

The Ships of Tarshish

A survey and evaluation of the historical references to the “Ships of Tarshish” with suggested solutions for various problems and issues.

by David J. Gibson

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The Ships of Tarshish by David J Gibson
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ABBREVIATIONS

AASOR - Annual of the American Schools of Oriental Research

AJA - American Journal of Archaeology

ARAM - Journal published by the ARAM Society for Syro-Mesopotamian Studies

BAR - Biblical Archaeology Review

BASOR - Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research

BASP - The Bulletin of the American Society of Papyrologists

BNP - Date according to Brill's New Pauly

BSOAS - Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies

HUCA - Hebrew Union College Annual

IRAQ - British School of Archaeology in Iraq

JAOS - Journal of the American Oriental Society

JNES - Journal of Near Eastern Studies

KJV - King James Version (Bible)

PEQ - Palestine Exploration Quarterly

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INTRODUCTION

The original (and major portion) of the study given in the following pages was first published in the Bible League Quarterly, No. 165, October/December 1940 under the title, "What the Bible says about Tarshish." It was accorded a very encouraging reception. Since then additional confirmatory material has come to hand favoring the concept that Tarshish was India. On the other hand, some events have transpired to modify certain passages dealing with prophetic subjects. In view of these facts, it was considered advisable to draw up a recession of the study, incorporating the fresh material and making a few amendments. The basic material of the first study therefore re-appears here, often with scarcely a change of wording. The Bible League, (which had but one objective, "To promote the reverent study of the Holy Scriptures, and to resist the varied attacks made upon their Inspiration, Infallibility and Sole Sufficiency as the World of God," Drayton House, Gordon Street, London, WCI, England), have most kindly given full consent to the re-appearance of this material.

The author is painfully aware that his efforts are not without fault. He will gladly welcome further criticism and comments from readers but trusts the study may prove of some value to Bible Students everywhere.

David J. Gibson, February 1, 1964

Note: This later edition has been reworked by David Gibson's son, Dan, to include archaeological and historical research up until 2012. It is hoped that these updates will enhance and reinforce the materials presented in this book. Much of the original language of this book is maintained, with the expressions and idioms used when writing it.

CHAPTER ONE

THE LOCATION OF TARSHISH

The story of the “*Ships of Tarshish*” is fascinating throughout. This saga is coming to light from the dim and distant past, partly through the help of archaeology, but preserved in the main part in the pages of the Bible where various ancient maritime merchant efforts were made to sail to Tarshish.

Before we can intelligently begin this study we must ask “Where was Tarshish?” The replies we receive are so conflicting and confusing that we must stop to clear the air first on this point.

The location of the ancient Tarshish of Scripture has been a subject of considerable interest to students of both Biblical history and also of prophecy. The name Tarshish also occurs in several prophecies relating to the time of our Lord’s Second Advent, and if we would possess a clear understanding of these predictions it is necessary to know what country the Scriptures designate by this name. This is a point upon which there has been wide diversity of opinion.

Many maintain that Tarshish was the ancient Tartessus in south-western Spain, an early Phoenician trade centre. (Neimeyer 1993:340). Herodotus 1:163; and also 4:152 where the Phoenicians are blown off course, pass through the Straits of Gibraltar and end up in a place called Tartessos. Centuries later Eusebius equated Tartessos with Tarshish and placed it in Spain. This affected the thinking of the church for many centuries. Aubert argues against this. (Aubert 2001:176-79)

Some writers declare Tarshish could have been in southern Arabia. (Markoe 2008:12) A few think it was a name for Tarsus in Asia Minor, the city where the Apostle Paul was born. Parts of Africa have been proposed. The LXX in Isaiah 23:1 has (carchedonos) for Tarshish, which seems to suggest Carthage, since the latter was written (Carchedon) in Greek. Some experts look to the east coast of Africa. (Markoe 2008:33) Still others look farther east for Tarshish, especially towards India and Ceylon. For instance Young’s Concordance under

“Tarshish” says it could be Ceylon. Dr. Arthur C. Custance in a private letter to David J. Gibson remarked that “Shalmenezer II (about 834 BC) attacked a place called Taratzi according to the cuneiform records.” He wondered if this could be the city Tarsus in Asia Minor but for geographical reasons Taratzi does not fit the Tarshish of Solomon and Jehoshaphat. Others have proposed it was the Americas (Fell, 1989)

Amid such conflicting claims, we ask, “What is the truth?” To ascertain this, our best method will be to examine all the various passages of the Biblical record which mention Tarshish, and from these search out all we can about the country described, and then decide which land there is which will satisfactorily “fit the bill.” As we do this, I believe that it will become apparent that Southern India fits better than the other suggested solutions.

It is easily seen that the city Tarsus in Asia Minor could not be the Tarshish of Scripture. Tarsus is at the north-eastern corner of the Mediterranean Sea. King Jehoshaphat of Judah would never launch all his ships at Ezion-geber on the Red Sea to send them to Asia Minor (II Chronicles 20:36). The ships would have to sail clear around Africa, then practically back home to reach that place. Such a suggestion makes the Biblical account into sheer nonsense.

It seems that the only basis for suggesting that Tarsus was the Tarshish of scripture is the accidental similarity of the names. We are not sure when the city Tarsus was founded. It probably was in existence as early as the times of King Jehoshaphat and King Solomon. The Jewish historian Josephus equates Tarshish with Tarsus, but he, too was likely misled by a mere similarity in the sound of the names.

“Tharsus to the Tharsians, for so was Cilicia of old called; the sign of which is this, that the noblest city they have, and a metropolis also, is Tarsus, the tau being by change put for the theta.” (The Words of Flavius Josephus, translated by William Whiston, AM, George Routledge and sons, Limited, London, 1899, Antiquities I.vi.i)

We must for our purpose set something more solid than mere phonetic similarity.

The Origin of Tarshish

The first mention of Tarshish is in Genesis 10, with which should be taken with the parallel passage in I Chronicles.

“The sons of Japheth; Gomer, and Magog, and Madai, and Javan, and Tubal, and Meshech, and Tiras... And the sons of Javan; Elishah, and Tarshish...”
Genesis 10:2&4; I Chronicles 1:5.7)

This tenth chapter of Genesis has long been recognized as a Table of Nations. (See the chart at <http://nabataea.net/foundingnations.html>) Some scholars view this table as giving merely the ethnical relationships of various groups of people to one another. Others hold that the table gives names of actual persons, progenitors of the national groups named after them. While we largely hold the latter view, the point is immaterial to our present study. The important matter at the moment is that we are here informed as to with which group the humanity Tarshish is to be linked. Taking the Table at face-value we would say that the man Tarshish, from whom the nations is descended, was a son of Javan, and a grandson of Japheth, Noah’s eldest son. (Genesis 10:1&21)

Now the descendants of Japheth are clearly the Aryan or Indo-European race. Of this ethnological division of humanity the table states:

“By these were the isles of the Gentiles divided in their lands; every one after his tongue, after their families, in their nations.” (Genesis 10:15)

Tarshish is named with these nations which have their particular ‘tongues’ or languages of the Aryan group. The fact that the tongue is mentioned first here may indicate that these families and nations are to be identified mainly by language rather than similarly of physical structure and color. But who, we would like to ask, in ancient times made so worldwide and masterly study of human languages as to be able to classify so many groups of humanity accurately as we find in this age-old table before us?

Herodotus traveled extensively for his day, and tells weird tales of foreigners he heard of but could not reach’ but there is absolutely nothing in his writings to show an extended perception of linguistic relationships such as this masterly table exhibits.

Where were there any facilities in the ancient world which would enable an investigator to compare language with language, dialect with dialect and to

patiently classify at least fourteen languages in this Japhetic or Aryan group alone, to say nothing of the thirty or more language groups represented in the rest of the table? We venture to say that it was highly unlikely that any man in the ancient world would travel so widely and to learn so many languages sufficiently well to classify them as is done in this table. Indeed, after this chart was produced, it has been used by subsequent people to help them classify languages.

For instance, the ancient Sanhedrin court that was active in the time of the apostle Paul used this very same chart to classify the nations of the world. (Feuer, 1981)

The Apostle Paul was born of Israelite descent, but grew up in a Gentile city. He studied under Jewish teachers, but was also a student of Greek philosophy and thought. In Acts 23:3 Paul makes his defense in Jerusalem and tells the Jews that he was trained in Jewish law under Gamaliel. This is significant, since Gamaliel trained Jewish men for the Sanhedrin court. Both Gamaliel and Joseph of Arimathea were members of the Sanhedrin. The Bible specifically points out that Gamaliel was known as a ‘teacher of the law.’ Paul was a ‘Pharisee of the Pharisees’, who studied under Gamaliel, and thus was preparing to perhaps someday sit on the Sanhedrin. Besides studying the Jewish law, teaching languages would have been one of Gamaliel’s other main tasks in preparing Paul for this possible appointment.

The Sanhedrin believed that during a trial everyone should be able to give their defense in their own language. So those training for the Sanhedrin studied seventy languages based on the seventy original languages mentioned in the table in Genesis 10. (Feuer, 1981)

So thousands of years later this table was still recognized as an authority on the founding of the nations and the development of different languages. It is not simply some obscure chapter written long ago, but it was foundational in the thinking of people for generations afterwards. However this astounding table came to be written, we see that it definitely places Tarshish within the Aryan Race. Of this race the Encyclopedia Americana says

“ARYAN RACE, a name sometimes applied to that particular ethnological division of mankind otherwise called Indo-European or Indo-Germanic, but more properly to the Indo-Iranic group alone. The Indo-European comprises the inhabitants

of Europe with the exception of the Turks, the Magyars of Hungary, the Basques of the Pyrenees and the Finns of Lapland and the eastern and northern Hindustan. From a multitude of details it has been established that the original mother tongue of all these peoples was the same.”

“It is supposed that the Aryan nations were at first located somewhere in central Asia, probably east of the Caspian and north of the Hindu Kush and Paropamisan mountains. From this center successive migrations took place toward the northwest. The first swarm formed the Celts, who at one time occupied a great part of Europe; at a considerably later epoch came the ancestors of the Italians, the Greeks, and the Teutonic people. The stream that formed the Slavonic nations is thought to have taken the route by the north of the Caspian. At a later period the remnant of the primitive stock would seem to have broken up. Part passed southward and became the dominant race in the valley of the Ganges, while the rest settled in Persia and became the Medes and Persians of history. It is from these eastern members that the whole family takes its name. In the most ancient Sanskrit writings (the Veda) the Hindus style themselves Aryas, the word signifying ‘excellent’ ‘honorable’ originally ‘lord of the soul.’”

Comparing this brief summary with the Scripture passage before us we draw a step toward identifying Tarshish. Many branches of this family are recognizable in this Scripture passage. (Genesis 10:2-4) Among the descendants of Japheth we see the name Gomer which may link with the Cimmerians of the Crimea and with the Celts. A good many believe that the descendants of Gomer are the Germanic peoples today. The name of Gomer’s first listed son “Ashkenaz seems to link up easily with Scandia or Scandinavians thus:

Spelling in Genesis: Ash-ke-naz

Spelling in I Chronicles 1:6, Jeremiah 51:27: Ash-Che-naz

Basic sounds re-appear as: S-ca-ndia or Scandia

Another name in Genesis 10 is Madai: This is certainly Media. Another is Javan, called Yavanu in Assyrian inscriptions and identified as the Grecian Ionia. Tubal was called Tabal by the Assyrians, appears to be preserved in Tobolsk, Siberia. Meshech is Mashki in Assyrian and ties in with the Greek Moshoi a name for some people to the north in Europe and possibly be found in the later Muscovy, and the modern Moscow in Russia. The name of Javan’s son

Elishah (brother to Tarshish) is obviously the ancient Alyasha, and the Greek Hellas.

As we have said, all these people have related languages. They are related to this day and are all known as the Aryan or Indo-European group.

Tarshish, being one of this Japhetic group should use an Aryan language. We are going to suggest that Tarshish was the branch of this group which went southward from the Caspian area and became the dominant race in the Ganges River Valley about 1,500 BC. Thus the Aryan language was carried into India. The language of the conquering Aryans in India was the classic Sanskrit, and Aryan tongue. From Sanskrit have developed Bengali, Urdu, Mahratti, Punjabi and other languages of India.

Thus there is nothing, as regards race and language to hinder identifying India as Tarshish. Of course this alone does not prove identity, but it is our first step in identification.

Tarshish in Solomon's Time

The next mention of Tarshish in Scripture comes in the reign of the great King Solomon, nearly 1000 years before Christ. Here we gain information of the utmost importance to our study, being told some of the products of the country.

“For the king had at sea a navy of Tarshish with the navy of Hiram: once in three years came the navy of Tarshish, bringing gold and silver, Ivory apes and peacocks.” (I Kings 10:22)

The base for this navy was “Ezion-geber which is beside Eloth, on the shore of the Red Sea, in the Land of Edom” (I Kings 9:26). This city Eloth (or Elath) may be found in Bible atlases at the head of the Gulf of Aqaba, the north-eastern arm of the Red Sea. It is at the southern tip of the land of Edom. Ezion-geber has now been identified as Tell el-Kheleifi, near the shore of the gulf, by Dr. Nelson Glueck, Director of the American School of Oriental Research in Jerusalem. (Glueck, 1938:212)

When Dr. Nelson Glueck carried out excavation work at Tell el-Kheleifi he supposed he had found Solomon's copper smelting plant. He proposed the idea that Solomon exported copper ingots from this port. He had found copper

and iron mines in Edom to the north. This idea was adopted by scholars generally and appears in many publications.

