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A New Look at the Pearl of Great Price: Part 8: Facsimile No. 1, by the Figures (Continued)

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Facsimile No.1, by the Figures

By Dr. Hugh Nibley

● *Mr. Jones:* They wouldn't be good Egyptians if they didn't break the rule sometimes, but the rule is there, all right. In the Joseph Smith Papyrus No. 1, ten doors are clearly drawn. So everything is in order. But are these the pillars of heaven? Dr. Mercer scoffed at the idea when he wrote, "Figure 11 represents rather the pillars of earth than 'the pillars of heaven.'"²⁶⁵ But where, I ask you, do the Egyptians speak of "the pillars of earth"?

Dick: Didn't they have the *djed*-pillars?

Mr. Jones: If any Egyptian pillars could qualify as pillars of earth, the four-in-one *djed*-pillar, as the symbol of enduring solidity, would be it—it has its place in the Osiris cult and the underworld, yet that would seem to be secondary, for Professor Bonnet is emphatic in his conclusion that the original and only function of the compound *djed* symbol is to denote the pillars of heaven.²⁶⁶ Very recently W. Kornfeld has reexamined the *djed*-pillar and found it to be the prehistoric symbol of durability both of the temple itself and of the dynasty that erected it; as such it always has a cosmic, astral significance, and is to be identified with the pylons of the temple facade.^{266a} Busiris is the city of the *djed*-pillars, which play a prominent role both in the coronation of the king and in the raising of Osiris from the dead; the "raising of the Djed-symbol" represents the establishing of the world-order, since the multiple-pillar symbol itself stands for the cosmic supports that extend from earth to heaven.^{266b} Since Mercer's day the palace-facade and *serekh* design have come to be understood in a new light: it represents the gate by which

the big Horus-hawk passes between earth and heaven,²⁶⁷ by which the spirits pass between worlds above and below: "This communication," wrote Lacau, "was one of the great preoccupations of the Egyptian. The stele was the instrument of this communication."²⁶⁸ In the first chapter of the Book of the Dead we stand before the gate of the underworld,²⁶⁹ but who is the figure in the tomb of Seti I between the uplifted arms of whose *Ka*-crown are five of our gates? It is Shu, the god of the upper regions, and what he holds are the pylons of the heavens.²⁷⁰ Their nature is clearly and unmistakably indicated on two portable shrines, depicted on the walls of the great temple of Amon at Karnak. One shows Rameses III as four men standing in a row supporting the symbol for heaven (*pt*) with upraised arms. The arrangement and attitude of the four portraits, in which the Pharaoh appears once as a priest and three times as king, show that he is meant to represent the four Sons of Horus supporting the sky; the figures all stand on a palace-facade design with the familiar row of pylons.

Jane: How many gates are there?

Mr. Jones: Just as many as the artist has room for. When he reaches the end of his space he does not hesitate to cut one of the gates neatly in two, making 16½ in all.²⁷¹ In the other picture a later Pharaoh appears as three kings—the priest is missing this time—supporting the heaven-symbol in the identical manner of Rameses, only this time the *pt*-sign is adorned with stars and the king himself is a heavenly being, "beloved of Amon-Re," as the inscription says, "endowed with life like Re." The three kings here stand

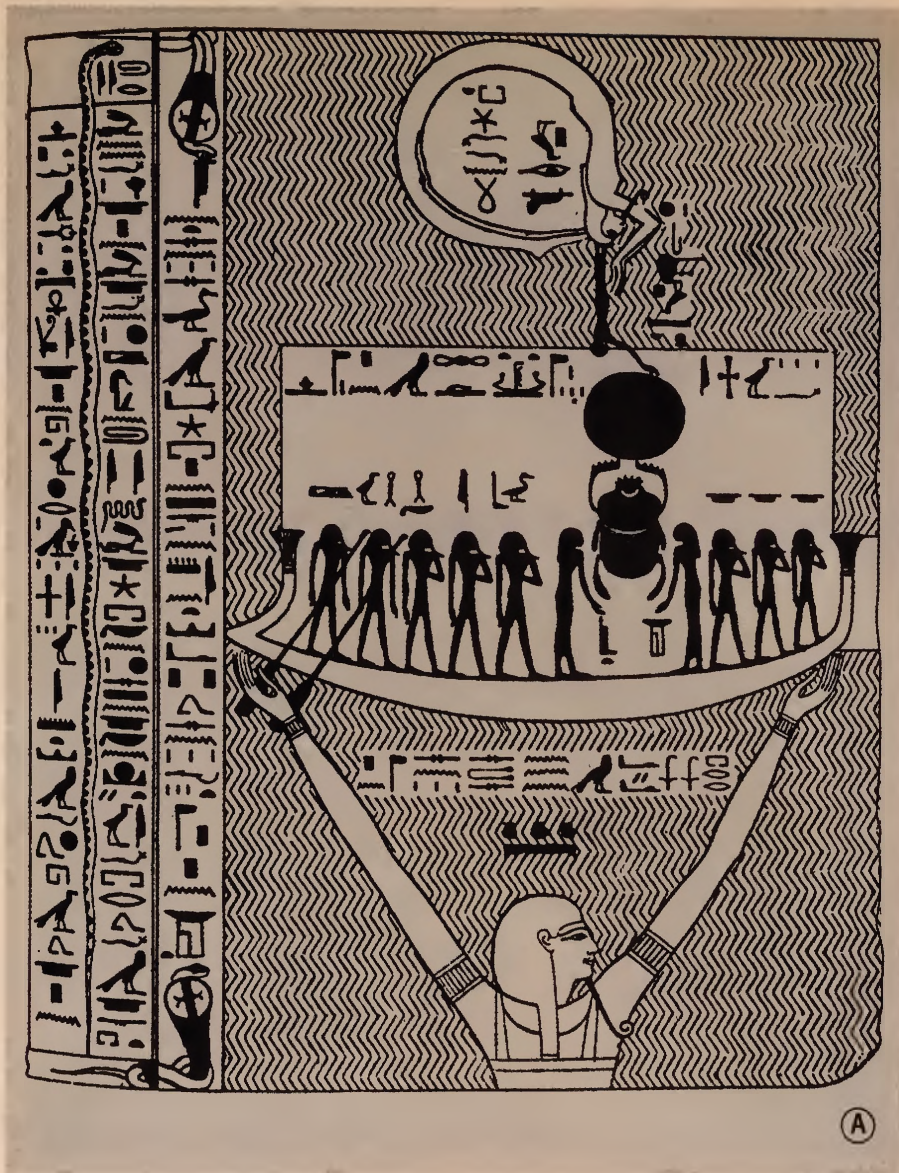
on a row of nine pylons.²⁷² In our 24-niche archaic tombs, incidentally, there were always nine niches on a side with three at either end, so this probably harks back to the ancient form, and there cannot be the slightest doubt that the row of gates is supposed to be supporting the heavens. In many gate-and-pillar designs the top rim is decorated with stars, showing that the pillars are supporting the heavens.²⁷³

Dick: You say that the Egyptians don't talk about the pillars of earth, as far as you know. Do they ever talk about the pillars of heaven?

Mr. Jones: Indeed they do, and they leave us in no doubt as to what they refer to. An inscription in the temple of Amenophis III at Luxor tells how the temple's "pylons reach to heaven, joining themselves with the stars." This is "a stereotyped expression,"²⁷⁴ and here is another: "Its pylons reach to heaven like the four pillars of heaven. . . ." Also the tall cedar flagpoles that flanked the pylons were said to reach the stars.²⁷⁵ Such expressions make it perfectly clear that the temple pylons, going back to the old palace facade, were, in the words of the Book of Abraham, "designed to represent the pillars of heaven, as understood by the Egyptians." Another feature of the palace facade was the "window of apparition."

Jane: What was that?

Mr. Jones: A ceremonial window-and-balcony arrangement to provide a theatrical appearance for the Pharaoh and the royal family. The window was a sort of elevated stage above the great gate; there the king would appear to his worshipful subjects in the court below, to cast down golden gifts among them in the manner of the beneficent



Concerning Facsimile 1, Figure 12, "Raukeeyang, signifying expanse, or the firmament over our heads; but in this case, in relation to this subject, the Egyptians meant it to signify Shaumau, to be high, or the heavens, answering to the Hebrew word Shaumahyeem." While "Shaumahyeem" is given as a Hebrew word, no indication is given of the origin of "Raukeeyang" and "Shaumau"—neither is put forth as Egyptian, and it needs no demonstration to show that both of them, written with meticulous care to indicate pronunciation, are meant to be Hebrew.

