, I must protest. These people, I’ve had no connection with them... except for the phone conversation with Ms Meehan.”

“So does Friends of the Priory of Sion ring a bell?” asked Hancorp.

“Sure. Ms Meehan is its convenor.”

“And Barker was a member. Does that mean anything to you?”

Al gasped. “What was he doing with my name?”

“We thought you might know that. These people blow up your classroom. And then someone runs him off the road? And your name is on his mind before he goes into the sea.” The officer arose. He looked at Beauworth, then motioned to Al. “You may go for now. But we may have further questions.”

* * * * *

Al was in a daze. He arrived home with no recollection of the twenty minute drive.

Meeting him at the door, Gloria stared. "Is everything all right?"

Without blinking, Al sat down. "Yes... I'm okay."

The next morning he phoned the principal and explained what had happened.

"Look," said Greg, "you and I have got to continue our interaction on this. I need to get into these peoples' minds – their arguments, their beliefs – and you need to give me your side. Just as we've done for the last couple of days. Are you okay on that?"

Al perked up. "You're right. Come over as soon as you're ready."

Gloria waited in the living room. Al sat down beside her. "Do you want to know what I think?" she asked.

Al gave her a hug. "I'm always interested in what goes on in that head of yours."

"Then listen carefully. Both Allison Meehan and that dead man belong to the same organization – Friends of the Priory of Sion. That woman was so angry she blew up your classroom. And this man had your address and was on the main road leading here. What if he was coming to see you?"

The idea clicked. "Honey, you may have something." He kissed her on the forehead.

"It seems to me," she said... and she paused, looking at Al. "My, you're handsome this morning. If I had to remarry, it would be you again for sure."

“Enough of that,” grinned Al. “You were about to say...”

“Well it seems to me how ironic that these events happening this week – starring Meehan, and now this dead guy – all have to do with one person who was on earth 2,000 years ago! I mean, those Friends of the Priory of Sion... that’s what they’re on about, right?”

“Yes,” said Al. “Emotions run high about Jesus Christ – as much as ever they did.”

Just then, the sound of Greg’s Mercedes was heard in the driveway.

“We’ve brought back some lunch,” laughed Bronwyn, struggling into the kitchen. “Chinese.”

“Just open it up and I’ll get some dishes,” said Gloria.

Greg and Al sat down in the living room. “I’ve got a question for you,” said Greg.

Al got comfortable. “Yes?”

How can we ever know the truth?

Greg’s eyes twinkled. “Isn’t it a bit strange that the Bible has come via Rome? I mean, if Rome has corrupted so many things... It’s all very suspicious. How can you believe something so dicey?”

Al leaned forward.

“Surely you must concede,” said Greg, “that our Bibles are a legacy from Rome – from Constantine, to be precise. And as you yourself admitted, they are ‘forged’ in key ‘theological places’.”

Just then Bronwyn brought in the food. “Plates are coming,” she said.

Gloria joined them. “Right, guys, take a break.”

For some minutes silence reigned, interspersed by the clanging of cutlery, and then it was all over.

“That filled the spot,” purred Al, stretching his arms.

“Don’t start yet. I’ll be quick,” chirped Gloria, scooping up a pile of dishes.

She was back in a flash.

Bronwyn glanced at Greg. “Did you ask him?”

Greg frowned. “Yeah, but we had only a moment before lunch. Okay then, Al. As I was saying, the Bible came via Rome – and it was corrupted by Origen’s mob even before that, as you yourself said. So how can you trust it?”

“Yes, tell us straight,” urged Bronwyn. “Can we ever know what the real Bible is?”

Al smiled unassumingly, and picked up his own personal copy. “See this one?” he asked, handing it to Greg. I can assure you Rome had nothing to do with ***THIS*** Bible.”

“Bunkum!” Greg snorted. “Rome gave it to us. You admitted so yourself.”

“Not this one!”

“Oh, come on. How is your single copy different from the millions of others?”

“Okay, Mr Principal of Thornton High,” grinned Al. “It’s time for a further history lesson. Are you ready for this?”

Greg nodded. “Churn it out,” said Bron.

Al looked at each of the others. “I’ll say it again. That Bible – the one you hold in your hands, Greg – did not come from Rome.” He saw Greg’s skeptical frown. “The fact is, many Christians who had access to the original truth, refused to accept such changes. So they preserved the pure Bible in regions outside the ruling church’s control. This is why it is still possible for you to cross-check and get at the truth.

“You see, Greg, historically there are *two streams of manuscripts*.”

Greg stared at him. “Are you saying there are *two differing Bibles*?”

One deliberately corrupted

Al smiled. “That’s right. One has been messed up by a super power, in a bid for total spiritual and political control. That sabotage was centered in Alexandria and Rome.

One transmitted with care

“The other Bible has been guarded and passed down from the uncorrupted early sources.”

“Uncorrupted sources?” asked Greg. “What are you talking about?”

“The Eastern Christians,” said Al. “And the Waldenses in the West. If you will bear with me, I’ll trace them for you.”

“Okay, tell me,” said Greg.

Preserved in the East

Al cleared his throat. “In AD 70, Jerusalem, the initial world headquarters of Christianity, was destroyed by the Romans. Jerusalem Christians were scattered into Syria. Antioch superseded Jerusalem as the center of Christianity.

“A version of Aramaic called ‘Syriac Aramaic’ was the *lingua franca* of the Galilee region in the first century, which tells us that this is likely the language the majority of the New Testament writers spoke.

“It is a material fact that an ancient Aramaic New Testament manuscript exists – and *has been in continuous use since* ancient times by the Church of the East.”

“In *the same original language* the New Testament was first written in?” queried Greg.

“That’s right. The apostles would have first written their books in Hebrew or Aramaic - the official languages of the synagogue. This would not have stopped their almost immediate translation into Koine Greek, the common language of the day.

“In Antioch, they were translated into Syriac about 150 AD. This translation was called the Peshitta (common language) Bible. (Hort, *Introduction*, p. 143)

“Copies of the Peshitta were eagerly sought by the growing Eastern Church and taken eastward into Persia, Armenia, India, China and Japan. (Burton and Miller, *The Traditional Text*, p. 128)

“The Bible was translated from the Greek into Syriac and Hindi in the East, and in the West into Latin as early as 157 AD.

“So within the lifetime of the generation following the first apostles, the world had the benefit of the New Testament written in Greek, Latin and Syriac languages.”

Greg leaned forward. This was startlingly new to him. “You’ve spoken of manuscripts preserved in the East. But you say that someone in the West also kept them from Rome’s control?”

Preserved in the West

“Yes. The Waldenses.”

“Who in the world were they?”

“It’s an interesting story. You see, Paul and the original apostles had spread the Christian message throughout the Roman Empire – including the Latin communities of northern Italy and the numerous Celtic communities of Asia Minor (modern day Turkey). Then the Galatians, who lived there, spread the Gospel to their kinsmen in Gaul, thence to England, Scotland and Ireland.

“Although they retained their Gallic language, they also used the Latin language of the Roman Empire.

“To suit their needs, the Koine Greek manuscripts were translated into Latin in AD 157. This was the forerunner of the Italia Bible. As the historian Flick informs us, ‘The Celts used a Latin Bible

[Italia] unlike the Vulgate [of Jerome] and kept Saturday as a day of rest.’ (Flick, *The Rise of the Medieval Church*, p. 237)

“This Italia Bible held its own as long as Latin continued to be a living language of the common people. (*Forum*, June 1887, cited in Wilkinson, *Our Authorised Bible Vindicated*, p. 27)

Persecution, then infiltration

“As Christianity spread through the empire, paganism began to fall back on its heels. So the Legion of Lucifer declared full scale war against Christians.

“Persecution followed. But their numbers continued to multiply. The Caesars, as puppets of the Lucifer Legion, tried to stop the movement, but in vain.

So a shrewd plan was hatched... It was decided to infiltrate the movement and destroy it from within - with a phony system of Christianity.

“This plan was launched in Rome, the capital city of the empire.

Bronwyn recoiled. “Wow! Is that really true?”

“It’s open history,” said Al. “Once the church in the city of Rome was established with armies at its disposal, it then set out to eliminate all opposition within the Christian world to the imitation Christianity it had set up. Numerous historians have documented this event.

The faithful flee into wilderness regions

“The real Bible Christians knew Lucifer had created a religious monster and had called it Christian. They knew it was phony, satanic and totally unchristian. So to save their families, many

withdrew to the hills. True Christianity went underground for about 1,000 years.

“The gigantic pseudo-Christian power based in Rome emerged as the visible, ruling body over kings and nations.

“That part of the Alpine chain which extends between Turin on the east and Grenoble on the west is known as the Cottian Alps. The valleys within this area became a haven for many Bible Christians. From these valleys they eventually derived the name Vaudois, or Waldenses.

“These Waldenses were among the first groups in Europe to obtain a translation of the Bible from the Koine Greek manuscripts.

“They insisted on following the Bible, pure and unaltered, as their rule of faith. For a thousand years, throughout the Dark Ages, they were to preserve it uncorrupted.

“Even Rome’s acclaimed authority Augustine around 400 AD said:

Now among translations themselves the Italian [Italia] is to be preferred to the others, for it keeps closer to the words without prejudice to clearness of expression.
(*Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers* [Christian Lit. edition], Vol II, p. 542)

“This contrasts with the later hatred generated by Rome against this same Bible which Augustine had praised.

“As to the antiquity of the Waldensians’ Italia Bible, the evidence is, as Dr Scrivener affirms, that ‘The Latin Bible, the Italic, was translated from the Greek no later than 157 AD.’ (Scrivener’s *Introduction*, Vol. II, p. 43)

“In fact, Greg, it is difficult to imagine any Bibles being closer to the apostles’ original autographs than the Peshitta (in the East) and

the Italia (in the West). The translators of these Bibles could very well have been born during the lifetime of some of Jesus' disciples.

"The isolation of the Waldenses – as well as their fervent reverence for the original text of the Bible – enabled them to preserve it from the rampant corruption going on elsewhere." Al paused.

Greg was stunned. "Man, why haven't I heard these things before?"

"You've heard nothing yet."

"What?"

"Did you know that *for a thousand years after Jesus' resurrection*, most Christians in the world observed *Saturday* – the seventh day Bible Sabbath?"

"Are you serious?"

"It's part of this same manuscript battle. You see, those who preserved the unchanged manuscripts also revered the Sabbath as Jesus' appointed flag day. They saw it as the symbol of the Creator's sovereignty over this planet – an institution given to our first parents.

"History reveals a double-edged ongoing battle:

"1. Between the uncorrupted manuscripts and Rome's corrupted manuscripts, and

"2. Between the Sabbath (Jesus' flag day) and SUN-day (Lucifer's flag day).

“Naturally, Lucifer’s mind controlled stooges had an *obsession* to stamp out or mangle anything to do with Lucifer’s hated foe.”

Greg was speechless.

Al looked at him. “Would you like to know how Jesus’ Saturday flag-day was stamped out and replaced with Lucifer’s Sun-day?”

Suddenly he stopped. A loud knocking was heard.

Al moved across the floor. Standing at the door was Detective Hancorp. Another officer stood slightly behind him.

“Well... come in,” motioned Al. “Do you have some news?”

Hancorp pushed inside, the other man following. Greg arose.

“Not at all pretty,” grunted Hancorp, looking everyone over. “This fellow Barker... it’s a dirty affair.”

Al gulped. “What have you discovered?”

“He was coming to see you,” said Hancorp soberly.

“But I don’t know the man.”

Hancorp nodded. “Friends of the Priory of Sion. He was one of them. But he’d told them that he was leaving the group. First, there was a hot argument about Ms Meehan burning the school. Then he told them he was going to defect.”

Al opened his mouth. And he was coming to see me?”

“Coming to apologise about the group, it seems.” Hancorp turned

to his colleague. “Tell them what you found out.”

“We’ve identified the vehicle that ran Barker off the road. “It belonged to a fellow cult member – Ms Meehan’s husband, in fact.”

Gloria let out a gasp.

“Friends of the Priory cult?” enquired Al.

The officer nodded. “We have an alert out for him.”

For several seconds Greg stood there. “You mean it was... murder?”

Hancorp scratched his hand. “What I want to know is what makes these guys so angry. Do have an idea?”

Al tossed a glance at Greg. “They’re furious because they think they were tricked.”

“Tricked?”

“By Christianity.”

“Yes. Meehan blurted it out to me. She was hopping mad that her daughter had, as she said, been ‘sucked in’ by the Jesus Christ ‘fraud’.”

“Fraud?”

“She and her friends have got into their heads that Christianity and its Bible are a tremendous fraud. That’s why she founded the Friends of the Priory of Sion – to expose the tremendous fraud of Christianity.”

“So where did she and her cult members get this idea?”

Al shook his head. “From writers like Dan Brown, David Icke and Zechariah Sitchen. Acting on this, they then decide that any who follow this Christian fraud should be taught a lesson.”

Bronwyn looked shaken. “But a person has died. Men like Brown, Icke and Sitchen, who have conned the public with such charges, have a responsibility to clear the air and put the facts right.”

“It’s a dirty business,” sighed Hancorp. “Anyway, you’re in the clear, Mr Coster.”

The officers turned to leave. Then Hancorp swung around. “Oh, just one thing... all of you keep away from that cult. Don’t provoke them.”

16

The European takeover -

CAMPAIGN TO DOMINATE

“Whew,” sighed Greg, in relief. “So let’s get back to our subject.”

Gloria nudged Bron. “Say, why don’t you and I go to the tennis court for a while. We can catch up on this later.”

Bronwyn smiled. “Sure, come on then.” She turned to Greg. “Don’t forget to fill me in.” And they were gone.

“Where were we?” asked Al.

“You were going to explain the Saturday – Sunday battle,” Greg replied..

“Sit back and relax, then,” smiled Al. “Enjoy the story. As we were saying before, the nations had accepted the message of the risen Jesus with joy.

“Meanwhile, the church in Rome, in league with the philosophers of Alexandria, carried on her agenda to amalgamate the Christian way with paganism. But her ambitions were not only for herself. She cast envious eyes over the other churches throughout Europe. She wanted to bring them under her own control.

Only one day a year, at first

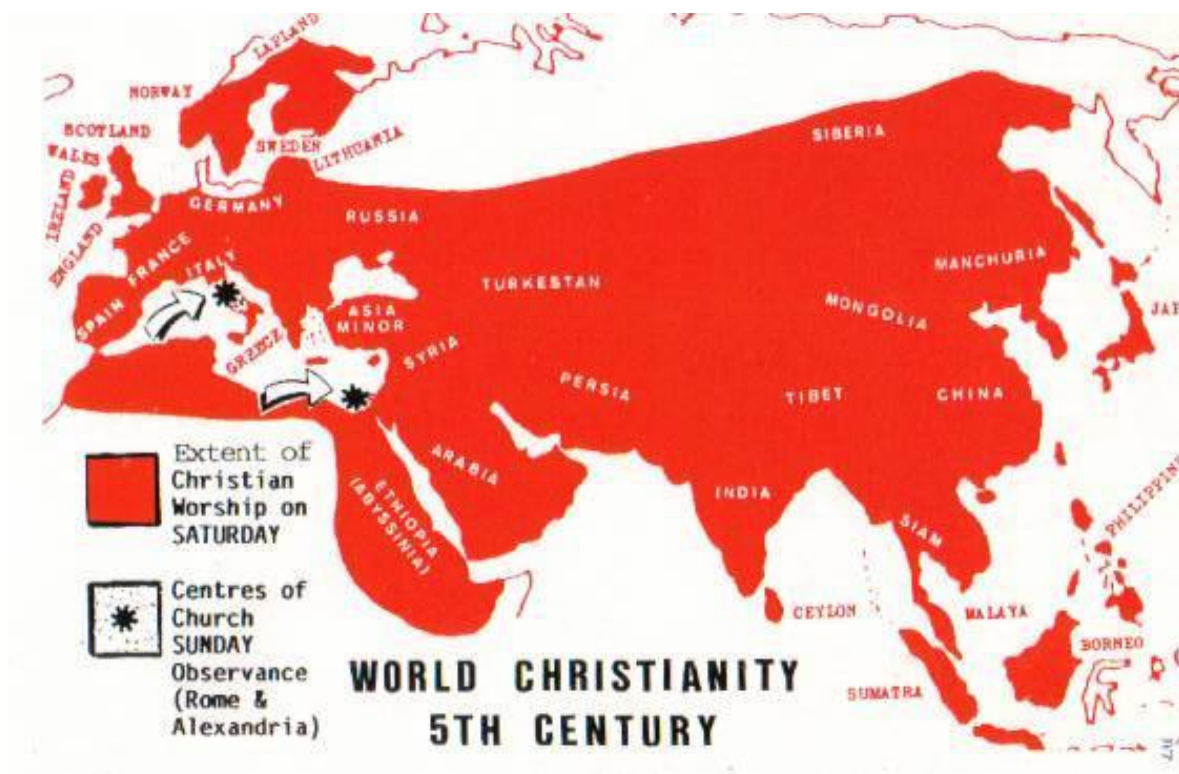
“Around the year 200 a dispute arose over picking *one day in the year* to honor Jesus’ resurrection. And Rome picked *Sunday* for this annual event. Later, when the pagan Lent was sneaked into the church, each Sunday during the 40 days of Lent came to be designated to honor the resurrection. It would not be until the fourth century that the church made the decision to observe *every* Sunday in the year. (Archibald Bower, *The History of the Popes*, vol. 1. Philadelphia: L. Johnson, 1844-47, p.18; Charles Joseph Hefele, *History of the Christian Councils*, vol. 1. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1872, pp. 300-313; Wilkinson, pp. 123,124)

“The Christians of Spain, Gaul and northern Italy (all of them observing the Saturday Sabbath, the flag day of their Deliverer Jesus), just as determinedly raised a protest against the introduction of pagan practices by the church in Rome. This swelled into an outcry.

“So it should not surprise us that shortly after 439 church historian Socrates could still report that ‘almost all churches throughout the world’ observed Saturday (not Sunday). (Socrates, *Ecclesiastical History*, b. 5, ch. 22 – found in Scribner’s *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*. See also Augustine, Ambrose, Chrysostom, Gregory of Nyasa, Asterius, Gregory of Caesarea, Origen, Cassian, etc)

“Then he added, ‘The Christians of Alexandria and at Rome... have ceased to do this.’ (You will recall that the churches at Rome and Alexandria were united in their bid to weld Christianity and paganism together – and that they shared a common antagonism toward the Bible Sabbath.)

“Christians, then, were still keeping the Sabbath of Jesus. But under pressure, many now began to try and satisfy the requirements of Constantine’s Sunday laws by observing that day also. (Sozomen, *Ecclesiastical History*, vol. vii, 19, in “A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers”, 2nd series, Vol. II, p. 390 – writing after AD 415)



“However, those who wished to preserve and live by the original, unchanged Bible message progressively withdrew into the wilderness areas.

“So you see, Greg, *Christianity was dividing into two movements* – one affiliating itself with paganism, the other deeply rooted in the unchanged Bible.

St. Patrick and Columba

“The message of the risen Jesus had reached the British Isles only five years after His resurrection. ‘The British National Church was founded A.D. 36, 160 years before heathen Rome confessed Christianity.’ (Archbishop Ussher, *Britannicarum Ecclesiarum Antiquitates*) When Joseph of Arimathea brought to Cornwall the news of Jesus Christ, the Druids, who had for centuries handed down prophecies

concerning the Coming One, were thus able to accept the announcement readily.

“In fact, Britain was the first to declare itself a Christian nation.

“About 390, the Scottish missionary Patrick (who, by the way, was never a Catholic!) arrived in heathen Ireland to find considerable Christian communities already there. Recognising only the Bible – and no pope - Patrick evangelized Ireland and strengthened the Irish church. (W.D. Killen, *Ecclesiastical History of Ireland*, vol. 1. London: The Macmillan Company, 1875, pp. 12-15; Wilkinson, ch. 7) Ireland continued to keep the Bible Sabbath until the 12th century. (Andrew Lang, *A History of Scotland*, vol. 1. Edinburgh: William Blackwood & Sons, 1900, p. 96; Barnett, *Margaret of Scotland: Queen and Saint*, p.97)

“In 563, Columba renounced his chance to the Irish throne to establish a Bible college on the Scottish island of Iona. From this center (taking with them myriads of Bibles hand-copied), the graduates soon fanned out over the British Isles and continental Europe to establish thousands of missionary centers, all observing the Bible Sabbath. (Butler, *Lives of the Saints*, vol. 6, p. 139)

“Such Sabbath-keeping communities were reported to be all over Europe, their adherents numerous. They included nobility, scholars and leaders of culture. Through the long Dark Ages, they were to provide *a sanctuary for the uncorrupted Scriptures*.

“Meanwhile, in 508 the papacy cooperated with the pagan Franks to overthrow Sabbath-keeping Christian Gaul (France), by military force.

“Then began Rome’s long and proud history of persecution to rid the world of heretics, as they were called.

“I’m not talking about the many sincere Catholic people, who were not aware of this. They were deceived and used. We’re dealing with the system, not the people. I truly believe that when they find out about the tricks of this corrupt system, many will wise up and be mad, very mad. They will grow up – and rise up – mighty fast.

“Anyway, the persecution of heretics was fierce. Yet, despite such military exploits, Pope Zachary would write around 700 that the pastors of the Celtic (Sabbath-keeping) church of Europe were still more numerous than those of his own church. (Antoine Monastier, *A History of the Vaudois Church*. London: Religious Tract Society, 1848, pp. 11,12)

The invaders conquered

“About 449, the pagan Anglo-Saxons ‘liberated’ England and Christian churches were demolished or replaced by heathen temples. The invaders all but destroyed the pure Celtic church in England.

“However, the Celtic church launched a spiritual counter attack. And by 620 they were able to subdue two thirds of their pagan conquerors, by the gentle persuasion of the Gospel.

“While this was going on, the pope sent Augustine and his monks to convert England. By the marrying of Catholic princesses to pagan rulers, England fell nominally to the church of Rome... but soon lapsed back into paganism.

“About 820, the pagan Danes conquered England, but pure Christianity remained powerful in Scotland, Ireland, Wales and south west England.

“In 1058, a Catholic lady by the name of Margaret renounced her plan to become a nun in order to marry Malcolm III of Scotland. The passion of her life was **Rome**. She quickly set about to

demolish the ancient Scottish church by force – beginning with a law to compel Sunday as the national holy day. (Bellesheim, *History of the Catholic Church of Scotland*, vol. 1, pp. 249,250; Barnett, Margaret of Scotland: Queen and Saint, p. 89)

“In 1066, Rome endorsed the invasion of England by William the Conqueror with the understanding that the English church (which observed the Saturday Sabbath) must be crushed. (George T. Stokes, *Celtic Church in Ireland*, p. 165)

“In 1171, Pope Adrian IV issued a bull to England’s Henry II, authorizing him to invade Sabbath-keeping Ireland. As a result, the Irish church was finally subjugated to the papacy. (Sir William Blackstone, *Commentaries on the Laws of England*. Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott Company, 1908, b. 4, ch. 8, p. 105; W.C. Taylor, *History of Ireland*, vol. 1. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1854, pp. 59,60)

“To promote the interests of the church, kings were coerced, bribed and intimidated.

“As the papacy consolidated her persecuting power over Europe, adherents of pure Christianity were progressively driven into the ‘wilderness’ areas, especially of north west Italy, south east France and northern Spain. (Wilkinson, pp. 237,238,258-264) Many of them came to be known as Vaudois, or Waldenses (‘valley dwellers’).

Wipe out

“In July, 1209, at Beziers, France, the Crusaders demanded of the pope’s legate, ‘How shall we distinguish the Catholics from the heretics?’ He replied, ‘Kill them all. God will know His own.’ Nice chap. (Samuel G. Green, *A Handbook of Church History*. London: Religious Tract Society, 1904, p. 508)

“Ultimately massacres, burnings and other ‘holy’ acts all but extinguished the people of the original Bible. (McClintock and Strong, *Cyclopedia*, art. “Waldenses”)

“The Bible lamp of Scotland had been extinguished by the papacy in 1069; that of Ireland in 1172; and that of the ancient Albigenses (France) in 1229. Finally, Rome succeeded in subjugating Wales. In 1272, the Welsh, who had resisted popery for seven centuries, at last fell by intrigue, flatteries and armed force. The light of the Malabar Indians was crushed out in 1560; and that of the Waldenses (Italy) in 1686.

“Let me tell you about an amazing event that occurred in an Alpine gorge. It will blow your socks off!”

Al paused.

A gentle breeze rolled through the living room. It was a “wide awake” sort of night. The air was fresh. And Greg felt stimulated. “Go on,” he urged. “What’s this drama in the canyon?”

“Sure. But first, let’s have a drink.”

17

The forbidden book -

THE HOUSEWIFE'S TRICK

“Mother, the soldiers are coming!”

This housewife in the south of France was baking bread when she saw them approaching. It was forbidden for anyone to have a Bible.

She glanced nervously across to the table. There was the family Bible, sitting in full view. What should she do? Those intruders would search high and low and surely find it.

Wiping off the dough from her hands, she darted across the room, snatched up the precious Book... and quickly stuffed it inside a wrapping of dough.

A thorough search of the house revealed only bread baking in the oven.

* * * * *

Forbidden book

“It happened this way,” said Al. “As the ruling church introduced more and more pagan practices, the disparity between what the Bible said and what church tradition now taught grew more glaring. Continuing protests highlighted these differences.

“Something drastic had to be done: They could reform the church or else destroy all copies of the Bible.

“So those good sports in Rome decided on what would make them feel good.”

“Ban the Bible?” asked Greg.

Al nodded. “So all over Europe they hunted down Bibles. They burned thousands of them. (Eugene Lawrence, *Historical Studies*, pp. 254-257) Cardinal Merry del Val was pleased to explain why: Because, as he said, the Bible in the hands of the people would have ‘disastrous consequences’ for the church! (*Index of Prohibited Books*, “revised and published by order of His Holiness Pope Pius XI”; “Forward” by Cardinal Merry del Val, pp. x, xi; Vatican Polyglot Press, 1930)

“Those *unaltered* copies of the Bible exposed the corruptions of the ruling church. And so it became desirable to wage campaigns of mass murder on the Waldenses and any others found with Bibles.

“Laymen were officially forbidden to possess or to read the Bible. In 1229, at the Council of Valencia, and again, in 1399 under Pope Paul IV, it was placed on the *Index of Forbidden Books*.

Another evidence that the Bible was NOT changed by the ruling church

“Dan Brown and some others are fond of putting out the line that the ruling church changed the Bible to get rid of what she didn’t like in it. Why can’t that man start telling the truth?

“You can check this for yourself. The Bible makes strong statements against bowing down to images (statues). The Second Commandment forbids such a practice. (Exodus 20:4-6)

“If the ruling church had tampered with the Bible, this would have been among the first things church leaders would have deleted.

“Why? Because they were teaching the flock to kneel before images. And the Bible clearly condemned such a practice.

“Even though they eliminated the Second Commandment from their teaching catechisms (which are still in use), the original Ten Commandments still remained in the Bible itself, to witness against them.

“Do you see? It was because they were unable to alter all those thousands of Bibles in circulation that they resorted to destroying Bibles wherever they could. That is a powerful evidence that the ruling church in Rome had NOT changed the Bible to get rid of things it didn’t like. So it sought to suppress the reading of the Bible.

“The most beautiful thing I have ever read”

“The Waldenses wanted to share pure Bible truth with the rest of the population. Frequently they would come down from the Alps as peddlers, but with Bibles under their cloaks. If a customer expressed interest, they would cautiously bring out the Good Book - and share its wonders. A common reaction was, ‘This is the most beautiful thing I have ever read.’ Many were amazed to discover from these writings that the Creator actually loved them.

Outlawed, tortured, burnt

“As with the pagans, so now with the pagan-infiltrated ruling church: It was teaching that an ‘angry God’ needed to be appeased. And to get this ‘angry’ God off your back, church agents sold indulgences. That is, you could pay money to have your sins forgiven.

“When an impoverished and nervous public expressed dissatisfaction with such practices, the Waldenses were the perfect group to pick on. It became an entertaining distraction to launch liquidation crusades. Such mass murder was usually accompanied by ingenious methods of torture – a free extra service.

“The history of Rome’s rule over the nations of Europe for over a thousand years was punctuated with slaughter of such a magnitude that it could only have been ordered by one who was criminally insane.

“One favorite punishment was seizing men and women and publicly burning them alive. Another was to slowly stretch the body lengthwise, until the victim was literally pulled apart. Then there was ‘the virgin’s embrace’. The two sides of a hollow statue of the Virgin Mary would open apart, to reveal spikes pointing from the interior walls toward the center. The victim would be pushed inside her statue, which then closed, the spikes penetrating the body from all sides. Others were offered the privilege of having phosphorus jammed under the finger nails and set alight. Still others had their skin slowly stripped off their bodies while still alive. Pregnant women’s bowels were ripped open. Live babies had their heads dashed to pulp on rocks before the eyes of their screaming mothers. (J.A. Wylie, *History of the Waldenses*. London: Cassell and Company, c.1860; John Foxe, *Fox’s Book of Martyrs*. Zondervan, 1978)

Al leaned forward. “Two years ago, Greg, I visited the Waldensian valley of Angrogna. Every rock has its story. There is the spot where young children were dashed against the stones - the spot where men and women, stripped naked, were rolled up as balls, and precipitated down the mountain, and where, caught by the stump of a tree, or projecting angle of rock, they hung transfixed, enduring for days the agony of a living death.

“Helping Rome’s case was the rumor that Waldensian children were freaks of the devil with one eye in the middle of the forehead. This was done to distract the public from the real rats in Rome.

“There’s one thing you could say in their favor. If persistence is a virtue, they were virtuous in two things: destroying Bibles and ‘compassionate’ burning of heretics.

“Neither sex nor age was spared... whether for hanging, beheading, or burying alive. Was it 50 million or 120 million victims? Historians seem to have lost count.

“Yet to their last breath, men, women and children stood fearlessly for the truth. They loved their Deliverer more than their own lives.”

A secret clue explains why

Greg began to fidget. Al paused. “Do you have a question?”

“Yes, I do. How can Christian faith be valid when there is so much evil, corruption and violence committed by those who claim to follow Jesus Christ?”

“Okay,” said Al. “Please take this in carefully. If you look closely at such persons, you will see that they have not attempted to adhere to the words of the Bible. Rather, they have imposed their own outside ideas – their own belief system - onto their lives. If you just allow the Bible to speak for itself, it will be easy to identify those who make a profession but don’t live it.

“Make no mistake. The visible institution that dominated Europe was *not* the real Christian church. The real church was hiding in the wilderness areas to escape death.”

