



CHRISTMAS, STARS, AMERICA AND ISRAEL

NO OTHER NATION IS AS INTIMATELY CONNECTED WITH ISRAEL LIKE AMERICA. AMERICA'S LARGEST HOLY DAY SEASON AT YEAR'S END REMEMBERS THE BIG STAR IN ISRAEL'S DARK NIGHT.



As we saw last month, America's Great Seal has the same symbol (above the eagle's head) that the flag of Israel has - the Star of David - symbol of the "Son of David," the Jewish Messiah.

(c) Paul-Warren Dinger, founding editor of the Boston Review of the arts

At the very beginning of the Bible (Genesis 1:14) God tells us that stars are "signs" of important events and important people. *

As we will see - this was the idea that America's founders were working with when they presented the first starry nation flag in history. They raised America as the manifestation of a big Bible prophecy - the last of Daniel's five empires, the "Stone Mountain."

The greatest example of Genesis 1:14 is the Star of Bethlehem - the sign of the Savior of the World. As we saw last month, America claimed to be the sign of Christ's Kingdom at the end of the Church Age. As we've seen, America's Christmas remembers the birth of the man who sits symbolically on America's Great Seal.

The truth of stars-as-signs-of-significant events and people is on display seven chapters later when God tells Abraham that the stars in the sky symbolize His Elect People who will come from Abraham's body: "And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be" (Genesis 15:5).

* You are probably unaware of this because contemporary Bible translators have ignored the "and" between "and let (the stars) serve as signs - AND - to mark seasons and days and years . . ." Modern translators did this to avoid giving credence to astrology, which God condemns as heresy.

Notably, the King James Bible retains the original "and." It is worth considering that a number of scholars have pointed out that astrology is the hijacking and garbling of the original "gospel in the stars" given by God before He began His salvation plan with Abraham. This would explain why so many biblical ideas are in ancient pre-Bible times, like the sacrificial system, the sacred tree, "sons of god" kings, demons and the devil.

Is it mere coincidence that the two poles of the zodiac echo the first prophecy of Jesus in Genesis 3:15? The Zodiac begins with Virgo the virgin (Mary, the virgin who bore Christ) and ends with Leo the Lion, the sign of Jesus' return as a lion to crush the head of the serpent. The Egyptian Sphinx combines these two poles of the zodiac. The resting lion has a woman's head. Is this the solution to the "riddle of the Sphinx?" Broadcast evangelist D. James Kennedy updated E. W. Bullinger's 1893 "Witness of the Stars" with his "The Real Meaning of the Zodiac." Bullinger's "Witness of the Stars" is still available through Kregel publications.

Four hundred years later, God tells Moses and the Israelites during the wilderness wanderings: the Hebrews will be as numerous as the "stars in the sky" (Ex 32:13).

A second major example of the Genesis 1:14 prophecy comes when God speaks mystically through a pagan soothsayer hired by a fearful enemy of the Hebrews to curse them. Bible scholars tell us Balaam prophesies King David and, by extension, the "seed" or son of David. "I see him, but not now." Balaam declares, "a star will come out of Jacob; a scepter will rise out of Israel" (Numbers 24:17)

Fast forwarding around seven centuries later, the great Jewish prophet Isaiah forecasts the Jewish Messiah to King Ahaz. This obvious prophecy of Jesus will be read in Christmas services that celebrate the birth of Jesus this month: "Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel" (Isaiah 7:14).

But you may say, "There is no star in Isaiah 7:10-14." It's hidden in the Hebrew text. God tells King Ahaz to ask for a sign "in the highest heights," i.e., where the stars are. Ahaz refuses saying he won't test God. In frustration, Isaiah accuses "the house of David" - not just the king - of trying the patience of my God!" Then Isaiah says, God will give "a sign," a virgin will be with child. Ahaz might be thinking, "Isn't a pregnant woman the definitive sign she is NOT a virgin?"

