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Report on Israel Trip August 1994

Introduction

There are several purposes in presenting the following information. One of these is to provide background information on the circumstances in which the journey was undertaken.

The journey under consideration was that of a small group of readers of The Urantia Book to what was known in Jesus' day as Palestine to celebrate the 2,000 year anniversary of his bestowal on our planet. This journey was made in August of 1994. The present document will be a general overview of the context in which this trip was undertaken. The serious student is directed to other documents of the time for greater detail.

A more utilitarian purpose of this writing is to attempt to begin to correlate present knowledge about the land of the bestowal with the information contained in The Urantia Book to the end that other travelers may have a reference document to help them plan their journeys. It is hoped that those individuals will update this document as time passes and additional knowledge is found.

A third purpose is to suggest that there is a place for informed readers of The Urantia Book in the present efforts of historians, archeologists and theologians to understand the origins of the Judeo-Christian tradition. Being uncovered at an unprecedented rate is the debris of cultures and civilizations whose achievements conceal the impact of epochal revelation. The Urantia Book can play a significant role in helping humankind to interpret and understand this rapidly accumulating store of information to the end that our origin and destiny might be more fully understood.

While I will make every effort to insure the accuracy of factual information presented, I offer no pretensions of objectivity -- this is of necessity a subjective presentation. There are no doubt at least as many interpretations of these matters as there are readers of The Urantia Book.

I have used the term "Palestine" in this document to refer to the immediate geographic area in which Jesus' bestowal was enacted. This

includes regions of present day Israel, Jordan and territories under Israeli military occupation which are contested by Syria, Jordan, Israel and groups seeking an independent Palestinian state.

Overview of Present Archeological Activity

For a comprehensive diary of this trip, the account by Ticky Harries in Appendix A should be reviewed. The present chapter will provide background information on the primary sites which were visited.

The Israel Antiquities Authority is overseeing an unprecedented period of excavation and discovery. In five years the department has gone from having 54 employees to more than 3,000 -- some 200 of them being professional archaeologists. The departmental budget has gone from less than \$2,000,000 in 1988 to \$22,000,000 in 1994. At Beth-Shean (Scythopolis) alone some 300 workers have been employed as part of a project expected to last at least five years.

As of April 1994, some 300 sites were in process of being excavated and the Authority has identified some 15,000 additional unexplored sites.

Some 200 persons have been hired to specialize in restoration alone, to make these sites accessible to visitors and to provide historical information, publications, museums, etc. As of summer 1993 there were 13 sites undergoing extensive restoration. "Restoration" itself consists of strengthening walls to prevent their collapse, sometimes putting up roofs to protect important discoveries from the ravages of winter rain and summer sun, replacing crumbly old stones with new ones, using special materials to strengthen the adhesion of ancient plaster on ancient walls, and restoring mosaic floors.

There are now 70 "Antiquities Inspectors" whose full-time task is to monitor all new construction, road-building and agricultural projects to assure that anything discovered of a cultural nature which predates 1700 AD will be examined by trained persons and competently excavated if necessary.

A special police force has been created to prevent looting of sites which are waiting to be excavated and a project has been initiated to computerize all the data which has been developed over the past 100 years.

Another group has been formed to develop educational materials -- publications, interactive CDs, and museum exhibits which will travel to the great museums of the world. Later this year a number of selected items will be sent to the Metropolitan Museum in New York on long-term loan.

The Authority is planning a major exhibition in 1996 in Jerusalem to mark the 3,000 anniversary of David's establishment in Jerusalem of the Israelite capital. This exhibition will see the return to Israel of many artifacts now held by foreign museums.

Needless to say, all this sudden archeological activity has its critics. There is legitimate concern about moving too fast and about potential tourist revenues taking priority over careful academic research. An example of what can happen is the problem which has resulted from the early Dead Sea Scrolls researchers using scotch tape to repair some of the scroll fragments. Today, three people work full time at the Rockefeller Museum just trying to remove this material. The adhesive from the tape has penetrated the parchment and darkened the letters to the point of illegibility. Each fragment must be treated with a special compound and then placed between special polyester screens which are being used to hold the scrolls together. This one mistake is expected to take many years to correct.

How does all this activity relate to students of The Urantia Book? How does it relate to us as a community of individuals who may have more than a passing interest in the remaining artifacts of the civilization which was flourishing during the time of Michael's bestowal? We may begin to consider these questions by considering some of the sites we visited and some of the information which The Urantia Book provides or implies about these sites.

[Be sure to include somewhere in this writing some reflections on courses of study to be pursued, possible courses of action to be taken, etc.]

The Urantia Book makes a number of rather bold statements about not only the first century Palestine in which Jesus lived and taught, but also the Palestine of earlier Hebrew and later Judeo-Christian history. The book provides information about a number of sites which, in the world of present day academic archeology, are highly controversial. Often these are statements which might appear to the casual reader as mere literary devices helping to create a context conducive to our assimilation of something which Jesus is saying or doing.

A good example of this is the paragraph at the bottom of page 1710. Here we are in the midst of reading the text of his epochal sermon in the Capernaum synagogue. As we read along, we're deeply involved in what Jesus is saying. Then we come upon this: "And then said Jesus, pointing up to the device of a pot of manna which decorated the lintel of this new synagogue, and which was embellished with grape clusters..." and the sermon continues.

But in this one little aside there is potentially enough information to make a clear dating of an artifact which might be found at this site. This is potentially enough of a key to make possible the identification of a great deal

more at Capernaum, including information about the orientation of the lintel, which may be sufficient information for not only the accurate reconstruction of the lintel but perhaps the entire wall of which it is a part.

Perhaps this one illustration may help you appreciate why our guides, well educated and deeply interested in the history of the land, were so excited about The Urantia Book. And this is but one example of the manner in which the book provides a great depth of meaning and insight into the factual material which is being discovered as you read this.