(A) Here the zigzag lines represent the expanse of the heavens. The inscription above the head of the deity with upraised arms tells us that it is Nu, supporting the Sun-bark as it passes over the heavenly sea. In Nu the primordial waters and "the firmament over our heads" were always identified by the Egyptians. In the careful and accurate drawing of the zigzag series, guidelines were obviously used, but not drawn in as they are in the small and hasty sketch of Facsimile 1.

(B) Here a series of five bands of zigzag lines is plainly meant to indicate the waters of life. Exactly such a series is represented in Figure 12.

(C) When the artist does not pay sufficient attention to the guidelines, the zigzags get out of line, as can be seen from the right end of this panel. Note also the line of doors or pylons below as in Facsimile 1, Figure 11, and the indication of human sacrifice in the beheaded figures.

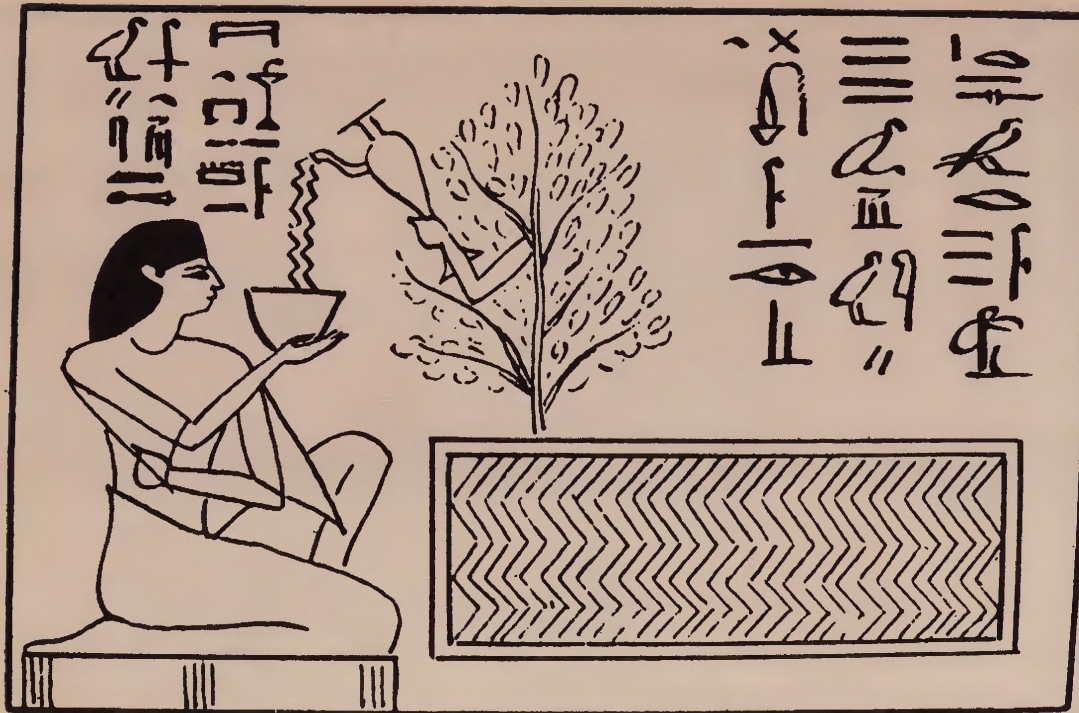
(D) Here we see a crocodile surrounded by zigzags, exactly as in Figure 12. This carving, from the Middle Kingdom, demonstrates both the antiquity of the motif and the difficulty that artists had with keeping their zigzags neat and regular without the aid of guidelines. That is why the scribe of Facsimile 1, Figure 12, not interested in producing a work of art, did not hesitate to draw in the horizontal lines to enable him to finish the zigzags in a hurry.

There is no doubt whatever that Figure 12 represents water and that the Egyptians always thought of the "expanse, or the firmament over our heads," or the high heavens to be a vast sea of water. The Egyptians thought of two such primordial seas, one above and one below the earth, meeting at the horizon. The concept is perhaps reflected in the word Shaumahyeem, which is a dual.

that is, at the gate of the temple [was] . . . conceived as the entrance of the Sun-king into his 'Heaven,' i.e. the temple," as W. Spiegelberg puts it.²⁷⁸ Egyptian temples were so orientated that the sun actually rose directly between the pillars of the main pylon on a certain day, so that the pylons "are not a purely abstract free theological speculation," but a physical arrange-

have seen Egyptian inspiration in the two lotus-crowned pillars, Boaz and Jakin, that flanked the main entrance to Solomon's temple;²⁸¹ the latest study of these concludes that "the sun must have risen between the columns at the Equinoxes," and that they "were symbols of the cosmic pillars," being derived from the temple-pillows and obelisks of the Heliopolis.^{281a} And here

as crowned with a line of what look like the classic double-axe symbols—the well-known thunder-axe found throughout the ancient world.²⁸³ It has been suggested that they originated as two lotuses bound together to recall the uniting of a prehistoric kingdom in the Delta, but they were early confused with the well-known thunder emblem.²⁸³ Also, the pylons are often



covered with zigzag designs which sometimes represent woven screens but are sometimes quite obviously water symbols, showing the life-giving waters descending from heaven.²⁸⁴ We mustn't get too involved with this sort of symbolism—it would take us all over the world. But it is in order, I think, to point out that the line of pillars that we always associate with Greek temples were called the *kiona ourania*, "the pillars of heaven."²⁸⁷ But I think we have said enough to make it clear that it is quite correct and proper to refer to the line of pylons in Papyrus No. 1 as "representing the pillars of heaven."

Jane: But if they are the pillars of heaven, then all those zigzaggy lines above them must be heaven!

Dick: It looks more like water, if you ask me.

Mr. Jones: And water is exactly what it is supposed to be. Any doubt about that is removed by a fragment from an XI Dynasty tomb which shows just such a crocodile as this one against just such a zigzag background as that shown here.²⁸⁶ These horizontal rows of hatchings in alternating directions are a common Egyptian way of showing big waters. On the Cenotaph of Seti I they are used to depict the waters of the cosmic ocean.²⁸⁷ But the most instructive parallels to our papyrus, I think, are found in the tomb of Rameses IX. Here in one scene we find above just such a series of pylons as our "pillars of heaven" just such another series of five long horizontal bands of

hatched lines, the strokes moving in contrary directions to give a zigzag effect, and upon this mass of zigzags the heavenly bark is sailing. It is very neatly done, for this was being put on the wall of a great king's funeral chamber, the horizontal bands are perfectly straight, and the hatching-strokes perfectly even and regular—it was all done with rulers, though the guidelines today are invisible.²⁸⁸ In a subsequent scene, however, the artist tried to do the job freehand, and though he was very skillful, he got tired before he finished and his horizontal zigzag strips got all out of line.²⁸⁹ Now the artist of Papyrus No. 1 was not making a carefully supervised adornment for an everlasting royal memorial but merely dashing off a small free-hand

sketch, so to get his five lines of hatching straight he does not hesitate to draw in guide lines. The neat way would have been to use a ruler, but that would also have been the hard way, and there can be no doubt that the same waters are being represented in the papyrus as in the tomb.

Jane: What waters?

“There is nothing to exclude any of the interpretations given by Joseph Smith...”

Mr. Jones: Ah, that is just the point. Notice the ship that is sailing on the waters in the tomb-drawings; it is the heavenly solar bark, and the deity who kneels before the huge sun-disk in the center of the ship is Shu himself, the god not of the lower but of the upper spaces. These are the waters of Nw, the primordial heavens. You may recall that it was from these heavenly waters that the crocodile emerged in the manner of the sun-god Re. And these were, of course, matched by the waters of the underworld.

Dick: Why “of course”?