Al took a breather. He arose, ambled over to his files and began searching. “Let me show you something,” he said. In a minute or two he was back. He handed a photograph to Greg. “This is the secret that answers your question, pal.”

The principal took a long look at the photograph. “What is this?” he cried.

“That’s the papal crest... in the Vatican museum in Rome.”

Greg studied it further. “Man!” he exclaimed. “This focuses on the winged *serpent*, the symbol of *Lucifer*!”

Greg sat there in shock, for a while. Then he handed the picture back to Al.

The science lecturer restored it to the file. He turned back to Greg. “You can’t really blame the pope and his crew. Wittingly or unwittingly, they were just mind controlled stooges carrying out Lucifer’s agenda.

“It turns out that the word *Vatican* means ‘*the divination of the serpent*.’ VATIS means ‘diviner;’ CAN means ‘the serpent’.

“Remember how the supreme god of the Roman Empire was Lucifer - Satan? Then when the empire of Rome disintegrated, the church of Rome simply took over its function, and its work – and this included the *elimination of Lucifer’s enemies*, the true followers of Jesus.”

Greg sat in shock. “I never realized...” he heard himself saying.



Papal crest in Vatican Museum

“But it wasn’t all one way,” added Al. “I’d like to share a thrilling piece of history with you.”

“Go ahead.” Greg lowered himself onto the carpet and stretched out.

Surprise in the canyon

“There were dramatic evidences of another power at work,” said Al. “And this brought encouragement to the persecuted ones.

“It was 1488. And the Waldenses heard that they had been condemned by the bull of Pope Innocent VIII.”

“A bull?” asked Greg.

“Yes. That means a papal announcement. The aim was to exterminate those guardians of the Bible - the Waldensians - once and for all. This solemn news cast gloom over the peaceful valley dwellers.”

Greg rolled sideways to face Al. “I bet it did.”

“I should have mentioned,” said Al, “that there were seven valleys encircled by mountains, all linked together and accessible from the outside only by a narrow gorge.

“Anyway, to carry out his bull, Innocent VIII appointed Albert Cataneo, Archdeacon of Cremona, his legate, to take charge of the enterprise. He was to deliver papal letters to all princes, dukes, and authorities within whose dominions any Waldenses were to be found. The Pope especially commanded Charles VIII of France and Charles II of Savoy, to support him with the whole power of their arms. The bull invited all the ruling church’s members to take up the cross against the heretics. And to stimulate them in this pious work it freed them from all penalties, and from any oaths they might have taken. It legitimatised their title to any property they might have illegally acquired - and promised forgiveness of all sins to any who should kill a heretic. It annulled all contracts made in favor of Waldenses, ordered their domestics to abandon them, forbade all persons to give them any aid whatever, and empowered all persons to take possession of their property.

“Then, in a gracious gesture, hoards of criminals in the prisons - rapists, murderers and thugs - were offered pardon and reward if they would join the extermination army.

“A Waldensian delegation went to meet the papal legate Cataneo, assuring him that they were loyal, peace-loving subjects of the king. But convinced that his forces could easily exterminate them, he brushed aside their plea.”

“What a jerk!” Greg’s indignation rose.

“Well, Cataneo advanced up the valley toward the Waldensian strongholds with no resistance. And soon he was ready to force his way into the Val di Angrogna. This valley is a magnificent array of narrow gorges and open vales, walled in by majestic mountains. It terminates in a circular basin called the Pra del Tor. Surrounded by snowy peaks, it was the seat of their college.

“In the Pra del Tor, or Meadow of the Tower, Cataneo expected to surprise the mass of the Waldensian people, who, after the rejection of their plea for peace, had now gathered into this strongest refuge which their hills afforded.

“Since their humble petition for peace had been contemptuously rejected, the Waldenses now had three options - to go to mass, to be butchered as sheep, or to fight for their lives. They decided on the last. But first, all who could not bear arms must be removed to the place of safety, the Pra del Tor.

“These valley folk fell on their knees and cried aloud, “O God of our fathers, help us! O God, deliver us!”

“Cataneo’s soldiers passed the height of Rocomaneot, and into the narrow defiles beyond. Here great rocks overhang the path. Majestic chestnut-trees stretch their branches across the way. And far down thunders the stream.

“Between him and his prey rose a steep unscaleable mountain, called the ‘Barricade’. It runs like a wall across the valley, forming the strength of a citadel.

“Would his advance have to end here? It seemed as if it must. However, he searched and found an entrance... a long, narrow, and dark chasm. This forms the one only path that leads to the head of Angrogna.

“Cataneo boldly ordered his men to enter this frightful gorge. The pathway through this chasm is a rocky ledge on the side of the mountains. It is so narrow that barely two abreast can advance along it. If challenged either in front, or in rear, or from above, there is absolutely no retreat. Nor is there room to fight.

“The pathway hangs midway between the stream at the bottom of the gorge and the mountain summit. Above the path, the naked cliff runs sheer up for at least 1,000 feet. And the cliff leans over the path in stupendous masses, which look as if about to fall. In some spots cracks admit the rays of the sun, to make the gloomy pass visible. Occasionally a half-acre or so of level space gives standing-room on the mountain’s side to a clump of birches, or a chalet, with its bit of meadow.

“The chasm itself runs on for one to two miles. Then there is a burst of light, and a sudden flashing of white peaks, as it opens into an amphitheatre. And in there is a meadow - so large that a whole nation might camp in it.

“Anyway, it was into this terrible defile that the Papal legate and his murderers now entered. They proceeded, as best they could, along the narrow ledge. They were now nearing the Pra. And it seemed impossible for their prey to escape. Assembled on this spot the Waldensian people had but one neck, and Cataneo’s papal mob planned to sever that neck in one blow.

“But evidently the Supreme One was watching over the valley dwellers. The agency about to save them was one of the frailest in all nature.

“A white cloud, no bigger than a man’s hand, unseen by the invaders, but keenly watched by the Waldenses, was seen to gather on the mountain’s summit, about the time the army would be entering the defile. That cloud grew rapidly bigger and blacker. Then it began to descend. It came rolling down the mountain’s

side, wave on wave, like an ocean tumbling out of heaven - a sea of murky vapor.

“It fell right into the chasm in which was the papal army, sealing it up, and filling it from top to bottom with a thick black fog. In a moment the invaders were in night. They were bewildered and stupefied. They could see neither in front nor behind. They could neither advance nor retreat. They halted in a state bordering on terror. (Antoine Monastier, *A History of the Vaudois Church*. London: Religious Tract Society, 1848, pp. 133-134)

“The Waldenses saw this as their deliverance. It had given them the power to repel the invader. Coming out from their hiding places, they spread themselves out and while the host stood riveted beneath them, they tore up huge stones and rocks, and sent them thundering down into the ravine.

“The invaders were crushed where they stood. Then, when some of the Waldenses boldly entered the chasm, sword in hand, and attacked them in front, the attackers were seized with panic. Cataneo’s forces jostled one another. In the struggle, they threw each other down. Some were trodden to death. Others went rolling over the precipice, to be crushed on the rocks below, or drowned in the torrent.

“So the guardians of the uncorrupted Bible manuscripts were spared. And the manuscripts would remain preserved.” Al’s voice trailed off.

Greg felt a little chill.

The silence was deafening.

Suddenly Al spoke. “Anyway, I was going to mention an Internet hoax that’s doing the rounds. And how I cracked it.”

Greg raised himself. “Tell us.”

18

Asia: safe from Europe -

VIOLENCE IN THE EAST

“Have you heard of the silent cities?”

“What are they?”

“They are deserted cities in Syria – about a hundred of them – and still in a remarkable state of preservation. There are splendid remains of villas, churches, inscriptions and public buildings that were established during the early Christian centuries.

“You know, Greg, there are still places where no modern traveler has been... ancient towns which no tourist has seen... in fact, whole regions full of antiquities, which are not shown on the latest maps.”

“And just when I thought there was no place left to explore!” Greg arose and planted himself back onto a chair.

“Yes,” said Al. “These silent cities lie far from the main lines of travel and in the midst of an excitable Muslim population.

“Just imagine it, Greg – a wasted land of barren grey hills. And in the distance you see a towering mass of broken walls and shattered colonnades, the mighty remnants of a city long deserted by civilized men... silent, with gates wide open and every house inside it untenanted even by wild beasts. You enter what was once a thriving town. And it has stood uninhabited for 13 centuries.

“Its health and sanitation arrangements would be superior to those found in many places in the Western world today, even in America and Europe.”

“Incredible!” exclaimed Greg. “Tell me more.”

“Well, the inscriptions on many of these buildings indicate that Syrian Christianity covered a goodly portion of the territory in which the silent cities stand today.”

Greg blew his nose. “Fascinating. But why are they silent and deserted?”

“Here’s why,” said Al. “After Jerusalem fell, Antioch in Syria became the new world headquarters of Christianity. However, as the church in Rome grew powerful and adopted pagan practices, it made the punishment of those who disagreed with Rome a serious part of its program. Then terrible persecution fell upon Syria.

“So entire Christian populations migrated from the areas of the silent cities and the rest of the eastern provinces of the Roman Empire. They found refuge within the boundaries of the restored Persian Empire.

“After 622, following the Muslim invasion, the Christians who remained in Syria worked their way farther east, leaving behind their cities, silent and deserted, and the area depopulated. So those people who had gone East were able to resettle in safety and preserve their original Bible from corruption.

“And that brings us to a 21st century Internet hoax.”

Just a myth of a Roman origin?

Greg’s eyebrows arched. “Hoax?”

“Some folk are claiming,” said Al, “that Jesus was never a literal person, but that the original teaching of Christianity was merely a kind of mystical ‘Christ within’. Then they say that the Jesus story was later ‘literalized’ and placed in a ‘historical’ setting *of Rome’s choosing*.”

“That’s exactly what I’ve been reading,” responded Greg. “That the historical Jesus was *invented by Rome*.”

Independent Eastern testimony

“Oh yeah? So tell me, how did Christians of the East, as far away as India - *where Rome had no influence* – how did they already possess the New Testament, with a literal Jesus – claiming it was brought to them direct by first century apostles of Jesus himself? Explain that!”

“Would you elaborate?” asked Greg.

Eastern Christians reject Roman and Alexandrian perversions

“Yes, as you know,” Al continued, “in AD 70, Jerusalem, the initial world headquarters of Christianity, was destroyed by the Romans. Jerusalem Christians were scattered into Syria. Antioch superseded Jerusalem as the center of Christianity.

“A training college was established in Antioch. And from there, missionary expansion became phenomenal.

“College trained young men went to Turkestan, Scythia, faraway Mongolia, Tibet, Manchuria, Siberia, Japan, Malaya, Ceylon, the Philippines, Siam, Arabia, Sumatra, Java, Borneo, or wherever the call came.

“And it is not generally known that all the Christians, from Ethiopia to eastern Asia, continued to observe the Saturday Sabbath – not Sunday. (Bower, *The History of the Popes*, vol. 2, p. 258; also note 2, 1845 ed.; Cox, *The Literature of the Sabbath Question*, vol. 1, p. 334)

“In Antioch, the Bible was translated into Syriac about 150 AD, within the lifetime of the generation following the first apostles. This translation was called the Peshitta (common language) Bible. (Hort, *Introduction*, p. 143; See also Appendix K)

“Copies of the Peshitta were eagerly sought by the growing Eastern Church and taken eastward into Persia, Armenia, India, China and Japan. (Burton and Miller, *The Traditional Text*, p. 128)

“In the reign of the Roman emperor Aurelian, Roman and Alexandrian bishops arrived in Antioch in an attempt to press their Romanised teachings. Lucian, a keen Antioch scholar, noticed that the Scriptures they brought were substantially different. He saw that they had taken unwarranted licence in removing or adding pages to the Bible manuscripts. (Benjamin Wilkinson, *Truth Triumphant*, p. 50)

“Because of Rome’s innovations, the churches of Ethiopia, Egypt, Syria and Armenia broke off all connections with Rome. This ***ensured that they would remain free from further corruption*** by Rome.

“As a counter to the corrupted manuscripts, Lucian determined to ***certify*** the apostolic originals by editing the Peshitta ***without change***. He also translated the Hebrew Old Testament into Greek. And, not surprisingly, in 312 Lucian was murdered.

“Lucian’s work would preserve for future generations the Received Text of the whole Bible in Greek. (DeLacy O’Leary, *The Syriac Church and Fathers*. London: Society for Promoting Christian knowledge, 1909, p. 49)

“This complete Bible was thereafter preserved through most of the East. (Nolan, *The Integrity of the Greek Vulgate*, p. 72)

“This Received Text (Textus Receptus) was also known as the Traditional or Byzantine Text. (*Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, 1958, p. 826) And from this would be translated ultimately the English Authorized Version (that is, the King James Bible).

Eastern copies of the Bible preserved

“But getting back to Lucian’s ‘common language’ (Syriac) Bible. How this was preserved in isolation in India throughout the ages of darkness is another fascinating story. They had retained the Bible in the ancient language used by the original church at Antioch, where the name ‘Christians’ originated.” (Acts 11:26; Christian Edwardson, *Facts of Faith*. Nashville, TN.: Southern Publishing Association, 1943, p. 153)

Al arose and headed for his book shelf. “I have here,” said he, “a history of India. Bear with me and I’ll find a record that will throw some light on this... Okay, here it is.

“As history confirms to us, ‘It was in these sequestered regions that copies of the Syriac Scriptures found a safe asylum from the search and destruction of the Romish inquisitors, and were found with all the marks of ancient purity.’ (T. Yeates, *Indian Church History*, p. 167)

Whatever may be the future use and importance of those manuscripts, one thing is certain, and that is, they establish the fact that the Syrian Christians of India have the pure unadulterated Scriptures in the language of the ancient church of Antioch, derived from the very times of the Apostles. (*Ibid.*, p. 169)

Separated from the Western world for a thousand years, they were naturally ignorant of many novelties introduced by the councils and decrees of the Lateran;

and their conformity with the faith and practice of the first ages laid them open to the unpardonable guilt of heresy and schism, as estimated by the church of Rome. “We are Christians, and not idolaters,” was their expressive reply when required [after the 15th century Portuguese invasion of India] to do homage to the image of the Virgin Mary.... LaCroze states them at fifteen hundred churches and as many towns and villages. (J.W. Massie, *Continental India*, Vol. 2, p. 120)

“In his researches in 1812, Claudius Buchanan found among the St. Thomas Christians of India’s Malabar Coast a copy of the Bible believed to have been among them from the days *before* the Council of Nicaea. Thus he wrote:

In every church, and in many of the private houses, there are manuscripts in the Syriac language: and I have been successful in procuring some old and valuable copies of the Scriptures and other books... (Claudius Buchanan, *Christian Researches in Asia*. London: G. Sydney, 1812)

Events in Asia

“In the year 285, all divisions of the church from Syria to China were unified with headquarters at Seleucia (in modern Iraq). This cohesion would endure for centuries, with directors of all districts in Asia reporting to headquarters regularly. (Wilkinson, pp. 276,296)

“Persecutions by the church of Rome and then the devastations by the Muslims depopulated Syria, as multitudes of Christians fled further east.

“In 762, church headquarters for the countries of Asia was shifted to Baghdad.

“Beyond the reach of Rome, Christians who preserved the *uncorrupted* Bible, covered *all of Asia*.

“In eastern and north east Asia they created alphabets and fostered literature and learning. Many writers note the high culture and civilization of the nations in which were located Eastern Christianity, as compared to the barbarous conditions of the papal nations of Europe. (For example, Arthur Penrhyn Stanley, *History of the Eastern Church*, new ed. London: John Murray, 1884, p.26; Walter F. Adeney, *The Greek and Eastern Churches*, 1965, p. 363)

“In 781, the Chinese emperor cooperated in erecting a marble monument in Changan to the triumphs of Christianity. (Benjamin G. Wilkinson, *Truth Triumphant*. Payson, AZ.: Leaves of Autumn Books, 1988, pp. 331-334,361-364,372-374) Christians (all of them Sabbath-keeping) numbered 8 million there. (*Ibid.*, p. 291)

“Unnumbered churches (all adhering to the Bible Sabbath of Jesus) were reported from Palestine to China. Kings were among their adherents. For long ages the people would be free to maintain a unity of belief and soundness of living. (Gibbon, *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, ch. 47, para. 30)

AD 1000 – Sabbath keeping predominates

“Around the year 1000, it was reported that under Muslim rule the bulk of the population of Syria, Iraq and Khurasan was Christian. Many Sabbath-keepers held high offices under the caliphs. (Abraham Yohannan, *The Death of a Nation*. New York: G.P. Putnam’s Sons, 1916, p. 102)

“The membership of the Church of the East surpassed that of the Roman system in Europe.

“Genghis Khan married a Christian. His successors, including Kublai Khan, or their wives, were Bible Christians. They all observed the Sabbath of Jesus. (Huc, *Christianity in China, Tartary and Thibet*, Vol. 1, p. 129; Alphonse Mingana, “Early Spread of Christianity,” *Bulletin of*

John Ryland's Library, vols. 9. Manchester: University Press, 1925, p. 312; Gregory Abul Faraj, *Chronography*. Translated from the Syriac by Sir E.A. Wallis Budge, vol. 1. Oxford: University Press, 1932, p. 398; Benjamin G. Wilkinson, *Truth Triumphant*. Payson, AZ.: Leaves of Autumn Books, 1988, pp. 294,295,348,349)

“In 1295, Marco Polo related that of six great kingdoms in the heart of India, three (including the greatest) were Christian. (Sir Henry Yule, *The Book of Ser Marco Polo*, vol. 2. London: John Murray, 1921, p.427)

Extermination plan

“But this could not be permitted to continue. From 1333 to 1405, the Legion of Lucifer masterminded a plan to wipe out the Christians of the East, just as was being attempted in the West.

“A Turkish Muslim ruler by the name of Tamerlane (also known as Timor and Timour) set out to conquer Asia. After he stormed through, of the Christian millions, only several hundred thousand survived. From Russia to China he destroyed their churches and training centers. Provinces became permanent deserts. Uncounted cities were deserted, to be swallowed by advancing sands.

“Then, before long, the Christians of the East who survived such an onslaught were to be treated to the extra joys of the Roman Inquisition. On their exploratory voyages, as Portuguese navigators sailed around the Cape of Good Hope and on toward India, they brought with them Jesuit priests.

“And when Rome’s Jesuits discovered thousands of Bible lovers in India, China and Japan, they did not deprive them of the chance to become martyrs.

“In 1560, arriving in India, the Jesuits were offended to see a large Sabbath keeping church which, having being separated from the Western world for over a thousand years, was still uncontaminated with Romanism. Supported by the guns of Portugal, they set out to

crush the “heretics” and alter or destroy all their books. (George Milne Rae, *The Syrian Church in India*. London: William Blackwood and Sons, 1892, p. 200; Benjamin G. Wilkinson, *Truth Triumphant*. Payson, AZ.: Leaves of Autumn Books, 1988, p. 20; William Wilson Hunter, *The Indian Empire*. London: Trubner and Co., 1886, p. 240)

“Of course, their faithfully preserved Bibles were graciously burned.

“But not only in India. Wilkinson informs us that ‘Arriving in China, Japan and the Philippines, and supported by the guns of Spain and Portugal, the Jesuits proceeded to ruin the Christian church there. Ultimately their atrocities outraged the Japanese and they were expelled.’ (Wilkinson, *Truth Triumphant*, pp. 376-378)

“In 1604 the Jesuits set about to turn the newly discovered church in Ethiopia to Romanism. Since accepting Christianity in the first century, the nation had observed the flag day of Jesus. But now a proclamation prohibited the people upon severe penalties to observe the seventh-day Sabbath any longer. (Michael Geddes, *The Church History of Ethiopia*. London: Richard Chiswell, 1696, pp. 87,88)

“You can be sure the Legion of Lucifer were delighted. Their Babylonian imitation of the truth had at last hijacked most of the Christian movement. So they were succeeding handsomely at sabotaging the rescue message of their detested enemy, Jesus!

“Great stuff!... bring Christianity into disrepute... derail its message of the Creator’s love for His creatures – and so destroy all hope of rescue for millions.

“There you have it, Greg. But now a most amazing twist of events was about to occur. This is cloak and dagger stuff. True history.”

Al reached for the jug. “Care for another drink?”

Just then, the sound of laughter was heard. The girls came tripping in.

“Time to go,” chirped Bronwyn. “Some jobs are waiting at home.”

“Till tomorrow, then, said Greg, rising to his feet. “Honey, you wouldn’t believe the scandal Al’s just been talking about.”

“Scandal? Tell me on the way home... Goodnight, Gloria... Al.”

And with that Bronwyn strutted out through the door.

* * * * *

Greg found it hard to sleep. Al had promised to expose a ‘cloak and dagger’ plot tomorrow. What was he about to reveal?”...

19

Two pure streams match -

INTO THE CAVE... QUICK!

You might call him an arsonist. But he didn't burn down houses. He burned people...

One of the many papal crusades against the peaceful valley dwellers of northern Italy was led by a man named La Palu in 1488. As an army entered one of the valleys, the Vale of Loyse, the inhabitants climbed the rugged slopes of Mount Pelvoux, which rises some 6,000 feet over the level of the valley. They sang as they climbed the steeps, to an immense cavern, called Aigue-Froid.

I was in that cave, some time back. It's awesome. In front of the cavern is a platform of rock, which looks over the precipices below. The cave roof itself forms a magnificent arch, which steadily contracts into a narrow passage, then widens once more, to form a roomy hall.

Into this grotto, as into an impregnable castle, the Waldenses entered. Their women, infants, and old men, they placed in the inner hall. The able-bodied men posted themselves at the entrance. With provisions to last two years and with barricades of huge stones, they considered themselves secure.

But the cunning La Palu ascended the mountain on the other side. Approaching the cave from above, he let down his soldiers by ropes from the overhanging precipice onto the platform in front of the cave. Then they piled up at its entrance all the wood they could collect and set fire to it. A huge volume of black smoke began to roll into the cave.



The Forbidden Book

The historian Muston records that “when the cavern was afterwards examined, there were found in it 400 infants, suffocated in their cradles, or in the the arms of their dead mothers. Altogether there perished in this cavern more than 3,000 Vaudois, including the entire population of Val Loyse. Cataneo distributed the property of these unfortunates among the vagabonds who accompanied him, and never again did the Vaudois Church raise its head in these blood-stained valleys.’ (Alexis Muston, *The Israel of the Alps*. London: Bladen & Sons, 1875, p. 20)

The Legion of Lucifer pulled no punches. They played dirty. And still do.

* * * * *

“Whew!” exclaimed Greg, as he sank down into Greg’s living room couch. “What a morning! The police came around, asking more questions about that guy who drowned. They’re tenacious.”

Al gulped. “They’ll probably come knocking again soon.”

Greg sniffed. “Pizza?”

“Shouldn’t be long,” chuckled Al.

“Anyway, Al, all day I’ve been wondering about this ‘cloak and dagger’ stuff you were going to share.”

Suddenly there was an interruption from the dining room. “Hey are you guys coming?” yelled Gloria.

“That’s for us,” grinned Al. “Let’s fuel up first.”

As anticipated, the meal went well. And Bronwyn pulled out a favorite she'd brought – cheesecake. Still, Greg couldn't wait to get back into the living room... 'Cloak and dagger', Al had said.

Allison Meehan's burning of the school had opened up this whole incredible enquiry. And he was hooked!

"Forget the dishes," said Gloria, crumpling her napkin. "I've never heard Al talk about these things. Let's all transfer to the living room... right now!"

She quickly snatched up the bowl of nuts. "Okay honey, we'll eat, you talk."

The awakening begins

Al smiled. "Very well, we're back to Europe," he began.

"One of those papal monks who sold indulgences (so people could 'buy' God's forgiveness) was John Tetzel. In Leipzig, one day, a Saxon nobleman approached him to ask if he had the power to pardon sins that men intend to commit in the future.

"'Oh yes,' replied Tetzel. 'I have received full powers from His Holiness for that purpose.'

"'Well, then,' answered the knight, 'I wish to take revenge on an enemy, without endangering his life. I will give you ten crowns if you will give me a letter of indulgence that will fully clear me.'

"Tetzel made some objections, but finally agreed to give the indulgence for thirty crowns.

"The nobleman and his attendants lay in wait for Tetzel in a forest

between Juterbock and Treblin. They ambushed him, beat him, and robbed him of his well-stocked indulgence chest.

“Tetzel took his complaint to the courts. But the nobleman showed the letter which Tetzel had signed himself, exempting him in advance from any penalty. The magistrate Duke George ordered the accused to be acquitted. (J.H. Merle D’Aubigne, *History of the Reformation*. Rapidan, VA.: Harttland Publications, p. 91)

A blow against suppression

Bronwyn exploded into laughter. “How priceless!”

Al resumed. “For long centuries the nations trembled under the Vatican whip. The Dark Ages settled thick like a fog.

“Then the unforeseen happened... an event that would dramatically change history. It was the invention of the printing press.

“And suddenly the suppression of the Bible – which had been going on for a thousand years - became impossible. Information that had been blocked from the public could at last be restored. And this would result in the Protestant Reformation bursting upon the world.

Two preserved sources compared at last

“Meanwhile, two groups in the Christian world (the Eastern and the Waldensian) had been preserving the Scriptures in isolation. But now these two sources yielded their respective Bibles publicly.

“And here comes the astonishing part: When these two long lost –

but *independently* preserved - copies of the Bible were compared, they matched! There was *virtual agreement*.

“Such *faithfully preserved manuscripts* would ultimately form the basis of the English King James Bible.

“So here is the bottom line. Of this you can be confident, that when you read from the King James Version of the New Testament (or any other language translation of the Received Text) you are indeed reading a reliable Word – since its pedigree goes right back to the first century.”

There was an audible gasp from Bron. Al paused.

Greg flushed. “Now hold on, Al. You’re trying to tell me that the texts used in forming the King James Version were out of the control of the Roman Church? Not so. Were you aware that these texts passed through the hands of a man called Erasmus, who was a Roman Catholic scholar?”

“Indeed, you’re right. But it definitely *bypassed Rome*.”

“How on earth can you say that?”

“Look, in the corrupt Roman system there were still many honest men and women. The knowledge had been kept from them. But now there was a stirring.

“So it would fall, ironically, to the Roman Catholic scholar Desiderius Erasmus of Holland to break the Roman shackles and translate the New Testament.

“Demonstrating a mind that could do ten hours’ work in one, Erasmus, during his mature years in the early 16th century, was the intellectual king of Europe. He was ever visiting libraries, and

collecting, comparing, writing and publishing. He read the Fathers and classified the Greek manuscripts.

“His books, exposing the ignorance of the monks, the priests’ superstitions and religious bigotry of the day, shook Europe, from end to end.

“Even today, some who resent the pure teachings of the Received Text, like to sneer at Erasmus. Some even pervert the truth to belittle his work. Yet, during Erasmus’ lifetime, Europe was at his feet. On several occasions, the King of England offered him any position in the kingdom, at his own price. Likewise the Emperor of Germany. France and Spain invited him to live in their territory. Holland got ready to claim him as its most illustrious citizen. And the Pope had even offered to make him a cardinal. But he refused to compromise his conscience.

“Erasmus translated the New Testament, not from the corrupted Roman texts, but from the uncorrupted manuscripts. His translation consisted of two columns, containing the Latin and Greek side by side.

Source of Erasmus’ text

“As we have noted, the text certified by Lucian of Antioch formed the basis of the Syrian, Waldensian and Greek Bibles, handed down from the first century. These were known as the Traditional Text. And they became the progenitors of the later-named Received Text.

“This was virtually the text which Erasmus used in his translation of the New Testament. His New Testament of the Byzantine (Greek) tradition differed markedly from the Alexandrian line of manuscripts (such as the Vaticanus) from which the Roman Vulgate derived. He rejected the text of the Catholic Vulgate, in

favor of those manuscripts which were not only in the vast majority, but had an outstanding history of Syrian, Greek and Waldensian usage. The Vulgate could boast no such pedigree. It had been used in areas where Rome had exercised political and religious control. Erasmus specified the positive reasons why he rejected the Vaticanus while receiving the other. (Nolan, *The Integrity of the Greek Vulgate*, pp. 413,414)

“Still, being a good Catholic, he dedicated it to Pope Leo X. Yet the church soon branded him as a ‘second Lucian – a fox that had laid waste the Lord’s vineyard.’ (D’Aubigne, *History of the Reformation*, Book 1, Chapter VIII)

“Two great scholars and linguists, Martin Luther and William Tyndale, quickly realized the value of Erasmus’ New Testament as a source of spiritual and moral enlightenment. By 1534 both the Germans and the English were able to read what Rome disparagingly called ‘Waldensian Bibles’ in their own language. In 1537 the French received their own Waldensian Bible, known as the Olivetan. Thanks to the recent development of printing and the consequent upsurge in literacy, the domain of these Bibles soon became strongholds of the Protestant Reformation.” (H.H. Meyers, *The Inquisitive Christians*. Morisset, N.S.W., Australia: New Millennium Publications, 1992, p. 69)

“Through Roman Catholic priests like Luther, the Protestant Reformation restored the Bible to western lands. And the reformers were soon accusing Rome of holding doctrines that had no biblical authority.

“Every honest intellect was at once struck with the strange discrepancy between the teachings of the Sacred Volume and that of the church of Rome.” (Eugene Lawrence, *Historical Studies*. New York: Harper Brothers, 1876, p. 255)

Al reached for a book from the pile. “Please don’t take my word for this. Let me share with you some competent authorities,” he said. “This one, Edwardson, expresses the matter very clearly.

“He says that in the now-circulating Bibles, ‘there were found no purgatory, no infallible pope, no masses for the dead, no sale of indulgences, no relics working miracles, no prayers for the dead, no worship of the Virgin Mary or of saints! But there the people found a loving Saviour with open arms welcoming the poorest and vilest of sinners to come and receive forgiveness full and free. Love filled their hearts and broke the shackles of sin and superstition. Profanity, coarse jests, drunkenness, vice, and disorder disappeared. The blessed Book was read by young and old, and became the talk in home and shop, while the Church with its Latin mass lost its attraction.’ (Christian Edwardson, *Facts of Faith*. Nashville, TN.: Southern Publishing Association, 1943, p. 14)

“Can you imagine the public reaction! It was tremendous. After the lies began to unravel, many began to reconsider what they’d been told about indulgences, purgatory, and so on. And within 35 years powerful nations were wrenched away from Rome.

Angry papal reaction

“The papal camp was aghast. They trembled under the onslaught. They could guess only too well the inevitable result of such enlightenment. The Vicar of Croydon declared in a speech at St. Paul’s Cross, London: ‘***We must destroy the printing press, or it will destroy us.***’ (E.R. Palmer, *The Printing Press and the Gospel*, p. 24)

“So now began a fiercer contest between Rome and the Bible – between the printers and the popes. It was declared that to read the Bible was the grossest of crimes. Rome’s centuries old murderama continued. Papal armies invested into the Inquisition new terrors,

forcing them upon France and Holland. Fair cities such as Antwerp, Bruges and Ghent were reduced to poverty and ruin.