Current Excavations

Sepphoris
Beth-Shean
Cesarea-Philippi
Cesarea
Bethsaida-Julias
Boat at Kibbutz Nof Ginnosar

Other sites of interest to readers

Caves on Mt. Carmel
Nazareth
 Synagogue site ?
 Rapid growth of city
Capernaum
 Bethsaida ?
Cana
Chorazin
Mt. of Beatitudes
Mt. Hermon
Mt. Gerazim
Mt. Tabor
Kheresa
Tiberias
 Becoming resort center
 Cemetery
 Maimodenes buried here
 Jewish center of learning after 63 AD revolt
Jericho
Bethany
Jerusalem
Hippos
Stone Circles in Golan

Nearby in Jordan
Pella
Beit Adis
Gerasa
Amman (Philadelphia)

Tour Specifics

Evening Programs

Friday, August 12

Group arrived and was driven to hotel in Tel Aviv in time for sunset on the Mediterranean Sea.

Saturday, August 13

Caesarea

Our first real "site" was Caesarea which we visited today on our way to Galilee. Rebecca Kantor gave a brief orientation in the old Roman theater (where Jesus and Ganid attended a Greek play in April of 22 A.D.) Here we were treated to the first of many wonderful musical interludes with the singing of Waldine Stump, Barbara Hestor, Chick Montgomery and Tom Allen. Barbara also sang a solo for us as we sat in the theater.

Readers of The Urantia Book will probably be most familiar with Caesarea as the place from which Jesus embarked on his journey to Rome with Ganid and Gonod. Page 1492 gives some detailed site description mentioning the wall which served as a promenade around the port, the water system, the statue of the Roman emperor, the amphitheater, the theater and the governor's palace.

Caesarea is presently the scene of one of the most extensive excavation projects currently under way in Israel. This was a large cosmopolitan city during Jesus' day. The artificial harbor constructed by Herod made Caesarea one of the most important maritime cities in the eastern Mediterranean for hundreds of years. It was the Roman capital of Palestine and thus provided a direct link to Rome and other cities of major importance throughout the empire.

In addition to the city itself, we were able to see the ruins of the Roman aqueducts which brought water to the city. These are presently dated to the second century A.D.

[the following material is condensed from "King Herod's Dream -- Caesarea on the Sea"]

The significance of Caesarea to us today lies primarily in it's being the site of significant activities in the early decades of the development of Christianity. Paul was in Caesarea under open arrest for nearly two years. Because Caesarea was such a busy seaport Paul had access to communications with the churches he had established in Asia Minor, Macedonia and Greece. It is possible that many of Paul's letters were written here. Some scholars think that the gospel accounts of Jesus' life took shape, at least in part, here in Caesarea.

[Note that the UB on page 1342 indicates that one Nathan, a Greek Jew from Caesarea, worked for John in the writing of the Gospel of John and that "First John" was a cover letter written by John himself for the work which Nathan executed under his direction.]

Acts 8:4-40 talks about one Philip who preached the Christian message in Samaria and that this same Philip eventually came to live in Caesarea. Paul lived with this Philip in 58 A.D. Was this the same Philip as the Apostle Philip? Page 1551 of The Urantia Book talks about the Apostle Philip working with the Samaritans. Did Paul spend time with Philip the Apostle in Caesarea?

The Jewish revolt of 66-70 A.D. which resulted in the Roman destruction of the temple in Jerusalem broke out largely as a result of the pagans in Caesarea attempting to slaughter the entire Jewish population of the city. Some 20,000 Jews were massacred in the streets of Caesarea during this episode.

Following the Roman victory, Titus celebrated his brother's birthday at Caesarea with a display of beast fights and man-to-man combat in the amphitheater. Forced to fight as gladiators, twenty-five hundred Jewish prisoners-of-war met their deaths.

Perhaps the first real theologian of Christianity, Origen of Alexandria, moved to Caesarea in 231 A.D. He had embraced the ideal of Christian asceticism and had devoted himself to the interpretation of the Christian scriptures and doctrines in terms of Greek Platonism. He moved to Caesarea after running into conflicts with the bishop of Alexandria.

Origen virtually turned Caesarea into a university town over the next two decades. The city already had a reputation for its Sophists and teachers of the pagan classics. Origen added Christian learning and advanced research. He did much to develop and articulate the first comprehensive theology of the Trinity. He wrote a number of his major works at Caesarea including an immense critical edition of the Old Testament with the text arranged in six parallel columns: Hebrew, Hebrew in Greek letters, and four different translations into Greek(!). Because such a hand-written work could not be widely circulated, serious scholars had to come to Caesarea to use it. Origen attracted many pupils, some of whom became prominent theologians in the Eastern Roman Empire.

In 250-51 the Roman emperor Decius ordered the persecution of Christians throughout the empire, including Palestine. Origen was arrested, imprisoned, and tortured on the rack in an effort by his tormentors to force him to abjure Christianity by sacrificing to pagan gods. Origen survived the ordeal with his faith intact, but died a few years later as a result of his injuries.

He left as a legacy to his adopted city the rich library of pagan and Christian books that he had assembled while writing his own works. Caesarea's library later reached an estimated size of thirty thousand volumes.

In the Great Persecution of 303-13 the priest Pamphilus was put to

death. Pamphilus had devoted his family's great wealth to putting in order and expanding Origen's library. Pamphilus had also used the library, along with his own learning, to educate another generation of pupils in the Christian school of Caesarea.

[end of quote from King Herod's Dream]

One of Pamphilus' pupils was Eusebius, the first historian of the new Christian movement. Eusebius went on to make a major contribution to the ideological side of Constantine's new Christian empire, thus transferring much of the accumulated learning of the first three centuries into the empire which was to dominate Western civilization for a thousand years.

