Fables of Ancient Israel Now Being Dissected

Researchers are weighing the accuracy of the reigns of King Solomon and King David against archeological and scientific data just recently discovered. These scholars are coming up with some very interesting conclusions.

MANY CHRISTIAN RELIGIOUS SCHOLARS, such as noted author Thomas L. Thompson, think the history of Palestine and its peoples is very different from Old Testament narratives, regardless of political claims. A history of the region during the Iron I and Iron II periods leaves little room for any historicity in the accounts of the books of Samuel and Kings, critics say. The major media seldom mention the scholarly Christian critiques of the ancient legends for fear they they will come under attack from those who believe the facts undermine Israel's very legitimacy.

BY JOHN TIFFANY

Be ready for a major upsetting of the apple cart. Unknown to almost all laymen, a huge number of scholars have quietly come together agreeing on a historical fact that will overturn the entirety of "court history" when all the facts they have gathered become widely known.

They agree that the various tales of "ancient Israel" are largely fictional. Based upon the known facts of geography, history, archeology and even biblical scholarship, many of them argue there was no such entity as "ancient Israel"—that it never existed. Is it possible that ancient Israel is a hoax?

If a hoax it is, then clearly "ancient Israel" is the most profitable hoax in history, with the possible exception of its twin fairy tale, the "court historian" view of what happened to the Jews of Europe during World War II (it is claimed that there was a systematic policy of exterminating them by the German government; among the specific claims are that 6 million Jews were gassed to death; however, there is no evidence of any of this).

In spite of the sensational nature of these findings about "ancient Israel," they are, so far, all but totally unknown to the general public, including even history buffs. Colleges have been reluctant to teach the facts, and many Christian pastors stay away from these truths as if they would be cursed by God, Himself.

There was a time, not so long ago, when one simply did not question the Old Testament. If the Old Testament said something had happened at some time in the past, then it happened, and that was that, regardless of whether there was any other evidence for the event outside of it's pages. No one even considered that it might be fictional. Today that is no longer the case.

William G. Dever, in his very interesting and extremely important book, *Who Were the Early Israelites and Where Did They Come From?*,[1] answers questions like "Did the House of David really exist?" and "Is King Solomon a fantasy?" Dever was formerly the head of the University of Arizona's Near Eastern studies department.

Most modern scholars consider the Davidic dynasty and especially the Exodus story to be entirely fictitious.

There are many new things under the Sun, despite the biblical statement to the contrary, and in recent decades a great controversy has developed among the clerisy, although little has (until now) been heard about it by the masses: To what extent may the Old Testament, or parts of it, be considered an accurate historical document?

Perhaps the Old Testament can answer that question itself:

> Thus saith the Lord: . . . Remember ye not the former things, neither consider the things of old. Behold, I will do a new thing.[2]

To be a true and honest scientist, one must be open to paradigm shifts, and, similarly, to be a true historian, a historiologist, is to be a Revisionist. To realize that what we once believed—although it seemed to make sense to us at the time—is not what we should continue to believe is the essential intellectual process by which wisdom grows. This is notoriously difficult for older, established scientists and historians who find themselves challenged to repudiate their whole life's work, so that for a new viewpoint to become dominant sometimes requires us to wait for the older scientists and historians to die off, as with the Copernican Revolution.[3]

Just as Copernicus overthrew the old understanding that the Sun goes around the Earth, and changed the Sun to the center of the universe (and now it is not even that, but a minor star in an average galaxy, in a vast universe that has no center),[4] so, with increasing knowledge of geography, was Jerusalem (appropriately enough, considering the gravamen of this article) dethroned from being the center of the world, as depicted in the *Mappa Mundi* in the Hereford (England) Cathedral, to a town in the backwaters of civilization.[5] Jerusalem is no longer the center of anything, either in geography or in history, except, of course, in the minds of Jews.

"Jews are not the same thing as Judahites, who are not the same as Israelites, who must be distinguished from Hebrews—and Israelis are something else altogether."

AMERIGO VESPUCCI

For centuries, Western scholars generally assumed that Old Testament "events" such as the exile from the Palestine/Canaan of the Israelites and their return thereto actually occurred. The ancient history of Palestine, it was taken for granted, could be written by merely paraphrasing or (where necessary to avoid conflict with known facts) correcting the stories of the Bible. However, this began to change as early as the beginning of the 16th century, with the publication of Amerigo Vespucci's *Mundus Novus* letter. According to Vespucci, in his explorations of the New World, there were found diverse pumas, panthers and wildcats, so many wolves, red deer, monkeys and felines, marmosets of many kinds and many large snakes. There was, in fact, so much wildlife that he concluded "so many species could not have entered Noah's ark."

On the other hand, there is the case of James Ussher (1581-1656), Anglican archbishop of Armagh, primate of all Ireland and vice chancellor of Trinity College in Dublin, who was highly regarded in his day as a churchman and as a scholar. Of his many works, his treatise on chronology has proved the most durable but perhaps also the most ill fated. Based on an intricate correlation of Middle Eastern and Mediterranean histories and holy writ, it was incorporated into an authorized version of the Bible printed in 1701, and thus came to be regarded with almost as much unquestioning reverence as the Bible itself. Having established the first day of creation as Sunday, October 23, 4004 B.C., Ussher calculated the dates of other biblical events, concluding for example, that Adam and Eve were driven from the Garden of Eden on Monday, November 10, 4004 B.C., and that Noah's ark made landfall on Mount Ararat on May 5, 1491 B.C., on a Wednesday.

In his work, Dr. John Lightfoot (1602-1675), vice chancellor of Cambridge University, a contemporary of Ussher and one of the most eminent scholars of his time in the field of the Hebrew language, declared, as the result of his study of the Scriptures, that "heaven and earth, center and circumference, were created all together, in the same instant, and clouds full of water," and that "this work took place, and man was created by the Trinity, on October 23, 4004 B.C., at 9:00 in the morning." That would be Greenwich time; the time at the Garden of Eden would have been midnight. Lightfoot published his calculations in 1644, before Ussher's were completed. It is interesting that the two scholars, acting independently, calculated the same date for the Creation, although Ussher did not give the time of day for the event. This may have something to do with the fact that both results compare, roughly, to the Jewish calendar's date for the very beginning of time, which, rendered into our terms, would be approximately 3760 B.C.