“To burn Bibles became an obsession. Thousands of Bibles perished in every part of France. But more appeared.

“In France, printers who were convicted of printing Bibles were seized and burned. The *Bourgeois de Paris* [a Roman Catholic paper] gives a detailed account of the human sacrifices offered up to ignorance and intolerance in Paris during a 6 month period ending June, 1534, in which twenty men and one woman were burned alive. And, get this! On February 26, 1535, a ***law was passed to suppress printing!*** (Samuel Smiles, *The Huguenots*, pp. 20,21, and first footnote)

“In Spain, not only were the common people forbidden to read the Bible, but even university professors were forbidden to possess it. The funeral piles were lit all over Europe.

New lines of attack

“However, Rome’s relentless persecution only betrayed the fact that Rome and the Bible were deadly enemies. If she hoped to win the battle, she must ***drop her public opposition to the Bible*** and forge new weapons.

“These would include, among other strategies

1. Her own doctored Bible for the people, and
2. Infiltration of Protestant schools and churches.

“The Council of Trent (1545-1563) was called as a council of war against Protestantism. And in the fourth session, it was decided that the Latin Vulgate should be accepted as the standard Bible.

“But, horror of horrors, it was discovered that in the 1,050 years from the time Jerome brought out his Latin Bible in 405 AD, to 1455 when John Gutenberg printed it, so many errors had crept in that no one knew just what was the original rendering of the book! (Christian Edwardson, *Facts of Faith*. Nashville, TN.: Southern Publishing Association, 1943, pp. 19-24)

“Not to worry. It could be useful in countering the English Bibles. And so in 1582, under the name Rheims Bible, it was thrust upon the English-speaking world. Its declared purpose was ‘to shake out of the deceived peoples’ hand the false heretical translations of a sect called Waldenses.’ (Preface to Geneva Bible) But this Bible was not generally welcomed, especially by Protestants who had now tasted something better.

“Talk about shooting oneself in the foot! Just look at the acknowledgement Rome had made:

“1. That the hated Waldensian Bible was responsible for the Received Text of Erasmus on which Luther and Tyndale relied heavily, and

“2. That it was sufficiently different in doctrine from Rome’s Latin Vulgate to support the Protestant Reformation against Rome.

“Do you see?”

Greg nodded.

Was Erasmus too hasty?

“It was in Rome’s interests to launch a smear campaign against Erasmus’ efforts, recasting him as careless... or even dishonest.”

Greg stiffened. “But they say Erasmus’ translation suffered from a paucity of manuscripts because he was too hasty in his translation.”

“Sure... what else would you expect them to say? But if it’s the truth you want, you’d better ask some competent historians.” Al pulled a volume from the pile beside him. “Notice how Drummond answers this assertion. He concludes:

As to the charge that Erasmus had been guilty of carelessness and dishonesty in not consulting more than one manuscript, it was simply absurd. He had, in fact, consulted many in England, in Brabant, and at Basle, and at different times had had in his hands a greater number than Valla. (Drummond, *Erasmus*, Vol. 1, p. 331)

Erasmus himself, however, seems to say that he used at least nine manuscripts, as he says in the *Apologia* prefixed to his first edition. (*Ibid.*, p. 311)

“In any case, Greg, if in his examination of manuscripts around Europe, Erasmus finally selected one manuscript, it would be one which he considered *representative* of the purest text. And other historians confirm this.” Al opened an old blue covered volume. “This is from Nolan’s definitive work, *Inquiry*:

The two great families of Greek Bibles are well illustrated in the work of the outstanding scholar, Erasmus. Before he gave to the Reformation the New Testament in Greek, he divided all Greek manuscripts into two classes: those which agreed with the Received Text and those which agreed with the Vaticanus Manuscript. (Nolan, *Inquiry*, p. 413)

“There were hundreds of manuscripts for Erasmus to examine, and he did. But he used only a few, virtually all of them the Received Text.

“Even Anthony Hort, one of the most hostile opponents of Erasmus’ Received Text was forced to admit that it closely corresponded to the ancient Syriac texts which were just as old as the corrupted texts.” (Hort’s *Introduction*, page 92)

“The Received Text – oh, yeah, you’ve spoken about that.”

Al smiled. “That’s another name for the line of manuscripts known as the *Traditional Text*, or the *Majority Text*.”

“Received? Majority?” said Bronwyn. “But why is it given those names?”

“Well, firstly, because they were historically regarded as *received direct* from Jesus’ companions, the apostles, and thus were the purest, and secondly, they comprised the overwhelming *majority* of all preserved manuscripts.”

Greg looked astonished. “You mean these *non-Roman* manuscripts comprise the *majority*?”

“How does *95 percent* sound?”

So vast is this majority, that even the enemies of the Received Text admit that nineteen-twentieths and some ninety-nine one-hundredths of all Greek MSS are of this class, while one hundred percent of the Hebrew MSS are for the Received Text. (Benjamin Wilkinson, *Our Authorised Bible Vindicated*, p. 13)

Challenge to the critics

“Now this calls for honesty by the critic who would have us believe that Rome has changed the Bible so much we cannot know the original writings.

“As we saw, *a corruption of texts under Rome’s control* did occur... from Origen to Constantine and beyond.

“*But 95 percent of the Bibles were never seen by Rome.* That means only five percent had any chance of being corrupted by Constantine and his cronies. Both in the East and the West, copies of the original were faithfully preserved, even till today.”

“So nothing is lost?”

“Exactly.”

Greg looked thoughtful.

“Now think about this. The Textus Receptus was - and still is - the enemy of the Roman Church. This is an important fact to bear in mind.

“All criticism of this text from which was translated the King James Bible, is based upon an unproved hypothesis: that is, that there are older and more dependable copies of the original Bible manuscripts. No one in 2,000 years, has been able to prove that one jot or tittle has been inserted or taken out.” (Jasper J. Ray, *God Wrote Only One Bible*)

“One of the outstanding features of the Received Text is its high percentage of agreement among so many thousands of independent witnesses.

“If the critic of the King James Bible is correct in his rejection of the underlying Textus Receptus, then he is also under the greatest pressure to account for its existence. To complain of fabrication is one thing, but to account for its universal prevalence is quite another. Whenever a large body of ancient documents are seen to be in agreement, this inexplicable harmony becomes their greatest evidence for legitimacy.” (William P. Grady, *Final Authority*)

* * * * *

The best version of all

“Hey,” said Gloria, “I heard about four men at a conference in Melbourne who were discussing the various translations of the Bible one day. One liked the King James Version because of its beautifully poetic use of English.

“Another liked the Revised Standard Version best because it seemed more literal.

“The third preferred the New International Version because it used the most up-to-date vocabulary.

“The fourth man was silent. When asked his opinion, he finally replied, ‘I like my mother's translation the best.’

“The other three expressed surprise. They did not know that his mother had translated the Bible.

“‘Oh, but she did,’ he assured them. ‘She translated it into life, every day of her life, and it was the most convincing translation I ever saw.’”

Al stretched back. “Thanks honey. Guys, if only every person on this planet would *live that message* found in the Gospels, the Legion of Lucifer would be defeated. There would be no more

wars, hatred, or danger. No more misunderstandings, no more loneliness. You would never have to lock your door.”

Greg locked eyes with him. “Yeah, it’s a message we all need.”

Al looked at its watch. “It’s still early...”

“Oh, forget the time. This is like a thriller. But I’m still waiting to hear the ‘cloak and dagger’ bit.”

“I think Gloria’s hidden some cookies in the cupboard,” chuckled Al. “How about some?”

Gloria sat up. “Hold on, Al. “You’re not supposed to know about those... not yet!”

“The secret’s out,” retorted Al. “Why not enjoy them now?”

She nodded. Al got up. Soon he was handing them around.

“Come on,” urged Greg. “Let’s get back to our discussion...”

20

The counter reformation -

OPERATION UNDER COVER

“You all comfortable?” crooned Al, plopping himself down. He looked at the others.

“Go on,” said Bronwyn.

“Now for one of the biggest undercover operations in history.” Al rubbed his chin. “The Reformation had begun. A progressive restoration of suppressed knowledge was under way.

“The ruling church had dominated the whole of Europe. But now, across the Continent, Rome’s stranglehold was collapsing. With the invention of printing, full-scale suppression of the Bible was becoming impossible. Scholars could at last investigate this forbidden Book. And from its pages radiated knowledge that packed earthquake power.

“Many scholars were claiming from this Book that the papal hierarchy was the predicted *Antichrist*, a word meaning not ‘against’ Christ, but *in place of Christ*. It was pointed out that an official title assumed by every pope, *Vicarius Filii Dei* (Vicar of the Son of God) actually meant his standing in role of the Christ - just as Nimrod was said to do, in the pagan Mysteries.

“Such scholars included Catholic priest Martin Luther, and Huss, Zwingli and Calvin, and later John Wesley, Sir Isaac Newton, and others.

“Their revelations sparked such a spiritual explosion that, within a few decades, half of Europe broke away from the papacy.

“However, these reformers were just emerging from the long tunnel of darkness. The restoration of lost knowledge would dawn stage by stage, a process which continues into our day.

Cloak and dagger

“You can be sure the Legion of Lucifer were mighty browned off at this. Those crazy guys do hold some mean grudges. And so they swore to exterminate this Protestant movement. Rome’s control *must* be restored.

“That would take time. But the plan was prepared:

“To destroy the Reformation, the Jesuit Society was established by Ignatius Loyola in 1534. Then the Jesuit priests Alcazar and Ribera came up with two decoys:

- (a) The Preterist theory, asserting that the predicted Antichrist was someone far back in the past, a chap called Antiochus Epiphanes.
- (b) The Futurist theory, asserting that the Antichrist was still future.

“Take your pick. Either way, these fulfilled their purpose – to take the heat off Rome. This would enable the Legion of Lucifer to work behind the scenes without suspicion, while a high powered public relations machine cast Rome in a good light, ready for a comeback.

“The next step would be to infiltrate the growing Protestant movement. Jesuit-trained agents were to enroll in Protestant colleges and churches UNDER COVER and gradually install

themselves in positions of influence, as professors, ministers, and SO ON. (Benjamin G. Wilkinson, *Truth Triumphant*. Payson, Ariz.: Leaves-of-Autumn Books, Inc., 1988, p. 316; Christian Edwardson, *Facts of Faith*. Nashville, TN.: Southern Publishing Association, 1943, pp. 243-287; J.C. Chick, *Alberto* Part 1. Chino, CA.: Chick Publications, pp. 18-28)

“Then, from inside, they could defuse Protestantism’s Bible-based assault and gradually lure its churches back to Rome. This would be accomplished by an ecumenical movement of ‘love and unity’ – with no one protesting against the papacy any more. Churches would be allowed to keep their identity, but they would become ‘Catholic’ in orientation. Churches that did not conform would become ‘extinct’, to cite Vatican insider Malachi Martin, in his book *The Keys of This Blood*. Accept this plan for all churches, ***or cease to exist!***”

“Since the printing press made a suppression of the Bible impossible, and since the hated Received Text was the basis of the Protestant Bible, Rome would promote decoy Bibles within the Protestant movement to more closely mirror her own teachings.

“The first step in this direction, as we noted earlier, was to release the Jesuit-Rheims Bible in 1582.

“A long term strategy would be pursued to entice Protestants away from the Protestant King James Bible. Around 1875, friends of England’s Roman Catholic Cardinal Newman fuelled a cry to ‘update’ some of the words of the King James Bible. A new committee was formed. But something weird went on. Everything was top secret. They worked on the Old and New Testaments for 20 years. They weren’t updating the King James Bible at all. They were changing it by using ***another*** manuscript.

“On the committee were two men from the Church of England, F.J.A. Hort and B.F. Westcott, who both worshipped Mary and secretly supported the Roman Catholic church. They put the

pressure on the other committee members – persuading them that the old texts in the Vatican (originated by Origen in Egypt) were more reliable than the Received text. From then onward until today there would follow scores more new English Bibles (all Roman Catholic), and based on the same corrupt Vaticanus and Sinaiticus manuscripts – all aimed at trying to push the King James Bible out of the picture.”

“Wouldn’t they be easier to read?” asked Greg.

Al shook his head. “According to computer analysis based formulas from the Flesch-Kincaid research firm, the King James Bible is the easiest version to read. Also, in his 606 page book *Archaic Words and the Authorized Version*, Dr Laurence Vance demonstrates that the King James Bible contains no more archaic words than the daily newspapers, current magazines, and modern Bible versions. In fact, he lists 220 words from the New International Version (NIV) for which the King James Bible (KJV) uses significantly simpler words.” Al arose and pulled another volume from his shelf. “Just compare these,” he said, opening to one of the pages. Here are translations of the same word:

NIV	KJV	
cors	measures	(1 Kings 4:22)
denarius	penny	(Matthew 20:2)
forded	passed over	(Joshua 2:23)
gadfly	destruction	(Jeremiah 46:20)
glutted	full	(Ezekiel 39:19)
goyim	nations	(Genesis 14:1)
pinions	wings	(Deuteronomy 32:11)
porphyry	red	(Esther 1:6)
Praetorium	common hall	(Matthew 27:27)
satraps	lieutenants	(Esther 3:12)

“The other day I heard of a prisoner who experienced a phenomenal leap in reading test scores after reading the King James Bible daily for a year. Can you imagine it? He jumped from a 5th-grade reading level, to 17th grade (post-graduate) level.”

“Wow!”

“So let me ask, how did reading one book, which some falsely claim is difficult, manage to help him, rather than frustrate him? Apparently, the answer lies in the King James Bible’s built-in dictionary. But that’s another subject. (Gail Riplinger, *The Language of the King James Bible*)

“Truly the NIV translators had a different agenda from simplifying language. That agenda was to change the meanings of selected passages, so as to weaken the Protestant position and favor the teachings of Rome’s planned One World Religion.

“One example is a rendering of 2 Peter 2:9 in the NIV which is worded to support the Roman doctrine of purgatory (a place of temporary punishment after death).

“Not surprising when we discover that in 1848 Anthony Hort, who wrote the nefarious Greek text underlying the NIV and the other modern versions, said, ‘The pure Romish view seems to me nearer and more likely to lead to truth than the evangelical.’ (Hort, Vol. I, pp. 76-77). ‘Protestantism is only parenthetical and temporary.’ (Hort, Vol. II, p. 31). In 1865, his colleague Brooke Foss Westcott visited the shrine of the Roman Catholic “Virgin” in Milan. He said that the idea of the appearances of the Virgin was “that of God revealing Himself, now, not in one form, but in many.” (Westcott, Vol. I, p. 290)

“So it was that in 1881, Westcott and Hort, ignoring the Received Text, used the ghoulish Vaticanus manuscript to produce the “New Greek Text”, the basis for all modern versions.

“The NIV (New International Version) is the best Roman Catholic Bible in the world today - sold in Roman Catholic and Protestant bookstores alike and found on ministers’ pulpits on Sunday morning. Roman Catholic Cardinal Carlo Maria Martini has edited the Greek text underlying both the NIV and NASB versions.

“The charge that the new versions are Catholic inspired is confirmed by Rome herself. The Roman church has stopped using the Latin Vulgate as the basis of translation. Now both Protestant and Catholic versions are based on the Vaticanus. This master plan is now coming to maturity.

“1. With the infiltration almost complete, you can check for yourself: most Protestants have taken on board the Jesuit Preterist and Futurist Antichrist theories, hook, line and sinker. Rome is “off the hook”.

“2. A swarm of ecumenical Bible versions is being churned out, based on Constantine’s corrupt Vaticanus and Sinaiticus. These dilute or totally omit numerous passages that are offensive to the Legion of Lucifer. (For further information, see Appendices L and M.)

“3. With Rome’s agents planted high in the ecumenical (church unity) movement, treasonous leaders are drawing their trusting flocks back into the clutches of Rome. That’s right. An undercover betrayal is going on.”

“Great Scott!” exclaimed the principal. “This is dynamite!” He paused, thoughtfully. And spoke again. “I think it was Marcus Cicero (c. 106-43 BC), who, speaking to Caesar and the Roman Senate, stated: ‘A nation can survive its fools, and even the ambitious. But it cannot survive treason from within.’”

Al arose. "I think I have a citation of his speech. Hold on." He rustled through some papers and sat down again. "Yes, here it is: "An enemy at the gates is less formidable, for he is known and carries his banners openly against the city. But the traitor moves among those within the gates freely, his sly whispers rustling through all the alleys, heard in the very halls of government itself. For the traitor appears no traitor; he speaks in the accents familiar to his victims, and he wears their face and their garments, and he appeals to the baseness that lies deep in the hearts of all men. He rots the soul of a nation; he works secretly and unknown in the night to undermine the pillars of a city; he infects the body politic so that it can no longer resist."

"It may have been Cicero also who said, 'The enemy within is more dangerous than a standing army.' And so today, while Protestantism has been lulled to sleep, the infiltration by Rome has been progressing successfully.

"Tens of thousands of volunteers have been trained to undo everything done by the reformers. Many of these are given a different name. Often they have to learn another language, and perfectly, to accomplish their mission. Many of them will marry a Protestant girl who has no suspicion of the real motive.

"Simultaneously, the health system, education system, the judiciary – you name it – are being infiltrated. In a recent year 280,000 Jesuits infiltrated government positions in the USA and Europe, to become government advisors, reporters, officials in trade unions, and so on. 'Mother' Rome is climbing back to power. The plan is well advanced. Undercover Jesuits, Catholic Youth Action, Legion of Mary and priests and nuns in street clothes, are 'joining' Protestant churches in preparation for the final coup.

“Alberto Rivera was one Jesuit who defected from his organization and blew the whistle. Apparently, after receiving a number of death threats, he was murdered in South America.”

“What!” exclaimed Greg with a start. “Is this happening today?”

Al smiled. “You haven’t heard half.”

There was an audible gasp.

Lucifer Legion intensifies the attack

Al looked him in the eye. “When the takeover is complete, events will explode into an inferno. The Lucifer Legion is bent on sabotaging the rescue operation. This is war. Satan’s aim is to undo the work of the Reformation and undermine God’s saving message. But he will lose.”

Questions that demand an answer

Greg was now sitting bolt upright. His astonishment was apparent. “Al... I never realized,” he said, finally.

“But perhaps you can clear up a few remaining questions about the Bible itself. I just need to be absolutely sure.”

“I understand.”

“Well, there are no originals. So how reliable are our copies? I’ve heard there are 200,000 contradictions in them. Not to mention geographical and historical mistakes?”

Bronwyn nodded. “It looks bad, right?”

Al took another cookie. “Yeah... those are interesting questions. Why don’t we put them under the microscope?”

21

Number of mss; and time proximity to originals -

EMBARRASSING WIN!

“And I’m glad you asked this,” said Al. “Since we don’t have the original documents, then how reliable are those copies we do have?”

“So what do you say, Greg? Should we test the New Testament by the same criteria we use to test all historical documents?”

“Definitely,” responded Greg.

How to test for reliability

“There are three testing criteria,” said Al.

1. The bibliographical test
2. The external evidence test
3. The internal evidence test

(C. Sanders, *Introduction to Research in English Literary History*. New York: Macmillan and Co., 1952, p. 143 ff.)

The bibliographical test

“In applying the first test, we shall need to consider two factors:

- (a) the number of manuscripts, and
- (b) the time proximity to the originals.

(a) How many copies?

“Did you know that more than 24,000 manuscript copies of portions of the New Testament are in existence today?”

“No other document from the ancient world even begins to approach such numbers. Homer’s *Iliad* comes second with only 643 surviving manuscripts.

New Testament.....24,970 manuscripts

Iliad.....643 manuscripts

“You see, the ***number*** of available manuscripts of the New Testament is overwhelmingly ***greater than those of any other work of*** ancient literature. That’s because the New Testament books were the most frequently copied and widely circulated books of antiquity.” (S.E. Peters, *The Harvest of Hellenism*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1971, p.50)

Greg leaned forward. “Which means, in practical terms?”

“Simply this: that no documents of the ancient world are as well attested bibliographically as the New Testament. In fact, it has more ancient manuscripts to authenticate it than any other ten pieces of ancient literature put together. To be consistent, if I am skeptical of the New Testament text, I will be forced to reject all of the classical writings of antiquity.”

(b) Time proximity to originals

“I grant that’s impressive,” said Greg. “But what about the ***gap in time*** between the ***originals*** that no longer exist and the ***oldest copies*** we have?”

“Another good question,” responded Al, reaching for his files. “Let’s first consider other ancient authors... say, for example, Homer. It is impossible to pin down with any certainty when Homer lived. Eratosthenes gives the traditional date of 1184 BC for the end of the Trojan War, the event which forms the basis for Homer’s *Iliad*. The great Greek historian Herodotus put the date at

1250 BC. But Greek historians were far less certain about the dates for Homer's life. Some said he was a contemporary of the events of the *Iliad*, while others placed him sixty or a hundred or several hundred years afterward. Herodotus estimated that Homer lived and wrote in the 9th century BC."

Al leaned forward. "Do you know, Greg, that the oldest complete preserved text of Homer dates only back to the 13th century? (Charles Leach, *Our Bible. How We Got It*. Chicago: Moody Press, 1898, p.145) So there's a time gap between the oldest copy and the original of at least 2,200 years."

Sifting through his files, Al handed one to Greg. "Just take a gander at these," he said. "It's almost embarrassing:

- For Caesar's Gallic Wars (composed between 58 and 50 BC) several manuscripts survive, but only 9 or 10 are good – and the oldest is some 900 years later than his day.
- For the Roman history of Livy (59 BC to AD 17), of the 142 books, only 35 survive. And only one (containing fragments of Books III-VI) is as old as the 4th century.
- Of the Histories of Tacitus (c. AD 100), of the 14 books, only 4½ survive.
- Of his Annals, of the 16 books, only 10 survive in full and 2 in part. All of this depends entirely of two manuscripts, one of the ninth century and one of the eleventh.
- Of the History of Thucydides (c. 460-400 BC), only 8 manuscripts survive, the oldest dating from about AD 900, except for a few scraps dating from about the beginning of the Christian era.
- The same goes for the History of Herodotus (488-428 BC).

“In point of time, the earliest surviving manuscripts of the New Testament are ***much closer*** to the originals than is the case with almost any other piece of ancient literature.”

“Can you prove that?” asked Greg.

Comparison with other ancient works – almost embarrassing

“Okay, let’s ask Sir Frederic G. Kenyon, who was director and principal librarian of the British Museum. This man was second to none in authority concerning manuscripts. And this is what he informs us:

... besides number, the manuscripts of the New Testament differ from those of the classical authors, and this time the difference is clear gain. In no other case is the interval of time between the composition of the book and the date of the earliest extant manuscripts so short as in that of the New Testament.

“Then he reveals that the earliest surviving manuscripts (with some trifling scraps excepted) are of the 4th century – ‘say from 250 to 300 years later.’

This may sound a considerable interval, but it is nothing to that which parts most of the classical authors from their earliest manuscripts. We believe that we have in all essentials an accurate text of the seven extant plays of Sophocles; yet the earliest substantial manuscript upon which it is based was written more than 1400 years after the poet’s death. (Frederic G. Kenyon, *Handbook to the Textual Criticism of the New Testament*. London: Macmillan and Company, 1901, p.4)

“As you can see,” said Al, “the oldest known manuscripts of most of the Greek classical authors are dated ***1,000 years or more after*** the author’s death. Yet no classical scholar would doubt their authenticity. ***By comparison***, some virtually complete New Testament books date back to ***only one century*** from the original writings.

“Whew!” exclaimed Greg. “Why haven’t we been told this?”

“Out of interest,” asked Bron, “what is the most ancient surviving New Testament manuscript of all?”

“One in the Magdalen Library, Oxford. As already noted, it dates from before AD 70.”

“***In the lifetime*** of the events it describes?”

“You’ve got it! It’s ***contemporary***.”

“As you know, scholars accept the writings of the ancient classics as generally trustworthy, right? Clearly, then, the reliability of the New Testament text is likewise assured.

“So what have you? Two things:

- (1) the ***overwhelming number*** of manuscripts and
- (2) their ***proximity to the originals***.

Such a “mountain of evidence” gives the New Testament ***great historical credibility***.

“It stands to reason that ‘on the basis of manuscript tradition alone, the works that made up the Christians’ New Testament were the most frequently copied and widely circulated books of antiquity.’ (F.E. Peters, *The Harvest of Hellenism*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1971, p. 50)

“Get this, guys. The sheer number of manuscript copies means we can reconstruct the original *with virtually complete accuracy.*”

Gloria arose and began to pour drinks.

Greg’s eyes brightened. “And what is this?” he asked, reaching out.

“Passion fruit punch.”

“Great!” he gulped, putting his glass down again. “Just keep that jug close.” Then he turned back to Al. “Okay, now... here’s my second question...those 200,000 *contradictions*. Sorry to be a spoil sport... but isn’t that just a little too many?”

22

Percentage of text in doubt -

200,000 ERRORS?

Greg repeated it. “200,000 contradictions!”

Al grinned. “Looks bad, eh?”

“Well?”

“200,000 contradictions?” repeated Al. “Not really. Not contradictions... but textual variations - yes!”

“Very well,” said Greg. “But two hundred thousand of them? Oh come on. How can the New Testament be a reliable text? If there are 200,000 different readings in the surviving New Testament texts, then probably there is not one paragraph in two manuscripts that is the same.”

How much is in doubt?

“Tell me, Greg, have you examined these?”

“With my busy schedule? Come off it!”

“Well, some scholars have.”

“So?”

“Well, Benjamin Warfield investigated the differences thoroughly. And here’s his report.” Al opened a well-worn book. “Here’s the result: ‘nineteen-twentieths... are of so little importance that their

adoption or rejection would cause no appreciable difference in the sense of the passages where they occur.’ (Benjamin B. Warfield, *Introduction to Textual Criticism of the New Testament*. Seventh edition. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1907, p. 14)

Greg’s brow furrowed.

Al continued. “It boils down to this, Greg. Let the critic assert that a certain passage should not be in there, or that one has been omitted. It really makes not an atom of difference. The truth is that *with or without a disputed passage or word, no basic teaching of the Bible would be changed.*

“Philip Schaff, after an exhaustive comparison, discovered that not one of the variations altered ‘an article of faith or a precept of duty which is not abundantly sustained by other and undoubted passages, or by the whole tenor of Scripture teaching.’ (Philip Schaff, *Companion to the Greek New Testament and the English Version*. Rev. ed. New York: Harper Brothers, 1883, p. 177)

“So, Greg, you don’t need to depend on disputed words in order to know the truth of the Bible’s message on any topic.”

How are manuscript variations counted?

Greg downed his glass and poured himself another. “I’m curious,” said he, “how exactly are textual variations counted?”

Al put his glass on the coffee table. “Geisler and Nix have put it rather well.” He handed a report to Greg. The principal cleared his throat and read aloud:

There is an ambiguity in saying there are some 200,000 variants in the existing manuscripts of the New Testament, since these represent only 10,000 places in the New Testament. If one single word is misspelled in

3,000 different manuscripts, this is counted as 3,000 variants or readings. (Norman L. Geisler and William E. Nix, *A General Introduction to the Bible*. Chicago: Moody Press, 1968, p. 361)

“That changes the picture,” said Bronwyn.

Greg nodded, fingering through the report. Then he stopped. “Just listen to this: ‘Mathematically this would compute to a text that is 98.33 percent pure.’” (*Ibid.*, p. 365)

“Virtually no variation”

“So,” beamed Al, “the great majority of the New Testament ‘has been transmitted to us with no, or next to no, variation.’ (Benjamin B. Warfield, *Introduction to textual Criticism of the New Testament*. Seventh edition. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1907, p. 14)

“No need to guess”

“Or as someone else put it, we ‘possess so many MSS, and we are aided by so many versions, that we are never left to the need of conjecture as the means of removing errata.’ (Tregelles, *Greek New Testament*, “Prolegomena,” P.X.)

Al began flipping through another volume. For a moment he was silent.

“What have you there?” asked Greg.

“This is Sir Frederic Kenyon.”

“Who’s he?”

“Just one of the great authorities in the field of New Testament textual criticism.”

“So what does he say?”

No doubtful passages

“Here’s his verdict:

No fundamental doctrine of the Christian faith rests on a disputed reading...

It cannot be too strongly asserted that in substance the text of the Bible is certain: Especially is this the case with the New Testament. The number of manuscripts of the New Testament, or early translations from it, and of quotations from it in the earliest writers of the Church, is so large that it is practically certain that the true reading of every doubtful passage is preserved in some one or other of these ancient authorities. *This can be said of no other ancient book of the world.*

Scholars are satisfied that they possess substantially the

true text of the principal Greek and Roman writers whose works have come down to us, of Sophocles, of Thucydides, of Cicero, of Virgil; yet our knowledge of their writings depends on a mere handful of manuscripts, whereas the manuscripts of the New Testament are counted by hundreds, and even thousands.” (Frederic G. Kenyon, *Our Bible and the Ancient Manuscripts*. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1941, p. 23)

Comparison with other ancient writings

Greg’s eyes met Al’s. “How about some proof?”

“Sure. Let’s compare the *Iliad* of Homer and the national epic of India, the *Mahabharata*, with the New Testament.” Al passed a folder to Greg.

Greg mulled over the figures.

- * *Iliad* - has about 15,600 lines. Lines in doubt: 764.
5% textual corruption.
- * *Mahabharata* – some 250,000 lines. Lines in doubt: 26,000.
10% textual corruption.
- * *New Testament* – c. 20,000 lines. Lines in doubt: 40.
½% textual corruption.

“So then,” prodded Al, “how does the New Testament compare?”

Greg looked at Bron. She was nodding.

98.33 percent pure

He turned to Al. “Well, I just read it out to you, man – 98.33 percent pure. That’s pretty close to your written figure here of a text that’s 99.5 percent pure.”

“You might say,” said Al, “that it boils down to four things:

“1. The New Testament’s reliability is far greater than that of any other record of antiquity.

“2. Most variants in New Testament manuscripts are merely in spelling or style.

“3. We possess so many manuscripts, that, in removing any errors, we need never guess. The great majority of the New Testament has been transmitted to us with no, or next to no, variation. As Sir Frederic Kenyon puts it: ‘...no unbiased scholar would deny that

the text that has come down to us is substantially sound.’ (Frederic G. Kenyon, *The Bible and Modern Scholarship*. London: John Murray, 1948, p.20)

“4. No basic teaching of the New Testament rests on a disputed reading. In substance, the text of the Bible is certain.

