

The Ryburn Christian Clarion

Upholding the Accuracy of the God-Breathed Word

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Unless otherwise noted, all passages are quoted from the King James Version (KJV) of the Bible. All explanatory remarks by a writer within a scripture verse are enclosed in brackets [].

A FAINT GLIMMER OF DAWN

NOT TOO LONG AGO, I was out very early in the morning running an errand. It was still dark, but on the eastern horizon, there was the faintest hint of pre-dawn light. It was barely there, and it made me think of our lives here on this earthly plane of existence. Compared to the life of exquisite bliss and glory that we shall someday enjoy with our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, in all its brilliant effulgence, we currently, *in this life*, experience only the slightest inkling of what God has prepared for His beloved children. Even as a brightening dawn may evolve into a startlingly brilliant noonday, our walk with our Father *now* will *one day* be excelled by "...the glory which shall be revealed in us...", and those things which God has prepared before the world "...unto our glory:" (Rom. 8:18b and I Cor. 2:7b respectively).

It is mental images and attitudes like these from The Word of God that put steel in our backbones, keeping us going in the most distressing circumstances. It is the hope of the Lord Jesus' return from Heaven, and all that it entails, that keeps us from drifting from our calling. As the anchor of a great ship causes it to hold its position, our anticipation of Christ's return, which the Bible calls the "...anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast..." (Heb. 6:19a), enables us to remain single-minded in our aim to share the life of deliverance God has ordained for all who will to claim it.

With so great a promise, we, at the *Clarion*, are eager to
continued on next page...

INSIDE AT A GLANCE

IN THIS FIRST ISSUE OF 2005, we've decided to add a cover page sidebar to allow our readers to skim the columns and articles in a matter of seconds. We trust this convenience will meet with your approval.

"A FAINT GLIMMER OF DAWN" examines the outreach of the *Clarion* as we enter a new year. Continually in transition, the *Clarion* broadens its scope of outreach to better move God's Word.
by Rick Heeter, Editor-in-Chief.....1

"GOD'S MATCHLESS WORD": Our offering this issue is a heartening disclosure of the Christian's hope in Christ entitled "**'Awaiting The Return'**". It will make you think.
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"FROM THE RESEARCH DEPARTMENT": Our research columnist has put together a uniquely compelling study concerning ancient Israel's deliverance out of Egypt. You've seen the movie; now, check out "**'Guns And Moses'**".
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"FOR YOUR SPIRITUAL ENRICHMENT": We present the first installment of a two-part essay covering the current move away from institutionalized religion by many who seek a *real* relationship with the Living God. "**'Collapse Of The Church Culture'**", **Part One**, will provoke many to re-examine their spirituality.
by Rev. Maurice Goulet, D. D.6

"ANTIQUITY SPEAKS": Our intriguing column on Biblical archaeology returns with a study on King David. For decades, scientists said he was a myth. "**'David: Written In Stone'**" explores the tangible evidence of his existence.
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Call the *Clarion* at (937) 275-3316.

make known the accuracy of the God-breathed Word. To that end, we work joyously, studying the Scriptures and sharing what we find with friends like you who are concerned about the direction our society and culture are taking. God has made known, in His Word, solutions to every dilemma, and we have the privilege of discovering and living them.

Men of believing, like Keith Jamison and Theodore “Ted” C. Mahr, are adding their Biblical scholarship to the outreach of the *Clarion*, increasing the scope and richness of our presentation of The Word. The Bible says, “...faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God...” (Rom. 10:17). Well, we intend to see to it that our readers have plenty to assimilate. **“From The Research Department”** will continue to bring to light tidbits of truth that are unbiased and accurate, but almost wholly unknown to those involved in mainstream Christian avenues. Concurrently, Mr. Mahr’s **“Antiquity Speaks”** column will regularly present scientific discoveries that validate Biblical accounts, but which the world refuses to acknowledge.