The story of Caesarea does not stop here. The city was taken by the Persians in 614 and then the Arabs took it in 639. The Crusaders took it in 1101 and it became the staging port for Crusader advances into Palestine. The Sultan Baibars took it from the Crusaders in 1265 and destroyed it. It was gradually covered by the shifting dunes of the eastern Mediterranean until the end of the nineteenth century when a village was established on the site by immigrants from Bosnia. Preliminary excavations were undertaken in 1945.

Excavation of the Roman theater and some of the Crusader structures were undertaken in the following decades. Some of the underwater structures were initially studied by the Link marine Expedition of 1960. In 1979 the Caesarea Ancient Harbour Excavation Project was formed. In the past few years a major dig has been under way to excavate major portions of this once great city.

It is of interest that all of this excavation post-dates the appearance of The Urantia Book.

Although much work is being done today on the site, I still recommend "King Herod's Dream" to the interested student or traveler. Much of the historical information is firmly established and the book contains some excellent drawings and maps of the area.

After leaving Caesarea, we continued on to Haifa and briefly visited the Mt. Carmel area. The most notable event here was watching Tom Choquette think he was being charged \$30.00 for a plate of spaghetti.

Although not visited by the tour, there are caves in the Mt. Carmel region and a museum in which some of the items excavated from the caves are displayed. These caves appear to have been used relatively continuously for

some 150,000 years. Thus one may find information here about human communities which existed as far back as the period following the collapse of the Prince's regime.

There are also skeletal remains and artifacts here which date to the time of the collapse of the first garden. This region is to the south of the location of the first garden and perhaps these remains are from some of the hostile tribes which prevented Adam and Eve from going south when they left the garden (847).

The ancient site of Megiddo was visited in the afternoon as we continued on our way to Galilee. 300,000 years ago Megiddo was the headquarters of the orange race during the time of Porshunta (724).

The Urantia Book refers to Megiddo as "the international battlefield of Palestine." (1404) This city could be seen by the young Jesus from the hilltop in Nazareth and he apparently enjoyed considering the history of this site. (1387)

He also passed through this city on his way to Passover one year (1404). Megiddo was included in the cities visited during the second preaching tour in 28 A.D. (1668)

Megiddo, which dominates the Plain of Jezreel and is the site of the mythological "battle of Armageddon" which supposedly will take place at the end of time, was already a significant fortified city by the Early Bronze Age. More or less continuous excavations since 1903 have yielded more than 20 distinct occupation strata. Solomon apparently remodeled the city to function as a military base for chariot warfare in the adjacent plains.

This site provides a good overview of the entire cultural history of the region. Also of significance here is the water tunnel which allowed residents of the city to have access to water from a spring which was outside the city walls. Most of our group was able to walk through the tunnel system.

Finally we arrived at Kibbutz Nof Ginosaur on the shores of the Sea of Galilee. In many respects, this was the objective of the journey, for there is no place on the planet like the Sea of Galilee. Rural and removed from most of the hustle and hype of the tourist attractions one can easily find places of solitude from which to watch the sunrise and sunset, to hear the cooing of doves in the early morning and watch fish jumping from the water.

When I asked individuals on our tour what had been most significant to them on the visit, they invariably responded, "Seeing the Sea of Galilee."

Berkeley is to be commended for finding this Kibbutz just south of Capernaum. The facilities were modest but adequate and the food was very good. The location provided easy access to all the sites we wanted to visit in the Galilee region. The staff at the Kibbutz was also very helpful and accomodating, providing meeting rooms as needed and providing competent guides for individuals wanting to take extra excursions on our day off.

This evening Rick Goebel gave a very informative presentation on Capernaum and the Goebel children used colored chalk and a large blackboard to provide graphics announcing the title of his talk.

Sunday, August 14

Day begun with boat ride on Sea of Galilee, morning prayer by Paula and morning readings by Steve McIntosh and Warren; a talk by Larry Geis about the boat found at the Kibbutz.

Visited Mt of Beatitudes; paused in garden for prayer, worship and reading of the ordination sermon from the UB (passing the book around a circle with multiple readers); Anis recited the Lord's Prayer in an Arabic dialect which he said was close to the Aramaic which Jesus would have spoken. Israeli military helicopters could be heard passing in the background.

Visited Tabgha and Capernaum

On to Cesarea-Philippi via the Syrian border past the Crusader fortress. Heavy military presence in this area which still bears the scars of the brutal assault on the Golan Heights during the 1967 war.

Viewed the UN Headquarters near Quneitra.

Larry Geis did presentation on Sepphoris.
Craig Rohrsen distributed handouts on Tiberias

Monday, August 15

(Switched guides for the day)

Visited Nazareth, "Cana", Sepphoris, Safed

Tried to get up to top of Hill of Simeon – made it and the good sisters at the Selisian convent opened the gate so we could get at the crest. Noted big differences since last visit in 1982 (Becky and I came up here before the tour got into town but couldn't get inside the compound.) Visited the accepted site

of the synagogue where Jesus would have attended -- beautiful singing session with our group only in the wonderful acoustics of this space. Visited Church of the Annunciation and appreciated the beautiful chanting going on and observed a large Catholic mass being offered.

Sepphoris -- governor's palace?

Safed -- wandered about town. Would have been a spectacular trip on a clear day. Very hot and hazy the entire time in Israel.

Tom Allen

(Did not deliver talk because the drivers and tour guides changed the schedule of the tour.) Steve McIntosh gave lakeside talk about the Sea of Galilee.

Tuesday, August 16

Day at leisure -- drove Becky to Cesarea-Philippi via same route as Sunday; on to Metulla and back to the Kibbutz.

Some folks went to Mt. Hermon -- came back with info on the "circles in the desert" trying to arrange a visit to the site. Unable to because of military activities but arranged later in the week as a side tour from Jerusalem.

Study group after dinner.