“So if anyone tells you the Bible has been altered so many times that the original message is unknown, then you had better start questioning *other things* that person tells you. Because he/she is *either ignorant or lying*.”

“Or suffering from mental malnutrition?” laughed Bronwyn.

The external evidence test

“Granted, you’ve proved that much,” conceded Greg. “But what about errors of FACT? ...you know, historical errors that were made in the original text?”

Al didn’t flinch. “Good one, pal. The second test of a document’s reliability concerns *external evidence*. So let’s see...”

+++++

FOOTNOTE: You will find Books 2 and 3 of this series helpful to this discussion.

1. *UFO Aliens: The Deadly Secret* presents concrete ***historical*** and ***archaeological*** evidence validating the Old Testament books.
2. *Stolen Identity: Jesus Christ – History or Hoax* contains ***non-Christian confirmation*** of the biblical text concerning the historical Jesus.

+++++

23

New Testament errors of fact? -

THE BLOND ON THE TRAIN

Greg's mind flashed back to a train trip he had undertaken a few weeks earlier.

Next to him sat a blond. She was a biologist. They exchanged pleasantries. then with one eye Greg had resorted to his newspaper.

But not for long. His other eye was partly on her. And then, in astonishment, he stopped reading. This intelligent, chic woman was engrossed in – was this for real? – a Bible!

He looked her way again. Yes, she was really into it! He would just have to straighten her out!

“Excuse me,” he interrupted. “I don't mean to be rude. But don't you know that book is unscientific?”

“Oh?” she smiled. “Really?”

A pushover, Greg decided. “Well, you know, it speaks of the sun coming up and going down. In this enlightened age, you and I know it's not the sun. It's the earth's rotation. How can you read a book containing such outdated errors?”

Unperturbed, she kept reading. Greg returned to his newspaper. A few minutes later, she half turned and said, “I wouldn't read that paper if I were you.”

“I beg your pardon?”

“May I?” said she, taking his paper and quickly scanning through it. “Here,” she said, pointing, “read that.”

His eyes fell on the weather section. “Tomorrow: Sun rises 5.32 am. Sun sets 6.16 pm.”

“So?” she laughed, “how can you swallow such unscientific twaddle? You know the sun doesn’t rise and go down. It’s the earth’s rotation. Look, I know a little science. Suppose I could show you that proven science totally agrees with the Bible?”

“What!” he roared. “You’re pulling my leg!”

“The Bible is not a science text,” she responded, “but it does speak authoritatively in matters of science – and accurately.”

Dumb female! “Okay, I’ll humor you,” he consented.

But Greg was in for a surprise. That lady knew some intriguing facts. He had jotted down a few of them to check later. They were in his pocket note book.

To his amazement he had actually found these scientific truths in the Bible:

- * Far from resting on the backs of turtles, elephants, Atlas, or whatever – the Bible says the earth is suspended in space. (Job 26:7)
- * Also that the earth is not flat – but spherical. (Isaiah 40:22. The original Hebrew word “khug” used here denotes “sphericity” or “roundness”.)
- * The earth turns on its axis, as clay to the seal. (Job 38:14)
- * The stars cannot be numbered, but are as the sand upon the seashore. (Jeremiah 33:22; Genesis 22:17)

Greg thought about that. Not so long ago scientists were teaching that the stars could be counted. From both hemispheres the naked eye could count perhaps 4,000 stars. But astronomers now estimated that there were at least a hundred-million-billion-billion stars (that is 10^{26} stars). And yes, that would probably reflect the same order of magnitude as the number of grains of sand on the earth.

So that old book was indeed scientifically sound. That discovery had thrown him. He had apologized to the lady.

Since then Greg had, to some extent, acquired a respect for the old book, but with reservations.

Now he was zeroing in on the New Testament. Because someone had hinted to him that it was full of historical errors.

The external evidence test

Was the New Testament discredited by modern discoveries? Now he would get to the bottom of that. Once more he fixed his gaze on Al, and broke the silence.

“I’ve heard it said that New Testament passages are inaccurate, unhistorical or unscientific,” said Greg. “How do you answer that?”

For a moment, Al was thoughtful. Then he spoke. “That *used to be* claimed... because often the New Testament *was the only source* for such statements. But there’s no excuse now.”

“Are you saying that some modern writers are lying about this matter as well?”

“Some do,” replied Al. “And others are ignorant of the facts. But let me fill you in with what’s been happening.

Five porticos at the Bethesda pool

“The book of John (5:1-15) relates how Jesus healed an invalid by the pool at Bethesda, which John describes as having *five porticoes* (colonnaded porches).

“Because no such place had been found, critics were fond of asserting that John was wrong.

“Then one day the pool was found and excavated. And you know what? Archaeologists discovered *five porticoes* – exactly as John had described. (Lee Strobel, *The Case for Christ*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1998, p. 99)

The census at Jesus’ birth

“Again, critics argued that Luke’s portrayal of events surrounding the birth of Jesus (Luke 2:1-3) was wrong. The critics asserted there was no *census*, that *Quirinius* was not governor of Syria at *that* time, but later. And that everyone did not have to return to his ancestral home for taxing.

“However, archaeological discoveries have since shown that:

1. Regular enrolment of taxpayers, as well as a 14-year census, were begun under the emperor Augustus, just as Luke wrote.
2. Quirinius was governor twice, including the time Luke says.
3. The conduct of a census *did* require that people return to their homes to complete the family registration. (A papyrus has now been found in Egypt confirming this.) (Josh McDowell, *The New Evidence That Demands a Verdict*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1999, pp. 63,64)

Alleged geographical “mistakes”

“Again, it was believed that Luke was wrong in implying that *Lystra* and *Derbe* (but *not Iconium*) were in *Lycaonia* (Acts 14:6). They based their criticism upon a statement by Cicero.

“Then Sir William Ramsay found a monument that confirmed Luke’s statement. (Joseph P. Free, *Archaeology and Bible History*. Wheaton: Scripture Press, 1969, p. 317)

Nazareth existing in first century

“Yet, despite the mountain of evidence supporting the truth of the New Testament accounts, there are still some writers who peddle the same outdated nonsense to us.

“Thus, in one of David Icke’s books, he says concerning the first century, that ‘NAZARETH DID NOT EXIST AT THAT TIME.’ (David Icke, *The Big Secret*. Wildwood, MO.: Bridge of Love Publications, USA, p.99)

“Oh, do come on. The place was so real between the years AD 44 and 50, that it merited an emperor’s decree carved in stone and directed probably at the people living there.

“How do we know? From *Nazareth*, Jesus’ home town, there came to light in 1878 a most interesting slab of marble, inscribed in a Greek text. For many years it lay in the Froehner collection, its value unrecognized until 1930. It is now in the Louvre, Paris.

“The text contains a decree issued by an unnamed Roman emperor prohibiting under penalty of death, any kind of tomb robbery, including tombs of relatives, or the moving of a body to another place. It reads:

Ordinance of Caesar. It is my pleasure that graves and tombs remain undisturbed in perpetuity for those who

have made them for the cult of their ancestors, or children or members of their house. If, however, any man lay information that another has either demolished them, or has in any other way extracted the buried, or maliciously transferred them to other places in order to wrong them, or has displaced the sealing or other stones, against such a one I order that a trial be instituted as in respect of the gods, as in regard to the cult of mortals. For it shall be much more obligatory to honor the buried. Let it be absolutely forbidden for anyone to disturb them. In the case of contravention I desire that the offender be sentenced to capital punishment on charge of violation of sepulture.

“What date is that inscription?” asked Greg.

“It has been placed somewhere between AD 44 and 50, which was during the reign of Claudius Caesar, who was noted for his persecution of the Jews. This was not many years after the death of Jesus.

“It is believed that the preaching of the resurrection had already begun in Rome by this time. Perhaps this decree reflected the fact that the enemies of Christianity had faced up to the empty tomb story.

“The placing of the decree on a rock in the little, unimportant town of Nazareth where Jesus was reared, indicates a possible relationship between the decree of Caesar and the empty tomb of Jesus.

“Nazareth did not exist at that time? This discovery knocks that claim on the head!”

Alleged personality “mistakes”

“Interesting, isn’t it? The critic shouts himself hoarse. Archaeology comes along. And the New Testament is vindicated. It happens time and again. That’s a one-sided contest, if you ask me.

“Here’s another example. Luke had claimed that *Lysanius*, the tetrarch of Abilene, ruled Syria and Palestine (Luke 3:1) at the start of John the Baptist’s ministry in *AD 27*.

“The only Lysanius known to ancient historians was one who was killed in BC 36. So Luke was accused of being mistaken.

“However, an inscription now found at Abila near Damascus speaks of “Freedman of Lysanias the Terarch”, and is dated between AD 14 and 29. (F.F. Bruce, “Archaeological Confirmation of the New Testament”. In Carl Henry, ed., *Revelation and the Bible*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1969, p. 321)

“Want more examples?:

“Paul makes mention of the *Corinth city treasurer, Erastus* (Romans 16:23). During excavations at Corinth in 1929, a pavement was found inscribed: ERASTVS PRO:AED:S:P: STRAVIT (‘Erastus, curator of public buildings, laid this pavement at his own expense.’) (F.F. Bruce, *The New Testament Documents: Are They Reliable?* Downers Grove, Ill.: Inter Varsity Press, 1964, p. 95)

“Luke gives to Publius, the chief man in Malta, the title ‘*first man* of the island’ (Acts 28:7). Inscriptions have been unearthed that do give him the title of ‘first man’. (F.F. Bruce, “Archaeological Confirmation of the New Testament”. In Carl Henry, ed., *Revelation and the Bible*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1969, p. 325)

“Luke was assumed to be wrong for using the term *politarchs* to denote the civil authorities of *Thessalonica* (Acts 17:6) – because ‘politarch’ is not found in classical literature. However, there have now been found some 19 inscriptions that make use of that title. One of the inscriptions was discovered in a Roman arch at Thessalonica and in it are found the names of six of that city’s politarchs. (*Ibid.*, pp. 325,360)

Pontius Pilate

“The New Testament records that *Pontius Pilate* was the Roman governor of Judea when Jesus was crucified (AD 31).

“However Icke the critic claims that ‘Pontius’ was a fictitious name invented only after AD 85. Icke also asserts that the Gospel of Luke was written after this date. (For Luke’s actual date, see Chapter 10.)

“Icke claims that a man called Pliny visited a place called Pontus from the year AD 85 onwards ‘and this is the origin of the first name of Pontius Pilate. He was only called Pilate in Matthew and Mark,... but in Luke, the one Piso wrote with Pliny, Pilate suddenly acquires the name, Pontius. Luke was written in the very years that Pliny began to visit Pontus.’ (David Icke, *The Big Secret*. Wildwood, MO.: Bridge of Love Publications, USA, p. 110))

“Thankyou, David Icke for that contribution. So is Icke right? Or the Gospel of Luke? Now let archaeology be the referee...

His name on historic inscription:

“In 1961, at the city of Caesarea, an Italian excavation uncovered a huge block of limestone. It bore an inscription containing the name – wait for it - ‘*Pontius Pilate*’. The block, probably from the period of Emperor Tiberius (AD 12 to 37) is engraved with the words:

.....S TIBERIEVM [Tiberieum]
[PO]NTIVS PILATVS [Pontius Pilate]
 [PRA]ECTVS IVDA[EA]E [Prefect Judea]

“The first word, ‘Tiberieum’, probably refers to a temple dedicated to the emperor Tiberius.

Mentioned by Roman historian:

“Is that all? Not quite. The well known Roman historian, Cornelius Tacitus (born around 52 AD), also mentions Pontius Pilate, and states that Pontius Pilate crucified Jesus Christ. In 112 AD, Tacitus became Governor of Asia. He wrote in his history:

Nothing which could be done by man, nor any amount of treasure that the prince could give, nor all the sacrifices which could be presented to the gods, could clear Nero from being believed to have ordered the burning, the fire of Rome. So to silence the rumor, he tortured and made false accusations against those who were called the Christians, who were hated for their large following. Christus, the founder of the name, was executed by *Pontius Pilate*, the Judean procurator, during the rule of Tiberius. [AD 14 to AD 37] (Tacitus, *Annals*, 15:44; cited by Justin Martyr, *Apology*, 1.48. Emphasis added)

“He further says:

At his coming the lame shall leap, tongues that stammer shall speak clearly, the blind shall see, and the lepers shall be cleansed, and the dead shall rise and walk about. And you can learn that he did all these things from the Acts of *Pontius Pilate*. (*Ibid.*)

“Pontius Pilate a fictitious name invented after AD 85? Icke, what’s got into you?”

Summary

“Colin Hemer, a noted Roman historian, has catalogued numerous archaeological and historical confirmations of Luke’s accuracy. His report is voluminous and detailed. His research includes:

- Specialised details, which would not have been widely known except to a CONTEMPORARY researcher such as Luke who traveled widely. For example, exact titles of officials, identification of army units, and information about major routes.
- Details which archaeologists know are accurate but cannot verify as to the precise time period. Some of these are unlikely to have been known except to a writer who had visited the districts.
- Correlation of known kings and governors with the chronology of the narrative.
- Facts appropriate to the date of a contemporary but not to a date earlier or later.
- ‘Undesigned coincidents’ between the writings of Luke and Paul.
- Other materials, the ‘immediacy’ of which suggests that the author was recounting a recent experience, rather than shaping or editing a text long after it had been written.

- Cultural or idiomatic items now known to be peculiar to the first century atmosphere, but not later. (Colin Hemer, *The Book of Acts in the Setting of Hellenistic History*. Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1990, pp.104-107)

“One archaeologist carefully studied Luke’s references. He discovered that Luke names 32 countries, 54 cities and 9 islands without an error! (Norman L. Geisler and Thomas Howe, *When Critics Ask*. Wheaton, Ill.: Victor, 1992, p. 385)

Ramsay the skeptic

“I mentioned the other day that one of the greatest archaeologists of all time was Sir William Ramsay.

“As a student in the German historical school of the mid-nineteenth century, Ramsay was firmly convinced that the New Testament book of Acts was a fraudulent product of the mid-second century AD.

“In his research to make a topographical study of Asia Minor, he was compelled to consider the New Testament writings of Luke. Here is how he relates his experience.” Al handed the file to Greg. “Greg, would you mind reading that to all of us?”

Greg read:

I began with a mind unfavourable to it... but more recently I found myself brought into contact with the Book of Acts as an authority for the topography, antiquities and society of Asia Minor. It was gradually borne upon me that in various details the narrative showed marvellous truth. In fact, beginning with a fixed idea that the work was essentially a second century composition, and never relying on its evidence as

trustworthy for first century conditions, I gradually came to find it a useful ally in some obscure and difficult investigations. (Edward Musgrave Blaiklock, *Layman's Answer: An Examination of the New Theology*. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1968, p. 36 – quoted from Ramsay, *St. Paul the Traveller and the Roman Citizen*) Greg handed back the file.

Al continued. “You know, guys, as a result of that, Ramsay was forced to do a complete reversal of his beliefs. He concluded after thirty years of study that ‘Luke is a historian of the first rank; not merely are his statements of fact trustworthy... this author should be placed along with the greatest of historians.’ (Sir W. M. Ramsay, *The Bearing of Recent Discovery on the Trustworthiness of the New Testament*. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1915, p. 222)

Luke’s “unsurpassed... trustworthiness”

“In fact, Ramsay concluded that ‘Luke’s history is unsurpassed in respect of its trustworthiness.’ (W. M. Ramsay, *St. Paul the Traveller and the Roman Citizen*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1962, p. 81)

“Since then, further discoveries have shown New Testament writers such as Luke to be careful historians.”

“I have here also the verdict of Roman historian A.N. Sherwin-White. He declares:

For Acts [in the New Testament] the confirmation of historicity is overwhelming.... Any attempt to reject its basic historicity must now appear absurd. Roman historians have taken it for granted. (A.N. Sherwin-White, *Roman Society and Roman Law in the New Testament*, reprint edition. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1978, p. 189)

“Dr Gleason Archer undertook a painstakingly detailed investigation into this question. Notice his report:

As I have dealt with one apparent discrepancy after another and have studied the alleged contradictions between the biblical record and the evidence of linguistics, archaeology, or science, my confidence in the trustworthiness of Scripture has been repeatedly verified and strengthened by the discovery that almost every problem in Scripture that has ever been discovered by man, from ancient times until now, has been dealt with in a completely satisfactory manner by the biblical text itself – or else by objective archaeological information. The deductions that may be validly drawn from ancient Egyptian, Sumerian, or Akkadian documents all harmonize with the biblical record. (Gleason L. Archer, Jr., *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1982, p. 12)

“And former skeptic Josh McDowell adds his testimony:

After trying to shatter the historicity and validity of the Scripture, I came to the conclusion that it is historically trustworthy. If one discards the Bible as being unreliable, then one must discard almost all literature of antiquity.

One problem I constantly face is the desire on the part of many to apply one standard or test to secular literature and another to the Bible. One must apply the same test, whether the literature under investigation is secular or religious.

Having done this, I believe we can...say, ‘The Bible is trustworthy and historically reliable. (Josh McDowell, *The New Evidence That Demands a Verdict*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1999, p. 68)

Al looked at each person in turn. “What gets to me is the way the critics try to hide all this evidence from us. Is it because they suffer from a lack of integrity? Or more likely that they’re just quoting someone else who is as ignorant as they are?”

“These very critics you put your trust in, are not going to help you survive death. But that Deliverer they like to attack so much – what if He really is the only answer to man’s problems?”

Al fell silent. Both Bron and Greg were deep in thought.

Gloria chirped up. “Darling, what about *internal* evidence?”

Al smiled. “Great, why don’t you all join me for a word game. And you may discover that the Gospels *could not have been written* unaided in a thousand years.”

Greg looked mystified. Gloria turned to Bronwyn. “I myself know a little about this,” she said. “It will blow your mind.”

“Speaking of *words*,” said Bronwyn, laughingly, “did you know that the original name for butterfly was flutterby?”

“Really?”

“True.”

“Word games? She’s always spouting them,” chuckled Greg.

“Anyway,” smiled Al, “You’re about to discover something more interesting than that. Are you ready?”

24

Discovering the author's signature -

WHO WROTE THE CODE?

Michelangelo was pointing out some intricate details of a picture.

“But these are only trifles,” shrugged his guest.

“Yes,” replied the master painter, “and trifles make perfection. But *perfection is no trifle.*”

Reportedly, the great historian, Macaulay, never allowed *a single sentence* to stand until it was as good as he could make it.

It is said that when painting his wonderful picture of the *Last Supper*, Leonardo da Vinci would walk all the way across the city of Milan to change a single tint or *the slightest detail*.

Consider what *the slightest inaccurate movement* of the surgeon's knife might mean. Consider what *a slight imperfection* in an automobile axle might mean for the occupants traveling at 60 miles an hour.

If I type into my Internet browser the name of a website, but misspell just one letter, I am unable to access the site at all.

In our modern world, more than at any time, there is positively no place for imperfection.

And that brings us to the reason *why* the New Testament *could never have been faked*. Al was about to explain this to Greg.

An amazing code which authenticates the documents

“You know what?” he said. “Neither Icke’s alleged Roman fake-writers nor anyone else could have invented the New Testament, even if they had wanted to.”

“You need to explain that,” challenged Greg.

A 6-sided dice

“All right,” said Al, “you know about the law of chances?”

“Of course,” nodded the principal.

“Would you humor me by explaining it?”

Greg uttered an impish snort and began. “Well, we all know how to play a game with a six-sided dice. To throw a six is not easy. At least on the law of averages you should throw a six once every six throws.

“If I throw 2 consecutive sixes, you may call me ‘clever’. If I throw 3 sixes one after the other, you’d say I’m ‘too lucky’. If I throw 4 sixes, you might look at me as though I’m cheating.

“If I throw 5 sixes in a row you’ll tell me that’s ‘impossible’. But then I throw 6 sixes in a row – what then? You’d say that the dice is definitely rigged.

“Suppose I do that again, Al, you might grab the dice and examine it, right? On the law of averages, I could not throw seven sixes in a row by accident.”

“Good. We’re tuned in,” smiled Al. “Now, what if you make 24 throws of the dice and they all come up as a 6? What are the chances that this will happen 24 times in a row, accidentally?”

“Oh that’s easily calculated,” replied Greg. “There is a standard, recognized, scientific method of calculating chances... an established *law of chances*.”

“Very well,” said Al. “If you don’t mind, I’d like to apply this same law to the number 7.”

“Why 7?”

“Because we shall soon discover a real life situation in which 7 keeps cropping up. So it will be helpful to use that number now, in our calculations. As you are aware, whatever number we use, the law of chances works in the same way.

“Only one number in every 7 is a multiple of 7 – 14, 21, 28, 35, 42, 49, and so on.

“According to the law of chances, for any 1 number to be a multiple of 7 accidentally, there is 1 chance in 7, right?

“According to the law of chances, for any 2 numbers to be multiples of 7 accidentally, there is only 1 chance in 7×7 - that is, only 1 chance in 49.

“According to the law of chances, for any 3 numbers to be multiples of 7 accidentally there is only 1 chance in 7×49 , or only 1 chance in 343.

“Let’s form this into a table:

“As we have just noted, for any 1 feature to occur accidentally there is only 1 chance in 7.

For 2 features - 1 chance in	49
For 3 features - 1 chance in	343
For 4 features - 1 chance in	2,401
For 5 features - 1 chance in	16,807
For 6 features - 1 chance in	117,649
For 7 features - 1 chance in	823,543
For 8 features - 1 chance in	5,764,801
For 9 features - 1 chance in	40,353,607
For 10 features - 1 chance in	282,475,249
For 11 features - 1 chance in	1,977,326,743
For 12 features - 1 chance in	13,841,287,201
For 13 features - 1 chance in	96,889,010,407
For 14 features - 1 chance in	678,223,072,849
For 15 features - 1 chance in	4,747,561,509,943
For 16 features - 1 chance in	33,232,930,569,601
For 17 features - 1 chance in	232,630,513,987,207
For 18 features - 1 chance in	1,628,413,597,910,449
For 19 features - 1 chance in	11,398,895,185,373,143
For 20 features - 1 chance in	79,792,266,297,612,001
For 21 features - 1 chance in	558,545,864,083,284,007
For 22 features - 1 chance in	3,909,821,048,582,988,049
For 23 features - 1 chance in	27,368,747,340,080,916,343
For 24 features - 1 chance in	191,581,231,380,566,414,401

“So for 24 features to occur in any situation accidentally, there is only 1 chance in 191,581,231,380,566,414,401 - only 1 chance in one hundred and ninety-one quintillion, five hundred and eighty-one quadrillion, two hundred and thirty-one trillion, three hundred and eighty billion, five hundred and sixty-six million, four hundred and fourteen thousand, four hundred and one.”

“I’m with you,” said Greg. “But what’s that got to do with the New Testament?”

The “sevens” pattern beneath the surface

“I was coming to that,” replied Al. “First of all, did you know that there is a peculiar *design* embedded *beneath the surface* of the New Testament (and for that matter, the entire Bible) – and it is based on the number 7?”

[Note: This is the same numeric scheme as found in nature. See Appendix G.]

Al continued. “Many brief Bible passages have as many as seventy or a hundred or more features of 7 in the very structure of their text. If there is only one chance in quintillions that 24 features of 7 could occur together accidentally, what would the chance be for 70 features of 7 to occur together accidentally?

“When there is only one chance in thousands for something to happen accidentally, it is already considered highly improbable that it will occur at all. When there is only one chance in hundreds of thousands, it is considered practically impossible.

“But here there is one chance in *not only* millions, *but* billions and trillions, that just 70 features could occur together in a passage accidentally.

“Ivan Panin, Russian scientist and one of the world’s top mathematicians, was astonished to discover this numeric design woven into the Bible.

“Panin was one of the ten top mathematicians of his time in the United States. He taught in universities and knew up to 14 languages. He loved playing with numbers.

“Anyway, one day in 1882, that mathematical genius Panin found himself experimenting. Knowing Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek, he began reading the Bible in *its original languages*. He experimented by replacing the letters in the Bible with their corresponding numbers. (Bear in mind that every letter in the Hebrew and Greek alphabets also doubles as a number.)

“Suddenly his excitement began to well up. His trained mind was seeing a mathematical pattern! He kept experimenting. And after a few hours he was totally amazed.

“The passages he had studied revealed unmistakable evidence of an elaborate numerical pattern. This was far beyond random chance, nor human ability to construct.

“On the surface ran the message in plain words as you would read in a book. But the substructure of individual letters spelled out a complex mathematical code. It was an interlocking pattern of ‘sevens’.

“This hidden design was in both the Hebrew Old Testament and the Greek New Testament.

“Now here was the problem. You see, the New Testament, comprising 27 books, was penned by at least eight different writers - yet from the hidden design it appeared there was one single Author!”

Greg coughed. “I beg your pardon?”

“Are you trying to suggest,” asked Bronwyn, “a single Intelligence behind the writing of all 27 books?”

Al looked her in the eye. “Would that startle you? Anyway, it became apparent to Panin that *whoever* had organized the New Testament had arranged its words and letters precisely in numeric order, and guided them into combinations of numbers. And this Intelligence was careful to weave designs and intricate cross-patterns into *every section* of this 27-book volume.”

Al eyed her for a moment, then looked at Greg. “You both seem shocked.”

“If I didn’t know you better,” retorted Greg, “I might say you had brain damage. Admittedly, this information is new to me.”

“All right, this is what Panin found: the New Testament, in Greek, was like a skilfully designed artefact... nothing less than the product of some mathematical mastermind. Panin had discovered a deliberate structuring that was far beyond human possibility to invent.”

Greg fidgeted. “Look, I think you’d better give us an example of this alleged phenomenon?”

Al’s eyes moved from one to another. “Why not? Okay, suppose you were asked to construct a genealogy of real people, but there are certain constraints.

- The number of words in the genealogy must be evenly divisible by 7 (with no remainders)
- The number of letters must be exactly divisible by 7
- The number of vowels and consonants must each be divisible by 7
- The number of words that begin with a vowel must be divisible by 7
- The number of words that begin with a consonant must be divisible by 7

- The number of words that occur more than once must be divisible by 7
- The number of words that occur in more than one form must be divisible by 7
- The number of words that occur only in one form must be divisible by 7
- The number of names in the genealogy must be divisible by 7
- The number of male names must be divisible by 7
- The number of generations in the genealogy must be divisible by 7

“Now let me show you such a genealogy,” said Al. “Honey?”

Gloria arose and collected some Bibles, passing one to each person.

“Now open your book to *the very first passage of the New Testament* - Matthew 1:1-11. This lists the human ancestry of Jesus Christ.

“Here is what Panin discovered *in the Greek*:

- The vocabulary contains 49 words (7 x 7)
- 28 words start with a vowel (4 x 7)
- 21 words start with a consonant (3 x 7)
- 7 words end with a vowel (1 x 7)
- 42 words end with a consonant (6 x 7)
- The 49 words have 266 letters (38 x 7)
- Of the 266 letters, 140 are vowels (20 x 7)
- Of the 266 letters, 126 are consonants (18 x 7)
- Of the 49 words, 14 occur only once (2 x 7)
- Of the 49 words, 35 occur more than once (5 x 7)
- Of the 49 words, 42 are nouns (6 x 7)
- Of the 49 words, 7 are not nouns (1 x 7)

- These remaining common nouns have exactly 49 letters (7 x 7)
- Mens' names occur 56 times (8 x 7)
- The names of just 3 women appear in the passage; the Greek letters of their names add up to 14 exactly (2 x 7)

“Panin calculated that it would have taken Matthew, working 8 hours a day, several months to construct this genealogy, even if that were possible.”

“Oh, surely not that long,” breathed Greg. “I mean, after all, he could just choose his words to make the numbers add up.”

“Sorry,” said Al. “To compose this ancestral list Matthew *could not choose* the names to be used. You see, those names were chosen BEFORE Matthew was born! This is a direct father-to-son list of people who had already lived and died.

“Let’s take another passage – *regarding the birth of Jesus* (Matthew 1:18-25). This comprises 161 Greek words (exactly 23 times 7). Do you know, Dr Panin has challenged anyone to produce a similar passage of 161 words in three years.

“Oh, that should not be so difficult,” croaked Greg.

“You think it’s easy? Just try it.”

“But you said it’s only 161 words – a mere third of a page.”

“Indeed. But according to the law of chances, the chance of this pattern appearing stands at ONE in 200-odd quintillion, a number which consists of 21 figures.”

“These amazing numerical features of even one small passage, to say nothing of the thousands in the entire Bible, could not possibly have occurred by accident - by sheer chance.

“If these features did not occur accidentally, then there is only one conclusion, one alternative. These features were purposely intended ...planned ...designed.

“Hold on.” Al arose and darted into the kitchen. He came back, lumbering a large bag of oranges. Greg’s eyes followed him with curiosity.

Al looked up. “Okay, suppose you are carrying this bag. Suddenly the bag breaks and these 25 oranges fall to the floor. What chance would there be for the oranges to fall into five perfect rows, with five in each row, each orange being exactly opposite the other, like this?”

Al bent down and arranged the oranges on the carpet, in five even rows, thus:

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o o o o o
o o o o o
o o o o o
o o o o o
o o o o o

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Then he resumed his seat. He looked at Bronwyn. “Well? Could they arrange themselves this way?”

“That would be impossible,” said Bron.

“So if you came in here and found the oranges arranged this way, you would arrive at only one conclusion, right? That they were purposely designed or arranged in this specific manner. If I insisted that this occurred accidentally you would call me insane!

“Likewise, these profound numeric features found in the very structure of the original Bible text... they are not there by sheer chance or accident, but by design. They are arranged according to a definite plan; they form thousands of perfect and uniform designs.

“Now turn to *the next chapter - the second chapter of Matthew*. This tells the story of the childhood of Jesus. And it likewise has a vocabulary of 161 words (23 sevens). These occur in 238 forms (34 sevens). And these have 896 letters (128 sevens). And their total numeric value is 123,529 which is 17,647 sevens. (You understand that every letter in the Greek alphabet also doubles as a number.)

“Furthermore, each of the 238 forms has, in turn, alphabetical groups of sevens, which it would be too tedious to enumerate.

“This chapter consists of at least four logical divisions - and each division shows individually the same ‘sevens’ phenomena found in the chapter as a whole. Thus the first six verses have a vocabulary of 56 words (that is, 8 sevens), and so on.

“Also, there are some speeches here: Herod speaks, the Magi speak, the angel speaks. Their numeric phenomena are so pronounced that though they are, as it were, a dozen rings within rings, wheels within wheels, yet each is a perfect pattern of sevens in itself... even though each forms only a part of the rest.

“If you, Greg, or Bronwyn, can write a chapter like this as naturally as Matthew writes, and build into just 500 words so large a number of intertwined yet harmonious mathematics - if you can write a short chapter like this in five years you will do very well indeed.