However, further research by Beno Rothenberg indicated that Dr. Glueck was mistaken (Kelso 1935:67). He claimed that there was no indication at Ezion-geber that Solomon exported copper ingots in any significant quantity. Mr. Rothenberg conducted extensive studies of the copper mines in Wadi Timna and Wadi Amram and came to the conclusion that Solomon operated these copper mines only briefly to supplement his other sources of this metal during the building of the Temple. The structures at Ezion-geber found by Dr. Glueck, he believes, to be a fortified caravansarai with large rooms for storage of grain and other goods.

The description of Solomon's Temple in the Bible reveals the use of enormous quantities of "brass." The Hebrew word here includes in its meaning copper, brass and bronze. Where did this vast amount of copper come from?

In 2008 archaeologist Thomas Levy conducted further digs at Khirbat en-Nahas (KEN) some 50 km south of the Dead Sea in Jordan's arid Faynan District which yielded evidence substantiating it as the largest Iron Age (1200 - 500 B.C.E) copper mining and smelting center in the southern Levant. Radiocarbon dating placed its age indisputably two centuries earlier than scholars had previously thought, pushing back the clock from the long-accepted dates assigned by archaeologists for the center and the kingdom of Edom in which it was located. It also places its heyday squarely during the time when ancient Edom and the United Monarchy of Israel under kings David and Solomon, according to traditional interpretations of the Biblical account, dominated the region. Project Director Thomas A. Levy of the University of California in San Diego states "Given the unambiguous C AMS [carbon 14] dating evidence presented here for industrial-scale metal production at KEN during the 10th and 9th c. B.C.E. in ancient Edom, the question of whether King Solomon's copper mines have been discovered in Faynan returns to scholarly discourse."

In other words, previous doubts about the existence of large-scale copper mines in existence during the time of and possibly under the control of a Solomonic monarchy again seem a possibility. (Levy 2008:16460-16465)

Some of Solomon's bronze supplies probably came from the Island of Cyprus where large quantities of copper were mined. Cyprus traded extensively with ports on the Syrian coast, but some of Syria's copper may have also derived from Edom. There seems to have been an Edomite-Syrian link existing prior to King David's conquests. This is quite noticeable from the fact that when at the great battle in the Valley of Salt (probably at the southern end of the Dead Sea) David claims a famous victory over the Syrians. He then immediately begins to place garrisons in Edom. (II Samuel 8:13-14) This certainly is indicative of a close link between Edom and Syria. The two were cooperating in some way or possibly the Edomites were subservient to Syria, less likely vice versa. This victory of David's is an important point in history: it made David internationally famous, "he got him a name." The record says he slew 18,000 men. I Kings 11:15-16 tells us David's army general then remained six months in Edom and cut off all the adult men. The heading of Psalm 60 informs us again of this decisive battle. It likewise links 'Aram' (Syria) with Edom. This heading states that 12,000 of Edom were slain in battle. The difference in figures in the two accounts suggests that 12,000 Edomites fell, and 6,000 Syrians making 18,000 total. In any case, the result of this battle was that Edom, with its rich copper and iron deposits, came under the power of Israel.

A small amount of copper and iron mining may have been going on in Edom prior to David's conquests, but as Rothenberg states there is little trace of any at that time in Wadi Timna and Wadi Amram. However the dig at Khirbat en-Nahas now proves that extracting of copper was taking place there. Prior to David's conquests any such metals mined in Edom would most likely go to Syria, but afterwards all would go to David. We have no positive indication that David operated any of the mines in Edom, indeed his sweeping slaughter of the adult males there would probably terminate most mining activities until Solomon began his mining works, possibly with Midianite labour.

The First Hebrew Navy

According to the Chronicles record Solomon himself went to Ezion-geber (Elath is spelled Eloth in this account). "*Then went Solomon to Ezion-geber and to Eloth, at the sea side, in the land of Edom.*" II Chronicles 8:17-18)

His ally Hiram (or Hiram) the King of Tyre, send men and equipment overland for ship building. There the first 'Ships of Tarshish were constructed for the Hebrew Monarch. The mountains of Edom were also a rich source of lumber, so there was wood nearby for the construction of ships. In fact the forests of Edom survived until the time of the Turks who built a spur on the Hejaz railway into the Shobeck valley to cut trees in order to provide lumber to their empire. Today this area is all desert, but a mere two hundred years ago, it was also a source of timber.

It is interesting to note that Herodotus considered the Phoenician people to have originated from this area along the Red (Erythraean) Sea. (Herodotus 1:1) While modern scholars find this hard to believe, given the harsh desert conditions that now exist on the shores of the Red Sea, it is interesting to note that during Solomon's time, the Phoenicians were operating out of both the Red Sea and the Mediterranean Sea.

The newly constructed ships were probably not called "ships of Tarshish" until a later time, as we shall see. Thus, the extensive conquests of King David and his subjugation of Edom paved the way for his son Solomon to launch upon the waters of the Red Sea the first Hebrew navy known to us.

What these ships were like, the record does not say, but the fact that Phoenicians of Tyre built the boats directs our attention that way for information. A poetic description of Phoenician ships is preserved to us by the Hebrews with interesting illuminative detail. In this Lamentation for Tyre, notice information given in connection with each word that we have capitalized.

*"The world of the Lord came again unto me, saying,
Now, thou son of man, take up a lamentation for Tyrus; and say unto Tyrus,
"O thou that art situated at the entry of the sea,
Which are a merchant of the people for many isles,
Thus saith the Lord God;
O Tyrus, thou has said, I am of perfect beauty.
Thy borders re in the midst of the sea.
Thy BUILDERS have perfected thy beauty.
They have made all thy SHIP BOARDS of fir trees of Senir,
(this is Mount Hermon in Deuteronomy 3:8-9)*

*they have taken cedars of Lebanon to make MASTS for thee,
of the oaks of Bashan have they made thine OARS.
The company of the Ashurites have made thy BENCHES
of ivory brought out of the isles of Chittim.
Fine linen with brodered work from Egypt
was that which thou spreadest forth to be thy SAIL.
Blue and purple from the Isles of Elishah was that which covered thee.
The inhabitants of Zidon and Arvad were they MARINERS;
Thy wise-men, O Tyrus, that were in thee, were thy PILOTS.
The ancients of Gebal and the wise men thereofe were thy CHALKERS.
All the ships of the sea with their mariners were in thee
to occupy thy merchandise.” Ezekiel 27:1-9)*

This vivid description gives a stirring picture of the Phoenician ships. They had smooth, ivory benches for the rowers, colored and embroidered sails etc.

The Phoenicians of Tyre, the ancient Mistress of the Seas were the most experienced ship builders and skilful mariners of the early world. Even before Solomon’s time they had ventured in their galley’s westward throughout all the Mediterranean Sea, and even beyond the Pillars of Hercules (that is, the Strait of Gibraltar) into the Atlantic Ocean. They had founded the city of Cadiz in Spain and believed to have followed the shores of West Africa southward at least as far as the gold Coast. (Nash: 2007) In referring to the daring sea exploits of these intrepid mariners Dr. Phillip Schaff mentions that “they worked the silver-mines of Spain and the lead mines of Cornwall, and their sailors brought amber from the Baltic and tin from Britain.” (Schaff:1885)

The presence of these Phoenician traders in Britain, coming as they did from Northern Canaan where a Semitic language was spoken may account for the discovery of Semitic or so-called Hebrew words in use later in England, perhaps handed down through Celtic peoples to turn up in later English. Discoveries at Ras Shamra on the Syrian coast have shown that other Semitic peoples had religious ceremonies apparently related to, perhaps directly copied from, the laws and institutions of Moses. (Neatby, 1939) Possibly the Phoenicians introduced some such practices into Britain also, for in a borrow-

burial at Stonehenge the startling discovery was made of an arch-druid with robes reminding one of the garments of an Israelite High Priest, even including a jewelled breastplate. (Johnson, 2008)

Foreign Trading for Gold

“And Hiram sent him by the hands of his servants ships, and servants that had knowledge of the sea; and they went with the servants of Solomon to Ophir and took thence four hundred and fifty talents of gold and brought them to king Solomon.” (II Chronicles 8:18)

“And king Solomon made a navy of ships in Ezion-geber which is beside Eloth, on the shore of the Red Sea, in the land of Edom. And Hiram sent in the navy his servants, shipmen that had knowledge of the sea, with servants of Solomon. And they came to Ophir, and fetched thence gold, four hundred and twenty talents, and brought it to King Solomon.” (I Kings 9:26-28)

As the Hebrews were shepherds, just coming out of a semi-nomadic state and not sailors, Hiram the king of Tyre not only supplied ships and material for constructing ships, but sent to Solomon some of his bold and experienced mariners, “servants that had knowledge of the sea.” So Solomon’s servants, with the aid of these expert Phoenician sailors started down the Red Sea on their first expedition. Excitement must have run high as to what would be the outcome of this exploratory venture. They sailed away to Ophir in Ethiopia, probably laden with various export articles such as copper, bronze and iron. The location of the goldmines in Ethiopia was confirmed in 2012 by Louise Schofield, an archaeologist and former British Museum curator, who excavation the Ophir goldmines on the high Gheralta plateau in northern Ethiopia. (Alberge, 2012) Solomon had plenty of the items mentioned above and could afford to export them. The ships returned bringing back to Solomon great riches. 450 talents of gold is a lot of gold. A talent was the largest of the Hebrew units of weight and of monetary value. (Exodus 38:29; 2 Samuel 12:30; 1 Kings 10:10; 2 Kings 23:33; 1 Chronicles 29:7; 2 Chronicles 36:3; Ezra 8:26) Calculated on the basis of its equalling 60 minas or 3,000 shekels (Exodus 38:25-26), a talent weighed 34.2 kg. (In Greek times it actually was valued as a smaller measure. Since a mina equalled 100 Greek drachmas in the first century C.E., a talent of 60 minas

weighed 20.4 kg.) (Smith, 1843:947) Thus 450 talents of gold equals 15,390 kilograms. In 2012 this would have equalled about 500 million dollars. Not bad for a first venture.

There is a curious difference in the books of Kings and Chronicles in relating the number of talents of gold these ships brought back on this voyage. The Book of Chronicles distinctly states that they obtained 450 tales of gold in Ophir while The Book of Kings states just as plainly that Solomon got obtained only 420 talents. The difference is 30 talents, which is exactly 6 2/3 %. This may well be accounted for as a commission paid by Solomon for the hire of the Phoenician mariners from Tyre.

The large profit Solomon gained must have stirred the King of Tyre. He obtained from Solomon permission to add a fleet of his own to sail with Solomon's navy down the Red Sea for the next voyage, for after this we read of a navy of Hiram as well as one of Solomon's. Solomon could scarcely refuse, as he needed Phoenician mariners. The text informs us later: "*For the king had at sea a navy... with the navy of Hiram.*" (I Kings 10:22)

The appearance of this Hebrew – Phoenician fleet in eastern waters was something new. It spread afar Solomon's growing fame. On the first voyage the ships went to Ophir in southern Arabia. The Queen of Sheba heard of his wisdom. Sheba (modern Ma'rib) lay not so very far inland in southern Arabia. Stirred by what she heard the Queen of Sheba, casting aside all thought of sending an envoy to make enquiry, which she could have done had the matter appealed to her as of lesser consequence, came herself with a great camel-train across the burning desert to visit Solomon (I Kings 10:1-2, II Chronicles 9:1).

The response of this noble Queen to the report she heard of Solomon's God-given wisdom has left a mark on history. It has been noted by both man and God, and will be a factor in the future. Jesus stated:

"The Queen of the South shall rise up in the Judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it, for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and behold, a greater than Solomon is here." (Matthew 12:42)

The Lord Jesus Christ here gives us a preview glimpse into that awe inspiring scene, the Final Judgment. Men and women of every nation and every age of history, a vast, vast throng, will be before a Great White Throne

(Revelation 10:11-15). The judgment will be thorough; it will be complete; and it will be final. Actions, both of individuals and of groups will be weighed, with even the thoughts of the heart made manifest and that which was whispered in the ear made public before all (Luke 12:2-3, Matthew 12:36)

The saints (those who follow Chris) from the first resurrection (Revelation 20:5-6) will be there also, with Him who shall sit upon the Great White Throne, for it is written, “Do you not know that the saints shall judge the world? ... The world will be judged by people! (I Corinthians 6:2-3) The Queen of Sheba will be there. None will be exempt. She will be asked to arise and tell why she came those many weary miles over the dry hot dusty desert. She will tell how she thirsted for truth, for real wisdom, for the knowledge of God and that when she heard of King Solomon’s God-given understanding, nothing could hold her back from going after that which her heart hungered for. And her testimony will condemn the generation of Christ’s day, when a “Greater than Solomon” walked in their midst “despised and rejected of men”, cast out of the vineyard and slain. If that generation will be condemned thus, what will be said of our generation which neglects the wisdom of God given in the Scriptures? Sadly, there is a Bible in many a modern home, but many will not walk across the room to open that Bible to search out the way of salvation for the soul.

The Queen of Sheba still figures today in tradition. Many a fancy story has been woven about her. Tradition in Ethiopia tells a romantic story built around the Scripture account, of how the Queen of Sheba became a wife of Solomon’s and that a son was born named Menalaus. The ruling family in Ethiopia to this day allegedly is descended from this Menalaus. This tradition accounts for the surprising title of the Kings of Ethiopia “Conquering Lion of the Tribe Of Judah, King of Kings of Ethiopia.”

While the Queen of Sheba was with Solomon, the now double fleet of Solomon’s and Hriam’s apparently completed the second expedition. (Lange, 1973:122) This seems so from the fact that in both Kings and Chronicles the story of the Queen’s visit is suddenly interrupted to tell of the arrival of the two navies. This time the ships return from Ophir laden not only with gold but with almug (or algum) trees and precious stones.