We’re expanding into other areas, as well. As promised, we are introducing a regular feature called **“Investigating Creation Science”**. It will debut in our next issue (Spring, 2005; Vol. II, No. 3), disclosing facts about the universe and natural world around us that indicate Divine workmanship as the basis of everything that exists. Since many scientists have privately, albeit reluctantly, acknowledged an intelligent design to the cosmos, this new feature in the *Clarion* will be most timely. Initially, this column will appear only in the *Clarion’s* spring and fall installments each year, being authored alternately by Keith Jamison and Theodore C. Mahr.

A different column altogether will appear in the *Clarion’s* summer and winter issues. Beginning this summer (Vol. II, No.4), I will author a recurring feature discussing the Biblical foundations of the United States of America and the Judeo-Christian ethic that engendered tremendous economic growth, enhanced social development, and fostered the spreading of liberty to millions in America, as well as untold multitudes in foreign lands. With the erosion of many of our original cultural mores by a rising cult of humanism that rejects any authority greater than man, and which disparages any reliance on God, we’ve decided to present the truths that once defined us as a people. In the column **“GOD And Country”**, we will examine America’s founding documents; get acquainted with statesmen small and great; uncover the establishing of traditions and social institutions which lend stability to our society;

and, in general, take a good look at those things which make us unique and worthy of emulation. We will highlight our strengths and note where and how we overcame weaknesses. Lastly, we will take an unvarnished look at the social path we’ve been on for over 60 years and discover what we can do to rejuvenate America’s flagging spiritual and traditional culture.

Having said all that, I should point out that our first regular feature, **“GOD’S MATCHLESS WORD: A Forum For Presenting The Light Of Life”**, will continue to hold a prominent place in the *Clarion*. In this feature, we will always set forth the *basics* of the Scriptures submitted by an array of Bible students and scholars who have proven their faithfulness and textual accuracy. Regarding this past year’s contributions to this column, we would be remiss if we failed to mention those who so ably graced the pages of this feature.

In the Spring, 2004 issue, we introduced the column by presenting a call to dedicated Christian service in the article **“Purpose With A Passion”** by Rev. Tad Hobert of North Riverdale Grace Brethren Church here in Dayton, Ohio. We followed it with Rev. Tommy Mae Kimble’s challenge to simply trust the Lord in her work entitled **“God Got Our Back”**, which appeared in the Summer, 2004 issue. In the Fall, 2004 installment, Vicki Edgar’s article, **“Believing”**, showed us the importance of paying attention to *what* and *how* we think. Finally, in this current edition (Winter, 2005), long-time Bible student Roger J. Tobler, of Ft. Mitchell, Kentucky, reminds us of our hope in Christ in his research study **“Awaiting The Return”**. To all our column contributors from this past year, we extend our gratitude and thanks.

In other news, our “Basics Of The Bible” Open-book Quiz has been reprinted. Copies will be sent out randomly in some of the newsletters which go to folks on our mailing list. You may obtain a copy (or have your name added to the mailing list) by writing **The Ryburn Christian Clarion, 420 Ryburn Avenue, Suite C-2, Dayton, Ohio 45405-2552**. Please note that our suite number has changed from **C-9** to **C-2**. If you prefer, you may call us at **(937) 275-3316**.

Alas, not all news is edifying. Sadly, we must inform you that the Ryburn Chapel has closed its doors and ceased its activities. Although the television outreach proved to be successful, attendance in the Chapel itself was often meager. As a result, Chaplain J. R. Collins has relocated to New Lebanon, Ohio (just west of Dayton) where he is

beginning his service as an assistant pastor at Eternal Crown Church. He is involved in video editing and continues to work on his manuscript dealing with John 1:1-3, "the Word". Meanwhile, *The Ryburn Chapel* television program continues, as popular as ever, carried locally on DATV, cable channel 12.

In closing this issue's news section, allow me to invite those who are interested to submit articles, essays, poetry, testimonies, and so forth for consideration for future installments of the *Clarion*.

If, instead, you'd care to financially support the outreach of God's Word by way of this newsletter, you may do so by making your checks or money orders payable to "The Ryburn Christian Clarion". Send all offerings to the address posted in the masthead of this newsletter at the top of page one. Remember, we've changed our suite number from **C-9** to **C-2**. Note, also, that we have a new e-mail address: rcc@proapc.com. As we take our leave, we ask that you include our efforts in your prayers; you are always in ours.

