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Articles

Seeing Is Not Believing

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Jesus said to him, "Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed." (John 20:29)

We all know the old saying that claims, "Seeing is believing." It has us trusting that if we can see whatever it is with our own two eyes, we can accept it to be so.

For instance, we would probably be skeptical about a snake and a hamster being best friends. Perhaps even more astonishing would be the friendships among three predators: a bear, lion, and tiger (affectionately labeled "BLT"). Yet, these animals have grown up together since they were mere babies, and the bond between them is so close that it displaces their natural enmity. We can see pictures and videos of these "friendships" online. With such visible evidence of these animals co-existing, we find it easier to accept these assertions as true.

Perhaps we have an acquaintance whom we have always considered mean or rude, yet a friend tells us that he or she has changed. We are most likely to say, "Yeah, I'll believe that when I see it." However, the next time we cross paths, the person is kind, gentle, and soft-spoken. Having seen evidence of the purported change, we can now believe that the formerly mean person has matured.

We also rely quite a bit on our hearing. This reliance is especially true when it comes to human interaction and relationships. If someone tells us they will do something, we take them at their word, while hanging onto the thought that something could come up and change what we were initially told.

However, sight is different. When we see something, the truth seems almost imprinted in our minds. No one can change what we saw because, well, we saw it firsthand! It cannot be changed. Or can it?

Brain Games

In 2011, National Geographic debuted a show called "Brain Games," which the Internet Movie Database (IMDB) describes as "an examination of the nature of human perception and how it can be fooled." Several episodes revealed how magicians and even brain doctors use techniques like sleight-of-hand, distractions, and props to "play" the brain game.

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It is truly amazing to see how an expert in sleight-of hand can make a quarter appear to move upward from one hand to another! He then impresses all the onlookers by “miraculously” causing the quarter to appear on his shoulder. Interestingly, the episode’s producers next show his actions in slow motion, pointing out his tricky movements along the way. The viewer can now see which hand holds the quarter and how his hand and arm movements narrow the participant’s field of view. It becomes apparent that he uses distraction to “force” the participant to look where he wants him to look.

He is so effective in distracting them that not only did he make the quarter disappear then reappear on the participant’s shoulder, but he also removed the participant’s watch and put it on his own wrist without him noticing!

So, seeing is *not necessarily* believing.

This principle appears in a familiar episode in Scripture, [John 7:21-24](#):

Jesus answered and said to them, “I did one work, and you all marvel. Moses therefore gave you circumcision (not that it is from Moses, but from the fathers), and you circumcise a man on the Sabbath. If a man receives circumcision on the Sabbath, so that the law of Moses should not be broken, are you angry with Me because I made a man completely well on the Sabbath? Do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment.”

Jesus, referring to the miracle He had performed in John 5, healing the paralytic on the Sabbath, rebukes the Jews for condemning Him for healing on the Sabbath day. In doing this, they disregarded the fact that they circumcised baby boys on their eighth day, even if that day was a Sabbath. He instructs them not to judge solely according to what they see but with righteous judgment—how God sees things. He sees things far differently than we humans do.

Thomas Doubts

The idea of seeing and believing appears again in John 20, where Christ appears to the disciples:

Then, the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said to them, “Peace be with you.” When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord.

Now Thomas, called the Twin, one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. The other disciples therefore said to him, “We have seen the Lord.” So, he said to them, “Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe.”

And after eight days His disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, “Peace to you!” Then He said to Thomas, “Reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand here and put it into My side. Do not be unbelieving but believing.”

And Thomas answered and said to Him, “My Lord and my God!”

Jesus said to him, “Thomas because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.” ([John 20:19-20, 24-29](#))

People are not always ready and easily persuaded to believe what people tell them. Thomas had the testimony of ten disciples; twenty eyeballs had witnessed Jesus appear in the closed room. They saw Him as He showed them His hands and side. They gave Thomas more than enough corroborating eyewitness accounts of the event, yet he still would not believe until he saw for himself.