As the sciences of geology and astrophysics and allied studies began to come into existence, with their intervals of millions and even billions of years (numbers that people in Bible times probably could not have conceived of), such chronologies as those of Ussher and Lightfoot impeded progress. Today, however, Lightfoot and Ussher have become laughingstocks as it is generally accepted that the Earth is at least 5 billion years old, and the known universe perhaps four times as old as the Earth.[6] (A few scientists such as maverick astronomer Tom Van Flandern[7] even

Many discrepancies turn up when historians look into the book of Joshua and the book of Judges. The Canaanites (Palestinians) whom Joshua (supposedly an invader) and his band of "Israelites" supposedly exterminated were alive and well to fight again. Joshua 10:12 mentions how the pagan tribal war god of the proto-Jews "gave the Amorites over" to the invaders. But in Joshua 13:2 and 4, later in the chronology, we find they are unconquered. There were no such conquests, but Zionists use the Old Testament to justify their claim for the "right" of Jews to establish the state of Israel, a nation of the Jews, by the Jews and for the Jews. This is why they are still at war to this day. Above is a Nicola Poussin (1625) painting depicting Joshua defeating the Amorites. Little evidence exists to authenticate this "great" battle.

maintain that the universe may be infinitely old.) Such phenomena as the Garden of Eden and Noah's Flood cannot be taken literally from the Old Testament by modern scientists. Gradually the historicity of events farther removed from "Creation" increasingly came into question as well. Unfortunately, many people today, known as biblical inerrantists, refuse to consider the evidence, both internal to the Old Testament and external to it, showing that ancient tales of the "Jews" are not history.

Criticism of "the Old Testament as history" has quite a history itself. Benedict de Spinoza, a Jew who lived in Amsterdam, wrote a revolutionary book on the Bible, *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus (Theological-Political Thesis*, or *TTP* hereinafter), which appeared in 1670 in Latin, and within eight years it was translated into French. Although it was banned for its shocking criticism of the Old Testament, somehow everyone who was anyone had a copy. *TTP* forced a serious debate about the trustworthiness of the Bible as history and about the importance of the so-called "ancient Jews."

Actually there is no such thing as ancient Jews. Jews, furthermore, are not the same thing as Judahites, who are not the same as Israelites, who must be distinguished from Hebrews—and Israelis are something else altogether. The confusion of these terms works greatly to the advantage of the movement for political Zionism and is understood by all open-minded scholars.[8]

This was a formidable onslaught upon the inspired inerrancy of the Pentateuch (the first five books of the Old Testament, or, more accurately, the Hexateuch, since Joshua seems to show the same hands that wrote Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy). It called

attention to scores of what H.L. Mencken called "transparent imbecilities" in the five books, and especially in Genesis, including a dozen or more palpable geographical and historical impossibilities. The answer of the constituted authorities was to suppress the *Tractatus*, but enough copies got out to reach the proper persons, and ever since then the Old Testament has been under searching and devastating examination. The first conspicuous contributor to that work was a French priest, Richard Simon, but since then the Germans have had more to do with it than any other people, and so it is common for American Christians to think of the so-called Higher Criticism as a German invention, and to lay a good deal of the blame for it upon [Adolf] Hitler and the Kaiser.[9]

Spinoza asserts, as his general conclusion about scriptural reports of miraculous events in history, that everything that is truly narrated in scripture to have happened necessarily happened, as all things do, according to the laws of nature. And if anything can be found which can be conclusively demonstrated to be contrary to the laws of nature, or not to have been able to follow from them, it should simply be believed that it has been added to the sacred texts by sacrilegious men.[10]

Tractatus the first book to analyze the Bible systematically as if it were an ancient secular text in Latin or Greek or any ancient tongue. Spinoza dethroned the Hebrews and Israelites as the bearers of a unique, divinely inspired truth. There could be no doubt, for Spinoza, that any valid historiology had to deny utterly the centrality of what might be called "the biblical experience."

The Quakers are said to have dismissed the Old Testament as a "dead letter."

AMERICA'S GODFATHER

Thomas Paine, who has been called the "Godfather of America," further laid the groundwork for biblical historical criticism. He wrote, in his influential 1795 book *The Age of Reason:*

> It is not the antiquity of a tale that is an evidence of its truth; on the contrary, it is a symptom of its being fabulous; for the more ancient any history pretends to be, the more it has the resemblance of a fable. The origin of every nation is buried in fabulous tradition, and that of the Jews is as much to be suspected as any other."[11] (*Essai sur les mœurs et l'esprit des nations et sur les principaux faits de l'histoire depuis Charlemagne jusqu'à Louis XIII* (Geneva, 1756, known in English as *The Essay on Morals*)

People began to wonder: Is the Old Testament, then, merely an antique fable?

These matters were discussed on all sides, and even the apologists of orthodoxy, if they hoped to be taken seriously, had to use the tools of historical and philological learning.

In the second half of the 19th century, a school of biblical criticism developed in Germany, of which Julian Wellhausen was a leading figure. It challenged the historicity[12] of the Old Testament stories and claimed that biblical historiography was formulated, and in large measure actually invented, during the Babylonian exile. These Bible scholars, the Germans in particular, claimed that the history of the Hebrews, as a series of events beginning with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and proceeding through the exile to Egypt, the enslavement there and the exodus, and ending with the conquest of the land of Canaan and the settlement of the tribes of Israel, was no more than a later reconstruction of events that had never actually happened, and was written with a theological purpose.

"It was Julian Wellhausen who challenged the historicity of the Bible stories and claimed that biblical historiography was formulated, and in large measure invented, during the Babylonian exile."

Additional fuel was added to the fire with the publication in 1897 of *The Myths of Israel: The Ancient Book of Genesis with Analysis and Explanation of Its Composition*, by Amos Kidder Fiske (Macmillan Co., New York). Fiske detailed how different and incompatible versions of various events were cobbled together rather clumsily by whoever compiled the Old Testament, as for example the Elohist and Yahwist versions of the Deluge, resulting in contradictions that would be intolerable in any book purporting to set forth an accurate chronology.[13]

Perhaps there are contradictions in other ancient documents such as the *Iliad* or the *Epic of Gilgamesh*, as well, but if so, only a handful of scholars would know about it, or care, since the *Iliad* does not purport to be history, nor, while important, does it enjoy quite the central importance in our culture that the Bible does.

H.L. Mencken's *Treatise on the Gods* was first published in 1930. (A second edition, in 1946, changed little of interest here.) Mencken pointed out that "[W]e have [the Flood myth] from the Jews, who got it from the Babylonians, who got it from the Sumerians." He saw in the Flood business the origin of religion, with the world's first priest being a sort of caveman who boldly attacked the rising waters of a flood with his club or spear. When the waters coincidentally receded, the hypothetical shaman was an instant celebrity within his tribe or band. Mencken wrote that: "The Old Testament, as history, is on a much

lower level" than Parson Weems's *Life of Washington* or *Uncle Tom's Cabin*.