Mr. Jones: Because the sun spends half his time in the heavens above and half in the heavens below—he must negotiate both by ship.^{269a} Everybody knows that water comes out of the ground from below and out of the heavens from above. The Egyptians devised some very sophisticated ways of describing these heavenly phenomena, of which Professor Anthes wrote, “If any simple Egyptian wanted to view these images as actual pictures of the heavens, he would necessarily become totally confused.”²⁹⁰ We can avoid confusion by sticking to one well-known and firmly established idea, namely, that the Egyptians started out with the common sense conception of heaven as “a flood, spreading its expanse of blue waters above the earth,” the lady Nut and the Hathor cow, though quite “primitive,” being “nothing else but personifications” of this “great Flood.”²⁹¹ This remained the basic Egyptian theory of the firmament forever after—it was a vast expanse of waters, the very waters depicted in the tomb-drawings and in our identical design in the Joseph Smith papyrus. “The expanse or firmament over our heads” is exactly what

these hatched horizontal strips were meant by the Egyptians to signify. The explanation adds a special, secondary meaning to the design, and explains that this is *not* the ordinary one: “. . . but in this case, in relation to this subject, the Egyptians meant it to signify Shaumau, to be high. . . .” That is, they wanted to emphasize in the special context one particular aspect of the heavens—their height and aloofness.

Dick: Would the Egyptians do that—just pick out certain things like that from all the rest?

Mr. Jones: They were up to that sort of thing all the time. Here is a votive statuette offering of Rameses II depicting a typically Egyptian combination of a solar disk, a child, a reed, and a falcon. Do you get the message?

Dick: You mean that each figure symbolizes something?

Mr. Jones: It goes farther than that—the composition actually spells out a name. A smart Egyptian would realize that the sun-disk was Ra-, the child -mes- (an Egyptian word for child), and the reed -ses.

Dick: Spelling Rameses, of course; but what’s the hawk doing?

Mr. Jones: He signifies, according to Stadelmann, “that Rameses places himself under the protection of the Near Eastern god Horon,” just as the kings of the 4th Dynasty (whose style is being imitated here) used to place themselves under Horus.²⁹² So here we are back in Canaan again, with the Egyptians playing charades. *There is nothing at all to exclude any of the interpretations given by Joseph Smith to the various figures in Papyrus I, and a great deal to substantiate them. I’m not claiming for a minute that any of this is proven, but I am claiming that the experts who condemned the Prophet without a hearing were not playing a very honest game.*

Jane: But why would anybody bring the pillars of heaven and the expanse of heaven into this particular Abraham episode?

Mr. Jones: Because what we have here is not merely the telling of a story, but the placing of that story in its proper context of timeless significance. What happens to Abraham and what he does is of enduring effect in the history of the whole human race, past, present, and future. He is one of those key figures in whom all the events of the past are brought into focus as by a burning-glass, and whose actions are in turn projected into the future as an ever-expanding image. What we see here is a moment of immeasurable significance in the history of the race: the messenger-bird is there to represent the Ruler of All; the

crocodile is no less necessary to represent the ancient opposition in all things; the lion is (in early Jewish and Christian parlance) the relentless force that consumes all material things; the lotus is the symbol of the righteous man’s pilgrimage through a hostile and dangerous world—everything has a meaning, and the pillars and expanse of heaven remove the whole story from this transient world to its proper relationship to the eternal plan of things. That’s one way of looking at it.

FOOTNOTES

- ²⁶⁵S. Mercer, in *Utah Survey*, Vol. 1, p. 18.
²⁶⁶H. Bonnet, *Reallexikon*, pp. 150, 153.
^{267a}W. Kornfeld, in *Z. f. A. T. Wiss.*, Vol. 74, pp. 56f.
²⁶⁷J. Bennett, in *Jnl. Eg. Arch.*, Vol. 53, p. 166.
²⁶⁸P. Lacau, in *Rev. d’Egyptol.*, Vol. 19 (1960), pp. 42f.
^{269a}A. Piankoff, *Shrines of Tutankhamon*, pp. 93f.
²⁷⁰Above, n. 248.
²⁷¹*Rameses III’s Temple*, Pt. III (Univ. of Chicago, *Or. Inst. Publ.*, Vol. 74).
²⁷²*Ibid.*
²⁷³Thus E. Naville, *Temple of Deir el-Bahari*, Pt. I, and Pt. V, Pl. cxxxviii, cxlviii, cxlix, cl, etc.; W. Borhardt, *Das Grabmal des Koenigs Sahure*, (Leipzig, 1913), Bd. II, Pl. 45; J. E. Quibell, *Excavations at Saqqarah*, Vol. 1 (1926), Pl. 57.
²⁷⁴W. Spiegelberg, in *Rec. Trav.*, Vol. 20 (1898), p. 45, n. xix (text p. 41, line 11).
²⁷⁵*Ibid.*, p. 46 (p. 42, line 22); T. Dombart, in *Egyptian Religion*, Vol. 1 (1933), p. 98. The poles as well as the pylons represented the supports of heaven, see H. Nibley, in *Western Political Quarterly*, Vol. 19 (1966), p. 604, for references.
²⁷⁶The most dramatic representation is the famous scene from the tomb of Eye, R. Lepsius, *Denkmäler*, III, 103-9.
²⁷⁷The design is discussed by U. Hoelscher, in *Aeg. Ztschr.*, Vol. 67 (1931), pp. 43-51.
²⁷⁸W. Spiegelberg, in *Aeg. Ztschr.*, Vol. 53 (1917), p. 101.
²⁷⁹*Ibid.*, pp. 99-101.
²⁸⁰F. Jeremiás, in *Chantipie, Lehrbuch der Religionsgeschichte* (1927), I, 618.
²⁸¹G. Jequier, *Considerations sur les Religions Egyptiennes*, p. 92, cf. pp. 88f, relating the pylons to the Bull of Heaven.
^{281a}Kornfeld, *op. cit.*, pp. 50-53. Cf. Count De M. du Buisson, in *Rev. Hist. Relig.*, Vol. 169, pp. 44f, who discusses the pillars of heaven in the Near East in general, associating them especially with the heavenly lion, pp. 45-48.
²⁸²Y. Aharoni, in *Archaeology*, Vol. 18 (1965), p. 18.
²⁸³Illustrations may be found in note 273 above. The lotus origin of the design is apparent in W. B. Emery, *Archaic Egypt*, p. 178, Fig. 100, and p. 181, Fig. 103.
²⁸⁴Most strikingly illustrated in *The Tomb of Pepi II*, Pl. xxii, xxvii, 15, 17, 19ff, in G. Jequier, *Fouilles a Saqqarah* (Serv. Antiq., 1936), and 1933, p. 13. When the zigzags are drawn horizontally down the whole length of a pillar, the meaning is unmistakable, H. Bonnet, in *Bilderatlas zur Religionsgeschichte* (Leipzig, 1924), No. 137. With the 15 pylons in the *Tomb of Puymerc*, Vol. 2, Pl. ix, goes the inscription: “Thy mother bestows the waters of heaven in her capacity of *ssht* of heaven.” Cf. *Coffin Texts* (De Buck), I, 263-64.
²⁸⁵J. Trumpl, in *Hermes*, Vol. 86 (1958), pp. 131f.
²⁸⁶Ed. Naville, *The XIth Dyn. Temple at Deir el-Bahari* (Eg. Expl. Fund., 1907), Part I, Pl. xvi, D.
²⁸⁷H. Frankfort, *The Cenotaph of Seti I at Abydos* (Eg. Expl. Soc., 1933), Vol. 2, Pl. xliv.
²⁸⁸R. Guilmont, in *Mem. Inst. Fr. Arch. Or.*, Vol. 15 (1907), Pl. 63, 65-67, 71-75.
²⁸⁹*Ibid.*, Pl. lxxv.
^{290a}See above, Note 149.
²⁹⁰R. Anthes, in *Mitt. d. Dt. Or. Ges.*, 96: 11-12.
²⁹¹H. Bonnet, *Reallexikon*, pp. 302f.
²⁹²R. Stadelmann, *Syrisch-Palastinensische Gottheiten*, p. 87.

Setting the Stage - The World of Abraham

Part 9:

Hard Times Come Again: One of the main objections of the higher critics to the patriarchal stories as history was that they were altogether too idyllic in their peaceful pastoral setting, which belonged to the bucolic poets rather than to the stern realities of life. But as Professor Albright now reminds us, the calm pastoral life of the Patriarchs has turned out to be a myth.¹ And the myth was invented by the scholars, for neither the Bible nor the Apocrypha gives it the least countenance: the world of Abraham that they describe was little short of an earthly hell. Furthermore, the peculiar nature of those terrible times as described in the written sources is in such close agreement with what is turning up in the excavations that it becomes possible to assign to Abraham a very real role and, possibly within a short time, a definite date, in history.