People often refer to Thomas as “Doubting Thomas,” and one could conclude that he merely wanted the same validating experience that the other disciples had gone through. In verse 20, Jesus shows them His hands and side, so the ten saw the evidence that He indeed was the crucified Jesus, now alive again. Yet, Thomas’s own words in verse 25 go beyond this. He says that he needed even more sensory evidence to prove that the apparition was indeed the Christ: The disciple needed to see *and* touch His hands and His side. It seems he refused to rely on the testimonies of others based on sight alone.

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We realize God says and does things purposefully. Jesus appears to the disciples again eight days after the original appearance. He seems to reappear for Thomas' edification alone, to help him specifically with his lack of belief. The Good Shepherd did not want to lose even one of His disciples, and as we know, He did not lose any except for the son of perdition, Judas Iscariot, who in the role of betrayer fulfilled scripture ([John 17:12](#)).

Susceptible to Deception

Notice verse 29 specifically: “Jesus said to him, ‘Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.’” Our eyes can be deceived—in fact, all our senses can be fooled. We can think that we have seen, heard, felt, smelled, or tasted something only to discover that our perspective was off, our hearing muffled, our touch calloused, our nose stuffed, and our taste distorted.

Humans are easily distracted, which makes them susceptible to deception. Jesus speaks to this fact in [Matthew 24:23-26](#):

Then if anyone says to you, “Look, here is the Christ!” or “There!” do not believe it. For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect. See, I have told you beforehand. Therefore if they say to you, “Look, He is in the desert!” do not go out; or “Look, He is in the inner rooms!” do not believe it.

Throughout the end times, we can expect frequent efforts to deceive us. People will believe they have “found” Christ in some secret place. False messiahs and prophets will rise and exhibit great signs and wonders—perhaps “magical” things like sleight-of-hand and distractions? — that have us looking in one direction while our very salvation is being threatened from another. Will we want to “see” them, believing that, if we can witness what the false teachers are up to, we will be able to determine if they are believable ourselves? To the contrary, Jesus says flatly, “Don’t believe it.”

In [Matthew 9:27-30](#), two blind men ask Jesus to have mercy on them and restore their sight. Of course, they could not physically see Him, but they believed in His ability to heal them if He was willing. Jesus touches them and says, “According to your faith let it be to you.” And they were healed. They walked “by faith, not by sight” ([II Corinthians 5:7](#)).

The author of Hebrews expresses the principle of faith before sight in [Hebrews 1:1-3](#):

Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. For by it the elders obtained a good testimony. By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible.

At least in part, faith is generated by the evidence presented to us of things we have not seen. In verse 3, the writer provides an example: that the Word of God constructed “the worlds” (the times we live in) from invisible things. What we see, then, provides evidence that a Creator God, whom we cannot see with our eyes, exists. So, we can believe—have faith in—Him, despite His invisibility. [Romans 1:20](#) supports this conclusion: “For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and [divine nature (margin)], so that they [humans] are without excuse.”

Faith in the Unseen Christ

Considering all that God's elect goes through—various sicknesses, employment trials, and tribulations created by governmental mandates—we need more than ever to find faith, hope, and strength in the Scriptures. We need to consider daily the One whom we believe in despite never setting eyes on Him. The apostle Peter writes in [I Peter 1:6-9](#):

In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ, whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, receiving the end of your faith—the salvation of your souls.

“Brain Games” shows how our physical senses work and how our brains process what we see, revealing how easily we can be distracted and misled. Our attention can be directed toward a particular thing or place so that we miss what is

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happening outside our scope of vision. The show even illustrates how simple color changes can make our brains think a thing is in motion when it is completely stationary. We cannot always believe what we see with our physical eyes. And the story of Thomas teaches that, spiritually, belief through sensory validation is not the kind of faith that Christ seeks from us.