MODERN HISTORIOGRAPHY

In 1987, *The Bible: Modern Critical Views* was published, a representative selection of biblical literary criticism, edited by Harold Bloom (Chelsea House Publishers, New York and Philadelphia). Robert Alter, writing therein ("Sacred History and the Beginnings of Prose Fiction"), described the Old Testament as "sacred history." Alter suggested that the biblical narratives should best be regarded as historicized prose fiction. He wrote:

> The case of the Bible's sacred history, however, is rather different from that of modern historiography. There is, to begin with, a whole spectrum of relations to history in the sundry biblical narratives, as I shall try to indicate later, but none of these involves the sense of being bound to documentable facts that characterizes history in [its] modern acceptation.[14]

Other than in the Bible, there is no historical evidence for the greatest "Jewish" leader of all time, Moses (above). There are no inscriptions on stone, bone, bronze, clay tablets or papyri, nor any mention in place names nor in traditional local legends. Most scholars agree the exodus, the plagues of Egypt and the Moses stories are all mythical. If events like the ones the Bible describes in Exodus, for instance, happened, they would be mentioned in the detailed records of ancient Egypt, especially if most of the Egyptian army drowned. And while some pharoahs were fond of inventing their own history, most of what you see in Egyptian history texts has been verified.

Today the climate of thought has shifted still further in Thompson's direction, so that there is a whole cluster of scholars who propose that the Old Testament does not provide us with adequate evidence to construct a history of early Israel. The Old Testament, these scholars are convinced, belongs in the same category as other ancient myths and literature such as the *Epic of Gilgamesh* and the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. Still, there must be some historical truth in the Old Testament, because some of the things written about therein have been confirmed by archeologists, just as Heinrich Schliemann seemingly confirmed the ancient Homeric writings by discovering what seemed to be the lost city of Troy, once thought by many scholars to be "nothing more than a myth." (See TBR January/February 2007 for an alternative setting for Homer's sagas.)

This, and other cases like it, indicate that, sometimes at any rate, myths can be an effective way of preserving bona fide ancient knowledge and wisdom.[15]

On the other hand, ancient tales such as the saga of Odysseus and his encounter with the Cyclops certainly cannot be taken to imply the historical or prehistoric existence of a race of one-eyed giant humanoids. (It is possible the tall tale, no joke intended, was inspired by someone having found the fossil skull of a mastodon; the centrally located nasal opening could easily have been misinterpreted to be an eye socket.) Similarly, we cannot, as historians, prove from the Old Testament that some of its characters, such as Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, actually existed, any more than some of the characters in the dramatic and romantic Shakespeare plays existed.[16]

Whereas internal contradictions within the Old Testament may suggest that some of these individuals and events are partly or entirely fictional, for the proof of their historicity we must look to other sources, both in the form of extrabiblical ancient documents and the evidence of archeology.

Of course, by now we should all understand that many an ancient myth contains valuable nuggets of fact, if we can somehow separate the wheat from the chaff. But certainly this is not to say that myth is history. The question is, how much of what resembles history (or perhaps we should say a chronicle) in the Old Testament corresponds with actual events that occurred in the region?

The cardinal rule of historiology is the balanced search for truth, and one does not find this in a partisan document such as the Old Testament. It does not take a great scholar to realize that the Torah is essentially a panegyric "mythic history" of the Israelites, a people now long extinct but claimed (with little actual justification) as their ancestors by the modern Jews. It is what is known in German as *Heilsgeschichte*, or a holy and theological pious fiction, but not true historiography. Historiology is an exacting discipline, essentially a science, and immensely different in its aims and methods from those of fiction or theology. In historiology and historionomy, as in other sciences, we cannot say, as Tertullian, the ancient church father, is usually quoted (or actually misquoted), *"Credo qui absurdum,"* or, more properly, *"Credible est, quia ineptum est"*—"I believe it because it is impossible to believe."[17]

French Philosophers Weigh in on King David And Related Questions

THE EXTREMELY INFLUENTIAL French Christian philosopher and critic Pierre Bayle (1647-1706) was an opponent of the atheism that he found in Baruch (Benedict de) Spinoza's writings. But he pointed out, in the famous article on King David in his *Dictionnaire historique et critique* (five vols., Paris, 1697; known in English as the *Philosophic Dictionary*), many inconsistencies in the Old Testament accounts, such as Saul's not knowing David when he came to camp during the battle with the Philistines, even though this story is told in the Bible after a passage that describes David playing the harp for Saul.

Voltaire (born Francois Marie Arouet on November 21, 1694) wrote a piece about the history of the world, a topic that had been attempted by many other authors, most of whom went to the Old Testament as their first reference. Thus, "the Jews" (meaning Hebrews and Israelites) were always given a prominent place in world history. But Voltaire, in his *Philosophy of History*, minimizes their part, giving credit for the first Western civilization instead to the Chaldeans. He does mention the Jews, but only to represent them as latecomers to civilization, whose records could not possibly be as accurate as many had represented them to be.

Particularly interesting is his tally, made from the Old Testament, that tells exactly how many "Jews" were killed by God Himself in His wrath or in civil wars. It came to 239,650—a remarkable number when you consider that only 600 years before, the total number of "Jews" had amounted to one: Jacob, the son of Isaac, the son of Abram (later known as Abraham).

More recent scholars have doubted whether Abram/Abraham, Isaac and Jacob ever walked the earth and have suggested that they were made up as folk heroes out of the whole cloth, like the American "Pecos Bill," centuries after they were supposed to have lived.

Voltaire attacked sections of the Old Testament for their obvious absurdities. Thus:

> It is to no purpose that a host of learned men find it surprising that the king of Egypt should have ordered two mid wives to put to death all the male children of the Hebrews, or that the king's daughter, who lived at Memphis, should have gone to bathe far from Memphis, in a branch of the Nile, where no one ever bathes because of the crocodiles.[1]
>
> It is to no purpose that they cavil at the age of 80 which Moses had already attained before undertaking to lead a whole people out of slavery. . . . They wonder how pharaoh could have pursued the Jews with a large body of cavalry, when all his horses had died in the fifth, sixth, seventh and 10th plagues. They wonder why 600,000 warriors took to flight with God in the lead, and having the advantage that all the firstborn of the Egyptians had been struck dead.
>
> They again wonder why God did not give the fertile land of Egypt to his chosen people, instead of making them wander for 40 years in a horrible desert. There is only one answer to these and other countless objections, and that is: God willed it . . . and we ought to believe it. . . .
>
> This catalogue of errors and frauds has been carried quite far enough. A hundred might be repeated, so constantly has the world been composed of deceivers and of people fond of being deceived.

VOLTAIRE depicted in youth

Voltaire died in Paris in 1778, an unrecanting heretic, although he did manage to trick the church into giving him a decent burial—something that, at the time, was denied to non-Christians.

ENDNOTE:

[1] Many authors have pointed out that the legend of the baby Moses being launched upon a river in a basket made of rushes is remarkably similar to, and probably plagiarized from, the myth of the infant Sargon, who was born of a lowly mother in Assyria, his father being unknown, and was rescued from the Euphrates in a reed basket and rose to become king of Akkad or Agade (reigned 2334-2279 B.C.). Many other Old Testament passages appear to have been similarly borrowed from older writings of various polytheistic peoples.