To understand what is going on here, we must look at the word, "sign" in this passage. As we saw the first mention of the word "sign" (Hebrew "*oth*") in the Bible (Genesis 1:14) is where God predicts that stars will be "signs" of important events and people.

So, it becomes clear that by using the word “sign” (*oth*), Isaiah is telling the king, and the elect house of David, that the “sign” that there is a pregnant virgin carrying the long-awaited Savior of Israel is a “star.” The “Star of Bethlehem” is the greatest example of the Genesis 1:14 prophecy.

King Herod is unaware of this - until foreign pagan “wise men” inform him that they know (from Bible prophecy) that the Jewish Messiah is being born under the sign of the star. How odd that the king responds by trying to kill the Messiah in the cradle (Matthew 2:16). This was the first attempt of Israel’s leaders to get rid of Jesus, the Messiah.



THE STAR OF BETHLEHEM IS THE ULTIMATE EXAMPLE OF A STAR-SIGN THAT GOD PREDICTED IN GENESIS 1:14

Hovering over and hiding beneath the secular carnival that has become America’s Christmas is the greatest example of a *Star-Sign* that God predicted at the beginning of His Word. The Star of Bethlehem is the greatest manifestation of that prophecy because it marked the greatest event of history. That star divided history into two parts - Before Christ and After Christ. In the darkest time of the year, when stars become conspicuous, God’s son emerged from a virgin womb to save the world. This Christmas that sign will be at the top of American Christmas trees.¹

¹ The evergreen tree is not a symbol of Christ’s birth. It is a symbol of Christ’s Return and the return of the Tree of Life (eternal life) that he will bring with him. One evergreen, the “Arbor Vitae,” means “tree of life.” The evergreen became a symbol of eternal life because it doesn’t “die” in the winter like other trees.

WAS JESUS BORN ON DECEMBER 25TH?

Many evangelical leaders insist that Jesus *was not* born on December 25th. Not only is their evidence no better than the majority opinion of American Christians, but the intellectual high ground on this question *may be* on the side of traditional Christian belief. The question of when Jesus was born should take into account of when he was conceived. Jesus was crucified during Passover, which is in March or April. If Mary were supernaturally impregnated in March, nine months later would be December.

It would make sense that Jesus was conceived around Passover, since Passover remembers the time the Hebrews were saved from the Angel of Death in Egypt by the “blood of the lamb” on their doorposts. When Jesus was baptized, John the Baptist called him, “the Lamb of God,” and God spoke from heaven authorizing him as His Son.

Passover is prophetically connected with Jesus in the Exodus’ picture of the saving-blood-of-the-lamb and of the Hebrews being redeemed from slavery. Similarly, Jesus’ blood signals the ultimate redemption from the bondage of this fallen world and hell for those who elect Him their King and Savior. So, it is logical that God the Father would plant His Son in the Virgin Mary during Passover.

One last thing - when John the apostle wrote at the beginning of his gospel (John 1:5) that Jesus came as a light that “shineth in darkness,” was he telling us that Jesus came into the world on the darkest day of the year - December 25th?

IS THE STAR OF BETHLEHEM RELATED TO THE STAR FLAGS OF AMERICA AND ISRAEL?

This question, of course, sounds like the murmuring of men walking the halls of asylums; but it didn’t when the original Stars and Stripes flag was unveiled. Prominent Americans then were comparing the “new constellation” star circle on the American Revolution banner to the Star of Bethlehem. Why? As the Star of Bethlehem signaled the birth of the Messiah, the first national star’s flag - America’s “new constellation” - was a “sign” to the world that “Christ’s Kingdom (nation)” had been born.

As we saw in last month’s *LDB*, the Star of David over the eagle on America’s Great Seal symbolizes the “Son of David,” Jesus the Messiah. It identifies Jesus as King of the United States and America as “Christ’s Kingdom.” America seems to be what Christ forecast as “a city on a hill” - the ideal state of Christ’s Church at the end of Christ’s Church Age.

