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The Paradox of *The Paradigm* The Flawed Hermeneutical Method of Jonathan Cahn

by J. Greg Sheryl

The dust jacket of Jonathan Cahn's *The Paradigm* calls the book "The Ancient Blueprint that Holds the Mystery of Our Times." The top of the back cover of the dust jacket boasts, "This May Be the MOST EXPLOSIVE and AMAZING Thing You've Ever Read!" Near the bottom of the back cover, it promises, "Prepare to be stunned, shocked, illuminated, and amazed. *The Paradigm* will reveal secrets and mysteries taking place all around you and show you what you never could have imagined." The sensationalism on the back cover concludes by suggesting, "As you open up *The Paradigm*, [Cahn's] most explosive book yet, you may never see your world the same way again."



what Cahn believed to be a contemporary fulfillment of Isaiah 9:9b-10. Cahn's second book, written as non-fiction, *The Mystery of the Shemitah*, proposed that the Jewish sabbatical year (the *shemitah*) affects present-day economic conditions in America and the rest of the world. His third volume, *The Book of Mysteries*, was a thinly disguised novel written in the format of a year-long devotional and sought to reveal some of Cahn's spiritual insights, which he called "mysteries," whether or not they deserve such a designation. *The Quarterly Journal* has carried articles on Cahn and his previous works.²
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In calling *The Paradigm* Cahn's "most explosive book yet," the publisher is referring to the three previous books that the Messianic Jewish rabbi has written.¹ His first, *The Harbinger*, written as a novel, revealed

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Editorials

HAS SODOM REALLY BEEN FOUND?

Over the centuries, many biblical cities have been discovered but there is one that has escaped detection, at least, possibly, until now: Sodom.

Genesis 14:2 and 14:8 mention five ancient cities near the Dead Sea: Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, Zeboiim, and Zoar. Finding Sodom would give us geographical clues and markers to the other four adjoining cities.

Lot, Abraham's nephew, settled in Sodom (Genesis 14:12) with his family. Sodom and Gomorrah became symbols of depravity, gross immorality, extreme evil, and ultimate judgment (Genesis 18:20; Jeremiah 50:40; Ezekiel 16:48-50; Jude 7). The Bible says that Sodom was somewhere near the Dead Sea, which is also called the Salt Sea (Genesis 14:3).

While some argue that the fiery end of Sodom and the other four cities was so devastating that nothing was left, many evangelical scholars believe otherwise, saying that something would have been left, even if it was only deep ash layers.

For well over a century it had been assumed that the ruins of Sodom were somewhere at the southern end of the Dead Sea and perhaps even under the waters at the south end of the Dead Sea. In 2011 and 2012, a dive team searched the southern end and found nothing. Large

amounts of time and money were spent by a Russian exploration group using a submarine to take photos of a vacant Dead Sea floor.

With all the research in that area and even with the drying up of the southern portion of the Dead Sea briefly in 1960, no ruins have been discovered. One can only conclude that everyone has been looking in the wrong place.

The fixation with the southern area of the Dead Sea has been attributed to archaeologist William Foxwell Albright (1891-1974). Albright was the Director of the American School of Oriental Research in Jerusalem for about eight years. He was orthodox in his theology and produced more than 1,000 books and articles. Albright was so admired and trusted that no one ever seriously questioned his personal conviction about the location of Sodom. Albright's commitment to the southernmost portion of the Dead Sea as Sodom's location was "gospel," even though it was all a guess and a hunch and no material remains were ever produced.

Today the Dead Sea is drying up because feeder water from the Jordan River is being used for irrigation throughout Israel. More of the southern end of the Dead Sea's bottom is exposed than ever in history and has proven to be barren archaeologically. Genesis 13:10 says that the area of Sodom was "well-watered." There is no way that the southern area of the Dead Sea could be described as "well-watered" back then or now.

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MORMONS APPOINT NEW LEADER

On Jan. 16, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints appointed its 17th president. Russell M. Nelson, in following the longstanding succession protocol of the Mormon church, became the new leader of the 16 million-member sect following the death of Thomas S. Monson on Jan. 2. Monson died at age 90 following a decade as church president. Nelson is currently 93.

Following the death of church founder, Joseph Smith, Jr., in 1844, many claimed the leadership role he left behind. From that episode, however, the church “gradually ironed out” its leadership succession. Currently, the church is ruled by a president and his two counselors in union with a Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. If an apostle dies, his replacement is selected by the president; when the president dies, normally the longest-serving apostle succeeds him. According to *The Salt Lake Tribune*, “It is a tidy system, and generally ensures that whatever disruption the church experiences at the death of a president is stylistic rather than political.”

Nelson is a former heart surgeon who became a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles in April 1984 and then, in July 2015, became its senior member. He is the second-oldest man appointed as church president. Joseph Fielding Smith, who served as the 10th president of the church from 1970-1972, was older by just two months.

The Mormon church regards its president to be a “prophet, seer, and revelator,” in addition to referring to him as “the Prophet,” a title that was originally given to church founder Joseph Smith.

—MKG

ANGLEY SUED FOR LOAN DEFAULT

Last year was not a good year for 96-year-old pastor, televangelist, and faith healer Ernest Angley. In late November, Angley’s church and his broadcast network were named in a lawsuit charging they had defaulted on a multimillion-dollar loan.

On Nov. 29, the Beck Energy Corporation Inc., filed a 39-page lawsuit against Grace Cathedral and the Winston Broadcasting Network seeking damages and a foreclosure of the church’s Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio, property. In

January 2013, the oil and gas company loaned \$3.6 million to Angley’s ministry. According to the online news source **Cleveland.com**, “The lawsuit says the loan was supposed to be paid from February 2013 to February 2016. A one-year verbal extension was granted to the WBN, but the loan remained unpaid, according to the lawsuit.”

For more than six months, Beck stepped up efforts to receive payment. The news report indicated that Angley responded with promises of imminent payment, but those promises went unfulfilled.

Earlier in 2017, Angley was forced to close his Cathedral Buffet. The closing came weeks after a federal judge ordered him and the restaurant to pay more than \$388,000 in back pay and damages to employees who worked as unpaid volunteers. The restaurant’s woes began in 2015 when it and Angley were hit with a lawsuit filed by the U.S. Department of Labor who claimed that, “Angley and the buffet violated the Fair Labor Standards Act through its use of volunteers and did not document the volunteers’ work.”

The Grace Cathedral campus in Cuyahoga Falls was purchased by Angley in 1994. It was first built in 1958 as The Cathedral of Tomorrow by the Rev. Rex Humbard and was home to his mega-church and television ministry. It was Humbard who, in April 1971, opened the Cathedral Buffet adjacent to his church. In the early 1980s, Humbard and his family moved from Ohio to Florida after years of declining church numbers and financial problems.

—MKG

COPELAND FLYING HIGH IN HIS NEW GULFSTREAM

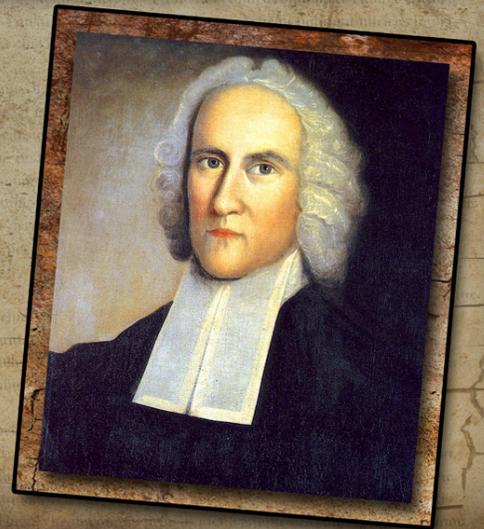
It has often been mused that the difference between men and boys are the price of their toys. Word-Faith evangelist Kenneth Copeland gives credence to that cliché. In January, thanks to the donations of his followers and directions from the Lord, Copeland purchased a Gulfstream V private jet. In announcing the acquisition of the aircraft, Kenneth Copeland Ministries boasted on its website, “Mission 3 Accomplished: The Gulfstream V Is Here!” The jet was previously owned by movie actor, director, and producer Tyler Perry. Last year, Copeland began negotiations with Perry to purchase the jet. By the end of the year, “a contract was

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The Fundamentalist in a Postmodern World

The History, Definitions and Distinctions of Biblical Fundamentalism

by Gary E. Gilley



I am a Fundamentalist. There, I said it. Although I inherited a few guns, I don't know where the bullets are. I don't hate anyone, not even my neighbor whose cat keeps my song-bird population thinned out. Knowing my own weaknesses and sinfulness, I refrain as best I can from being particularly judgmental of others. Some might call me a "Bible-thumper," but I have not actually thumped anyone with a Bible since junior high when I was trying to impress the girls. (I learned many years later that punching girls did not impress them nearly as much as I originally thought.) I have some strong preferences and opinions about everything from politics to entertainment (just ask me), but I recognize that not everyone shares all my views and I am at peace with that.

I believe in separation from sinful practices and compromising associations, but I do not hide out in a wilderness refuge in an effort to stay as far away from "sinners" as I can. And horrors of horrors, I will tune into CNN as much as Fox News — which, in the eyes of some, may cause me to lose my Fundamentalist membership card. Nevertheless, I, and

those like me, are among the most despised, marginalized, suspected, criticized, and misunderstood people on the planet. So it is with good reason that few today want to identify with the label Fundamentalist.

When asked how we would like to be identified we might say we are Evangelicals, but that term lost all its meaning many years ago. Perhaps "conservative Evangelicals" might be better. Yet Fundamentalism is a good word, when properly understood and biblically informed. Unfortunately, even among many Christians, Fundamentalism is an unattractive term and much of the blame lies with Fundamentalists themselves. Aaron Dunlop helps explain the nuances of understanding and defining Fundamentalism:

"Fundamentalism is extremely complex. There are many sides to the movement, many conflicting identities within it and it has manifested itself in many different forms since the prophetic conferences of the late 1800s. One writer has condensed fundamentalism into four distinct and successive forms: irenic (1893-1919), militant (1919-1940), divisive

(1941-1960), and separatist fundamentalism (1960-present). Through all of these periods there have been those known as 'moderates' who, while holding to the fundamentals of the faith, followed a different path than that which the movement took."¹

Adding to the problem is this: too often biblical Fundamentalism has been high-jacked by cultural Fundamentalists and few know the difference. But before we look at the important distinctions in more detail, we should back up and take an overview of the historical development of Fundamentalism.

ROOTS OF FUNDAMENTALISM

The 1800s proved to be years in which evangelicalism was radically changing, especially in English-speaking societies. As the world moved into the nineteenth century, the effects of the Great Awakening under Jonathan Edwards and George Whitefield in the 1730s-1740s in America and the Evangelical Revival under John and Charles Wesley in England were largely a memory. Those reading the accounts of these earlier movements

of God longed for something similar, but many seemed willing to settle for the outward emotionalism of revivalism² rather than follow the content-oriented approach of their fathers.

Thus, when the so-called Second Great Awakening began in Cane Ridge, Kentucky, in 1800 and subsequently spread throughout much of New England and parts of the American South, it had a very different flavor from what Edwards and his peers experienced. Edwards believed the Great Awakening was a true revival sent by the Lord, but he also knew that intermingled was a measure of excesses, pretenders, and "false spirits." What took place in the first half of the nineteenth century flipped the ratio.

While there were undoubtedly true conversions and fervor for the Lord, there was much that was little more than fleshly passion. Nineteenth-century believers longed for a spiritual experience that the camp revivals and travelling evangelists seemed to provide. A good motivational speaker, such as Charles Finney, could draw huge crowds to hear his messages, which often provided sensational, if temporary, results.

Churches would be packed during "revivals," but sadly, after the evangelists had moved on, life returned to normal and church attendance did as well. It did not take pastors long to figure out that if they wanted large, enthusiastic meetings they would have to dump their more subdued method of teaching the Bible and offer revival-style services complete with "new means" that were field-tested and handed down by Finney and other lesser-known revivalists. This soon led to a predictable pattern. People would be whipped into emotional frenzies by evangelists and pastors through the use of new and creative techniques which were devoid of solid biblical content.

When the emotions subsided, a new round of similar methods was needed to bring back the "revival." One critic of the Finney-style revivals wrote in 1858, "'Singing, shouting, jumping, talking, praying, all at the same time ... in a crowded house, filled to

suffocation,' according to a more sober Congregational missionary, led to people having fits and giving in their names as converts but, as soon as the excitement was over, falling away."³

This cycle became so common that certain sections of New England, especially the state of New York, became known as the "Burnt-over District" where the fire of revival meetings had swept so often through some areas that people ultimately had grown resistant to the things of God. To this day, these regions remain perhaps the most spiritually hardened parts of the American landscape. It is interesting, however, that in the mid-1800s many of the major cults that are prominent today emerged from the "Burnt-over District." In addition, numerous utopian societies arose at the same time and place, each offering some form of heaven on earth. All of these things appear to be the direct result of revivalism of the early 1800s which heavily promoted emotional excesses while minimizing the study of the Scriptures.