Obviously, examples and metaphors break down at some point. For good reasons, God Himself created in humanity what the doctors and scientists presented on “Brain Games.” A takeaway from the show is that our complex brains need to be only slightly tweaked by various stimuli to re-write how our brains see and respond. We must be cautious about why we believe and trust certain people and ideas. Are our beliefs based on faith or sight?

Christ used Thomas’ physical sight to help his unbelief, and it serves as an excellent example for those of us who have not seen our Savior in person. Knowing that we believe in a perfect Creator and Son of God, One who took such wounds and died to pay for our sins—yet rose again! — should give us great joy.

Knowing and believing that “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever” (Hebrews 13:8) and that “it is impossible for God to lie” (Hebrews 6:17-18) should embolden our faith because we know that, unlike fallible men, God and Christ are working with us with purpose and design. They are creating a Family in God’s image and working diligently to bring the elect into the Kingdom of God to reign with Christ forever.

But, as humans, we want something we can see, something that provides us with evidence and makes us comfortable with what we believe. We, however, have something even better. Paul writes in II Corinthians 5:5-8:

Now He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who also has given us the Spirit as a guarantee. So we are always confident, knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord. For we walk by faith, not by sight. We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord.

The Israelites had a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night that led them through the wilderness. They witnessed the Red Sea parting, manna provided every morning, and great armies decimated before their eyes. Yet they did not believe.

As the Israel of God (Galatians 6:16), we in the church do not see such astounding miracles and the visible certainty of God’s presence in our lives. It is typically only after much reflection and prayer that we finally understand the true reason for what is happening to us. But we do see the evidence of Almighty God and Jesus Christ working in our lives and in creation. So, we can be of good cheer. We have genuine proof for our belief.

God has provided us with His words in the Bible, and they are true (John 17:17) and, like God Himself, unchanging (Malachi 3:6). He has given us His Holy Spirit (I Corinthians 2:6-16), one of power, love, and a sound mind (II Timothy 1:6-7). These gifts enable us to worship God in both spirit and truth (John 4:24) and open our eyes to “see” God working out His purpose. Finally, as Jesus says in John 20:29, we are among the blessed because we have not seen Him yet have believed. And that is something to be very thankful for!

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Does Color Matter?

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About half of the world’s bird species migrates. That’s a lot of birds since there are more than 10,000 species!

These small travelers have an ingrained knowledge given to them by their Creator to migrate as seasons change, often to follow food sources or reach safer nesting grounds. They can take surprisingly long journeys, including one tiny type of warbler that migrates over 8,000 miles one way, setting the record for distance traveled related to size.

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Researchers have found something most migrating birds share in common — lighter colored feathers than nonmigratory birds. They suggest these paler feathers may help them stay cooler while flying in bright sunlight, which would help with overheating during their arduous, long flights.



While secularists assume these lighter feathers are due to evolutionary processes, we know their Creator gave these birds the adaptability to produce paler colors if needed, knowing it would be helpful during migration.

Some recent research has found the longest migrating birds have about 4% lighter feathers than nonmigratory birds. Although this isn't a large percentage, it indeed points to a Creator who designed each and every bird and knew what each type would need to complete the migrations to keep them alive and multiplying.

Psalm 50:11 says, “I know all the fowls of the mountains: And the wild beasts of the field are mine.” While scientists don't completely understand all about how birds migrate, we know God does and he knows all about each bird. In Matthew 6:26, Jesus reminds us that our Father cares for every bird, and cares for us even more.

I'm David Rives. Truly, the heavens declare the glory of God.

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The Gap Theory

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Why it fails on all counts

The Gap (or Ruin-Reconstruction) Theory aims to fit the alleged millions of years of Earth and universe history into a postulated gap between the first and second verses of Genesis Chapter One.

This theory did not arise from contemplation of Scripture but was an attempt to 'harmonize' the Genesis account with belief in long ages, only after secular thinkers started to promote the belief that the world was very old.