As we also saw in the November *LDB*, the Star of David on Israel’s flag symbolizes the same thing it does on America’s Great Seal - the Son-of-David-Jewish- Messiah. The only difference is that America’s founders believed the Son of David is Jesus the Messiah while Jews believe that savior has not yet come.



Star of David on Great Seal and Israel's flag

The Jewish-authored New Testament presents Jesus of Nazareth as the fulfillment of the centuries-old Jewish hope for the “Son of David” that Isaiah forecast with a star (Isaiah 7:10-14). So, the Star of David on America's Great Seal and Israel's national flag symbolize the same thing - the Jewish Messiah whose birth sign was an extraordinary star. Most Jews don't accept the New Testament report of Jesus-the-Messiah as authentic.

However, a number of books by respected Jewish historians explain how the European Jewish “reformation” beginning at the time of the American colonial era was very “messianic.”² Beginning around 1665, close to half of Europe's Jews believed the Jewish Messiah had arrived in the form of a man named Sabbatai Zevi. And though Zevi turned out to be an embarrassing pretender, “reformation” Judaism had become so focused on the Old Testament-prophesied messiah that the Star of David became the symbol of the coming “Son of David,” the Jewish Messiah.

The American year ends with the overwhelming presence of its longest holy season, Thanksgiving-and-Christmas. America's Thanksgiving is borrowed from Old Testament harvest-thanksgiving feasts. And Christmas celebrates an event that happened in Israel. The national sign of Israel is a star - the Star of David. We wonder - could the Star of David be in God's mysterious providence the Star of Bethlehem, the sign of the birth of the Son of David in David's hometown, Bethlehem?

According to Jewish historians like Gershom Scholem and Rachel Elijor,³ the belief in a coming Jewish Messiah has been very compelling in European Judaism for the last four centuries. Significantly, it began at a time when Europe was saturated with expectations of Jesus' return while the equally aroused Jewish longing for their messiah and redemption evolved into the resurrection of long-dead Israel.

As we saw in last month's *LDB*, the Star of David on Israel's flag was on America's Great Seal 166 years before it was on modern Israel's banner. And as we also saw, they symbolize the same thing - the Old Testament-prophesied Jewish Messiah - whom America's founding fathers believed was Jesus of Nazareth.

Let's remember that a star was forecast repeatedly throughout the Old Testament as a sign of Messiah. It first appeared as a symbol of the great king of Israel (Numbers 24:17). And then, the most messianic Old Testament prophet, Isaiah, forecast the Star of Bethlehem as the sign of the Messiah. If the Star of Bethlehem is the sign of the Jewish Messiah, isn't the Star of David the sign of the Son of David, Israel's King and Savior - Jesus of Nazareth?

² “The Messianic Idea in Judaism,” Gershom Scholem. 1971, Schocken Books, N.Y. N.Y.

³ “The Mystical Origins of Hasidism,” Rachel Elijor, 2006, The Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, Portland, Oregon.

And since Jesus is symbolically represented as that Son of David Messiah on America's Great Seal, then aren't America and Israel united by their belief in a messianic savior - while at the same time divided by religion? We must remember that the rabbis had a long collection of Old Testament prophecies of the Jewish messiah when Jesus walked on earth. The Star of David on America's Great Seal is also the Star of Bethlehem and the Jewish symbol of the Jewish messiah on Israel's flag.

AMERICA WAS THE FIRST NATION TO PRESENT ITSELF WITH A STARRY FLAG

Flag scholars report that America was the first country in the modern world to introduce itself with a star flag.⁴ The biblical idea of stars symbolizing great events, nations and people was precisely what America's founders were announcing with the use of a star circle on the first Stars and Stripes flag. As we saw, the birth name of the world's first star flag, "a new constellation," proclaimed something big to the world. Paraphrasing the founders' idea in a vernacular voice we get, "Hey! Look! This new nation is Daniel's Fifth Empire and the last phase of Christ's Church Age! America is Christ's Nation, 'a city on a hill!'"