“You want the truth? There is not a single paragraph out of the hundreds in Matthew that is not constructed on exactly this same plan!

“Yet with each additional paragraph the difficulty of construction increases, not in arithmetical but in geometrical progression. Exponentially! Because you will need to plan your paragraphs so as to develop constantly fixed numeric relations to what has gone before and what follows. Every additional letter, word, and sentence makes the matter tremendously more complicated and comprehensive.

“Thus in your last chapter you must plan to use just seven words not used by you before.”

Al noticed Bronwyn’s eyes opening wider. Now he would drop another bombshell. His voice grew stronger. “Do you know how long it would take for any man to write that one Gospel – Matthew’s?”

Greg tossed out the challenge. “Okay, man – you have a figure?”

“Yes – and here it comes...”

25

Discovering the author's signature -

THE CROSS-OVER MYSTERY

Bron sat up straight. Al's eyes roved, first to her, then to Greg.

“Okay, here it is. We ask Dr Panin. And he tells us that it would have taken Matthew *over one thousand years* to have constructed the Gospel on these lines. And that's assuming it to have been possible for him to do so, which, of course, it was not, because of the many circumstances over which he had no control.

“I need a moment to process this,” said Bronwyn. “Would you repeat it?”

“Sure. One of the world's greatest mathematicians affirms that Matthew (the writer of the first book in the New Testament) could not have written that book in 1,000 years!

“But here's the problem: Jesus was crucified in AD 31 – so Matthew's Gospel (which reports that event) could not have been written earlier. And in AD 70 Jerusalem was destroyed (an event still future when Matthew wrote) – so it could not have been written later.

“So how Matthew managed to write the book in those mere 39 years between AD 31, when Jesus Christ was crucified and AD 70, when Jerusalem was destroyed, let any sane man explain.

“Yet Matthew did it. We thus have a miracle – an unheard of piece of literary mathematical artistry, unequalled, hardly even

conceivable. This is a vital ‘fact’ for the skeptic to contemplate.

“Sevens” in Mark

“Now turn to the *Gospel of Mark*. You will find it shows exactly the same ‘sevens’ phenomena as Matthew.

“Let’s take, for example, the first eight verses of Mark, which report on the ministry of John the Baptist, the man who announced the arrival of Jesus.

- * This passage contains
 - 126 words (18 times 7)
 - 294 syllables (42 x 7)
- * Its vocabulary has 77 *different* words (11 x 7). The sum of the factors of 77 is 14 (2 x 7). And it is divided again between tens and units exactly by 7s!
- * These 77 words of the vocabulary have 427 letters (61 x 7). And the sum of its factors amounts to 14 (2 x 7).
- * Of those 427 letters,
 - 224 are vowels (32 x 7)
 - and 203 are consonants (29 x 7)
- * In it, John the Baptist uses exactly 21 of the vocabulary words. (3x 7)
- * The words he doesn’t use amount to 56 (8 x 7)
- * 42 of the words begin with a vowel (6 x 7)
- * 35 of the words begin with a consonant (5 x 7)
- ... and so on.

“Now, if the cleverest man in this world sat down to produce similar phenomena of 7s, his brain would soon reel, because every time he adjusted one portion it would upset another!

“If a man was able to struggle through, it might well take months

to produce these mere eight verses, even choosing his own words. But where would he be if, like this example, he had to use unbroken, several phrases by two other writers - one being a quotation from the Old Testament?

“How can this be explained? Peter tells us: These writings ‘*came not by the will of man... but... by the Holy Spirit.*’ (1 Peter 1:21) That is the Bible’s own explanation of its Author. Could it be true?

“Now turn to *the last twelve verses of Mark*. This passage, which critics sometimes slur as ‘a forgery’, presents (among others) these phenomena: It has 175 words (or 25 sevens). Its vocabulary has 98 words (14 sevens). Of these, the ones Jesus uses in His speech, are 42 (or 6 sevens). In like manner, of the 175 words in these same twelve verses of Mark, the ones Jesus uses total 56 (or 8 sevens). And all this, too, with the usual break-up into alphabetical groups of seven in each case.

“Then again, of the 98 words of the vocabulary, 84 (or 12 sevens), are *used before* by Mark. And 14 (or 2 sevens), are used *only here*. Mark, then, is another miracle, another unparalleled mathematical literary genius. (For more on this phenomenon in Mark, see Appendix J.)

“Remember this: with each additional sentence the difficulty greatly increases, and owing to the limitations of human intellect, soon becomes hopeless. Scholars who have set out to accomplish a similar thing admit that after struggling for days their efforts were in vain without reducing the passage to a meaningless jumble.

“Dr D. B. Turkey tells how he attempted to construct a passage that would show some numeric features. He declared:

I gave numeric values to the English alphabet, and tried to prepare a passage which would adhere to the numerics, and make every section a multiple of seven,

and present all the other features of Biblical arithmography, without letting the meaning of the passage descend to nonsense. After working on it for days, I could get no satisfaction. Yet this feature is accomplished in every one of the thousands of Bible paragraphs without the slightest visible effort. (Jonathan Gray, private files)

“Both the Hebrew Old Testament and the New Testament give evidence of this amazing phenomenon.

A crossover pattern between books

“A second fact is still more important. Matthew, uses just 140 words (20 times 7), found nowhere else in the New Testament. There you have another feature of 7s.

“Now how on earth did Matthew know that the other writers, Mark, Luke, John, James, Peter, Jude, and Paul would not use those same words? How did Matthew know that he should use certain words which would not be used in any of the other 26 books of the New Testament?

“So how did he accomplish that particular feat of 7s? Did he have an agreement with them that *they* would *not* use those words? Impossible. Alternately, did he have all the other New Testament books before him when he wrote his own book? But that would require that the Matthew’s book was written LAST.

Each writer wrote last?

“And in the same manner in which we saw that Matthew wrote *last*, it can be shown that Mark also wrote *last*. So we have this fact established: Matthew surely wrote after Mark, and Mark equally surely wrote after Matthew.

“It happens, however, to be an additional fact that *Luke's Gospel* contains exactly the same phenomena as those of Matthew and Mark. And so does John, and so do the books of James and Peter, Jude and Paul. We have then no longer two great unheard-of mathematical literati, but eight of them, and *each wrote after the other????!!*

“That’s right - *each of the other writers* does exactly the same thing – each other writer likewise uses exactly ‘x times’ 7 words found *nowhere else* in the New Testament. And for this to deliberately occur requires the impossible scenario that every one of those different writers wrote his own book LAST.

“So there you have it. Not only is each of the 27 books they wrote constructed on the same interlocking ‘sevens’ pattern. But each book by the same method already mentioned, can be shown to have been written last. So we have 27 New Testament books *each written last*.

“The phenomena are there, and there is no human way of explaining them. Eight men simply cannot each write *last*. 27 books simply cannot each be written *last*. But once we conclude that One Mind supervised the whole, then the problem is solved as simply as an algebraic equation. However, you do realize what this means?”

Al paused, carefully looking at Greg, then Bronwyn.

Inter-book chain designs

“All right, here’s something else to blow you away!” he continued. “Certain special words are scattered through many different books of the Bible to form amazing chain-designs. The use of a single

word extends over several books of the Bible – and guess what? It turns out that it is used just 7 times or a multiple of 7 times!

“The discovery of such word-chains requires careful searching in all parts of the 66 books of the Bible.

“The design of sevens in the name ‘Moses’, for example, could not have been planned and carried out by the Bible writers themselves. It must be remembered that those writers did not all live at the same time; they lived many years apart. In fact, there was a period of about 1,600 years between the writing of the first book of the Bible and the last.

“We should note also that the 66 books were written by about 40 different persons. And these persons were scattered throughout various countries of the world. Also, they were men of widely different backgrounds. Many of them had little or no schooling. So I ask you, how could these men have planned the distribution of the name ‘Moses’ throughout the entire Bible so as to form marvellous numeric designs?

“How could each one of the 40 writers who lived in various countries, the last writer separated by 1,600 years from the first, insert the name ‘Moses’ just enough times to keep the numeric design in suspense until it came to John, the last writer who used it in the book of Revelation? He needed to use it once to complete the design!

“How could each writer have known that he should use a particular word a certain number of times so that when all would be finished after 1,600 years the total would divide perfectly by seven and would show numeric design?

“Certainly such design could not possibly have been planned by the writers themselves. The case of Moses is only one example of

chain design which extends throughout the entire Bible. Literally hundreds of other cases such as this, can be pointed out.

“The bottom line is this. Each word of the whole Bible is linked and connected in one amazing pattern.

Al leaned forward. “Let’s face it, guys. There are only two possible ways in which these facts could have occurred.

1. They could have occurred either by accident, that is, by sheer chance, or
2. they could have been purposely designed or arranged.

“Since the discovery of a design is proof of a designer, the next logical question arises: WHO PLANNED AND CARRIED OUT THESE AMAZING NUMERICAL DESIGNS? Again we have two possible alternatives:

1. Natural human intelligence, or
2. A supernatural intelligence

“Were these amazing numeric designs planned by the men who wrote the books of the Bible? As we noted, many of the writers were just ordinary men from different walks of life, who had little or no schooling at all.

“So how long would this have taken them? If Matthew, Mark, Luke or John, for instance, had attempted to construct and produce the harmonious numeric features and designs which are found in their books as a whole, and if they had attempted to produce separate numeric schemes and designs which occur in each division, and in each subdivision, and in the words, forms, vocabularies, letters, etc., how long would it have taken them to construct their books? Centuries upon centuries!

“Can you tell me that mere human intelligence planned and worked out the amazing designs of numeric features which occur in the very structure of the Bible text? Let’s get real! The limitations of the human intellect and the shortness of human life make it impossible. So no man or any set of men combined could accomplish such stupendous feats.

“This phenomenon is uncanny! And you have *scientific, mathematical proof* of it.

“As you can imagine, this discovery was to change the course of Panin’s life. For the next 60 years, he would use every working moment to painstakingly write out over 43,000 pages of data. There it was - an intricate matrix revolving around the number 7 and prime factors of 7.

“Panin would later present his findings – all 43,000 pages of them – to the Nobel Research Foundation. He also presented to them his conclusion that the Bible (including the New Testament) could only be the work of Someone with the Mind of the Creator. Nothing less.

The reply of the Nobel Research Foundation was: “As far as our investigation has proceeded... we find the evidence overwhelmingly in favor of such a statement.”

Now Panin issued a challenge through the world’s leading newspapers. He dared anyone to either submit a “natural explanation”, or refute the evidence. To date, no person has been able to do so.

Al’s challenge

“All right,” said Al, “here’s my personal challenge - and before you dismiss this claim, you will need evidence to demolish it. First

try this. Write a passage - any passage – yourself. And see how long it would take you to produce a passage as long as Matthew containing an equally intricate pattern!

“Just do that – and you’ll see how ridiculous is David Icke’s claim that someone just thought up the story of Jesus then scribbled it into a book? Or Dan Brown’s claim that Constantine tossed out or inserted Bible books on a whim?

“These men can’t even agree with each other. But both play on our gullibility – and on the assumption that all books are the same as those of the Bible – just man-made.

“But there must be some other books with such a numerical code as you’ve described.” Greg eyed Al straight.

“Sorry, old son. It’s found in no other literature,” replied Al. “Mind you, there have been sincere efforts to find such numerics in the Greek classics (Homer’s *Iliad* and others), the *Septuagint*, the *Apocrypha* and other works, but they have proven unsuccessful. NO WORKS OF MAN – NOT EVEN OTHER HOLY BOOKS - SHOW EVIDENCE OF SUCH DESIGNS. It seems that man just cannot do it.

“You see the problem now, don’t you? We’re not talking about an ordinary piece of literature, here. We are face to face with a phenomenon that required an outside, above-human Intellect.”

Al smiled as he saw in Greg’s eyes that he understood.

Then Bronwyn spoke up. “Are we to understand that the whole Bible is like this?”

“You’ve got it, girl... every paragraph, passage and book is constructed in the same astonishing way.

“If you think that’s too good to be true, then just prove that it is not so.”

Bronwyn nodded.

“And it’s even more remarkable,” said Al, “when you consider that Luke is a Greek, Mark a Roman, and Matthew a Jew. Yet they all wrote with the same sub-surface pattern. And although each of them wrote in his own different style, when it was all completed, the same identical pattern under the surface emerged all the way through each book!

“Should I say it again? Many writers, all so different – yet one Master Mind right through. We’re talking about something that Dan Brown assumes was just man-made.”

“That’s wild!” exclaimed Bronwyn. “So this book is not just words. There’s an incredible interlocking numeric pattern in these words!” She looked excitedly at her husband. “Greg, do you get it? A pattern under the surface... a design of “7s” interwoven right through! Isn’t that cool?”

Greg stared at her in silence. Finally he spoke. “I’m staggered... really staggered. And just one letter would make all the difference.”

One letter can change the result

Indeed. And just think how crucial one important detail could be:

On October 13, 1945, a citizen of Durham, North Carolina, was brought before Judge Wilson of Traffic Court for parking his car in a restricted street right in front of a sign forbidding parking. But instead of pleading guilty, the defendant protested that he was not extracting ore from underneath the street.

This was not a facetious reply, for when the sign was brought in as evidence, the defendant triumphantly pointed out that it read “NO STOPING”. And **stopping**, he was able to prove with the help of an unabridged dictionary (Webster’s *New International Dictionary*, p. 2,485), means “extracting ore from a stope, or loosely, underground.”

“Your honor,” said the defendant, “I am a law-abiding citizen. When I saw that sign I noted it carefully. And being a law-abiding citizen, I said to myself, ‘Bill, whatever you do, don’t extract any ore – it’s against the law.’ Judge, I didn’t do any stopping – and I move the case to be dismissed.”

The judge decided that the defendant had lived up to the letter of the law – the single letter – and the case was dismissed. (Maxwell Nurnberg and Morris Rosenblum, *How to Build a Better Vocabulary*. New York: Popular Library, 1961, p. 174)

Do you get the point? With the numeric pattern of the New Testament turning out to be so precise, we can neither pull out, nor add, one letter of one word. As you see, one letter makes all the difference. This is a **self-checking, self-verifying** protection factor.

So those critics would have us believe the New Testament has been so **tampered with** over the centuries that you can’t know what the original writings said? Yeah... and I’m King Kong.

Seriously now, with this self-checking feature, if any passage did not fit the numeric pattern, we could determine precisely where the

tampering had been done! Do you see? It’s fail proof.

So, Dan Brown, you want us to believe it was Constantine’s scheming politics that determined which books should be in – and which not?

Stick to fiction, Dan. You're better at that.

Now here's a question for everyone. If there's a toss-up between (a) documents stamped with the *authentication code* and (b) Gnostic (or any other) books that *lack* the authentication code, on which would you rather stake your life?

Wouldn't COMMON SENSE say to go with (a)?

So let's get wise. The application of the number 7, both to the Bible as a whole, and to each separate book in detail, enables us to determine *the question of the canon* with demonstrable certainty. You can know that the books specified as canonical comprise neither less nor more than the Word of the Supreme One. This code is the watermark of the same designing Mind that programmed our DNA.

Then why don't we swallow our pride and start taking its message more seriously?

What if its rescue plan is, after all, *authentic* – and your future and mine really does hinge on it... What then?

Bronwyn still had a question...

26

Does he care about us now? –

HAS HE DESERTED US?

“Why?” sighed Bronwyn, smoothing her jeans. “Why did He desert us?”

“What do you mean?” Al gave a concerned look.

“All this happened in the past,” said Bronwyn. “The things in the Bible, I mean. The Creator made himself known to man and worked with him closely. Then it all stopped. Why did He desert us?”

Al stroked his chin. “Yeah... good point. Well, it’s important to remember that, despite all the pain, loneliness, sickness, war and death, in this world, we do have a Maker who loves us.

“It may seem a long time since Jesus was here. But 2,000 years is to God as a brief moment. In any case, it takes time to roll through a plan such as His.

“As we’ve noted, this planet is involved in a drama of cosmic proportions. It began when Lucifer rebelled, charging that God was a tyrant and that he himself could set up a better kingdom. Then he hijacked this planet to set up that kingdom which he claimed would be better than God's. Such a demonstration needs time for its results to be evident to the watching universe. God decided to give Lucifer (Satan) enough rope to discredit himself - and the contrast of God's love in rescuing people would become evident to all.

“God has not turned His back on us - but He got His prophets to write down future history in advance, so that we could all know when this drama was about to end.

“Meanwhile, He is there to help us individually - to answer our prayers, guide and help us get ready for the wonderful new world He has planned, which will replace this present world we have messed up.”

Bronwyn nodded, casting a glance toward her husband.

“Let me share this incident with you,” said Al. “At the time of the Japanese invasion of China in the early 1940s, a school for refugee children was being operated in the Chinese interior.

“During an air raid, a unit of the compound was struck by a falling bomb. It was discovered that three little orphan lads had been buried beneath a mass of bricks and mortar. The raiders passed on. As soon as help could be obtained, the workmen and missionaries rushed to the spot where the boys had been buried.

“They worked desperately to remove the debris, hoping against an apparently vain hope that they could reach the children while they still lived.

“Finally they reached the boys, and carefully and tenderly extricated them. The boys were carried to the mission hospital for a thorough examination.

“The examiners were amazed. Not only were the children uninjured, but they were also unscratched!

“Each was questioned separately regarding the experience he had just gone through. Their stories agreed to the smallest detail.

“They had heard the bursting of bombs all around them, and were naturally terrified. However, during their short stay at the mission compound, they had learned to believe in the Supreme One who hears and still answers prayers. So they knelt down together, and in their simple, childish way asked Him to take care of them.

“Upon looking up, they saw a Being in white, who said to them, ‘Lie down quickly on your faces, and I will cover you.’

“They did as instructed. And a promise in the Bible was confirmed to them: ‘He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust.’ (Psalm 91:4)

“This really happened,” said Al. “And the news of this event was broadcast over the radio in Shanghai.

“If you didn’t know, such incidents are occurring by the thousands all over the world. Of course the Bible is full of similar past accounts.”

Bronwyn stared at him, her face expressing amazement.

Al continued. “Were you aware that these unseen messengers that were around thousands of years ago are still interacting with us today? The angels of God, an unnumbered multitude, are commissioned to help those who are seeking to follow their Maker.

Answered before you call

“The Bible, which I like to call *The Intelligence Report*, makes a bold claim: that before you call, Jesus will answer. I have put this to the test on a number of occasions.

“For example, when in need of something important – whether

money to pay a particular bill on time, or crucial information (whose source eludes me) - I have called upon Jesus to help.

“And how often the answer has arrived in the mail that day or soon after – often posted before I made the request, and by someone who was personally unaware of my need.

“I have lost count of the times such things have happened.”

Greg spoke. “It might be coincidence!”

“Coincidence? It’s too frequent, pal. There’s a *pattern of request and answer* – they go together. And the timing is often so perfect.”

Greg moved to face Al straight on. “Look, I envy you,” said he. “This is something we need in our home. That kind of security.”

* * * * *

No money for food

When Catherine Scott was a little girl, money was very tight, especially right after her father was ordained as a minister.

She recalls: “My mother often reached the end of her grocery money long before the end of the month. She used to send me into my father's closet to go through the pockets of his pants and coats. Since he was very absent-minded, I often found money during these treasure hunts.” Somehow, it was always enough.

There was one place, however, where neither Catherine nor her mother would search - father's bottom dresser drawer. That was where he put the contents of the church's “poor box,” money that parishioners gave to aid the neediest among them. Catherine knew

she and her mother were never to take anything from that box, even though they also were sometimes poor.

One day when she was about five, Catherine heard her mother crying. "Mama, what's wrong?" she called.

Catherine found her mother sitting on her bed staring at the bottom dresser drawer. "Nothing, sweetheart." Catherine's mother hastily wiped her cheeks. But despite her young age, Catherine understood. There was money in the drawer, and no doubt enough to feed them. But Mama couldn't use it. That money belonged to the church.

"I can go through Papa's pockets again," Catherine suggested. Her mother smiled wanly, and Catherine started a search. But today there was nothing to find, even though Catherine looked carefully in every one of her father's garments.

"I could sense my mother's desperation," Catherine says, "but I wasn't afraid. Perhaps I was too young to know how serious the situation was. But I did remind her that we still had some Cheerios left, and my brother and I could eat that if nothing else turned up."

Catherine's mother did not seem especially cheered by this revelation. But within minutes, the back doorbell rang.

Catherine was usually not permitted to answer a doorbell alone. But right now her father was working, her brother at school, and her mother trying to repair her tear-streaked face, so the little girl was alone when she opened the door.

A man in badly worn jeans was standing there.

"Is your daddy home?" he asked Catherine.
She shook her head.

The man squatted down in front of her and handed her a battered envelope. “Your daddy gave me a school desk several years ago,” he explained. “There's money inside here to pay for the desk.” Catherine noticed his warm smile. And his eyes seemed to twinkle too. “Hurry up and take this to your Mama,” he told Catherine. She closed the door, and did what he had told her.

Her mother opened the envelope. There was a five-dollar bill inside.

“In those days, five dollars was more than enough to get us to the end of the month,” Catherine recalls, “so my mother was extremely grateful. She did not remember the desk or the incident, but felt certain that my father would.”

But later, Catherine's father was sure that Catherine had gotten the details mixed up, and he questioned her over and over again. Who was this stranger? The father had no idea.

“He actually had given an old school desk to a poor family many years ago, but that had happened in New Jersey, and we now lived in Illinois,” explains Catherine. “Why, after fifteen years, would a man travel 1,000 miles to return money he had never been asked to repay?”

Catherine's family never discovered who the man really was. But his timing was perfect.

Promises of such intervention are made in the Bible. And evidently there is Someone out there, who honors those written promises.

* * * * *

Why doesn't He stop all this mess?

“Anyway,” noted Greg, “things in this world are getting steadily worse.”

“I have to agree,” said Bron. “So if He cares, Al, and if He is all powerful – why doesn't He step in and stop it?”

“Answer me this,” responded Al. “A nation that expels God from public life, should it expect his protection when threats and attacks come, whether from without or within?”

“Really, to stop it, He is going to have to intervene in what evil men are doing. He is going to have to bring destruction to many.

“He is merciful, patient and longsuffering, not willing that any should perish but that all would turn from their evil ways to do right. Be sure of this: when He does intervene, it is judgment time – for everyone. That's why He has not yet intervened.

“You know, I'm totally amazed that people will turn their backs on the Supreme One, rebel against His Word and ignore His warnings – then wonder why He doesn't intervene when they get into trouble and need His help. It says somewhere in the Good Book, ‘Because you have rejected knowledge, I also will reject you.’” (Hosea 4:6) Al smiled. “I wasn't being personal. It's obvious you guys do want the truth.

Is God remote – or does He care?

“Anyway, this much is certain: God loves man. He seeks man's company even at unimaginable cost to Himself. And despite all our indifference, He has delight in us. Not only that, He now has a special relationship with the human race.”

“What do you mean?”

“Well, firstly, we fell from innocence to a state of conscious guilt. Secondly, He reached out to reclaim us, which resulted in great suffering on His part. Thirdly, His Son Jesus Christ took on human form to raise us to an entirely new level of fellowship with our Creator.

“Do you want to know why I’m so sure He has not deserted us? Because our rescue was so carefully planned, as a long range project. That’s why.

Our rescue was meticulously planned

“Look, the breaking of Jesus Christ into human history is bound up in historical events. These events occupy time and space in our time-and-space world.

“Moreover, they were no accident – but rather the climax of divine planning and preparation.

“Think about this. A whole series of circumstances had to be organized to make it possible. Here are three examples.

“1. After our forefathers had gone almost irretrievably deep into rebellion, the Great Flood intervened to preserve the human race from destroying itself completely.

“2. After the world had again slipped into the most degraded, life-destroying paganism, a nation was raised up, taught, and planted at the crossroads of the world as a field of influence to enlighten and prepare mankind for the coming rescue.

“3. During those long centuries, personal intervention into the lives of countless people needed to be co-ordinated, to bring about the

best circumstances for the rescue mission to be undertaken.

“It is evident that both the good and bad in human history were overruled by God for His own purposes – to an extent which few of us are probably aware.

The careful planning for his death

“To rescue man, God then chose to become man. Why? Because the rescue process required the sacrifice of one who was like the subjects that had to be rescued.

“The death of Jesus Christ also needed to involve crucifixion – and not some other legal form of death.”

“Why did it have to be crucifixion?” asked Greg.

“Good question,” replied Al. “Because giving up his life had to be a voluntary act. No other form of death penalty would have permitted Jesus to decide when he would dismiss his breath as a purely voluntary act. For example, if he was executed by poisoning, strangling, thrusting through, or drowning, only by a miracle could he have remained alive to choose the moment of death.

“As it was, he died on the cross, but *not because* of it. His death was entirely an act of his own will... not a surrender to circumstance.

“We are subject to death by our fallen nature. He became subject to death by an act of will. Had he willed, he might have lived on indefinitely. As it was, he submitted to a form of capital punishment, but dismissed his life *before* that penalty could take its naturally expected effect.

“Again, the self sacrifice of Jesus for mankind could not be merely some isolated event, occurring in some dark age of barbarism. Nor could it occur in some corner of the earth where news of it might filter back into the world only by accident.

“This was an event that had to be appropriately witnessed and recorded. It also had to be undertaken in an orderly legal way that could be recognized as a valid, historical event.

“Furthermore, it was necessary that it occur at a time when the event itself would be sufficiently public that there could never be any doubt that it happened.

“It also needed to be arranged at a time in history when there was adequate means of communicating the news to a large, fluid population, so the news could be carried far and wide. And roads for travel had to exist and be maintained in safety.

“Moreover, a police force or military needed to be in place to prevent the trial of Jesus from turning into a lynching.

“And a common language was needed that could appeal to prophecies of the event already written in that common language (the Old Testament in the Greek of the Roman Empire), so that the news could be explained universally, and not as merely a Jewish message.

“As far as I can discover, this was the first time in history that all these circumstances came together. The Roman Empire provided the ideal stage for the most important event in history – a divine sacrifice on behalf of the human race.

So has He forgotten us since?

“Now, here is the crunch.

“Having planned and orchestrated events during those 4,000 years

of lead-up to the BIG event, do you really think He could forget – would forget – this little world He has spilt His blood for? Never!

“Of course, as you said, Bronwyn, a thousand years does seem like ages. But to our Maker – who is outside time and above it – a thousand years is as a moment.

“In any case, if Jesus Christ paid the supreme sacrifice to make it possible for us to be in the new world He has planned, do you think He can forget you – His rescued one? As the Bible says, *‘Since He did not spare even His own Son, but gave Him up for us all, will He not also freely give us everything else?’*” (Romans 8:32)

“You memorized that?” asked Greg in surprise.

“It’s a precious promise,” responded Al. “Believe it. He is the best in the universe at keeping promises. And you and I are very dear to Him.

“You can be confident of this: man will never be allowed to completely destroy himself while God still has some purpose to work out, while history pursues its course.

Events from his death till now: known and predicted

“Again, I agree: 2,000 years since the BIG event is not so long really. Not when you consider the agenda of the conflict between Jesus Christ and the Legion of Lucifer.

“Actually, He has predicted the main events leading up to the final showdown. These are written in the Bible. Just as there were some 300 prophecies of Jesus’ first coming, so there are approximately 300 concerning His return. The point is, God is never caught by surprise. He knows precisely the moment when human history will stop short... never to go again.

So why doesn't he stop the pain now?

“Yeah. I understand,” said Greg soberly. “It’s all starting to make sense. But something still nags at me. If He cares – and if He is all powerful – then why doesn’t He stop the pain now?”

Al stretched out his legs. “It’s like this, Greg, if Satan were to have a real chance to show what his rule was like, then God, to some extent, had to keep His hands off.

“The watching universe note the hatred, heartache and death on Planet Earth. And they begin to understand. Satan’s ‘better government’ has been given time to show *its true colors*.

“Then they see the Creator come to man’s rescue and suffer the most shameful and agonizing of deaths, out of LOVE for us. It is not a weak, insipid, wimpy love, but it is a tough love that takes risks, that regards the other person as more important than one’s self.

“This demonstration on our planet will show BY CONTRAST God’s care, His truthfulness and his sharing of human suffering. This will ultimately nullify the doubts created by Lucifer’s slander.

“As history unfolds, the universe see Satan’s vengeance on those who accept the rescue offer.

“Do you get it? When God DOES step in and end it all, there will be no longer any doubt as to who is responsible for this planet’s tears, and who it is that really cares.”

Greg scratched his cheek. “But a God of love who gets angry and *judges* people?”

“That’s not a contradiction,” said Al. “God loves people. He hates sin. Judgment is directed against the misery and suffering that results from sin. He cannot stand

by idly – *because He is a God of love*. But people who choose to hold onto sin, will by their own choice be wiped out when He eliminates sin.”

“Yeah!” shouted Bronwyn. “That really *does* make sense! For the first time, it all fits together! Oh, I’m so grateful.”

Al looked at her. “Even while we wait for the culmination of all things, our Creator’s watchful care can be seen throughout history.

“Britain is a good example. When the nation of Britain took God seriously and repented of its sins the result each time was Divine intervention in human affairs altering a sequence of events which would otherwise have naturally occurred.

“The miracle of Dunkirk in 1940 was just that – a miracle. Winston Churchill (prime minister during World War 2) had been advised that only 20,000 to 30,000 men would be evacuated. The situation was so perilous that King George VI called for a National Day of Prayer on May 26, to plead for deliverance. Hundreds of thousands of people across the British Isles flocked into churches. The result was a calm on the waters of the English Channel the like of which had not been experienced for some 30 years, which allowed an armada of boats to rescue 335,000 men. Similar Providential ‘interference’ was experienced during the Battle of Britain and during the Normandy landings.

“And during that same Dunkirk incident, while the sea remained calm between France and Britain, Hitler’s Luftwaffe, ordered into the air to obliterate the retreating British army, was suddenly grounded by severe storms. A matching miracle, if ever there was.

“Churchill delivered a speech at the end of 1942, in which he admitted:

““I sometimes have a feeling of interference, I want to stress that. I have a feeling sometimes that some Guiding Hand has interfered. I

have a feeling that we have a Guardian and we shall have this Guardian so long as we serve his cause faithfully.”

Greg smiled. “Yeah, that’s really neat.” Then he looked at the time. “Oh, my! We really must get going. I have to admit, Al, you are not just a good teacher at Thornton High. You are a true friend. This is going to change our lives.”

Bronwyn stood up. “You two...” A lump stuck in her throat. “I... I...” She fumbled in her handbag, and pulled out a handkerchief. “This is too much...”

Gloria gave her a hug.

“See you tomorrow,” waved Greg, heading for the door. “Again, thanks.”