In its most common form, God originally created a perfect world, but then in this supposed 'gap', Satan fell, and God judged the world by a catastrophe, which formed most of the fossils. Thus, gappists translate Genesis 1:2 as 'the earth

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became formless and void’. Then the six days of creation become a re-creation of this fallen world.

But this fails on several grounds:^{1,2}

- Although the gap theory was totally motivated to fit in with uniformitarian geology, only the most naïve would think it does. Uniformitarian geologists reject the idea of any global Flood, whether the biblical Noah’s Flood, or the gappists’ Lucifer’s Flood’.³
- It postulates the fall of Satan, and the existence of evil, death, suffering and disease in a world God afterwards declared “very good’ in Genesis 1:31. Adam and Eve would have been standing on a graveyard of fossils showing death, bloodshed, and cancer –hardly ‘very good’.⁴
- It contradicts the Sabbath command of Exodus 20:8-11, which is based on the creation of the ‘heavens, earth, sea and everything in them’ in six ordinary days. In the Old Testament Hebrew, whenever the words ‘heaven(s) and earth’ are conjoined, it is a figure of speech called a *merism*, in which two opposites are combined into an all-encompassing single concept.⁵ Throughout the Bible (e.g., Genesis 14:19, 22; 2 Kings 19:15; Psalm 121:2) this means the totality of creation, not just the earth and its atmosphere, or our solar system alone. It is used because Hebrew has no word for ‘the universe’ and can at best say ‘the all’.⁶
- The Hebrew words *tohu* and *bohu*, translated ‘without form’ and ‘void’ in Genesis 1:2, are claimed by gappists to indicate a judgmental destruction rather than something in the process of being built. But *tohu* occurs several times in the Bible in which it is used in a morally neutral state, describing something used in a morally neutral state, describing something unfinished, and confused, but not necessarily evil. Hebrew scholars and the Church have for centuries taken the view that Genesis 1:2 is not a scene of judgment, or an evil state created by the fall of angels, but a description of the original undeveloped state of the universe. The plain and simple meaning of what Moses says is that on the first day there was a mass covered by water, with no dry land involving features (*tohu* = ‘unformed’), and no inhabitants yet (*bohu* = ‘unfilled’).
- Some have misused Jeremiah 4:23 to teach the gap theory, because it uses the phrase *tohu va bohu* to describe the results of a judgment. Leading gap theorists like Arthur Custance used this fact to assert that ‘without form and void’ must mean ‘laid waste by a judgment’. But this is fallacious – there is nothing in the Hebrew words *tohu va bohu* themselves to suggest that. The only reason they refer to being ‘laid waste’ is due to the context in which the words are found. They simply mean ‘unformed and unfilled’. This state can be due either to nothing else having been created, or some created things being removed. The context of Jer. 4 is a prophecy of the Babylonian sacking of Jerusalem, not creation. In fact, Jer. 4:23 is known as a literary allusion to Genesis 1:2 – the judgment would be so severe that it would leave the final state as empty as the world before God created anything.

An analogy: when I open my word processor, my document screen is blank. But if I delete an entire document the screen would likewise be blank. So ‘blank’ means ‘free from any text’. In some contexts, the lack of text is because I haven’t written anything, in others it is due to a deletion of text. You would need to know the context to tell which – you couldn’t tell from the word ‘blank’ itself. However, a gappist-type analysis of the word might conclude: ‘since “blank” can refer to a screen with all the text deleted, the word “blank” itself signifies a text deletion event, even when none is stated.’

This is in line with the common biblical principle where a judgment is a *reversal of creation*. Jer. 4:23 is taking the land back to its unformed state, unfit for Man to live in. Similarly, the Flood took the world back to its condition on Day 2 before the land and water had separated.

Furthermore, the gappist argument violates the principle of God’s progressive revelation in Scripture. Later texts presuppose the prior revelation of earlier texts, not vice versa. Therefore Jer. 4:23 cannot be used to interpret Gen. 1:2 as a judgment – that would be completely back-to-front, because an allusion works only one way.