“And the navy also of Hiram, that brought gold from Ophir, brought in from Ophir great plenty of almug trees, and precious stones. And the king made of the almug trees pillars for the house of the Lord, and for the king’s house, harps also and psalteries for singers: there came no such almug trees, nor were seen until this day” (I Kings 10:11-12)

“And the servants of Hiram and the servants of Solomon which brought gold from Ophir, brought algum trees and precious stones. And the king made of the algum trees terraces for the house of the Lord and to the king’s palace, and harps and psalteries for the land of Judah.” (II Chronicles 9:10-11)

Some have suggested that “almug” or “allgum” wood was red sandalwood from India. Although such a suggestion is attractive from our view of a link with India, the suggestion must be rejected because of the uses to which the wood was put. Sandalwood is definitely unfit for making musical instruments. And beside this the text states that “algum” wood came from Ophir, not Tarshish. This would indicate a tree found in Ethiopia, mostly likely the *Afrocarpus gracilior* which is prized for its wood grain.

Ivory, Apes and Peacocks?

After this, on the third voyage, which would be also the third year, allowing one complete voyage per year, the Hebrew and Phoenician fleets ventured very much farther. This time they sailed to Tarshish.

“For the king’s ships went to Tarshish with the servants of Hiram: every three years once came the ships of Tarshish bringing gold, and silver, ivory, and apes, and peacocks. And king Solomon passed all the kings of the earth in riches and wisdom.” (II Chronicles 9:21-22)

The names of these exports from Tarshish are highly significant. The significance can scarcely be over emphasized. The words for them in the Hebrew Scriptures are really not Hebrew words at all but are (aside from gold and silver) borrowed, taken from the language of Southern India. This is a vital factor which we may not lay aside if we wish to determine where the land of Tarshish was. Smith’s Bible Dictionary under Peacock (Smith, 1863:765) informs us that Gesenius cited many authorities to prove that the word here used in the Hebrew for peacock (*tucci*) is to be traced to the Tamil or Malabaric name for these birds

(toge) and moreover, reports that this opinion is confirmed by Sir. E. Tennent who stated “*It is very remarkable that the terms by which these articles (ivory, apes and peacocks) are designate in the Hebrew Scriptures are identical with the Tamil names, by which some of them are called in Ceylon to this present day.*”

The names for ivory and apes are taken, one from Sanskrit and the other from the Malay language. (Unger 1959:54) Furthermore, peacocks are indigenous to the Malabar Coast of India and so were actually unobtainable anywhere else in early times. This is exceptionally strong evidence. Anyone who disputes that Tarshish was India must face and reasonably explain these linguistic and other evidences in some other way than that in which we taken them here.

The Encyclopedia American Volume 2, page 450, under “Peafowl” tells us the peacock or common Peafowl (*Pavo cristetus*) comes originally from the wooded hill-country of India and Ceylon. The splendid plumes which are the chief glory of the peacock are not the tail quills as commonly supposed, but are the tail coverts. When these are erected and spread the true tail quills are exposed at their base, and are quite plain and ordinary. The tail quills, however do furnish support for the beautiful tail coverts. The encyclopedia continues as follows, but strangely places its mention of Solomon completely out of chronological order, thereby hiding the fact that the Hebrews brought the peacock west, centuries before others imported it.

“From India it was probably brought to Persia and Media. Aristophanes (420 BC) speaks of “Persian Peacocks” Suidas terms it the “Median Bird” The fleets of Solomon brought these birds to Judea. Alexander the Great brought them to Europe; and they were first seen in Rome about the end of the Republic, and speedily became objects of interest to the sybaritic states of the day.”

One need but to remember the date of Solomon (about 950 BC) to see that the Hebrew of the Bible were importing these birds long before any other record of them being brought westward.

At the time that Solomon’s ships sailed to Tarshish, India had already come under the infiltration or invasion (whichever it was) of the Aryan races from the north, about 1500-1200 B.C. If, as we suggest and believe, the Aryan race was the “Tarshish” family of the biblical records, then the Israelites, finding them to be the dominant rulers of the country would naturally call the land Tarshish or

the variant form, Tharshish after the rulers. The former natives were not Aryans, but evidently became sub servant to the Aryans. These former inhabitants are neither Aryians nor Semites, but are of the Turanian group, that is, descendants of Ham, Noah's youngest son. They are called Dravidians. To this day they compose the major part of the inhabitants of Southern India and Ceylon. Tamil (or Tamir) and Malabaric are two of their chief languages. Having been long in the land before the coming of the Aryans they had given names to the fauna, the animals etc., of the country, including the peacocks. This name "togeï" for peacocks was evidently pickup up by Solomon's traders when they purchased the first such birds. It was then transported into the Hebrew as "tucci."

Now we have in hand a sufficient quantity of facts which ought to settle beyond further question that the land to which Solomon's ships went on their third voyage was Southern India. First, India answers the requirements as to race, being dominated by and under the rule of Aryan or Japetic branch of humanity, which agrees with the Biblical references to the people called Tarshish. Second, India answers as to direction from Palestine, Solomon's ships sailing down the Red Sea into eastern waters to go to Tarshish. Third, Southern India in particular answers to regard natural exports, the ivory, apes and peacocks (products which fairly scream India) coming from Tarshish. Forth, Southern India answers positively to the foreign names of the exports of Tarshish. Indeed if this array of facts is insufficient to demonstrate that Southern India is Tarshish, one wonders what proof would suffice.

Silver would suit Tartesus in Spain, but the other exports do not. None of the named exports of Tarshish are prominent as items from the British Isles of antiquity. Neither do these exports make one think of Carthage or any other North African port, nor of any place adjacent to the Mediterranean, nor yet the European coasts. Ships would not sail down the Red sea to reach Spain or Britain. If Solomon wanted to reach any place to the west he had seaports in his own land right on the Mediterranean coast, Joppa (II Chronicles 2:16), Dor, Accho, etc. Indeed, Solomon could have arranged with his friend Hiram the King of Tyre to send ships out from Tyre itself. But no, his ships had to be launched in eastern waters to meet his designs and plans. Neither do we find any linguistic support to link the exports of Tarshish with a western proposal. All this evidence

rules out Tarsus, Carthage, Taresus, the whole Mediterranean area, the Atlantic coasts of Europe and the British Isles.

The list of the natural exports of Tarshish takes the mind to Southern India, and Southern India alone, very forcibly.

Certain other exports of Tarshish are names elsewhere in Scripture. We did not list these before as they are less definitive than those which are names in connection with Solomon's trading. We add them here with some comments.

"Silver spread into plates is brought from Tarshish." (Jeremiah 10:9)

Silver was known in ancient India. The mention of silver here does not trouble us, therefore, but it must be acknowledged that silver also came from the silver mines in the Tartesus of Spain. Thus the reference in Jeremiah to silver from Tarshish does not help us in any way define where Tarshish was. However, the reference is certainly not incompatible with Southern India.

"Tarshish was thy (Tyre's) merchant by reason of the multitude of all kind of riches; with silver, iron, tin and lead. They traded in thy fairs." (Ezekiel 27:12)

Jeremiah and Ezekiel were contemporary prophets and both emphasize silver as an export from Tarshish.

We wish to point out here that all the metals mentioned in these passages were known in ancient India. Most of them were known from very early times. Archaeological research by Sir. John Marshall, Director General of Archaeology in India as shown that ancient India was a great cultural centre nearly as great as wither Mesopotamia or Egypt. He found that as early as the third millennium before Christ, gold, silver, copper, tin and lead were known as Mohenjo-daro and Harappa (Pakistan) in the Indus Valley. (Schaff, 1855) Iron would be known there as late as the time of the prophet Ezekiel. (550 BC) Dr. Ernest MacKay, Field Director of the Expedition of the American School of India and Iranian Studies found that Chanhudaro, by the Indus River was a manufacturing centre over 2,000 years before Christ. (Mackay, 1937:1-15) These finds indicate the advanced state of early India, so that it would be an attractive place for Solomon's ships to go to.

Tarshish is Southern India

So our conclusion is that the Tarshish of Solomon's time was not Carthage, Spain, the British Isles or far off Americas, but Southern India, probably extending as far north as the "Thar" of "Great Indian Desert." Ceylon, to the south of India may have been included in the name.

It is rather tempting to try to make out a case for linking this name "Thar" to the Biblical Tharshish" the spelling the name receives in the Book of Kings (I Kings 10:22). However it is only a possibility and not at all certain. The Columbia Lippincott Gazetteer of the World (1952) tells us that the Thar Desert or Indian Desert is an extensive sandy waste in north-west India and west Pakistan, between the Sutlej and Indus Valleys on the west, the Aravelli Range on the east, Rann and Dutch on the south-west, the Punjab Plains on its north-east, about 500 miles long and 300 wide. But the article accompanying the above note gives no indication as to the derivation of the name "Thar."

The New English Dictionary on Historical Principles (Clarendon Press, Oxford 1919, Vol. IX, Part II, pg 249) under the subject "Thar" tells us that the in Nepali language a native name for the goat-antelope *Hemorhaedus bubaline* belonging to the same genus as the Tehr or Himalayan wild goat *Hemitragus jemlaicus* is "Thar" but this animal seems to have little to do with the Great Indian Desert. In the languages of northern India, the word "thar" has several meanings, beside the wild goat. Here are some of the meanings:

In the Nepali language

Thar (s), Cream (Turner, 1931:294)

Thar, (s) Clan, tribe, class, sub-caste (Turner, 1931:294)

Thar (s) A particular kind of wild sheep (Turner, 1931:296)

Tharo, (adj) Barren, sterile, unproductive (of plants or land) (Turner, 1931:296)

In Urdu and Classical Hindi:

Thar (s,m.) determination, snow, frost (Platts, 1994)

Thar (adj) fixed, stationary, standing, erect, steep, precipitous, perpendicular (Platts, 1994)

From this it is clear that "thar" is a very common syllable in the language of India. It is difficult to find any certain link "of Thar" with the "Tharshish" of

the Bible. The only point is this, that “thar” is common in India, and it is certainly no surprise then to have it turn up in the ancient name for the country and its people.

What used to be recognized as northern India is now Pakistan. This region around the Indus River is called India in the book of Esther (chapter 1:1). This seems to be distinguished from the greater peninsula of India, called Tarshish by the Hebrews, as we have seen. One of the seven princes of Ahasuerus, Queen Esther’s husband, was named Tarshish. The passage runs: “*Carshena, Shethar, Admath, Tarshish, Meres, Maraena, Memucan, the seven princes of Persia and Media.*” (Esther 1:14)

This is a personal name. It does not appear to have any connection with Southern India, the Tarshish which the ships sailed to.

Some writers, holding that Tarshish lay to the west of Palestine instead of to the east, have questioned the accuracy of the text in II Chronicles 9:21 where it is stated Solomon’s ships sailed to Tarshish. They suggest the writer of Chronicles was misled into thinking the ships sailed to Tarshish by the statement in Kings that Solomon had “a navy of Tarshish.” But as we are concerned with following the Scripture evidence to determine the location of Tarshish, it is a most unwise policy to trim the evidence to suit the theory, instead of altering the theory to fit the evidence. One does not turn around a signpost at a cross-road merely because he has a theory it points in the wrong direction. If we would arrive at the right destination we follow the signs. It is not as if we passed any positive evidence of tampering with the text. Furthermore the suggestion strikes directly at belief in the Divine Inspiration of Scripture. The write of Chronicles was not misled, but led by the Holy Spirit of God. And He would not be mistaken! Also let us not forget that the discoveries by Dr. Nelson Glueck of the many copper and iron mines in Edom and the unearthing of the port of Ezion-geber by the red Sea, the way into eastern waters, all showing great activity in Solomon’s day, go a long way towards confirming the Scripture at this point just as it stands today. Those who dispute the test here have all the weight of the forgoing evidence against them, they must do a lot of explaining, and reasonable explaining, before we can lend an ear to them.

It is highly significant that scientific research does ever confirm or tend to confirm the statements of the Bible. The Bible is a sure signpost, whether dealing with history or the way of salvation for the soul. The Scriptures point unerringly to Christ as The Way, and multitudes have turned that way and found salvation. This writer included. Jesus said “I am the way, the truth and the life; no man cometh unto the Father but by me. (John 14:16); a statement which is all inclusive as it bars no man from coming, but is utterly exclusive as it bars out every other supposed way to God the Father.

Our next part of this study will take up the fascinating story of the Ships of Tarshiah before looking forward to some prophecies of the future of Tarshish.

CHAPTER TWO

THE SHIPS OF TARSHISH

Solomon's fleet of ships, which sailed to Tarshish every third year, is called "a navy of Tarshish (I Kings 10:22). Thus we can see immediately that the expression "navy of Tarshish" and "Ships of Tarshish"(see II Chronicles 9:21) do not mean either ships belonging to or owned by that country or even ships built there. Solomon's ships of Tarshish as we have already seen were built by him in the land of Edom; they were owned by Solomon. Neither are these ships vessels which came from Tarshish seeking outside trade. It is abundantly clear that these terms mean ships which went to Tarshish for trade. We have an exact parallel to this in the ships known as Indiamen of more recent history. As the Indiamen were ship built to go to India for trade, just so the earlier ships of Tarshish were sent to Tarshish or Southern India for trade, bringing back the ivory, apes and peacocks to Solomon. Lange, who held Tarshish to be Tartesus in Spain, so understood the term (Lange, 1973:122)

It should be noted that Solomon's ships were not called Ships of Tarshish until on their third voyage they sailed beyond Ophir to Tarshish. As we have no earlier record of Ships of Tarshish or indeed any mention of previous ships of any nation sailing down the Red Sea to go to Tarshish, we may conclude that there were the first vessels to bear that name. Egyptians had sent ships down the Red Sea to a place they called "Punt" but Tarshish is not mentioned. Thus, it is with Solomon's navy there begins the fascinating saga of the Ships of Tarshish, a tale which brings to light the most brilliant exploits of the mariners of antiquity. This is the story we have now to tell, beginning about a thousand years before Christ.