* * * * *

The naked runner

The following two incidents are so amazing that, on first thought, one might be tempted to dismiss them, were it not for the fact that they are testified by living witnesses of integrity and sound mind.

The first report reached my desk late in 2002 from Pastor Paul Ciniraj, of Kerala, India.

Hawa Ahmed was a Muslim student. One day, she read a Christian paper in her dormitory, and decided to follow the way of Jesus. Her father was an Islamic ruler, so she expected to lose her inheritance because of her conversion.

Hawa was completely unprepared for what really happened. When she told her family that she had become a Christian and changed her name to Faith, her father exploded in a rage. He and her

brothers stripped her naked and bound her to a chair fixed to a metal plate with which they wanted to electrocute her.

Faith asked them to at least lay a Bible in her lap. Her father responded, “If you want to die together with your false religion, so be it.” One of her brothers added, “That will show that your religion is powerless.”

Although they had bound her, she was able to touch a corner of the Bible. She felt a strange peace, as though someone were standing beside her.

Her father and brothers pushed the plug into the socket - and nothing happened. They tried four times with various cables, but it was as though the electricity refused to flow.

Finally, her father, angry and frustrated, struck her and screamed, “You are no longer my daughter.” Then he threw her out into the street, naked.

The girl ran through the streets, humiliated and in pain. People looked at her, curious rather than shocked. Shaking and tearful, she reached the house of a friend. Her friend let her in, clothed her and gave her shelter.

The next day, her friend asked neighbors what they had thought when they had seen Faith running naked through the streets.

“What are you talking about?” they asked. “The girl had a wonderful white dress on. We asked ourselves why someone so beautifully clothed had to run through the streets.”

Had the Mighty One intervened – to hide her nakedness from their eyes, clothing her in that beautiful white dress? In gratitude and love, Faith has now become a full-time missionary.

The care goes on

On the evening of May 20, 2004, Victor and Deborah Khalil of Poway, California, were in shock. They had just received a message that sounded so incredible, at first. But, talking it over, they knew there was one thing they had to do: they must contact family members in Egypt to confirm the details that had been given there on the news.

“Did it really happen?” they asked.

“Truly... every detail of it,” was the response.

A Muslim man had killed his wife and buried her with their infant baby and eight-year-old daughter. The girls were buried alive!

He reported to the police that an uncle killed the kids.

Fifteen days later, another family member died. When they went to bury him, they found the two girls under the sand – alive.

The girl was asked how she had survived.

“A man wearing shiny white clothes, with bleeding wounds in his hands, came every day to feed us,” said the girl. “He woke up my mom so she could nurse my sister.”

The girl was interviewed on Egyptian national TV, by a veiled Muslim woman news anchor.

The anchor woman said on public TV, “This was none other but Jesus, because nobody else does things like this!”

Of course, Muslims believe that Isa (Jesus) would do this. But to these witnesses in Cairo the wounds meant He really was crucified, and it also became clear to them that He was alive!

Muslim leaders have been teaching that Jesus did not die on the cross and rise from the dead, but that some other person was crucified instead of him, and that Jesus escaped alive.

According to news reports, the country was outraged over the incident, and the man would be executed.

However, two facts were clear:

1. The child could not make up a story like this, and
2. There was no way these children could have survived without a true miracle.

With Egypt as a media and education center of the Middle East, you could be sure the account of this incident would spread.

Who was that individual, who came to be with those children?

So God has forgotten us? You decide. Does He care? You can count on it.

It is evident that we are talking about a very caring Being – One who feels deeply about what happens to us.

Indeed, He cares enough about His creation to help us prepare for what is coming. As we shall discover in the final two chapters...

27

Lucifer's final moves –

THE BID TO CONTROL YOU!

Sergei Kirpotin of Tomsk State University in western Siberia and Judith Marquand of Oxford University reported in *New Scientist* on 11 August 2005, that the vast expanse of western Siberia was undergoing unprecedented thawing.

The area, which covers the entire sub-Arctic region of western Siberia, is the world's largest frozen peat bog. And scientists fear that as it thaws, it will release billions of tonnes of methane - a greenhouse gas 20 times more potent than carbon dioxide - into the atmosphere..

This is a scenario climate scientists have feared since first identifying “tipping points” - delicate thresholds where a slight rise in the Earth's temperature can cause a dramatic change in the environment that itself triggers a far greater increase in global temperatures.

For decades already climatologists had been puzzled about the steady retreat of glaciers the world over. On May 2nd, 2006, Red China reported that they had just completed a four-year study involving 681 weather stations. The study, according to Professor Dong Guangrong, concluded that the “roof of the world glacier” was melting rapidly at a rate of seven percent per year. (Xinhua News Agency, May 5, 2006, by Zhu Jin, Nanning, Red China) We are now seeing things we have never seen before.

A report, “Meeting The Climate Challenge”, aimed at policymakers in every country, has been largely ignored. It predicts that when the current average CO_2 content of the atmosphere of 279 ppm (parts per million) will have reached the magic number of 400, what is termed the irreversible “Venus Effect” will set in.

Solar thermal energy received by the Earth (as sun-rays) is in the visible part of the spectrum of electromagnetic waves; the heat radiated back into space from Earth is of infra-red wave lengths. Gas molecules like carbon dioxide (CO_2) or methane (CH_4) block such radiation. According to the report, heat trapped in the atmosphere by “greenhouse-gases” will lead to run-away temperature increases. They in turn will cause the melting of ice in the Western Antarctic and Greenland (not to mention the thermal expansion of water in the oceans!) and cause a sea-level rise of in excess of 10 meters (33 feet).

The influx of fresh-water will turn off (or alter - which amounts to the same thing) “thermohaline conveyor-belts” like the Gulf Stream in the Atlantic and El Nino in the Pacific. The feed-back caused thereby will lead to out-of-control warming of global climates and ultimately eradicate life “as we know it”. (Michael McCarthy, *The Independent* January 24, 2005).

As contradictory as it may appear - global warming is expected to cause drastic cooling in certain regions. These regions, as it happens, are home to a large fraction of humanity. Some 80 percent of all humans live at or close to the present-day sea level. What is worse, many of the largest agricultural regions lie also just a few meters above sea level.

At the present rate of CO_2 increase in the atmosphere of 3-4 ppm per annum, we will have reached the dreaded threshold in less than 30 years. If the thawing of the tundra in western Siberia is not just

local, but equally affects eastern Siberia, Alaska and northern Canada, the -30 year “grace period” for human life on earth as we know it will shrink to a mere fraction of this time-span.

Contrary to common belief it is not so much the emission of “greenhouse gases” by human activity and our way of life overall, that is really causing the climate change! Deforestation and pollution of the world’s oceans are the real reasons for the run-away climate change.

The beginning of thawing of the tundra is finally bringing justice into it all: it will not be our (grand-)children who will have to pay for our ways of life, but it seems possible that we ourselves are not only writing the bill, but will also have to settle it in our life-time!

Steve Connor, Science Editor of *The Independent*, reported on September 16, 2005 that satellites monitoring the Arctic had found that the extent of the sea ice that August had reached its lowest monthly point on record. It was the fourth year in a row that the sea ice volume in August had fallen below the monthly downward trend - a clear sign that melting had accelerated.

The record loss of sea ice in the Arctic that summer had convinced scientists that the northern hemisphere may have crossed a critical threshold beyond which the climate may never recover.

Can we stop this, reverse the trend? Humanly speaking, NO!

Do we blame God?

Where is God when disaster strikes?

What about the tsunami in Asia on December 26, 2004? Was that an act of God? Was it a judgment against the Hindus of India, the Muslims of Indonesia or the Buddhists of Thailand? In this whole

sad saga, did God determine which babies would be orphaned, who would be swept out to sea and who would be somehow spared? Was He responsible for setting the time clock for this to happen?

Do those two events - Jesus dying on the cross out of love for mankind – and the tsunami – have the same origin? Indeed, no!

The Lucifer Legion in action

Some have speculated that scientists were involved in the tsunami. Others that it was a natural tectonic adjustment.

But the *Intelligence Report* (the Bible) gives us some insight to what's going on here. It declares that when Lucifer was cast onto this earth, a “loud voice in heaven” was heard to say, “*Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and the sea, because the devil has gone down to you! He is filled with raging anger, because he knows that he has but a short time.*” (Revelation 12:12) He is declared to be “*the ruler of the kingdom of the air*” (Ephesians 2:2) and “*the prince of this world.*” (John 12:31) We are warned that “*the whole world is under the control of the evil one.*” (1 John 5:19)

Indeed, even now he is at work. In accidents and calamities by sea and land, in great fires, in fierce tornadoes, floods, tsunamis, and earthquakes, in every place and in a thousand forms, the Legion of Lucifer is exercising its power. The reign of evil must run its course until its time is due.

Again, the *Intelligence Report* informs us:

For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against wicked spirits in high places. (Ephesians 6:12)

The battle over every person

It is crucial to understand the great conflict going on between invisible agencies, the long running feud between loyal and disloyal super beings. Over every person they are striving. This is no make-believe conflict. It is not mimic battles in which we are engaged. We have to contend with the most powerful spirit enemies. But our individual destiny rests on each of us.

If we could only know the number of the Lucifer Legion, their devices and their activity, we would be far less laid back about this issue.

You'd better believe it. This guy Satan is more powerful than the president of the United States – or the pope. The evil entities over whom he rules do his bidding. They appoint human agencies. And they instigate all the evil we see in our world.

If Lucifer sees that he is in danger of losing one person, he will exert himself to the utmost to keep that one. And when the individual is aroused to his danger, and, with distress and determination, looks to Jesus for strength, Lucifer calls a reinforcement of his bullies to hedge in that person, and form a wall of darkness around him, determined that the Creator's light may not reach him.

But you can make it! When a person forgets his pride, admits his helplessness and asks Jesus Christ for rescue, a reinforcement of all-powerful angels is sent to his assistance and Satan and his host fall back.

Get this. It is a real battle under way. But Jesus has already met Lucifer head-on, with the fiercest that Lucifer could put up against him. And he won the victory for us.

Citizens of pagan New World

But the Legion of Lucifer will not give up without a titanic struggle.

Their agents are now focusing on your children. It is reported that 1,400 U.S. schools have accepted the ‘children’s global flag’ which is flying beside the national and state flags in government school classrooms. Schools which fly the flag have signed an agreement to teach children the moral code of ethics which includes world government and a pagan form of worship in which Mother Gaia (Mother Earth) is the fountainhead or source of life.

This program is designed to teach children an international mentality, and that they are children of a universal pagan deity. (*Update International*, Aug-Oct., 2003, p.16) - with a universal religion made from all kinds of faiths where neither the real Jesus nor true rescue can be found – just as is proposed by *The Da Vinci Code*.

This global religion will indeed emerge, headed by a man with the number 666. Says the prophecy: “*Here is the key; and let anyone who has understanding work out the number of the beast. The number represents a man’s name, and the numerical value of its letters is six hundred and sixty six.*” (Revelation 13:18)

Cracking the prophecy code

Can we know this man’s identity? Let’s crack the prophetic code. In Bible prophecy, a kingdom or political power is symbolized by an animal, a beast. (Daniel 7:23) (That is easy to understand. In our day, for example, a kangaroo symbolizes Australia.)

The “beast” power of Revelation is the same as the beast described in the book of Daniel. (Revelation 13:1; 17:3; Daniel 7:7) And Daniel furnishes us with a string of clues by which to identify it.

Riding (controlling) this beast is a corrupt woman (Revelation 17:3). The Bible explains itself, telling us that a woman is symbolic of a church. (Jeremiah 6:2; Isaiah 54:5,6; 2 Corinthians 11:2) Furthermore, this corrupt church is identified with a city (Revelation 17:18) – the same city that was reigning “over... the earth” when John wrote his prophecy, namely Rome.

This church of the beast sits on “seven mountains” (Revelation 17:9), the famous seven hills of Rome. So you have the church of Rome riding a political power. Isn’t that plain?

The man heading this system has a number. (Revelation 13:18) A footnote in the Catholic Bible says: “Verse 18, Six Hundred Sixty Six. The numerical letters of HIS NAME shall make up this number.” (Douay [Catholic] Bible. Note on Revelation 13:18)

The method of reading generally adopted is that known as GHEMATRIA of the rabbins, which assigns each letter of a name its usual numerical value, and gives the sum of such numbers as the equivalent of the NAME. (*Word Studies in the N.T.*, Marvin R. Vincent, D.D., notes on Revelation 13:18)

Roman Catholic sources are very helpful to us in deciphering this code. As early as last century an issue of a Catholic weekly published this information:

What are the letters supposed to be in the Pope’s crown, and what do they signify, if anything?

The letters inscribed in the Pope’s miter are these: VICARIUS FILII DEI, which is the Latin for ‘VICAR OF THE SON OF GOD.’ Catholics hold that the church, which is a visible society, must have a visible head.... Hence to the Bishop of Rome, as head of the

church, was given the title, ‘VICAR OF CHRIST’. (*Our Sunday Visitor*, “Bureau of Information”, Huntingdon, Ind., April 18, 1915)

This is the pope’s official title, used whenever a new pope is ordained. It has been seen both on a miter worn by the pope and also inscribed on a door of the Vatican. If we do as the Catholic Douay Bible tells us, and total the letters which have numerical values and count as zero those which don’t, this is the result:

V5	F0	D .500
I1	I1	E0
C ..100	L ..50	I <u>....1</u>
A.....0	I1	<u>501</u>
R0	I <u>....1</u>	
I1	<u>53</u>	
V.....5		
S.....0		
<u>112</u>		

Totalling these three we have:

112
53
501
666

Again, as the Catholic Bible says: “Verse 18, Six Hundred Sixty Six. The numerical letters of HIS NAME shall make up this number.” (Douay [Catholic] Bible. Note on Revelation 13:18)

Something else. Down through the years a number of coins and medals have been struck by the Vatican to highlight the alleged virtues and titles of the popes. The inscriptions and titles on these coins and medals are, of course, in Latin, but here are some of these translated into English:

HIS HOLINESS THE POPE
 VICAR OF JESUS CHRIST
 SUCCESSOR OF ST. PETER
 POSSESSOR OF THE KEYS
 HEAD OF VATICAN STATE
 SUPREME ROME PONTIFF
 SUN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS
 PATRIARCH OF THE WEST

The interesting point in each of these titles is that the English has 18 letters, and we know that $18 = 6 + 6 + 6$. What is more, it is possible to find 18 such English titles which each have 18 letters, suggesting once again the identity of the man whose number is 666.

To identify the man by this number, is not, however, sufficient. All other identification points must match. There is *only one* organization in the world that has fulfilled *all* 47 specifications of the prophecy.

The term “Antichrist” is often used to describe the religious leader of the predicted New World Order. The term “anti”, as used in the Bible, does not mean “against”, but “in place of”. Thus “Antichrist” refers to someone pretending to stand “in the place of” Christ,” “in place of the Son of God”. The title we have just examined, VICARIVS FILII DEI, translated into English, is “IN PLACE OF THE SON OF GOD”.

Displays anti-christ symbol

Pope Paul VI was the first to display the “broken cross”. He “made use of a sinister symbol, used by Satanists in the sixth century, that had been revived at the time of Vatican Two. This was a bent or broken cross, on which was displayed a repulsive and distorted figure of Christ, which the black magicians and sorcerers of the

Middle Ages had made use of to represent the Biblical ‘Mark of the Beast.’ Yet not only Paul VI, but his successors the two John Pauls, carried that object and held it up to be revered by crowds, who had not the slightest idea that it stood for anti-Christ.” (“Broken Cross Hidden Hand in the Vatican – Book Review for the Coming New World Order” [Radio Show Transcript] in Cathy Burns, *A One World Order is Coming – Who Will Rule?* 1997)

Appointed by the Legion of Lucifer

Biblical prophecy says that “his power, and his seat, and great authority” would be received from “the great dragon... that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan”. (Revelation 13:2; 12:9)

“Lucifer is God”

Radio journalist Pam Schuffert thought she had seen about everything. But her assignment in Germany sent her into shock. She issued this report:

In the five months I have been investigating and reporting from Germany, I have noted the rise in Satanism, Theosophy and esoteric teachings that once fuelled and fired Adolph Hitler and his previous Nazi, New World Order madness.

While interviewing one German Bundeswehr in Munich, he opened his wallet and pulled out his German ID card, required by all citizens. He showed me the back of his ID card. “What do you see?” he asked.

I held the card and studied it. All of a sudden, I was stunned. “I see the clear outline of Baphomet, the *Satanist* Pentagon goathead!”

He looked at me and said, “You are right... and it is on the back of every German’s ID card!”

When I started to show my German Christian friends, they were shocked... and sickened. NOW they understood what the strange symbol was on the back of their ID.

Earlier in the winter, in the Bavarian Alps (where Bavarian Thule and Illuminati originated, and with it the Hitler’s madness and the New World Order plan) I attended an outdoor ski festival. A stage was erected in the village square, and a band with young singers began to sing and play.

Suddenly, the song changed – and I heard the German words for “**6-6-6**” begin to be sung by the band. Immediately, I turned to look at the crowd. I noted how many began to sway and sing along as if mesmerised as the band belted out “*six-six-six*”.

This confirmed what a missionary had reported earlier... how **666** was being glorified now in Germany. Many cities are sponsoring esoteric festivals, such as Murnau, in which are emerging teachings that harmonise with the idea that ***Lucifer is God.*** (Pam, Schuffert, *An American Holocaust and Satanism in America Today*. Reported in *Update International*, February-April 2003)

Lucifer worship exploding

Interest in witchcraft continues to skyrocket among children – our future population. Across America, Satanic temples are filling with youngsters clamoring for instruction in summoning and conjuring. Today, more than 14 million children belong to the Church of

Satan, thanks largely to the fictional boy wizard, Harry Potter, popularised in books. “Harry is an absolute godsend to our cause,” said High Priest Egan of the First Church of Satan, at Salem, Massachusetts.

With membership in Satanic temples reaching critical mass in some areas, many children have been impelled to start their own organization to worship the Lord of Lies.

Houston 11-year-old Bradley Winters, who purchased *Goblet of Fire* with his own allowance money at the stroke of midnight on July 8, 2000, organized his own club, ‘*Potteries to destroy Jesus*’, with his neighborhood pals. An admission fee of **\$6.66** grants membership to any applicant willing to curse the name of God and have a lightning bolt carved into his or her forehead with an iron dagger. (*Orion* news report, May 2001)

Here let it be noted that the Bank of Canada recently put into circulation its new 20 dollar bill. In the upper right hand corner of the bill are what look like Braille indentations, even though there is no such Braille pattern. These indentations are arranged like the number six domino, and there are three sets of them. These bills are marked with 666 or the number of the beast. The large number 20 on the front of the bill is filled in with a pattern that looks like a snake skin, and as if this serpentine design is not bad enough, the back of the bill features numerous gargoyles and several demonic faces. This is Illuminati witchcraft of the first magnitude.

Not only have the Legion of Lucifer driven mankind to mock and defy the Creator. It is becoming obvious that Satan is working hard and fast to revive and completely rebuild all of his old religions and to merge them into a one-world religion. The whole world is under the continual pressure of a sinister force to bring forth the antichrist governance. Anything to do with Christianity must be eradicated from all public forums while non-Christian religions are

promoted as a positive multi-cultural experience. This system will tolerate all religions – except Christianity.

The ultimate aim

Said Robert Muller, former Assistant Secretary General of the United Nations: “We must move as quickly as possible to a one-world government; a one-world religion; under a one world leader.” (Dr Catby Burns, *A One World Order is Coming*, p. 6)

As to what manner of leadership is being mooted, consider this statement from Paul Henry Spaak, the former Secretary General of NATO, who as early as 1957 said: “What we want is a man of sufficient stature to hold the allegiance of the people, and to lift us out of the economic morass into which we are sinking... Send us such a man, and be he God or the Devil, we will receive him.” (*Ibid.*, pp.53,54)

A New World Order will be enforced. Penalties upon dissenters will become increasingly severe, with economic sanctions, at first, and ultimately the death penalty decreed.

But Lucifer’s supreme power is short-lived. Suddenly all hell breaks loose. World trade collapses, religious extremism mounts and the planet is plunged into “a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time.” (Daniel 12:1; Matthew 24:21) The Bible predicts that so great will be the devastation that unless the conflict is halted, no life will be left on earth. (Matthew 24:22) It will be stopped – just in time, but only because of the supernatural intervention of the Creator.

Undoubtedly, human history is racing toward some appalling catastrophe.

The good news is that the Bible has clearly foreseen these events. It offers evidence that the Creator is still in control – and will do what man cannot do – act decisively to save the human race from total destruction.

His power will be broken

Then Satan's power over the air, the earth and the sea will be broken forever.

The ultimate fate of every nation does not rest in the hands of the unbeliever, but in those faithful to the Supreme One. (Genesis chapter 18)

A word to every “pretend” believer

However, let this be understood. Many who call themselves by His name have not walked in harmony with their Maker. The Supreme One will permit disasters so as to wake us up. Judgment will come upon the nations because many who have called themselves “Christian” have not walked according to their Maker's guidelines.

Yet our Creator cares about us all:

If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land. (2 Chronicles 7:14)

When Hurricane Charley slammed into Florida in mid-August 2004, battering the state with up to 100 mph winds that knocked over signs, uprooted trees, and left thousands of homes destroyed or uninhabitable, one billboard on Sand Lake Road in Orlando survived the onslaught relatively unscathed.

The storm peeled off the most recent advertising message displayed on the board, however, revealing in its place a previous ad:

WE NEED TO TALK. GOD.



Isn't it time we started listening?

Overcoming fear

A young mother in West Sussex, England expressed the fears raging within many of us:

I have found this constant talk of war, weapons of mass destruction, terror attacks, and the end of the world, very frightening. It seems every time you open a newspaper or switch on the news there is more bad news.

It had totally taken over my otherwise rational thinking to the point where I avoided buying a newspaper and left the

room when the news comes on. I had lain awake at night unable to sleep because of the thought whizzing around in my head... we're all going to die...

Then I heard a talk on Matthew 24:22-23, explaining that while it was prophesied that there will be a world conflict centering on the Middle East, 'such as the world had never seen before', the Lord was going to shorten this trouble by his return, otherwise 'no flesh would have survived'. It was explained that the whole reason for Jesus' return is to stop the human race from destroying itself.

I wish I had known this before... It was such a relief to hear these words from Scripture. I got myself a copy of the address and anytime I get frightened I read it over and over again. I really do feel as if a black cloud has been lifted and replaced by a ray of sunshine.

Are you worried about *what's* coming? I am more interested in *who's* coming.

Intervention coming

The promised return of Jesus Christ to end Lucifer's reign of terror is fast approaching. In fact, his return is the second most-mentioned subject in all biblical prophecy.

To the unprepared, this will be unexpected. It will catch the world by surprise.

Every one is soon to witness it. The staggering brightness of his coming flashes from horizon to horizon. (Luke 17:24) The atmosphere is charged with brilliant glory like lightning. The atmosphere

disintegrates with a roar and the elements melt. An unprecedented earthquake leaves the world in a state of total destruction.

In Isaiah 24, you will find this description of the event:

Verse 1 – perfect description of a pole shift.

Verse 2 – everybody will be affected by it worldwide.

Verse 3 – the earth’s surface is going to be broken to pieces.

Verse 4 – the pride of man will be humbled.

Verse 5 – God’s law has been violated. Millions of people continue to transgress God’s holy law, believing lying preachers who have convinced them that *love* and *grace* have replaced *obedience*. Many will awaken with an awful shock!

Verse 6 – the falling meteorites, tidal waves, floods, fires, earthquakes, and so on, will destroy multitudes... and FEW will be left (as is also predicted in Revelation 9:18).

Verses 7 to 17 – great sorrow, mourning and weeping will be heard... soon. It will then be TOO late to call upon God. This is judgment day. Lying preachers have deceived millions of Christians (who won’t diligently study for themselves) into believing they will escape all these calamities through the so-called “secret rapture”, which history reveals is a human invention concocted by a Catholic priest in the year 1590.

Verse 18 – there is no escaping what is soon to come. The underground bunkers won’t help. The elite will be trapped in them.

Verses 19 and 20 – describes how the earth will look... soon.

Divine judgment is always deserved, inescapable, and selective. God will find the wrong-doers wherever they hide. And He will locate individuals He considers deserving of His mercy, no matter where they may live on this earth.

So it is written. So it shall be. The Legion of Lucifer and all sin will be brought to an end. And this earth will be made safe for eternity. One wrong-doer, if left on this planet, would be a deadly

virus forever threatening the universe. So it is the Creator's plan to blot it out of existence for all time.

The final move is His

Yes, the final move is His. And you can trust Him to do it right.

Did you hear of what happened to some people in Japan? They were a Christian group who had just completed a new church building when the commander of a nearby army base ordered it torn down because it was so close to the military installation. Tearfully they removed every board and rebuilt their sanctuary at a much less convenient site a number of miles away.

Three weeks later America's first atomic bomb exploded over the area where the church had first stood.

Yes, you can trust your Maker to overrule and do everything right.

Blondin, the celebrated aerial performer, made arrangements to walk across a cable stretched over Niagara Falls. He was to push a wheelbarrow across, and there was to be a man in the wheelbarrow.

Every detail was carefully perfected, except for finding a man willing to be the passenger. Despite the promise of an attractive financial reward, no man would volunteer. Newspapers featured the event. Public speakers referred to it. One in particular was loud in voicing his conviction that Mr Blondin would easily accomplish the journey across the cable, wheelbarrow, passenger and all.

Finally the day arrived for the performance. But still no one had been found to serve as passenger in the wheelbarrow, even though the wheel was grooved to fit the cable.

A large offer was made to the huge crowd before Blondin was to start. There was no response.

Then someone noticed the public speaker who had been so positive in announcing his conviction that the venture would be a success. Immediately the crowd began to urge him to get into the wheelbarrow. He could not be persuaded. His faith in the undertaking stopped where the real hazard began.

However, Mr Blondin went across the cable, because he had been walking cables for many years. He had faith that he could do it again, and he did.

The Deliverer is able to keep His promise and get you across successfully to the new earth. Just trust Him.

28

From fear to confidence –

HISTORY'S COMING INTERRUPTION

One evening I was concluding a lecture at Macquarie University in Sydney, Australia. I had just read out to the audience this biblical prophecy:

First I want you to know that in the last days there shall come scoffers, following their own passions and saying, “So Jesus promised to come back, did he? He’ll never come! Why, ever since the days of our forefathers, everything has remained as it was since the first day of creation.”

They deliberately ignore this fact: that by the word of his command God created the heavens and caused the earth to form out of the waters, and the waters to surround it. And that later God did destroy the world with a mighty flood, And the earth and the heavens that now exist are by his command stored up for burning, reserved till the judgment day, when all ungodly men will perish. (2 Peter 3:3-7)

This prophecy clearly states that in the closing scenes of earth’s history, men will ridicule the idea of Creation and the Flood – trusting rather in evolutionary concepts. *“In the last days there will come scoffers.”*

As the lecture ended, I invited live audience questions. A smart,

well-dressed gentleman seated three rows back rose to his feet.

“I am Doctor Ritchie, curator of the Sydney Museum,” he began. “This talk of a Great Flood is nonsense, all nonsense.” And the good man engaged in a tirade of scoffing. Then he took his seat.

Thanking him for his statement, I then turned to the audience, reminding them of this prophecy, that in the last days there would come scoffers. “And tonight you have seen this prophecy come true.”

Perhaps scoffers should keep quiet – and then the prophecy would fail. But by their scoffing they actually bring about the fulfillment.

A world scoop

You can soon be richer than a millionaire. Here's the secret.

At this moment you hold in your hands a package of such immense value that it would make Rockefeller look like a pauper. It is a package of prophecies that are coming true like clockwork. With Bible prophecy, you have a source of **INSIDE INFORMATION** that is a real scoop - **ADVANCE INFORMATION**.

Do you realize what an edge this will give you on the average person? You can know before the best media reporters what's going to happen.

This is a century teeming with dramatic events. Millions sense that something enormous is about to occur. Many people sense we are at the end of an age.

When you go on a long journey, you know by the road signs when you are nearing your destination. *The Intelligence Report* furnishes us with “signs” of the approaching end of our journey through

predicted history. The general expectation of those who know Bible prophecy is that the time for Jesus' return is close. The conditions long ago predicted are now with us. Here are some of them:

Signs of the approaching climax

1. *Great increase in war* (Matthew 24:6,7)

Fulfillment: There have been only two WORLD WARS in history, and both occurred within the past century. Since then, in more than one hundred local wars, more people have died than in the whole of World War 2. The 20th century was the bloodiest century in all of history.

2. *Increase in earthquakes* (v.7)

Fulfillment: Earthquakes have increased dramatically in the past decades. In the early eighties there were 9,842 earthquakes recorded on planet earth. This has increased, until the year 2001 saw 21,988 earthquakes recorded. Scientists are reported to be disturbed at the accelerating increase of earthquakes.

In 2006, there were more than 450 significant earthquakes every thirty days in various places throughout the world. (U.S. Geological Survey, Isis Seismic Monitor, May 6, 2006) This was up from an average of 350 per month just one year before.

One is tempted to ask, could this be the build up to the super earthquake that is to bring down all the cities of the world? (Revelation 16:18, 19)

3. *Gigantic explosion of knowledge and travel* (Daniel 12:4)

Fulfillment: Today we are witnessing an explosion in human inventiveness. Man has made more spectacular advancements in science, medicine, transport, communication, and every other area of knowledge in the past century than he has for several thousand years.

4. *Man will acquire the capacity to destroy the earth.* (Revelation 11:18)

Fulfillment: The rate at which we are knocking down forests and our emission of fossil fuel gases and chemicals into the atmosphere over the past 150 years is now about to catch us.

Man-made pollution is making many localities unfit for life. Man-made salinity is producing permanent deserts. Each year, vast tracts of the world's productive land suffer devastation on an almost thermonuclear scale. An expanse one third larger than Australia's entire cropped area, some 27 million hectares, is lost to food production each year worldwide, according to the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP). Desertification is the reality of human misery on an unprecedented scale. At present rates of destruction, within two centuries there will not be one single hectare of productive land left in the world, the UNEP calculates.

Man's destruction of the earth is at an advanced stage, and may be irreversible. Even without considering Bible predictions, it appears there will be an end - and soon.

5. *Disasters caused by sea and wave* (Luke 21:25,26)

Fulfillment: The tsunami which struck Asia on December 26, 2004, was one of the worst natural disasters in history. Over 300,000 were killed, with millions left injured and homeless. Scientists are predicting that others will follow.

6. *Fear will spread concerning earth's dangerous future.* (Luke 21:25,26)

Fulfillment: We now have the nuclear bomb, a diminishing ozone layer, a greenhouse effect, worldwide pollution, worldwide economic difficulties, and worldwide terrorism. It is almost an understatement to say that there is great fear and perplexity in today's world.