As we saw in last month's *LDB*, America's founders declared in the symbolism of America's Great Seal that America was the fulfillment of Daniel's Fifth Empire and "Christ's Kingdom" ("Stone Mountain"). And as we also saw in last month's *LDB*, America's flag first presented these founding fathers' beliefs in a more subtle way.

One of the Bible stories in the minds of the founders who voted for the original Stars and Stripes (the "new constellation") was that famous New Testament incident when the disciples asked Jesus, "Tell us . . . what will be the sign of your coming and the end of the age?" (Matthew 24: 3) Many in England and Europe grumbled that America was arrogantly and presumptuously presenting itself as the incarnation of Daniel's Fifth Empire, the last great empire of history.

Was the "new constellation" banner intended as the answer to the disciples' question, "What will be the sign of your coming and the end of the age?" The founders' logic was - Christ was the beginning of the Church Age and America, Christ's Kingdom, is the Last Days of the Church Age.

AMERICA HAS THE CLOSEST SPIRITUAL AND POLITICAL RELATIONSHIP WITH THE JEWS AND ISRAEL OF ANY NATION IN HISTORY

The Puritans brought with them from England the English respect and identification with the Jews and Israel that started with Oliver Cromwell and England's Puritan Revolution. America became, in its colonial period, the most Bible-shaped nation of the modern world. God's Word arrived and situated itself in America like no other place. The famous Harvard historian Perry Miller, one of the top experts on the colonial times, wrote that God's Word was not merely something for Sundays, but rather, "like the air they breathed."

America's identification with the Jews and the land of the Bible is preserved for us in the many U.S. towns named for Bible places (Bethel, Salem, Canaan) and the Old Testament names Americans

⁴ Both of the most authoritative books on international flags, "Flags Through the Ages and Across the World" (p. 338) and "The World Encyclopedia of Flags" (on p. 113) identify the Stars and Stripes as the world's first starry nation flag.

gave their children, like Isaac, David, Abigail and Hannah. America's most celebrated president, for example, was named "Abraham" (Lincoln) and his mother was "Sarah."

America's spiritual relationship with Israel has spanned its history. After borrowing the "Jewish star" for America's Great Seal, America became Israel's midwife after World War II.



President Harry Truman: "I am Cyrus! I am Cyrus."

President Harry Truman was so instrumental in Israel's 1948 resurrection that he repeatedly declared, "I am Cyrus," referring to the Persian king who ordered Israel's first rebirth after the Babylonian exile. We can only speculate how long Israel would have lasted over these past 70 years without its big younger brother, America, standing next to it?

And today, even though significant parts of American Protestantism have become anti-Israel, President Trump's unprecedented moving of America's embassy to Jerusalem and his warm relationship with Israel's President Netanyahu underscores America's historic, providential kinship with Israel.

AMERICA AND ISRAEL'S CLOSE CONNECTION IS EVIDENT IN THEIR NATIONAL SYMBOLS

Space limitation prevents the reporting of the great influence Reformation Christianity had on the Jewish "reformation" from traditional Judaism to *messianic* Judaism. But it is the messianic "Jewish Star" that symbolizes that transition in big letters. However, there is another hidden phenomenon - a political one - that shows the great influence History's Great Christian Nation- America - had on back-from-the-dead Israel.

Did you know that Israel borrowed four of the five symbols on America's flag? Israel's national flag is a star-and-stripes banner with two of the three colors on America's flag. And let's not forget that the Star of David on Israel's flag was first on America's Great Seal 166 years earlier. So, we can see the close spiritual-political relationship between America and Israel - in the mutual back-and-forth borrowing of political-religious symbols from each other.

Europe's Roman Church has, from the beginning, viewed itself as the replacement for the Jews and Israel. The Vatican has regarded Israel and the Jews as obsolete and "in the dustbin of history." Had the Roman Crusades won Jerusalem from Islam, Israel would never have resurrected. By the same token, Israel's Muslim neighbors that surround it, and communist countries, have been in one form or another at war against Israel ever since it was reborn. The United Nations was opposed to Israel's resurrection, but could not prevent it.