In reconstructing the world of Abraham, it is customary procedure first to determine upon an approximate date for the hero and then to look for things in the history of that period which fit into his career. But since the world of Abraham has already been described for us in the traditional sources, we are going to reverse the process and withhold any attempt at dating until we have the clearest possible picture of what was going on: then, given enough details and particulars, the dating should pretty well take care of itself. What justifies such a course is the remarkable clarity and consistency of the accounts of the Bible and the ancient commentators when they describe the physical world of Abraham, the state of society, Abraham's reactions

to the challenges that met him, and the wonderful body of covenants and ordinances that he handed on to us. Let us consider each of these briefly in order.

Each of the great dispensations of the gospel has come in a time of world upheaval, when the waywardness of the human race has been matched by a climactic restlessness of the elements. When Adam was cast out of the Garden of Eden, he found himself, we are told, in "a sultry land of darkness" where he was lost and confused,² where temporary survival was a matter of toil and sweat amidst the all-conquering dust—"for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." (See Gen. 3:17-19.) Worse still, Satan was on hand to add to his burdens, deride his efforts, and make fearful inroads into the integrity of his progeny. Who but our first parents could have sustained the appalling "birthshock" of sudden precipitation from one world to another, from the presence of God to thorns, thistles and dust?³

If we fancy Noah riding the sunny seas high, dry, and snug in the ark, we have not read the record. The long, hopeless struggle against entrenched mass resistance to his preaching, the deepening gloom and desperation of the years leading up to the final debacle, then the unleashed forces of nature—the family absolutely terrified, weeping and praying "because they were at the gates of death," as the ark was thrown about with the greatest violence by terrible winds and titanic seas.⁴ Albright's suggestions that the Flood story goes back to "the tremendous floods which must have ac-

companied successive retreats of the glaciers . . ."⁵ is supported by the tradition that the family suffered terribly because of the cold, and that Noah on the waters "coughed blood on account of the cold."⁶ The Jaredites had only to pass through the tail end of the vast storm cycle of Noah's day, yet for 344 days they had to cope with "mountain waves" and winds that "did never cease to blow." Finally Noah went forth into a world of utter desolation, as Adam did, to build his altar, call upon God, and try to make a go of it all over again, only to see some of his progeny in short order prefer Satan to God and lose all the rewards that his toil and sufferings had put in their reach.

All of Moses' life was toil and danger, the real, intimate, ever-present danger such as only the Near East can sustain at a high level for indefinite periods of time. No one would ask to go through what Lehi did, or Jared and his brother, or Joseph Smith in his dispensation. And the one who suffered most of all was the Lord himself, "despised, rejected, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief." In short, the leaders of the great dispensations have truly earned their calling and their glory, paying a price that the rest of the human race could not pay even if they would. Preeminent among these was Abraham, whose life, as the Rabbis remind us, was an unbroken series of supremely difficult tests.⁷ As in some frightful nightmare, the narrator ticks off the principal episodes: "But Sarah was barren; she had no child (Gen. 11:30). . . . Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house (12:1). . . . going on still toward the south. And there was a famine in the land (12:9-10) . . . the Egyptians beheld the woman . . . and the woman was taken into Pharaoh's house (12:14-15). . . . And Pharaoh . . . said, What is this that thou has done unto me? . . . and they sent him away (12:18, 20). . . . And the land was not able to bear them . . . and there was a strife (13:6-7). . . . [The kings came and made war.] And they took Lot . . . and his goods (14:1-2). . . . I go childless, and the steward of my house is this Eliezer of Damascus (15:2). . . . lo, an horror of great darkness fell upon him (15:12). . . . My wrong be upon thee: I have given my maid into thy bosom; and . . . I was despised in her eyes: the Lord judge between me and thee (16:5). . . . Wilt thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked? . . . Oh let not the Lord be angry (18:23, 30). . . . lo, the smoke of the country went up as the smoke of a furnace (19:28). . . . and Abimelech king of Gerar sent, and took

Sarah (20:2). . . they will slay me for my wife's sake (20:11). . . And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and took bread, and a bottle of water, and gave it unto Hagar . . . and sent her away (21:14). . . And Abraham reproved Abimelech because of a well of water, which Abimelech's servants had

Abraham's life was filled with "an incredibly severe time of probation..."

violently taken away (21:25). . . Take now thy son, Thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, . . . and offer him there for a burnt offering (22:2). . . I am a stranger and a sojourner with you: give me a possession of a burying-place with you, that I may bury my dead (23:4)."

Any one of these crises is enough to break any man's spirit. There are various standard lists of the classic "Ten Trials of Abraham," and while the later lists are confined to events mentioned in the Bible, the earlier ones significantly give a prominent place to Abraham's imprisonment in Mesopotamia and the attempt to sacrifice him.⁸ But all are agreed that Abraham's career was an incredibly severe time of probation, and that the problems he had to face were forced upon him largely by the evil times in which he lived.

Signs in the Heavens: On the night Abraham was born, his father had a party to celebrate the event. As the guests were leaving the house very late at night, they were astonished at the sight of a great fireball that came from the east at great speed and broke into four parts as it passed overhead, the parts seeming to converge as it passed on and out of sight.⁹ There have been times of intensified meteoric showers in history, and Abraham's time seems to have been one of them. G. Lanczkowski has pointed out significant resemblances between the Genesis account of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah in Abraham's day and the famous Egyptian tale of the shipwrecked sailor, who was told by a great serpent how his whole race was wiped out by a huge flaming star that fell upon their island home.¹⁰ Of this, G. Wainwright asks "whether the detail of the destruction of the serpents may not be the romanticized record of

an actual event," in which the island, which he identifies with Zeberged or St. John off Ras Benas, was blasted "by the fall of a meteorite" or by an eruption . . . not later than the XII Dynasty."¹¹ Even Jewish tradition tells of a time when "great dragon-like monsters had taken over the earth," until God cut them off suddenly,¹² and also of a "planet" that comes out of Scorpio and "spews gall and a drop of unhealthy blood that fouls the waters of the earth."¹³ To a great comet that appeared periodically in the north "and destroyed crops and kings in East and West," the Greeks gave the name of Typhon,¹⁴ identifying him with the Canaanite Resheph, the sky-god who came from Palestine to Egypt as a fiery meteorite rushing through the heavens¹⁵ and whose sacred symbol was an iron meteorite in his shrine.¹⁶ Now Resheph is closely bound up with Abraham, and we are told that "the stars fought for Abraham" the night he marched against the marauding kings, and slew his enemies "by the almighty power of God."¹⁷ The Egyptians were, according to Wainwright, convinced that "destructive falls of meteorites" were an affliction particularly reserved for the wicked.¹⁸

It has been suggested that the remarkable interest in stargazing that meets us in the Abraham traditions and is so vividly brought home in the Book of Abraham may be the normal result of a period of unusual celestial displays. Thus the Sefer ha-Yashar reports that it was by observing the planets that Abraham was able to calculate that the earth itself was behaving erratically on its axis.¹⁹ This misbehavior, according to the same source, had been apparent ever since the days of the Flood and the Tower, since when "the world no longer stood firm, the order of the creation having been altered."¹⁹ The people of Abraham's day believed that "the heaven shifted once every 1656 years," and they devised a means to prevent this by building a series of towers, of which the great Tower was the first; for their folly Abraham denounced them.²⁰ This is supposed to be the first time that the planets had been disturbed since the days of Adam: "Before the Fall the planets moved with greater speed and in shorter orbits than after."²¹ In Abraham's day, Jupiter is said to have changed its orbit,²² and even the fixed stars were troubled: "Because men had perverted the order of life, God altered the order of nature: Sirius became irregular and two stars were removed from their places."²³ Egyptian observers seem to say that Sirius was earlier a variable star, "ruling all the other stars," wrote Horapollo, "as it changes

its brightness."²⁴ We have already seen that Abraham's contemporaries were singularly devoted to the star Shagreed—Sirius—which they associated with the sun, according to the Book of Abraham and other sources. The great mural discovered in 1929 at El-Ghassul, thought to be one of the "Cities of the Plain" of Abraham's day, is dominated by a huge and impressive star figure that has been identified with both the sun and Sirius and has been hailed as establishing "the meeting-point between the two great empires of Egypt and Chaldea, where celestial phenomena played such an important role in the moral life of men."²⁵ We can avoid the enticing twilight zone of science fiction by confining our conclusions to the minimal speculation—which seems quite safe—that unusual displays in the heavens, whatever they were, belonged to the general disturbances of Abraham's restless world.