Before commencing our story, we should mention that Professor Albright has suggested that Tarshish was not originally a place name but a word said to be used by the Phoenicians which they had borrowed, and traceable back to Akkadian, a language used in part of Babylonia. (Albright: 1941:14-22) It is

supposed to mean “smelting-plant, refinery” and “tarshish-ships” meant a refinery fleet. (Harris, 2003) We feel that such a view has surely lost sight of pertinent and indubitable facts to the contrary, such as: 1) Tarshish is a place name in Jeremiah 10:9, “Silver spread into plates is brought from Tarshish.” 2) The Bible never once connects the expressions Ships of Tarshish with smelting or refining. 3) If Solomon’s ships were a refinery fleet, they ought to have born the name Tarshish-ships immediately after they were constructed, but the text certainly does not so designate the fleet until their third voyage when the Chronicles account expressly states that they went to Tarshish. Last, ships of that day were constructed of wood, sealed with tar, with highly inflammable sails and ropes above. Anyone attempting to smelt metal on a wooden ship was likely to sink the ship! Were not the ships just as much a refinery fleet when they went to Ophir as when they later went to Tarshish? 4) The Professor’s suggestion has entirely lost sight of the foreign names of the exports brought from the land which the ships went to, names which insist on India as the land... a land without a name in the text (I Kings 10:22) if “Tarshish-ships” means a refinery fleet. Surely the text would give a name to the land producing such unusual things, and Tarshish is the only name in the passage. Obviously, then it is the name of the land whence the ships sailed. In addition to the foregoing, as we mention in part one, Rothnberg has now shown there was no refinery at Ezion-geber, the home-port of Solomon’s fleet.

Standing by our understanding of the expression “Ships of Tarshish” as ships intended to sail to that land, we plunge into the ensuing tale. The joint Hebrew-Phoenician fleets of the two kings, Solomon of Jerusalem and Hiram of Tyre evidently kept up their yearly voyages as they had begun; two years running making shorter expeditions like the ones to Ophir, but “once in three years” making the longer trip to Tarshish (India). [The trade must have been highly profitable, not only to the Israelites, but to the Phoenicians of Tyre as well though they would naturally receive a smaller share of the profits than the Hebrews who then dominated the scene. But this lucrative commerce must have ceased with the suddenness of the proverbial bang, upon the death of King Solomon in the tenth Century BC.

Consider this a moment. The land part of the great trade route was vital and most sensitive. It started from Tyre and went to Jerusalem, from Jerusalem it

went on southward through the tribal areas of Judah and Simeon, then through Edom to Ezion-geber and Elath on the Red Sea shore at the northern tip of the Gulf of Aqaba (I Kings 9:26). The rest of the route was by water, down the Red Sea, through the straits of Bab el-Mandib, past the barren rocks of Aden along the southern coast of Arabia, then in a daring dash across the Arabian Sea to some part of the India coast, perhaps near Bombay, thence southerly along the west coast of India to their trading posts, possibly Cochin as we shall see.

The land section of this trade route was definitely broken up and tightly closed upon Solomon's death. The commerce must have ceased with devastating suddenness. Ten of Israelite tribes revolted immediately after Solomon died, leaving but one tribe, Benjamin, with the royal tribe of Judea, in which Rehoboam, Solomon's son reigned at Jerusalem. Jeroboam I became king of the ten tribes, thence forward called Israel (or else "Ephriam" after the leading tribe of the ten.) When Solomon's kingdom was thus rent in twain, becoming, as we have said, the two separate kingdoms of "Judah" and "Israel" it completely broke up the overland section of the great trade route, the section from Tyre to the Red Sea, for there were constant hostilities between the fragments of Solomon's dominion.

“And there was war between Rehoboam and Jeroboam all their days.” (I Kings 14:30)

The tribe of Simeon, firmly astraddle the route between Judah and Edom, revolted from Judah with the rest of the ten tribes. It is not until three decades later that we read of individuals of the tribe of Simeon defecting to Judah; and even then the governing element in Simeon evidently adhered to the Kingdom of Israel... a fact which the makers of Bible maps have unwisely chosen to completely ignore. (See II Chronicles 15:9) Judah's way to the Red Sea was dominated over by Simeon.

It seems from all we can learn that Judah continued to hold power over Edom and with it the Red Sea ports of Ezion-geber and Elath. But Judah would not be able to continue the sea trade with Tarshish without the aid of the expert mariners from Tyre. The Phoenicians of Tyre were close neighbors of Israel. They would naturally want to keep on good terms with the ten tribes, since they

needed Israel's wheat exports (Ezekiel 27:17) neither could they conveniently send overland to Judah without passing through the territory of Israel which might be construed as a most unfriendly act in the strained, international situation just then prevailing. In addition to these obstacles, the sea route from Tyre to Jerusalem was also cut off. Solomon had had timber brought to him from Tyre, by landing it from the Mediterranean Sea at Joppa (I Kings 5:8-12; II Chronicles 2:16) but the port of Joppa was now lost to Judah, being held by Israel ... it was within the territory of the ten tribes.

Thus every avenue of the great Tarshish trade route was closed. The Tarshish trade necessarily stopped abruptly. The first brilliant chapter of the story of the Ships of Tarshish is cut short in unhappy surroundings.

The Black Jews of India

So suddenly was this trade with Tarshish cut off that any Hebrew merchantmen who evidently would be staying in Tarshish or Southern India as Solomon's foreign agents, would be left stranded there without opportunity of returning to their homeland. So also would any Phoenician merchants who happened to decide to stay there to await the next trip of the Ships of Tarshish, a trip which failed to materialize after Solomon died. Thus two types of people were very likely left cut off in Southern India. This, in the opinion of many, was the origin of the Black and White Jews of Cochin in India. Henry Baerlin in 1937 wrote (Baerlin, 1937:32) "One of the most puzzling mysteries of India is the presence in the native state of Cochin of two small communities, the Black and the White Jews. The Black ones, in color they are indistinguishable from the Indians who surround them, number about 1500, while the White Jews, who are as pale as the average European, have dwindled to seventy or eighty persons ... they have always declined to intermarry with the Black Jews."

"Apparently the Black Jews first settled on the coast of Malabar when the vessels of King Solomon came out for various commodities which he desired, and which were not indigenous to Palestine. Cinnamon and Cassia, ivory and apes and peacocks were among the chief articles of export. It is interesting to note that there is a striking similarity between the Hebrew and the old Tamil words for apes and peacocks." Mr. Baerlin goes on to quote in full an inscription written upon two

copper tablets wherein the King of Malabar made certain grants to the Jews of Cochin, probably in the fourth century of the Christian era.

It could be that the Black Jews of Cochin are descendants of the Phoenician (Canaanite) traders stranded there, while the White Jews are from the Hebrews of the same time. Dr. Arthur C. Custance has adduced some bits of evidence that the Canaanites may possibly have been a people with black skin. (Custance, 1957: 9-10) The Black Jews could be those Phoenicians who, finding themselves left in a strange land, adopted the Jewish religion of their fellow Hebrew traders. They would thereby become Black-faced Jews (by conversion) but Canaanites by descent. The White Hebrew Jews would feel themselves forbidden by the Mosaic Law to intermarry with them. However, this is only a possibility, not demonstrated fact and the difference in skin color could have had a quite different origin.

In any case, the general evidence is that the Tarshish trade of King Solomon ceased very abruptly at his death. How the eyes of Solomon's traders must have failed with longing, looking out over the sea for the Ships of Tarshish which never came back for them.

It is interesting to note that the harbor of Cochin was dredged in modern times. It is said to now be among the finest and safest harbors in the south of India. Possibly, Solomon's shallow-draft Ships of Tarshish found this harbor a safe refuge from the storms of 3000 years ago.

CHAPTER THREE THE PHOENICIANS

The ancient Greek historian Herodotus tells us that the Phoenicians came from the Red (Erythraean) Sea.(Herodotus 1:1) Some historians believe that by this the Greeks writer may have indicated their origin was from the Persian Gulf and Indian Ocean, as they could not believe that any sea power could have risen from the barren coasts of the Red Sea. (Lagassé, 2000:925)

“Originally, these people came to our sea from the Red Sea, as it is known. No sooner had they settled in the land which they still inhabit, than they turned to overseas travel.” Herodotus 1:1

This claim was challenged by later historians who suggested the Phoenicians were part of the wider group of Canaanites, who for many years populated the wide swath of land between Turkey and Egypt. Maurice Dunand, who excavated at Byblos, was among those whose support this conclusion. (Dunand 1973:1-110)

A third theory suggested that the cities of Byblos, Sidon, Tyre, and the towns around them were conquered by the Sea Peoples about 1200 B.C. and that the Phoenicians came from a merging of migrating Sea Peoples with the local inhabitants. Gerhard Herm and others have espoused this view. (Herm 1975:54-55) This theory was formulated prior to the archaeological excavations at several Phoenician cities which have demonstrated that there was no destruction or societal change in these cities at that time.

A fourth theory suggests that Phoenician cities existed prior to 1200 B.C., but they did not differ from the other Canaanite people until after the appearance of the Sea Peoples. According to this theory the Sea Peoples conquered only the surrounding peoples in the Levant causing the conquered people to become different than the Phoenicians. Because of this, the Phoenicians are then said to have emerged as a separate people only after 1200 B.C., and their “origin” is attributed to that date. (Moscati 1999:18-19) and (Bondi 1999:23-30)

Moscati and Bondi noted that the migrating Sea Peoples did not attack the Phoenician cities. This is supported by archaeological excavations Tyre in 1974 which have shown conclusively that there was no widespread destruction

around 1200 B.C. (Bikai 1978:73-74) This is also true of Sarepta (modern Sarafand) (Pritchard 1978:1-168)

Ongoing excavations of other Phoenician cities have been less definitive, but are generally in agreement that the Sea People who migrated into the Mediterranean coast around 1200 BC left the Phoenician cities alone. Other archaeologists digging in Canaanite cities have detected signs of destruction in the Levant at this, which is generally attributed to the arriving of the Sea Peoples. (Grant 1969:79) The proposal that the Phoenicians were different from the surrounding peoples only after 1200 B.C. asserts that the Phoenicians were identical to the surrounding Canaanites prior to that time. While it is true that everyone who lived in the region known as Canaan could be called Canaanite, just as every person who lived in Europe could be called European, we do not know whether they all lived in the same society—or in different societies—until we examine their history, culture and practices.

Around 2200 B.C., the Amorites came into the Levant, where they encountered the well-established city of Byblos. (Jidejian 1968:29) Archaeologists working at Byblos have documented several courses of walls around the city which date back to 3000 B.C., attesting to the city's longevity. (Dunand 1973:20-21) They also found signs of burning and destruction at several intervals between 2200 B.C. and 2000 B.C., which reflect the repeated Amorite attacks. Each time, the public buildings and homes in Byblos were rebuilt, and the city continued. The newly-arrived, land-oriented, military force of the Amorites clearly had an adversarial relationship with the well-established, sea-oriented and relatively peaceful Phoenicians. It is very hard to accept the assertion that these two societies were identical.

To further examine data for the time prior to 1200 B.C., let us consider the Hebrew people who came into the Levant between 2000 and 1500 B.C., led by Abraham. (Lagassé, 2000:7) These people were predominantly shepherds, who lived a nomadic life, and worshiped a single god. The Phoenicians, in their cities, were sea traders who continued to worship many gods. Once again, it is difficult to accept the assertion that these two societies might have been identical.

In other words, the Phoenicians were very different from the peoples around them prior to 1200 B.C. As mentioned earlier, Moscati and Bondi

observed that the Phoenicians were clearly different from the surrounding people after 1200 B.C. They and others such as Glenn Markoe further noted that the Phoenician cities and society were unchanged throughout this period. (Markoe, 2000:20-22)

The third theory mentioned above claims that the Sea Peoples conquered the coastal cities and merged with the local people to become Phoenician. (Hern, 1974:54-55) The problem with this theory is that there is no archaeological or other evidence which hints that the Phoenician cities were conquered by the Sea Peoples. This is not only attested by Moscati and Bondi, but also by Pritchard and Bikai, whose excavations revealed not only lack of destruction, but showed the continuity of Phoenician society during this time.

This leaves us with only two possible theories of the origin of the Phoenicians. Either they originated on the Mediterranean coast, probably at Byblos since it was the first Phoenician city, or as Herodotus tells us, they came from the peoples living along the Red Sea.

The cities of Phoenicia

Byblos stood, along with Sidon and Tyre, as one of the leading cities of the Phoenician people.[xviii] It has also been often cited as one of the oldest, continuously inhabited cities in the world, with some signs of habitation going back to 6000 B.C. Moscati, Sabatino 1999:20) This city still exists today in modern Lebanon, often being shown on modern maps as Jubay. The earlier Hebrew was pronounced Gubla, reflecting its ancient Phoenician name of gbl rather than the Greek name of Byblos. Since the Greek name is traditionally used by scholars for this city, we will use this name as well.