Wednesday, August 17

To Jerusalem via Beth-Shean and Jericho.

Spectacular excavations at Beth-Shean including the amphitheater, probably the site where Jesus and Joseph watched the games on their way to Passover. Saw spectacular monastery in wadi above Herod's palace near Jericho. Name of monastery? Elisha's spring. To Jerusalem via Mt. of Olives. Split into city with Becky, Barbara Hester and Tom Choquette and Steve Sawyer to see wailing wall, Church of the Holy Sepulcre, and some of the old city.

Cheryl Bellman

Talk on Jerusalem

Thursday, August 18

Beautiful singing in St. Anne's (near pool of Bethesda) -- formed circle. Were joined in singing the Lord's prayer by a group from Africa -- we later sang an aleluia with them and exchanged hugs and greetings.

Wailing wall - bar mitzvahs and joyous celebrations

Mosque closed.

Walked Via Dolorosa and visited Church of the Holy Sepulcre. Visited the traditional "stations of the cross". On to the Garden Tomb where we sat outside and read from the UB.

Evening presentation by:

Nathan Jansen

Ron Louie

Jim Johnston

With additional readings by

Alice Hodemaker

Tom Choquette

John Hales

Ef Hodemaker

Jim Johnston

Chuck Burton

Barbara and Waldine closed with a song

Friday, August 19

To Dead Sea via Bethany -- stopped at church built over supposed site of Mary, Martha and Lazarus' house. Barbara sang.

On to Qumran and Masada with a stop at Engedi on the return trip. Readings on bus -- even the kids participated. Larry Geis pointed out the Nazarite parable about Dives and Lazarus -- will it be found in DS writings?

Today the group journeyed south along the shores of the Dead Sea. We stopped at Qumran, proceeded south to Masada and briefly visited Engedi on the return north.

After the visit to Masada, we were taken to a resort on the Dead Sea where we could have lunch and where those who wished to do so could experience an attempt to swim in the Dead Sea. Notable at this location were several high-rise hotels being built and a community developing as a health resort, with access to hot springs and the unique mineral waters of the Dead Sea for a variety of therapies.

[Include some data on current Israeli efforts to capitalize on the mineral content of the Dead Sea.

The Judean landscape while often desolate is geologically dramatic. The road from Jerusalem descends from an altitude of 2,400 feet above sea level to 1,300 feet below sea level, to the lowest point on the planet's surface.

Qumran appears to have had its most important period of occupation between 150 B.C. and 68 A.D. At present it is believed that a community of Essenes lived and worked here during this period but this assessment is controversial. Findings at the site have been interpreted as indicating a place where a great deal of writing occurred. The location of near-by caves where the scrolls were found is well-known. Manuscripts of every Old Testament book, with the exception of Esther, were found in addition to many more documents. A great deal is currently being published about the Dead Sea Scrolls and the serious student is referred to a good book store; any book suggested here would be outdated in six months.

Among the scrolls found is the oldest known copy of the Septuagint written about 100 B.C. Recall that Jesus had been given a copy of the Septuagint by family friends in Alexandria and that the presence of this document at the Nazareth home occasioned visits from many individuals interested in the Greek translation of the scriptures. In a pre-printing press

world where all such documents were painstakingly reproduced by hand, this was a real treasure which Jesus had been given. In telling us about it, the revelators use the term "priceless manuscript" to describe it. (1359)

The book also tells us that having a copy of this rare manuscript made Joseph's home "a much-sought place and enabled Jesus, as he grew up, to meet an almost endless procession of earnest students and sincere truth seekers." He subsequently donated this manuscript to the library of the Nazareth synagogue as his maturity offering to the Lord on his fifteenth birthday (and also to keep it from being seized by the Roman tax collectors.) (1393)

Another factor of interest to readers of the Urantia papers is the mentioning of Melchizedek in some of the scrolls. The meaning to be ascribed to some of this material is perhaps more controversial than the circumstances surrounding the creation and use of the scrolls themselves.

In a number of places the scrolls refer to "the Sons of Zadok", the "Zaddikim" or "Righteous Ones". "Melchi Zedek" is used as "The King of Righteousness". Sometimes "Zedek" is used alone and at least one scholar has suggested that the "z-d-k" sequence always by implication be understood as referring to Melchizedek. There is a great deal of work to be done here by competent scholars to see if it is possible to trace a path back through existing documents and stories to the times of Melchizedek.

Perhaps the primary factor of interest in the Qumran-Engedi region for readers of The Urantia Book is that this is the region where John the Baptist tended his flocks, studied and from where he launched his ministry which prepared the ground for Jesus.

Just who inhabited this region during the first century and who occupied Qumran are issues of great current controversy. The Urantia Book clearly designates this region as a major center for the Nazarites. Page 1496 refers to Engedi as "the southern headquarters of the Nazarite brotherhood." It's interesting to note that outside the Urantia papers and some references in the Old Testament, there is little information available on the Nazarites.

In reading passages in The Urantia Book on John the Baptist, we get some insight into what life was like in this region at that time (See pages 1496 through 1499). The book describes John studying "the sacred writings which he found at the Engedi home of the Nazarites." It even mentions the Isaiah and Malachi scrolls as ones which particularly impressed John (1499).

John was no isolated teacher. On page 1502 it is indicated that in the fifteen months of John's public ministry he baptized more than 100,000 penitents. The ford across the Jordan where John did much of his work was not far from Qumran. Millar Burrows devotes an entire chapter to the relation

of John the Baptist to the Qumran community in the book "More Light on the Dead Sea Scrolls." Even though this book is somewhat outdated (published in 1958), Millar's arguments provide interesting background on John and his work.

Abner was also associated with this region. In referring to the Nazarites on page 1605 it says that "Abner had been head of this group." On page 1817 it is indicated that Abner was "a Nazarite and onetime head of the Nazarite school at Engedi."

