
Noah and the 21st Century AD

Jane Broida Drake

Noah and the 21st Century AD

NOTICE: This ebook is licensed to the original purchaser only. Duplication or distribution via e-mail, disk, network, printout, or other means to a person other than the original purchaser is a violation of international copyright law and subjects the violator to fines and/or imprisonment.

Copyright © 2004 by Jane Broida Drake. All rights reserved. No part of this ebook may be reproduced in any form, by any means (including electronic, photocopying, recording or otherwise) without the prior written permission of the copyright owner.

Published by: Marketing & Sales Tools
3350 Scott Blvd. Bldg. 20
Santa Clara, CA 95054
1-866-836-2987
info@marketingandsalestools.com

Contents

| | |
|--|----|
| Introduction | 1 |
| 1. In The Beginning | 4 |
| 2. A New Beginning | 13 |
| 3. The Enduring Influence of Noah's Children | 17 |
| About the Author | 27 |

Introduction

Extensive scientific research has never resolved the arguments over the reality of the World Flood, described in the Hebrew Scriptures. In fact, scholars throughout the world have made the Flood "one of the most debated subjects of all time." Yet, ironically, many believers in the Lord God, revealed in the Scriptures of Judaism, Christianity and Islam, don't really care if there ever was a man named Noah who survived a flood! In truth, they're inclined to think there wasn't. And skeptics consider the lack of conclusive scientific evidence of the Flood to be proof that Noah's story is merely one of many versions of a widespread heathen fable. Nevertheless, later events involving Noah's sons, grandsons and great-grandsons are still reflected in our daily news and in the vocabulary of believers and unbelievers the world over. Those *unmistakable references* lend credence to Noah's reality. Of more importance, they offer knowledge we urgently need to recall, in our age of nuclear weapons.

The Hebrew Scriptures, the Christian Bible, and Islam's Koran tell us the "Lord God" is an *omniscient, omnipotent* Being. But organized religions, obsessed with promoting their own interpretations of their own Scriptures, rarely if ever even try to explain what it actually means to us to be subject to an "all-knowing, all powerful" Being. For example, while studying Noah's story, we need to remember that an *omniscient* God always knew that humans would behave violently. So, He staged a Flood that He knew mankind would never forget! Of course, He also knew that believers and unbelievers, alike, would endlessly argue over the reality of that Flood. Unfortunately, the scholarly arguments have caused most people to focus on the physical Flood, instead of *its purpose*.

The Scriptures tell us God created the Flood to cleanse the earth that was "...filled with violence" (Gen 6:11). And He made the cleansing unforgettable. Evidently, He wanted mankind to remember it, if only to help us remember it *could happen again*.

When the Flood ended, God made a covenant with Noah. He promised, "...never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth" (Gen. 9:11). Therefore, if, again, the earth must be cleansed of violence, God will not wash away men and the tons of blood men have spilled. Next time, we are warned, "...the earth and the works that are in it shall be burnt up" (II Peter 3:10).

Beyond doubt, our nuclear weapons can ignite the fire that would burn up "the earth and the works that are in it." That

The Prophets, however, also told us that if we will *turn our hearts to each other* (Mal. 3:24/4:6) we can spare ourselves the most dreaded of all recorded prophecies.

means, believers and unbelievers, alike, can know that ancient prophecies of "blood and fire and pillars of smoke" (Joel 2:30), and

a "gross darkness" that will cover "the peoples" (Isa. 60:2) can now be fulfilled *exactly as described*. And we don't even have to believe in an unseen God Who will fulfill the prophecies! We can accomplish it as a "do-it-yourself" project!

The Prophets, however, also told us that if we will *turn our hearts to each other* (Mal. 3:24/4:6) we can spare ourselves the most dreaded of all recorded prophecies. But a severe impediment to that seemingly simple "prescription for peace" rests in our religious beliefs, which have always bitterly divided mankind and now threaten to ignite a nuclear holocaust.

In short, we are the generation that will "change the world." Either we must enlarge our religious understanding, or we will use the weapons of mass destruction that will end the world as we have made it.

