AN INTRODUCTION TO JEWISH MYTH AND HISTORY

by Bill White

Any discussion of the mythical history of the Jews and Ancient Israelites is fraught with problems – mostly one irrational, ethnic and religious in nature. The Jews of today – the Khazar Turks who claim Jewish descent via Assyria and their Sephardim and other brethren – are intensely jealous of how they are defined, and resistant of most efforts by those not of them to define their history. A reason for this is that the normative modern Jewish account of their people and history is largely false – not only mythical, which implies neither truth nor falsehood – but actively untrue and perpetrated for sinister purposes. Equally difficult are the Jews’ Magian children, the Christians, who have, over the millennia, fought, died and killed each other over such erroneous and extrapolating bits of minutiae that many view any discussion of the myths of the Bible as an existential threat.

Despite these dangers, an explanation of the history and myths of the Old Testament and its Jewish people through the period just after the return from Babylon is fundamental to understanding the development of Western Civilization – the civilization of the Aryan in Europe – from at least the time of the Macedonian conquest of Palestine, circa 323 BC. In fact, the interplay between the Aryan peoples of Europe, with their essentially creative nature, and the Jews, who define themselves by envious hatred and criminal exploitation of other peoples – a major theme of this work. Thus, despite objections, the demands of history force us to proceed.

The Bible – the Old Testament being our focus here – should not be viewed as a literal work of God, as it was written by men, many of whose identities are known. To say the Bible is not the literal word of God is not to attack its “truth” – unlike the Koran, the Bible was not dictated by an angel (and particularly not by an angel with limited knowledge of a handful of Bible stories and an intense interest in the daily politics of Arabian desert tribesmen). The Bible claims neither infallibility nor divinity – it is a collection of histories and stories about a divinity and the people he claims, in which that divinity occasionally speaks and gives laws. To note that, for instance, 2 Kings contains clear internal errors in the reigns of various kings – and that either three kings have been omitted or, more likely, the dates of their reign are improperly recorded – does not attack the assertion of various commandments by Jehovah. Similarly, the fact that multiple observers viewed Jesus Christ in multiple, and to some degree, inconsistent ways, does not attack the divinity of Christ or his message – except to those who foolishly insist that every word of the Bible is both divinely inspired and a literally accurate and perfect recollection of events.

Let Christ and God be perfect, and the men who knew them be but frail creatures.

With caution noted, the history of the Jews begins, ironically, in the Hindu Vedas. The arch-Semites, who have taken the term Semitism for their own, were actually once a portion, if not of the Aryan peoples, of the people the Arya once ruled. Whether the Jews were ever admitted to the noble castes is questionable – what is known is that they comprised a class of thieves, rapists and killers whose activity was so odious to the Aryan peoples that it caused their expulsion from India – a nation that knew them as the Chandala outcasts – and began their lives as roving marauders and bandits in the Southern portion of what we know as Persia.

Eventually the Hebrews settled in Southern Mesopotamia, in the city where we find Abraham, the Sumerian and Chaldean city of Ur. When did they settle here? This is a difficult question, and one where the numerology of the Bible – the use of numbers to communicate other than literal meanings – becomes important. From David forward, the years and regnal years of the Bible are relatively consistent. Knowing a few facts – the Babylonian captivity was 586 BC; the Assyrian captivity was 721 BC; Shoshenq I reigned in Egypt 945-924 BC; Necho II reigned 610 – 595 BC; one can adjust for the inconsistencies in year and regnal year after Jeroboam II of Samaria and Azariah of Judah, and derive a clear timeline. Before that, the mystical number of 40 begins to confuse things. The Jews apparently considered 40 the number of years of a perfect reign – Ehud reigned 80 years, twice 40; Samson reigned 20, half 40; Moses led in the wilderness 40 years; Joshua, Othniel, Eli, David and Solomon reigned 40 years. Gideon and Samuel are unknown. Solomon came to power 12 x 40 = 480 years after Moses. It is possible the use of this number and its multiples is reserved for completely mythical figures. We presume, for purposes of our work, it doesn’t.