Europe's humiliating Jewish ghettos, the murderous pogroms and the long record of contempt for Jews that climaxed in Europe's attempt to exterminate all Jews in the holocaust is in direct contrast to America's welcoming of Jews. Almost half the world's Jews now live and thrive in America, the country with the Jewish star on its national insignia.

In contrast to the world, America felt an association with the Land of the Bible and the Jewish people from the colonial era on. Only America, with its Jewish-Star-Great-Seal has been Israel's greatest ally and friend. Theologians once suggested that Israel's rebirth signaled the beginning of the end of America. Was America's growth into history's superpower on the clock of Israel's 70-year life providentially guided by the God of Israel for the purpose of the U.S. being Israel's guardian?

THE "SHIELD OF DAVID" ON ISRAEL'S FLAG SYMBOLIZES THE PROTECTION OF THE "SON OF DAVID"

REVELATION SAYS CHRIST WILL SAVE ISRAEL IN ITS LAST DESPERATE HOUR

We must wonder why Israel's flag has the "Shield of David" as its state symbol when the first place the Hebrew word "*magen*," (shield/protector/protection) appears in the Old Testament is in Genesis 15:1? God approaches Abraham, the father of the Jews, to begin His salvation plan and He immediately announces He will be the protector ("*magen*") of Abraham and his descendants. The God of Israel vows to be the guardian of the Jews from the start, so why is Israel's flag the "*Magen David?*"

Why is David, who has been dead for around 3,000 years, regarded as the protector of Israel when it was God who first declared Himself Israel's bodyguard?

Obviously, what "*Magen David*" and the "Star of David" symbolize is the *Messianic descendant of David*. This prophecy begins in vague terms by Israel's first great prophet when the nation of Israel has just begun. Samuel, who anoints David as king predicts a "seed of David" i.e., a descendant of Israel's greatest king will one day appear as Israel's ultimate king (2 Samuel 7:12-16). However, the title, "Son of David" does not specifically appear in the Bible until the first verse of the New Testament, which immediately identifies Jesus as that man. The "Son of David" appears 17 times in the New Testament.

DIDN'T DAVID FORECAST JESUS AS ISRAEL'S ULTIMATE SAVIOR?

King David records a divinely inspired picture of his prophetic descendant, the Son of David, who bears an unmistakable resemblance to Jesus. He uses the terms, "Messiah," "Son of God," and the Savior-of-Israel from an international conspiracy. In a Bible *Deja-vu*, Jesus duplicates David's vision at the end of the New Testament.

Around 1,000 years after David presents his vision of an international cabal surrounding Zion/Israel, Jesus also prophesies in Revelation 19 an international army surrounding Israel. David and Jesus

predict the same thing - the “anointed one,” the Son of David Messiah we know as Jesus will defeat the cabal of Israel’s enemies - just as David says in Psalm 2. Interestingly, David also says in Psalm 2 these enemies are coming against the “LORD, and against his anointed” (Psalm 2:2) not Israel.⁵

Let’s remember the “*Magen David*” on Israel’s flag is a sign of the protection of Israel’s Son of David Messiah. But in Revelation 19, it is *Jesus* the Messiah (“Christ” is the transliteration of the Greek translation of the Hebrew word for “Messiah”) who delivers, not another Messiah. Why would Israel’s leaders put the Star of David on Israel’s flag when they were well aware that it was on America’s Great Seal as a symbol of Jesus Christ for the previous 166 years?

AMERICA AND ISRAEL ON ISRAEL’S 70TH BIRTHDAY

It is God’s providence that America, History’s Great Nation and the land of the Bible, have had the closest relationship of any nations on earth. America helped resurrect Israel. Neither is it coincidence that both America and Israel have borrowed symbols from one another. Both the flags of America and Israel are star-and-stripes. As we saw in last month’s *LDB*, America’s founders believed that America was the fulfillment of a giant Old Testament prophecy of a final empire.

