



Correspondence

Comments on articles appearing in the magazine are always welcome, and should be addressed to the editor in whose section the article appears.

Ezekiel's visions of the Millennium

Several readers have written to comment on the series of articles of the above title by Brother Geoff Cave, which ran from December 2001 until July 2002. Most of these comments put forward alternative views. These comments have been retained for consideration at the end of the series, except for one short letter in support of Brother Cave, published in [February 2002 \(p. 56\)](#). We now publish comments on one of the earlier matters dealt with in the series; comments on other matters are retained for consideration in later issues.—Tony Benson

The extent of the land in the Kingdom

I am concerned about Brother Cave's conclusion that the twelve tribes will occupy only a very small area of land in the Kingdom ([Dec. 2001, p. 469](#); [Jan. 2002, p. 26](#)).

He states that the promise in Genesis 15:18-21 regarding the extent of the land to be possessed by the seed of Abraham was fulfilled in Israel's past, the seed being solely the natural descendants of Abraham, and that this passage does not therefore determine the extent of the land in the Kingdom. However, surely in these words we are reading of the Abrahamic covenant spoken of by Paul in Galatians 3:17, with the seed being the Lord Jesus Christ, a covenant which, as the verse says, cannot be disannulled. "The seed . . . to whom the promise was made" of Galatians 3:19 is surely the "seed" of Genesis 15:18, with the "seed" of verse 13 being natural Israel.

This being the case, the extent of the land promised in verse 18 must define the extent of the land in the Kingdom. It is defined as, "from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates". The word for 'river' in this verse is *nahar*, which means, according to *Strong's Concordance*, "a stream (including the sea; especially the Nile, Euphrates, etc.)". The same word is used for the rivers of Genesis 2:11-14, and for the river of Isaiah 19:5, which must be the Nile. I conclude therefore that "the river of Egypt" in Genesis 15:18 is the Nile. When Israel were about to inherit the land, God said to them: "I will set thy bounds from the Red sea . . ." (Ex. 23:31); and said that the land would extend "unto the great river, the river Euphrates" (Deut. 1:7).

Ezekiel 47:13-21 must be in harmony with what is revealed in Genesis 15 about the extent of the land under the Abrahamic covenant. Regarding the place names in Ezekiel 47:15-17, although we can identify some, others are in doubt. Regarding the northern boundary, it is noteworthy that in referring to Damascus it continues: ". . . and the north northward" (v. 17).

From the Euphrates to the Red Sea is approximately 600 miles. If we set out the tribal cantons in reeds, and each one is 25,000 reeds across, then thirteen tribal cantons (including the holy oblation) would extend over approximately 600 miles (a reed being in the range nine to twelve feet).

It is fitting that Israel should occupy a large tract of land in the Kingdom, in view of the statement that it will be "the first dominion" (Mic. 4:8). That it will do so is shown by the following Scriptures:

"For thy waste and thy desolate places, and the land of thy destruction, shall even now be too narrow by reason of the inhabitants . . . The children which thou shalt have . . . shall say . . . The place is too strait for me: give place to me that I may dwell" (Isa. 49:19,20);

"Enlarge the place of thy tent . . . for thou shalt break forth on the right hand and on the left; and thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles, and make the desolate cities to be inhabited" (54:2,3);

"Jerusalem shall be inhabited as towns without walls for the multitude of men and cattle therein" (Zech. 2:4).

Carlo Barbaresi
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Reply

Regarding Genesis 15, we read that the Almighty said to Abraham: "Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years" (v. 13). This is obviously a reference to the bondage of Israel in Egypt.

Verse 14 speaks of them coming out of Egypt: "and afterward shall they come out with great substance". Abraham is then separately addressed, indicating that he is not included in this: "And thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace; thou shalt be buried in a good old age" (v. 15). The passage then continues by saying of natural Israel, "But in the fourth generation they shall come hither again: for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full" (v. 16), the Amorites here representing all the nations mentioned in verses 19 and 20.

The covenant of verse 18 surely follows on from the earlier verses: "In the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates". The seed of Abraham and not Abraham himself were to be the beneficiaries of this covenant, and it is not stated to be an everlasting promise, in contrast with 13:15, "for all the land which thou seest, *to thee* will I give it, and to thy seed *for ever*", and 17:7,8, "And I will establish My covenant between Me and *thee* and thy seed after thee in their generations for an *everlasting* covenant . . . And I will give unto *thee*, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an *everlasting* possession; and I will be their God".

To me this is confirmed beyond all doubt by Nehemiah 9:7,8: "Thou art the LORD the God, Who didst choose Abram, and broughtest him forth out of Ur of the Chaldees, and gavest him the name of Abraham; and foundest his heart faithful before Thee, and madest a covenant with him to give the land of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Jebusites, and the Girgashites, to give it, I say, to *his seed*, and *hast performed Thy words*; for Thou art righteous".