SORDID ASPECTS

While it is true that the Old Testament reflects many sordid aspects of the lives of its characters, which is surprising in a work allegedly intended to glorify these "founding fathers of the faith" (such as the incident in which King David engineers the death of Uriah so that he can gain access to Uriah's wife), it is clear that as these tales began to be recorded, the Israelites began to produce an ethnic myth explaining and glorifying their origins, their superiority and justifying their special claim to the land of Canaan/Palestine, of which they had, by one means or another, taken possession, and to exalt themselves above all other peoples and their gods above all other deities. For example, while the Israelite scribes acknowledged the common descent of the "Ishmaelites," as they called the Arabs, from their great ancestor Abraham, they relegated them to an inferior relation with the story of the Egyptian handmaid and her son. Similarly with the Midianites, Edomites and the especially hated Moabites and Ammonites, who were placed on another line.

There is little reason to believe that the "David" of the Bible is really one person. He may be derived from two or three different Davids of actual history or prehistory, who became conflated in the evolution of the legends that eventually gave rise to the Old Testament. For example, consider the David who supposedly slew Goliath: Many academicians have noted the similarities between the famous ancient Egyptian folktale *The Autobiography of Sinuhe* and the biblical account of David and Goliath. There is no reason to suppose that this little Egyptian grew up to be a king of Israel.

THE LAND OF CANAAN

Noah, of course, conveniently, is made to say, "Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants he shall be unto his brethren," making it supposedly legitimate for the Israelites to help themselves to the land of Canaan, robbing and murdering the inhabitants. Then there is the curse of Ham, the curse of Cain, and so on, so that in their own stories, only the Israelite people are blessed.

Just as with the Koran, which is now being questioned in regard to its historicity by Revisionists such as Ibn Warraq,[18] Paul Fregosi[19] and others, a number of scholars are now coming forth to analyze, in a critical light, the historical aspects of the Old Testament. Most scholars are not claiming that ancient Israel did not exist at all (just as the Islamic Revisionists do not dispute that some such person as the Koran's Mohammed existed). But rather the question is whether it was a great empire, as the Old Testament indicates, and whether such biblical individuals as Abraham or Moses, for example, ever existed in real life.

Could the so-called empire of Israel actually be a disguised version of the Egyptian empire, as Revisionist Ahmed Osman reasons? Could the Emperor David actually be an Egyptian pharaoh, who became confused with an Israelite chieftain who also was called David?

Ancient Egyptian documents do not appear to reference Moses—unless he was actually Ahmose I, founder of the 18th dynasty, as Revisionist Ralph Ellis believes (you will note the similarity of "Ahmose" to "Moses"). Nor are there any indications that an Exodus ever took place, unless it is a distorted interpretation of the expulsion of the Hyksos people.[20]

Since the event describes the departure of a work force of thousands and details the devastation of Egypt by a series of plagues, such an omission by the Egyptians is extraordinary, if such an event actually occurred.

Keith W. Whitelam,[21] George Mendenhall, Niels Peter Lemche,[22] Philip R. Davies,[23] the "Copenhagen school," and even some distinguished Jews such as Israel Finkelstein (professor and chairman of the archeology department at Tel Aviv University),[24] and leading Israeli archeologist Ze'ev Herzog have come to very similar conclusions.

Whitelam's excellent book, *The Invention of Ancient Israel: The Silencing of Palestinian History* (Routledge, London and New York, 1996) has a 14-page bibliography, indicative of the seriousness of the scholarship that went into his groundbreaking study, which argues that "ancient Israel" was an invention of the court historians, in the image of a European state. "Ancient Israel" as it is gener-

ally understood, never existed, and this fiction has prevented a proper understanding of the history of Palestine, he argues. Whitelam is a professor of religious studies and head of department at the University of Stirling in Britain.

Among other things, the Revisionist "Bible minimalists" claim to have determined that: The acts of the patriarchs (Abraham, Isaac and Jacob) are legendary, and the Israelites did not sojourn in Egypt nor make an "exodus," nor did they conquer the land of Palestine or Canaan (western Palestine).

Moses, as such, probably did not exist historically but is a legendary individual derived from a blend of various polytheistic sources and real personages such as Sargon of Akkad and Pharaoh Akhenaten of Egypt, in much the same way that the legendary British "Robin Hood" arose as a composite of various imaginary gods and of various people who really lived at one time or another in the dim past. It is very interesting folklore, and does have some basis in truth, but does not qualify as accurate history by any means.

Neither is there any mention, outside of the Bible, of the glorious empire of David and Solomon, other than, at most, as a small tribal kingdom or chiefdom. It is reasonable to surmise, from the available evidence, that King Saul, King David and King Solomon were, if anything, the kings of a very minor nation and not some great empire. Jerusalem, it seems, was nothing more than a "cow town," the capital of a small statelet in the highlands to the north of the village. Mencken refers to these people as "a little tribe of desert Bedouins, so obscure and unimportant that secular history scarcely knows them." (287)

"Moses probably did not exist historically, but is a legendary individual derived from a blend of various polytheistic sources and real personages like Sargon of Akkad & Akhenaten."

Spinoza dealt with:

> . . . misconceptions regarding the true authorship of the sacred books, beginning with the Pentateuch. The author is almost universally believed to be Moses, a view so obstinately defended by the Pharisees that they have regarded any other view as a heresy.[25]

The point is important because Mosaic authorship was regarded as the guarantee of the truth of the text. According to the Westminster Confession of 1658 (a statement of the leading English Protestants), God guaranteed the transmission of His message to Moses and preserved the Mosaic text perfectly in all transmissions from then on.[26]

Spinoza mentions that Aben Ezra, a medieval Spanish rabbi (ca. 1090-1165), who wrote an important commentary on the Bible, "a man of enlightened mind and considerable learning . . . was the first as far as I know, to call attention to this misconception." "Aben Ezra" appears to be a short form of the rabbi's name; H.L. Mencken refers to the 17th-century Spanish rabbi as Abraham ben Meir ibn Ezra, and states: "He unearthed many absurdities, but he had to be very careful about discussing them, and it was not until 500 years later that anything properly describable as scientific criticism of the Old Testament came into being." Ibn Ezra is, among medieval Jewish scholars and interpreters of the Torah, second only to Rashi in the scope of his influence and the respect he is accorded. His most celebrated work, analyzing the Pentateuch, is generally known as his *Commentary to the Torah*, was originally titled *The Book of the Upright*, which also happens to be the name of a work that is cited in the Bible itself (e.g., Joshua 10:13). The latter part of the rabbi's life was spent wandering in poverty through Italy, Provence, France, England, Egypt and Palestine. It appears that he may have wound up living in Morocco. It was during his wanderings that he composed most of his many influential literary works.