Far more conspicuous in the reports are seismic and volcanic disturbances. When "the Lord broke down the altar of Elkenah, and of the gods of the land, and utterly destroyed them . . ." (Abr. 1:20), it was no doubt in the same manner in which he dealt with the proud and wicked Nephites: ". . . that great city Moronihah have I covered with earth. . . I did send down fire and destroy them. . ." (3 Ne. 9:5, 11.) Just so in the days of Abraham he dealt with Sodom and Gomorrah, which, like the American cities, lay along one of the most active earthquake zones in the world. No minor catastrophe or the death of a single haughty priest would have caused "great mourning in Chaldea, and also in the court of Pharaoh." (Abr. 1:20.) The overthrow of the altar and the wide destruction are confirmed by the legends. Just as Abraham prayed on the altar, "there was a violent upheaval of the heavens and the earth and the mountains and all the creatures in them. . ."²⁶ An older account, the Pseudo-Philo, says that "God sent a great earthquake, and the fire gushed forth of the furnace and brake out into flames and sparks of fire and consumed all them that stood around about . . . 83,500 of them. But upon Abraham there was not any least hurt by the burning of the fire."²⁷ The attempted sacrifice is sometimes placed at the site of the Tower, in northern Mesopotamia, where the rites are interrupted "by a vast burst of roaring flame," which destroys many people and saves Abraham, but does not bring the people to repentance.²⁸ The traditions consistently associate earthquakes with fires bursting from the earth, as at Sodom and Gomorrah,

which were overthrown while fire enveloped them from above and below (see Gen. 19:24-25): "the rivers of the region turned to bitumen, we are told, and the ground became sulphurous and burned, while the five cities on their elevations were all toppled over."²⁹ Earthquakes, fumeroles, fissures, rumblings, sulphurous smells, etc., all go together in the story, as they do in nature.³⁰ "For 52 years," according to a well-known tradition, "God warned the godless" by a series of preliminary rumblings and quakings; "he made the mountains to quake and tremble, but they hearkened not to the voice of admonition."³¹ The last 25 years were particularly ominous, with the earth subsiding and quaking almost continually.³² All through the life of Abraham, even before the fall of the Cities of the Plain, we meet with earthquakes.

The Abraham cycle includes the tradition that one-third of the Tower was swallowed up by the earth and one-third was burned by fire from heaven.³³ The Pearl of Great Price itself tells us that when Enoch led the people of God against their enemies, "the earth trembled, and the mountains fled . . . and the rivers of water were turned out of their course; and the roar of the lions was heard out of the wilderness, and all nations feared. . . ." (Moses 7:13.) The Jewish tradition is that in the days of "Enos," when men started to worship idols, the mountains on which men once farmed became broken up, rocky, and no longer arable.³⁴ The passage from the Book of Moses reads like an accurate description of the great Assam earthquake of 1955—including even the "roar of lions . . . out of the wilderness." When Abraham's grandfather Nahor was 70 and his people had become confirmed idol worshippers, there was another great earthquake, so violent that all the people fell down unconscious—but for all that they only increased in their wickedness.³⁵

One of the best-known stories of the childhood of Abraham tells how the boy's father, out of patience with his son's lack of respect for the king's claim to divinity, took him to the palace for a personal interview with Majesty, hoping the boy would be properly impressed. Just as the father and son entered the throne room, there was a short and violent earthquake, which shook the throne and threw all the courtiers off their feet. This shattered their dignity, and the king, impressed by the coincidence of the tremor with the appearance of Abraham, cried, "Truly thy God, Abraham, is a great and mighty god, and he is the King of all Kings."³⁶ In another version it is Pharaoh's palace that is shaken by

an earthquake while Abraham is visiting there.³⁷ Carrying things to extremes, the Apocalypse of Abraham reports that when as a youth he was one day leaving his father's house, "there was a great clap of thunder, fire fell from heaven and burned up Thera, his house and all that was in it for 40 ells around."³⁸ This seems to reflect the story of the death of Haran, who got involved with the idol worship of his father and suffered death as a substitute for Abraham while trying to extinguish supernatural fires.³⁹ One report has it that Nimrod sacrificed his victims in inextinguishable fires of petroleum, which Abraham nonetheless extinguished.⁴⁰ All in all, fire and earthquake go well together in the Abraham traditions: ". . . and the fiery furnace fell down, and Abraham was saved."⁴¹ "In Abraham's day," says the Clementine Recognitions (1:32), "the world was afflicted by fire, which beginning at Sodom, threatened to destroy the entire world." After the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, Abraham had to leave his beloved Mamre, because the entire region had been completely blighted by the catastrophe.⁴² All plant life was destroyed, and seeds transplanted from Sodom would not grow anywhere.⁴³ No wonder Lot's daughters, hiding in a cave, thought they were the only surviving mortals.⁴⁴ "The entire landscape was desolation; there were almost no travellers; everything stopped."⁴⁵

Archaeology confirms the general picture of disaster in Abraham's time. "Our archaeological discoveries in the Negeb," wrote Nelson Glueck, "are in harmony with the general historical background of the accounts in Genesis 12, 13 and 14." Southern Canaan right to Sinai is marked by many sites of permanent settlements and caravan stopping places, reminding one that "all the plain of Jordan . . . was well watered every where, before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, even as the garden of the Lord, like the land of Egypt, as thou comest unto Zoar." (Gen. 13:10.) Then suddenly "all of these sites are destroyed at the end of the Abrahamitic period, and for the most part were not reoccupied ever again or not until at least 1000 years, and in most cases . . . not until 2000 years had elapsed."⁴⁶ In Ghassul, the only City of the Plain that has been located so far, "everything was ruined completely by an earthquake."⁴⁷ Otto Eissfeldt, one of the most sober and cautious of scholars, believes that the story of Sodom is "a very obscure and distorted memory of a real historical occurrence," noting that a great earthquake actually did take place at the southern end of the Dead Sea some-

time in the second millennium B.C., and concluding that the best solution to the problems of the stories of Lot and Abraham in Genesis 19 is to regard them as real history.⁴⁸ While R. Graves and R. Patai observe that "the shallow basin south of the Lisan (the tongue of land that protrudes into the Dead Sea from the east) may once have been a plain encroached upon by salt water after severe earthquakes about 1900 B.C.," they would explain away the fire from heaven as a description of "the intense summer heat."⁴⁹ An easier explanation would be those fires which, according to seismologists, are always the main cause of destruction when cities suffer earthquake.

A century ago B. Beer listed a number of ancient sources reporting the rather sudden formation of the Dead Sea.⁵⁰ Yet until recently scholars have rejected the whole story as impossible. "Critical scholarship," writes F. Cornelius, "insists emphatically that the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah are purely fantasy"; yet it now appears that the Jordan Valley is a very active earthquake zone, and Cornelius calls attention to disturbances that afflicted the whole ancient world about the middle of the seventeenth century B.C., when "an enormous earthquake destroyed the Cretan palaces, Ugarit and Alalah VII. . . ." "It is quite possible," he notes, "that the southern end of the Dead Sea, a plain which is only 4 to 6 metres under the level of the sea, was formed at the time of Sodom and Gomorrah." Though there is no lava in the area, "the ignition of earth gases among the tarpits (*Asphaltsee*) is virtually unavoidable in an earthquake," such as is described in Genesis 19.⁵¹ A. Parrot speculates that "Sodom was destroyed perhaps by an earthquake accompanied by a sinking of the ground-level, which caused a moderate extension of the Dead Sea which could have submerged the cities."⁵² He suggests that we take seriously the notoriously persistent place names of the desert, which still designate features of the region as "Mt. Sodom" (Djebel Usdum), Zoar, etc., remembering that St. Jerome, who lived in Palestine, reported that the latter village was actually swallowed up by an earthquake in his day.⁵³ The fate of Sodom and Gomorrah reminds us of the account in the Iliad XXI, 139-204, of how Hephaestus dried up the river Scamander and chased the Greeks out of the place, with a mighty flame.⁵⁴ The fact that earthquakes of appalling violence have occurred within that very area within the last few years is a reminder that the disasters described, if not the mythical beings, who personify their destructive wrath, can have been

quite real. That such disturbances reached a peak in Abraham's lifetime is implied by the tradition that after him and because of him the state of nature has remained more stable.⁵⁴

Great natural disasters do not come singly. Earthquakes and volcanoes are regularly accompanied by great storms.