Ramesses II, the red-haired and Aryan empire builder, was the Pharaoh who did not know Joseph. This places Moses between 1279 BC and 1213 BC. To accommodate all those who came after him, we must assume Moses is contemporary with the start of Ramesses’ reign – perhaps 1279 BC. For Joseph to have been vizier or chief of the grain for 14 years, he must have entered Egypt under Horemheb, the last Pharaoh of the 18th Dynasty, c. 1319 – 1292 BC. To serve 14 years, make that 1319 – 1306 BC. Reducing the mythically long lives of the Hebrew Patriarchs to human terms, and figuring 30 years between generations, Isaac is a grown man circa 1340 BC; Abraham circa 1370 BC. This date is useful for us, because the first historical mention of the Hebrews occurs during the reign of Pharaoh Akhenaten, 1353-1336 BC, when the Apiru – the Hebrews – invade Egyptian Syria – Canaan. Thus, shortly before 1350 BC, we can place Abraham in Ur.

Out of Ur, Abraham takes two things. One is he rudiments of Sumerian and Semitic religion, including several religious texts – the “Elohim” texts – that lie at the root of the Bible, particularly Genesis 1:1- 2:4. The other was Chaldean philosophy and mathematics – rigid ideas of cyclicity, astrology and numerology that underlie the “mysticism” of Judaism – what later becomes the Qabballa and informs the Talmud and Midrash.

With Abraham, the Jews can be said to become Semitic. They adopt as their governing religious motif the Earth Mother, whom they call Asherah, probably after Ishtar, and her serpent consort. With that comes the idea of the garden and the tree of wisdom, the serpent guardian, and the mythology of the flood. We do not yet have the Old Testament, but we have the rudiments of it.

From the Chaldeans, the Jews adopt the mathematics of the Great Cycle – what is popularly referred to in discussions of the Age of Aquarius. The Earth rotates once each day; the moon revolves around it once every 28 days; the Earth revolves once around the sun every 365-¼ days. In its revolution, the Earth slowly changes its path so that its orientation to the stars and other solar bodies changes. Every 13,00 years or so, the Earth moves through 30 degrees of the circle that is the night sky. By measuring these changes with great precision, the Chaldeans could determine what the night sky looked like thousands of year into the past and the future.

Interestingly, the end of the last Great Age was just about 11,000 BC, give or take a few years. This is also just about the date one arrives at if one takes all the Bible chronology literally and works backward through the lives of the Patriarchs through Adam. Mythically, it is linked to global cataclysms, such as the destruction of Atlantis. And a large effort has been made, of course, to link the end of our Great Age to the rise of international communism, multiculturalism, and the like.

The Chaldean notion is linked to a rigid notion of the predictability of events. The sun and the moon have cycles. The seasons have cycles. Plants have cycles. The stars have cycles. And man has a cycle of his life. Positing the interconnectedness of the universe, it was believed that the specific events of a man’s life could be predicted or influenced by reference to the cycles in which he exists. Performing the correct rite at the correct time allowed man to command even the gods and act magically – knowing what and when to speak and act was the key.

This contrasts with the similar Aryan notion of cyclicity in its rigid formalism and ultimate posture of subservience to the eternal. The Aryan consecrated himself to become one with and to embody God; the Semite sought to command God. The Aryan focus was on leaving the mundane for the transcendent; the Semite sought to bring the transcendent down to service the mundane. The Aryan created and rejuvenated the cycle; the Semite merely manipulated it.

With the Apiru, Abraham brought these perspectives into Canaan, at that time a tributary province of the Egyptian Empire. Thutmose I (1493 – 1482 BC) had conquered the land of Canaan for Egypt, and his grandson Thutmose III (1479-1428 BC) had reaffirmed Egypt’s control. The people of Canaan were primarily Semitic Asiatics of the same stock as the Northern Nile Delta people and as the Hyksos kings of the Second Intermediate Period (c. 1640 BC – c. 1532 BC). Into these people and this vassal nation Abraham migrated.