DEVELOPING FUNDAMENTALISM

All these things dovetailed to create much confusion and division within Christian circles. By the mid-1800s, some were seeing a need to push back and establish criteria by which a true Evangelical could be identified. In 1846, "the Evangelical Alliance was formed to bring together the Protestants all over the world who were the heirs of the awakening of the previous [eighteenth] century."⁴ The Evangelical Alliance confirmed the standard conservative doctrines of the faith and offered four important hallmarks of an Evangelical:

- Belief in the inspiration, authority, and sufficiency of Scripture.
- Acknowledging the centrality of the cross upon which the sacrifice of Jesus provided the way of salvation for men.
- Affirming the need for conversion in which by repentance and faith a sinner becomes a new creature in Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit.

- Activism in which the child of God is diligently presenting the Gospel and ministering to those in need.⁵

Those who rejected the doctrinal orthodoxy of the World Evangelical Alliance (as it was also called) attempted to infiltrate it with liberal theology, but when that failed they withdrew in 1894 to form their own organization, the Open Church League, which later was renamed the National Federation of Churches and Christian Workers in 1900. By 1950 the National Federation was reorganized as the National Council of Churches of Christ.⁶

This breaking away by the liberal factions and the forming of their own organization led ultimately to the demise of the World Evangelical Alliance. It is noteworthy, in light of the common misunderstanding that conservative Christians are the source of most ecclesiastical disunity, that, "It was the liberals who could no longer accept the orthodoxy of the Alliance and who separated from the evangelicals to found their own organizations to promote church union among those who rejected the authority of Holy Scripture."⁷ Liberals, both in the past and today, desire unity, but do so at the expense of doctrinal purity. They are happy to join hands with any except those who insist on certain essential truths remaining foundational to unity.

THE GREAT DIVIDE

By the closing decades of the 1800s liberal theologians (known as modernists in the late 1800s) were bringing German rationalism into English-speaking churches, especially in America. Many in these churches, pastors and laymen alike, had long since abandoned the careful study and teaching of Scripture, allowing their churches to become fertile ground for heretical ideas, especially because the liberals often disguised their teachings by using the same words that Evangelicals used but giving those words new meanings. Added to these factors was a move from Enlightenment thinking with its preciseness to Romanticism with its impreciseness and emphasis on feel-

ing and experience over theology and Scripture.⁸

These threads were drawn together during the second half of the nineteenth century to produce a radical makeover in Christianity. The cardinal doctrines held dear by Evangelicals, since at least the Reformation, were now being jettisoned. And with the denial of essential biblical truth came a shift in the focus and purpose of the Church. If the incarnation of Jesus Christ was in doubt and the Scriptures suspect and theology itself under attack, then that left social action as the mission of the Church. And thus was born what would be called the “social gospel.”⁹

By the early 1900s, most theological liberals had made social concerns central to their understanding of the Gospel. Historian George Marsden writes:

“While not necessarily denying the value of the traditional evangelical approach of starting with evangelism, social gospel spokesmen subordinated such themes, often suggesting that stress on evangelism had made American evangelicalism too other-worldly ... and individualistic Such themes fit well with the emerging liberal theology of the day.”¹⁰

The “theology of the day” was an increasing acceptance of Darwinian theories, higher critical attacks on the Scriptures, and Freudian redefining of human nature. In light of these modern challenges to the Bible and despite conservative evangelical thought, liberal theologians believed Christianity needed to change to survive.

That which was unacceptable to modern man, such as the incarnation, the atonement, creationism, inspiration and authority of Scripture, and so forth, had to be rejected. That which was acceptable and appreciated by the culture was to be retained and emphasized. Western societies had little problem with the social agenda. As time passed the Church accommodated such thinking.

Of course, not everyone was in lockstep with the social gospel, but by the turn of the twentieth century

virtually all the major denominations, schools, seminaries, and Christian agencies had been infiltrated by liberal thinking. By the 1920s they had capitulated almost entirely. The test of orthodoxy had shifted from what one believed to how one lived. As Marsden states it, “The key test of Christianity was life, not doctrine.”¹¹ Drawing from Friedrich Schleiermacher, the father of Christian liberalism, what increasingly mattered was experience and not truth. Renald Showers observes:

“Liberal Protestant advocates of the social gospel declared that the church should be concerned primarily with this world. It should divert its efforts from the salvation of individuals to the salvation of society. The church should bring in the kingdom of God on earth instead of teaching about a future, theocratic kingdom to be established in Person by Jesus Christ. ... The church was to save the world, not be saved out of it.”¹²

Conservatives fought against the modernistic drift of Christianity through various means such as books entitled *The Fundamentals for Today* and the writings of such men as Princeton professor J. Gresham Machen. Machen, in his classic book *Christianity and Liberalism*, called liberalism a different religion altogether. Machen warned during this turbulent period:

“What is to-day [a] matter of academic speculation begins tomorrow to move armies and pull down empires.”¹³

His insight has proven all too sadly to be true. But neither Machen nor other conservatives were able to rescue the denominations and schools, as Princeton itself officially rejected its doctrinal roots and adopted liberalism in 1929. It was left to the conservatives to either stay within their systems and work to redeem them or separate and start new denominations, schools, churches, and ministries. Many took this latter route, with Machen himself starting Westminster Theological Seminary in 1929 and the Orthodox Presbyterian Church in 1936.

Many others from all denominations would follow suit, resulting in the founding of the Independent Fundamental Churches of America, the Conservative Baptists, and the General Association of Regular Baptist Churches. Mission agencies, seminaries such as Dallas Theological Seminary, and numerous parachurch organizations also were founded during this era.

According to Marsden, 26 schools tied to Fundamentalism were founded during the Great Depression.¹⁴ The conservatives focused on evangelism, theological training, and discipleship while the liberals were increasingly defined by the social gospel accompanied by their view of the kingdom. To the liberals, the “kingdom was not future or otherworldly, but ‘here and now.’ It was not external, but an internal ethical and religious force based on the ideals of Jesus.”¹⁵

THE SECOND GREAT DIVIDE

The colossal differences between liberals and conservatives were crystallized around the turn of the twentieth century with the subsequent division of the two camps occurring in the 1920s and 1930s. At this point the conflict was often referred to as the Fundamentalist-Modernist controversy but, as the years rolled by, another division was looming, this one among the Fundamentalists.

By the 1940s, the question of cultural and social engagement had arisen within the Fundamentalists’ camps. The original Fundamentalists, perhaps oversensitive to the social gospel that was at the heart of liberalism, often pushed away from any form of social action. In time, some felt that they had gone too far and needed to become more involved with the culture and improve society, as well as preach the Gospel. This ultimately led to a split within the conservative camp.

The Fundamentalists would take on more separatists’ views, that is, they would separate from any who taught false doctrines and, rather than try to infiltrate society, they would live as lights of the Gospel calling people to Christ. On the other hand, the oppos-

ing position would be termed New (or Neo) Evangelical. Neo-evangelicals believed that the Church had the mandate not only to win and disciple the lost, but to engage the culture and make the world a better place to live by changing social structures that cause grief and suffering.

Many see 1957 as the year of the official rupture between Fundamentalists and Neo-evangelicals, for it was that year that the two groups divided over Billy Graham accepting an invitation to conduct a crusade in New York City sponsored by a consortium of conservative and liberal churches. The Fundamentalists opposed Graham while Neo-evangelicals made him the face of their movement.¹⁶

Since that time Neo-evangelicals have become better organized, more influential, and more widely funded as they have united over many causes, both spiritual and cultural. Evangelicals, however, have not been without their problems. The movement has continued to spread and broaden theologically to the point that defining the word “evangelical” has become an exercise in futility. Conservatives, Pentecostals, prosperity gospel proponents, and even many Roman Catholics are all claiming the title “Evangelical,” although the doctrinal beliefs between these factions differ widely.

Fundamentalists, on the other hand, perhaps because of their very nature as separatists, have been increasingly marginalized and content to go about the business of fulfilling the Great Commission.

As we have now made the turn into the twenty-first century we can look back with some insights and some questions. Liberalism, which seemed to have won the day as the twentieth century dawned, has lost most of its steam. Evangelicals make most of the waves today, but in order to do so, they have had to increasingly widen their views, practices, and doctrines to include those they would have deemed heretical in the mid-1900s. They seem to be united mostly over social action rather than the Great Commission. Without question, it is the Fundamentalists who have been

able to safeguard the Gospel and the Scriptures, even as they have lost influence in society. As one student of the Church has correctly observed:

“At root, however, it is a question of how to engage the culture without losing one’s soul. Fundamentalism feared losing its soul and so did not engage the culture; evangelicalism feared being different from the culture and is in danger of losing its soul.”¹⁷

In the 1920s and 1930s differences between conservative and liberal churches came to a head in America. Out of that controversy came new denominations, fellowships, schools, and missions from the conservative camp which separated from those who no longer believed in biblical Christianity. These organizations were founded by believers who desired to hold fast and “contend earnestly for the faith” (Jude 3).

One of the big problems at that time (as it is today) was developing a consensus concerning the essentials of the faith. That is, what doctrinal truths were absolutely necessary? What did all Christians who claimed to be orthodox believe and, conversely, what could be left to individual convictions? In other words, what was non-negotiable in the faith?

A series of volumes, published originally in 1909, entitled *The Fundamentals for Today* (mentioned earlier in this article), were an attempt to answer those questions. Written by some of the finest conservative scholars and Church leaders of the day, *The Fundamentals* addressed the doctrines of Christology and soteriology, but almost one third of the essays concerned the reliability of Scripture. What emerged from this has become known as the Fundamentalist movement. A Fundamentalist was one who adhered to the fundamentals of the faith, primarily as described in *The Fundamentals*. One of those fundamentals was the belief in an infallible and inerrant Bible.

As time moved on, those who would become known as Evangelicals split from Fundamentalism. Evangelicals still held to the fundamentals of

the faith, but believed there was more room to compromise and work with those who denied some of the essentials. Of course, today there are many sub-groupings under these titles, but that is not our subject. Our point is that, by definition, all Fundamentalists and Evangelicals supposedly adhere to the belief that the Bible is the only authoritative revelation from God to man, without error in the original and is correct in all that it affirms. So how do the two differ?

DEFINITIONS

The primary caricature of Fundamentalism is that it is in essence legalism. Legalism is one of the hot-button words that everyone seems to use and few know what it is — they just “know” they are not personally legalistic. Almost no one would say he identifies himself as legalist.

In declaring Fundamentalists as legalistic, the most common comparison offered is with that of the Pharisees, with the idea that Fundamentalists are modern-day Pharisees hung up on external rules, comparisons, and judgmentalism. Jesus certainly condemned the Pharisees’ hypocrisy and judgmentalism, but the heart of Pharisaic legalism had more to do with their handling of Scripture than rule-keeping. In Mark 7:1-13 and the parallel passage in Matthew 15:1-9, Jesus’ concern ran much deeper than the practices of the Pharisees — all the way to their handling, or should I say, mishandling of the Word of God.

The encounter, as recorded in Mark 7, between Jesus and the Pharisees took place somewhere in Galilee, probably after the feeding of the 5,000. The Pharisees, as a religious sect, followed the teachings of the scribes, who were the official interpreters of the Mosaic Law and the guardians of its sanctity. Their interpretations formed the basis for the practices of the Pharisees.

In verses 3-4, Mark, who is writing primarily to Gentiles, adds a footnote of sorts because he realizes that many of his readers will not understand why the Pharisees were angry at Jesus. We are at the same disadvantage. In dispute was the tradition of

the elders (v. 5). This was a body of minute regulations passed down orally by leading rabbis. Later these traditions were recorded in the Mishna; later still a commentary on the Mishna called the Gemara was added. Together they would make up the Talmud, a Jewish religious book that, in reality, became more important to the Jews than the Scriptures.

The oral tradition probably started with the best of intentions. The rabbis, during the intertestamental period, sought to protect the sacred law of Moses by “putting a fence” around it in the form of detailed rules which would regulate every aspect of daily conduct. They developed extremely detailed rituals concerning ceremonial washings of hands and the body. The Law itself required such purification only for the priests under certain circumstances (Leviticus 16:4, 24, 26; 22:6) and for others on specific occasions such as purification from disease (Leviticus 14:8-9; 15:5-27). The Pharisees apparently decided that if it was good enough for the priest, it was good enough for the people. And so an elaborate system of washing was established. (The Mishna devotes no fewer than 30 chapters to the cleansing of vessels.) By the time of Jesus, any Jew who wanted to be considered pious followed the Pharisee’s oral tradition.

Today, Christians do not officially have an authoritative oral tradition or a written Mishna, but it is not uncommon to develop their own traditions and standards that are elevated to biblical importance. We will fight, split churches, and demonize fellow believers over styles of music, theater attendance, versions of the Bible, whether women can wear slacks, holiday observances, and a myriad of other issues. Like the Pharisees, we have convinced ourselves that our convictions have the support of Scripture and therefore to not follow them is equal to disobedience to God. When we do so, we have moved into the realm of legalism. At this point it is important to determine how Jesus described legalism in that seventh chapter of Mark’s Gospel. According to Jesus, legalism is:

• **Hypocrisy** (v. 6a). Jesus often used word pictures and object lessons from the cultural world in which He lived. In line with this, Jesus used the word *hypokrites* some twenty times throughout the Gospels. It is the Greek word for hypocrite and was used for actors on the stage who wore masks. W.E. Vine instructs us that *hypokrites* primarily denotes:

“[A] stage-actor; it was a custom for Greek and Roman actors to speak in large masks with mechanical devices for augmenting the force of the voice; hence the word became used metaphorically of a dissembler, a hypocrite. It is found only in the Synopists, and always used by the Lord, fifteen times in Matthew; elsewhere, Mark 7:6; Luke 6:42; 11:44 (in some mss.); 12:56; 13:15.”¹⁸

Thus we derive “hypocrite” from the word for a stage actor and using Jesus’ application, draw from it the meaning that hypocrites are equal to uncaring legalists and people who are radically inconsistent with what they claim to be.