In The Beginning

The Hebrew Scriptures begin with the story of Adam and Eve, the first human beings to know their Creator. But, when Noah's story begins, most of Adam's descendants no longer thought about the God Who had condemned Cain, Adam's firstborn son, for murdering his brother. The people living in those days, as Jesus described them, were "...eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage..." (Matt. 24:38), and frequently committing mayhem and murder. "But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord," because he was "...a man righteous and wholehearted..." (Gen. 6:8,9).

The Prophet Malachi defined "righteous" and "wicked" persons as, "...one who serves God and one who does not serve Him" (Mal. 3:18). That means Noah was "righteous" because he faithfully served Adam's God, and he was "wholehearted" in his effort. So, one day, out of the clear blue sky, God started talking to Noah about rain.

The Lord ordered Noah to build an ark to house himself, his wife, his three sons and their wives, and a large number of animals. Since that was an extraordinary assignment, God told

Noah the vessel's dimensions, how to equip it, and why he would need it (Gen. 6:14-21).

The Bible's description of the Deluge appears to state that every living creature on earth drowned, except the passengers on the ark. Scholars have now studied all known heathen religions, past and present. A startling number include a story of a flood that only one or two individuals miraculously survived. The heroes of the stories repopulated the world in magical ways. Communities that have told or still tell variations of the tale represent an astounding array of nations and cultures. The list includes Iceland, Lithuania, Wales, Greece, Africa, India, China, the Malay Peninsula, Japan, Australia, New Guinea, the Polynesian and Melanesian Islands, North and Central America, and Argentina.

Scholars have now studied all known heathen religions, past and present.

A startling number include a story of a flood that only one or two individuals miraculously survived.

Today, some believers consider the story's worldwide presence to be convincing evidence of the Biblical Flood's reality. Most scholars, however, believe the evidence points to the Hebrews adapting a popular heathen myth to fit their God. But there remains another possibility the scholars studiously ignore. Heathen societies could have heard a kernel of a true story from Noah's family and adapted it to fit their gods. Before we explore how that could have happened, we need to examine some historical facts.

In the excavated ruins of Ninevah, in present-day Iraq, archaeologists found twelve clay tablets that are about 4,000 years old (2000 B.C.). The stories engraved on the tablets are known collectively as *The Gilgamesh Epic*. They relate the deeds of Gilgamesh, believed to be a semi-divine king. The eleventh tablet describes his search for a man who had gained eternal life. The man and his wife had been the only human survivors of a great flood. They had survived because the man had been divinely directed to build a ship, to save himself, his wife, and the seed of all living things.

After comparing the many flood legends, scholars decided the Bible story shares an exceptional number of details with the flood in the Gilgamesh myth. Because the myth was recorded hundreds of years before Moses lived to record Noah's story, authorities cite the ancient tablet as evidence that the tale of a world flood was invented by heathens. In reality, the written myth only proves that a literate person recorded a popular story about a flood. The story cannot prove who *first told* the tale that would appear in different verbal and written forms throughout the world.

Plagiarism of a monumental flood story appears reasonable. Neighbor nations often worshiped the same gods and told similar stories about them. But a story about gods drowning everyone except a few people arose in distant cultures that pictured their gods in very different forms and told very different stories about them.

Although scholars don't agree on how and why the story spread around the world, many authorities have now concluded that most if not all the flood stories must have had a common origin, though they cannot identify it. Other experts, however,

Nowadays, most believers in the Lord God are aware of the multiple flood stories, but they give them no thought. They look to science to tell them what really happened.

still contend that some details are too dissimilar to have come from the same root.

They cite the details they consider so weighty! For instance, the story told in India speaks of only one male survivor, but a female magically appeared. Japanese and Chinese renditions only focus on the inundation and re-population of their own lands. The Icelandic account depicts a deluge of blood, not water.

While the stories contain different details, they are all based on an unparalleled flood, which only a few people survived. Today, if dozens of fictional stories were based on the same unique event, though details differed, we'd strongly suspect they had a common origin. And we'd expect to hear of a lawsuit for plagiarism!

Nowadays, most believers in the Lord God are aware of the multiple flood stories, but they give them no thought. They look to science to tell them what really happened.

After lengthy research, geologists have failed to uncover conclusive evidence of a global Deluge. But Henry Morris, a promi-

ment scientific creationist, interpreted the geologic findings in ways that indicate the whole world could have been covered with water.