It is my opinion that there is sufficient information contained in The Urantia Book to significantly inform some of the controversies surrounding the Dead Sea Scrolls (as well as start some new ones!) and will do so in the future. It should be noted that the scrolls and their associated controversies post-date the completion of the Urantia papers.

The identification of Qumran with the Essenes is based largely on a few comments made by Josephus in his "Wars of the Jews". However, it should be noted that Josephus uses the term "Essenes" to describe individuals who "would not call any man Lord." Page 1497 of The Urantia Book says that "The Engedi colony included not only Nazarites....but numerous other ascetic herdsmen who congregated in this region with their herds and fraternized with the Nazarite brotherhood." Scrolls have been found in various parts of the region, some significant finds having been made in the Nahal Heber which is about three miles south of Engedi.

The available data illuminated by the text of the Urantia papers leads me to speculate that this entire region of the Judean wilderness between Qumran and Engedi was populated by ascetic herdsmen who used these settlements as community gathering places, libraries and educational centers and perhaps for purposes of trade as well. There is evidence at both Qumran and Engedi to support the idea that these communities played a substantial role in the commercial life of the region.

Part of what interests us, as students of The Urantia Book, is that the historical events which spark so much controversy about Qumran, the destruction of these communities, and the dramatic events which occurred at Masada is that these were major events in the early outworking of the fourth epochal revelation.

Far from appearing to be a library, the scrolls found at Qumran appear to have been stashed for safekeeping. The community was apparently abandoned in 68 A.D. as the Romans attempted to put down the Jewish revolt. What happened to the religionists inhabiting this region?

Consider: Due east of Qumran is Amman, the capital of present day

Jordan and the Philadelphia of Jesus' day. Remember that Abner had moved to Philadelphia and set up his headquarters there. On page 1831 we find, "The synagogue of Philadelphia had never been subject to the supervision of the Sanhedrin at Jerusalem and therefore had never been closed to the teachings of Jesus and his associates....This very synagogue later on became a Christian church and was the missionary headquarters for the promulgation of the gospel through the regions to the east. It was long a stronghold of the Master's teachings and stood alone in this region as a center of Christian learning for centuries....Philadelphia was really the headquarters of the early church in the south and east as Antioch was in the north and west."

Consider also some of the characters who were supporting Abner at Philadelphia after the resurrection of the Master. Lazarus became the treasurer of the church at Philadelphia (1849) and was a strong supporter of Abner in his controversy with Paul. Mary and Martha disposed of their lands at Bethany and moved to Philadelphia (1849). David Zebedee became "...the financial overseer of all those large interests of the kingdom which had their center at Philadelphia during the lifetime of Abner (1869). Jesus' sister, Ruth, would also have been a part of this community, having married David Zebedee two months after the Master's death (2031).

With such a strong nucleus, did many of Abner's associates from the Engedi region join this group in Philadelphia? Given his contacts, did Abner get sets of scrolls for the center in Philadelphia? Would the religionists in the Judean hills fled to the Philadelphia region when faced with the Roman response to the Jewish revolt of 68 A.D? Abner would have still been in Philadelphia at this time, not dying until November of 74 (1832).

How many early kingdom believers died at Masada? Did Abner, Lazarus, Mary, Martha, David and Ruth spend three years living through the horror of watching their friends attempt to outlast the Roman siege? And this after seeing the temple at Jerusalem destroyed and the Jerusalem community of believers scattered across the land?

Sobering indeed are such considerations.

Masada itself was spectacular. The account of the three-year Roman siege is an epic story best heard as one gazes down upon the remains of the Roman siege wall and the ramp, or while one wanders through the luxurious bath house and steam rooms Herod had constructed as part of his palace on this remote plateau. We were fortunate to have reader Sheryl Bellman with us on the tour. She had participated in the original excavation of Masada and had very informative stories to share with the group. One of her close co-workers found an ostrakon containing the name of one of the men selected to kill the members of the community as the Romans made their final assault.

This day we also visited the present day village of Bethany and the supposed site of the tomb of Lazarus and the home of Mary, Martha and Lazarus. I don't have much to say about these tourist sites with their hawkers of carved olive wood crucifixes and rosary beads.

Saturday, August 20

This was the day on which part of the group returned to the Golan region to visit the site of the stone circles. The name of the site is Rujm El Heri and is currently under study by several universities in Israel. Judged even by the standards of similar megalithic structures which appear from Europe to India, this site is impressive. Nearly a third of a mile in circumference, the three concentric rings each measure nearly eight feet in height and ten feet in width. They are dated to the Early Bronze Age (3150-2200 B.C.). Scholars disagree on the age of the central burial cairn which may date to the Late Bronze Age (1550-1200 B.C.)

Megalithic sites abound throughout the region. A British survey conducted by C.R. Conder in 1889 devoted an entire volume to the description of some seven hundred megalithic structures in the Transjordan.

In what may be the first serious archeological work by a student of The Urantia Book, Michael Wisenbaker has examined the site using sonar techniques but available data remains inconclusive. Archeologist Mattanyah Zohar, writing in the July/August 1993 issue of "Biblical Archeology Review", conjectures that it was the burial site of a "Great Man" perhaps sometime in the Earmly Bronze Age.

To appreciate this site one must recall that such megalithic structures predate the monumental architecture of cities. In "pre-city" cultures, burial sites of important people often evolved into ceremonial or cult sites -- places where important community activities took place. Such burial sites would often assume transcendental importance for later generations and Zohar believes that this is what happened at Rujm El Hiri.

Zohar also sees evidence that the structure of the rings is such that anyone approaching the central burial cairn would be forced to approach in a pre-determined spiral through the three concentric rings. He describes several cultures which have ritual walks around the tombs of sheiks or famous rabbis.

As this was a "free day" people were on their own to choose and visit various places.