• **Lip-service, not heart service** (v. 6b). Here Jesus draws from the words recorded by Isaiah (29:13). And, once again, they are applied to a people who make great boasts about how much they love the Lord and how they worship and honor Him. The truth is they do none of these things with their hearts.

• **Elevating man’s ideas to the level of doctrine** (v. 7). When we confuse our opinions, convictions, and traditions with the doctrines of God we magnify ourselves and degrade God. Before long we can no longer distinguish between what is from God and what is our own creation. And when this happens, it becomes all too easy to transform man’s judgments and present them as God’s unquestionable truths.

• **Neglecting the commandments of God** (v. 8). Legalism is not obedience to God; it is just the opposite. When the opinions and rituals of men begin to dominate the spiritual lives of people, it inevitably leads to a neglect of the commandments of God. And

neglect brings with it grave consequences. If we neglect servicing our automobiles, repairing our homes, or keeping our bodies healthy, disaster and serious results are imminent. Just as crucial is neglecting the commandments of God. God, through the prophet Jeremiah, spoke to a wicked people who refused to listen to His words and who followed the stubbornness of their hearts (Jeremiah 13:10). To those people He said, “Therefore I will scatter them like stubble that passes away by the wind of the wilderness. This is your lot, the portion of your measures from Me,” says the LORD, “Because you have forgotten Me and trusted in falsehood” (vv. 24-25).

• **Invalidating the Word of God** (v. 13). Going one step further, legalists have abandoned and devalued the Word of God by replacing it with their own opinions, preferences, and convictions, which undermine God’s Word.

Having strong convictions, loving traditions, or being firm in principles of behavior is not legalism. As noted above, legalism happens when people substitute the Word of God with their own opinions, ideas, convictions, or traditions. This would mean that both theological liberals and conservatives could be legalists.

The liberal invalidates the Word by saying it is unimportant, old-fashioned, out of date, not politically correct, or not really God’s Word. Therefore, they subtract from the Word and replace it with their own ideas. The conservative, who claims to have a deep love for the Bible, can add his own views and convictions to the Divine Revelation and elevate them to the level and authority of Scripture. Both are legalists and both are guilty of the sins that Jesus identifies as being the sins of the Pharisees. Today some theological conservatives have fallen into the legalistic trap. These could be defined as “cultural Fundamentalists.”

DISTINCTIONS

Those, including myself, who are content with being described as a biblical Fundamentalist, should also

have a keen desire to be distinguished from cultural Fundamentalism. This is because we see a number of important differences between the two. These include:

- **Authority.** Biblical Fundamentalism draws its understandings from the clear record of Scripture and believes God's Word is the final authority on everything it touches (2 Timothy 3:16-4:5). Cultural Fundamentalism, much like the Pharisaic legalism described above, tends to add personal, or corporate preferences and convictions to the inspired revelation and these additions hold more weight than Scripture in matters of practice.

- **Sanctification.** While cultural Fundamentalism emphasizes rules and regulations either as a means of spiritual growth or a measure of it, biblical Fundamentalism seeks to emphasize walking in the Spirit as outlined in texts such as Galatians 5:16-25. Biblical sanctification is not about rules and regulations; it is a lifelong experience about being made like Jesus. Peter Jeffery reminds us:

"Justification makes us right with God. You could go to heaven the moment you are justified because you are clothed with Christ's righteousness and therefore acceptable to God. But God does not stop at justifying us. He immediately begins in us the process of change called sanctification. Justification freed us from the guilt of sin and its condemnation. The process of sanctification begins to free us from the power of sin and its rule in our life. In this process God wants to make us more and more like the Lord Jesus Christ (1 Thessalonians 4:3-4, 7). In this verse 'learning to control' is not a one-off effort but a prolonged experience."¹⁹

- **Leadership.** Some Fundamentalists exercise an authoritarian or dictatorial style of leadership, which is often characterized by harshness. Biblical Fundamentalists see the importance of leadership, but seek to live out the servant leadership style Jesus modeled and espoused in the Upper

Room (Luke 22:24-27). Bible teacher and church elder Alexander Strauch emphasizes the characteristics of the biblical leader and warns that authoritarianism is a recipe for disaster:

"Christ's persistent teaching on love and humble servanthood demonstrates how difficult it is for people to understand and implement this principle. Pride and selfishness continually strive to dominate and deceive the human heart. Tragically, many Christians are more comfortable with Plato's *Republic* and its tough-minded, singular leadership style than with Jesus' style of humble-servant leadership. The past two thousand years of Christian history show that we have advanced little in our understanding of Christ's core teaching. Many of the scandalous divisions, ugly power struggles, wounded feelings, and petty jealousies in our churches and personal relationships exist because pride and selfishness motivate much of our thinking and behavior. The church leader who doesn't understand the Christlike spirit of humility, love, and servanthood is doomed to perpetuate fighting and division."²⁰

- **Attitude toward others.** Whereas Fundamentalists are often accused of being judgmental and condemnatory toward those who do not measure up to their standard, biblical Fundamentalists seek to call one another to godly living with grace. They recognize their responsibility to restore those who struggle or have fallen into sin, but they also recognize that only the grace of God keeps them from similar failures (Galatians 6:1-2). Therefore they desire to show the same grace as the Lord shows them, without minimizing the importance of obedience. Romans 14:1-4 makes clear that even the strongest of believers will differ over certain preferences and convictions which are not explicitly defined in Scripture. We are not to look down upon those who do not agree with us nor judge them, for they are servants of Christ.

- **Separation.** All Fundamentalists recognize the importance of the scriptural doctrine of separation (2 Corinthians 6:14-18) — it is one of the marks that distinguish them from many who call themselves Evangelicals. But biblical Fundamentalists do not believe in isolation. They want to be engaged with this world, rescuing people from this "present evil age" (Galatians 1:4), and be lights in the world who reflect the love, grace, and truth of Christ (Matthew 5:14-16). The common criticism of Fundamentalists, that they don't care about this present world, is not true of the biblical Fundamentalist. As Jay Adams instructs:

"The believer is to find as many ways of living in harmony with the unbeliever as the Bible permits [Romans 12:16]. He is to be willing to associate with those who have little as well as those who have much. He is never to think of himself as 'above' them. After all, he is no better than the worst sinner he knows. He is a sinner who, but for the grace of God, could have been an even worse sinner."²¹

- **Fear.** Sadly, some within Fundamentalism have used intimidation to keep the troops in line. As a result the fear of man can be prominent. The biblical Fundamentalist seeks to guard his steps so as to not be a stumbling block to weaker believers (1 Corinthians 8:1-13), but his main concern is the fear of the Lord and pleasing Him (2 Corinthians 5:9).

CONCLUSION

Fundamentalism has become an unattractive term because of its drift from a sound biblical meaning and because it has been high-jacked by people using unbiblical methods to present Jesus and the Christian faith to unbelievers. The result is that the wrong message is presented, Jesus' reputation is defamed, the proclamation of the Gospel is hindered, and the biblical Fundamentalist is disgraced.

The online Christian ministry, **GotQuestions.org**, speaks to the issue at hand and offers a fitting conclusion:

“Like all movements, Fundamentalism has enjoyed both successes and failures. The greatest failure may be in allowing Fundamentalism’s detractors define what it means to be a Fundamentalist. As a result, many people today see Fundamentalists as radical, snake-handling extremists who want to establish a state religion and force their beliefs on everyone else. This is far from the truth. Fundamentalists seek to guard the truth of Scripture and defend the Christian faith, which was ‘once for all entrusted to the saints’ (Jude 1:3). The church today is struggling in the post-modern, secular culture and needs people who are not ashamed to proclaim the gospel of Christ. Truth does not change, and adherence to the fundamental principles of doctrine is needful. These principles are the bedrock upon which Christianity stands, and, as Jesus taught, the house built upon the Rock will weather any storm (Matthew 7:24-25).”²²

May God grant us an increase of Fundamentalists who seek to guard

the truth of Scripture and defend the Christian faith.

Endnotes:

1. Aaron Dunlop, *Confessions of a Fundamentalist*. Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire (England): Tentmaker Publications, 2016, Introduction.
2. Revivalism could be defined as an attempt to orchestrate a spiritual awakening through man-made techniques and manipulation in contrast to revival which is often defined as a genuine movement of God.
3. David W. Bebbington, *The Dominance of Evangelicalism, The Age of Spurgeon and Moody*. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 2005, pg. 106, ellipsis in original.
4. *Ibid.*, pg. 21.
5. See *ibid.*, pp. 22-40.
6. Robert Lightner, *Church-Union, A Layman’s Guide*. Des Plaines, Ill.: Regular Baptist Press, 1971, pp. 31-32.
7. *Ibid.*, pg. 62.
8. See *The Dominance of Evangelicalism*, op. cit., pg. 166.
9. See further this author’s article, “The Social Gospel – Imposing a Cultural Mandate into the Great Commission,” *The Quarterly Journal*, July-September 2012, pp. 1, 11-22.
10. George M. Marsden, *Understanding Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1991, pg. 29.
11. *Ibid.*, pg. 34.
12. Renald E. Showers, *What on Earth Is God Doing?* Bellmawr, N.J.: Friends of

- Israel, 2005, pp. 79, 80.
13. Machen cited in George M. Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1980, pg. 137.
14. *Ibid.*, pg. 194.
15. *Ibid.*, pg. 50.
16. *Understanding Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism*, op. cit., pg. 73.
17. David F. Wells in John H. Armstrong, General Editor, *The Compromised Church*. Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway Books, 1998, pg. 27.
18. W.E. Vine, *The Expanded Vine’s, Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*. Minneapolis: Bethany House Publishers, 1984, pg. 572.
19. Peter Jeffery, *Bitesize Theology*. Auburn, Mass.: Evangelical Press USA, 2000, pp. 81-82.
20. Alexander Strauch, *Biblical Eldership, An Urgent Call to Restore Biblical Church Leadership*. Littleton, Colo.: Lewis and Roth Publishers, 1995, pg. 93.
21. Jay E. Adams, *Christian Living in the World*. Woodruff, S.C.: Timeless Texts, 1998, pg. 66.
22. “What is Fundamentalism?” from **GotQuestions.org** website. Document accessed at: www.gotquestions.org/fundamentalism.html. The mission statement for this website states: “Got Questions Ministries seeks to glorify the Lord Jesus Christ by providing biblical, applicable and timely answers to spiritually related questions through an internet presence.”



THE PARADOX OF THE PARADIGM

(continued from page 1)

The Paradigm’s “must-read” Preface, which contains both a tease and a disclaimer, states:

“*The Paradigm* is, above all, the revealing of a mystery, a blueprint, an ancient paradigm, that uncannily and amazingly has everything to do with our times. It is also the revealing of a warning to a nation and a civilization concerning its present course and the ultimate end of that course.”³

Cahn’s disclaimer states that the book is not about politics:

“*The Paradigm* is not directed against any person or persons. ... And so while it will speak of world figures, it will not ultimately be about them. Its

ultimate focus will be the larger picture that involves an entire nation and civilization. The importance of the figures involved is in the roles they’ve played in that larger picture and in the unfolding of the ancient template.”⁴

He further states, “Though the book will deal with the political realm and many other realms, it is not political but spiritual and prophetic.”⁵ What Cahn apparently means is that, although he goes into detail about ancient and contemporary politics, the book’s message and theme is much greater than mere politics.

HOW THE PARADIGM CAME TO BE WRITTEN

In addressing a gathering at Pat Robertson’s *The 700 Club*, on Sept. 25, 2017, a meeting that appeared to

coincide with the release of *The Paradigm*, Cahn stated:

“I didn’t plan on writing it [*The Paradigm*]. I was gonna write a different book. But like *The Harbinger*, it just came to me out of the blue and it happened in January [2017], and rapidly. I had 60 days to write it then, for this [the book] to get out today. In fact, it intersects with the revelation of *The Harbinger*.”⁶

In this same lecture, Cahn stated:

“I know at your work you don’t — you will never see all the fruits of your work. But there was a Jewish young man, who was watching *The 700 Club*, and it was during ‘The Seven Days of Blaze’ — in watching that, that he gave his life to the Lord, and that was me.”⁷

What is interesting about this testimony is that it seems clearly at variance with his earlier testimony. Without going into all the details of his previous testimony, as to how Cahn said that he gave his life to Christ, it culminates this way:

“[Cahn told God that] he would accept the Lord and start following the Lord ... when he turned twenty. About eight months later, on his twentieth birthday, coming to God as a man whose contract had run out and not knowing exactly what to do or how to do it, Jonathan got into his car and drove up a mountain overlooking the Hudson River. When he reached the top, he found a rock on which to kneel down. There on that mountain-top he committed his life to following God.”⁸

CAHN’S PARADIGM IN THE PARADIGM

In *The Paradigm’s* first chapter, called “The Master Blueprint,” Cahn refers to the paradigm as “a master blueprint ... that lies behind the events of the modern world.”⁹ He also calls it “a template,”¹⁰ and “the replaying of the mystery.”¹¹ As in his previous books, he uses the words “mystery,” “mysteries,” and “mysterious” numerous times — although fewer times than in some of his other books.¹² However, he uses the word “ancient” more than 200 times and the word “paradigm” at least 320 times.