-----by Rick Heeter, Editor-in-Chief

In Loving Memory...

It is fitting that we pause for a moment to note the passing of a wonderful man of God and a precious brother in Christ. In late-November, 2004, Rev. Mark Gluckin, who served the past several years in North Carolina, fell asleep in Christ and is awaiting his Lord's return. Our prayers and believing are with his wife, Barbara, and the immediate family. The world is always better for having witnessed the stand of a man of God. Mark will be missed.

GOD'S MATCHLESS WORD:

A Forum For Presenting The Light Of Life

(Continuing in this installment of The Ryburn Christian Clarion, "God's Matchless Word: A Forum For Presenting The Light Of Life" will feature a wide range of subjects from God's Word as they are set forth by a host of preachers and teachers from differing avenues of Christian thought and various areas of Biblical study and concern.)

“ ‘Awaiting The Return’ ”

by Roger J. Tobler

GREETINGS AND GOD BLESS YOU in the powerful name of Jesus Christ! Please join me as we take a look at I Thessalonians 4:13. "But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren," it reads, "concerning them which [who] are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as [or "to the degree of "] others which [who] have no hope." There are seven occurrences in the Church Epistles where God encourages His people not to be ignorant of specific things; this is one of them. God does not want the believers uninformed concerning those who have fallen asleep in Christ, namely, those believers who are *dead*.

The word "asleep" is a *euphemism*, a figure of speech, used to soften the blow of anything harsh, like death. The Lord wants His people to "sorrow not" to the degree that unbelievers do, who are willfully ignorant of The Word (II Peter 3:5a).

Instead, God wants His children to know what happens to the dead, those who have *fallen asleep*.

Most people believe in some sort of "afterlife", entered upon immediately at the time of death. These beliefs are usually based upon everything *except* the Word of God. Sincere Christians are certain they will be taken to see Jesus immediately upon dying. The Word, however, teaches that restored life to the dead *comes to the believer* with the return of Christ from Heaven. Before His coming, all who have died remain in the grave, in corruption and unconsciousness.

To verify these claims, let's take a stroll through some Old Testament scriptures. In Job 7,

verses 9 and 10, it says, "As the cloud is [becomes] consumed and vanisheth away: so he that goeth down to the grave shall come up no more. He shall return no more to his house, neither shall his place know him any more." Wow! At the time of death, you go to the grave (not to Heaven, nor to a burning place of torment with devils in red pajamas with pitchforks).

Verse 10 of Job 7 states that the dead person shall not return to his house. The deceased does not return to his home to "haunt" it. Haunted houses are a deception of Satan designed to trick people into believing in "survival after death", causing us to doubt the integrity of The Word. The last phrase in verse 10, "neither shall his place know him any more", establishes the truth set forth in the first part of the verse. This is the figure *exergasia*, whereby a truth is stated twice, but in different wording. Also, a "house" or a "place" are not alive and cannot **know** anything. This language is figurative, and emphasizes that no house can harbor a person's "spirit".

In Job 21:13, we read, "They spend their days in wealth, and in a moment go down to the grave." In Psalms 6:5, David notes, "For in death there is no remembrance of thee [God]: in the grave who shall give thee thanks?" Why can't we remember or thank God "in death"? The Word says there is no consciousness in death; you are "asleep".

Ecclesiastes 9:5,6 and 10

For the living know that they shall die: but the dead know not any thing, neither have they any more a reward; for the memory of them is forgotten.

Also their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished; neither have they any more a portion for ever in any thing that is done under the sun.

Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest.

The phrase, "the memory of them", actually means "their own memory". All memory and consciousness cease in death. It sounds as if we have no hope, but what does The Word say? God wants His people to not be ignorant regarding the dead, as are the unsaved who have no hope (Eph. 2:12). *Our hope* is in Christ! I Thessalonians 4, where we began, unveils what God says about those believers who are *asleep*.

I Thessalonians 4:14-18

For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.

For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent [precede] them which are asleep.