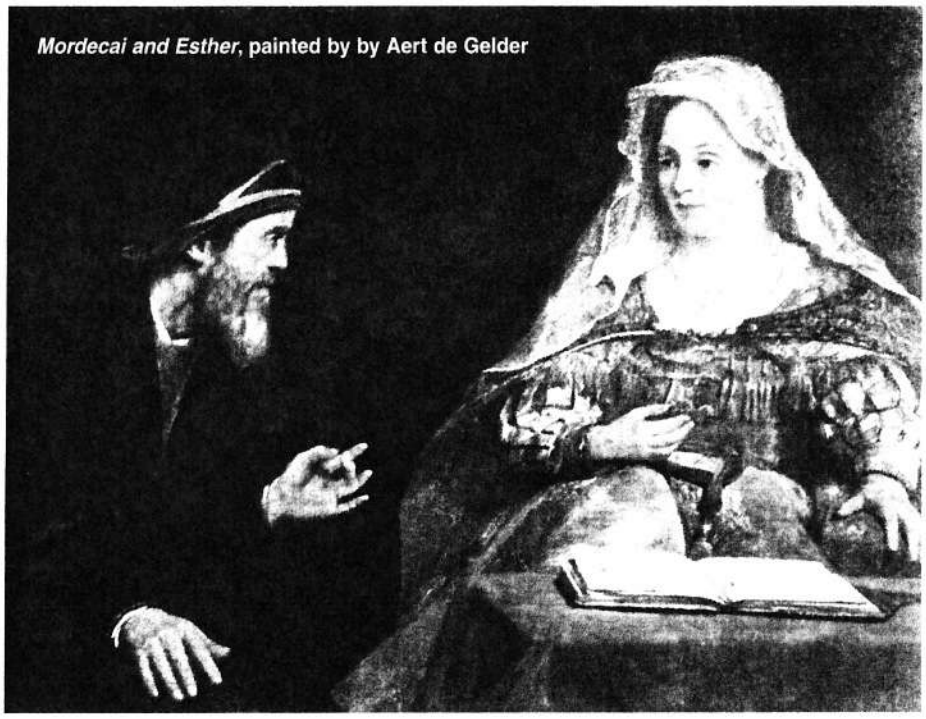
MOSES WRITES ABOUT HIS OWN DEATH?

Among other problems noted by ibn Ezra was the fact that Moses supposedly wrote in detail about his own death.[27] The recognition of the non-Mosaic authorship began to have serious and severe repercussions in the 1650s, in the writings of Thomas Hobbes, Isaac La Peyrère, Samuel Fisher and then Spinoza. They all seem to have gotten their view directly or indirectly from ibn Ezra. During the Puritan Revolution, a variety of critics known to history by such colorful names as Ranters, Levelers and Seekers, rejected the Bible for all sorts of reasons, including the obvious problems that learned Old Testament critics had dwelt upon, including the claim that Moses could not have written about his own death.

We can safely conclude that the Old Testament narratives of the past are clearly not history, nor were they written anytime near the eras of which they speak, but rather they reflect the political purposes of their much later authors. So therefore, it is now part of the scholarly consensus that the patriarchal narratives of Genesis do not record events of an alleged patriarchal period but are retrojections into a past about which the writers knew little, reflecting the authors' intentions at the later period of composition. It is naive, then, to slavishly accept the view that God made the promise of progeny and land to Abraham after the fashion indicated in Genesis 15.[28]

In the first place, as with the modern Israeli atrocities against the Palestinian people, this would be horrifyingly

Esther's Purim Massacre



Mordecai and Esther, painted by by Aert de Gelder

The high holy Talmudic holiday of "Purim" is a time of slaughter out of revenge. Purim, the most joyous day in the Jewish calendar, is the traditional celebration of the alleged slaughter of tens of thousands of Persians in the days of Queen Esther. The historicity of the Esther story has been questioned, since no Persian queen of that name is known from any source other than the Bible, and the names of the protagonists, Esther and Mordecai, are suspiciously similar to the names of two top Babylonian deities, Ishtar and Marduk. According to the tale, the king of Persia, Ahasuerus, is convinced by his chief adviser, Haman, to exterminate the proto-"Jews" in a proto-holocaust. Mordecai, Esther's uncle, advises the secretly Jewish queen, Esther, to influence her husband to prevent the genocide. She succeeds, and instead the king orders a holocaust of his own people. During a two-day reign of terror, the Jews are permitted to run wild, murdering more than 75,000 non-Jews in the Persian realm. In reality, it is likely there was no plot against the Jews, but the allegation was used as a pretext to allow the Jews to murder those whom they perceived to be their enemies—men, women and children. Judaized Christians today are fooled into thinking the Purim celebration is perfectly harmless. Today the Jews celebrate a perpetual Purim by massacring the natives of Palestine.

immoral (try reading the narrative from the viewpoint of the innocent parties about to be exterminated, that is, with the eyes of the Canaanites). In the second place, it is contra-historical.

Scholars now agree, virtually unanimously, that ancient Israel did not come to exist by way of the tribal conquest narrated in Joshua 1-12. Outside of the Bible, we have no evidence of any Hebrew conquest. The archeological evidence points in an altogether different direction. It suggests a sequence of periods marked by a gradual and peaceful coalescence of disparate peoples into a group of highland dwellers whose achievement of a new sense of unity culminated only with the entry of the Assyrian administration. The Iron Age settlements on the central hills of Palestine, from which the later kingdom of Israel developed, reflect continuity with Canaanite culture and repudiate any ethnic distinction between Canaanites and Israelites. Israel's immediate origins, then, were within Canaan, not somewhere outside it.[29]

Archeological silence is a problem the biblical inerrantists do not like to talk about. While, according to the Bible, the various Israelite tribes were united for a time into one powerful nation during the reigns of King David and his son Solomon, the archeological record is silent about these kings except for two disputed inscriptions some think may be references to "the house of David." This is odd, considering that references to other kings of much less biblical importance, such as Omri, Ahab, Jehu and Zedekiah have been clearly found in extrabiblical records. While this silence obviously cannot prove David and Solomon did not exist, it certainly gives rational historians pause to wonder. Assuming that they did exist, they were certainly of far less global importance in real life than the Old Testament makes them out to have been.

CHRISTIAN ZIONISTS HELP

These conclusions have been aired among scholars for years, but political Zionists (especially the Jerry Fallwell types) are stubborn people, and until recently, nobody wanted to hear about it. Israelis and other political Zionists (a respectable segment of the Christian population) like to believe modern Israelis are the descendants of those wonderful Israelites of ancient times, and certainly they use the Old Testament myths to justify the Jewish occupation of Palestine—although ironically most Jews today including the ruling Ashkenazi class in Israel, are not descended from any Middle Eastern people but from the peoples of the Khazar empire of what today is southern Russia.[30] Even the Sephardic minority of Jews today are such a mixed race that it appears they can only claim a quite tenuous connection to the ancient Israelites.

Thompson has spent his academic career steeped in this biblical controversy, researching the intertwining archeological histories of Israel and Palestine He has con-

cluded that the Old Testament is not a historical document but should be regarded as a work of fiction, more like a historical novel than a history textbook. Thompson contends, however, that understanding the Old Testament as fictive literature does not have to undermine its spiritual truth and integrity for Christians, and this is important.