In 1985 archaeologist, Michael Hoffman unearthed a old temple in the ancient Egyptian city of Hierakonpolis, dating to around 3500 B.C. (Friedman 1996:16-35) At the temple site he discovered four huge cedar pillars which had been added around 3200 B.C. to form an impressive front to the edifice. (Friedman 1998:27-28) These trees are very different from the local short acacia tree, which could produce boards only about 1 meter in length. The four pillars which formed the front of the temple were roughly three feet in diameter, thirty-six feet in length, and were identified as cedar of Lebanon.

The existence of these pillars demonstrated the Old Testament story which describes how the Phoenician King of Tyre promised to deliver cedar logs to Solomon for use in building his Temple in Jerusalem.

And we will cut wood out of Lebanon, as much as thou shalt need: and we will bring it to thee in floats by sea to Joppa [Jaffa]; and thou shalt carry it up to Jerusalem. 2 Chronicles 2:16

The scriptures imply that the Phoenician boats delivered logs to foreign ports, rather than foreign boats loading in Phoenician ports. While we do not have room for a study of Egyptian maritime skills, archaeologists and historians have shown that Egyptian boats seldom ventured from the Nile River delta known to them as Wadj Werpr “the great green”. (Fabre, 2004:11-12) From early times the Egyptian records show foreign boats coming to Egypt, bearing crews from the Levantine coast—as shown by their distinctive beards and embroidered robes. The name which the Egyptians gave to these foreign vessels was “Byblos boats.” (Casson 1991:6)

Byblos was a town of small houses in 4500 B.C., but by 3200 B.C., the town began to grow. (Dunand 1973:18-20) Homes became larger and were surrounded by enclosed yards. Civic buildings were constructed, such as the temple of Baalat Gebal or (Lady of Byblos) By 3000 B.C., Byblos was a bustling city which had surrounded itself with a massive city wall. (Dunand 1973:20-21)

Tyre and Sidon also became famous Phoenician cities. Herodotus questioned priests at the temple of Hercules in Tyre, and was told the temple had existed since the founding of the city 2300 years earlier. (Herodotus 2:44) Patricia Bikai excavated Tyre down to bedrock where she found identifiable pieces of pottery which enabled her to date the founding of the city to the first part of the third millennium B.C. confirming the date given by Herodotus. (Bikai 1978:72)

In 2004 Spencer Wells and Pierre Zalloua used DNA to identify what they believed was a relevant Phoenician Y-chromosome group known as M89 and M172. (Holst 2005:32-197) They believed that these specific groups are native to the Levant, going long before 3200 BC. The study of ancient DNA however, is most difficult, because one has to find an ancient body sample to work from, that is 100% Phoenician. In this case they used 1330 men who lived

in historical Phoenician trading centres around the Mediterranean region to look for similarities. The problem with this is that most tribes and villages have undergone tumultuous upheavals during the invasions of the Greeks, Persians, Romans, and countless others. Along with this, the coming of Islam resulted in the moving and resettling of people across the Middle East which has erased almost all tribal connection with earlier races. While living in the deserts of Arabia, my son carefully compiled the genealogies of various Bedouin tribes, only to discover that none of them, outside of the direct descendants of Muhammad, could trace their lineage farther than the founding of Islam. Beyond this, things became very fuzzy. In fact, many tribes who claim ancient connections, such as the Bedul tribe living in Petra, have in actuality no tangible evidence that connects them with the ancient Nabataean people. Rather, the Bedul tribe moved into the area hundreds of years ago, and over time became connected in their own thoughts with the people who built the ruins, among whom they live. Therefore, finding people who say they are descendants of the early Phoenicians, and finding true descendants of the Phoenicians are two different things.

Therefore, even though this study used DNA sources to conclude that the Phoenicians and their society emerged from the local Canaanite people of the Levant around the year 3200 B.C. it is far from certain that this is actually what happened. It is true that the Cedars of Lebanon were in great demand and this may have been the impetus that helped the Phoenicians develop sea trade with Egypt and beyond, but before this, Herodotus claims they migrated from the Red Sea region. There is no way to prove this, but during his lifetime it was clear in the minds of the Phoenician priests as they recalled some relationship with the Red Sea in the past. Did the Phoenicians develop connections with the Red Sea through Solomon, or were they already connected with Red Sea trade when Solomon and Hiram cooperated together in trading expeditions to India?

Alphabet

The most visible and long-lasting impact of the Phoenicians is their alphabet. As Herodotus tells us, and virtually all linguists have confirmed, Classical Greek developed from the Phoenician alphabet in the early days of their

existence. (Herodotus 5:58) (Healey 1990: 229) The Greeks added vowels and created their own alphabet. Other alphabets based upon the Phoenician one include the Roman, Persian, Hebraic, Arabic, Brahimi (Indian and Southeast Asian) and Cyrillic (Russian). (Sacks 2003: xiii-xv)

It is believed that the Phoenician alphabet developed from the Proto-Canaanite alphabet, during the 15th century BC. Before then the Phoenicians wrote with a cuneiform script. (Healey 1990:210,221) The earliest known inscriptions in the Phoenician alphabet come from Byblos and date back to 1000 BC.

The Phoenician alphabet was perhaps the first alphabetic script to be widely-used, since the Phoenicians traded around the Mediterranean and beyond, and set up cities and colonies in parts of southern Europe and North Africa. The origins of most alphabetic writing systems can be traced back to the Phoenician alphabet, including Greek, Etruscan, Latin, Arabic and Hebrew, as well as the scripts of India and East Asia. (Healey 1990:220-229)

The Phoenician alphabet consisted of 22 consonants but had no vowels. It was written right to left like most Middle Eastern scripts today. The names of the letters are acrophonic, and their names and shapes can be ultimately traced back to Egyptian Hieroglyphs. For example, the name of the first letter, 'aleph, means ox and developed from a picture of an ox's head. Some of the letter names were changed by the Phoenicians, including gimel, which meant camel in Phoenician, but was originally a picture of a throwing stick (giml).

Sea Going Ships

Phoenician ships have always been a challenge to those who believe history is just one long upward sweep from the primitive past to the cultured. In fact, history is more a matter of ups and downs, as illustrated by the Dark Ages which followed the fall of the Roman Empire. Before that time, ancient ships were successful in sailing the oceans of the world.

Right from the beginning, shipbuilding and sea trade were part of the Phoenicians' long history. We can learn much from several ancient shipwrecks which provide us with preserved boats and cargoes. The Phoenician wrecks off Cape Gelidonya in southern Turkey were from ships on the Byblos - Cyprus -

Greece trade route. These wrecks were excavated by George Bass and Cemal Pulak from 1960 to 1985. (Ballard 2004: 24-29) These mortise and tenon ships were laboriously and painstakingly built by carving each piece of wood in the hull to create a row of "pockets" along the edge. On the piece of wood beside it, a similar row of pockets was carved, with each one being lined up exactly opposite a pocket in the neighboring board. A small piece of wood (tenon) was then put in each pocket (mortise) of one of the boards, which ended up looking like it had a long row of wooden teeth. (Casson 1994:26-35)

A second board was placed beside it with its pockets fitting onto the teeth of the other. Finally a round hole was drilled through each pocket-and-tooth, and a wooden peg was placed in the hole. When all the pegs were in place, the two boards could not be separated by any amount of force by wave or cargo. And this was done for virtually every board in the hull. Their craftsmanship was not only beautiful, it was incredibly strong.

The Phoenicians built galley fighting ships, with rows of oars, and crews of over a hundred people. Phoenician cargo ships had vast, rounded hulls which were built for huge loads and long hauls. They made extended trips from the Mediterranean ports out to Cadiz, Lixis and other destinations on the Atlantic Ocean coasts of Spain and Morocco.

CHAPTER FOUR

A SECOND ATTEMPT AT TARSHISH

The Phoenicians of Tyre must have felt keenly the loss of this profitable Tarshish trade. Doubtless they sought means for re-opening the trade route but evidently without success. Hostilities continued between Judah and Israel for half a century until the reigns of Asa and Jehoshaphat in Judah in the ninth century BC. Then we read of a serious attempt to re-establish the Tarshish trade. By that time the royal families of Israel and Phoenicia had become affiliated by marriage. Israel's king Ahab had wedded the notorious Jezebel, daughter of Ethbaal king of the Zidonians or Phoenicians (I Kings 16:31). Then Jehoshaphat also, the king of Judah, joined affinity with Ahab of Israel (II Chronicles 18:1). The land of Edom through which the trade route passed, with its rich copper and iron mines and the necessary ports on the Red Sea was at that time a vassal state under Judah, which appointed a deputy there as king. (I Kings 22:47) Thus the trade route from Tyre, via Jerusalem to Ezion-geber and Elath on the Red Sea could be opened once more through the co-operation of the three governments, Phoenicia, Israel and Judah. The governments of both Israel and Judah were at this time strong and stable, as the Bible Record shows. We do not know of any disturbing factors at Tyre and Zidon at this time, though our information is scanty. We presume a government existed sufficiently stable to promote a trade pact. If the infamous Jezebel is any indication of the nature of the ruling family amongst the Phoenicians at this time, the rule must have been at once most aggressive, cunning, strong and ruthless.

Ahab died from battle wounds, evidently before such an agreement for re-opening the trade route was completed. But his son Ahaziah reigned but slightly over one and a half years ("two years" in round numbers, I Kings 22:51) and the latter part of that time he was confined to his bed from an accidental fall

(II Kings 1:2-17) hence it is clear his active part in trying to re-open the Tarshish trade must have been immediately after his coming to the throne. Most likely Ahab had been working towards this end prior to his death.

Anyway, right after Ahab's death, we find Ahaziah entering into just such a trade pact. Plans blossomed, and ships were built once more at Ezion-geber to sail way again to both Ophir and Tarshish, as in the days of Solomon's glory. For this purpose we draw information from both the Book of Kings and the Book of Chronicles.

"Jehoshaphat made ships of Tarshish to go to Ophir for gold: but they went not, for the ships were broken at Ezion-geber. Then said Ahaziah the son of Ahab unto Jehoshaphat, "let my servants go with thy servants in the ships. But Jehoshaphat would not." (I Kings 22:48-49)

One gathers from this that the main objective of the first voyage was to do as Solomon had done on the first trip to send the new ships of Tarshish only as far as Ophir in Southern Arabia where gold seems to have been relatively abundant. Also, that Ahaziah wanted a greater part in the venture than Jehoshaphat would agree to allow him. Jehoshaphat, holding absolute power over the key seaports actually had the whip-hand and was in position to dictate the terms.

The Book of Chronicles account runs: *"And after this did Jehoshaphat king of Judah join himself with Ahaziah king of Israel, who did very wickedly: and he joined himself with him to make ships to go to Tarshish: and they made the ships in Ezion-geber."* (II Chronicles 20:35-36)

It is obvious from this that Jehoshaphat was the main instigator of the scheme. He joined himself to Ahaziah for the purpose, not vice versa. Jehoshaphat stood in the position to gain most in this affair, just as Solomon's profits far exceeded those of his Phoenician helpers. Thus he felt the greater urge. Then he had to seek Ahaziah's co-operation for two important reasons: (1) through him he had to get the help of Phoenician mariners from Tyre (not mentioned in the text but an obvious necessity for the Hebrews); and (2) he needed Ahaziah's co-operation both for the overland route between Jerusalem and Tyre and that the route south through the territory of the tribe of Simeon

ruled by Ahaziah, should be unhindered. Everything was prepared, the new Ships of Tarshish built... but...!

“Man proposes, but God disposes.” Though Jehoshaphat got the trade pact negotiated these commercial schemes met with God’s sharp disapproval. It may seem very strange to many that what God manifestly blessed in Solomon’s reign he denounced and destroyed in Jehoshephat’s time. Why? Had God changed? Ah, no, but God looked upon the spiritual effects of the trade pact of these three governments.

Notice first, the spiritual effects accompanying Solomon’s trade pact with Hiram king of Tyre. Hiram was a friend of Solomon’s father David, building David a palace (II Samuel 5:11) and Hiram was tremendously influenced by David. Through David he evidently came to know the true God as the Scriptures make clear. Hiram sent messengers to young King Solomon, “For Hiram was ever a lover of David.” (I Kings 5:1) When Hiram learned that Solomon was setting out to follow his father’s footsteps and carry out his father’s will to build the Temple, Hiram’s genuine joy knew no bounds. “He rejoiced greatly and burst out in thankful praise to God saying “*Blessed be the Lord (Jehovah) this day, which hath given unto David a wise son over this great people.*” (I Kings 5:7)

Here we see that the contact between David’s family and the Phoenicians was carrying the knowledge of God outward to the heathen. When Solomon’s Ships of Tarshish went, they carried with them the word of God, so that the heathen Queen of Sheba heard the news and arose to go and investigate the truth for herself. Doubtless, many others beside her heard of the true God, both in Ophir and in Tarshish. They must have been very godly and devout Jews which were stranded in India upon Solomon’s death for they clung tenaciously to their knowledge of God, being not absorbed by the surrounding heathenism. Indeed they so taught and instructed their children, generation after generation, that for nearly 3000 years they have maintained their identity, separation and a testimony to the God of Israel.

Under Solomon, the trade pact was helping take the knowledge of God to “The ends of the earth.” Why did God leave those Jews stranded in India? Was it because, separated from the home base, where declension and rank apostasy set

in even before Solomon died, that they could bear a better testimony to Him and keep a greater degree of spiritual purity thus? It may be.