Morris, a hydrologist, served as the chairman of the Civil Engineering Department at the Virginia Polytechnic Institute for thirteen years. He was also a faculty member of other major American universities, during his lengthy teaching career. Although most of his professional peers favor the conventional interpretations of the geologic evidence, enough scientists support Morris's theory, or similar theories, to keep the subject of a global Flood open to scientific debate.

For our purpose, we can leave all questions about the physical Flood to scientists, while we focus on the *stories* of a deluge, which unquestionably exist worldwide. To secular scholars, the origin and transmission of those stories is a mystery. But believers in God believe they have solved the mystery, in one way or another.

Actually, the origin of flood stories has never been a mystery to traditional believers. According to their understanding, after the Flood, Noah and his family were the only humans left on earth. The Hebrew Scriptures report that most of Noah's grandchildren and great-grandchildren became heathens. Apparently, nothing inspired them to worship an unseen God Who never spoke to them. But they didn't forget their family story about surviving a flood that had covered the whole world. Naturally,

they carried the story with them as they traversed the globe, repopulating the earth. Future generations altered the tale, to fit their gods.

While that explanation of the story's origin, and how and why the story spread, makes inarguable sense, it only serves those who can believe the traditional interpretation of the Bible story. Countless people can't!

Millions of believers find it impossible to believe that one vessel, no matter how large, held a male and female of every animal species science has now discovered. Yet, the same believers might have no trouble believing in miracles. Bible miracles, however, were often urgently needed happenings, which sometimes included physical events that contradict natural laws. God speaking to a man is another form of "miracle" believers accept. But the ark Noah laboriously built was not "miraculously" enabled to carry an incredible number of animals and their food. Henry Morris, in his efforts to prove the authenticity of disputed Biblical events, calculated the size of the ark, based on his understanding of God's instructions. As Morris pictured it, Noah's vessel could have carried the enormous load assigned it. Nevertheless, numberless believers simply cannot believe it.

It's common for believers to dismiss the Flood story as only another allegory, designed to convey moral teachings, not actual events.

These days, it's common for believers to dismiss the Flood story as only another allegory, designed to convey moral teachings, not actual events. Some believers, however, cannot completely discount a lengthy, detailed description of a stupendous disaster meticulously recorded in their Holy Book. So, they've embraced a liberal interpretation of the Bible story.

They believe the Scriptures are speaking of a devastating local flood, probably one that occurred in the lowlands of Mesopotamia (which are now in Iraq), or a nearby region. By obeying God, Noah saved his family. In effect, Noah assumed Adam's role as the Patriarch of the only family in the world that knew of the One Almighty Creator. But, as Noah understood their situation, he and his family were the *only* people left in the world. Later, Noah's grandchildren and great-grandchildren set out on their journeys. After they had traveled far enough, they discovered they weren't alone on the earth. Still, the story of a world flood was part of their family history. As they mingled with and married heathens, the story became part of heathen folklore. In turn, versions of the tale were carried throughout the world, by migrating heathen tribes.

The belief that Noah's family was the source of the stories doesn't have to rest on faith, alone. The Bible says Noah's sons, Shem, Japheth, and Ham, had many children who traveled widely. Secular references appear to confirm their travels.

The references identify Noah's grandsons and great-grandsons by name. For example, the Ethiopians have always claimed descent from Noah's grandson, Cush. The Columbia Encyclopedia identifies another grandson, Mizraim, as the "eponym of Egypt," and Canaan as "the eponymous ancestor of the Canaanites," the family that founded the Biblical land of Canaan. The Encyclopedia also identifies Madai's name as "the biblical form of the name of the Medes," the people who built the country of Media, in an area now in Iran. Some scholars think ancient Greek writers associated Gomer with the region we call the Crimea. And Assyria is the Greek form of Asshur's name, the grandson said to have built Ninevah (Gen. 10:11), the city that became the capital of the Assyrian Empire. It's obvious why Aram is linked to the Arameans. They coined the Aramaic language and became the predominant population in Syria. The Armenians identify themselves as the descendants of Togarmah, Noah's great-grandson. And tradition has always linked another great-grandson, Ashkenaz, with Germany. To this day, a Jew from that region calls himself an Ashkenazi. Other secular references place members of Noah's family in Libya, Sudan, India, and China.