For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet [trumpet] of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:

Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

Wherefore comfort one another with these words.

We are to comfort one another with the truth that we rise unto new life at Christ's return. We are not to be ignorant of these matters. No one who believes in him as Lord will be left behind. Until then, those who have *fallen asleep* remain in a state of unconsciousness, awaiting "The Return".*

(Mr. Roger J. Tobler, of Ft. Mitchell, Kentucky, has been involved in Biblical studies since 1978. He is a graduate of various research classes and seminars, and presently studies with Christian Family Fellowship Ministry, headquartered in Tipp City, Ohio. His favorite areas of study are the Harmony of the Gospels, the Book of Acts, and the use and usage of the word "spirit" in the New Testament.)

FROM THE RESEARCH DEPARTMENT

(Continuing in this installment of The Ryburn Christian Clarion, "From The Research Department", featuring our columnist, Keith Jamison, will examine God's Word and how its application in our 21st Century lives has been influenced by mythology, philosophy, and tradition.)

“ ‘Guns And Moses’ ”

THE TITLE OF THIS STUDY is actually from a routine by comedian Robin Williams. He used a pun alluding to the name of a rock band, namely *Guns And Roses*. He used "Guns and Moses" as a reference to the movie "The Ten Commandments". This is because Charlton Heston played Moses in the movie and is *now* the president of the National Rifle Association. What is amusing about the line, from a Biblical research point of view, is the popular notion that the children of Israel were unarmed and

totally defenseless when they came out of Egypt. This notion came about because of the fear many Israelites had of the Egyptians, as described in the accounts of their deliverance by God.

The King James Version of the Bible refers to the children of Israel several times in the Book of Exodus in military terms. Exodus refers to the Israelites as being in "armies" four times and uses the word "hosts" once. In Exodus 6:26 it reads, "...Bring out the children of Israel from the land of Egypt

according to their armies.” In chapter 7, verse 4 continues, adding, “...and bring forth mine armies, and my people the children of Israel,...” In 12:17, it declares, “...I brought your [Israel’s] armies out of the land of Egypt:...” Also, Exodus 12:41 states, “...all the hosts of the LORD went out from the land of Egypt.” Lastly, in 12:51, The Word says, “...the LORD did bring the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt by their armies.” The same Hebrew word was translated “armies” or “hosts” in these five verses. The word is *tsaba*, which means a mass of people regimentally organized for war.

In addition, Exodus 13:18 states, “...and the children of Israel went up harnessed out of the land of Egypt.” The Hebrew word translated “harnessed” is *chamush*, meaning able-bodied soldiers or armed men. This word is used only five times in the Bible. Its four other uses are in Deuteronomy 3:18; Joshua 1:14; 4:12; and Judges 7:11. In these four places it is translated “armed”. The use of “harnessed”, though misleading to many in our modern culture, is not actually incorrect. Soldiers, throughout history, have needed various forms of harnesses for carrying weapons, armor, and gear. The use of both Hebrew words, *tsaba* and *chamush*, as well as the English renderings, “armies”, “hosts”, “armed”, and “harnessed”, is enlightening. They show that the children of Israel were armed when they left Egypt.

Being armed did not mean that Israel was invincible. The world at that time was a more arduous place in which to travel. As such, it makes sense that the Egyptians would give them weapons, in addition to the gold, jewelry, and raiment (clothing) they carried when they left Egypt to worship God. The men of Israel, despite their bondage, would have had a basic knowledge of how to use the weapons of the day. Swords, shields, and javelins existed throughout ancient cultures, and the Israelites would have been routinely exposed to such implements. There were most likely archers among the departing children of Israel, too. This would have made them strong enough to face most threats along the way. They were not, however, a battle-hardened army. That is why, according to Exodus 13:17, “...God led them not through...the land of the Philistines, although that was near; for God said, Lest peradventure the people repent [change their minds] when they see war, and they return to Egypt:...” God knew the Israelites were not ready to fight a war and, thus, led them by a safer route.