- Jesus said that people were there ‘from the beginning of creation’, not after a billions-of-years gap from the beginning (Mark 10:4-6).⁷

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- The English word ‘replenish’ in the KJV translation of Genesis 1:28 (‘... and God said unto them, Be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth’), does not support the gap theory as gappists claim. As linguist Dr. Charles Taylor explains,⁸ when it was translated in 1611, “replenish” was merely a parallel to “fill”, and the prefix “re-” didn’t mean “again”, but “completely”. The same Hebrew word *male* is used in Genesis 1:22 and is there translated “fill (the seas)”, so there was no need to translate it differently in verse 28.

Summary and Conclusion

Top professors of Hebrew at world-class universities are in agreement that Genesis is teaching straightforward historical narrative about the creation of everything in six earth-rotation days, with no gap, thousands of years ago, and a subsequent global Flood (though they don’t usually believe the history in Genesis, there is no doubt for them about what it says). Which is what the vast majority of believers, for nearly 2,000 years, understood the text to be saying – until unbelieving philosophies about long ages become popular.

Like virtually all of the other attempts to ‘harmonize’ long ages with Genesis,⁹ the Gap Theory

- a) Puts death and suffering before the Fall/Curse.
- b) Has not the slightest basis in the Hebrew of Genesis. In fact, it seriously violates the tenets of historical-grammatical exegesis.
- c) Was never thought of from the Bible but arose due to the pressure of outside secular views.
- d) Fails to satisfy the proponents of those anti-God views, anyway.

End Notes

1. Grigg, R., From the Beginning of Creation: Does Genesis have a Gap? *Creation* 19(2):35-38, March-May 1997;<creation.com/gap>.
2. The definitive critique of the Gap Theory is Fields, W.W., *Unformed and Unfilled*, Burgener Enterprises, Collinsville, Illinois, 1976.
3. By making an imaginary ‘Lucifer’s Flood’, which the Bible nowhere mentions, responsible for the fossils, the global Flood of Noah (which the Bible spends three whole chapters describing in detail) gets relegated to a non-event that did not leave any fossil traces.
4. Sarfati, J., *The Fall: a cosmic catastrophe – Hugh Ross’s blunders on plant death in the Bible*, TJ 19(3:60-64, 2005;<creation.com/plant_death>.
5. An English example is ‘open day and night’. This doesn’t simply mean during sunlight and darkness but not dusk; rather, ‘day and night’ means the whole 24-hour day-night cycle. Other examples are ‘far and near’, ‘hill and vale’, ‘high and low’.
6. See Leupold, H.C., *Exposition of Genesis*, 1:41, Baker Book House, Michigan, 1942, who cites similar usage in Jeremiah 10:16; Isaiah 44:24; Psalm 103:19, 119:91; and Ecclesiastes 11:5.
7. See also Mortenson, T., *But from the beginning of ... the institution of marriage?* <creation.com/beginning>, 1 November 2004.
8. Taylor, C., *What does ‘replenish the earth’ mean?* *Creation* 18(2):44-45, March-May 1996; <creation.com/replenish>.
9. E.g., the Day-Age theory, and the Framework Hypthesis.

Technical Box **Why the Hebrew grammar forbids the idea of a ‘gap’**

‘Waw’ is the name of the Hebrew letter which is used as a conjunction. It can mean ‘and’, ‘but’, ‘now’, ‘then’ and several other things depending upon the context and type of waw involved. It occurs at the beginning of Genesis 1 verse 2 and is translated in the KJV, ‘And [waw] the earth was without form, and void.’ Gappists use this translation to support the gap theory. However, the most straightforward reading of the text sees verse 1 of Genesis 1 as the principal

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subject-and-verb clause, with verse 2 containing three ‘circumstantial clauses’. Hebrew grammarian Gesenius calls this a ‘*waw explicativum*’, and compares it to the English ‘to wit’. Other terms for it are ‘*waw copulative*’, ‘*waw disjunctive*’ or ‘*explanatory waw*’.