After the story of the Deluge, the Bible relates the genealogy of Noah's three sons (Gen. 10:1-33). In an unusual addition to the standard statistics, the family tree includes the names of cities Noah's grandsons and great-grandsons built. Among them is Ninevah, where archaeologists discovered the tablets containing *The Gilgamesh Epic*. Those ancient tablets provide a material reason to suspect that the heathen myth came from a story *first*

told by Noah's grandson, Asshur, identified as the builder of Ninevah. (Some translations of the Hebrew Scriptures identify Noah's great-grandson, Nimrod, as Ninevah's founder. Either way, the myth is linked to Noah's family.)

Thus, Noah's grandchildren can be reasonably identified as the source of a greatly exaggerated flood story that reached around the world.

A New Beginning

Regardless of the Flood's actual extent, the water eventually receded, and Noah's family left the ark. Then, we're told, God spoke to Noah and, through him, to all mankind.

In one concise sentence, the Lord identified the root of man's preoccupation with violence. God said, "...the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth..." (Gen. 8:21). In effect, the Lord was enlarging on His advice to Cain concerning mankind's "evil" behavior. Human beings "may" — which means we *can if we choose* — "rule over" the sin that "lies at the door" (Gen. 4:6-7), by *controlling our thoughts*. Violence and other "evils" proceed from *unrestrained imaginings*.

Adults know they must control their behavior, and more often than not they do. But many adults don't even try to control their thoughts about whole nations of people, especially persons they wouldn't want their children to marry! For instance, when someone imagines that his skin color is innately superior to others and too precious to be mingled with others, he is exalting the perishable "flesh" he wears today. Worse yet, he's entertaining the proud and hateful thoughts that occasion-

ally visit everyone. Sooner or later, hateful thoughts expose themselves in words and deeds, which tempt the hated to hate and retaliate.

In short, we don't become proud persecutors or vengeful victims for complicated reasons. Most of the time, we simply nurture hateful thoughts, as Cain did, until the imagination of

In actual practice, humans strongly resist altering their chosen opinion on any subject, especially thoughts that endow them with a personal sense of superiority!

our heart grows evil. Thus, we only have to refuse to harbor evil thoughts to avoid evil ways!

If you think that monitoring our thoughts is a simplistic solution to the complex problem of man's evil doings, it only *sounds* simple. In actual practice, humans strongly resist altering their chosen opinion on any subject, especially thoughts that endow them with a personal sense of superiority! Still, individuals have always done whatever they've needed to do to re-form their thinking and ways, when they sincerely believe they have found a better way to proceed.

The modern author, Amos Oz, believes, "...the worse dangers are not in guns or bombs, not even in governments and militaries, but in the human heart...." Today, scientists, military experts, and political analysts warn of the world's urgent need to change direction, which means we must alter the thinking that directs us. And it doesn't matter if people believe we must improve our thinking

to preserve life in this world or to be eligible for life in the world to come. Either way, most if not all of us have a real need to change the "imagination" of our heart in some ways.

After revealing the root of man's violence, the Lord addressed Noah's immediate needs, by expanding his food supply. God said, "Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you...But you shall not eat flesh with its life, that is, its blood" (Gen. 9:3-4).

Drawings on cave walls of hunters and their animal quarry, and piles of dismembered animal bones, prove that our ancient ancestors weren't all vegetarians, as Noah had apparently been. Not only have most human beings eaten animals with their blood, some have consumed the flesh and blood of humans, usually in the performance of magico-religious rituals. But, when God told Noah's family they could eat flesh, He made the difference between humans and animals ominously clear. "Whoever sheds man's blood," the Lord proclaimed, "by man his blood shall be shed..." (Gen. 9:6). The Lord gave His reason for that firm mandate: Man was made in *His* image.

Therefore, when a person corrupts God's image by permitting the imagination of his heart to grow evil, and then intentionally murders a fellowman, "...having hated him in time past" (Deut. 4:42), God has decreed he should die at the hands of his fellowmen. Today, however, a growing number of believers and unbelievers oppose the execution of murderers, but not only because they fear executing an innocent person. They rally in defense of

"the badly abused, whose suffering drove them to lash out at the society that failed them" — as though God did not make plain through Adam and Eve, who blamed the devil for their disobedience, that we cannot exonerate ourselves by blaming others!