Certainly, Israel was no match for Pharaoh’s army. First of all, the children of Israel would have been severely hampered in combat by the need to

protect their women, children, and livestock. Also, Exodus 12:37 reveals that the valiant of Israel numbered “...about six hundred thousand on foot...” Pharaoh sent chariots against this untried infantry. Exodus 14:7 shows that Pharaoh “...took six hundred chosen chariots, and all the chariots of Egypt, and captains over every one of them.” The Egyptian chariot had a crew of two: a driver, or charioteer, and a warrior, usually an archer. A two-horse team pulled them at a speed of about thirty miles per hour, on flat terrain. This is about the same speed as the Sherman Tank of World War II. Both the Egyptian chariot and the Sherman Tank are considered, by those with tactical expertise, to have a similar shock effect on infantry.

The Egyptians also fielded a highly-trained and experienced army. At the time, it was the most powerful military in the known world. A modern analogy of this disparity in combat forces would be “Operation Desert Storm” of the recent Gulf War, except that the children of Israel were in a worse tactical situation. They had no defensive structures or avenues of retreat. The place God led them to, however, had only one means of approach for the Egyptian chariots. This, God blocked with a pillar of fire. The Egyptians were held back as God opened a way out for Israel by parting the Red Sea. Once His people were safely across, God allowed the Egyptians to advance and perish when the waters returned to their normal state. This had two effects on the Egyptians: 1) they were given a final example of God’s power, and 2) they lost their mobile strike force. Even if Pharaoh still wanted to pursue Israel, it would have been unlikely that he had sufficient military reserves to do so. He would need the rest of his forces to maintain stability in Egypt.

All this raises a question, though. If the children of Israel didn’t need arms, because of God’s protection, why did they have them? One reason would be that they would use them in the wilderness to train mighty men of valor, soldiers. Despite the reality that most of the generation of Israel that came out of Egypt perished in the wilderness, this training would have been handed down to those who entered and eventually subdued the Promised Land.

Some have said, “If you do your best, God will do the rest.” That little proverb seems to be at the heart of these records concerning Israel’s deliverance from captivity. Although the Lord rescued His people with undeniable works of deliverance, He expected them to do their part by arming and training themselves for eventual military

encounters. At the time of The Exodus, they were laying the foundations of martial training that would one day, with God's guidance, enable them to conquer all the lands the Almighty had originally promised to Abraham and his seed. It's intriguing how just a couple Hebrew words can add so much detail to our understanding of God's Word, but that's the allure of Biblical research. Thank you for joining

us in what we trust has been an enriching experience. Until next time, God bless you.*

(Mr. Keith Jamison has avidly studied God's Word for over thirteen years. He recently served as a Biblical consultant and floor director for the Ryburn Chapel's television series, Truth vs Tradition. Currently, he oversees The Ryburn Christian Clarion's Research Department, developing articles for this column.)

FOR YOUR SPIRITUAL ENRICHMENT

Essay

(Continuing in this installment of The Ryburn Christian Clarion, "For Your Spiritual Enrichment" will offer our readers a variety of inspirational and edifying submissions. In this "grab-bag", appearing from time to time, you will find essays, book reviews, testimonies, poetry, letters, and other things designed to exhort and comfort God's people.)

"The Collapse Of The Church Culture"

Part One

by Rev. Maurice Goulet, D. D.

HAVING TRAVELED THE FOUR CORNERS OF THIS COUNTRY, I have witnessed firsthand the imminent demise and collapse of the unique culture in North America that has come to be called "church". This church culture has become confused with Biblical Christianity, both inside the church and outside. A growing number of people are leaving the institutionalized church for a new reason. They are not leaving because they've lost faith; they are leaving the church to *preserve* their faith. People no longer want the powerless God of the modern church

Some are asking, "How do we do church better?" All the effort to fix the church misses the point. You can build the perfect church, and they still won't come. People *are not* looking for a great church. Most of the growth of mega-churches represents people transferring from small fishing boats to cruise ships. The real question should be, "How do we de-convert from Churchianity to Christianity?"

There is a spiritual awakening occurring in America. It is not, however, informed by Christian theology, and it's not happening in the church. God is pulling end runs around the institutionalized North American church to get to people in the streets. God is still inviting us to join him on this quest, but it is an invitation to be part of a movement, not a religious club.