Cahn describes the paradigm in mysterious, impersonal terms. He writes:

“This book will be the uncovering and opening up of the master blueprint, the mystery that came into being ages before the people it concerns were born and millennia before the events it reveals took place. The template is objective and fixed. It has no animus against anyone with whom it corresponds or involves. ... It is, above all, the unveiling of a mystery that has operated behind and affected our lives and times. Any connection to any figure or event of the modern world will

be a matter of letting the chips of the ancient mystery fall where they may.”¹³

A little further, he states, “It is the revelation of where we have been and where we are and a warning as to where we are heading.”¹⁴ Cahn also says, “The paradigm itself will be distinguished by the fact that it will appear in indented form in a box.”¹⁵

In chapter 3, Cahn introduces the paradigm, stating, “The paradigm begins this way:” and then formatted in a box for emphasis, he says:

“The nation, culture, and civilization that had been established on the Word of God and dedicated to the ways of God will begin to depart from the God of its foundation. The departure will begin subtly at first, but as time goes on, it will become more and more blatant and brazen.”¹⁶

There are more than 230 such “paradigm boxes” like this in the book’s 255 pages.

Cahn concludes his first chapter by stating that, “To uncover the blueprint, we must go back to ancient times and to the land of the paradigm [Old Testament Israel].”¹⁷ In the following chapter, Cahn explains:

“Why Israel? Israel is the paradigm nation, the nation that stands as the pattern, or model, for good or bad, to the rest of the world. Israel is the exemplar nation. Beyond that every nation and culture of Western civilization is in some way connected to the civilization of ancient Israel. They are all joined to the biblical nation first through their spiritual, moral, and cultural foundations. American civilization is especially connected, as it was founded by the Puritans to be an Israel of the New World. The paradigm, likewise, is formed out of what took place in ancient Israel.”¹⁸

CAHN’S HERMENEUTICAL METHOD IN THE PARADIGM

In his second chapter Cahn begins to explain and defend his hermeneuti-

cal method — the same one he used in *The Harbinger* and *The Mystery of the Shemitah*.

The dictionary provides a definition for “paradigm” as “An example that serves as pattern or model.”¹⁹ Cahn’s own definition is broader. He states, “A *paradigm* is defined as a pattern, a model, a template, a prototype, an exemplar, an archetype.”²⁰

Cahn attempts to show that the Bible itself uses paradigms, citing such examples as God’s giving the pattern (paradigm) of the ark of the covenant to Moses, “acts of prophetic symbolism”²¹ such as the breaking of a potter’s jar (see Jeremiah 19:10-11), and the patriarch Joseph being a type or paradigm of Christ.²²

In the following chapter, Cahn explains that although a paradigm contains certain correspondences between the prototype and its future manifestation, not all the pieces of the original example will necessarily fit the future manifestation of the prototype (paradigm).²³ He states:

“The template, or paradigm, can never be exactly the same as the reality or event it foreshadows or corresponds with. Nor can every element, detail, or characteristic of a prophetic symbol or type match up with every element and detail of the reality it foretells or represents. So it is with the paradigm. It could never be that every element, detail, or characteristic of the ancient case would or could manifest or be replayed in the modern case. If it did, it wouldn’t be the modern case, but the ancient. It is rather that certain elements, certain details, and certain characteristics of the ancient case will manifest in the modern.”²⁴

He further explains:

“There are of course critical differences between the ancient world and the modern. The ancient world was ruled by kings, and their reigns were most often begun and ended by death and sometimes bloodshed. But in the world of modern democracies

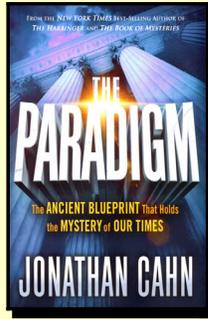
the reigns of leaders are most often begun and ended by political elections. So the ancient kings of the paradigm will correspond with modern leaders. And the sometimes bloody rise and fall of ancient kings will correspond with the political rise, fall, defeat, and victory of modern leaders. The means will differ, but the ends will remain the same."²⁵

Cahn's qualifications above render his using Old Testament examples as patterns of current events as almost non-falsifiable. When some contemporary person or situation he mentions doesn't "match" the Old Testament "paradigm" he has chosen for it, he can simply point back to his having said above that not everything will "match up." However, what he *doesn't* say is just *how much* of the Old Testament paradigm should match its contemporary counterpart for his thesis to prove itself true. This is very convenient because there is much about the contemporary people and situations he mentions that do not match the Old Testament paradigms Cahn has chosen for them.

CAHN'S THESIS IN THE PARADIGM

The biblical template Cahn uses for his paradigm involves the reigns of four kings of the northern kingdom of Israel: Ahab, Ahaziah, Joram, and Jehu, plus Ahab's wife, Jezebel. The time span of the reign of these four kings (along with Jezebel) over the northern kingdom of Israel is 60 years, dating from 874-814 B.C.,²⁶ and their reigns in biblical history comprise slightly more than 16 chapters from 1 Kings 16:28 to 2 Kings 10:36. During this time, Israel was divided. The northern 10 tribes were called Israel, and the southern kingdom was known as Judah. Cahn's "template" doesn't involve the kingdom of Judah at all,²⁷ although the chapters mentioned above deal with the kings of both Israel and Judah.

It also is significant to note that Cahn gives no reason for selecting that time in Israel's history. While he sees parallels between what happened during that time in Israel's history



An Analogy to What Cahn Does in *The Paradigm*

by J. Greg Sheryl

In his book, *Reckless Rumors, Misinformation, Doomsday Delusions*, evangelist and author Ralph Woodrow states, "Take enough facts and figures, [and] one can find patterns — some seemingly strange and mysterious."¹ Beginning on the same page where he makes this statement, Woodrow examines a seemingly miraculous set of coincidences that is similar to what Cahn does in linking biblical people and events with contemporary people and events in *The Paradigm*. Woodrow writes:

"Based on the following list of comparisons between Abraham Lincoln and John F. Kennedy, some have supposed that history repeated itself in a 'miraculous chain of events.'

Lincoln was elected president in 1860; Kennedy in 1960 — 100 years apart.

Both Lincoln and Kennedy were concerned with civil rights.

Both presidents' wives lost children through death while in the White House.

Both were slain on a Friday, in the presence of their wives.

Both were shot from behind and in the head.

Their successors, each named Johnson, were Southerners who had previously served in the United States Senate.

Andrew Johnson was born in 1808 and Lyndon Johnson was born in 1908.

John Wilkes Booth was born in 1839² and Lee Harvey Oswald was born in 1939.

Booth and Oswald were both Southerners who favored unpopular ideas.

Lincoln's secretary, whose name was Kennedy, advised him not to go to the theater. Kennedy's secretary, whose name was Lincoln, advised him not to go to Dallas.³

John Wilkes Booth shot Lincoln in a theater and ran to a warehouse; Lee Harvey Oswald shot Kennedy from a warehouse and ran to a theater.⁴

Lincoln was shot in Ford's Theater; Kennedy was shot in a Lincoln, a product of the Ford Motor Company.

The names Lincoln and Kennedy each contain seven letters.

The names Andrew Johnson and Lyndon Johnson each contain 13 letters.

The names John Wilkes Booth and Lee Harvey Oswald each contain 15 letters.

Both assassins were killed before being brought to trial.

This is an interesting list of comparisons — but it is not miraculous. It only *appears* that way because a few similarities are emphasized, while all kinds of differences are ignored. This becomes apparent as we break it down and take a closer look."⁵

This same observation applies to the way Cahn deals with some of the correspondences that he sees between Old Testament people and situations and contemporary people

and situations in *The Paradigm*. Nearly the only thing missing from the list above is a claim therein that this list represents a *paradigm*. Woodrow then demonstrates his assertions above by examining the data he has presented:

“Lincoln was elected president in 1860; Kennedy in 1960 — 100 years apart.’ However, it was after Lincoln was *re-elected* in 1864, and during his second term, that he was assassinated. ‘Both were slain on a Friday.’ But in the case of Lincoln, he did not die until the following morning, on Saturday. Since there are only seven days in a week, the odds of nearly *anything* happening on a Friday are roughly 1 in 7. The fact that Booth and Oswald were both Southerners proves nothing — the South is a vast area with *millions* of people. ‘The names Lincoln and Kennedy each contain seven letters.’ *Millions* of people have a last name with seven letters. As I wrote these lines I realized *my* last name has 7 letters. Presidential last names having seven letters include Madison, Jackson, Fillmore [sic], Johnson, Harding, and Clinton. We notice that when letters in the names Lincoln and Kennedy are compared, only *last* names are used. But when the letters in the names of John Wilkes Booth and Lee Harvey Oswald are compared, *full* names are used. The arbitrary nature of this arrangement is obvious. Lincoln being shot in *Ford’s* theater, and Kennedy being shot in a *Lincoln* — a *Ford* product — provides a play on words. But most of the presidential limousines have been *Lincolns*.⁶ The fact that the successors of both Lincoln and Kennedy had the name Johnson provides an interesting similarity. But one could compile a *long* list of things that were NOT similarities. Lincoln’s secretary was a man; Kennedy’s a

woman. Lincoln came from a poor background; Kennedy from a rich background. They did not have the same religion or political party. Lincoln was born 1809; Kennedy 1917. They were not born 100 years apart; they did not die 100 years apart. They did not die in the same month of the year: Lincoln died in April, Kennedy in November. The successors of Lincoln and Kennedy were opposed for re-election by men whose names started with ‘G.’ Andrew Johnson was defeated by Ulysses S. Grant. Because of this, some supposed Lyndon Johnson would be defeated for re-election by Barry Goldwater. But this didn’t happen and it was finally conceded that the so-called ‘miraculous chain of events’ had come to an end!”⁷

As in Woodrow’s examples above, Cahn does not deal with the fact that there are also vast *dissimilarities* between some of the people and situations that he tries to draw parallels between. Additionally, some correspondences that Cahn attempts to make in *The Paradigm* seem artificial and forced and some don’t work at all.

Endnotes:

1. Ralph Woodrow, *Reckless Rumors, Misinformation, Doomsday Delusions*. Palm Springs, Calif.: Ralph Woodrow Evangelistic Association, Inc., 2000, pg. 60.
2. Woodrow notes, “Some historians say Booth was born in 1838.” *Ibid.*, pg. 61.
3. Woodrow notes, “Kennedy’s secretary was Evelyn Lincoln, but the name of Lincoln’s secretary was not Kennedy; it was John Nicolay. Apparently as the story was retold, names were transposed and took the above form.” *Ibid.*
4. Woodrow notes, “Actually Booth ran to a barn, but the word ‘warehouse’ has been substituted in many copies.” *Ibid.*
5. *Ibid.*, pp. 60-61, italic in original.
6. Of the 11 presidential limousines listed in a note on this by Woodrow, he lists seven that were *Lincolns*, and the other four were *Cadillacs*. *Ibid.*, pg. 62.
7. *Ibid.*, pp. 61-62, italics, capitalized emphasis, and underscoring in original.

and what has — and is — happening in contemporary America, he gives no explanation for choosing this period.

Cahn begins *The Paradigm* by suggesting that certain Old Testament events and personalities parallel events and personalities in present-day America, then proclaims that the events in Israel “determined” (Cahn’s word) events in modern America and that those events have been and are being played out today.

PLAY IT AGAIN, JON

In the book’s first chapter, he asks, “Could events that took place nearly three thousand years ago now *be determining* the course of our world and with it the course of our lives?”²⁸ And, “Is it possible that we are all part of *the replaying* of the mystery?”²⁹ He then begins chapter 2 of *The Paradigm* with these words:

“The idea that there could exist a blueprint from ancient times in which are contained and revealed the events of the modern world, even the timing of those events, and the people who would take part in those events sounds, of course, too incredible to be true. But what if it were true? What if it reveals all this as well as the course we are presently on, the ultimate end of that course, and a warning concerning the future? If such a thing existed, we would want to know it and could not afford not to know it.”³⁰

Cahn’s words above are rhetorical. He obviously believes what he is suggesting. Later, he asserts:

“That a three-thousand-year-old template could lie behind, could determine the events of the modern world is a radical proposition. And yet, as we have seen, the paradigm of ancient Israel not only corresponds to events that transpired thousands of years after the paradigm was formed but reveals those events down to the exact days of their transpiring.”³¹

In chapter after chapter, Cahn shows how he believes events and

personalities from 1 Kings 16:28 through 2 Kings 10:28³² are “replaying” (Cahn’s word for it)³³ in modern-day America. Indeed, he believes that events within those chapters of the Old Testament are “determining”³⁴ what has been happening in America from the end of the twentieth century through the present time. Other words that he uses to describe the influence by people and events from the above-mentioned chapters of the Bible, which he says correlates to contemporary American people and events, include “foretold” (or “foretell”)³⁵ and “an omen.”³⁶ It is as if the political personalities and events are merely actors on a modern stage following a script (those Old Testament chapters) written for them.

CAHN’S CONTEMPORARY DRAMATIS PERSONAE

Space permits us to give only a general idea of the way Cahn tries to demonstrate his thesis for the events in Old Testament Israel to be replaying and determining events in contemporary America. Some of his observations involve relating lengths of reigns or positions of power of people in the Old Testament to lengths of reigns or positions of influence of personalities in modern America. However, from what is said below, the reader will gain at least some idea of what Cahn tries to do in his book, in relating ancient people and situations to modern-day “replayings.”