Thompson believes: "How the [Old Testament] is related to history has been badly misunderstood. As we have been reading the [Old Testament] within a context that is certainly wrong, and as we have misunderstood the [Old Testament] because of this, we need to seek a context more appropriate. As a result, we will begin to read the [Old Testament] in a new way."

Thompson is currently a professor of the Old Testament at the University of Copenhagen. Thompson's *The Mythic Past: Biblical Archaeology and the Myth of Israel* aims to separate the Old Testament from history in order to understand it on its own terms, in the context its authors intended. While parts of *Mythic Past* value research and analysis over readability, it is arranged to help aspiring scholars negotiate the vast and complex history of biblical understanding.

It should be noted that Thompson authored a magisterial tome in 1992, *Early History of the Israelite People* (EHIP), of 482 pages, with an extensive bibliography of approximately 900 books, which delves in depth into the questions involved with the historicity or non-historicity of the Bible. *Mythic Past* is largely a popularization of the compendious and detailed, highly professional but difficult-to-read *Early History of the Israelite People*.

Many scholars already view the Old Testament as literature and not as factual reporting, but their ideas have not been easily accessible to the general public, nor is such thinking welcome to the average Christian. Even religious skeptics generally tend to think it is in bad taste to air these sensitive matters. And very few ordinary folks will go slogging through a book or journal on academic biblical scholarship or archeology written in turgid prose calculated to put most readers to sleep.

Thompson's shift in the way we see the Bible is the culmination of centuries of biblical criticism but it is still radical. Western Christianity has always narrated a great epic history of salvation based on the Bible: creation, the fall, the flood, the patriarchs, Moses, the exodus and the law, the conquest, the judges, the kings and prophets, and the promised Messiah. We are now invited to see the whole story as back-projected and mythical.

To read the Old Testament as history, says Thompson, is to distort it. In Thompson's words, "the misappropriation of ancient texts for purposes contrary to the tradition's intentions, which two generations of theological use of the Old Testament have now encouraged, is one of those common abuses of intellect" that "contributes to the pollution of the ocean of our language."

Unlike some others who critically analyze the Old Testament, Thompson does not become cynical, leaving the reader with a desire to "trash" the whole Bible—after all, one might be tempted to ask, if the Bible, constantly referred to by fundamentalists as the "Word of God,"[31] isn't literally true, then what good is it? On the contrary, Thompson finds enormous spiritual and philosophical value in these stories, reminding us that the biblical storytellers were passing on to us the wisdom of the ages, just as we do not demand that the stories told in the works of Shakespeare, even the so-called historical plays, be literally true.

"There is good history in the Old Testament, as long as one is able to contemplate the possibility that one is really reading about Egyptians or Hyksos or Sumerians recast as 'Israelites.'"

There is even good historical content in the Old Testament, as long as one is willing to contemplate the possibility that one is really reading about Egyptians or Hyksos or Sumerians who have been recast as "Israelites." Of course, it becomes a tricky and intricate task to sort out the truth from the fiction and the distortions. We must bear in mind that when the Bible was written down, the modern concept of history writing did not exist.

Be that as it may, certainly the time is long overdue for recognizing that the Bible is not a collection of religious texts, but rather a hodgepodge of ancient documents (much reworked), some of which have no religious content at all, while a few may even incline to religious skepticism (Ecclesiastes comes to mind—see "The Style of Koheleth" by Robert Gordis, in Harold Bloom's *The Bible).* Written by numerous different authors, many of them unknown, the Bible's contents are a mixture of good, bad and mediocre, not infrequently contradictory. A highly selective reading of it is required if one is to get a positive moral message from this material—much of which is downright immoral. (You won't hear about those passages from your local pastor.)

Yet the Old Testament is certainly one of the most influential books ever in the Western World. It is to many a vital part of our heritage, and as such it needs to be properly understood for what it is—and what it is not. *Mythic Past* achieves this goal and achieves it in a readily comprehensible fashion making the "minimalist" view available to the average reader for the first time.

MAN'S INHUMANITY TO MAN

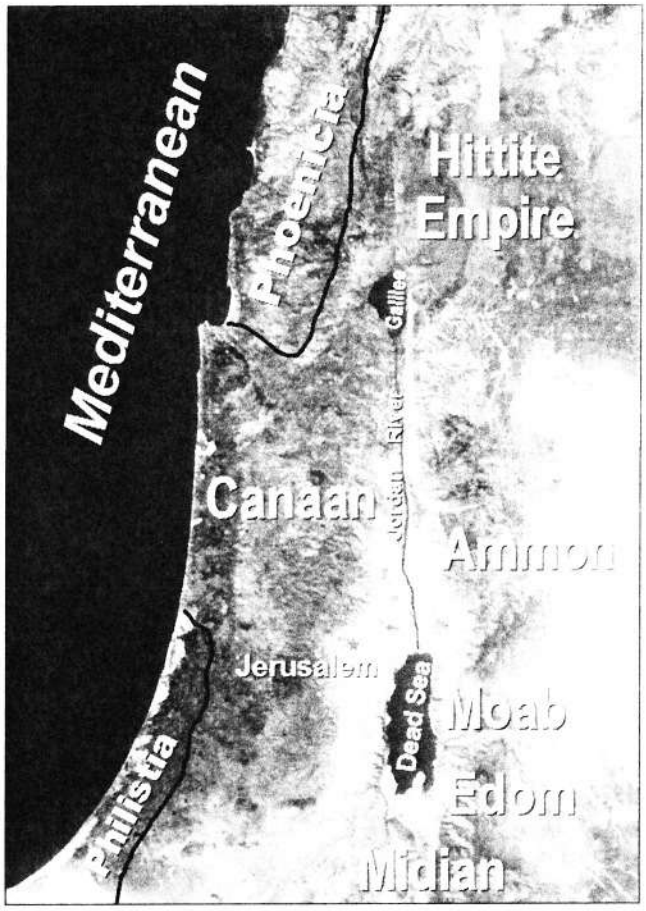
There have certainly been enough sad, shocking and sickening events in the real history of man's inhumanity to man. With the exception of a few harmless books such as Ruth, Proverbs and the Song of Solomon, the Old Testament is one of the most blood-soaked tomes one could ever hope to find. Thus, many Revisionists feel that we should perhaps feel relieved, and even rejoice, that some of the horrific, grisly slaughters described therein (such as the armed conquest of Canaan by the Israelites) may never have happened at all. Unfortunately, it is a safe bet that Zionists, including Christian Zionists, will not welcome the news that the ancient Israelites did not slaughter the native Canaanites to anything like the extent the Old Testament leads one to believe.

Thompson's book may not cover much that has not been covered by other scholars in the past, but it is a controversial volume nevertheless. Any attempt to question the reliability of the biblical historical descriptions is perceived (and rightly so) as tending to undermine the alleged historic right of the Jews (who point to some ambiguous passages in the Old Testament to "prove" that they are "God's chosen people") to the lands of Palestine and as shattering the myth of the bandit nation that is supposedly renewing the ancient kingdom of Israel. Unfortunately, the truth is never so monetarily profitable as a clever pack of lies, such as the web the Jewish Zionists and their dupes the Christian Zionists have spun.