A few of the group explored the tunnel constructed under the direction of Hezekiah in 701 B.C. which enabled water from the Gihon Spring, outside the city walls, to be brought into Jerusalem via an underground channel. This is similar to the tunnel constructed at Megiddo which was seen by most of the individuals on the tour. A very interesting and detailed description of the

construction of this tunnel appears in the July/August 1994 issue of "Biblical Archeology Review."

Other individuals visited the Islamic Museum, the Israel Museum or spent time in the Old City. Anyone visiting Israel with the intent to better understand the history of the region would do well to begin with a visit to the archaeological wing of The Israel Museum.

In addition to containing excellent artifacts and well-designed exhibits, the museum provides an overview of the region's history, an introduction to terminology

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Jerusalem was described at the end of the day by one member of the group as "a religious theme park".

Waldine Stump gave evening presentation

Sunday, August 21

6:00 Women's Corp worship in the garden behind the hotel

6:30 Flag raising with readings from great spiritual leaders of the past and present coordinated by Larry Geis. Song by Barbara and Waldine.

To Bethlehem and a visit to the Church of the Nativity; on to "Shepherd's Fields" where we had a nice time of quiet and communion at noon. Remembrance of bread and wine (not very well organized or coordinated primarily due to Berkeley's reluctance to engage in such activities) Individuals brought chalices which they had purchased during the week for the occasion which could be taken home as remembrance of the day or for future use. Becky and I used the one which we had for our wedding and our first shared communion in Wyoming. Israeli fighter jets could be heard doing low altitude overflights in the background.

To Evangelical Lutheran Church in Bethlehem for prayer and singing. Waldine and Barbara sang -- Berkeley spoke -- group sang re-written Christmas carols. These sound pretty tacky and we need to get some songs of our own. Beautiful stained glass windows in this church.

This same day we visited the Dome of the Rock and the Al-Aqsa (sp?) mosque as well as the Garden of Gethsemane and the Church of all Nations.

Prayer after evening meal by Tom Choquette and music by Waldine and Tom Allen. Commemoration continued outside in the garden behind the hotel.

Monday, August 22

Last day in Israel. Becky and I went to Israel Museum and had lunch at American Colony Hotel with Bob and Betsy before returning to the hotel to get on the buss for the airport.

Part of the group went on to Egypt, while others boarded flights for New York, San Francisco and Los Angeles.

Importance of relationship between group and guide

The great guide controversy "diversity"

Anis

Active in local Greek Orthodox community

Fascinated by Dead Sea Scrolls issues

Brother a professor at Bethlehem University

Dead Sea Scrolls passed through his hands

Given a UB -- very interested

Daily opening prayer on bus

Part of group to Mt. Hermon

Bus to ski resort

Tram to top

Walk to crest

Had to cross military line with guide "to go up on the mountain to pray."

Future Suggestions

Prepare chants and songs in simple harmony which everyone learns ahead of time to sing in cathedrals, etc.

Keep tour groups small so that everyone can share a common frame of reference.

Start trip with visit to Israel Museum with competent guide and a program designed to give a contextual background for understanding what will be encountered on the trip.

APPENDIX I

BACKGROUND HISTORIC DATA

Note that these dates are very approximate. Similar cultural patterns emerge in different geographical regions at different times in the chronological sequence. The Urantia Book makes a note of this on page 903, "There were no distinct periods, such as the Stone, Bronze, and Iron Ages; all three existed at the same time in different localities." Nevertheless, I have listed the traditional chronological periods below for general orientation to the literature.

For practical purposes, it seems reasonable to equate "Bronze" with "Andite" noting on page 904 that it was one of the Adamsonites who discovered how to alloy tin and copper in Turkestan.

It is interesting to note that the most consistent break point across the literature is the crossover into the upper paleolithic which corresponds to the arrival of Adam and Eve and the end of the ice age.

These periods are all broken down into finer subdivisions in the archaeological literature although most public museum displays do not go beyond the divisions listed here. These times are approximate; the actual times which form the boundaries of these periods vary somewhat from source to source.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL PERIODS

BC 500,000 80,000	Lower Paleolithic (Old Stone Age)
80,000 35,000	Middle Paleolithic
35,000 15,000	Upper Paleolithic
15,000 8,000	Mesolithic (Middle Stone Age)
8,000 4,000	Neolithic (New Stone Age)
4,000 3,150	Chalcolithic

3,150 2,500	Early Bronze Age
2,500 1,550	Middle Bronze Age
1,550 1,200	Late Bronze Age
1,200 586	Iron Age
586 332	Babylonian and Persian Periods
332 37	Hellenistic Period
37 AD 324	Roman Period
37 AD 70	(Herodian Period)
324 640	Byzantine Period
640 1099	Early Arab Period
1099 1291	Crusader Period

GENERAL TIMELINE

(Years BC)

2,000,000	First North American glaciation
1,500,000	Second period of glaciation
1,000,000	Urantia registered as inhabited planet Birth of Andon and Fonta Life Carriers relinquish planetary sovereignty Third glacial advance
990,000	Continuing dispersion of Andonites
983,323	Onagar and the development of the first high spiritual civilization on the planet
950,000	Deterioration of Andonic civilization
900,000	Emergence of the Heidelberg race Foxhall peoples Badonan tribes
850,000	Appearance of Neanderthal races
750,000	Fourth glacial advance
650,000	Mild interglacial period
500,000	Mutation of the Sangik races Fifth glacial advance Arrival of Planetary Prince Emergence of Primary Midwayers
350,000	Fantad and the cultural zenith of the green race
300,000	Yellow race established in China
298,000	Headquarters of Orange race at Megiddo (oldest UB reference to known site in Palestine?)
250,000	Sixth period of glaciation
200,000	Outbreak of Lucifer rebellion Van and Amadon near Lake Van Appearance of the pre-Sumerian Nodites
199,500	Orlandof ministers to the blue race European Old Stone Age
150,000	Maximum incursion of sixth glaciation