Such a *waw* disjunctive is easy to tell from the Hebrew because it is formed by *waw* followed by a ‘non-verb’. It introduces a parenthetic statement, that is, it’s alerting the reader to put the following passage in brackets, as it were – a descriptive phrase about the previous noun. It does not indicate something following in a time sequence – this would have been indicated by a different Hebrew construction called the *waw consecutive*, where *waw* is followed by a verb (the *waw consecutive* is in fact used before the different days of creation – see my book, *Refuting Compromise*, p. 100).

It is simply grammatically impossible to translate the verb *hayah* as ‘became’ when it is combined with a *waw* disjunctive – in the rest of the Old Testament, *waw* + a noun + *haya* (*qal* perfect, 3rd person) is always translated, ‘was’ or ‘came’. But never ‘became’. Also, the correct Hebrew idiom for the word ‘become’ is to attach the verb ‘to be’. e.g., ‘was’ to the preposition ‘to’ (Hebrew *le*). The verb ‘to be’ does NOT mean “become” without this preposition. Since Genesis 1:2 lacks the preposition, it cannot mean that the earth ‘became’ without form and void.

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The Bottomless Pit

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One of the most fascinating and intriguing chapters of the Book of Revelation is chapter nine. We shall discuss the symbolic meaning of the things described in the first 12 verses. Rather than quoting these verses, take a minute to read them for yourself.

To summarize, we begin with the sounding of the Fifth Trumpet. A star falls from heaven to the earth. This star or fallen angel has the key to the “bottomless pit.” To have the key to something means that you have possession of it. If I hand you my car keys, it’s the same as giving you possession of my car. The bottomless pit or abyss is opened. What happens next?

A great cloud of smoke arises from the pit from which locusts appear. These aren’t any normal locusts. They have golden crowns and faces of men and women. They are flying craft of some sort with wings and a tail protected by metal armor. John could only describe these images of the future in terms that he could relate to for his day. We would recognize them as military helicopters as we see today manned by male and female pilots and crew. The “crowns” are probably their flight helmets. Rather than attacking with rockets and explosives, something is transmitted or released from their tails which disable the populace but does not cause death. This would allow for the conquest and control of an enemy without destroying vital facilities needed for economic and military gain.

Let’s decipher what God is trying to show us about a future event. We have smoke and locusts. Smoke is the result of something being burned or consumed. Locusts are well known for consuming all vegetation in their path. So, we have something that comes from a bottomless pit or abyss that is burned or consumed. You may think that this bottomless pit is only a symbolic fabrication to illustrate a prophetic point. But what if it is a literal physical location on the earth?

As you know, oil wells can run very deep into the crust of the earth and may seem bottomless. And the oil from them is vital to the economic productivity of our modern world. Not only is oil vital for energy to run vehicles and equipment and for heating homes, but also provides much of the fertilizer for crop production.

Despite all the current propaganda about cutting fossil fuels and reducing carbon emissions to save the planet, this political agenda by the globalists will fail and oil will experience a strong comeback. It will be in even greater demand

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which will make it a precious commodity desired by all nations. And oil will be at the heart of the struggle for the control of Jerusalem.

Why do I say oil will be a major factor for the struggle to control Jerusalem? Will a major oil discovery take place in Israel close to Jerusalem? There are those who are drilling for oil in Israel hoping to find a large reserve for commercial production. There is one company presently looking in the Jezreel Valley area where they believe the Bible says there is oil. However, I believe their interpretation of those scriptures is misplaced. The Bible does reveal where there is a vast reserve of oil in Israel but not where they think. See Zion Oil: www.zionoil.com.

If this hidden oil field near Jerusalem is as large as I believe it is, then it may rival the oil fields of Saudi Arabia. Imagine the impact this would have for Israel and the Jewish people. Some have told me that I'm crazy for even suggesting such a thing. For those who aren't as short-sighted, keep reading.