Many a Christian will continue to go as a tourist to Israel and give money to the Israeli government, convinced that Moses and David existed and that the Old Testament is literally true—regardless of discrepancies.

Thomas Paine, for one, died friendless and broke because he would not mince words with regard to the truth as he saw it, but spoke and wrote forthrightly. In essence he was a martyr for truth. Voltaire was persecuted and forced to move from one nation to another to avoid "the monster" (*"Ecrasez l'infame,"* or "crush the beast of persecution," he was fond of saying to his followers). Thomas L. Thompson, as noted above, has also suffered in very recent times for his honest, scholarly views. But still Revisionists feel morally impelled to always pursue the truth—no matter at what cost.

The mythic legends of Moses, Joshua, King David, Solomon etc are largely fake. The myths of the Old Testament are no more valid than the ancient Greek and Roman belief in a pantheon of idiosyncratic and psychologically unstable gods. But as today's Israel derives her very legitimacy for statehood (and for the continued genocide in Palestine) from these ancient fairy tales, it would seem the historical truth in this case undermines the very foundation of the modern state of Israel. ❖



At top, a map of the lands of Canaan around 1200 B.C. The Philistines occupy the Gaza area while the Phoenicians occupy an area equivalent to Lebanon. Both of these cultures left obvious archeological remains and were mentioned by other cultures. However, the only extrabiblical reference existing that mentions ancient Israel at all is the Merneptah Stele (right), dating from about 1207 B.C. According to this victory ode commissioned by Pharaoh Merneptah, "Israel is laid to waste, and his seed is not." Some scholars, led by Albrecht Alt, believe the Israelites were merely Canaanite pastoralist nomads who finally settled down in the central hill country east of the Jordan River during Iron Age 1. George Mendenhall proposes that the ancient Israelites are no more than Canaanites who left their original towns in the Late Bronze Age, and became dissidents or outlaws, rejecting their former nationality for a new identity.

JOHN TIFFANY is the assistant editor for THE BARNES REVIEW. Mr. Tiffany has a B.S. in biology from the University of Michigan (1969) and has been writing professionally for about 30 years.

ENDNOTES:

[1]Paperback, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2006.

[2]Isaiah 43: 16-19.

[3]John Donne, writing in 1611: "And new Philosophy calls all in doubt . . ." was troubled that the old answers no longer were capable of being regarded as true. But modern science has long since inoculated man against the permanence of all answers. (Donne, "The First Anniversary," in *The Poems of John Donne*, edited by Sir Robert Grierson [London, Oxford U. Press, 1933] 205-18.) Donne was not alone in his worry that all coherence was gone, that the natural order was giving way to disorder. (David H. Levy, *Starry Night: Astronomers and Poets Read the Sky*, Prometheus Books, Amherst, N.Y., 2001.)

[4]Eventually the Roman Catholic Church had to swallow the Copernican astronomy, by fiat of the Holy Office, on September 11, 1822, nearly three centuries after *De Revolutionibus Orbium Caelestium* was published. H.L. Mencken (259) predicted that the same thing would happen with the theory of evolution.

[5]The *Mappa Mundi*, or map of the world, in question here is a late 13th-century parchment credited to Richard of Holdingham. *(Trilobite: Eyewitness to Evolution*, Richard Fortey, Borzoi Books, Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 2000, 191.)

[6]As Tennyson, who knew that dinosaurs had once strode the Earth and were now extinct, poetically expressed it:

> The hills are shadows, and they flow
> From form to form, and nothing stands;
> They melt like mist, the solid lands,
> Like clouds they shape themselves and go.
> There rolls the deep where grew the tree.
> O Earth, what changes hast thou seen!
> There where the long street roars hath been
> The stillness of the central sea.

[7]Van Flandern, Tom, *Dark Matter, Missing Planets and New Comets: Paradoxes Resolved: Origins Illuminated*, North Atlantic Books, Berkeley, California, 1993. Van Flandern finds many flaws in the Big Bang theory and has an entire cosmology of his own devising that is worthy of attention.

[8]The word "Hebrew," anciently written as "Habiru," means "one who is from across the river," i.e., an alien. In Egyptian writings, the word is paired with *"sagaz,"* meaning "cutthroat" or "bandit."

[9]Mencken, H.L., *Treatise on the Gods*, 2d ed., copyright Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1946, reprinted by Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997, available from THE BARNES REVIEW BOOK CLUB, 94 pp., #229, $18.

[10]*Tractatus Theologico-Politicus*, vi. 51.

[11]Here is a typical quote from *Age of Reason:*

> There is a striking confusion between the historical and the chronological arrangement in the book of Judges. This shows the uncertain and fabulous state of the Old Testament. According to the chronological arrangement, the taking of Laish, and giving it the name of Dan, is made to be 20 years after the death of Joshua, who was the successor of Moses; and by the historical order, as it stands in the book, it is made to be 306 years after the death of Joshua, and 331 after that of Moses; but they both exclude Moses from being the writer of Genesis, because, according to either of the statements, no such a place as Dan existed in the time of Moses; and therefore the writer of Genesis must have been some person who lived after the town of Laish had the name of Dan; and who that person was nobody knows, and consequently the book of Genesis is anonymous; without authority."

And another:

> "Take away from Genesis the belief that Moses was the author . . . and there remains nothing of Genesis but an anonymous book of stories, fables, and traditionary or invented absurdities, or of downright lies. The story of Eve and the serpent, and of Noah and his ark, drops to a level with the Arabian Tales, without the merit of being entertaining, and the account of men living to eight and nine hundred years becomes as fabulous as the immortality of the giants of the mythology.

[12]We need to distinguish two terms here: the "historicity" of the Old Testament, and the "authenticity" of the Old Testament. Some authors would reverse the definitions, but as used here, by the historicity of the Old Testament is meant the correspondence between events and persons described in the Old Testament with events that actually transpired and people who really lived. The authenticity of the Old Testament would mean the degree to which the Bible as we know it today corresponds with what its original writers intended for it to say. It is a known fact that various theologians down through the centuries have rewritten the Bible to suit their particular agenda—a process that would usually detract from whatever historical truth may have been in it to start with. Herein we will not deal with the authenticity debate, although it might be noted in passing that the Bible, according to most modern, respected biblical scholars, is one of the most tampered-with scriptures on Earth, with dubious authorship and beginnings.

[13]A couple of web sites list numerous historical contradictions in the Old Testament. Among these, to mention just a few, are these:

> How old was Ahaziah when he took the throne? "Two and twenty years old was Ahaziah when he began to reign." (2 Kings 8:26) "Forty and two years old was Ahaziah when he began to reign." (2 Chronicles 22:2)

When the chief of the mighty men of David lifted up his spear, how many men did he kill at one time? "Eight hundred." (2 Samuel 23:8) "Three hundred." (1 Chronicles 11:11) from *Losing Faith in Faith: From Preacher to Atheist*, by Dan Barker, and angelfire.com/ak/BaltoMuslims. The Angelfire website lists 101 contradictions, and Barker asserts that there are thousands of discrepancies in the Old Testament.)