The world of Abraham— a world of "earthquakes, famine, and trouble"

Typhon was not only the flaming meteorite; he was also the bringer of great storms and disastrous flood, according to the Egyptians, while Horus and Osiris held back the waters and cleared the skies.⁵⁵ The three great floods of water, wind, and fire were assigned by the old desert sectaries to the times of Noah, Abraham, and Lot, respectively; a tradition kept alive in the Old Syrian Church has it that when the Great Wind destroyed the generation of the Tower, only Abraham was saved.⁵⁶ It is interesting that Abraham should be made the central figure of some of the old stories of the great winds, even the story of Ram and Rud, the righteous brothers whose language was not confounded at the Tower and who wandered back toward Eden, makes place for Abraham, for while Rud may be a Mandaean form of Jared, Ab-ram has been suggested for his brother.⁵⁷ What made it easy to confuse the two periods was the persistent report that Abraham did indeed have to cope with great winds and storms—but mostly hot winds. In the one hundredth year of his grandfather Nahor, "God opened the vessels of the Winds and the gate of the storms, and a great hurricane swept over the land, carrying away the idols and covering the settlements with sand-hills which remain to this day."⁵⁸ The poetic language is remarkably like that of Ether 2:24, ". . . for the winds have gone forth out of my mouth . . ." but the reality of the winds is attested in many old Egyptian and Babylonian sources, such as "The Lament for Ur" (Abraham's city?), in which we read of "the evil winds of Gibil the fire-god . . . the great heaven-storm with its floods, and the hot wind that darkens the sky," scatters the flocks, lays bare

the fields, and depopulates the cities and the holy places, "like a field desolate after the harvest."⁵⁹ The Egyptians have left us a whole literature of lamentation vividly describing the dire circumstances that attend the hot desert winds and the low Niles at times when even the ultra-stable government of Egypt was shaken to pieces.⁶⁰ Even the Flood story of the Egyptians, according to Anthes, "goes back to far distant climatic changing—not speculative, but a real experience of the human race."⁶¹ The best attested account of a super-storm, however, is found on the stele of the Pharaoh Amosis. In it, that monarch recounts in a dry, factual manner his tour of inspection of the disaster area: the face of the land was changed, a major valley was formed overnight, the land was in total darkness, so much so "that it was impossible to light a torch anywhere," and the most awesome aspect of the thing was the total silence that met the king wherever he went: "the population sat in total silence in the east and in the west, after God had shown his power."⁶² Parallels to the Book of Mormon and Abraham 1:20 are no more striking than the genuinely religious interpretation that the pious Amasis puts on the event.

World Food Shortage: But far more conspicuous in the Abraham traditions than the raging storms and floods is the blasting heat and drought that bring famine to the scene. In the Book of Abraham, the prophet, even before the conflict with the people of Ur of the Chaldees, learns from the Lord that there is going to be a famine in the land; and after his escape from the altar the famine descends in earnest, blighting the whole land of Chaldea. (Abr. 1:29-30.) Leaving the country, Abraham, as his first act on crossing the border into Canaan, sacrifices to God, praying "that the famine might be turned away from my father's house, that they might not perish." (Abr. 2:17.) But even in Canaan the famine only got worse and worse, forcing the patriarch to go clear to Egypt for food, "for the famine became very grievous." (Abr. 2:21.) Of the ten great famines to afflict the world, according to Jewish tradition, the greatest was that in Abraham's time, it being the first worldwide famine.⁶³ Needless to say, hunger was one of the Ten Trials of Abraham.⁶⁴

In the last days of Methuselah, when men began to apostatize and defile the earth and steal from one another, God purposely caused the harvests to fail.⁶⁵ This tradition is clearly recalled in the Pearl of Great Price, Moses 8:3-4. With the birth of Noah, things began to im-

prove, and Noah himself sought to improve conditions by inventing plows, sickles, axes, and other agricultural machinery.⁶⁶ Next, when men reverted to evil "during the time of the scattering from the Tower, the time of God's wrath, it did not rain"—the great winds were dry winds.⁶⁷ In the "Lament for Ur" we are told how "the good storm, Nannær, is driven out of the land, and the people are scattered. . . . everywhere corpses lie withering in the sun; many die of hunger; the heat is unbearable; all government collapses, parents desert their children. . . ." ⁶⁸ Kenan, the son of Enos, is said to have recorded the great famine that followed the preaching of his father.⁶⁹ Then in the days of Terah, just before the birth of Abraham, "Mastema [Satan] sent ravens and birds" and by the starving birds the people were robbed of their grain and fruit and "reduced . . . to destitution."⁷⁰

So we find Abraham at the age of four (some say 15) driving the birds from the fields, but politely explaining the situation to them and reaching an amicable understanding as he does so.⁷¹ All his life he is escaping from heat, drought, and hunger, or helping others to escape from them. Everywhere he goes he digs wells and plants trees (most of which perish);⁷² he invents important improvements in agricultural machinery and methods,⁷³ and distributes food wherever he can.⁷⁴ He undertakes search-and-rescue missions for wanderers in the desert when "it was as hot as the day of judgment, God having released the fires of hell" on the earth,⁷⁵ and tangles with marauding bands "amidst dust and stubble."⁷⁶ But above all it is in a *ritual* capacity that Abraham is involved in the business of checking heat and drought. This may seem very strange until we realize that the running of the waters and the tempering of the blasting heat is the *Hauptmotiv* of the great yearly ritual assemblies of Abraham's day from one end to the other of the inhabited world.⁷⁷ The Book of Abraham is aware of the strange system in which human sacrifice and famine are closely connected. The ancients, though they knew perfectly well that it was the sun that dried up the earth, nevertheless attributed the most deadly heat and drought to the Dog-star, Sirius, who in Abraham's day was propitiated with "the thank-offering of a child," as "the god of Shagreel." (Abr. 1:10, 9.) It was when famine prevailed in spite of everything that Abraham's father decided not to make such an offering of his own son; ". . . a famine prevailed throughout all the land of Chaldea, and my father was sorely

tormented . . . and he repented of the evil which he had determined against me, to take away my life." (Abr. 1:30.) But Abraham's brother, Haran, died in the famine. (See Abr. 2:1.) We are not told why this was permitted while the rest of the family survived, but numerous legendary accounts have it that Haran died as an offering in the fire in the place of Abraham.⁷⁸

As we have seen, Abraham's delivery from the altar in the Land of the Chaldees is often described as his escape from the fire or the furnace of Chaldaea, and we are told how at the moment he was cast from the altar into the flames, the latter became a lush and lovely garden.⁷⁹ In the most mysterious episode in all his career, we find Abraham driving off birds of prey from a sacrifice while he is overcome with a *tardema*, which some scholars interpret as sunstroke.⁸⁰ The first altar Abraham built, according to Abraham 2:17, was for an offering and prayer "that the famine might be turned away from my father's house. . . ." What is most significant for our study is that the "Busiris" type of sacrifice, of which our Facsimile No. I is an illustration, has the specific object of propitiating the heavens in time of drought and famine.⁸¹

A World in Trouble: The great insecurity of life accompanying major natural upheavals, when men can no longer count on the stability of the earth itself, is not without marked psychological effect. A basic teaching of the Talmud is that there is a definite correlation between the behavior of man and the behavior of nature. The universe is so organized, according to this, that when man revolts against God's plan of operations, to which all other creatures conform, he finds himself in the position of one going the wrong way on a freeway during rush hours: the very stars in their course fight against him. The blight of nature follows the wickedness of man in every age. Thus, when Adam fell, an angel cut down all the trees of the Garden but one; when Abel was murdered, all the vegetation in the world withered until Seth was born, when it bloomed again; but when men started worshipping idols in the time of Abraham's great-grandparents, "the sea rose along the whole eastern Mediterranean seaboard, flooding one-third of the land from Akho to Jaffa"; and when in the last days of Methuselah men again defiled the earth, God caused all the harvests to fail.⁸² This same philosophy is strikingly expressed in the Book of Moses of the Pearl of Great Price, especially in the seventh chapter, where we even hear the earth itself, personified as "the mother of men," weeping

for the wickedness of her children that have defiled her. (Moses 7:48.) It was because of wickedness among the people that the birds came to destroy their crops when Abraham was a child.⁸³ As it was in the days of Noah, so in the days of Abraham, a very old Christian writing explains, the world was ripe for destruction, according to the principle that whenever men fall away completely from God, destruction must follow.⁸⁴ Indeed, the people had sunk so low, says one very old source, "that God caused their civilization to degenerate back to the stage of cave-dwelling, and brought Abraham out of the land."⁸⁵

After the Flood, men were haunted by an understandable feeling of insecurity, to overcome which they undertook tremendous engineering projects; among these was the famous tower, which was to be the symbol of man's ultimate mastery of nature, being so ingeniously designed and solidly constructed as to be absolutely safe against flood, fire, and earthquake. Within the walls of the tower was to be stored the sum total of man's knowledge of the physical universe, enabling him to meet and master any situation that might arise—"and it was all done out of fear of another flood!"⁸⁶ A great economic boom and commercial expansion enabled them to undertake "all kinds of engineering projects for controlling a dangerous nature, but the Lord fooled them by altering the course of nature and creation."⁸⁷ That was in Abraham's day: the Nimrod legends are full of marvelous gadgets and structures—super-buildings, mechanical thrones and altars, flying machines, and whatnot. It was a time of great scientific and technological progress—the Abraham stories, including the Book of Abraham, are unique in their concern for a *scientific* understanding of the cosmos, as against a purely religious and moral teaching—but toppling on the edge of destruction: those hot winds were breathing down everybody's neck.