7. *Conflicts between capitalistic and labor classes* (James 5:1-6)

Fulfillment: The prophecy that rich men would be heaping treasure while the poor suffer has never been truer than now. Today gigantic corporations control the world's markets – financial systems that are focused on gaining a total monopoly of the world's wealth and power. Today as never before, the majority of the world's wealth is controlled by only a small minority of men. They create money out of thin air and lend this credit to the nations, who are kept poor by the demand for annual interest.

8. *Increasing corruption and violence, moral and spiritual decline* (2 Timothy 3:1-13; Matthew 24:37; compare Genesis 6:12,13)

Fulfillment: In spite of the most ingenious and costly equipment for the fighting of crime – violence, robbery, murder, rape, drugs, and so on, are increasing at an alarming rate.

9. *Evolution theory will dominate intellectual attitudes.* (2 Peter 3:3-7)

10. *Materialism will become widespread.* (Luke 17:26-30, 18:8)

11. *Revival of the occult* (1 Timothy 4:1; Matthew 24:24-26; Revelation 18:23)

12. *Pestilence epidemics* (Matthew 24:6,7)

Fulfillment: Today we have the AIDS virus that is affecting 6,000 new young people every day – that’s four every minute. We also have the Ebola virus, Mad Cow disease, and what scientists call super bugs – viruses that are becoming immune to the strongest antibiotics.

13. *The long foreign domination of Jerusalem will cease.* (Luke 21:24, 29-32; Ezekiel 37:21)

Fulfillment. Almost 2,000 years ago, when the Jewish nation lost its position as the Messiah's special agency, its people were scattered worldwide and Jerusalem was trodden down by Gentiles. No nation in history has ever regained nationhood after a worldwide dispersal, let alone a dispersal lasting almost 2,000 years.

The modern ending of “the times of the Gentiles” (nations) cannot be ignored, but must be viewed as clear evidence that the wind-up of history has begun.

14. *Preparations for a world government, world economy and world religious coalition* (Revelation chs. 13 and 17)

Fulfillment: On all three fronts this is occurring. If you didn’t know, the Order of the Illuminati has established six global goals, the sixth of which is:

The Order desires the Vatican to be the fountainhead and headquarters of the New World religion, and intends that the Pontiff of the Roman church become the supreme Pontiff of the whole world. (Texe Marrs, *The Millennium*. Austin, TX.: Living Truth Ministries Publisher, pp. 95,96)

This has been long in the planning. And it is coming. You’d better believe it.

Tell me, how many of the above predictions are now reality? One of them? Six of them? All fourteen? Surely this partial list makes the point. The Bible predicts that world conditions will become increasingly perilous as the climax of history draws near.

Both sides are marshalling their forces. And here's another prophecy:

15. *A final global alert will be sounded, proclaiming that the return of Christ is imminent* (Revelation 14: 6,7; Matthew 24:14)

Is this alert being given? If you haven't heard it, you soon will!

And more prophesied events

In fact, 52 major signs could be listed. All the prophecies have been – or are being - fulfilled except those few that concern the last, rapid events in earth's history. This is a ***very sure indication*** that Jesus is coming SOON!

The conflict is accelerating to a fearful climax. And as we near the wind-up of history, the Creator of our world has issued a warning of global peril more dangerous than any natural disaster. **EVENTS ARE SOON TO BREAK WHICH WILL STAGGER YOU.**

It will eventually boil over, igniting a horrendous end-time conflagration that will bring the human race to the verge of extinction.

Are you in shock? From County Down, Britain, one man admitted:

“I had looked upon much of the Bible as being a collection of myths. But as we look around and see its prophecies being fulfilled, I am having doubts about this view. The thought keeps coming to my mind, ‘What if I am wrong and the Bible is true after

all?’ I have to honestly admit to myself that this is a serious possibility.”

Every method of computation points to one conclusion: we are now facing the consummation, which we are approaching at break neck speed.

God is in charge of history and He has warned us that the last movements will be rapid ones.

He is making bold moves and the Legion of Lucifer is responding with desperate countermoves on all fronts. Satan’s time is running out. And he knows it!

Toward the end of World War 2, as Hitler contemplated possible defeat, he remarked, “If I go down, I will drag the whole world down with me.”

That is also the aim of the Master Deceiver. His hope is to keep men and women safely tranquilized until time has run out and it is too late. If he can't have people by choice, he'll do it by force, or by deception.

This plan is meeting with phenomenal success. Many have become spiritual appeasers, no longer able to discern right from wrong, truth from error, safety from danger.

Be sure of this: Human history is soon to be interrupted. Jesus is coming back to planet earth! The Creator is working in accordance with a master plan. And in His foreknowledge He has already fixed the schedule of last day events.

Just bear this in mind. The Bible HAS NEVER MADE A MISTAKE!!! Even when foretelling events thousands of years into the future. So accepting divine prophecy is not bathing yourself in

fantasy. You are seizing an advantage. You are reading history ahead of time. More importantly, it could save your life.

What you can do

In practical terms, what can we do? The whole world is in a mess.

Our age is pinning its hope for the future on science and God is left out entirely; people appear to be through with God, but they will yet find that God is not through with them.

Should I be reluctant to accept the truth because a few ideas are not clear? Is that a safe position when reason and consistency require that we accept the weight of evidence? Would it be reasonable for a schoolboy to decide against the science of arithmetic because he has come to a problem that he cannot solve? Although there might remain a few points unexplainable to our minds, should we allow these points to shake our confidence in plain and unmistakable evidences?

If any man comes to the claims of Jesus Christ wanting to know if they are true, and willing to follow his teachings if they are true, he will soon *know*.

So, you want a solution? Here are three common sense suggestions:

1. Develop a relationship with the One who loves you the most – your Creator.
2. Become engaged in the most important work on earth – helping to spread the good news of His coming intervention.
3. Look for opportunities to relieve the suffering of others.

YES, THERE IS HOPE. Although nothing can save the world from its inevitable end, the way of rescue for the individual man or

woman is still open. There is a way from hopelessness to hope. Sin and rebellion, heartache and death, are on the way out.

So get yourself ready for it... the biggest spectacle this world has ever seen.

* * * * *

A self help manual

If life isn't working for you, why not consult the best self-help book ever published. Millions of copies are in circulation. Its words have been around for thousands of years. It is your Bible, no less!

A perpetual best-seller, it is crammed with practical, down-to-earth tips from your Maker.

It records vital and profound lessons from real people. It can help us see and avoid the pitfalls that come with doing things our own way.

It is packed with sound help on how to guarantee happy families, marriages and friendships, how to successfully rear children, how to manage your finances and succeed on the job, how to maintain your health, and much more. In a word, how to make life work.

Dan Brown's *Da Vinci Code* can't light a candle to that!

EPILOGUE

So! We have peered into the *Da Vinci Code*... Dan Brown's code! And discovered the REAL cover-up... the *secret that men kill to protect*.

What is more, the *Da Vinci Code* offers no hope, no enlightenment, no rescue for this world. At best Plantard, Brown and Company offer only a new age of Merovingian rule on the thrones of Europe and Israel.

But the Book that Brown tried to discredit has come out of this whole mess looking astonishingly robust.

You can be confident that the Bible, which continues to outsell Brown's novel, is historically reliable. You can also be certain that the Bible has remained functionally identical for almost 2,000 years.

And its star Jesus Christ emerges as a sensible, plausible and urgent hope for a world gone insane! Rescue from the chains that bind us and the opportunity for unending life! In any case, when you think about it, what other option have we?

Very well, so you wanted evidence? Now it's in your hands!

With my best wishes to you and yours,
Sincerely,
Jonathan Gray

Appendix A

DID THE GOSPELS BORROW FROM THE ESSENES?

Question: Have you heard of an Essene text from 100 BC which may have been the forerunner of the Gospel of John? Who were the Essenes?

Answer: The Essenes were a sect of Judaism that existed from sometime in the second century before Christ up to AD 70. Most scholars agree that the community at Qumran near the Dead Sea (whence came the Dead Sea Scrolls) was an Essene group.

In their scrolls is mention of somebody termed the “Teacher of Righteousness” and another person called the “Wicked Priest”. The former refers to either the man who founded the Essene sect, or to a messianic hope. These terms are code names for persons unknown. There is no proven connection with Jesus Christ or with any other identifiable person.

Question: What connection did Jesus have with them? Did Christianity have its origins at Qumran?

Answer: There is *no* evidence that Jesus was an Essene. On the contrary, there is a lot of evidence indicating he could not have been.

The Dead Sea Scrolls also confirm that Qumran was not the source of early Christianity. There are significant differences between their concept of the “Teacher of Righteousness” and the Jesus revealed in Scripture and early Christianity. The differences

are enough to show that early Christianity was not just an offshoot of the Essenes, as has been theorized. (C. Billington, "The Dead Sea Scrolls in Early Christianity," *IBA*, January-March 1996, pp. 8-10)

Here are the *facts*:

1. The Essenes lived in desert isolation, having little or no contact with outsiders. Jesus and his disciples, on the other hand, mixed freely with people of all levels of society. Jesus spoke with Gentiles, something the Essenes would have regarded as abhorrent.
2. The Essenes were not to visit the Temple in Jerusalem (because it was polluted). But Jesus and his followers often frequented the Temple.
3. The Essenes were not to eat or socialize with people outside their community, but to observe a rigid, ascetic lifestyle. Jesus ate with publicans and sinners.
4. The Essenes were exclusivistic regarding women, sinners, and outsiders; Jesus was inclusive.
5. The Essenes were legalistic Sabbatarians; Jesus was not. The Essenes, avid law-keepers, criticized the Pharisee sect as being too lax in the way they observed the law. However, Jesus rebuked the Pharisees for their extreme legalism in observing the law.
6. The Essenes stressed Jewish purification laws; Jesus attacked them.
7. Jesus observed the major religious festivals at the same time as the general Jewish community. The festival dates were governed by the lunar-solar Hebrew calendar. The Essenes' festivals were observed often at a time quite different, since they followed a purely solar calendar.

8. The Essenes were divided into a strict hierarchical order of four classes: priests, Levites, lay members and applicants. Jesus established no such official ranking among his disciples.

9. The Essene doctrine rested on the concept that man is born either just or unjust; there is no crossing the line. This led the Essenes to emphasize hating one's enemies. Jesus Christ taught the opposite, stressing a message of love and repentance (turning).

10. The Essenes believed two messiahs would come; Christians held that Jesus was the only one. (James Charlesworth, *Jesus and the Dead Sea Scrolls*. New York: Doubleday, 1992)

Any similarities between the New Testament and the Dead Sea Scrolls were not due to one borrowing from the other, but were due to the common theological background to all religious groups in Palestine prior to the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70. They all used and revered the Scriptures we call the Old Testament.

Appendix B

THE BIBLE TELLS IT AS IT IS

The Bible deals quite frankly with the wrong doings of its characters. Just read the biographies of today, and notice how they try to cover up, overlook or ignore the shady side of people. Or consider the respected literary geniuses; see how most are painted as saints. The Bible does not record things that way. It simply tells it like it is:

The sins of the people are denounced – Deuteronomy 9:24

The wrong doings of the patriarchs are exposed – Genesis 12:11-13; 49:5-7

The Gospel writers portray their own faults and the faults of the apostles – Matthew 8:10-26; 26:31-56; Mark 6:52; 8:18; Luke 8:24,25; 9:40-45; John 10:6; 16:32

They record the disorder of the churches – 1 Corinthians 1:11; 15:12; 2 Corinthians 2:4; etc.

Why did the Gospel writers include the passages about the disciples abandoning Jesus or Peter denying him with curses? Simply because the Bible has the habit of telling it like it is.

In all literature, it has no like or equal.

Words and deeds that were an embarrassment to the Christian writers are *not* likely to have been *invented* by them. These brand the New Testament books with the ring of authenticity.

Appendix C

BIBLICAL “AMEN” COPIED FROM EGYPTIAN PAGANISM?

Objection: In Revelation 3:14 Jesus is called “The Amen” (AMON). You just can't seem to get away from Egypt's religion.

Answer: To understand this term “The Amen”, let's take an example from the English language. In English the word “see” means “look” or “behold”, but the same word “see” in Latin means “seat”. Here we have “see” in two different languages, but there is no connection between them. One was NOT copied from the other.

Likewise, “Amen” in the Hebrew language has no connection with “Amen” (“Amon”) in Egyptian. The expression “Amen” in the book of Revelation, is a Greek transliteration of the Hebrew word which means “truly” or “truth”. Jesus actually stated, “I AM the truth”. Claimed by Jesus as a title, it means “God of truth”, stressing His faithfulness or reliability.

The word or root of the Egyptian “amen” (or “amon”), means ‘what is hidden.’

Although there is no connection between the Egyptian word and the Hebrew word, it is an interesting fact that both words legitimately apply to different aspects of one and the same God. When the earliest Egyptians used the word “Amen” (“Amon”) they spoke of the invisible Creator. They were initially monotheists, who believed in the Creator - and knew Him by the

title of “Amon”. Indeed, it wasn't just the Egyptians who had this knowledge - from the beginning of time, the whole world knew of, and believed in, the unseen Creator.

It was only later that polytheism, with its hundreds of pagan gods and images, emerged as religious understanding deteriorated. This gradual degeneration from monotheism to polytheism is historically traced. (See Jonathan Gray, *Stolen Identity*, chapter 8 - <<http://www.beforeus.com/stolen-id.php>>)

Jesus' claim to have come from this same ONE Creator God, was not an adaptation from paganism. The Bible states that, as the Son of God, Jesus was in the “express image” (the “exact likeness”) of the invisible Creator. The Egyptian word “Amen” was therefore applicable to Him, if He chose to use it.

It was not a pagan invention. It harmonises with an aspect of God known by all nations from the beginning.

However, the bottom line is that Jesus' use of the term “Amen” did *not* have its roots in Egypt. In its own right, it was a Hebrew word which described perfectly an aspect of the One God.

BOOK OF REVELATION COPIED FROM EGYPTIAN MANUSCRIPT?

Question: I also heard that a book about ‘the secrets of Osiris and Isis’ is the pre-christian book of Revelation. What do you think?

Answer: What I think, matters not. Important only are the *facts*. And the *fact* is that the books of the Bible, including Revelation, bear no relationship to any Egyptian manuscript. They are as opposite as is night from day. Rather, Revelation updates two Old Testament prophetic books – Ezekiel and Daniel.

The unique prophecies of Revelation – uncannily fulfilled – and the book’s numeric code – which cannot be duplicated – stamp Revelation (and, for that matter, the whole Bible) as of another origin, of another kind.

Appendix D

THE LANGUAGE OF THE NEW TESTAMENT MANUSCRIPTS

Question: The thing that puzzles me the most of late is language. Jesus Christ did not speak Greek as far as we know, but Aramaic. At the age of twelve he was speaking in the temple, discussing the scriptures which were in Aramaic and Hebrew. He preached to great multitudes for two years, yet he quoted from the Greek Septuagint (LXX) which was translated prior to his birth, because, so we are told, the average man in the Roman Empire spoke Greek and could not read the scriptures in Hebrew. If Jesus spoke Aramaic and his disciples also spoke Aramaic, and the great multitudes spoke Aramaic, yet how is it that the New Testament was written in Greek by uneducated Hebrew fishermen?

Answer: In the time of Jesus Christ and the apostles, Greek was the universal language of the Roman Empire. In local areas, other local languages were also spoken (thus, in Palestine, the Jews spoke Aramaic, the language of the country).

There is now mounting archaeological evidence that Greek was widely used in cities of Galilee. Sepphoris, only four miles from Jesus' home town of Nazareth, was such a Hellenistic city. It now appears likely that Jesus knew Greek as a second language. In fact, the parables and maxims recorded in the Gospels - their assonance, resonance and rhythm demonstrate a clever play with words, not typical of the belaboured prose a translator often produces. This suggests that Jesus, versed in Aramaic, may as well have employed Greek in his discourses.

The common people throughout the empire spoke “the koine dialektos”, or, briefly, Koine, the “common one” - a version of Greek which was a common mixture of dialects. This was the language in which the disciples wrote. It was a language that everyone could read and understand.

This is also why most New Testament quotations from the Old Testament are from the LXX translation into Greek. Since the LXX was a translation and not an original Greek work, it introduced to the Greek-speaking world many Hebrew and Aramaic theological concepts and expressions. Thus it furnished the early Christians with theological terminology in Greek that already was familiar among Hellenistic Jews. In this way it became a medium in the hands of the apostles for proclaiming the teachings of Christ to the Jews of the Dispersion in terms they understood everywhere. Furthermore, from Mesopotamia to Italy the LXX was the Bible for millions of Jews. Hence, most of the Old Testament quotations in the New Testament are given according to the LXX.

Appendix E

A PARABLE: GOOD WORKS CANNOT SAVE US

A man goes to heaven and St. Peter meets him at the Pearly Gates. St. Peter says, “Here's how it works. You need 100 points to make it into heaven. You tell me all the good things you've done, and I will give you a certain number of points for each item, depending on how good it was. When you reach 100 points, you get in.”

“Okay,” the man says, “I was married to the same woman for 50 years and never cheated on her, even in my heart.” “That's wonderful,” says St. Peter, “that's worth three points!”

“Three points?” he says. “Well, I attended church all my life and supported its ministry with my tithe and service.”

“Terrific!” says St. Peter. “That's certainly worth a point.”

“One point!?! I started a soup kitchen in my city and worked in a shelter for homeless veterans.”

“Fantastic, that's good for two more points,” he says.

“Two points!?!?” Exasperated, the man cries. “At this rate the only way I'll get into heaven is by the mercy of God.”

“Bingo, 100 points! Come on in!”

Appendix F

THE MEN BEHIND DA VINCI CODE

Just as a matter of interest, below are the people behind the distribution of the *Da Vinci Code* hoax.

I was stunned to discover that every one of these organizations and people is Jewish. This I had not previously suspected. We love the Jewish people. After all, Jesus was a Jew and came to rescue Jews. But we are distressed by the activities of some individuals and their organizations. Certainly one could have no brief against the sincere members of the Jewish community. Rather, it is a minority of men with an agenda, whose motives, actions and influence might well call for investigation. Strangely enough, one could pity such men in their turmoil. Even love them, pray for them.

Ever since the Jewish hierarchy rejected Jesus Christ and cursed those who accept him, there has persisted on the part of some leaders a concerted hate campaign toward Jesus and Christianity. The *Da Vinci Code* would appear to be a conscious part of this campaign.

Let the reader draw his or her own conclusions of what that might mean.

By Ted Pike (forwarded by email May 30, 2006:)

Almost everyone realizes the *Da Vinci Code* is an unprecedented attack on Christianity and Jesus Christ. But most people don't know that the media giants orchestrating this attack are Jewish.

Sony Corporation, the force behind the *Da Vinci Code* movie, is the eye of this Jewish promotional octopus. In the late 1980s, Sony of Japan bought out Metro Goldwyn Meyer, Columbia Pictures, and United Artists. Former president of Jewish-owned CBS, Howard Stringer (a Jew), became second in command of Sony International. He is chair and CEO of Sony of America. (*Standard & Poor's Register*, 2006)

Sony of America is dominated by Jewish names. Emily Susskind is president. Robert Wiesenthal is executive VP and chief financial officer; Nicole Seligman is executive VP and general counsel. Phil Weiser is CTO and senior VP. Michael Fidler Jr. is senior VP. Jay Samit is general manager of Connect. Gretchen Griswold is director of corporate communications. (*Ibid.*, and *LexisNexis*, Corporate Affiliations International, volume 8, 2005)

Sony's subsidiary, Columbia Pictures, maker of the *Da Vinci Code* movie, is headed by Amy Pascal, a Jew. She is also chairman of Sony's Motion Picture Group. (*LexisNexis*, Corporate Affiliations International, volume 8, 2005) The producer of the film is Brian Grazer, a Jew.

The screenplay was written by well-known Jewish screenwriter Akiva Goldsman.

A media octopus

While originating with Sony, the *Da Vinci Code*'s promotion is a many-pronged attack on Christianity coming from the Jewish media community.

Sony worked closely with NBC in promotion of NBC/Universal's anti-Christ Book of Daniel last winter. Now NBC, presided over by its Jewish head of television programming, Jeff Zukor, has

lavishly promoted Sony's *Da Vinci Code* movie on NBC. This past week, Today Show host Matt Lauer led the nation on a European 'treasure hunt' in the steps of the *Code*. CBS, presided over by Jewish Sumner Redstone, and ABC, by Jewish Michael Eisner, have helped build a firestorm of public curiosity about the book and movie.

Mega book sales

The largest Jewish publishing houses reap staggering profits from sales of *Da Vinci Code* books. Jewish Joel Klein is chairman of American operations of Bertelsmann A.G., the largest publishing conglomerate in the world. Random House, which the *Encyclopedia Judaica* confirms is Jewish-owned and controlled, is part of this consortium, benefiting by massive distribution advantages. (*Encyclopedia Judaica*, "Publishing.")

Random House owns rights to produce all large-print copies of the *Da Vinci Code*. As a division of Random House, Doubleday owns rights to produce all regular-print and special collector's editions of the book. Finally, Anchor Books, another venerable Jewish publishing house and subsidiary of Random House completes this Jewish monopoly by printing all paperback copies.

Jewish-controlled magazines also hype the Code. Some 50 popular magazines, including *Time*, *Life*, and *People*, are owned by Time/Warner, with Jewish Norman Pearlstein, editor in chief. *Newsweek*, published by Jewish Donald Graham's *Washington Post*, has featured recent conspicuous articles enticing millions to purchase the book or see the movie.

Articles too numerous to mention continue to emerge from Jewish-controlled newspapers. These include those owned by the Samuel Newhouse chain, the *New York Times*, the *Boston Globe*, the *New*

York Review of Books, the *Village Voice*, etc. All have been intensifying interest in the *Da Vinci Code*'s blasphemous message. The *New York Times* praised the book as "impeccably researched," despite the *Code*'s outrageous claims.... These media voices, which reflected so gravely on possible anti-Semitism in Mel Gibson's *Passion of the Christ*, have not a word of concern about the *Code*'s rabid anti-Christianity. That's because they share it.

Attacks on Christ converge

In a previous e-alert, I documented how Jews helped the National Geographic Society to bring the "Gospel of Judas" blasphemy to the attention of the world (See, "Judas: Historic Jewish Hero"). I revealed how NGS' prestigious Codex advisory panel, the driving force behind promotion of this sacrilege, is top heavy with Jewish names.

Such fevered Christ-bashing continues a pattern of stepped-up attacks by Jewish activists over the past six months:

* Last November, Abe Foxman, head of the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, attacked politically involved Christian conservatives as a threat to freedom. He vilified the Southern Baptist Convention for allowing witnessing to Jews. In his recent book, *Never Again? The Threat of the New Anti-Semitism*, he accused Christians who witnessed to Jews of being anti-Semitic. The New Testament, he rails, is a lying, hateful, hurtful book, ultimately responsible for the deaths of 6 million Jews in World War II. (See, "ADL's Foxman: New Testament is Anti-Semitic")

* Last December, in CBS' 48 Hours special, "The Mystery of Christmas," CBS dramatized the possibility that Christ was a bastard. (See, "More Christian Bashing from Media this Easter?")

* This winter, NBC's Book of Daniel, authorized by Jeff Zukor, trashed Jesus and the Christian family. (See, "Who's Behind NBC's 'Book of Daniel'?"")

* Also this winter, Jewish activist Mikey Weinstein was successful in his suit against the Air Force Academy, banning chaplains there from using the name of Jesus in public prayers. He was assisted by Rabbi Arnold Resnicoff, highly placed ethical consultant to both the Navy and Air Force, in upholding such an end of free speech. (See, "Correction: Speech at Air Force Academy Not Free")

Evangelicals won't identify their enemy

One would think evangelical leaders, clearly under attack by Jewish activists in high places, would at least inform Christians of the identity of those who assail them and their Savior.

This is not the case. Evangelical and new-right leaders are silent concerning the Jewish origins of present attacks on free speech, Christian witnessing, the New Testament, and the integrity of Jesus Christ.

Why this incredible silence? Evangelicals won't identify their attackers as Jewish because of a centuries-old superstition. They believe a divine curse will fall on any person or nation who criticizes Jews. The Biblical promise to Abraham, "I will bless those that bless thee and I will curse them that curse thee," (Genesis 12:3) is taken to mean that no matter what evil or injustice Jews commit, Christians must only bless them, never criticize.

This is flatly contrary to Scripture.

The Bible teaches that godly reproof and warning are not curses

but the greatest gifts that can be given to any sinner. Reproof brings with it the possibility of repentance, saving a soul from [eternal death]!

It was with such a desire to bless Jews, that the Hebrew prophets, including Isaiah and John the Baptist, fiercely reprovved the Jewish people and their leaders for sin. Does the Bible consider such fearless truth-telling to be anti-Semitic? Does it record terrible curses descending upon such prophets?

Quite the contrary, God's curses did descend on those false prophets who flattered the Jews, exactly as do modern-day evangelicals. In the time of Elijah, compromising prophets cooed unconditional blessings on Ahab and Jezebel. Today Jerry Falwell, John Hagee, and Hal Lindsey lavish blessings on the vilest of Jewish sinners including arrogant, violent men like Shamir, Begin and Sharon.

A cult of Israel-worship

Christ's followers 2,000 years ago viewed His crucifixion from afar. They were impotent to restrain evil Jewish leaders who had Him killed. Today, evangelicals are paralyzed from really striking a blow against those who now publicly re-crucify the name and reputation of Jesus. Yes, they write letters and emails and perhaps boycott TV sponsors. Their intellectuals argue against the fallacies of the *Da Vinci Code*. But no one points a prophetic, bony finger at the Jewish media moguls, identifying their racial and religious origin. No one says like Nathan to the adulterous David, "You are the man!" (2 Samuel 12:7)

Incredibly, as Jewish anti-Christ activism surrounds and overlays Christianity, the silence within the Church only becomes more deafening. About all that can be said then, is that when "Israel first" leaders and their flocks are at last herded into gulags to be

slaughtered, few groups of people in history will have worked harder to ensure their own destruction.

Appendix G

NUMERIC PATTERN IN NATURE

You are aware that a numeric scheme runs through nature? Everything operates according to mathematical laws.

Have you ever considered that the human body might be stamped with the number SEVEN? Think about this. Your body consists of 7 main parts – head, neck, trunk and four limbs – 7 in all. Did you know that the development of the human embryo is in exact periods of 7s, such as 28 days (4×7)? Ask your doctor to explain. You'll be amazed at the accuracy of this law.

Is this arrangement of 7s merely accidental? Let me remind you that this same number or its multiples marks the period of gestation and incubation of many birds and animals.

The common hen sits 21 days (3×7); the pigeon, after having laid eggs, sits for 14 days (2×7). The duck takes 28 days to hatch ducklings (4×7); the goose 35 days (5×7); the swan 42 days (6×7); hundreds of varieties of small birds have been checked at 14 days (2×7); larger birds, such as the emperor penguin, ostrich or emu 49, 56 or 63 days ($7 \times 7 \dots 8 \times 7 \dots$ or 9×7). If the hen leaves her eggs on the 20th day, there'll be no chicks.

The seal calves on the rocks and suckles its young for 14 days (2×7). The ova of salmon are hatched in 140 days (20×7). The gestation period of the mouse is 21 days (3×7); the rabbit 28 days (4×7); the cat 56 days (8×7); the dog 63 days (9×7); the lion 14×7 ; the sheep 21×7 ; the cow 40×7 ; the elephant 90×7 . And so on. The ova of the glow worm occupy 42 days (6×7), and the

mole cricket 28 days in hatching (4×7). The period of the bee in the larva is 7 days. In moths it is 42 days (6×7).

Come to think of it, in chemistry, music and art we find the same number 7 playing an important role. Both sound and light are subject to the law of 7. How has it come about, for example, that the human ear responds to 7 distinct intervals in a scale of one octave? In the rainbow are 7 colors –red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, violet.

Intentional design?

Appendix H

TIME PROXIMITY OF THE EARLIEST EXTANT COPY TO THE ORIGINAL DOCUMENTS

The chart below reveals the time gaps of these and other works from the ancient world and compares them to the earliest New Testament manuscripts (taken from Josh McDowell's *Evidence That Demands a Verdict*, p.42 and F.F. Bruce's *The New Testament Documents*, pp.16-17).

Author	Date Written	Earliest Copy	Time Span	Copies extant
Secular Manuscripts:				
Herodotus (History)	480 – 425 BC	900 AD	1,300 years	8
Thucydides (History)	460 - 400 BC	900 AD	1,300 years	?
Aristotle (Philosopher)	384 - 322 BC	1100 AD	1,400 years	5
Caesar (History)	100 - 44 BC	900 AD	1,000 years	10
Pliny (History)	61 - 113 AD	850 AD	750 years	7
Suetonius (Roman History)	70 - 140 AD	950 AD	800 years	?
Tacitus (Greek History)	100 AD	1100 AD	1,000 years	20
Biblical Manuscripts: (note: these are individual manuscripts)				
Magdalene Ms (Matthew 26)	1st century	50-60 AD	co-existent (?)	
John Rylands (John)	70 AD	130 AD	60 years	
Bodmer Papyrus II (John)	70 AD	150-200 AD	80-110 years	
Chester Beatty Papyri (N.T.)	1st century	200 AD	150 years	
Diatessaron by Tatian (Gospels)	1st century	200 AD	150 years	

Codex Vaticanus (Bible)	1st century	325-350 AD	275-300 yrs
Codex Sinaiticus (Bible)	1st century	350 AD	300 years
Codex Alexandrinus (Bible)	1st century	400 AD	350 years

(Total New Testament manuscripts = 5,300 Greek MSS, 10,000
Latin Vulgates, 9,300 others = 24,000 copies)
(Total MSS compiled prior to 600 AD = 230)

Appendix I

ORAL TRADITION AND NEW TESTAMENT ACCURACY

There is evidence that in cultures where oral memory has been trained for generations, large amounts of information can be preserved accurately.

A ‘memory’ culture

An Old Testament passage (Deuteronomy 6:4-9) reveals how important oral instruction and the memory of divine teaching was stressed in Hebrew culture. The Jews placed a high value on memorizing inspired Scripture and whatever writing reflected the wisdom of God. Memorization skills among ancient Jews were far advanced compared to ours today. Theirs was a culture of memory.

Oral recall was far more important in ancient societies, particularly Judaism, than we have commonly allowed for. The techniques used for memorization by ancient societies as a whole have a remarkable similarity to techniques promulgated by today's “memory improvement” seminars that folk now pay exorbitant fees to attend.