The Church Growth Movement that began in the 1970s fell victim to an idol as old as the Tower of Babel: the belief that *we* are the architects of the work of God. As a result, we have the best churches men can build, but we're still waiting for the church for which only *God* gets credit.

I say this because I hear the wrong questions asked frequently: "How do we grow this church?" or "How do we get them to come to us?"

In their quest to be attractive to potential congregants, churches have *added* staff, *added* programs, *added* buildings (including full health clubs), all to improve their market positions, and *it worked!* A study released in 2002 found that one-half of churchgoers attended churches in the top 10 percent of church size.

All this has been done with *what* results? Overall church attendance continues to decline. We can keep on this track, just to watch even more dismal results, or we can change our focus to: "How do we transform our community?"; "How do we hit the streets with the Gospel?"

The Pharisees' evangelistic strategy and approach to sharing God was, "Come and get it". Jesus' strategy directly challenged the Pharisees' approach. Instead of "Come and get it", Jesus' strategy was "Go get 'em".

Jesus' strategy was to go where people were already hanging out. This is why he went to weddings, parties, and religious feast day celebrations. We need to go where people are and be prepared to have conversations with them about the great love of our lives. This is the only appropriate mission response to the collapse of the church culture. I am not talking about short forays, off the cruise ship, into nearby ports. I am speaking of an intentional **24/7** church presence in the community. This will require us to shift our efforts from growing churches to

transforming communities. **They're not coming to us!** We've got to go to them.

The first Reformation was about freeing the church. The *new* Reformation is about freeing God's people from the church (the institution). The original Reformation decentralized the church. The *new* Reformation decentralizes ministry.

The historical Reformation distinguished Christians one from another. The *current* Reformation distinguishes followers of Jesus Christ from religious people. In India and other places, these followers are called "Great Commission Christians" to distinguish them from mere "pew sitters". Today, ministry is being defined largely in church terms, and lay people are often viewed as functionary resources for getting church work done. The collapse of the church culture and the emergence of kingdom growth as a paradigm for renewal spell the end of an era of church members playing support roles. Many clergy just don't get this. They view the recruitment difficulties they are experiencing as a motivational issue rather than understanding the significant shift in how people are making decisions about how they will spend their lives.

North American culture is increasingly post-modern, and its churches are thoroughly out of touch with the surrounding culture. The result of the modern church's form of spirituality is a North American church that is largely on a "head trip". The test for orthodoxy typically focuses on doctrinal stances, not character and godliness.

In keeping with modernism, Christians in North America practice their faith in a segmented approach, having it separated from other parts of life: business, family, and so forth. After all, this is why we "go to church", to do our spiritual activity. This is why we don't do spiritual formation at home. *That's what the church is for*, right? After all, shouldn't spiritual "education" be left to the professionals who have the training and credentials for it?

The end result is parents unable to talk to their kids about God; church members who take their teenagers to church (believing this activity inoculates them against the influences of a pagan culture), but who don't talk about the life implications of faith; or couples which are embarrassed to pray together. The list goes on and on. Our times demand a radical change in the way we *do church*.*

(Rev. Maurice Goulet, D. D. has been a Bible scholar and researcher for many years. He was ordained to the Christian Ministry in 2004 and subsequently received an honorary Doctor of Divinity degree from Renewed Faith Ministry. He authors an online newsletter, teaching others principles regarding how to organize and oversee home-based fellowships. He is the author of the new research work entitled Lord Of Darkness; Lord Of Light: Unfolding The Signs Of The Times And The Hope Of A New World. For more information about the online newsletter or to order the book, visit www.GodsLivingRoom.com, or e-mail Rev. Goulet at Maurice@bibleways.com.)

ANTIQUITY SPEAKS

(Continuing in this installment of The Ryburn Christian Clarion, "Antiquity Speaks", featuring our columnist, Theodore C. Mahr, will acquaint us with archaeological discoveries and secular historical documentation which verify the ancient Biblical accounts.)