According to Cahn, the part of King Ahab was replayed by Bill Clinton,³⁷ and the part of Queen Jezebel was re-enacted by Hillary Clinton.³⁸ Ben-Hadad was replayed by Osama bin Laden,³⁹ and Hazael (who killed Ben-Hadad in 2 Kings 8:8-15) was replayed by Bin Laden’s courier.⁴⁰ For the replaying of the incident of Ahab coveting Naboth’s vineyard (told in 1 Kings 21), Cahn sees a dual fulfillment in our day.⁴¹ First, he says it was the Clintons’ Whitewater scandal⁴² and then secondly, it was the sexual scandal involving Monica Lewinsky.⁴³

Cahn believes Baal worship — particularly the aspect of child sacrifice in

Baal worship — in the days of Ahab and Jezebel is being replayed today in the widespread practice of abortion,⁴⁴ including the inhumane abortion-on-demand platform of Planned Parenthood.⁴⁵ Cahn further makes a correspondence between rampant sexual immorality including — but not limited to — homosexuality and gender confusion involved in Baal worship and these same practices today.⁴⁶ However, his primary focus in the book regarding Baal worship is its practice of child sacrifice in the days of Ahab and Jezebel, which he relates to the contemporary practice of abortion.

Cahn correctly says that in the Old Testament, Ahab’s son, Ahaziah, was the immediate successor of Ahab.⁴⁷ But Cahn does not have anything in his paradigm to relate to Ahaziah, so he dismisses him as irrelevant.⁴⁸ Cahn then picks up the paradigm with Joram, another son of Ahab, who was Ahaziah’s successor to the throne of Israel.⁴⁹ Cahn sees Barack Obama as Joram’s modern counterpart.⁵⁰ Next, Cahn sees Jehu’s role in 2 Kings 9-10 being replayed by Donald Trump.⁵¹

Cahn presents both a general and a specific fulfillment of an obscure religious figure named Jehonadab⁵² (briefly mentioned in 2 Kings 10:15, 23 and who is mentioned again in Jeremiah 35, under a shortened form of his name as “Jonadab”). Cahn sees the general fulfillment of Jehonadab in the form of evangelical and religious conservatives.⁵³ But he sees the most specific contemporary fulfillment of Jehonadab in the person of Vice President Mike Pence.⁵⁴

Cahn merges the Elijah and Elisha characters in 1 Kings 17 through 2 Kings 10 and finds a contemporary fulfillment of them in the readers of *The Paradigm* who take up the challenge he gives to them to be “the Elijahs of the day.”⁵⁵

In addition to the ancient and contemporary personalities in *The Paradigm*, Cahn has a short chapter on what the future may hold⁵⁶ and his final very brief chapter is a summary of things that he wants the reader to take away from *The Paradigm*.⁵⁷

EXAMINING THE PARADIGM

We will only briefly touch on a few of the players in Cahn’s drama somewhat more closely, to see if his thesis stands up on its own terms.

First, it is understandable that Cahn has noticed some parallels between characters in a portion of the books of 1 and 2 Kings and in the political situation in contemporary America. Secondly, although some of the parallels that Cahn has drawn do seem similar, others do not.

A big part of Cahn’s thesis is not simply that there are *parallels* between certain figures and situations in the Old Testament and figures and situations in contemporary America, which we would grant, but that to Cahn, in some mystical manner, the Old Testament events presage what is occurring in contemporary America and that modern figures and situations are replaying this script. It is this second aspect of Cahn’s hermeneutical method that is troubling.

As noted above, Cahn sees Bill and Hillary Clinton replaying the roles of King Ahab and Queen Jezebel, respectively. Cahn makes interesting and apparently valid comparisons between this contemporary political couple and the Old Testament template he assigns to them. For instance, both Bill Clinton and King Ahab were national leaders of their respective nations. Both leaders led their respective nations on a downward moral course, compounded or perhaps influenced by their own moral failures. Cahn further references the biblical account of Ahab coveting Naboth’s vineyard (1 Kings 21) and he sees in it a dual fulfillment of this biblical story in the lives of the Clintons.⁵⁸

The first correspondence Cahn makes between Ahab and Clinton is with the Whitewater scandal,⁵⁹ which Cahn notes, “was focused on their acquisition of real estate property — the same fundamental elements involved in the ancient scandal of Ahab, Jezebel, and Naboth.”⁶⁰ And just as Jezebel had Naboth murdered to enable Ahab to acquire Naboth’s vineyard, Cahn suggests that there was a

suspicious death — that of Vince Foster — which was, in some sense, connected with the Clintons and Whitewater.⁶¹

The second Naboth-incident correspondence Cahn presents between Ahab and Bill Clinton is the Monica Lewinsky scandal, in which Clinton had a sexual relationship with Lewinsky, a 22-year-old White House intern.⁶² Cahn produces evidence that, as Ahab evidenced some repentance after Elijah confronted him about having Naboth murdered (see 1 Kings 21:20-29) so, too, Clinton publicly expressed repentance before a large group of ministers at an annual White House prayer breakfast.⁶³

These comparisons are conceivable, whether one agrees with them or not. So are some of the other correspondences that Cahn gives between other people and situations in the section of 1 and 2 Kings referenced above when compared with contemporary American people and events. However, as is illustrated by the accompanying sidebar article (on pages 12-13) which shows how to achieve an artificial paradigm, there are likewise dissimilarities in some of Cahn's paradigm. Cahn's premise is infected with forced, artificial, and non-working correspondences throughout.

THE DISSIMILARITIES OF CAHN'S PARADIGMS

For instance, as illustrations of dissimilarities within Cahn's paradigms, Bill Clinton is not Jewish, as Ahab was, nor did he govern a divided nation, as Ahab did. Ahab only ruled over the northern kingdom of Israel, not also over the southern kingdom of Judah. Although Ahab committed several sins in his coveting Naboth's vineyard, and being complicit in his wife's assassination of him, we have no record of him being unfaithful to his wife Jezebel, unlike Bill Clinton. Likewise, Hillary is not a foreigner, as Jezebel was.

One major dissimilarity occurs when Cahn tries to create a correspondence between one of Ahab's sons and successors, Joram (whom Cahn styles as "the Heir") and President Obama.⁶⁴ Aside from the obvi-

ous fact that the Clintons are white, and President Obama is racially mixed (which is a big difference) and that Obama is not biologically related to the Clintons (unlike Joram, who was Ahab's son), Obama spent part of his childhood in Indonesia, which cannot be said about either of the Clintons. President Obama also demonstrated an affinity toward Islam that is not noticeable in the Clintons' public personas; Bill Clinton being a Baptist, and Hillary, a Methodist.⁶⁵

Cahn's response to this would likely be to point back to what he states in the book:

"It could never be that every element, detail, or characteristic of the ancient case would or could manifest or be replayed in the modern case. If it did, it wouldn't be the modern case, but the ancient. It is rather that certain elements, certain details, and certain characteristics of the ancient case will manifest in the modern."⁶⁶

As mentioned earlier, this renders Cahn's thesis about paradigms difficult to disprove, because for any differences pointed out between the ancient and contemporary situations or persons, Cahn can simply say, "Well, not everything about the ancient situation will apply to the contemporary situation." This engenders the question: Just *how much* of the ancient situation would have to be the same to prove Cahn's thesis that biblical events and personalities are "replaying" today? However, Cahn doesn't answer this question, because he is engaged in circular reasoning. That is, he simply believes that past events are replaying in modern times because in modern times past events are replaying. The reader simply must take Cahn's word for it that this is so, regardless of the number of dissimilarities there may be between the ancient cases and the contemporary ones.

CAHN'S FORCED CORRESPONDENCES

As mentioned above, some of Cahn's attempts to show similarities between biblical persons and events

and contemporary ones, seem genuinely forced or artificial. Some examples of these sorts of forced or artificial correspondences occur in certain instances where Cahn tries to derive parallels between the names of some (but not all) of the biblical and/or contemporary persons involved in his paradigms. For instance, Cahn writes:

"The plot of land that Ahab wanted for himself was a vineyard. A vineyard is, of course, a place of fruits. The name of the man who kept the vineyard was *Naboth*. What does *Naboth* mean? *Naboth* means fruits. Whether by coincidence or the design of God the name of the victim, *Naboth*, was connected to the plot of land at the center of the scandal, a vineyard — a place of fruits."⁶⁷

Cahn then attempts to show that as "Naboth," (meaning "fruits") was killed over the vineyard, so the name of Vince Foster (i.e., the man whose suspicious death had a connection with the Clinton Whitewater scandal) also had a similarly significant name. Cahn writes:

"If the name of Naboth was linked to the land of the ancient scandal, is it possible that the name of the modern-day Naboth could likewise be connected to the land of the Whitewater scandal? What does the name *Foster* mean? It can be rendered as: 'an official in charge of a forest.' Thus *Foster* was a name given to the keeper of the forest. And that is what Vince Foster would become — the legal guardian of the forest land of Whitewater."⁶⁸

While the webpage that Cahn references for the meaning of "Foster"⁶⁹ gives a couple of other possible meanings of the name, the meaning he cites from that webpage seems to be perhaps the most likely meaning. Nevertheless, it seems like Cahn has gone to a lot of trouble to make it appear that the names of "Naboth" and "Foster" are somehow correspondingly significant to his paradigm.

In another instance, Cahn spends more than two pages of *The Paradigm*,

giving a detailed explanation of how both the biblical incident of Ahab coveting Naboth's vineyard and Clinton's sexual immorality involving Monica Lewinsky are both supposedly connected with the tribe of Levi.⁷⁰ After his detailed explanation, which is convoluted beyond belief, Cahn concludes, "The scandal and downfall of each [Ahab and Clinton] was marked and bound to the tribe of Levi."⁷¹

CORRESPONDENCES THAT DO NOT WORK

As noted above, Cahn's designation of Joram, in the person of President Obama, as "the heir" to the Clintons has serious problems. The correspondence simply isn't there between Joram in the Old Testament and Obama in twentieth-first-century America. As was the case with the Clintons, Obama is not Jewish. Furthermore, in Cahn's paradigm, he draws a strong connection between Baal worship in the Old Testament and abortion in modern times. However, whereas Joram seems to have largely abandoned Baal worship, which Cahn parallels with contemporary abortion, if anything, Obama ratcheted up promotion of abortion. Cahn states, "We have no evidence that Joram ever stopped or took any serious action to oppose the worship of Baal."⁷² Regardless of whether or not Joram opposed Baal worship, or simply didn't promote it to the extent that Ahab and Jezebel had, the Bible states, regarding Joram:

"And he did evil in the sight of the LORD, but not like his father and mother; for he put away the sacred pillar of Baal that his father had made. Nevertheless, he persisted in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who had made Israel sin; he did not depart from them" (2 Kings 3:2-3).

Cahn does mention Joram's removal of the sacred pillar of Baal, but discounts it as essentially meaningless.⁷³ Nevertheless, from the above verses, Joram appears to have been somewhat less wicked than his parents. (Ahab had also followed in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat — see 1 Kings 16:31.) It is questionable,

from Cahn's survey of President Obama, whether Cahn sees him as morally better or worse than he views the Clintons. For instance, at one point, Cahn lists 11 specific instances "of some of the acts of hostility toward God, His ways, and His people that took place under the Obama administration."⁷⁴

A second correspondence that does not work for Cahn is Ahab's son and immediate successor, Ahaziah. President Clinton's immediate successor was George W. Bush. But, not surprisingly, Bush doesn't fit in Cahn's paradigm. So, Cahn admits:

"Whatever one thinks of the presidency of George W. Bush, with regard to the issues of apostasy the Bush presidency was a break in the progression that had begun in the Clinton years. Rather than championing such issues, he sought to stem or reverse them."⁷⁵

Therefore, the way Cahn handles George W. Bush (Ahaziah in the Old Testament) in his book is to simply dismiss Bush as being irrelevant to his paradigm!⁷⁶ And truly, there is little about Bush (who served two terms as president) that fits the brief career of Ahaziah, as recorded in the section of Scripture from which Cahn draws his paradigm. Ahaziah, who reigned for only two years (1 Kings 22:51), is portrayed in Scripture as wicked and idolatrous (1 Kings 22:51–2 Kings 1:18). Bush was president for eight years, and despite what one may think of his politics, he could hardly be described as wicked or idolatrous.

A third instance where Cahn's paradigm fails is when he suggests that the sins of Jeroboam from which Jehu didn't depart, correspond to Donald Trump's "championing the cause of nationalism [which] will at times compete with his intentions to carry out God's will."⁷⁷ However, not departing from the sins of Jeroboam was a consistent feature in all four of the kings Cahn covers in *The Paradigm*: Ahab (1 Kings 16:30-31); Ahaziah (1 Kings 22:51-52); Joram (2 Kings 3:1, 3); and Jehu (2 Kings 10:29, 31). Moreover, according to Cahn, regarding

the modern-day counterparts of Clinton, Bush, Obama, and Trump, it is questionable as to whether President Clinton exhibited nationalism and it is undeniable that President Obama was certainly *not* a nationalist! So, Cahn's paradigm also fails here.