Jewish rabbis were encouraged to memorize entire books of the Scriptures, even the whole Old Testament. In fact, all of Jewish education consisted of rote memory.

Students were expected to remember the major events of narratives - although incidentals could be varied, if the main point was not affected. (Michael J. and J. P. Moreland, eds. *Jesus Under Fire: Modern Scholarship Reinvents the Historical Jesus*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995, p. 32)

Reliability of oral tradition

In societies attuned to oral transmission, variants are minor, and seldom occur, so that even within one or two generations there is little change. Then even when changes do occur, there is no doubt as to the actual message and the wording of the tradition.

How much better, then, would the Gospels reflect the words of Jesus, considering the short time span between their composition and publication?

General studies of oral transmission show it to be more reliable than critics would presuppose:

Why oral tradition accurately preserved Jesus' teachings:

1. Jesus' Messianic presentations would reinforce among His followers the need to preserve His words accurately.

2. Ninety percent of Jesus' teachings and sayings use memory-aiding methods similar to those used in Hebrew poetry.
3. Jesus trained His disciples to go out and teach His lessons even while He was teaching them.
4. Since Jewish boys were educated until they were twelve, Jesus' disciples probably already knew how to read and write.
5. Just as Jewish and Greek teachers gathered disciples, Jesus gathered and trained His.

Jesus taught with memory-aiding devices

There is a growing awareness of the easy-to-memorize structure of many of Jesus' sayings.

He used memory-aiding devices, such as parables, exaggerations, puns, metaphors and similes, proverbs, riddles, and parabolic actions, to aid his disciples and audience in retaining his teachings. And he used poetry for this purpose.

It is evident that Jesus thought out carefully and deliberately formulated his utterances.

We also know that the early Christians preserved Jesus' teachings in the form of hymns which were likewise easy to

memorize. Paul's summary of the gospel in 1 Corinthians 15 is a good example of this.

Jesus kept repeating his message

Modern psycholinguistic studies have confirmed that the techniques that characterized Jesus' oral teaching methods would have ensured excellent semantic recall.

“If we come to the ministry of Jesus as first-century historians, and forget our twentieth-century assumptions about mass media, the overwhelming probability is that most of what Jesus said, he said not twice but 200 times, with (of course) a myriad of local variations.” (N.T. Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God*. Minneapolis: Fortress, p. 123)

We might ignore the memory-aiding nature of Jesus' teaching; and even the tremendous capacity of the Oriental memory. Yet it still needs to be considered that whatever Jesus taught, He would, as any teacher, have taught it many, many times - ensuring that His disciples would have the entire set of lessons committed to memory.

Necessity of oral recording

It should be realized that the farther one got from the Jewish Establishment, the more one tended to record oral traditions.

In 'mainstream' Judaism one's belief system was reinforced weekly in the Synagogue. All the social and cultural structures reinforced the Establishment's oral traditions. However, the farther out one's beliefs were in relation to the mainstream—the more that extra efforts needed to be made to keep the oral belief system in mind.

Christianity began as a sect WITHIN Judaism. And it began to experience serious exclusion from 'mainstream' Judaism in the early 30s. (We might note in this connection the stoning of Stephen and persecutions by Saul--Acts chapters 7 and 8).

It is probable, therefore, that the new movement had to do as did others (such as the Qumran group) before them --WRITE down the material to be used by new believers and worship groups.

Then, as time passed, and the worship services and gatherings were forced 'underground', and the leaders murdered, there developed an increasing need for written materials for preserving the core of the faith.

Too illiterate to preserve Jesus' message?

OBJECTION: What about Acts 4:13, which says that John and Peter were illiterate? How, then, did they write the books attributed to them?

ANSWER:

Acts 4:13 does NOT indicate that Peter and John were nonliterate, but that they did not study under the Pharisaic Rabbis. But in any case, they were only two men out of hundreds of Jesus' original group of disciples who, like Matthew, could act as scribes.

In the first century there were great numbers of people with scribal skills. Many of them would have heard Jesus speak and become followers. It is not improbable that these folk took notes. And some of these may very well have been included in Luke's comment: "MANY have taken in hand to put together an account of Jesus' life." (Luke 1:1)

Matthew, for example, was by trade a tax collector. This occupation required a very complex system of record-keeping. Matthew would have been proficient in the three languages of Palestine: Hebrew, Greek, and Aramiac.

As John Wenham notes:

“It is known that in Egypt at this date there were 111 kinds of tax, and many of the tax-collectors knew shorthand. Matthew's livelihood was earned by interviewing tax-payers and discussing their affairs (usually in Aramaic) and then writing up his reports in Greek. He had a lifelong habit of noting things down and of preserving what he had written.” (John Wenham, *Redating Matthew, Mark and Luke*. Downers Grove: IVP, 1992, pp. 112-113)

He also notes:

“Goodspeed suggests that Jesus found himself in a similar position to Isaiah, when it became clear that his message was going to be rejected by the people as a whole. He deliberately took steps for the preservation of his teaching among his disciples. He observed the faith and commitment of Levi the tax-collector and recognized him as one who was capable of making a record of his teaching.” (*Ibid.*)

Note-taking practised

“There is a growing body of evidence and arguments that supports the thesis that the disciples (and sometimes even the audiences of Jesus) ‘took notes’ during or immediately after His words/deeds....

“The only hypothesis with enough flexibility to meet the requirements is that a body of loose notes stands behind the bulk of the synoptic tradition. The wide use of shorthand and the carrying of notebooks in the Graeco-Roman world, the school practice of circulating lecture notes and utilizing them in published works, and

the later transmission of rabbinic tradition through shorthand notes support this hypothesis. As a former publican, the Apostle Matthew would have been admirably fitted to fill a position as note-taker in the band of uneducated apostles....

“The use of oral tradition IN NO WAY implies that 'written tradition' did NOT occur. The body of allegedly oral traditions of the rabbis of Jesus' day was transmitted orally during His day. Eventually it was written down into the Mishnah, but ‘even after its definitive compilation, the Mishna (as well as a great deal more interpretive material of the Rabbis) continued to be passed on primarily by rote for centuries to come’ (Kugel, EBI:68). The point is that the oral transmission process CONTINUED even after the definitive compilation of that oral tradition!” (*John Wenham, Redating Matthew, Mark and Luke*. Downers Grove: IVP, 1992)

Differences between the Gospel reports

This is reflected well in the differences in reportage that we find in the Gospels, for there we find an 80 percent agreement in the words of Jesus. (Eta Linnemann,. *Is There a Synoptic Problem?* Grand Rapids: Baker, 1992, p. 106)

Many of the disagreements are cultural variations of the sort we might expect, such as Luke, out of consideration for his Gentile readers, not using the Jewish term “Son of Man” where Matthew or Mark do.) This was a society well-attuned to preserving oral tradition.

The four Gospel reports concerning Jesus are not contradictory, but complimentary, as by four different witnesses of the same event.

Oral tradition preserved even after written down

Tony Lentz presents to us a reason why oral tradition was preserved even after the introduction of written versions:

“The ancients often called the written word into question because it did not have the authority of an honest man's character to support its credibility.” (Tony M. Lentz, *Orality and Literacy in Hellenic Greece*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois U. Press, 1989, p.77)

To put it another way, you cannot ask questions of a piece of paper to determine that it is telling the truth.

Conclusion

Not only was oral transmission quite adequate for the task of preserving the words and deeds of Jesus, but the widespread use of note-taking and ample supply of literate listeners almost guarantees that VERY early written sources for the gospel materials would have existed.

There is good reason to believe that the oral tradition accurately preserved the teachings and the events of Jesus' life until they were written down just a few years later.

One can, therefore, have confidence that the material in the Gospels is historically reliable.

Appendix J

THE RECEIVED TEXT versus the Alexandrian mss

Numeric value considerations

Three of the oldest complete existing manuscripts of the Greek New Testament text had their origins in ancient Alexandria. Since they are the oldest *complete* manuscripts that we currently possess, many regard them as having greater authority than the Received Text (Textus Receptus). There are a number of passages that do not appear in these Alexandrian manuscripts, and therein lies an intense ecclesiastical debate.

The Greek New Testament compiled by Westcott and Hort from the corrupted Alexandrian manuscripts (the basis for many modern versions) omits twelve verses from the Gospel of Mark, which on the other hand, appear in the Received Text (source for the King James English Bible). These verses are Mark 16:9-20.

Argument: “The disputed passages were added later”

Detractors of the traditional King James Version regard the Alexandrian text as a more academically acceptable literary source for guidance than the venerated Textus Receptus. They argue that this and other disputed passages were added later as scribal errors or amendments.

Counter argument: “The disputed passages were deleted in Alexandria”

Defenders of the Textus Receptus attack Westcott and Hort (and

the Alexandrian manuscripts they used) as having taken out these many passages, pointing out that these disputed passages proclaim the deity of Jesus Christ, His sacrificial atonement, His resurrection, and other key Bible truths.

They note that Alexandria was a major headquarters for the Gnostics, who attempted to water down the Christian message to make it more palatable to pagans.

(It is also evident that Westcott and Hort, like the Gnostics, opposed taking the Bible literally concerning the Atonement, Salvation, and so on. If you read their personal writings you might shudder!)

Corrupted texts delete Mark 16:9-20

Now look upon those last verses of Mark. We shall discover something which is quite amazing.

Mark 16:9: Now when Jesus was risen early the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast out seven devils. 10: And she went and told them that had been with him, as they mourned and wept. 11: And they, when they had heard that he was alive, and had been seen of her, believed not. 12: After that he appeared in another form unto two of them, as they walked, and went into the country. 13: And they went and told it unto the residue: neither believed they them. 14: Afterward he appeared unto the eleven as they sat at meat; and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen. 15: And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. 16: He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. 17: And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my nameshall they cast out

devils; they shall speak with new tongues; 18: They shall take up serpent; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover. 19: So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God. 20: And they went forth and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen.

The critics' insistence that Mark's Gospel should not include these verses, but should really end at 16:8 leaves the women afraid and fails to record the resurrection, Jesus' final instructions, and his ascension to heaven.

It is understandable why these verses are an embarrassment to the Gnostics, and why some would advocate their exclusion, and insist that they were "added later."

However, Irenaeus in 150 AD, and also Hypolytus in the second century, each quote from these verses, so the documentary evidence is, then, that *they were deleted later* in the Alexandrian texts, *not added subsequently*.)

However, now comes even more astonishing evidence for their original inclusion.

The fingerprint of the Author

Let's examine these verses and explore their underlying design. Just as we encounter fingerprint or retinal scanners to verify an identity in today's technological environment, it seems that there is an equivalent "fingerprint" hidden beneath the biblical text that is still visible even after all the intervening centuries.

The "sevens" design

There are over 600 explicit *surface occurrences* of "sevens" throughout both the Old and New Testaments. However, there are *also* evidences of the same design *hidden behind the text*, which point to its supernatural origin.

What about these disputed 12 verses which Westcott and Hort leave out?? Let's subject them to this test.

There are 175 (**7 x 25**) *words* in the Greek text of Mark 16:9-20. Not only that. These words use a total *vocabulary* of 98 different words (**7 x 14**) - also an exact multiple of seven.

Now, try constructing a passage in which both the number of words and the number of letters are precisely divisible by seven (with no remainder)!

Let's understand our chances of this happening accidentally. The random chance of a number being precisely divisible by 7 is one chance in seven. In seven tries, there will be an average of six failures. The chance of two numbers both being divisible by 7 exactly, is one in 7 (exponent 2), or one in 49. (This is a convenient simplification; some mathematical statisticians would argue the chance is one in 915.)

Of course, one might still view this as an accidental occurrence, or the casual contrivance of a clever scribe. But let's look further.

The number of *letters* in this passage is 553, also a precise multiple of seven (**7 x 79**). This is getting a bit more tricky. The chance of three numbers accidentally being precisely divisible by seven is one in 73, or one in 343. This increasingly appears to be deliberate. Furthermore, the number of *vowels* is 294 (**7 x 42**); and the number of *consonants* is 259 (**7 x 37**). Do you sense that someone has gone through a lot of trouble to hide a design behind this text?

As we examine the vocabulary of those 98 (**7 x 14**) words: 84 (**7 x 12**) are found before in Mark; 14 (**7 x 2**) are found only here. 42 (**7 x 6**) are found in the Lord's address (vv.15-18); 56 (**7 x 8**) are not part of His vocabulary here.

So this is, conspicuously, not random chance at work, but highly skillful design. But just how skillful?

With 10 such features of sevens it would take 7 (exponent 10), or 282,475,249 attempts for these to occur by chance alone.

How long would it take the writer to redraft an alternative attempt to obtain the result he was looking for? If he could accomplish an attempt in only 10 minutes, working 8 hours a day, 40 hours a week, 50 weeks a year, *these would take him over 23,540 years!*

But there's more. The total *word forms* in the passage are 133 (**7 x 19**). 112 of them (**7 x 16**) occur only once, leaving 21 (**7 x 3**) of them occurring more than once; in fact, these occur 63 (**7 x 9**) times.

If we examine more closely the 175 words (**7x 25**), we discover that 56 (**7 x 8**) words appear in the address of the Lord and 119 (**7 x 17**) appear in the rest of the passage.

The *natural divisions* of the passage would be the appearance to Mary, verses 9-11; His subsequent appearances, verses 12-14; Christ's discourse, verses 15-18; and the conclusion in verses 19-20. We discover that verses 9-11 involve 35 words (**7 x 5**). Verses 12-18, 105 (**7 x 15**) words; verse 12, 14 (**7 x 2**) words; verses 13-15, 35 (**7 x 5**) words; verses 16-18, 56 (**7 x 8**) words. The conclusion, verses 19-20, contains 35 (**7 x 5**) words.

It gets worse. Greek, like Hebrew, has assigned numerical values

to each letter of its alphabet. Thus, each word also has a numerical ("geometrical") value.

The ***total numerical value*** of the passage is 103,656 (**7 x 14,808**). The value of v.9 is 11,795 (**7 x 1,685**); v.10 is 5,418 (**7 x 774**); v.11 is 11,795 (**7 x 1,685**); vv.12-20, 86,450 (**7 x 12,350**). In verse 10, the ***first word*** is 98 (**7 x 14**), the ***middle word*** is 4,529 (7 x 647), and the ***last word*** is 791 (**7 x 113**). The value of the ***total word forms*** is 89,663 (**7 x 12,809**). And so on.

In fact, renowned mathematician Dr Ivan Panin identified **75 features of seven** in these last 12 verses of Mark. We have highlighted only 34 such features.

If a supercomputer could be programmed to make 400 million attempts per second, working day and night, it would take ***over four million years*** to achieve this combination of 34 features of sevens by chance.

As you add each word or verse the magnitude of the challenge to integrate the new phase into the existing pattern grows geometrically and its complexity of construction gets incomprehensibly more difficult.

The bottom line: No unaided human on earth could have composed this passage. It was definitely NOT added later by some forging scribe.

Not in Vatican and Sinaitic mss

This passage - Mark 16:9-20 – carries the divine signature. And it is ***not*** in the Alexandrian Vaticanus and Sinaiticus manuscripts. The area where it should have appeared ***was left blank***.

On the other hand, this passage ***is*** found in the Received Text (Textus Receptus) – and found to be bearing the signature of the Creator, the “sevens” factor. This phenomenon was discovered by that master mathematician Ivan Panin.

Appendix K

HISTORICAL USAGE OF THE RECEIVED TEXT

“The critical-text-position view that there is no record of any historic usage of the Received Text prior to the fifth century is simply wrong. There is a substantial historic record to the contrary. The text used by the churches of Jesus Christ in the first five centuries was primarily the Received Text. To be sure, there were localities which used the Alexandrian text, but they were limited largely to Alexandria and Rome.”

(David H. Sorenson, *Touch Not The Unclean Thing*, p. 82)

“First of all, the Textus Teceptus was the Bible of early Eastern Christianity. Later it was adopted as the official text of the **Greek Catholic Church**. There were local reasons which contributed to this result. But, probably, far greater reasons will be found in the fact that the Received Text had authority enough to become, either in itself or by its translation, the Bible of the great **Syrian Church**; of the **Waldensian Church** of northern Italy; of the **Gallic Church** in southern France; and of the **Celtic Church** in Scotland and Ireland; as well as the official Bible of the **Greek Catholic Church**.

“All these churches, some earlier, some later, were in opposition to the Church of Rome and at a time when the Received Text and these Bibles of the Constantine type were rivals.” (David Otis Fuller,

Which Bible?)

The differences between the various editions of the Greek Received Text are extremely slight and cannot be compared to the differences found in Rome's Alexandrian manuscripts.

The Syriac Peshitta text

The translation called the Old Syrian Peshitta New Testament, is in the Aramaic language. The word Peshitta derives from the Syrian word *peshitla*, meaning "common." It carries with it the implication that it was the version commonly used by the people.

This Syrian version is important to history. Antioch in Syria is the birthplace of the word Christian. "*And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.*" (Acts 11:26) In fact, the church at Antioch was the home and sending church of the apostle Paul. In the mid and latter portion of the first century, the church at Antioch was one of the pre-eminent churches in the Christian world – and the mother church for numerous other churches of Syria.

When was the Peshitta translated from Greek?

The tradition of the Syrian church is that the Peshitta was the work of the apostle Mark while others claim the apostle Thaddeus (Jude) translated it. There was a translation of the New Testament into Syrian made about 150 AD. (Kenyon, *Our Bible and the Ancient Manuscripts*)

This early translation of the New Testament agreed with the Traditional Text (Received) Text. In fact, even proponents of the critical text will generally admit this. (Dr E. V. Hills *The King James Version Defended*, p.172).

John Burgon noted that the churches of the region of Syria have always used the Peshitta. There has never been a time when these churches did not use the Peshitta, based on the Received Text.

But more important is this fact, that one of the earliest churches of the Christian era used a translation of the New Testament based upon the Received Text. This indicates that the Received Text was the true text of the New Testament, with roots leading back to the original autograph.

The Old Latin, Italic or Itala Version

When they hear the word Latin used in conjunction with the Bible or church, some people make the mistake of assuming automatically that it is associated with the Roman Catholic Church. However, this is not true. According to Theodore Beza, the associate and successor of John Calvin, the great Swiss reformer, the Italic Church of northern Italy had been born in AD 120. Its remoteness isolated it from the influence of the Church at Rome.

The Italic Church was the forerunner of churches in this same region, later to be known as Vaudois or Waldenses. Both of these names simply mean “peoples of the valleys.”

The Italic or pre-Waldensian Church produced a version of the New Testament, which was translated from the Received Text by the year 157 AD. The noted church historian Frederic Nolan confirms this. This date is less than one hundred years after most of the books of the New Testament were written.

The point of greater importance is that the Itala (or Old Latin) was translated from the Received Text. This indicates that the Received Text clearly existed and was used by churches in early church history.

The Gothic Version

About 350 AD, the New Testament was translated into the Gothic language used by Germanic tribes of central Europe, by a missionary to the Goths named Ulfilas or Wulfilas.

Textual critic Frederic Kenyon wrote in 1912 that the Gothic Version “is for the most part that which is found in the majority of Greek manuscripts.” (Frederick Kenyon, *Handbook to the Textual Criticism of the New Testament*)

Thus Kenyon conceded the Gothic Version to be based upon the Received text, since the vast “majority of manuscripts” are those that support the Received Text. If Ulfilas translated the Gothic Version from the Received Text in about 350, it must have been in existence long before that date. A missionary in the field having the Received Text with him, would certainly imply that it was the well-established, common text.

The Ethiopic Version

Geisler and Nix state, “This translation [from about 300 AD] adheres closely, almost literally, to the Greek text of the Byzantine type.” They also classify the Armenian Version, Georgian Version, and the Slavonic Version to belong to the same textual family, that of the Traditional Text. (Norman L. Geisler and William E. Nix, *A General Introduction to the Bible*. Chicago: Moody Press, 1968, pp. 324-327)

The clear historical evidence is that the Received Text was the common New Testament text used throughout the civilized world from the earliest period of Christianity.

Our age of rapid editing, publishing, and distribution is very different from the first centuries of Christianity. For translations of the Bible to be available in the second to fourth centuries based upon what is distinctively the Received Text is *prima facie*, historic evidence that the Received Text was the commonly translated, commonly copied and commonly used of the New Testament. This is evident.

Appendix L

THE NEW BIBLE VERSIONS SCANDAL

For ten years Professor Gail Riplinger of Ararat, Virginia, USA, who had become a Christian, listened to her students' personal problems and helped many of them come to a relationship with Jesus Christ.

Then a new type of problem began to surface. Many were having great difficulty understanding their various new translations of the Bible.

Gail had always assumed that the new versions made the Bible easier to understand. Why, then, were her newly converted students having so much trouble?

With one student she turned to Luke 4:18-19 to help heal the relationship problem: "*Jesus came to heal the broken hearted...*"

To her horror, that verse ***had been deleted*** from the New American Standard Version (NASB) from which the student was studying! She later found it was missing from the NIV, Good News [?] for Modern Man and all Catholic Bibles.

Gail decided to study, research and compare all the major Bible versions.

After 6 years of continuous research, sometimes up to 12 hours a day, Gail Riplinger was absolutely horrified at what she found: The Bible was being continuously altered and watered down by successive new Bible versions.

Editing groups and publishers were changing the Word of God to meet the requirements of the New Age and Roman Catholic world systems.

“Theology has failed”

Preachers like Robert Schuller tell us “theology has failed.” To which Dave Hunt answers, “The obvious implication is that Christianity is somehow deficient and that psychology has found answers to spiritual problems that are missing from the Bible.”

His phrase, “missing from the Bible” is the missing puzzle piece which, when set in place, gives us a complete picture of the problem. The peace and healing that previous generations gained from their Bibles has been stolen by the thief in the battle for the mind.

The removal of scores of comforting words and verses from the new versions leaves Christians hungry targets for the New Age bait of ‘psychological counseling’.

NIV: 64,000 words deleted

One of the most startling facts that surfaced, to Riplinger’s amazement, was this: 64,000 words had been taken out of the New International Version (NIV)! Most of the deletions had to do with the deity of Jesus Christ and changes of gender.

Character and fate of many new version kingpins

Another discovery was the personal history of the new version editors... in agreement with Luciferians, occultists, and New Age

philosophy... and – most shocking of all - denying that rescue is through faith in Jesus Christ.

Dr Virginia Mollenkott, one of the ‘scholars’ who helped compose the NIV turned out to be a lesbian activist. She was giving interviews and saying that the NIV Bible approved homosexual behavior.

Martin Woudstra, a supporter of the homosexual movement, was the NIV’s Old Testament Chairman.

Media magnate Rupert Murdoch, acquired the lucrative printing rights to the NIV when he bought the Zondervan Publishing Company.

The NIV follows the Westcott and Hort text. And, if you didn’t know it, these men, Westcott and Hort, engaged in spiritism (communication with devils) and organized a society called the ‘Ghostly Guild’. Westcott was drawn to alcohol and became a spokesman for a brewery.

J.B. Philips, who edited another new version based on the Vaticanus and Sinaiticus, turned out to be a male witch, who suffered from clinical psychosis.

Philips became ‘dumb’, permanently losing his ability to speak. Taylor, translator of the Living Bible, lost his power of speech. Westcott lost his power of speech. And at least two other editors of new Bible versions lost their power of speech.

Still another, suffering hallucinosis, went insane and was committed to a mental institution. Others ended up in séance parlor and prison cells.

There is an interesting law found in the Bible: “*Be not deceived. God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.*” (Galations 6:7)

Translator repudiates new version

Dr Frank Logsdon was involved in the production of the New American Standard Version. However, he later confessed:

“I must under God renounce every attachment to the New American Standard Version. I’m afraid I’m in trouble with the Lord... We laid the groundwork; I wrote the format; I helped interview some of the translators; I sat with the translator; I wrote the preface... I’m in trouble; I can’t refute these arguments [of Gail Riplinger’s]; it’s wrong, terribly wrong; it’s frighteningly wrong; and what am I going to do about it?

“When questions began to reach me at first I was quite offended... I used to laugh with others... However, in attempting to answer, I began to sense that something was not right about the New American Standard Version. I can no longer ignore these criticisms I am hearing and can’t refute them... The deletions are absolutely frightening... there are so many... Are we so naïve that we do not suspect Satanic deception in all of this?

“Upon investigation, I wrote my very dear friend, Mr Lockman, explaining that I was forced to renounce all attachment to the NASV. The product is grievous to my heart and helps to complicate matters in these already troublous times... I don’t want anything to do with it.

“[T]he finest leaders that we have today... haven’t gone into it [the new version’s use of a corrupted Greek text], just as I hadn’t gone into it... that’s how easily one can be deceived... I’m going to talk

to him [Dr George Sweeting, president of the Moody Bible Institute] about these things.

“[Y]ou can say that the Authorized Version [King James Bible] is absolutely correct. How correct? 100% correct!... I believe the Spirit of God led the translators of the Authorized Version. If you stand against everyone else, stand...” (G.A. Riplinger, *New Age Bible Versions*. Munroe Falls, Ohio: A.V. Publications, 1993)

Gail Riplinger has been bitterly attacked and vilified for writing her outstanding 700 page book exposing the corruption of thousands of words and phrases in modern versions of the Bible. Riplinger’s advice is to return to the King James Bible – the only “true word” English translation.

Appendix M

ROME AND THE NEW BIBLE VERSIONS

Rome's hatred toward the Protestant Bible was well expressed by Pope Pius X:

“If a Christian should be offered a Bible by a Protestant, or by some emissary of the Protestants, he ought to reject it with horror, because it is forbidden by the Church; and if he should have accepted it without noticing what it was, he should at once pitch it into the fire, or fetch it to his Pastor.” (Pope Pius X, *Larger Catechism*)

The Catholic Encyclopedia agreed that this attitude extended toward the Bible Societies themselves:

“The attitude of the Church toward the Bible Societies is one of unmistakable opposition. Believing herself to be the divinely appointed custodian and interpreter of Holy Writ she cannot, without turning traitor to herself, approve the distribution of Scripture without note or comment.” (*The Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. II, p. 545)

New strategy: infiltrate and control

Since the hated Received Text was the basis of the Protestant Bible, Rome decided to infiltrate the Protestant churches and promote within them a Bible that would more closely mirror her own teachings.

The first step in this direction was to release the Jesuit-Rheims Bible in 1582. However, this had very little impact upon the Protestant world.

So a strategy was plotted to entice Protestants away from the King James Bible, into further new versions based on the Vaticanus and Sinaiticus.

The World Catholic Federation for Biblical Apostolate (WCFBA) was established. This Roman Catholic organization was formed solely for the purpose of promoting ecumenism through participation in the translation of interconfessional Bibles.

It appeared that the Vatican was content to allow so-called Protestant organizations to bear the bulk of production cost and distribution of such Bibles, while she herself remained in the background.

The United Bible Society was formed as an umbrella for the successful capture of Bible Societies. Among the architects of this coup was Monsignor Alberto Ablondi. In 1984, while Bishop of Livorno, Italy, he was a member of the General Committee and European Regional Executive Committee of the United Bible Society. His influence on the Societies undoubtedly helped shape their current policies.

With smug satisfaction, he was able to declare the modern Bible versions as:

“One of the important advancements of post Vatican II ecumenism – an important step towards unity” [and that these versions] “will help overcome prejudice in a divided church.” (*Word-Event*, No. 57/1984, p. 6. Reported in the Trinitarian Bible Society, *Ecumenism and the United Bible Societies*, Article No. 72, p. 9)

Word-Event No. 56/1984 happily confirmed that many Roman Catholics, including several Bishops, were now members of National Bible Society Boards and/or regional committees and that Roman Catholics were serving as Bible translators.

We are indebted to the Trinitarian Bible society for revealing that:

“One of the joint editors of the widely used United Bible Society’s Greek New Testament is a Roman Catholic Cardinal, namely, Carlo M. Martini, the Bishop of Milan.” (*United Bible Society*, Article N. 72, p. 9)

Any who feel that in the New International Version (NIV) they have discovered God’s revelation to man, should sit up and take note. The NIV has generally followed the United Bible Society’s Greek Translation of the New Testament (Third Edition) – which, in turn, like Westcott and Hort’s New Testament, is largely based on the Vaticanus and Sinaiticus manuscripts. (*Trinitarian Bible Society*, Article No. 74, p. 16)

Appendix N

GOSPEL OF MARK FOUND IN DEAD SEA SCROLLS

Jose O'Callahan, a Spanish paleographer, announced in 1972 that he had translated a piece of the Gospel of Mark on a fragment of the Dead Sea Scrolls.

Fragments from this same cave 7 had previously been dated between BC 50 and AD 50.

Eventually O'Callahan identified nine fragments. Using the accepted methods of papyrology and palaeography, O'Callahan compared sequences of letters with existing documents and eventually identified nine fragments as belonging to one Gospel (Mark), Acts, and a few epistles.

These were identified thus, as “7Q5”, and so on – fragment “7Q5” indicating fragment 5 from Qumran cave 7.

Time magazine quoted one scholar who claimed that, if O'Callahan's identification was correct, “they can make a bonfire of 70 tons of indigestible German scholarship” (David Estrada and William White, Jr., *The First New Testament*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1978, p. 136)

As one would expect, critics have objected to O'Callahan's identification and have tried to find other possibilities. They object that the fragmentary nature of the manuscripts makes it

difficult to be dogmatic about identifications. Yet O'Callahan offers a plausible, albeit revolutionary, possibility.

If the identification of even one of these fragments as New Testament is valid, it would be shown that Mark's Gospel was written within the life time of the apostles and contemporaries of the events.

A date before AD 50 leaves no time for mythological embellishment of the records. They would have to be accepted as historical.

And, since these manuscripts are not originals but copies, it would confirm that the New Testament was "published" - copied and disseminated - during the life time of the writers.

Not only that, it would show that the New Testament canon already existed during this early period, with pieces representing every major section of the New Testament: Gospels, Acts, and both Pauline and General Epistles.

With these conclusions being so crucial it is little wonder that their authenticity is being challenged by the skeptics.

The Anvil and the Hammers

I stood one evening by the blacksmith's door
 And heard the anvil ring the vesper chime,
 And looking in I saw upon the floor
 Old hammers worn with years of beating time.
 "How many anvils have you had?" said I,
 "To wear and beat these hammers so?"
 "Just one," the blacksmith said with twinkling eye,
 "The anvil wears the hammers out, you know."
 And so methought the anvil of God's Word
 For ages skeptic blows have beat upon,
 And though the sound of clanging blows is heard,
 The anvil is unharmed, the hammers gone.

- Selected

Within that awful volume lies
 The mystery of mysteries.
 Happiest they, of human race,
 To whom God has granted grace,
 To read, to fear, to hope, to pray,
 To lift the latch and force the way
 And better had they ne'er been born
 Who read to doubt or read to scorn.

- Sir Walter Scott

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