All the while, anyone, whether a soldier, policeman, or civilian, who has defended himself against a deadly aggressor, has witnessed a fact of human life: It often *takes violence to stop violence*, if the violent won't stop themselves. And there *is a difference* between hatefully shedding blood and shedding the blood of those who have hatefully shed blood.

The Enduring Influence of Noah's Children

Although God's Sixth Commandment commands us not to murder (Ex. 20:13), much of the blood that drenches the earth has been spilled by believers in God who hated each other. The stage on which their hatred would bloom was set in Noah's time.

The Scriptures tell us Noah became a farmer. His occupation suggests he could have lived around 10,000 years ago (8000 B.C.), when archeologists say the world's first farming communities appeared in the Middle East. Still, to gain an improved understanding of God and His messages, we don't need to know exactly when Noah lived. No matter the time or extent of the Flood, the earth finally dried, and Noah planted a vineyard.

Years later, after Noah had adult grandchildren, the man who "walked with God" (Gen. 5:22) drank the wine from his vineyard and got drunk. He fell asleep, or, as we'd say today, he "passed out" and became uncovered. Ham saw his drunk, naked father who, in his sleep, might have been sexually aroused (as

some believers now suspect). To be sure, it seems unlikely that Noah's nakedness, alone, would have prompted Ham to mention it to his brothers. In any case, unlike Ham, his brothers walked backward, to avoid looking at their naked father, and covered him (Gen. 9:20-23).

Either Noah wasn't completely "out of it" that night or someone told him what had happened. However he learned of it, Noah "...awoke from his wine, and knew what his youngest son had done to him" (Gen. 9:24). And he was furious. But, for an undisclosed reason, he directed his fury against Ham's son, Canaan.

In view of what happened next, believers in today's free-speaking societies have voiced a reasonable suspicion. They suspect that Canaan, in his father's presence, performed an act that relieved Noah's sexual arousal. Though such behavior might seem too outrageous to believe, Noah's words unquestionably prove he considered his grandson's behavior outrageous!

"Cursed be Canaan," Noah declared, "a servant of servants shall he be to his brothers" (Gen. 9:25). Then, Noah asked God to enlarge the households of Shem and Japheth, and let Canaan's family serve them (Gen. 9:27). And, as time revealed, God granted Noah's prayer.

These days, self-righteous persons might say Noah invited disrespect, by his "disgraceful drunkenness." But we don't hear

God condemning Noah for getting drunk! On the contrary, the Lord answered Noah's prayer in a greater way than Noah could have imagined. Much later, some of Shem's descendants established the world's first monotheistic nation on the land they captured

Although all the Canaanites were descendants of "righteous and wholehearted" Noah, they were all heathens.

from Canaan's heathen descendants. And the whole world was on its way to learning of the unseen God worshiped by that one tiny nation.

To track what happened, we only have to follow two branches of Noah's family. One branch began with Ham's cursed son, Canaan, who had eleven sons. Most of them settled in the Biblical land of Canaan. Hence, the Canaanites were actually individual tribes, and each had its own tribal name. That means the Jebusites, Amorites, Hittites, Girgashites, Hivites, Arkites, Sinites, Arvadites, Zemarites, and Hamathites, spoken of in the Hebrew Scriptures, were all Canaan's descendants, not persons of "unknown origin," as secular reference books ignorantly describe them. Although all the Canaanites were descendants of "righteous and wholehearted" Noah, they were all heathens.

Some people living in Canaan were remarkably clever and industrious. Dating techniques indicate that men started building Jericho, the first walled city in the world, close to 10,000 years ago. If that date is accurate, Europe was still recovering from the last Ice Age when men in the Middle East were erecting Jericho's circular tower and famous wall.

The other prominent branch of Noah's family began with Shem. One branch of Shem's family became the Hebrews. Around 1,400 B.C. (3,400 years ago), the Hebrews invaded Canaan. The Bible says they began the invasion by attacking Jericho. The soldiers camped outside the city's wall until seven priests made "...a long blast with the ram's horn...." Then everyone shouted, as God had instructed, and "...the wall fell down flat" (Joshua 6:5,20). The Hebrews burned the city, with all its "...accursed things..." (Josh. 6:18), and began to build their unique nation to honor the One omniscient, omnipotent Creator of everything.