A fourth instance where Cahn's paradigm doesn't work is in his treatment of Elijah and Elisha.⁷⁸ Although the chapter of the book where Cahn deals with Elijah is perhaps the best and most inspiring chapter of *The Paradigm*, Cahn simply merges the two prophets into one figure there. Although Cahn gives reasons for doing this,⁷⁹ it seems unfair to both men, because they had separate and successive ministries.

Additionally, for Cahn to devote a mere chapter to Elijah and Elisha when the section of Scripture that Cahn has chosen for *The Paradigm* has *much* to say about both men, it appears that Cahn's treatment of these very important figures in the Bible is much too brief, compared with the treatment he gives to some other people. For example, Cahn has an entire chapter on the obscure Old Testament figure Jehonadab, who is only mentioned by name in 2 Kings 10:15, 23 (and then again in Jeremiah 35). Yet Scripture devotes much more space to the ministries of Elijah and Elisha than to Jehonadab.

POSITIVE THINGS ABOUT THE PARADIGM

Not everything about *The Paradigm* is bad. Cahn has an interesting and captivating writing style. Cahn's chapter on Elijah/Elisha, titled, "The Elijah Paradigm,"⁸⁰ is inspiring as a standalone piece and reads as though it might possibly be a transcription or adaptation of a sermon by Cahn. The chapter also closes with an evangelistic invitation to the unsaved reader. Additionally, he does make some valid and insightful points at times.

It is possible that Cahn's book could have functioned legitimately in one or two ways. First, it could have functioned strictly as a book about spiritual conditions in Israel during the time described in 1 Kings 16 through 2 Kings 10. Secondly, it could have

been written as a purely conservative political commentary on the U.S. presidents from Clinton up through Trump. From that standpoint, also, it makes compelling reading.

However, by attempting to merge the biblical with the political, via a flawed hermeneutical method, Cahn has created a horrid hybrid that doesn't do justice to either the political aspects or the biblical subject matter that he treats in this book.

WHAT WE CAN (AND CAN'T) KNOW FROM THE BIBLE

God tells us much about many things in the Bible. There may be more that God tells us in the Bible than many of us realize. And if we did realize how much God reveals to us in His Word, we would love and study it all the more.

However, the Bible doesn't answer every question we may have or tell us all that we wish that it did, although it may yield more information than we realize were we to attend to it more closely. But it is a great error to attempt to *make* the Bible yield more information about things than God has been pleased to provide. It has been said, "Where God puts a period, let no man put a question mark."⁸¹ The Bible tells us that, "The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but those things which are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law" (Deuteronomy 29:29).

The eminent scholar and historian of religion, George Foot Moore, emphasizes:

"The time when the Messiah should appear, or the rule of God be established in power, was fixed in God's plan, and signs of its approach were given in the prophets, *but it was God's secret, into which it was not for men to pry.*"⁸²

To this Moore adds:

"Against such speculations Sirach had given a warning which is quoted in the Talmud in this connection thus: 'Do not inquire into what is beyond thine under-

standing, and do not investigate what is hidden from thee. *Reflect on things that are permitted to thee; thou hast nothing to do with the study of mysteries.*"⁸³

This is sane — and biblical — counsel from a recognized scholar of Judaism to which Cahn, who presents himself as one who has great understanding of Judaism, needs to contemplate and subscribe. Again, as Deuteronomy declares, the "secret things belong to the LORD our God." God, for example, has chosen to reveal partial details about coming events, such as things about the future of certain nations, the Second Coming of Christ, and the final destiny of the saved and unsaved. However, God has not revealed every detail that we would like to know about everything. The Bible tells us what God desired for us to know in this life and it tells us much about many things. Yet, just because we are curious, or have a question about something, it does not mean that God is obligated to completely satisfy our curiosity or our quest for knowledge. We cannot *force* God's Word to reveal answers to questions that it doesn't answer. A vivid example is that Jesus clearly and specifically told us that no man can know the day or the hour of His return (e.g., see Matthew 24:36, 42; 25:13; Mark 13:32-37; Acts 1:6-7). Although, despite the clear teaching of Jesus about this, many throughout Church history — to their own shame and the devastation of their followers — have either ignorantly or arrogantly attempted to derive a date for His return.

To attempt to force the Bible to give us information that it doesn't provide is illegitimate. The Psalmist said, "LORD, my heart is not haughty, nor my eyes lofty. Neither do I concern myself with great matters, nor with things too profound for me" (Psalm 131:1).

Cahn is trying to derive answers from the Bible that God has not given us. He is trying to make the Bible speak to us concerning things which God never intended for it to tell us. The Bible does not give us detailed and specific information about con-

temporary America in the way Cahn has portrayed in *The Paradigm*. First and Second Kings are about the northern kingdom of Israel. Can we derive principles for what pleases and doesn't please God from these narratives? Certainly!

However, the narratives in 1 and 2 Kings are not some sort of script that God wrote in advance predicting what would happen in modern-day American politics, regardless of what Cahn believes about this. It is a gross misuse of Scripture to read and handle it in this manner. There may be certain parallels between certain events in ancient Israel and events in contemporary America. Yet, it is a far cry between acknowledging this possibility and stating that what happened in the narratives in 1 and 2 Kings has *determined* the course of events in contemporary America.

Paul exhorted Timothy, "Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth" (2 Timothy 2:15, NASB). Dealing with the narratives in 1 and 2 Kings as Cahn has done is a shining example of *not* accurately handling the Word of Truth. He has not treated the text of Scripture with integrity or respect, but has read his own conceptions into the text of Scripture. He has thus engaged in eisegesis (reading his interpretation *into* the Scriptures), rather than exegesis (deriving his interpretation *from* the Scriptures). He exemplifies the saying, "Wonderful things in the Bible I see; things that were put there by you and by me."⁸⁴ Cahn tortures the text of Scripture in a vain attempt to try to make it confess to his predetermined conclusions.

CAHN'S FAULTY HERMENEUTICAL METHOD

Early in his book, Cahn attempts to defend the way he handles the Old Testament section of 1 and 2 Kings by appealing to 1 Corinthians 10:11, where Paul — in reference to some of God's judgments on the children of Israel during their 40 years of wilderness wanderings — says, "Now all these things happened to them as

examples, and they were written for our admonition."⁸⁵ Cahn here asserts that he is justified in rendering this verse as, "Now all these things happened to them as *paradigms*, and they were written for our warning."⁸⁶

However, contrary to the way Cahn attempts to handle the narratives in the Old Testament that he uses for his "paradigm," in the section of 1 Corinthians which Cahn quotes above, the Apostle Paul is drawing lessons about Christian conduct from the examples of Israel's period of wandering in the wilderness. Unlike this, Cahn attempts to use the Old Testament narratives in 1 and 2 Kings as a sort of prophecy of people and events in twentieth- and twenty-first-century America. The Apostle Paul was not doing that in the 1 Corinthians passage Cahn references. One simply cannot interpret Scripture in any way that suits one's fancy and expect to derive the meaning that God intended for that passage.

In addition to 1 Corinthians 10:1-13, there are other places in the New Testament that give us valid uses of the Old Testament. Some of these uses are:

1. They testify about Jesus: "You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me" (John 5:39; see also, vv. 46-47; Luke 24:27; Acts 13:27-29; 1 Corinthians 15:3-4).

2. They provide perseverance and hope: "For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, so that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope" (Romans 15:4, NASB).

3. They give us the wisdom for salvation through faith in Jesus: "[F]rom childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus" (2 Timothy 3:15).

4. They thoroughly equip the man of God for all good work: "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God

may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work" (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

5. They provide light for Christians as we await the return of Jesus: "And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star⁸⁷ rises in your hearts" (2 Peter 1:19).

There are also prophetic portions of both Old and New Testament Scriptures that foretell things that were either future when they were first given and/or that tell us of things that are *still* future, about our own time. Bible prophecy scholar Mark Hitchcock states that "more than one-fourth of the Bible was prophetic at the time it was written."⁸⁸

Cahn also justifies his faulty method of biblical interpretation by a reference to "types" that appear in Scripture.⁸⁹ However, one dictionary explains "typology" thus:

"According to Christian exegesis, biblical typology deals with the parallels between actual, historical (usually OT) figures or events in salvation history and their later, analogous fulfillment. Often NT events and figures are typologically understood and interpreted according to an OT pattern (e.g., creation and the new creation, Adam and Christ, the exodus and NT concepts of salvation)."⁹⁰

However, Cahn tries to use an Old Testament person or situation as a "type," but then goes completely outside the Bible to find an antitype. So, here again, his biblical interpretation is flawed. (Although a possible reason for Cahn's mixing biblical and non-biblical history will be suggested at the end of the article.)

REVEALING THE MYSTERY OF CAHN'S PARADIGM

Cahn has invented the paradigm of *The Paradigm* out of whole cloth. He has noticed some interesting similarities between certain personalities and situations in the Old Testament section of 1 Kings 16:28 to 2 Kings 10:36

and those of certain personalities and situations in contemporary America. Where Cahn found apparent similarities between characters and events in that section of Scripture and those of contemporary America, he has created "paradigm boxes," using such descriptions of the similarities between both the ancient and modern situation that were either specific or general enough to apply to both the ancient and modern situations. Cahn wants the reader to believe that he has discovered a mysterious linkage between Old Testament events and situations and those in modern America. In fact, Cahn has created a game using rules that he himself has invented, in the way and to the degree that was necessary for him to achieve his desired results.

This latter statement is proven in several ways:

1. His descriptions are as general or specific as he needed them to be to apply to both the ancient and the modern situation.

2. Some of his correspondences seem artificial or forced, such as certain correspondences that he tries to demonstrate between names, years, or dates.

3. Some of his correspondences — such as that of Joram with that of his modern "counterpart" Barack Obama — do not seem to work at all. However, for Cahn to make his paradigm succeed, he tries to force the correlation, even though it doesn't fit.

4. Cahn ignores, discounts, or dismisses dissimilarities between the ancient and modern templates. He does this, for instance, with the lack of any correspondence between Ahab's immediate successor, Ahaziah (in the Bible) and his "modern counterpart," George W. Bush. In other words, when he comes to a situation where there is no correlation, he simply changes the rules to *make* the paradigm work.

5. Cahn also deviates from the template he has created in other significant ways. As noted above, he merges the characters of Elijah and Elisha, even though their ministries were successive and that they were

two different prophets who each ministered to different people and situations during different times.

6. Cahn bypasses wide swaths of Scripture within the section of the Bible with which he is dealing. For instance, he does not show any contemporary correspondence in America between Elijah's confrontation with Ahab in 1 Kings 17:1, and Elijah's subsequent going into hiding (1 Kings 17:3ff.); his sojourn with the widow of Zarephath and her son (1 Kings 17:8-24); his raising of the widow's son to life (1 Kings 17:17-24); the Old Testament believer Obadiah (not to be confused with the later Old Testament prophet, for whom an OT book is named) in 1 Kings 18:3-16; and Elijah's dramatic contest between himself and the prophets of Baal in 1 Kings 18, which is a landmark event in the section of Scripture from which Cahn derives his paradigm.

Similarly, although the section of 2 Kings that Cahn uses in his paradigm (chapters 1-10) devotes more space to the ministry of Elisha and the miracles God did through him than to any of the kings of Israel mentioned in those chapters, Cahn has nothing specific to say about Elisha (or his noteworthy miracles) other than to merge him into the ministry of Elijah (whose noteworthy miracles Cahn likewise ignores)!

THE WORTHLESSNESS OF CAHN'S PARADIGM

There is an old Chinese proverb that says, "It is difficult to prophesy, particularly with regard to the future."⁹¹

Cahn attributes both predictive and determinative ability to his paradigm. For instance, in his appearance on *The 700 Club*, Cahn stated:

"If we could have known this — I didn't know it before, this just came to me — if we could have known it beforehand, you could've actually marked your calendars to put down when colossal events of our time would happen, [down] to the exact days."⁹²

Similarly, in *The Paradigm*, he states:

"We are now about to see how the mystery foretold one of the most pivotal events of modern history, an event that the greatest intelligence organization of earth had failed to foresee. And yet the ancient mystery was so exact that if one had known the paradigm, one could have marked on a calendar the exact day it would take place — years before it happened."⁹³

And again:

"When Jehu entered Jezreel to confront Jezebel, there could only have been one outcome, the victory of Jehu and the defeat of Jezebel. Thus, despite every poll showing her [presidential] victory, the paradigm would determine that Hillary Clinton would be defeated. For in the paradigm the former queen [Jezebel, corresponding to Hillary Clinton] is defeated by the warrior [Jehu, corresponding to Donald Trump]."⁹⁴

So here Cahn ascribes assured determinative and predictive ability to "the paradigm." According to what he has stated above, there should never have been any question or doubt that Donald Trump would win the presidential election over Hillary Clinton, because, according to Cahn, the paradigm expressly foretold and determined that this would be the case.