But oh how different the situation in Jehoshaphat's time, good king though he was. (II Kings 3:14). Ahab's marriage to the wicked Jezebel, daughter of the Phoenician king had been the means of introducing into Israel a new, strong, sweeping wave of Baal-worship and Ashtoreth worship ... and seemingly in their worst form! Which threatened to out all true Jehovah-worship not only in Israel but in Judah as Well. (I Kings 16:31-33, 18:21; 18:4, 22:53, II Kings 1:6; 8:18)

The people generally were turned away from the worship of God, and the remaining few genuine ones were under severe persecution with the objective to stamp out all worship of the true God. Elijah though that he alone was the only one left and even God himself in viewing the whole nation of Israel (which probably numbers in the millions) could find only seven thousand true to him. (I Kings 19:10&18) To combat this, God raised up special prophets in Israel, Elijah and Elisha and certain other; and a fierce and long spiritual war ensued until Baal-worship was drastically stopped in Israel by King Jehu (II Kings 10:15-28) and later in Judah by the High Priest Jehoiada (II Kings 11:17-18) and also Baal worship was getting underway.

It was right in the midst of this spiritual war that Jehoshaphat sought alliances and affinity with the Baal-worshippers to foster his trade schemes patterned after the brilliant Solomon. But the trade pact with Jehoshaphat was making with Ahab's son Ahaziah of Israel, would certainly have helped entrench in Judah the evil virus of hateful Baal-worship, already beginning to infect his people. Baal-worship from Tyre was a degraded sun religion and generally carried a very demoralizing influence wherever it went. God could not at that stage of affairs bless anything which helped bring this false religion among his people.

God Sank A Good King's Ships

Just here we come upon most vital principles respecting international trade agreements and relationships. There are matters which modern statesmen out to study most carefully. As one reads through the inspired record of the Hebrew nation many lessons are to be learned, as to when and why God's

blessing may rest upon international leagues, pacts and trade agreements, and why not in other cases. Not all trade agreements, however good and attractive in themselves can have divine approval. This one of Jehosphahat's with Ahaziah certainly did not, as it was bound to help bring this God-hated immoral, Phoenician Baal-worship into Judah, and through the joint navy spread it far south through Arabia and beyond to India. God said, No. We are told:

“Then Eliezer the son of Dodvah of Mareshah prophesied against Jehoshaphat saying, Because thou has joined yourself with Ahaziah, the Lord has broken your works. And the ships were broken, that they were not able to go to Tarshish.” (I Chronicles 20:37)

The account in the Book of Kings informs us that thereupon the whole trade pact fell through. The position in the text in the Book of Kings of the reference to Ahaziah has puzzled many and has led to some conflicting ideas. After the ships are said to have been broken we are told Ahaziah said *“Let my servants go with your servants in the ships.”*

It may be that Ahaziah said this before the ships were broken, and that the text is therefore not in strict chronological order... which would be nothing new. On the other hand, it may be that Ahaziah wanted to still press on, to rebuild ships and send his servants with those of Jehoshaphat, but that Jehoshaphat, having received such a check from God in his first attempt, now refused and would not consent to co-operate in another venture. We report the whole brief account from the Book of Kings leaving the reader to make his own conclusions on this point. Notice how the account is opened by reference to the subject position of Edom, a necessary factor to the use of the port of Ezion-geber.

“There was then no king in Edom: a deputy was king. Jehoshaphat made ships of Tarshish to go to Ophir for gold: but they went not; for the ships were broken at Ezion-geber. Then said Ahaziah the son of Ahab unto Jehoshaphat, ‘Let my servants go with your servants in the ships.’ But Jehoshaphat would not.” (I Kings 22:47-49)

In such ways “the heavens to rule” over the affairs of men. For the spiritual welfare of his people at large, God stopped Jehoshaphat's pact with the wicked Ahaziah and sank the good king's ships. Perhaps the ships were destroyed at this time in the way described by the Psalmist when he sang:

“Thou breakest the ships of Tarshish with an east wind.” (Psalm 48:7)

Thus the second chapter of the ships of Tarshish closes gloomily over an abortive effort that never reached its objective.

God Closes Judah’s Door

We do not know whether the Phoenicians of Tyre tried again to open this trade route through the two Hebrew kingdoms to Tarshish, as the matter is not mentioned. But we can see that a few years later through another political change God closed Judah’s door in the matter and completely blocked the overland section of the route. We read: *“Edom revolted from under the hand of Judah.”* (II Kings 8:20-21)

This took place in the reign of Jehoram or Joram, the sons of Jehoshaphat. This cut off from Judah the copper and iron mines of Edom, as well as all access to the Red Sea ports of Ezion-geber and Elath. Not until the reign of Amaziah, some 55 years later, did Judah again obtain control over Edom (II Kings 14:7, II Chronicles 25:5-12); but by then Judah and Israel were once more at loggerheads. So the way still was not open. But, what is more important than that, it appears that meanwhile the Phoenicians had found another way to Tarshish, as we shall presently see. They were, therefore, no longer dependent upon the very uncertain overland route, and evidently made no further attempts to re-open the route via Jerusalem and Ezion-geber.

The powerful king of Judah, Uzziah, (Azariah) had control of the Red Sea ports. *“He built Elath, and restored it to Judah.”* (II Kings 14:22)

Clearly Uzziah had opened the way to the Red Sea ports. He even undertook construction work there, yet Tyre had lost interest. The Phoenicians preferred their new route. In the reign of King Ahaz Uzziah’s grandson, Judah finally lost the Red Sea ports for good.

“At that time Rezin, king of Syria recovered Elath to Syria, and drove the Jews from Elath: and the Syrians came to Elath and dwelt there unto this day.” (II Kings 16:6)

That Rezin “recovered” Elath to Syria is evidence that the Syrians had held Elath during some intervals previously. In all probability they controlled the Edomite mines at such times as well. However, from hence forth the Syrians

dwelt there “until this day,” the day the record was written. But we are evidently meant to understand that Judah lost the place permanently.

But what was the other way which it seems the Phoenicians had found?

CHAPTER FIVE EGYPT AND TARSHISH

Before the year 800 BC we find that the “ships of Tarshish” were sailing again. What startles us is that this time they are on the Mediterranean instead of the Red Sea. They sailed direct from the harbour of Tyre and continued to do so until Tyre itself was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar more than 200 years later. In his lamentation for Tyre the Prophet Ezekiel says:

“Tarshish was they merchant by reason of the multitude of all kind of riches; with silver, iron, tin and lead, they traded in your fairs.... They ships of Tarshish did sing of thee in thy market: and you were replenished, and made very glorious in the midst of the seas.” (Ezekiel 27:12,25)

These passages make it sure that Tyre was then trading with “Tarshish.” The Phoenicians had found some way of restarting the trade, this time direct by sea. By this re-established commerce Tyre was “replenished” and in addition “made very glorious” thereby. It was therefore an unusual and very remarkable feat, or there would be no special glory in it. These ships of Tarshish were Tyre’s special glory.

The question arises whether Tarshish in this case was not the Tartesus in Spain. Were there perhaps two places called Tarshish, one India and the other Tartesus in Spain? We think not, for the reason that any Phoenician ship sailing as far as Spain would be no special feat, and Tyre would not be “made very glorious” thereby. They were sailing much farther than this 500 years earlier in King David’s time. Sailing to Spain would not be considered an extraordinary thing in the period 800 BC down to 600 BC. No, this reaching to Tarshish must have been something new, something considered a special glory, something exceeding former exploits. We feel that we can safely dismiss Tartesus in this matter from our thoughts.

But how could these ships of Tarshish, which sang the praises of Tyre, reach far off Tarshish or southern India? Tyre is on the Mediterranean, Tarshish on the Indian Ocean! Did these bold mariners, which we know ventured far beyond the Strait of Gibraltar, actually follow the Atlantic coast of Africa southward far enough to circle that continent, enter the Indian Ocean and reach India? This they must have done, unless they were able to use the Egyptian canal from the Nile River to the Red Sea. By sailing up the Nile and down the canal to the Red Sea the distance would be vastly shorter, but would require the permission of the Egyptians which it is doubtful they would grant.

However, although the Egyptian canal was first dug early in Egyptian history, XIIth Dynasty (2000 BC) it appears to have become impassable at this later period, even if the Egyptians had been disposed to permit the Phoenicians to use it.

Only about ten or fifteen years before Ezekiel uttered his great lamentation for Tyre, we learn that the canal was not in use. Professor James Henry Breasted in his book "A History of the Ancient Egyptians" states that Pharaoh-Nacho who slew Josiah King of Judah at Megiddo began to have this canal re-excavated, but did not succeed. (Breasted, 1919:407) This shows that the canal was not then usable. So we conclude that some daring sailor of the Phoenicians must have made the amazingly long discovery voyage, right around the Cape of Good Hope at the south tip of Africa, and across the north-west shoulder of the Indian Ocean to reach southern India or Tarshish. Whoever he was, he anticipated by more than 2000 years the exploit of Vasco de Gama in 1498 AD. The more we learn about the marvels of the Phoenicians sea voyages, the more wonderful they appear in our eyes. They dared anything in their little light crafts.

This exploit opened up a new all-sea route from Tyre to Tarshish. By it, Tyre was "replenished." Such a feat by the Phoenician mariners exalted Tyre greatly, so that she truly was "made very glorious in the midst of the seas." The new "Ships of Tarshish" ships which went to that country) spread the glory of Tyre afar, and did "sing" of her in her market, bringing produce from India and the "Cinnamon Isle" of Ceylon.

Egypt Copies Tyre

Pharaoh Necho himself, around 610 BC sent an expedition to circumnavigate Africa. He hired Phoenician mariners for the task, as those capable of carrying out such lengthy expeditions, thus confessing the inability of Egypt in the matter. Herodotus tells the story of this voyage. He calls Africa by the name Libya.

“Nacos ... when he had ceased digging the channel which goes through from the Nile to the Arabian Gulf (Gulf of Suez) sent Phoenicians with ships bidding them sail and come back through the Pillars of Heracles (Strait of Gibraltar) to the Northern Sea (the Mediterranean) and so to Egypt. The Phoenicians therefore went forth from the Erythraian Sea (the Red Sea) and sailed though the Southern Sea (Indian Ocean and South Atlantic) and when autumn came, they would put to shore and sow the land, wherever in Libya (Africa) they might happen to be as they sailed, and then they waited for the harvest: and having reaped the corn (grain) they would sail on, so that after two years had elapsed, in the third year they turned through the Pillars of Heracles and arrived again in Egypt.” (Macaulay, 1923, Book IV, paragraph 42)

This story is particularly interesting, as it reveals so much. First, it reveals that Pharaoh-Necho knew, even before he sent out the expedition, that Africa could be circumnavigated. This is clear in that he instructed the sailors before they started to do precisely that very thing. We do not hear of anyone being sent to circumnavigate Europe or Asia. . . . no one appears to have supposed it possible. But Africa, yes. The question is, how could Pharaoh-Necho know it was possible at all? The only sensible answer is that someone had done it before. And surely, no one would do it before the Phoenicians

Thus if this story tells us anything, it tells us the Phoenicians had circumnavigated Africa before Pharaoh-Necho did. Egypt copied Tyre. The Biblical evidence agrees that ships from Tyre had circled Africa and reached Tarshish, they were therefore properly called “Ships of Tarshish.” Second, the story provides a striking parallel to Solomon’s ventures, in the hiring of Phoenician sailors. Phoenicians appear to have been the only ones capable in those days of undertaking such lengthy trips. Third, it reveals the methods of the Phoenician sailors in making such long voyages. They stopped to raise crops on

the way. Evidently, journeying in this way, the “Ships of Tarshish” from Tyre, which the Bible speaks of, could sail in stages around Africa and on until they reached Tarshish or Southern India. Fourth, it reveals something of the time required for such trips. It took Pharaoh-Necho’s ships over two years to go around once. It may have taken the Phoenician ships six years to make the round trip to India and back. These travels were very large undertakings, and certainly merit our great admirations. We must see Tyre’s crowning “glory” in this.

The Encyclopaedia Americana comments: “*The Indian Ocean was little known to the ancients. The first Europeans who explored it seem to have been the Phoenicians, who in the 7th century BC held the thalassocracy or marine domination of the Mediterranean. Necho, an Egyptian monarch who flourished around 610 BC is reported by Herodotus to have some of his vessels manned by Phoenicians into the Indian Ocean, then known as the Erythraean Sea to circumnavigate Africa.*”

We wonder a little at calling the Phoenicians “Europeans” but the encyclopedia does. Concur in crediting the Phoenicians with being “first” from the west in the Indian Ocean.

CHAPTER SIX

JONAH AND TARSHISH

That these journeys to Tarshish did not always proceed smoothly is indicated to us by the Prophet Jonah. Of course, we are aware how many refuse to believe the story of Jonah, but aside from the one point of Jonah being swallowed and then thrown up alive by the whale or great sea monster of some kind, there is nothing throughout the Book of Jonah which is not quite acceptable as historical. It follows that acceptance of the story as historical hinges solely upon one's faith in God as to whether he could and did perform this miracle. The one who believes that God can and does perform miracles as he sees fit has not problem here: the one who does not believe limits God from the position of being "all mighty" yet as far as our purposes go in this study, will likely admit that the rest of the Book of Jonah depicts a background known and accepted as real and genuine by the Hebrews in that time. This background supplies us several important points to our purpose. Let us follow the story accordingly.

God commanded Jonah to go to Nineveh, the capital city of Assyria. He was to warn them to repentance or the city would be destroyed. Assyria soon to be Israel's enemy and to carry them away into captivity, was not loved by Jonah. Jonah decided to flee away from God and his unwelcome command by taking the longest known journey in the world .. a trip to Tarshish! It would be years before he could return again.