“David: Written In Stone”

THERE HAVE BEEN, from time to time, evidences brought forth from the discovery of antiquities which have validated the historical veracity and accuracy of the Bible. While they've been limited in number and proven origin during the past few centuries, these "finds" have increased in number and importance over the last few decades. In recent years, significant discoveries have been occurring almost regularly and are greatly affecting Biblical studies in a positive way.

One such discovery was the House of David Stone which was uncovered in 1993. At an archaeological dig at the ancient city of Dan in northern Israel, a stone was found bearing inscriptions clearly referring to both "The House of David" and the "King of Israel". These were, at the time, the only known extra-Biblical references to King David and the ancient

nation of Israel. As such, they were a sensation at the time of their discovery, as well as a validation over the years that followed that there was, in fact, a real King David, and that he, indeed, ruled a nation long ago known as Israel.

The exciting discovery was made by the famed Israeli archaeologist, Dr. Avraham Biran, and his staff as they excavated Tel Dan, which lies near the foot of Mount Hermon in the northernmost region of Israel. A "tel" is a large mound, or hillock formation, in Israel which is basically a site where multiple towns or fortifications have been built over centuries. Each town was built atop the ruins of the

preceding one over time. This is how a hill or mound was formed, as layer upon layer of successive settlement and civilization occupied and lived atop the same site.

Dan was an important city-fortress in northern Israel, lying near the upper reaches of the Jordan River, and charged with guarding the northern borders of the kingdom. Biran and his associates have worked for years excavating the site and have made many outstanding discoveries at the location. None, however, have been more sensational, or more important to Biblical historiography, than the House of David Stone. It is actually a fragment from a *stele*, a larger, ceremonial stone carved and engraved by kings and important government officials in ancient times to commemorate historical events, conquests, decrees, and the like. Most steles herald the exploits of battle and the subjugation of enemies, and the House of David Stone falls into this category. Although only a fragment of the total stele text is on the stone, enough of the inscription exists to clearly show that the monument was erected as a result of the conquest of the city of Dan, the northern kingdom of Israel, and, possibly, the Kingdom of Judah, by an Aramean king.

The inscription is in early Aramaic, a Semitic language and simpler form of the later Hebrew. The content of the inscription boasts of this conquest and, more important, refers to the deed as being against those of the “House of David”, who had been “king of Israel”. The artifact has been dated unequivocally to the Ninth Century (the 800s) B. C. E., exactly the time when the northern parts of David’s former realm were being overrun by enemies of Israel. The stone is one of the greatest archaeological finds of our times and has all but silenced the serious critics who claimed King David never really existed, much less the ancient

nation of Israel. Here, indeed, is tangible proof that David truly lived, and that he was king of Israel, having a line of descent with kings following him in succession, namely the “House of David”, just as the Bible states.

Since the House of David Stone was found, several other archaeological references to King David and his dynasty have also been discovered. One reference is in the Mesha Stele, being another inscription from about the same period as the Tel Dan stone. It bears witness to the “House” of David. Additionally, a more recent discovery in the hieroglyphics at the Temple of Amun in Karnak, Egypt mentions King David.

There have been many other discoveries from archaeology and history, antiquities outside the Word of God, which bear clear witness to people, places, and events recorded in the pages of Holy Writ. We will share these with you in coming issues of the *Clarion*. They are genuine proofs for any open-minded, evidence-seeking individuals who desire to find the truth about the Bible, particularly its accuracy and validity. For such people, this column was designed. Please join us as we examine material evidence that substantiates, time and time again, the truths of the Scriptures.*

(For more on these findings, see Biblical Archaeology Review, vol. 20, no. 2, p. 26; and Ibid, vol. 25, no. 1, p. 34.)

(Mr. Theodore C. Mahr has both a B. A. and M. A. in History, as well as doctoral work in United States Military History. He is a published author and book reviewer in the same fields. His serious study of the Bible began in the late 1980s with an emphasis on Judeo-Christian Studies and Creation Science.)

**Articles and columns submitted to The Ryburn Christian Clarion are edited to ensure correct spelling and punctuation, proper grammar, and clarity of expression.*

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Until next issue, may God abundantly bless you.**