Shem's name has lived on to become part of our everyday vocabulary. From his name came the word, *Semite*. All of Shem's descendants are *Semites*. Nowadays, however, someone who is "anti-Semitic" is usually against only one branch of Shem's descendants: the Jews.

The word *Jew* is an abbreviation of Judah, one of the twelve Hebrew tribes. The word *Hebrew* stems from Shem's great-grandson, Eber. Eber's most prominent sons were Peleg and Joktan. The Hebrews descended from Peleg's eldest son. Joktan fathered the Semites we speak of as *Arabs*.

Therefore, all the descendants of Noah's son, Shem, are Semites. Some Semites became monotheists known as Hebrews. Shem's other descendants, and the non-Semitic children of Japheth and Ham, became heathens. But, whether they were

Semites or non-Semites, monotheists or heathens, they were all cousins, descended from Noah's three sons.

Authorities don't agree on how the Hebrews got their name. Some scholars think they coined the word themselves, to honor their forefather, Eber. The word, *Hebrew*, however, also appears in secular documents, in reference to

any "moving tribe." So, other scholars think the Mesopotamians coined the word, to identify people who moved into their area and called themselves "the children of Eber." The family would have been noticeable because they worshiped a God Who was not embodied in an idol.

Idolatry was a major factor in the ancient Middle East economy. Heathens religiously purchased images of their gods to keep in their homes and carry with them when travelling.

Archaeologists have discovered documents in Mesopotamian ruins that contain the names of more than 2,000 gods. That huge assortment must have generated a handsome income for the idol industry!

Idolatry was a major factor in the ancient Middle East economy. Heathens religiously purchased images of their gods to keep in their homes and carry with them when travelling. There was an enormous number of idols to carve and sell. Archaeologists have discovered documents in Mesopotamian ruins that contain the names of more than 2,000 gods. That huge assortment must have generated a handsome income for the idol industry! But Eber only worshiped the invisible God Who had

saved his great, great-grandfather, Noah. And so did the branch of Eber's descendants who immortalized his name.

By invading Canaan, the Hebrews finally earned mention in secular documents. At that time, the land of Canaan was an Egyptian province. Letters written about 1400 B.C., by governors of Canaan and Syria, mentioned the Hebrews. The letters, discovered at Tel el-Amarna, in Egypt, were addressed to the Pharaoh and conveyed urgent appeals for help. The governors told of a marauding tribe of "Hibiri," or Hebrews. They described the Hibiri as "brigands," and "cutthroats," and spoke of serious disturbances they were causing in the vital land of Palestine.

The Egyptians called Canaan's land *Palestine*. Although Palestine's borders shifted as different nations conquered the region, it always included the area between the Mediterranean Sea and the Jordan River. That narrow strip of land was a crucial link in the merchants' caravan route between Egypt and Mesopotamia.

The Columbia Encyclopedia tells us that the word, *Palestine*, comes from the word *Philistine*. When the Philistines moved to Canaan's land, they settled along the Mediterranean coast. Religious scholars believe the Philistines, like the Canaanites, were descendants of Ham. Their forefather appears to be Ham's son, Mizraim, identified as "the eponym of Egypt."

Unlike the Canaanite tribes, the Philistines were a united people. They built five major cities in Canaan, including Gaza, and created a powerful federation. As testimony to their strength, the whole region became known as *Palestine*.

Archaeological evidence confirms that the Philistines lived in the turbulent area we now call the "Gaza Strip." Archaeologists have also confirmed that a massive, mud-brick wall surrounded Jericho. But the excavated remains have yielded little information about the wall, which appears to have been partially restored numerous times. It's thought that earthquakes were largely responsible for weakening sections of the wall. Severe erosion, however, has prevented scientists from determining when and why the whole wall collapsed. Nor do we know the exact year the Hebrews invaded Canaan. Hence, science cannot tell us if the wall fell during the Hebrew invasion or at another time.