Elsewhere, however, Cahn seems much less sure, such as when it comes to the ability of "the paradigm" to predict the future. This is the case in chapter 29 of *The Paradigm* where Cahn merely *suggests* what the paradigm *could* (but not necessarily *will*) predict regarding the future.⁹⁵ Here, Cahn cautiously suggests:

"[W]ith the ascent of the warrior, the saga of Ahab's house, its rise and fall, attains resolution. What began with the rise of Ahab and Jezebel is finally undone and resolved with the rise of Jehu. [Which events Cahn believes correspond to the political rise and fall of the Clintons and the rise of Donald Trump to power]. The

manifestations of the paradigm do not necessarily have to continue. On the other hand, the history does continue. Therefore could there be in its continuance a revelation or glimpse of what the future holds? Could its details still contain clues as to where we are heading?"⁹⁶

For reasons that are unclear, Cahn decides that the paradigm ends with the rise of Jehu to power and his destruction of Baal worship in Israel (see 2 Kings 10:28). However, Jehu's reign extends to 2 Kings 10:36 and the history of the northern kingdom of Israel continues for almost another hundred years, following Jehu's death in 814 B.C. So, why Cahn would end his paradigm before the death of Jehu and before the destruction of the nation of Israel in 722 B.C. is unclear, especially given his bold assertions of the paradigm's predictive and determinative abilities.

Note Cahn's timidity in this chapter about the future, as he states:

"Could these elements of Jehu's reign give us revelation into what the future may hold for America and the world? Beyond the fact that after Jehu's rise there would be no necessity for the manifestations of the paradigm to continue, we must also remember that even if they did, there is no formula dictating which details of the template must manifest. On the other hand, since the account continues, could it contain more keys, revelations, clues, or even warnings? We will now open up and explore some of these clues, not as what must be but as that which could be. Thus they will be presented as possibilities — and warnings."⁹⁷

Several things should here be noted. First, he never states why it is a "fact" that "after Jehu's rise there would be no necessity for the manifestations of the paradigm to continue." Second, if ever there was any doubt about it, it should be clear from the quotation above that Cahn is *not* a biblical prophet, despite accolades that some have bestowed on him, such as calling

him “America’s prophet,” because no biblical prophet ever prophesied with such caution or timidity. They *all* spoke with the authority of “Thus says the LORD.”

Finally, what would we think of the Bible, were it to give such qualified and limited revelations as Cahn has, stating things like, “Some of what is said in this passage doesn’t have to manifest, and there is really no way to determine which of these words are going to occur, and which ones are not, since not everything in this passage has to manifest?” The believer should be thankful that the Bible doesn’t speak with such indecision and qualifications as Cahn does with his paradigm!

What Cahn is doing with his paradigm is prophetic sleight-of-hand. He has done nothing more than to “predict” the past (up to the present) and make his readers think it is a genuine foretelling of the future. Of what value is a paradigm that merely “predicts” the past and present? The vague prophecies of Nostradamus⁹⁸ have been used to do the same — and some would even argue that the prophecies of Nostradamus also predict the future! Perhaps it can be granted that Cahn has misused the Bible in his paradigm and that he has been much more detailed and specific in the details of his paradigm than are the prophecies of Nostradamus. However, a paradigm that merely enables us to predict the past and the present is essentially worthless unless it can also be used to accurately predict the future.

All the above points (and probably more) demonstrate that *The Paradigm* is Cahn’s own invention, and not at all a revelation from God. As if all this were not enough, Cahn’s hermeneutical method is completely arbitrary, and not based on any principles of sound biblical interpretation. This has also been true of his previous books, *The Harbinger*, *The Mystery of the Shemitah*, and *The Book of Mysteries*. As mentioned, Cahn’s method is the opposite of what the Bible exhorts God’s ministers to do — which is to be “accurately handling the word of truth” (2 Timothy 2:15, NASB).

In speaking of the letters of the Apostle Paul, the Apostle Peter said that, “in [them] are some things hard to understand, which untaught and unstable people twist to their own destruction, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures” (2 Peter 3:16).

The *New Living Translation* renders 2 Corinthians 2:17:

“You see, we are not like the many hucksters who preach for personal profit. We preach the word of God with sincerity and with Christ’s authority, knowing that God is watching us.”

God is, indeed, watching those of us who proclaim His Word. May we emulate the Apostle Paul’s example, given to us above.

A FINAL CONSIDERATION

Cahn makes several statements in the final chapter of *The Paradigm* that are troubling, in that they appear to indicate the possibility that he may believe that biblical history is still, in some manner, ongoing beyond the pages of Scripture, although he has certainly not advocated adding to the books of the Bible.

In that final chapter, Cahn lists some bullet points, which include the following:

“• The Bible is the Word of God, so much so that its patterns, keys, and templates reveal, illuminate, foretell, if not determine even the events and details of the present day.”⁹⁹

“• The Word of God is beyond time. That which was written nearly three thousand years ago is as relevant now as when it was first written.”¹⁰⁰

“• We are living in biblical times.”¹⁰¹

Similarly, in the address before *The 700 Club*, Cahn also stated, “So many of you have wanted to live — ‘Oh, Lord, I wish I could live in biblical times’ — Congratulations! You’ve got it.”¹⁰²

Cahn here seems to be treading on dangerous ground, because he appears to be advocating for a continu-

ous, ongoing biblical history beyond the pages of the Scriptures. On what basis does he dare to do this? Doing so would seem to imply an open, ongoing canon of Scripture, although he has not yet *explicitly* stated this. Nevertheless, his views regarding the Bible, evidenced by the quotations above, make one wonder if that is where he is heading with his view of the Scriptures.

Endnotes:

1. After his first book, *The Harbinger*, was published, Cahn wrote a follow-up volume, *The Harbinger Companion With Study Guide*, which explains and elaborates on matters dealt with in his initial book. However, this subsequent book does not usually seem to be counted in discussions of how many books he has written and, thus, we will not count it here as one of his three previous works.
2. In chronological order, *The Quarterly Journal* articles dealing with Cahn and his books are: G. Richard Fisher, “The Harbinger: The Cahning of the Church,” *The Quarterly Journal*, October-December 2012, pp. 2, 21-22; J. Greg Sheryl, “Jonathan Cahn: Man of Mystery – The Art of Making God’s Word Complex and Sensational,” *The Quarterly Journal*, April-June 2015, pp. 1, 12-21; M. Kurt Goedelman, “Cahn’s Ancient Mystery Message Appears Unstoppable,” *The Quarterly Journal*, April-June 2016, pp. 22-23; J. Greg Sheryl, “Is the Bible a Book of Mysteries? Examining the Prophetic Shtick of Jonathan Cahn,” *The Quarterly Journal*, April-June 2017, pp. 1, 12-20; and M. Kurt Goedelman, “Devil Blamed for Delay of Cahn’s New Book,” *The Quarterly Journal*, January-March 2018, pp. 3, 23.
3. Jonathan Cahn, *The Paradigm*. Lake Mary, Fla.: FrontLine, 2017, pg. vii.
4. *Ibid.*
5. *Ibid.*
6. Jonathan Cahn, “Prophecy Update Warning!” YouTube video, Sept. 25, 2017, timemark: 7:25. Video accessed at: www.youtube.com/watch?v=sECQbsqIOwM
7. *Ibid.*, timemark: 4:53.
8. Jonathan Cahn, *The Harbinger Companion With Study Guide*. Lake Mary, Fla.: FrontLine, 2013, pg. 198, ellipsis in original. Cahn offers substantially a similar account on the DVD, Jonathan Cahn, *The Harbinger Man: The Jonathan Cahn Story*. Chantilly, Va.: WND Films (WorldNetDaily.com), 2015, timemark: 27:08-28:15.
9. *The Paradigm*, op. cit., pg. 1; also pg. 2.
10. *Ibid.*, pg. 1.
11. *Ibid.*, pg. 2.
12. I counted about 66 uses of these words in *The Paradigm*.
13. *Ibid.*, pg. 2.

14. Ibid.
15. Ibid., pg. 3.
16. Ibid., pg. 11.
17. Ibid., pg. 3.
18. Ibid., pg. 6.
19. *The American Heritage College Dictionary*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2000, s.v. "paradigm," pg. 989.
20. *The Paradigm*, op. cit., pg. 4, italic in original.
21. Ibid., pg. 5.
22. Ibid.
23. Ibid., pp. 18-19.
24. Ibid., pg. 19.
25. Ibid.
26. Eugene H. Merrill, *An Historical Survey of the Old Testament*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Books, 2000, Table 6, "Kings of Israel and Judah," pg. 231.
27. *The Paradigm*, op. cit., pp. 6, 222.
28. Ibid., pg. 1, emphasis added.
29. Ibid., pg. 2, emphasis added.
30. Ibid., pg. 4.
31. Ibid., pg. 91.
32. Cahn concludes his paradigm with Jehu's destruction of Baal worship (ibid., pp. 211-216), which ends at 2 Kings 10:28. However, Jehu's reign continues through 2 Kings 10:36.
33. For instances where Cahn uses this word "replaying" (or "replayed") to describe what he believes is occurring, see, ibid., pp. 2, 19, 56, 58, 54, 73, 84, 112, 119.
34. For instances of Cahn using the words "determine," "determined," "determining" etc., to describe what he believes is occurring, see ibid., pp. 1, 2, 56, 91, 138, 176, 182, 235, 236.
35. Ibid., pp. 91, 133, 236.
36. Ibid., pg. 183.
37. Ibid., pp. 26-30, 56.
38. Ibid., pp. 35-39.
39. Ibid., pp. 60-66.
40. Ibid., pg. 136.
41. Ibid., pp. 67-91.
42. Ibid., pp. 69-74.
43. Ibid., pp. 77-80.
44. Ibid., pp. 16-18, 24, 34, 43-44, 105-106, 129-130, 145-147.
45. Ibid., pp. 120, 146, 177, 213.
46. Ibid., pp. 8-9, 15, 44-45.
47. Ibid., pg. 109.
48. Ibid., pp. 109, 112.
49. Ibid., pp. 109ff.
50. Ibid., pp. 110ff.
51. Ibid., pp. 151ff.
52. Ibid., pp. 186-189.
53. Ibid., pp. 190-196.
54. Ibid., pp. 195-196.
55. Ibid., pg. 234.
56. Ibid., pp. 217-224, entitled, "The Harbingers of Days to Come."
57. Ibid., pp. 235-237.
58. Ibid., pp. 67-91.
59. Ibid., pp. 69-74.
60. Ibid., pg. 71.
61. Ibid., pp. 71-73.
62. Ibid., pp. 78-85.
63. Ibid., pp. 94-98, 243, note 9 (for "Chapter 13: The Day").
64. Ibid., pp. 110-115.
65. President Obama claimed to be a Christian. However, as an adult, he was associated with a very liberal denomination (United Church of Christ) and in his policies, during his time as president, he arguably showed partiality to Muslims over Christians. It is difficult to point to anything specific that Obama did to help Christians wherein he did show great favor toward Muslims, including, at times, having celebrations for them at the White House.
66. Ibid., pg. 19.
67. Ibid., pg. 72, italics in original.
68. Ibid., pg. 73, italics in original.
69. Ibid., pg. 241, note 17, "'Foster Origins,' The Foster Name Website, accessed July 31, 2017, <http://www.fostername.com/england.htm>."
70. Ibid., pp. 82-84.
71. Ibid., pg. 84.
72. Ibid., pg. 110.
73. Ibid.
74. Ibid., pg. 120. The 11 points are given on pp. 120-123.
75. Ibid., pg. 112.
76. Ibid., pp. 109, 112.
77. Ibid., pg. 220.
78. Ibid., pp. 225-234.
79. Ibid., pg. 225.
80. Ibid., pp. 225-234.
81. A former pastor of mine, Sandy Adams, said this, although it probably did not originate with him.
82. George Foot Moore, *Judaism*. Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishers, 1997, Vol. 1, pg. 119, emphasis added.
83. Ibid., pg. 383, emphasis added.
84. Source unknown.
85. *The Paradigm*, op. cit., pg. 5, citing 1 Corinthians 10:11 in the NKJV.
86. Ibid., italic in the original.
87. The "morning star" is likely a reference to Jesus. In Revelation 22:16, He calls Himself, "the Bright and Morning Star."
88. Mark Hitchcock, *The Amazing Claims of Bible Prophecy*. Eugene, Ore.: Harvest House Publishers, 2010, pg. 8.
89. *The Paradigm*, op. cit., pg. 5.
90. Stanley J. Grenz, David Guretzki, and Cherith Fee Nordling, *Pocket Dictionary of Theological Terms*. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1999, s.v. "typology," pg. 117.
91. Roy B. Zuck, *The Speaker's Quote Book*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Kregel Publications, 2009, pg. 426.
92. "Prophecy Update Warning!," op. cit., timemark: 7:06.
93. *The Paradigm*, op. cit., pg. 91.
94. Ibid., pg. 175.
95. Ibid., pp. 217-224.
96. Ibid., pg. 217.
97. Ibid., pg. 219.
98. For an evaluation of Nostradamus and his prophecies, see M. Kurt Goedelman, "The Tarnished Prophet of the 16th Century - The Legacy of Nostradamus," *The Quarterly Journal*, July-September 1998, pp. 4, 13-17.
99. *The Paradigm*, op. cit., pg. 236.
100. Ibid.
101. Ibid., pg. 237.
102. "Prophecy Update Warning!," op. cit., timemark: 32:36.



EDITORIALS

(continued from page 2)

In the early 1960s, archaeologists began to question Albright's assertion. Archaeologists suggested that Sodom had been on the eastern side of the Dead Sea, in modern-day Jordan (see, *The Dead Sea, Myth, History, and Politics* by Barbara Kreiger, pp. 104-105).