Revelation nine appears to be depicting an invasion of Israel and the Middle East to gain control of the oil fields which are vital to the economic prosperity of the entire globe. Where else do we find an invasion of the Holy Land?

Recall the prophecy in Daniel 11 regarding the kings of the north and south. In verse 40, a final battle occurs at the end-time. We are drawing closer to that time. The King of the North will invade the Holy Land and surrounding countries including Egypt in order to gain economic control as a result of his own vaunted grandiose beliefs inspired by Satan that he is the foretold messiah. The King of the North mentioned in Daniel is likely the Little Horn and also ties into the Beast mentioned in Revelation 13.

And when will this invasion occur? At the sounding of the Fifth Trumpet. If you are not already aware of the **Timeline** of Revelation that I have explained elsewhere, then let me review for you. The seven trumpets described in the Book of Revelation will begin to sound on a future Feast of Trumpets. First Trumpet sounds on Trumpets. Second Trumpet on Atonement. Third Trumpet on First Day of Tabernacles. Fourth Trumpet on the Last Great Day.

Thus, the Fifth Trumpet will sound on the first day of unleavened bread about five months or so after the autumn holy days. Stop and think. What happens on the first day of unleavened bread? “On the first day you shall **remove** leaven from your houses” (Exodus 12:15). Anything that is leavened or puffed up is to be cast out of our homes. Does God follow His own instructions? Notice:

“And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels and prevailed not; neither was their place found anymore in heaven. And the great dragon was **cast out**, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceived the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him” (Revelation 12:7-9).

This ties perfectly with the Fifth Trumpet when a star falls from heaven. This will also be Passover night. What happened on that night? A destroyer was sent forth.

See Exodus 12:23. Likewise, in Revelation nine, the angel of the bottomless pit is called “Apollyon” in the Greek which means “Destroyer.” As we can see, history does repeat itself because the same spirit being following his old tricks is still at play on the world scene.

After Satan is cast out of heaven as pictured in Revelation 12, he pursues the “woman” again after the end of the 1,260 days which is also the time period when the Two Witnesses will prophesy.

Some believe that this woman is the church of God but that is inconsistent with the story-flow of the chapter. The woman must be a prominent city of the Jewish people, most likely the city of Jerusalem. The church did not exist prior to Christ's birth depicted in verse five. The church is not identified until the very end of the chapter in verse 17.

This woman flees again into the wilderness for “a time, times, and half a time.” Everyone thinks that this is another three and a half years. Not so! Read Galatians 4:10, “Ye observe days, and months, and **times**, and years.” This shows that “times” and years are not the same. This is the same Greek word as found in Revelation 12:14. It is referring to a holy day or season.

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When all factors are considered, it appears to mean the time between Passover and Pentecost. The locusts which arise from the bottomless pit are only allowed to torment men for five months. This will take us close to the Feast of Trumpets when Christ will return from heaven with His resurrected saints to make war against the armies of the Beast.

The Resurrection will occur on that previous Pentecost which is when the saints receive the seal in their foreheads as depicted by Revelation seven. This is why the locusts can no longer harm them.

One last tidbit to tantalize those who want to think outside the box. There is a famous incident in Genesis that may reveal where God planted a huge oil reserve yet to be uncovered which will rock the world upon its discovery. It will not easily yield its secret. It must be searched out as with any hidden treasure. The right contacts must be made in Israel. It is not time yet to look but we must make ready for when God opens the door.

"Thus saith the Eternal to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have strengthened to subdue nations before him; and with secret wisdom by which he shall outwit resistance and open the double doors so that the gates shall not be shut. The eastern mountain shall be leveled and made smooth. And I will give thee the **treasures of darkness**, and **hidden riches of secret places**, that the world may know that the Eternal is the God of Israel!" (Isaiah 45:1-3 inspired).

Captivities of Israel and Judah

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When did the Kingdoms of Israel and Judah go into captivity? Why did God send them out of the land he gave them? Where did they settle after leaving their captors?