"Jonah rose up to flee unto Tarshish from the presence of the Lord, and sent down to Joppa and he found a ship going to Tarshish, so he paid the fare thereof and went down into it to go with them unto Tarshish from the presence of the Lord."
(Jonah 1:3)

In the storm which followed we can see what these bold mariners sometimes had to face. Their fear of the ship breaking up by the pounding of the huge waves, shows that such a fate did occasionally overtake the small but sturdy ships of Tarshish. Jonah intended to put a three-year journey between himself and God's appointed task, but God brought him back by that strange, three-day submarine route, and Jonah lost his Tarshish fare, paid in advance. Man cannot flee God! In spite of God's mercy to Jonah, he still had not learned to really value God's grace, for when God spared Nineveh, because the people repented, he complained:

"Therefore I fled before unto Tarshish, for I knew that you were a gracious God, and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repentest thee of the evil." (Jonah 4:2)

We are not at liberty to condemn Jonah's lack of appreciation of God's graciousness, if we have not yet availed ourselves of the grace he offers us today in Christ. If we have accepted his grace through the cross of Calvary, we surely know ourselves unworthy to censure others too readily. But we can and will give praise and thanks that he is "a gracious God" gracious both to nations and individuals, even to us.

However, the story of Jonah does settle several points. It makes it abundantly clear that Tarshish was emphatically and definitely a place, that ships were sailing at that time to Tarshish from the Palestine coast, that it was considered a very long journey, long enough to try to flee from God, that the ships went out over the Mediterranean Sea, and coupling this onto the accounts of Solomon and Jehoshaphat when Tarshish was or could be reached by a shorter easterly route, that these ships were going to the same place by a westerly route through the Mediterranean, thus around Africa to Tarshish. Linking the background of the Jonah story to the earlier accounts I cannot see what other conclusion one can arrive at. Jonah's ship does not appear to be a refinery vessel.

Jonah prophesied during the reign of Jeroboam II of Israel, approximately 800 BC (II Kings 14:25). This is the earliest indication we have that the Phoenicians had ships of Tarshish doubling the Cape of Good Hope. Joppa, an Israelite city was a port of call. (Encyclopedia Americana, Vol. 15., Pg31 under Indian Ocean)

The Fall of Tyre

For two centuries after this, “Ships of Tarshish” evidently continued to sail their lengthy voyages. We have no way of knowing how many vessels were engaged in this distant traffic, probably several would set off every few years, something like Solomon’s ships went there only once in three years. Possibly the Phoenicians went only every six years, or again, possibly a few each year. But they went, and are mentioned in Biblical history, until a catastrophe overtook the base of this fruitful and famous commerce. In fulfilment of the prophecies of both Isaiah and Ezekiel, that great trade centre, Tyre, was overwhelmed by the army of Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, in the sixth century BC. The city was destroyed.

Prophesying before 700 BC Isaiah foretold the vent, when he cried, “*The burden of Tyre. Howl you ships of Tarshish for it is laid waste, so that there is no house, no entering in, from the land of Chittim it is revealed to them.*” (Isaiah 23:1)

This pictures the bewildered consternation which must have prevailed on board the returning ships of Tarshish. Think of them, coming homeward bound toward Tyre, from their six-year voyage, glowing with the success of a long and difficult trip now almost behind them, full of elation at the thought of seeing home, relatives and friends once more; and then being met at Chittim with the utterly devastating news that their noble city “the daughter of Tarshish” (verse 10) “is laid waste.” What a terrific blow to all their hopes and plans. What now, you merchants of Tarshish, to do with your rich cargos, but no market? The very heart of your trade is God. “*Howl, you ships of Tarshish, for your strength is laid waste.*” (Isaiah 23:14)

“*Who has taken this counsel against Tyre, the crowning city, whose merchants are princes whose traffickers are the honourable of the earth? The Lord of Hosts has purposed it, to stain the pride of all glory, and to bring to contempt all the honourable of the earth.*” (Isaiah 23:8.9)

What a lesson against boastfulness over human achievement! The city’s fleeing fugitives, escaping by boat, and nothing is left to boast of when they met the returning merchants at Chittim with the startling word “that there is no house, no entering in” left for them in Tyre. But there was not rest for them in

Chittim (verse 12). Distressed and distracted, some, at least, of the people appear to have decided to move to Tarshish, so that the ships of Tarshish turned back.

“Pass you over to Tarshish, howl you inhabitants of the Isle. Is this your joyous city, whose antiquity is of ancient days? Her own feet shall carry her afar off to sojourn.” (Isaiah 23:6,7)

And so ceased the wonderful sea trade of Tyre with Tarshish. The curtain falls leaving us with a sense of admiration for these early mariners who accomplished so much in the dim and distant past. After the fall of Tyre the picturesque ships of Tarshish sailed no more, and they soon became an indistinct memory of the glory that had faded. In time it seems to have been well nigh forgotten that Africa could be circumnavigated and India reached via the Cape of Good Hope, until in 1486 the Portuguese first rounded the Cape and then in 1498 the India route was re-started by Vasco de Gama.

Thus closes the story of the famed ships of Tarshish of long ago. It began with King Solomon’s navy, nearly 1000 BC and covers about four centuries, and ends with Nebuchadnezzar’s conquest of Tyre, nearly 600 BC. The ships of Tarshish are the peak of Tyre’s greatness, the crowning exploit and glory of the mariners of that merchant city. However, the Scriptures reveal a second and better story about the Ships of Tarshish in the prophecies relating to the last days. This second story will make the last part of our study of the ships of Tarshish.

CHAPTER SEVEN PROPHECY AND TARSHISH

This chapter looks at the Biblical references that deal with the future of Tarshish in what the Bible describes as the last days, or the Day of the Lord. All kinds of views are extent as to how and when Christ came or comes or will come. We are not going to enter into any arguments here upon that subject. We hold the “futurist” viewpoint, and what we say hereafter is stated from that standpoint, for we feel that the “futurist” interpretation is most consistent with Scripture. Those who take other views will have to interpret the passages we quote in some other way to fit in with what they assume or think, a task we do not wish to undertake for them. We are glad to say that under the “futurist” teaching, we can take the passages we quote in this chapter to mean exactly what they say, accepting them with the simplicity of a little child.

However, to save misunderstanding, may we set out a few definition of terms and expressions which we will be using:

1) Christ’s second coming or coming again, or Second Advent. This is inclusive of his coming for and with his saints, his judgments upon the world, his reign upon the earth and the Great final Judgment thereafter.

2. Millennium or millennial reign, a period of 1000 years during which Christ will actually reign on earth.

3. The last days, that period of time commencing with Christ’s First advent (Hebrews 1:2) and inclusive of the time since then and on into the future, inclusive of the “Millennium above.”

4. Tribulation Period or the Great tribulation, the time of trouble and wrath before the 1000 year reign of Christ

5. Battle of Armageddon, the last battle

6. The Day of the Lord, that period in which the Lord Jesus Christ both judges the earth and takes His power and reigns. It is His great day.

Now those who define these expressions differently are, of course entitled to their own opinions, but they will know in the following paragraphs what we mean when we use them.

The Lord Jesus Christ, who is the centre and circumference of all Scripture, is likewise the centre of its prophecies. Much of prophecy deals with his second advent, his promised coming again with attendant judgments and blessings, and he shall reign over all the earth for a thousand years. (Zechariah 14:1-9, Revelation 20:4-6) His reign is preceded by a dark time of trouble, judgment and the wrath of God. (Amos 5:18-20, Matthew 24:29-30, Revelation 15:1) We turn now to search the scriptures to see what mention there is of Tarshish in that great Day of the Lord.

“Ships of Tarshish” in the Day of the Lord

The prophet Isaiah informs us that there will be Ships of Tarshish in that day. He foretells that their trade will suffer under the great judgement which will be poured upon the earth.

“For the day of the Lord of Hosts shall be upon everyone that is proud and lofty, and upon every one that is lifted up, and he shall be brought low.... and upon all the ships of Tarshish ... and the loftiness of man shall be bowed down, and the haughtiness of man shall be made low, and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day.” (Isaiah 2:12, 16:16)

As the ships of Tarshish in the past were the peak of human exploration and achievement, so may they prophetically in symbol represent the peak of human exploration and achievement in this present age, that is, space exploration and achievement of going out into regions beyond. However we do not intend to develop this thought. We wish to draw attention to the simple fact of the presence of real ships of Tarshish in that day.

What ships will these be? We have already discovered that Tarshish is Southern India. Also, we found that the phrase, “Ships of Tarshish” means ships which go to Tarshish for trade etc. Both Solomon and the Phoenicians had ships of Tarshish to sail to that country for trade. Further, it was pointed out that the “Indiamen” of recent history corresponded nicely to the “Ships of Tarshish of long ago, both being ships built to go to India for trade. We take it therefore that

the Ships of Tarshish in the Day of the Lord will be ships which sail to India for trade, especially those coming from the west.

India with its one billion people is a major segment of humanity, and no doubt in God's eye, (who views all men without respect of person, unaffected by their racial or cultural pride) might well merit mention.

India, formerly in the British Empire was given its independence August 15, 1947. This ended the British Indian Empire and South India became a British Dominion. A further change took place January 26, 1950 when it became a republic but maintained a relationship with the British Commonwealth of Nations. In April 1949 it was decided that the new Indian republic would give a certain recognition to the British Crown without sacrificing any principles of full independence approving the following declaration:

The Government of India's constitution declares and affirms India's desire to continue her full membership of the Commonwealth of Nations and her acceptance of the King of England as the symbol of free association of its independent member nations and as such the Head of the Commonwealth. (<http://indiacode.nic.in/coiweb/welcome.html>)

Thus it is that a link continues to exist between India and the British Crown. The connection used to be far more pronounced, as we shall mention later. It may continue until Christ returns.

Until quite recent times, it could rightly be said that the modern "Ships of Tarshish" or ships going to India for trade were by far a majority of British ships. Although the percentage of British shipping entering India's ports compared with the percentage of other nationalities will naturally fluctuate with changing circumstances, still the friendly relations which exists may well keep British ships in the lead. Thus, British shipping may still come under this style and phrase, Ships of Tarshish, but in today's world of trade, as India grows as a trading nation, many nations of the world send ships to India.

As we attempt to see into the future by the lamp of divine prophecy we cannot stop to discuss the portions which speak of a great struggle between "North and South." We must look on to the close of these events, to the 38th chapter of Ezekiel, and read there of the final great invasion from the North, in "the later days" (Ezekiel 38:16). Palestine appears to be the immediate objective

of the Northern military forces to seize the concentrated wealth of the re-gathered Jews. (Ezekiel 38:10-12)

The Northern Invasion

The prophetic picture gives us some idea of the line-up of the opposing forces in the final struggle. With the North we note these: Named in Ezekiel 38 = Modern Equivalent (Suggested)

- Gog = apparently the leading individual
- Magog = Turkic people
- Meshech = Moscow (?) Russians
- Tubal = Tobolsk N.W. Siberia
- Persia = Iran
- Ethiopia (Cush) = Egypt
- Libya = Probably Africa
- Gomer & Togarmah = Probably European peoples

With the south we find the following names: Names in Ezekiel 38 = Modern Equivalent (suggested)

- Sheba = Yemen, Gulf States
- Dedan = Saudi Arabia
- Tarshish (merchants) = India
- Israel = Israel

We have listed Israel with the south, though possibly Israel may be caught in the grip of a great struggle between North and South, once more between “the hammer and the anvil.” Israel will be in danger of being wiped out. (Psalm 83:1-5), 79:1-13) Added to the commercial avarice and political disputes of that day will become intense religious hatred of a Jewish remnant clinging to the Old Testament covenant and the New Testament of Christ (Revelation 12:7). This remnant which will “keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ,” will be hated by a world characterized by the passion exposed in Psalm 2:1-2 and Revelation 13:11-17, 19:19, the desire to break free

from all restraint of God and his anointed, beneficial though that restraint may be.

“Howl, o gate, cry oh city; you, whole Palestine, art dissolved, for there shall come from the north a smoke, and none shall be alone in his appointed times. What shall one then answer the messengers of the nations? In their sore calamity the remnant of Israel will seek God as never before. In faith they shall return answer to the messengers from the north, “That the Lord has founded Zion, and the poor of his people shall trust in it.” (Isaiah 14:31-32). So shall “all nations” be gathered against Jerusalem, to the Battle of Armageddon (Zechariah 12:2-3, 14:2, Revelation 16:13-16). It is the time of “Jacob’s trouble” when “all faces are turned into paleness. (Jeremiah 30:4-7)

The expression in Ezekiel 38:13 “merchants of Tarshish” who oppose the North is an expression akin in nature to “The Ships of Tarshish.” Just as the “Ships of Tarshish” designates ships which go to India for trade, even so, “merchants of Tarshish” means merchants which go to India and deal in trade with India. This has been a strong element of British foreign trade, probably more so than of any other nations.

The reference therefore seems to be to the British merchants and traders primarily. The additional expression “with all the young lions thereof” is particularly apt as representing both them and the merchants of the nations of the Commonwealth, since these nations recognize the British Crown, symbolised by the Lion.

But that as it may, it is apparent that the sudden coming of our lord Jesus Christ in power and great glory with all his saints (Psalm 2:4-6), Zechariah 14:1-4), Jude 14,15; Revelations 19:19-20). Christ with the breath of his lips shall slay the “wicked” (Isaiah 11:4, II Thessalonians 2:8, revelation 19:21). Then at last will Christ establish upon the earth the long promised Kingdom of God in process of preparation since the foundation of the world (Luke 19:11-12; 22:18; Matthew 25:31-34). Satan will be bound and cast into the bottomless pit while Christ reigns for 1000 years in real peace. (Revelation 20:1-6; Isaiah 32:1-5) People will flow unto that kingdom, Christ will judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off: they shall “beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning hooks.” (Micah 4:1-3)

Some of our readers may find this doctrine of Christ's return and of his literal reign on earth a new thought to their theology. To such it is suggested that they prayerfully study the passages referred to above and believe just what God there reveals to them.