Bible prophecy scholars have erred in ignoring this very important relationship and America’s founders’ presentation of America as a sign to the world of the Last Days. This idea is behind President Lincoln, and later Reagan, calling America “the last best hope.” It has been said that Israel’s resurrection from the dead after 1,900-some years signaled the end of America, which had called itself “the New Israel” - not as a replacement, but as a stand-in for the House of David while it was in the wilderness. America fully expected Israel to resurrect.

It seems, in God’s providence, one of the reasons America remained over Israel’s 70-year life is because it was Israel’s big brother protector. Israel’s enemies knew that any serious attack on Israel would provoke the awesome power of History’s Great Nation. It is worth noticing as we look at Revelation 19’s picture of that international army malevolently surrounding Israel, there is no sign of Israel’s big brother, America.

The kings of the north, south and east are present to destroy Israel, but there are no “kings of the west” because America is gone.

JEWISH MESSIAHS

Israel has had a number of candidates for the long-expected Messiah. God was the first to forecast Jesus as the Messiah in Genesis 3:15. But later, prophets, beginning with Moses in Deuteronomy 18:17-19, and, later, Isaiah, Micah and Daniel predicted and described Israel’s Savior-King.

By the time Jesus walked the land of Israel, the Jews had been anticipating the “*Moshiach*” for around four centuries. The rabbis had a long list of prophecies of the Messiah when Jesus walked the earth.

⁵ The New Testament seems to confirm Psalm 2 as being about Jesus. The last verse says, “Kiss the son, lest he be angry . . .” Did Judas acknowledge Jesus as the Messiah from Psalm 2:12 when he kissed him before delivering him to the Temple guards? Judas seems to have been trying to force Jesus’ hand into finally proving he is the Messiah by crushing the Temple cops.

Clearly, the Jewish leaders, Joseph of Arimathea, who claimed Jesus' corpse from the cross and buried him in Joseph's tomb, as well as Nicodemus, had carefully analyzed these prophecies and concluded that Jesus was, indeed, the Messiah they were awaiting. What these two Jewish council leaders did was the classic expression of "actions-speak-louder-than-words." Their actions said they believed Jesus was the Messiah.

KING DAVID



God made a covenant with David for Israel's greatest king and savior who would be a descendant of David. "And when thy (David) days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build an house for my name, and I will stablish the throne of his kingdom for ever" (2 Samuel 7:12, 13).

He would be "King of the Jews" - just as the mocking sign read over Jesus' head at his crucifixion. The Jewish hope for this Savior King never went away after most, but not all, the Jews of Jesus' day rejected him as the messiah. This Jewish hope for the *Moshiach* has spanned around 2,400 years of Jewish history.

The following are the two greatest examples of the Jewish false messiahs.

SIMON BAR KOKHBA - circa AD 135



“Bar Kokhba,” means “Son of the Star.”

Simon bar Kokhba was the leader in what is known as the Bar Kokhba revolt against the Roman Empire in 132 A.D., establishing an independent Jewish state which he ruled for three years. His state was conquered by the Romans in 135 A.D. following a two and a half-year war. The Jewish sage Rabbi Akiva indulged the possibility that Simon could be the Jewish messiah, and gave him the surname “Bar Kokhba” meaning “Son of the Star” in Aramaic, from the Star Prophecy verse from Numbers 24:17 (Based on recently discovered documents, his original name was probably Simeon bar Koseva).

SABBATAI ZEVI - 1665



Somewhere around half of European Jews believed a man named Sabbatai Zevi was the long-expected *Moshiach*. In a sad series of events, Zevi proved to be, like Bar Kokhba, a tragic, embarrassing pretender. However, what the Zevi incident revealed was the great hope European Jewry had in the second century of the Reformation for their messiah.

The Zevi event had enduring ramifications that helped shape modern Judaism. The Star of David on modern Israel's flag is the symbol of that hope.

Next month's Last Days Beacon will conclude the series, "America is forecast in the Bible."

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