Long before being taken into captivity, Israel existed as a unified kingdom under Saul (reigned from 1050 to 1010 B.C.), King David (1010 - 970) and Solomon (970 - 930). Soon after the death of Solomon, however, the Kingdom of Israel divided into two separate pieces with each possessing their own line of rulers.



Ten of the tribes formed the Northern Kingdom (also known as the Kingdom of Israel in the Bible) with rulers descended from Jeroboam I (reigned 930 to 909 B.C.). Two of the tribes (Benjamin, Judah), along with the tribe of Levi (the priests who served the temple), created the Southern Kingdom or Kingdom of Judah. Their rulers were the descendants of King David. Rehoboam (930 to 913 B.C.) was the first King of the Jews.

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The start of the northern ten tribes (Kingdom of Israel) captivity and ultimate demise began during the reign of Tiglathpileser, king of Assyria, who ruled from 745 to 727 B.C.

During Tiglathpileser's reign he came into the land of Israel and took the inhabitants of the tribes of Asher, Naphtali, Zebulun and Dan as captives. He also conquered areas east of the Jordan River and took the tribes of Gad, Reuben, and part of the tribe of Manasseh into captivity (2Kings 15:29, see also 1Chronicles 5:26).

In 732 B.C. Hoshea became the last King of Israel when he assassinated King Pekah (2Kings 15:30). Although He paid tribute money to the Assyrian Empire for a few years, he stopped doing so shortly after a new Assyrian ruler, King Shalmaneser V, assumed the throne in 727.

Shalmaneser, angry that no tribute was being paid, and finding out that Hoshea was secretly seeking a military alliance with Egypt, acted swiftly against Israel. His activities would lead to the captivity of what remained of Hoshea's kingdom (2Kings 17:4).

Around 725 B.C. Shalmaneser began to attack the Kingdom of Israel and its capital Samaria (2Kings 17:5). In 723 Samaria fell and with it Hoshea, along with most of the remaining people in the land, were taken into captivity (verse 6). God allowed this to happen as punishment for the nation's many sins against him, sins which they refused to repent of (2Kings 17:7 - 23). Because of their sins, chief of which was idolatry, the Kingdom of Israel lasted only 208 years.

The Southern or Kingdom of Judah lasted as an independent Kingdom from 930 to 597 B.C. (about 334 years). Sadly, like her northern Israel counterpart, Judah's sins, and refusal to obey God would be the ultimate cause of her captivity.

God allowed the Babylonian empire to take Jerusalem in 597 B.C. They pillaged the temple and took Judah's king, as well as many people including the prophets Daniel and Ezekiel, into captivity. They then made Zedekiah a puppet king over Judah in 597. In 586 the Babylonians laid siege to Judah and Jerusalem one last time, destroying the city and burning Jerusalem's temple to the ground.

Tribal Lost and Found

The history of the twelve tribes of Israel has been obscured by artificial gaps in their migratory history. The first gap occurs with the fall of the Northern kingdom when they were taken into captivity.

Historical accounts imply that the kingdom of Israel "suddenly disappeared" into Asia or became "lost." At the same time, however, we have Scythians, Parthians, Gauthai, and related peoples "suddenly appearing" in Asia with Hebrew names and customs!

The next artificial gap in the history of Israel occurs in the third century A.D. when historical texts depict the Parthians as disappearing from their Asian homelands. This idea is promoted even though there are records the Parthians fled northwest.

Prior to the fall of the Parthian Empire (224 A.D.), we find many Semitic (descendants of Israel) tribes living within its borders and in the Scythian regions of South Russia. Many of these tribes (the Sacae or Scythians), Kermans (Germanii), Jats, and Alani migrated out of Asia into Europe via the Caucasus Mountains and the Black Sea region of the Getae (or Gauthai) after the empire fell.

In Europe, many of these migrating tribes were called the Saxons, Germans, Jutes, Alani (Alans) and Goths. Evidence highly suggests these peoples were none other than Israelites who migrated into these regions after leaving captivity.

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