Who are "the Isles"?

When Christ reigns, some nations will submit to his rule much more readily than others. Ethiopia will "soon" stretch out her hand unto God. (Psalm 18:43-45; 68:30-31). But what concerns us just now is that we are told:

"The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents." (Psalm 72:10)

One explanation was written back in 1940 with the following comment upon that passage: "All one needs to do to gain great light on this verse is to take a British coin and look at the image and superscription upon its face. But not everyone can understand the shortened Latin inscription which describe the head of the British Empire as King and also Emperor of India (Tarshish). The full title of the present British Sovereign runs as follows:

George the Sixth, by the Grace of God, of the United Kingdom of Great Britain, and Ireland and of the British Dominions beyond the Seas, King, Defender of the Faith, Emperor of India.

In this title we see the King is briefly King of the British Isles and Emperor of India also. To say the least, it is very interesting if not startling to find in our day the British Sovereign bearing a title which is so close a parallel to the line of the 72nd Psalm. Indeed we can truly say today we find in the British king, the King of the isles and the Emperor of Tarshish. In this prophecy, God definitely linked "the isles" (which we hold are the British Isles) with Tarshish (which is Southern India). Today one ruler is over both places as foretold. (37)

That was true in 1940, but the scene has shifted since. It seemed so right at the time that it was easy to assume that there would be little change thereafter in the relationship of the isles and India before the Second Advent occurred, but that assumption was wrong. In only ten years the words "Emperor of India" had been dropped from the royal title, India received its independence and split into Pakistan and India, and India decided to become a republic. Yet the tie to the British Crown was not entirely severed. India has remained within the

Commonwealth of Nations, and recognizes the British Sovereign as the symbolic head of that commonwealth. To that extent the words of the Psalm still remain true. What of the future? The present link may continue or it may be strengthened or again it may disappear entirely and after be revived again. We say only that the words will be found to be precisely right when that day arrives.

If this is right, in that “the isle” (specific) in prophecy are the British Isles, then it may be that Britain will be one of the first of the gentile powers to submit to our returned Lord. This seems indicated by the prophet Isaiah. Note in this prophecy how once again “the isles” are linked with Tarshish or India.

“Surely the isles shall wit for me, and the ships of Tarshish first, to bring thy (ie. Israel’s) sons from afar, their silver and their gold with them unto the name of the Lord thy God, and to the Holy One of Israel. (Isaiah 60:9)

It would seem that “the isles” here are not isles in general but certain “isles” in particular. While no nation on earth is a “Christian” nation, yet there is an element in Britain which honours God. The lingering influence of this element, even if the element is no longer there, may help to induce “the isles” to early accept the rule of Christ. This would be a generation which formerly heard the truths of God, in infancy, perhaps, though not adhering to his ways.

An illustration of that element in Britain is well given in a story respecting Queen Victoria. I give it as told by Rev. C. M. Ward in a pamphlet (38)

Queen Victoria, in later years, listened to a sermon on the Second Coming of Christ. She received that truth into her heart, became a Christian, and made the Second Coming of Christ her hope. This story is told in Dean Farrar’s *Life of Queen Victoria*.

She met Dean Farrar sometime later and was telling him about this sermon, how she believed Christ was coming personally, and that he might come at any moment. She finished by saying ‘Oh how I wish that the Saviour might come in my life-time.’

Dean Farrar said “Your Majesty, why do you desire that?” She replied “I should covet the holy privilege of being alive when the Saviour came, that I might take the crown from my head and lay it at his feet.”

A faint trace of this type of godly respect could indeed help the rulers of “the isles” to yield to the returned Christ.

If British ships then still trade extensively with India, they will be the “Ships of Tarshish” referred to in the prophecy. They will be “first” in waiting on the King of Kings and Lord of Lords to bring back scattered Israel with their possessions and also those Israelites who have been carried captive out of Palestine during that last invasion from the North. This will be a better work for the ships of Tarshish than their former sailings between India and Isles in the greedy commerce of “the last days.” This final chapter of the story of the Ships of Tarshish will be blessed and far more genuinely glorious than any phase of the past, for it will truly please God.

India in the Millennium

Finally we find that Tarshish-India will be thoroughly evangelised when Christ returns. God tells us of the missionaries he will send to the heathen after the Lord has come. During the Great Tribulation period and in the terrific Battle of Armageddon many will have been slain, and the world most severely judges. But after that, when Christ has returned, there will be a time of revival and of restitution of all things which God has spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.” Acts 3:20-21) A certain number will be saved from the destructions of the Tribulation period and will become God’s converted missionaries. God says:

“It shall come that I will gather all nations and tongues (ie to Armageddon) and they shall come and see my glory. (ie Christ’s glorious return.) And I will set up a sign among them, and I will send those that escape of them unto the nations, to Tarshish, Pul and Lud, that draw the bow to Tubal and Javan, to the Isles afar off, that have not heard my fame, neither have they seen my glory, and they shall declare my glory among the Gentiles. And they shall bring all your brethren (Israel) for an offering unto the Lord out of all nations. (Isaiah 66:18-20)

We notice that Tarshish (Southern India) is the first mentioned in this list. Southern India with its teeming millions of souls is one of the first countries to which the missionaries, the escaped ones from the frightful slaughter of

Armageddon are to go with their message of Christ's glory. They have seen him come with clouds, with their own eyes, they have beheld that glory and power, and were saved, now they go to tell heathen India that "the Desire of all Nations" has come, he is Here, let everyone submit himself with pieces of silver (Psalm 68:30). They will say, "Look out among you every Jew and bring them for an offering to their King who has returned to his temple suddenly." Some will be brought by air transport, where such has survived after that great final war: Who are these that fly as a cloud, and as the doves to their windows? (Isaiah 60:8). But the Ships of Tarshish will be the first means of transport to be placed at the king's disposal in his final re-gathering of Israel. Tarshish or Southern India will bring from Cochin the Hebrews (Black and White) and all of God's chosen people. They will bring them "upon horses and in chariots" (automotive vehicles?) and in litters and upon mules and upon swift beasts, to the mountain of Jerusalem (Isaiah 66:20) as well as by the Ships of Tarshish. Thus will India or Tarshish quickly and nobly do her part at the establishing of Christ's kingdom.

"And the Lord shall be King over all the earth: and in that day shall there be one Lord, and His name one." (Zechariah 14:9)

We shall read as well in that quotation from Isaiah 66:19 that the missionaries of those days will go also to "the isles afar off" to preach Christ's glory for they have not formerly heard Christ's fame. Clearly these are not the British Isles. They are not linked with Tarshish (India) neither are the inhabitants of the British Isles to be classed with those heathen which have not heard of Christ. Christ has been heard of in Britain. The heathen isles, of which Isaiah here speaks may be such as parts of the East Indies, or the Pacific, the Philippines, or Indonesia, where Christ's name at present is more and more known.

Obey the Gospel

Although the people of the British Isles have indeed not only heard of Christ, but have become known as a "Christian nation" that is a form of Christianity is professed by a large number of the inhabitants, yet we know that but comparatively few have really received Christ into their hearts and been born again through faith. The majority of the nation, like other so-called Christian nations have not obeyed the gospel which includes taking Christ Jesus as the

absolute Lord of their lives. (Romans 10:9-10) Such persons are not true Christians, for a true Christian is an obedient follower of Christ whom he acknowledges as his Lord and master (I John 2:4; 3:10; 4:20). Heart faith that produces obedience is what counts, not lip profession. Many of those who yield lip service to Christ have never carefully studied the New Testament to ascertain what their Lord requires of them in faith and manners. God heeds not their outward profession but looks upon their hearts; and if they are not true Christians he sees these Gentiles as simply educated, polish, refined heathen. This is startling, but true; to him they are still heathen regardless of what they call themselves or claim to worship.

In I Corinthians 10:32 we see that religiously God recognizes but three classes in the world, the Jew, the Gentile (or heathen) and the Church of God (all true Christians). Everyone must be in one of these three. A Jew would still be a Jew even if he called himself a Gentile; a Gentile is still a Gentile even if he calls himself a Jew, unless there is fundamental change of belief. So it is that lip profession does not change the class we are born into by nature. Therefore, a Gentile who calls himself a Christian, a member of the true Church of God, but is without the new birth (John 3:3-5) and without conversion (Matthew 18:3) and without yielding continued heart obedience to Christ (Romans 10:9-10; John 8:31) is obviously still a Gentile and not a true Christian. He deceives it may be, even his own self (James 1:22). God considers him to be simply a heathen called by his name. (ie called a Christian) still a child of disobedience by nature (Ephesians 2:2; 5:5; Colossians 3:6). Thus it is that God speaks in his word of the so-called "Christian" nations as "the heathen which are called by my name. (Amos 9:12). These nations will be given into the hand of redeemed Israel, who under Christ the Head over all (Psalms 2:8-12) will teach them and bring to them such a rule of peace, quiet and prosperity as they have never enjoyed before.

Just a word now on the end of the Millennium period. Satan will be loosed for a short period of testing of humanity. His evil influence immediately starts a large part of humanity to prepare for war, but no war occurs ... the last war was the Battle of Armageddon ... for the fire of God descends and consumes the rebelling ones, leaving them not "ashes under the soles of your feet" that is, under the feet of God's protected saints (Revelation 20:7-9; Malachi 4:1-3).

Christ's rule as king does not end, he continues to reign at his father's right hand until the last enemy is destroyed. (I Corinthians 15:24-28; Revelation 20:14). However, Christ will retain the glorified and enlarged throne of his father David "forever" thus his kingdom knows no end. (Luke 1:32-33) The Scripture tells us that King David reigned "seven years and six months" also that he reigned "thirty and three years" and still again that he reigned "forty years" Yet no one accuses the Scripture of contradiction here, for all three statements are quite correct. The Scripture itself defines the place of rule in each case, 1 ½ years in Hebron, 33 years in Jerusalem, 40 years altogether (II Samuel 2:11; 5:4-5). So has the Holy Spirit carefully defined Christ's reign, (a) 1000 years on earth, (b) on his father's throne "till he has put all enemies under his feet (c) on David's throne "forever."

We have now seen what God has to tell us about the Ships of Tarshish, both in the past ages and in the future re-gathering of Israel. We have seen that Christ is coming again to reign on the earth. Let it not be forgotten that "Now is the day of salvation" not at the time of his coming "when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his power. (II Thessalonians 1:7-9) May every reader accept Christ now as his sole Lord and Master and be a true Christian washed in Christ's blood from every sin and stain. Lord haste they day of peace on earth. They Kingdom come.

APPENDIX A

REFERENCES AND COMMENTS

It is quite striking how very frequently the Scriptures, in spite of the Israelites not being really a sea-faring people, link them with sea-faring matters. This is so persistent in the word that one wonders if we have over-looked an important factor in their history. Is it possible that the Hebrews actively collaborated with and assisted the Phoenicians in those early sea-exploits?

I do not hold for a moment with those of the British-Israel and similar schools who teach, or taught that the entire tribe of Dan took to the sea and migrated before the days of King David to Ireland, Denmark, or some other distant place. Not only is there absolutely nothing in Scripture to suggest such a fantastic migration, but Scripture actually constitutes it. In I Chronicles 12:23-40 there is a record of “the bands” which came to David in Hebron to make him king of all Israel, and in the list is a band of no less than 28,600 men from the very tribe of Dan (verse 35) which they claim had already migrated to distant parts! The size of this band ranks high in the list, compared with the bands from the other tribes, demonstrating that there was no diminution of the tribe by any sizable migration.

But what I mean is this. In the Song of Deborah, an early document from my point of view, the question is asked, “Why did Dan remain in ships?” (Judges 4:17) What ships? Surely, seeing a large part of the tribe had settled in Laish in northern Canaan, a district not on the sea shore, but at the back door of Tyre, the ships would be Phoenician ships. Is not the thought underlying the words of Deborah’s song that the Danites were busy helping the Phoenicians in their ships and so protected by Tyre, did not fall under the domination of Jabin, the King of Hazor and took no part in the war of deliverance? To answer, no leaves us floundering for any meaning to the line of poetry. To answer Yes means that at that early date, Hebrews were actively taking part with the Phoenicians in seafaring work.

As our study as shown, both David and Solomon were on very friendly terms with Hiram King of Tyre. How do we know that David and Solomon did not share in Hiram's sea venture, similar to the way Solomon soon invited King Hiram's collaboration in the Red Sea exploration, and akin to the day the Danites seem to have been helping the Phoenicians right along? The factors referred to seem to favor such an idea.

If this was so, then early Phoenician exploration westward might have been "Phoenician-Israelite" efforts rather than just "Phoenician." This could help account for a very extensive knowledge of lands and people discernable in early Hebrew literature, otherwise not easily accounted for.

The suggestion is supported by the appearance of inter-marriages between Phoenicians of Tyre and Israelites. The skilled founder Hiram or Hiram who helped Solomon so much in the temple building was from such a marriage. Comparing the relative passages we would suggest that this Hiram's mother was of the Tribe of Dan ("A woman of the daughters of Dan" II Chronicles 2:14) who had been married to a man of the Tribe of Naphtali ("a widow's son of the tribe of Naphtali" I Kings 7:14) Subsequently this widow married "a man of Tyre" that is a Phoenician as both Kings and Chronicles state) and bare him a son, who became the Hiram who helped build the temple. He resided in Tyre. The whole picture is one of friendliness and co-operation between the two nations and agrees well with the idea that Israel may have helped in early Phoenician exploration extensively.

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