100,000	Formation of polar ice caps Extinction of orange race Singlangton
83,000	Migration of Red race across Bering land bridge to North America
78,000	Civilizations established in Mexico, Central America and South America
63,000	Onamonalonton in California
35,848	Arrival of Adam and Eve
35,748	Serapatatia assumes leadership of western Nodite confederation
35,730	Collapse of Edenic regime and migration of Adam and Eve to Mesopotamia -- Development of second garden
35,719	Birth of Seth and subsequent development of Sethite priesthood
35,337	Death of Eve
35,318	Death of Adam
33,000	End of ice age Adamson center founded near Lake Van
32,875	Adamson and Ratta -- appearance of secondary Midwayers
23,000	Appearance of first Andites
23,000	Beginning of primary Adamite migrations and Andite expansion
18,000	Yellow River and Yangtze River cultures thriving
16,000	Sethite priests enter India
13,000	Beginning of second period of Adamite migrations and continuing Andite expansion Andites enter China
12,000	Andite settlement of Crete
11,000	Deterioration of Sethite teachings in India
10,000	Descendants of Adamson settle in Greece Dawn of the era of independent cities
9,000	Period of climatic changes in Turkestan region
9,500	Oldest identified walls at Jericho
6,500	Spiritual decline of Andites

5,000	<p>Period of severe flooding in Mesopotamia</p> <p>Evolving white races dominant in northern Europe</p> <p>Refugees from Mesopotamia settle Cyprus</p>
3,500	Complex city-states emerging in Mesopotamia
3,100	<p>Unification of upper and lower Egypt under Menes</p> <p>Begin sequence of first three Egyptian dynasties</p>
3,000	Melchizedek receives petition Most Highs of Edentia for help
2,800	<p>Stonehenge</p> <p>Rujm El-hiri</p> <p>Period of European Megaliths</p>
2,650	Fourth Egyptian Dynasty
2,600	Great pyramid built in Egypt
2,500	<p>Final absorption of the Andites</p> <p>Fall of Lagash</p> <p>Fall of Akkad</p> <p>First Dynasty of Ur</p> <p>Fifth Dynasty in Egypt</p> <p>Rise of Indus River civilization</p> <p>Andites develop compound bow and chariot warfare techniques</p>
2,400	Civilization in Europe, the Levant and China under assault by barbarian horsemen from the Eurasian Steppes
2,350	<p>Sargon the Great unifies Sumerian City-states</p> <p>Akkadian domination of Mesopotamia</p> <p>Sixth Egyptian Dynasty</p>
2,100	<p>Deterioration of culture in Egypt</p> <p>Increasing use of bronze for tools of war in Mesopotamia</p>
2,050	<p>Third dynasty of Ur</p> <p>Beginning of Middle Kingdom in Egypt</p>

2,000	Suites and Guites assault Mesopotamia Final collapse of Second Garden culture Trojan culture at Troy Emergence of Hurrians, Canannites, Assyrians, Kassites and Elamites in Mesopotamian border regions
1,973	Arrival of Machiventa Melchizedek Covenant with Abraham Hittites carry Melchizedek teachings to descendants of Adamson near Lake Van
1,800	Epic of Gilgamesh and Epic of Creation written Hittite imperial state in Anatolia
1,750	Hammurabi of Babylon reunites Sumerian City-states Rule of the Amorites in Mesopotamia
1,700	Hyksos domination of Egypt Continuing barbarian invasions of Europe and the Levant
1,600	Beginning of Mycenaean period in Greece Beginning of Mitannian state in Levant
1,550	Beginning of New Kingdom in Egypt
1,525	Kassite conquest of Mesopotamia
1,490	Tuthmosis III in Egypt
1,475	Hittite New Kingdom develops in Anatolia
1,465	Expulsion of Hyksos peoples from Egypt Appearance of first major cities in Egypt -- Memphis and Thebes
1,450	Destruction of Minoan empire
1,400	Ugarit palace archives -- tablets discovered containing epic cycles dealing with gods, kings and heroes which echo earlier Mesopotamian myths
1,380	Ikhnaton (Amenhotep IV)
1,290	Ramesses II
1,250	Fall of Troy
1,280	Exodus from Egypt under Moses Egypt under increasing assault by the "Sea Peoples"
1,250	Conquest of Canaan under Joshua

1,200	<p>Destruction of Ugarit and the Hittite Empire</p> <p>Increasing use of iron and development of steel for tools of war amongst Andite descendants</p> <p>Mesopotamia overrun by northern barbarians</p> <p>Begin the period of the Judges in Israel</p>
1,190	Philistines settle coastal regions of Palestine
1,150	Deborah, Gideon in Israel
1,100	<p>End of Egyptian Empire</p> <p>Tiglath-Pileser I</p> <p>Samuel</p>
1,013	David makes Jerusalem the capital of the United Kingdom of Israel
973	Solomon builds the first temple
928	United Kingdom splits into Judah and Israel
883	Ashurnasirpal II at Nimrud
876	King Omri founds Samaria
859	Shalmaneser III in Assyria
745	Tiglath-Pileser III founds Neo-Assyrian Empire
721	Sargon II
722	Fall of Samaria; captives taken to Assyria
715	Hezekiah builds tunnel from Gihon spring
689	Sennacherib sacks Babylon
671	Assyrian conquest of Egypt
668	Ashurbanipal of Assyria initiates search for ancient tablets and establishes the palace library
640	King Josiah institutes religious reforms in Judah
612	<p>Nineveh destroyed by Babylonians and Medes</p> <p>Assyrian empire destroyed</p>
587	Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon conquers Jerusalem, destroys temple and exiles Jews to Babylon
560	Massive editing of Old Testament texts by Hebrew priests in Babylon
555	Nabonidus, last King of Babylon, launches desperate attempt to excavate ancient temple sites in quest of lost secrets
538	Cyrus of Persia conquers Babylon and allows Jews to return to Jerusalem -- unites Middle Eastern national and imperial states