[14]*The Bible: Modern Critical Views* 22.

[15]An example is the seminal work *Hamlet's Mill: An Essay Investigating the Origins of Human Knowledge and Its Transmission Through Myth*, by Giorgio de Santillana and Hertha Von Dechend (Nonpareil Books, 1969).

[16]Regarding Abraham, what can we say of a supposed historical figure whose life story conforms virtually in every detail to the mythic hero archetype, with nothing, no "secular" or mundane information, left over? It doesn't prove there was no historical King David, for it is not unreasonable that a genuine historical individual might become so lionized, even so deified, that his life and career would be completely assimilated to the mythic hero archetype, i.e. King Arthur. But if that happened, we could no longer be sure there had ever been a real person at the root of the whole thing. The stained glass would have become just too thick to peer through. Alexander the Great, Caesar, Cyrus, Arthur and others have nearly suffered this fate. What keeps historians from dismissing them as mere myths, like Paul Bunyan, is that there is some residue. We know at least a bit of mundane information about them, perhaps quite a bit, that does not form part of any legend cycle. Or they are so intricately woven into the history of the time that it is impossible, to make sense of that history without them. This is not the case with King David.

[17]We shall leave to one side such quotations as that of Niels Bohr, who, when speaking to a younger theoretical physicist, is said to have said: "Your theory is crazy. But it's not crazy enough to be true." Similarly, the common saying that, "Truth is stranger than fiction," is no justification for an uncritical or "anything goes" approach in history. In Tertullian's treatise *De Carne Christi*, he is arguing against Marcion, whose contention was that the humiliation implied in the fact of the Incarnation was unworthy of God. Tertullian answers this in a passage splendidly paradoxical and profoundly spiritual: "Spare the whole world's one and only hope, thou who art destroying the indispensable dishonor of our faith. Whatever is unworthy of God is of gain to me. . . . The Son of God is born; we are not ashamed, because we ought to be ashamed. And the Son of God died; it is perfectly credible, because it is absurd. And being buried He rose again; it is certain, because it is impossible." *("Natus est Dei Filius; non pudet quia pudendum est; et mortuus est Dei Filius; prorsus credibile est quia ineptum est; et sepultus resurrexit; certum est quia impossibile")* To a scientist, this is on a par with the statement by the Red Queen to Alice that it was her regular practice "to believe six impossible things every day before breakfast." The fact that theoretical physics, and even mathematics, the queen of sciences, are rife with paradoxes (one thinks, for example, of how the Polish mathematicians Stefan Banach and Alfred Tarski in 1924 proved that it is theoretically possible to take a small solid sphere, say the size of a pea, divide it into a finite number of parts and reassemble them into a solid sphere the size of the Sun, which violates our intuitive understanding of the meaning of the word "volume") is a separate issue. Anyway, history, which is full of unexpected twists and turns, demands evidence, not plausibility. Just as a butterfly fluttering its wings a certain way by chance in Peking may cause a tornado to occur in Kansas, as chaos theorists inform us, so the course of world history might be utterly changed by such a trivium as the happenstance length of a woman's nose (Cleopatra). It is, in fact, fiction that demands plausibility; and this is the basis for Thompson's argument on behalf of a literary approach to biblical material. Still, when what is promoted as being history is simply too fantastic to be believable, it becomes necessary to take a closer look at the verifiable facts, for, as the scientists might say, an extraordinary scenario requires extraordinary proof.

[18]Author of *Why I Am Not a Muslim* and *The Quest for the Historical Muhammad*.

[19]Author of *Jihad in the West*.

[20]*Tempest & Exodus*, by Ralph Ellis, Edfu Books, pub. in the U.S. by Adventures Unlimited, Kempton, Ill., 2000, 2001.

[21]Author of *The Invention of Ancient Israel*.

[22]Author of *The Israelites in History and Tradition*, and of *Prelude to Israel's Past: Background and Beginnings of Israelite History and Identity*.

[23]Author of *Scribes and Schools: The Canonization of the Hebrew Scriptures*.

[24]Author with Neil Asher Silberman of *The Bible Unearthed: Archaeology's New Vision of Ancient Israel and the Origin of Its Sacred Text*.

[25]*Tractatus* viii., 161.

[26]*The Cambridge Companion to Spinoza*, Don Garett, ed., Cambridge University Press, 1996, 386.

[27]Similar problems exist with regard to Isaiah, for example. The prophet Isaiah is traditionally supposed to have written the book of Isaiah; but while it is very likely that he wrote parts of it, "[t]he idea of his having written the whole of it is completely impossible. In several chapters he is actually spoken of in the third person. Three main documents have been separated from the book, but there are also other lesser ones, and two whole chapters appear to be lifted bodily from II Kings. Isaiah has strained biblical scholarship very uncomfortably, and many of the problems that it presents are still under furious discussion. The literature upon the subject is almost endless, and makes very hard reading." (Mencken 200)

[28]"Confronting the Bible's Ethnic Cleansing in Palestine," by Michael Prior, C.M., in *The Link*, published by Americans for Middle Eastern Understanding Inc., vol. 33, No. 5, Dec. 2000.

[29]*Ibid.*

[30]Worth quoting in this connection is a passage from the prominent Jewish writer Arthur Koestler. He told this curious but little-known story in his 1976 book *The Thirteenth Tribe:*

> [T]he large majority of surviving Jews in the world is of Eastern European—and thus mainly of Khazar—origin. If so, this would mean that their ancestors came not from the Jordan but from the Volga, not from Canaan but from the Caucasus . . . and that genetically they are more closely related to the Hun, Uigur and Magyar tribes than to the seed of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Should this turn out to be the case, then the term "anti-Semitism" would become void of meaning . . . The story of the Khazar empire, as it slowly emerges from the past, begins to look like the most cruel hoax which history had ever perpetrated.

Corroborating Koestler, a noted French Jew, Prof. Maxime Rodinson, has observed: "it is very probable that the so-called Arab inhabitants of Palestine . . . have much more of the ancient Hebrews' 'blood' than most of the Jews of the diaspora, whose religious exclusiveness in no way prevented them from absorbing converts of various religions."

It will surely be acknowledged, then, that for such people to denounce Palestinian Arabs as "anti-Semites" for resisting the Khazar-Zionist seizure of their millennia-old homes and lands must be close to the height (or depth) of what these folks smirkingly call *chutzpah. (Talk About Hate*, by William N. Grimstad, Council on Hate Crimes Injustice, 1999)

[31]As early as the 17th century, controversies arose as to the theory of the inspiration of the Bible, which led certain theologians to change the formula from, "The Bible is the Word of God," to, "The Bible contains the Word of God."

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