In desperation, men turned to worshipping idols. Why idols, of all things, in a scientific age? It was "because in the whole world the people were without a teacher or a lawgiver or any one who could show them the way of truth. . . ."⁸⁸ Of course, there was Abraham, but they didn't want him, and precisely therein lay the convenience of having idols. Even when the boy Abraham argued with his father that the idols were blind, dumb, and helpless, as any one could see, and therefore could not possibly help others, Terah stuck to his idol business. The one salient, outstanding, universal, undeniable characteristic of all idols is their utterly passive help-

lessness; and if men persist in worshipping them, it cannot be in spite of that quality, but *because* of it. The sophisticated people of Abraham's time wanted the sanction of holy beings which at the same time were one hundred percent compliant with their own interests and desires, just as people today search out those scriptures which support their interests and push the rest aside. As Brigham Young pointed out time and again, the enlisting of systematic piety in the interest of private greed and ambition is the very essence of idolatry.⁸⁹ We can believe that the smart and cynical people of Abraham's day were sincere and devout in their idol worship—after all, Abraham's own father was willing to put him to death in support of the system.

Move On!: The Bible does not tell us why Abraham left Ur,⁹⁰ but the Book of Abraham (1:1-2) clearly implies that he found the general atmosphere of Mesopotamia unbearable. There are indications that he was swept along to the west with many others under the pressure of world unrest and political crisis: "When you see the Powers fighting against each other," says the Midrash, "look for the feet of the Messiah. The proof is that in the days of Abraham, because the great powers fought against each other, greatness came to Abraham."⁹¹ Recently E. MacLaurin has suggested that "the advancing armies of the great Semitic ruler Hammurapi were probably the cause of departure from his native city of Abraham."⁹² Others emphasize religious reasons: he was escaping from the idolatrous rites and ceremonies of the fathers, according to Judith (5:6-8); Thera left Ur because he hated the atmosphere of the place, says Josephus (*Ant.* I, 152); and when the family moved, Abraham was in serious trouble with both Chaldeans and Mesopotamians, and finally had to leave the country altogether (I, 157). He left for the west, according to the Pseudo-Philo (VII, 1-4), because his homeland had become completely degenerate, and because he had become disgusted with the tower building and the whole business.

The religious background of Abraham had been Babylonian, "Chaldean" rather than Egyptian, and that at a time, as F. Cornelius puts it, "when Babylonian religious degeneracy was flooding the Syrian regions."⁹³ It was to escape this spreading miasma, some have maintained, that Abraham fled to the purer air of the west.⁹⁴ While on a return visit to Haran after 15 years in Canaan, according to one story, Abraham was terribly shocked



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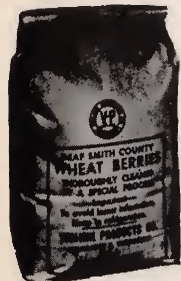
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by the general immorality of the old home town and yearned for the simpler frontier life of Canaan.⁹⁵ A Roman soldier with a keen eye and a sound head has left us a description of the hot, sultry, mosquito- and lion-ridden district of Harran, with its voluptuous, rich, carefree, immoral inhabitants, and though his account is as far removed from Abraham's day as it is from our own, still this particular corner of the "unchanging East" has indeed remained unchanged even down to our times, as A. Parrot has strikingly demonstrated.⁹⁶ The ancient Ur to the south has been described by its excavators in much the same terms as are the great contemporary cities of the Indus Valley by their discoverers: they were depressing places to live—huge, ugly, monotonous, geometrical, rich, sultry, joyless metropolises.

But Abraham's Canaan did not offer escape for long. The fabulous prosperity of the cities of the Plain turned them too into little Babylons.⁹⁷ The only "city of the Plain" yet discovered, El-Ghassul, displays astonishing luxury and sophistication, the style being Babylonian rather than Egyptian, and apparently "already in a state of decadence" just before its destruction by an earthquake.⁹⁸

Some have explained Abraham's departure to the west simply as a test—he migrated because God told him to do so.⁹⁹ If it was a test, it was a severe one: Professor Albright has recently pointed out that the ancient pioneers, far from finding a Golden West awaiting them, were "ethno-political intruders in the West,"¹⁰⁰ and as such "were not well received but were closely watched and were usually driven away by the local inhabitants, who bitterly resented any attempt on the part of outsiders to move in and take over their fields or pastures."¹⁰¹ Even in Canaan, moreover, the Babylonian threat followed the Patriarch, who was forced to leave Damascus, according to a very ancient source, because of military and political pressure from the East.¹⁰² In Canaan, Abraham's nephew Lot, catching the spirit of the times, declared that he preferred suburban Sodom to the society of his uncle, saying, "I want neither Abraham nor his God!" and moving down into the crowded and prosperous plain.¹⁰³ ○

(To be continued)

FOOTNOTES

- 1 W. F. Albright, *Yahweh and the Gods of Canaan* (University of London: The Athlone Press, 1968), pp. 56f.
- 2 M. J. bin Gorion, *Sagen der Juden*, I, 333.
- 3 We have discussed the reality of such a "fall" in *Western Political Quarterly*, Vol. 19 (1966), pp. 600f, 628-29. The specific men-