There were ruins in Jordan at a large *tel* — a mound with ruins of destroyed cities — in the east named Bab edh-Dhra. Those excavations were small, limited, and inconclusive. Its timeframe was not right, either. Larger and more serious excavations took place at Bab edh-Dhra

in the 1970s. Those digs were chronicled in the *Bible and Spade* magazine (Summer 1974). Though Bab edh-Dhra fit somewhat near the time frame of Abraham (Middle Bronze Age), more excavating there neither proved nor disproved any identification with any of the five cities of the plain. Bab edh-Dhra was the new best guess and supposed as the last and only candidate for Sodom. That is, until another candidate emerged. This newest contender is more tied to the Bible's geographical markers.

All the while, liberals infected with the higher criticism bug simply wrote off Sodom and her sister cities as myths and fables. They took the easy route and ignored any discussion on the topic.

To understand the new area of interest and its archaeological research, we need to start by going to the back of our Bibles and zeroing in on a map of Israel. Focus on the Dead Sea and place a dime on the map with the bottom edge of the dime on the very northern tip of the Dead Sea. The circle of the dime is the area of concentration in the new search for Sodom. The circle encompasses Jericho on the west, Bethel and Ai north of it, and Tall el-Hammam and Pisgah on the east (to the right in Jordan). The Jordan River and tributaries run through the disk, making it a well-watered plain (Genesis 13:10). The area of the dime in Hebrew is *kikkar*. *Kikkar* is literally a circle. When used of land it is a geographical circle. The word is most often translated as plain, but circle or disk is more accurate. (A traffic circle in Israel is a *kikkar*.)

The *kikkar* is very fertile because of the waters and tributaries of the Jordan River. From that standpoint, the *kikkar* would make a perfect setting for the cities of the plain. But there is much more.

Enter Dr. Steven Collins. Collins is the Executive Curator of the Museum of Archaeology and Biblical History. He is also the Dean of the College of Archaeology and Biblical History at Southwest University in New Mexico. He has taught Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek for 30 years at a graduate and doctoral level. Since 2005, Collins has been digging and researching the area of the *kikkar* and has discovered a treasure trove of ancient ruins. The largest *tel* there has been under study. This enormous *tel* is Tall el-Hammam and is a prime candidate for Sodom's location. It is on the right edge of the dime, a bit below center. Most *tels* in Israel cover only 10 to 20 acres. Tall el-Hammam covers 63 acres and an even larger lower city. It fits every biblical geographical marker attributed to Sodom. There is an ash layer more than three feet deep in the Middle Bronze Age level of the *tel*.

Tall el-Hammam is so impressive and compelling that it is being favored as the site of Sodom by Joseph Holden and Norman Geisler in their *Popular Handbook of Archaeology and the Bible*. They devote several pages (pp. 214-220) on Collins' digs. They also include an Appendix with salient points titled, "Ascertaining the Geography of the Cities of the Plain: 40 Points." These 40 statements are very impressive and provoke much thought.

First Thessalonians 5:21 tells us to "test all things." The very best way to do that is to get all the facts that we can. The only way to get all the facts is to research Collins' claims as we read and interact with his book. His book is titled, *Discovering the City of Sodom*. His co-author is Dr. Latayne C. Scott.

In the Foreword to *Discovering the City of Sodom*, Dr. Leen Ritmeyer shares his thoughts:

"Even today, the eastern Kikkar is a well-watered plain with agricultural crops growing abundantly in the middle of winter. There can be no doubt that this region corresponds to the description of the area that Lot gazed on from Bethel/Ai and to which he

was fatefully lured. ... Not only is Tall el-Hammam one of the largest Bronze Age sites in the whole of the Middle East, but nowhere else have I seen such a thick layer of destruction, with collapsed walls, burnt debris, and dramatic skeletal remains, all inside a meter-thick layer of ash. The destruction of this ancient city was complete, and interestingly, other adjacent Bronze Age sites have a similar archaeological profile, showing that they suffered a similar fate" (pp. x, xi).

The book takes us to Tall el-Hammam in text, maps, and photographs. It describes human bone fragments found in dwellings and kitchens showing that the city and the people were taken down and wiped out without warning. There is a cluster of other cities in ruin around the *tel* which could qualify for the other cities of the plain. There is a detailed description of seven seasons of digs at Tall el-Hammam. Mud brick buildings have been uncovered showing evidence of intense burning. The *tel* announces one thing: catastrophe. The city had three-story buildings with walls that were twelve feet thick. All this was wiped out.

Collins discusses the history of the *kikkar* from ancient times to its references in New Testament times. After Sodom's destruction the area lay in ruins and desolation for seven centuries. The ruins were called the "Place of Mourning" or calamity. Later, the larger area there was known as Gilead. Collins says Tall el-Hammam is the right place geographically. It fits the time and has the right stuff as far as architecture and artifacts.

Another compelling fact is that there are photographs of maps in Collins and Scott's book from the mid- to late-nineteenth century that show the cities of the plain north and east of the Dead Sea — the very location of Tall el-Hammam. Current maps for some reason show nothing in the eastern *kikkar*.

Collins, his wife, and two associates went to Jordan and researched the findings of R.G. Khouri. Khouri had discovered and documented numerous *tels* in the Jordan Valley between the Sea of Galilee and the Dead Sea. The *kikkar* had 14 *tels* with names and Tall el-Hammam was one of them. Just perhaps the lost cities were not lost. Not all the ruins fit the criteria of the right place, right time, and right stuff. However, Tall el-Hammam remains the biggest and best contender for serious digging. There are at least two dozen geographical indicators that fit with the biblical material.

My desire for this editorial is to report, not persuade. I have no ax to grind and "no dog in the fight." The reader needs to do some digging (no pun intended) into the text of the Bible and the finds of Steven Collins. This new information on the cities of the plain is like a rolling snowball that is getting larger and attracting more attention. Some think the snowball will melt with further research at Tall el-Hammam. Time will tell. But for now, join me on the search.

—GRF

signed, a cash deposit was paid, and the aircraft was brought to Dallas for a very thorough pre-buy inspection process.”

A specific purchase price for the aircraft was not given — other than to say it “is in outstanding condition and is an exceptional value.” However, earlier fundraising efforts announced, “For about \$11-\$12 million, we can purchase a low-time, top-of-the-line Gulfstream V, and put it into service immediately.”

An ultimate goal of \$17 million was set for the “Mission 3” campaign. Beyond buying the jet, the money will also be used for redesigning the aircraft’s interior “to better serve KCM’s needs for international flights” — upgrades estimated to be \$2.5 million. And the expenses don’t stop there. Funds will also be spent on “the construction of a new hangar, upgrading the existing runway, and purchasing special GV maintenance equipment,” Copeland’s ministry reported.

Copeland’s ministry claims to have received millions of dollars toward the purchase of the aircraft from his supporters known as the Elite CX Team. According to the ministry, “The Elite CX Team, founded by Mac Gober more than a decade ago, is a special team of believers dedicated to standing for and sowing into special projects as the Lord leads.”

Copeland has long justified his need for traveling in a privately owned jet. During one of his *Believer’s Voice of Victory* broadcasts in 2015, he lamented that if he had to fly via commercial airlines, he would have to stop “at least 75 to 80, more like 90 percent of what we’re doing, ‘cause you can’t get there from here.” And, for the 81-year-old prosperity teacher, it’s not just an issue of airline delays and inconvenient travel routes. Copeland said that at one time the late faith healer Oral Roberts would fly commercial, but “it got to the place where it was agitating his spirit, people coming up to him, he had become famous, and they wanted him to pray for them and all that.” “You can’t manage that today [in] this dope-filled world, and get in a long tube with a bunch of demons. And it’s deadly,” Copeland said.

The recently acquired Gulfstream V is not the ministry’s only aircraft. It also owns a Citation X, a long-range medium-sized business jet built by Cessna. Copeland originally pitched a plan “to purchase a second Citation X at a greatly discounted price of approximately \$17 million.” But apparently God said “no.” According to Charlie Bollinger, who writes blogs for KCM, “on Feb. 1, [2017] at 11 a.m., the Lord spoke to Brother Kenneth, saying, *You’re believing for the wrong airplane. The Citation X is too small; you have already outgrown it. The second Citation X will come, but at a later date.*” Bollinger later wrote that, “the Holy Spirit confirmed to Brother

Copeland that the Gulfstream V was the plane the Lord had set aside for KCM.”

The Gulfstream V is a long-range, large business aircraft which has a 6,500-nautical-mile range and typically accommodates four crew and 14 passengers.

—MKG

MORMONS SAID TO BE STILL BAPTIZING HOLOCAUST VICTIMS

If there is a proverbial bad penny that keeps showing up for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, the leading candidate probably can be found in its ordinance of Baptism for the Dead — or more specifically, the practice of baptizing by proxy for dead Jewish Holocaust victims.

Nearly 25 years ago, Mormons took flak when it was revealed that hundreds of thousands of Holocaust victims had been baptized by proxy by the Utah-based church. In 1995, Mormon leaders responded by saying they would purge the Holocaust victims from their records and would establish rules prohibiting further baptisms of Holocaust victims except in cases of direct ancestors to church members. A 2002 news report said that the names of 380,000 Holocaust victims were in the church’s database in 1995, with around 20,000 showing up after the proxy baptisms were supposedly discontinued.

More recently, the online Jewish news agency, **Ynetnew.com**, cited the research of former Mormon Helen Radkey who says the practice is ongoing. The news source reported, “The suburban Salt Lake City woman has dedicated countless hours to researching proxy baptisms because she believes people’s religious preferences should be respected even after they’re dead. Printouts and screenshots of Radkey’s latest research show that in the past five years, proxy baptisms were performed on at least 20 Holocaust victims.”

The article also noted, “Radkey said she found no evidence of ancestral ties to Mormons.”

The Mormon church, in response, stated it continues to create safeguards to keep the practice from being repeated and that the proxy baptisms discovered by Radkey violate church policy and would be invalidated.

The LDS ritual of Baptism for the Dead was established so that Mormons could be baptized for their dead relatives or even for deceased people they did not know and who were not members of the church, so that they too could receive Mormon salvation — a higher degree in glory.

—MKG



Books in Review

THE COMING APOSTASY

by Mark Hitchcock and Jeff Kinley

Tyndale Momentum, 205 pages, \$15.99

Dave Hunt and T.A. McMahon's 1985 book, *The Seduction of Christianity*, pointed out a growing embrace by Christian leaders and authors of various aspects of the occult and that through these leaders and authors, these things were infiltrating the Christian Church. Chapter 5 of that book was titled, "The Coming Apostasy."

In a similar vein, a book on a spreading apostasy within the Christian Church appeared last year, co-authored by Mark Hitchcock and Jeff Kinley, both graduates of Dallas Theological Seminary. Unlike *The Seduction of Christianity*, *The Coming Apostasy* does not locate the threat to the Church as coming from occult infiltration of the Church, but from other sources, including a replacement of the Bible as the believer's source of authority with other things such as experiences, a replacement of the biblical Jesus with "another Jesus," and a growing acceptance and praise of homosexuality and gender confusion by portions of the professing Christian Church.

Both the Hunt/McMahon book and the Hitchcock/Kinley book point to the fact that the Bible predicts a great apostatizing from the faith prior to the return of Christ (e.g., 2 Thessalonians 2:3) and both indicate that we are currently living in such days and suggest that the return of Christ is near. Both books also urge the reader "to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints" (Jude 3).

Hitchcock and Kinley focus primarily on the acceptance and embrace of homosexuality and gender confusion and a denigration of the authority of Scripture. One or both of these cancers is evidenced by some "Christian" bloggers and authors, such as Tony Campolo, Rob Bell, Rachel Held Evans, and Matthew Vines. In one of the book's most important chapters, titled, "The Watershed Moment for the Church," the authors refer to the Church's current posture toward the issue of homosexual behavior as being exactly that — the watershed moment. In that chapter, the authors write:

"Simply stated, the tide on this issue has turned in our culture, especially with those under age fifty and overwhelmingly with those under age thirty. For believers who have lived in America over the last few decades, our heads are still spinning. What on earth has just happened? How did we get here? While many factors contribute to a shift like this, three stand out" (pg. 118).

The three factors the authors list are:

"First, behind this shift is a well-organized satanic strategy." Stating, "The home is the foundation of society — the first human institution created by God" (ibid.), the authors note that Satan is trying, by this strategy, to change human identity.

"Second, the Bible and sound biblical teaching are fast becoming relics. The Bible today is not faithfully taught in a growing number of churches" (pp. 118-119). They note that people are also losing confidence in the Bible as the inspired and inerrant Word of God.

"Third, many professing believers are gripped by compromise and cowardice" (pg. 119). It's simply easier and causes less fuss not to make waves by standing for God's truth about homosexuality, etc.

The authors emphasize the need for fidelity to the Lord and His Word, regardless of the cost. They speak of the need for us to align ourselves with what the Bible, God's Word, says about things, rather than being swept along with the changing tides of cultural values. As the Apostle Paul wrote, "do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God" (Romans 12:2) or, as J.B. Phillips translated the first phrase of the verse, "Don't let the world around you squeeze you into its own mould."

In chapter 8, the authors urge the reader to hold to an accurate (biblical) and complete view of Jesus, as opposed to an inaccurate (cultural) and incomplete portrayal of Him.

Although not all portions of the book are equally good, it contains good and salutary counsel, teaching, and exhortation considering some of the threats that are assaulting the Church today — not only from the outside, but also from within.

—JGS

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