537 to 332	Persian Period -- Persian empire extends from the Nile to the Oxus
522	Darius the Great of Persia
515	Completion of second temple
500	Gautama Siddartha Lao-tse Confucius Zoroaster
499	Ionian revolt in Greece
400	Asoka makes Buddhism the dominant religion of one-half the world in one generation
332 to 167	Hellenistic Period
331	Conquests of Alexander the Great
323	Ptolemy I in Egypt
200	Conquest of Palestine by Seleucids of Syria
169	Antiochus IV Epiphanes, Seleucid king, plunders the Temple at Jerusalem, forbids practice of Judaism
167 to 141	Maccabean war of liberation Rise of the Hasmonean Kingdom
131	Seige of Jerusalem by Antiochus VII
63 BC to AD 324	Roman period
63	Pompey conquers Jerusalem and destroys temple
37 to 4 BC	Reign of Herod the Great Temple rebuilt
7 BC-30 AD	Jesus of Nazareth
66 to 70 AD	First great Jewish revolt against the Romans
67 AD	Vespasian arrives; Zealots take over Jerusalem
70 AD	Destruction of the temple by Titus and the fall of Jerusalem
73 AD	Seige and ultimate fall of Masada
132 to 135 AD	Bar Kochba leads second revolt of the Jews
135 Ad	Hadrian levels Jerusalem and bans Jews from the site
324	Byzantine Period in Palestine
326 Ad	Constantine declares Christianity the official religion of the Empire

614 AD	Persian conquest of Jerusalem
638 AD	Beginning of the Moslem Period in Palestine
691 AD	Dome of the Rock completed
1099 to 1187 AD	Crusader Kingdom
1187 AD	Saladin captures Jerusalem from the Crusaders
1250 AD	Rule of the Mameluke slave warriors in Palestine
1400s	Development of printing press and movable type
1500s	Destruction of Meso-American civilizations Protestant revolt in Europe
1517 AD	Beginning of Ottoman Turkish period in Palestine
1538 AD	Suleiman the Magnificent rebuilds the walls of Jerusalem into their present state
1559 AD	Begin age of the great religious wars in Europe continuing to 1715 AD
1611 AD	Publication of King James version of the Bible
1715 AD	Begin period of increasing decline of Western spiritual culture in response to the fanaticism precipitated by the Protestant revolt and subsequent religious wars in Europe
1776 AD	American Revolution
1789 AD	French Revolution
1750 AD	Continuing decimation of the red race
1800s	Discovery of role played by micro-organisms in human health -- subsequent development of vaccines
1915 AD	Beginning development of petroleum-based military and industrial super-states competing for global control
1917 AD	Beginning of first world war Russian Revolution
1920 AD	Fifth Epochal Revelation in process Continued deployment of radio as a means of global mass communication
1917 to 1948 AD	British Occupation and Mandatory period in Palestine
1942 AD	Beginning of second world war
1945 AD	Nuclear energy developed as an instrument of warfare Marshall Plan in Europe and laying of foundations for global Capitalist economic system

1948 AD	Israeli war of Independence
1950s	Continuing dramatic global shift to petroleum-based agricultural technologies and use of hybridized seed for food production
1955 AD	Publication of <u>The Urantia Book</u> First commercial trans-Atlantic jet flight Beginning international deployment of television as a medium of mass communication
1960s	Beginning of extensive deployment of global communications satellites Andite descendants land on moon
1970s	Beginning of remote exploration of other planets in solar system
1980s	Unprecedented acceleration of global population growth rate -- more people are estimated to be presently alive on the planet than have lived here in the entire previous historic period
1990s	Continuing spread of global computer networks and new communications technologies Massive economic collapse of Socialist states in Eastern Europe and Central Asia Continuing emergence of global economy Acceleration of project to sequence human genome Launching of Hubble Space Telescope

Misc. Dates and Names

Middle Pleistocene	500,000 to 100,000 BC
Upper Pleistocene	100,000 to 12,000 BC
Holocene	12,000 to 3150 BC

Civil Rulers of the Period

The Herodians

Herod the Great	37 to 4 BC
Archelaus	4 BC to AD 6
Herod Antipas	4 BC to AD 39
Philip	4 BC to AD 34
Herod Agrippa I	AD 37 to AD 44
Herod Agrippa II	AD 53 to AD 100(?)

The Procurators

Coponius	AD 6 to AD 9
M. Ambibulus	AD 9 to AD 12
Annius Rufus	AD 12 to AD 15
Valerius Gratus	AD 15 to AD 26
Pontius Pilatus	AD 26 to AD 36
Marcellus	AD 36 to AD 37
Cuspius Fadus	AD 41 to AD 46
Tiberius Alexander	AD 46 to AD 48
Ventidius Cumanus	AD 48 to AD 52
Antonius Felix	AD 52 to AD 60
Porcius Festus	AD 60 to AD 62
Albinus	AD 62 to AD 64
Gessius Florus	AD 64 to AD 66

The Roman Emperors

Augustus	27 BC to AD 14
Tiberius	AD 14 to AD 37
Gaius Caligula	AD 37 to AD 41
Claudius	AD 41 to AD 54
Nero	AD 54 to AD 68
Balba	AD 68 to AD 69
Otho	AD 69
Vitellius	AD 69
Vespasian	AD 69 to AD 79

Titus AD 79 to AD 81
Domitian AD 81 to AD 96
Nerva AD 96 to AD 98
Trajan AD 98 to AD 117
Hadrian AD 117 to AD 138

Constantine the Great AD 308 to AD 337