- tion of thistles, thorns, and dust in Gen. 3:17-19 is a clear indication of drought conditions.
- 4 Bin Gorion, *S.d.J.*, I, 186.
- 5 Albright, *op. cit.*, p. 86. We discussed this in *The World of the Jaredites*.
- 6 Midrash Rabbah, XXXII, 11 (H. Freedman's trsl., I, 256).
- 7 F. Bohl, *Zeitalter Abrahams*, pp. 35f.
- 8 B. Beer, *Leben Abraham's* (Leipzig, 1859), pp. 190ff; J. Goldin, *Rabbi Nathan*, p. 132; T. Boehl, *loc. cit.*; the older list is in G. Friedlander, *Pirke de Rabbi Eliezer*, Ch. 26, pp. 187-92.
- 9 *Sefer ha-Yashar* 18a-20b, and b. Gorion, *S.d.J.*, II, 26-28.
- 10 G. Lanczkowski, in *Ztsch. d. dt. Morgenlaendische Ges.*, Vol. 105 (1955), pp. 257f.
- 11 G. A. Wainwright, in *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*, Vol. 32 (1946), p. 285.
- 12 B. Gorion, *S.d.J.*, I, 12.
- 13 *Ibid.*, II, 310.
- 14 Hephaestus of Thebes, *Astrologia*, XXIV, in T. Hopfner, *Fontes Hist. Relig. Aegypt.*, p. 562.
- 15 G. Wainwright, in *Jnl. Eg. Arch.*, Vol. 18 (1932), p. 161.
- 16 *Ibid.*, p. 160, and in *Ztschr. f. Aeg. Sprache*, Vol. 71 (1935), p. 44.
- 17 Beer, *op. cit.*, p. 30.
- 18 In *Jnl. Eg. Arch.*, Vol. 18, p. 166.
- 19 Bin Gorion, *S.d.J.*, II, 185.
- 20 *Jewish Encyclopedia*, Vol. 2, pp. 396f; R. Eisler, *Iesous Basileus* (Heidelberg, 1930), Vol. 2, p. 108.
- 21 Bin Gorion, I, 104.
- 22 "... shifting its position from west to east," whatever that means; *Ibid.*, II, 185.
- 23 *Ibid.*, I, 206.
- 24 Horapollo, *Hieroglyph.* I, 3. Eratosthenes says Sirius gets its name from the fact that its brightness changes (*dia ten phlogos kinesis* . . .), which can hardly refer to twinkling, since other stars twinkle just as much. T. Hopfner, *Fontes Hist. Relig. Aegypt.*, p. 760.
- 25 A. Mallon, in *Melanges Maspero*, I, i, 59.
- 26 Tha'labi, *Qissas al-Anbiyah* (Cairo, 1340 A.H.), p. 54.
- 27 *Biblical Antiquities of Philo*, VI, 17.
- 28 L. Cohn, in *Jewish Quarterly Review*, Vol. 10, p. 286.
- 29 Bin Gorion, *S.d.J.*, II, 238.
- 30 Cohn, *op. cit.*, pp. 288f.
- 31 L. Ginzberg, *Legends of the Jews*, Vol. 1, p. 253.
- 32 Beer, *op. cit.*, p. 41.
- 33 *Ibid.*, p. 9, n. 84, for sources; also bin Gorion, II, 59; *Sefer ha-Yashar*, Ch. 22-31; B. Sanh. 109a; P. R. Eliezer, Ch. 24.
- 34 Bin Gorion, I, 154.
- 35 *The Cave of Treasures*, 25:17.
- 36 Bin Gorion, II, 45. In some legends God shakes and even overthrows the throne of Nimrod as a warning, without any mention of Abraham. H. Schuetzinger, *Ursprung der arab. Abraham-Nimrod Legende* (Bonn, 1961), p. 74.
- 37 G. Weil, *Biblische Legenden der Muselmanner* (Frankfurt, 1845), p. 59.
- 38 *Apocalypse of Abraham*, 8:7.
- 39 He was consumed by fire from heaven while Abraham was saved, Beer, pp. 16-17, *cit. S. ha-Yashar*; a fragment of Josephus says that he was killed trying to put out the flames that were destroying his father's idols and house. R. Eisler, *op. cit.*, Vol. 1, p. 523.
- 40 Schuetzinger, *op. cit.*, p. 100.
- 41 Pseudo-Philo, VI, 18. The two phenomena meet most dramatically in volcanic activity. The Egyptians have much to say about "the fire-island that emerged from the waters" at the time Egypt was first settled—perhaps a volcanic island emerging from the Mediterranean, G. Roeder, *Egyptian Religion*, Vol. I, p. 10.
- 42 Beer, *op. cit.*, p. 165.
- 43 Bin Gorion, II, 238.
- 44 Gen. 19:30-31; bin Gorion, *S.d.J.*, II, 239f.
- 45 Beer, *op. cit.*, p. 44. Also at the attempted sacrifice of Abraham, fire burned all the birds and made all the surrounding region desolate, Tha'labi, *loc. cit.*
- 46 N. Glueck, in *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, Vol. 100 (1956), pp. 150f.
- 47 A. Mallon, in *Melanges Maspero*, I, i, 57.
- 48 O. Eissfeldt, in *Ex Oriente Lux*, Vol. 17 (1963), pp. 163-64.
- 49 R. Graves and R. Patai, *Hebrew Mythology*, p. 169.
- 50 Beer, *op. cit.*, p. 137.
- 51 F. Cornelius, in *Ztsch. f. Alt Test. Wiss.*, Vol. 72 (1960), pp. 5-6.
- 52 A. Parrot, *Abraham et son Temps* (Paris, 1962), p. 105, n. 3.
- 53 Apollodorus, *Epist.*, IV, 1.

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- 54 Zohar, Lech Lecha, 86b.
55 Plutarch, *de Iside*, 39-40.
56 R. Eisler, *op. cit.*, Vol. 2, p. 109.
57 *Loc. cit.*, n. 9. Interestingly enough, one of the most important accounts of the wind-flood recounts that there were no inhabitants in the Near East before the time of Noah, the world's population dwelling far to the eastward near the region of Eden, *Cave of Treasures*, 26:15, 17. To this area, according to the Ram and Rud story of the Mandaean, Jared and his brother returned.
58 *Cave of Treasures*, 26:11.
59 M. Witzel, in *Orientalia*, Vol. 14 (1945), pp. 188-90, noting that this must be descriptive of a real historical event.
60 H. Kees, in *Orientalia*, Vol. 21 (1952), pp. 86-97; E. A. W. Budge, *Egyptian Hieratic Papyri in the British Museum*, 1923, p. 19.
61 R. Anthes, in *Mitt. d. Dt. Or. Ges.*, Vol. 96 (1942), p. 18.
62 C. Vandersleye, in *Revue d'Egyptologie*, Vol. 19 (1967), pp. 133, 155-57; quote is from 140.
63 Different lists (but both including famine) in A. Wuensche, *Midrasch Rabbah*, p. 182, and L. Ginzberg, *Legends of the Jews*, Vol. 1, p. 221.
64 P. R. Eliezer, Ch. 26; bin Gorion II, 159.
65 Bin Gorion, I, 174; cf. Helaman 11:4ff.
66 *Ibid.*, I, 176.
67 *Ibid.*, II, 83.
68 M. Witzel, *op. cit.*, p. 190.
69 Bin Gorion, I, 154. Among the oldest and most vivid products of Egyptian art are the famine reliefs from the III Dynasty, showing the horribly emaciated condition of the people.
70 Jubilees 11:11-13.
71 J. Bergmann, *Legenden der Juden*, p. 58. Bar Hebraeus, *Chronography* (Budge), Vol. 1, p. 10, says he was 15 when he drove off the *qarqase* (ravens? locusts?) who were eating all the crops of the Chaldeans.
72 Jubilees 24:18; bin Gorion, II, 272; Book of Lights.
73 Jubilees 11:21, 23.
74 Book of Jasher, 22:11-12.
75 Bin Gorion, II, 198.
76 W. Braude, *Midrash Ps*, 110:2.
77 H. Nibley, in *Western Political Quarterly*, Vol. 4 (1951), pp. 226-30, 235-38.
78 Eisler, *op. cit.*, I, 523.
79 E.g. A. Jellinek, *Bet ha-Midrasch*, I, 34, cf. 32.
80 Gen. 15:9-15; Josephus, *J. Ant.*, I, 185. On *tardema*, A. Caquot, in *Semitica*, 12.
81 This is well treated in A. Moret, *La Mise a Mort due Dieu in Egypte* (Paris: Geuthner, 1927). Cf. J. Berard, in *Rev. de l'Hist. des Religions*, Vol. 151 (1957), pp. 228-230.
82 These episodes are described, with the sources in bin Gorion, *S.d.J.*, I, 317, 151, 153, 174.
83 Jubilees 11:13.
84 *Clementine Recognitions* I, 29-33.
85 *Pseudo-Philo*, VII, 1.
86 Bin Gorion, II, 64, 48.
87 *Ibid.*, I, 196.
88 *Cave of Treasures*, 25:8-9.
89 E.g., *Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 5 (1857), p. 353.
90 N. H. Segal, in *Jewish Quarterly Review*, Vol. 52 (1961-2), p. 45.
91 Midr. Rab., Gen. 42:4. The Lord "was chosen by our father Abraham when the nations were divided in the time of Phaleg . . ." *Test. of Naphthali* 8:3 (in R. H. Charles, *Apoc. & Pseudepigr. of the Old Testament*, II, 363).
92 E. MacLaurin, in *Journal of Religious History*, Vol. 2 (1963), p. 278.
93 F. Cornelius, in *Ztschr. f. A.T. Wiss.*, Vol. 72 (1960), p. 7.
94 Chwolson, *Die Sabaeer*, I, 620.
95 Midr. Rab., Gen. 39:8; L. Ginzberg, *op. cit.*, Vol. 1, p. 219; Beer, *op. cit.*, p. 23.
96 Ammianus Marcellinus, *Hist.*, XVIII, 7, 5; A. Parrot, *Abraham et son Temps*—see especially the illustrations.
97 M. C. Astour, in A. Altmann, *Biblical Motifs* (Harvard University Press, 1966), p. 74.
98 A. Mallon, in *Melanges Maspero*, I, i, 57f.
99 Ginzberg, *op. cit.*, Vol. 1, p. 218.
100 W. F. Albright, *Yahweh and the Gods of Canaan*, p. 93.
101 *Ibid.*, p. 57. This applies whether Abraham was a caravaner or shepherd: "The life of wandering shepherds was anything but pleasant." *Loc. cit.*
102 Eusebius, *Praep. Evangel.*, IX, 16; cf. Josephus, *Ant.*, I, 159, who says that Abraham's house in Damascus was still being pointed out in his day.
103 Midr. Rab., Gen. 41.

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