If this does not refer to Genesis 15, what does it refer to? Genesis 15 is the only passage which mentions the nations to be dispossessed by Israel. The passage in Nehemiah continues, ". . . and didst see the affliction of our fathers in Egypt, and heardest their cry by the Red Sea; and show-

edst signs and wonders upon Pharaoh, and on all his servants . . .", giving more links with Genesis 15.

What then of Galatians 3? Is Paul here, through the Spirit, speaking of the covenant in Genesis 15 as fulfilled in Christ, when the book of Nehemiah, also given by the Spirit, said earlier that the covenant had already been fulfilled? How can we resolve this apparent difficulty? I feel that God made a covenant with Abraham on more than one occasion. The word 'covenant' occurs nine times in Genesis 17 and the word 'everlasting' four times. See verses 7 and 8, for example, already quoted above, where the words 'covenant' and 'everlasting' both occur twice, and the land is promised to both Abraham and his seed. This is surely the covenant mentioned in Galatians 3.

I believe from the above that Genesis 15 has nothing to do with the borders of the land in the future, and that we can concentrate on Ezekiel's description without trying to make the passage say that the land extends to the Euphrates. My original article expounded the description in Ezekiel 47 and does not need repeating here. Brother Barbaresi's only comment on the detail of this passage is to draw attention to the phrase, "and the north northward" (v. 17), which I take to be referring to the northern border of the Damascus region, which is the southern border of the Hamath region.

Regarding the river of Egypt, I believe Scripture defines this as being the river on the border of Egypt, that is, the river which separates the land of Israel from the land of Egypt. This is not the Nile but the brook of Egypt, as the following references show:

". . . and the border shall fetch a compass from Azmon unto the river of Egypt, and the goings out of it shall be at the sea" (Num. 34:5);

"Ashdod with her towns and her villages, Gaza with her towns and her villages, unto the river of Egypt, and the great sea, and the border thereof" (Josh. 15:47);

"And at that time Solomon held a feast, and all Israel with him, a great congregation, from the entering in of Hamath unto the river of Egypt" (1 Kgs. 8:65);

"And the king of Egypt came not again any more out of his land: for the king of Babylon had taken from the river of Egypt unto the river Euphrates all that pertained to the king of Egypt" (2 Kgs. 24:7).

The Hebrew word translated 'river' in all these cases is *nachal*, as used in Ezekiel 47:19 to refer to the borders of the land in the Kingdom. The first two passages above refer to the borders of the land to be inherited under Joshua; this did not extend to the Nile. The third is referring to the northern and southern boundaries of Solomon's dominion, which again did not extend to the River Nile; and the final passage is referring to the same territory.

Geoff Cave
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Brother Barbaresi quotes Exodus 23:31 as evidence that the boundaries of the land are defined by God as extending to the Red Sea. The verse reads: "I will set thy bounds from the Red sea even unto the sea of the Philistines, and from the desert unto the river". It seems from reading the full description that the first part is defining the eastern and western limits of the land and the second part the northern and southern limits, with the Red Sea being the Gulf of Eilat, and the sea of the Philistines the Mediterranean. We know from 1 Kings 9:26 that the Gulf of Eilat was part of the Red Sea.—T.B.



Science

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"As newborn babes . . ."

Valerie Pinfield

A NEWBORN baby is completely dependent on its mother for the nourishment it needs to grow and develop. In the natural order, our heavenly Father has provided for the needs of such infants in the form of milk produced by the mother and delivered by breastfeeding. As well as supplying all the nutritional requirements, human milk includes vitamins and minerals essential for proper development, and protects the baby against infection, a vital role in the earliest and most vulnerable stage of life.

This article aims to show how the production and composition of human breast milk are finely tuned to the baby's needs, and therefore show the hand of a Designer in creation. As we go along we will draw out spiritual lessons, such as the relationship between mother and baby being a figure for our position before our Creator. The final section illustrates the benefits of breast-feeding in preference to bottle-feeding, demonstrating human limitations in trying to improve on God's creation.

The composition of human milk

In the earliest months of life, a mother's breast milk provides entirely for her baby's nutritional and developmental needs. During this stage not only does the baby's weight and size increase

rapidly (typically its weight doubles in four to five months), but its eyes, nervous system and other parts develop dramatically too. To achieve this, milk is a complex concoction of substances taken from the mother's diet or stores of fat (via the blood stream), or manufactured in the milk-producing cells.

Breast milk includes the well-known nutritional components water, proteins, fats and sugars, as well as vitamins and minerals, enzymes and hormones (see Table 1 overleaf). Water is, of course, essential for all cells, whilst fats and sugars (carbohydrates) are needed for energy and growth. The proteins (including the 'curds and whey' proteins) have a range of roles, from nourishment to binding surplus iron, or preventing infection (antibodies). Similarly, the category known as 'fats' includes many different substances, such as triglycerides, phospholipids, cholesterol and free fatty acids.

There has been much public information (and confusion) in recent times in Western societies as to which sorts of fats are best in the diet of a fully-grown adult. A baby has somewhat different needs, requiring a range of fats, not all of whose importance is yet understood. A particularly important group are the polyunsaturated fatty acids (PUFAs), which cannot be produced