In spite of such inconclusive scientific testimony, some authorities declare, with absolute certainty and finality, that the wall fell centuries before the Hebrew

Skeptics have always dismissed all Old Testament "miracles" as natural events that chanced to occur, to which the Hebrews would later ascribe a "divine purpose."

invasion. And some modern scholars are certain that a commonplace earthquake, not a Divinely executed "miracle," knocked down the wall. But skeptics have always dismissed all

Old Testament "miracles" as natural events that chanced to occur, to which the Hebrews would later ascribe a "divine purpose."

In other words, some scholars now accuse the Hebrews of inventing an elaborate story about the wall's collapse, though it had probably fallen before they reached Jericho. Or, if an earthquake caused it to fall as the Hebrews prepared their attack, whoever recorded the story deliberately omitted that natural event. The deceitful writer, we're told, portrayed the wall's collapse in a mysterious and dramatic way — with a ram's horn sounding and people shouting — to encourage future genera-

Today, the modern nation of Israel again occupies the same troubled land that many people still call Palestine.

tions to believe God was "with their forefathers." But, in reality, the Hebrews were only "brigands" and "cutthroats," seizing valuable land.

Obviously, without indisputable proof of what actually happened when the Hebrews attacked Jericho, anyone can dismiss the Bible story as "revisionist history." That claim, however, provides indisputable proof of another kind: We can know, with *absolute certainty*, that people are now revising the Bible story to fit their own imaginings!

The Hebrews' invasion of Canaan worried the Egyptians, Canaanites, Philistines, Syrians, Mesopotamians, and others, whose livelihoods depended on the caravan route. Today, the

modern nation of Israel again occupies the same troubled land that many people still call Palestine. And the cousins are again warring over the land. This time, however, the cousins are all monotheists, and, this time, the whole world is worried. In truth, both believers and unbelievers have real reason to worry, for the bitterly divided cousins could ignite the fire that would burn up "the earth and the works that are in it."

Atheists contend that the family feud, which now threatens the whole world, grew out of fictitious stories about fictitious people. But, if Noah never lived, neither did his sons and grandsons. Among other significant inferences, that would mean there was no Shem, though there are Semites. And there was no Ham who had a son named Canaan, though there was a land of Canaan. Noah's great, great-grandson, Eber, from whom the Hebrews took their name, also becomes suspect. No one, however, can rightly deny that people known as Hebrews created the first nation in the world that worshiped One unseen God. The Scriptures tell us why the Hebrews created their unique nation, and why they built it where they did. We hear they established their nation at God's direction, on land He ordered them to capture from the heathen descendants of Canaan, the cursed grandson of a man named Noah.

Through the Hebrews, the world received the Ten Commandments, which tell men to love God and to "...love your neighbor as yourself..." (Deut. 6:5; Lev. 19:18). If, tomorrow, all human beings were to suddenly begin to love their

neighbors the world over — and, therefore, refrain from doing to them what they would not want done to themselves — the world as we have made it would instantly and spectacularly change. Yet, it's hard for us to even imagine that loving world, much less imagine it materializing tomorrow! Yet, if you are among the persons who say, "People will never change and the world will always be the same," you are forgetting that we can now wreak "utter destruction" (Mal. 3:24) on the world as we have made it.

The Hebrew Scriptures do not speak of anyone as a "Hebrew" until the sixth generation after Eber. Terah, a descendant of Shem, lived in Ur, a prominent city in Mesopotamia. About 4,000 years ago (2000 B.C.), Terah and his family were living in Ur. One of Terah's sons would become the first person identified in the Bible as a "Hebrew" (Gen. 14:13). His name was Abram. And his story ushers in the era of Moses, Jesus, and Muhammad, with all the hope and hatred born of their teachings.

To gain an urgently needed, enlarged understanding of the messages delivered by Moses, Jesus and Muhammad, read *Of Promises and Previews: Urgent Old Messages for a New Millennium*.

About The Author

Jane Broida Drake honed her conversational writing style while co-authoring a business book. The experience ultimately prepared her to discuss her lifelong study of religious teachings and beliefs with a “businesslike” realism and startling common sense seldom found in religious writings. She sincerely invites you to express your thoughts about this book or her website www.ofpromisesandpreviews.com by clicking on the Contact the Author link on the site.