Abraham integrated easily into the culture of the Near Eastern Semites, moving between Canaan and the communities of the Delta. Working his way into the upper circles, he prostitutes his wife, Sarai, for a time to Akhenaten (1353 – 1336 BC), Pharaoh, thereby building his political connections and amassing wealth. Eventually, though, he is expelled back to Canaan, still an Egyptian vassal. Leaving again, he travels to the South of Palestine where he politically infiltrates the Aryan community of Geron – a settlement of Hittites. Again, this political influence translates into wealth.

The Hittites were an Aryan people who entered the Near East through the Caucasus Mountains contemporary with the Aryan invasions of Europe and India, occupying Asia Minor and pressing into the Middle East until their collapse by 1130 BC. Like the Medes and the Persians, they are characterized by fire worship, in addition to sky worship. With the decline of Egypt during the reign of Akhenaten, they encroach on Palestine and eventually occupy and tributize it. The Biblical Molech is likely one of their gods.

Akhenaten was a key figure of the Egyptian New Kingdom. Born Amenhotep IV, shortly into his reign he “got religion” and began imposing worship of Aten, the sun-disk, over Amun, the hidden principle within chaos that was identified with the Aryan peoples’ sky father and god of order. Most modern traditionalists believe Aten to have been a radical expression of the Aryan “sun” principle – the devotion to love and life that characterizes the racial organism. What caused this reformation in unclear, as the Egyptians, after his reign, tried to expunge Akhenaten’s memory, and in doing so, obscured his history.

Akhenaten’s main wife was Nefertiti, an Aryan princess, who later ruled as Nefernuaten. His second wife was a second Aryan princess, Kiya of the Mitanni, who likely mothered his famous son, Tutankhamun. Ay, possibly Nefertiti’s father, was the last Pharaoh of the Aten faith. Horemheb, the Pharaoh who would later welcome Joseph, was both Ay’s successor and the Pharaoh who would lead the attack on Aten’s worship.

One of the puzzling questions of Akhenaton’s reign is why he allowed the Hittites to overrun the Mitanni, Egypt’s vassals in Syria and Northern Mesopotamia, and conquer of vassalize the people of Canaan. Did Abraham’s political influence play a part? This is unknown. Clearly, though, like the Egyptians, the Hittites eventually found the Jews a noxious ally.

Abraham’s son is Isaac, and with Abraham’s wealth and connections, Isaac begins to “sow seed in the land” – i.e., lend money at interest – until he has a hundred fold – enough that the Hittite “envies” him and expels him from the land. Following this lead, Jacob, Isaac’s son, goes to his uncle Laban in Syria and steals everything that’s not nailed down, joining it with Isaac’s riches and laying the foundation for Israel.

The family business – usury, pimping, and politicking – what we call racketeering – is then passed on to Joseph who discovers, after a brief stint as a slave, that the biggest racket is taxation. His entry into Egypt is a turning point in Hebrew religion.

After being sold into slavery by his brothers, Joseph rises to marry Asenath, daughter of Potiphar, a priest from On – Heliopolis of the Greeks and Iunu of the Egyptians. He is made overseer of the grain – one of the chief ministers of Pharaoh – under the Egyptian name Zaphenath-Paneah. For seven years he taxes away the grain of Egypt – stealing under the color of law – and then for seven years he sells – not gives – it to the starving people, stealing all their land, homes, money and livestock, which are then used to invite in all his Hebrew brothers. Ironically, to the modern world, this is a parable of thrift.

Joseph is able to do this because of the ease with which his people mix with the Semites of the Northern Delta. Beginning no later than 3100 BC, Semites of Western Asia settled in Lower Egypt – the Nile Delta. Their god was Seth. Within a century, they were conquered by the Horus-worshippers of Herakonpolis – likely a mix of black-ish Africans under white-Atlantean leadership and advisors. The First Dynasty and most of the Second are dedicated to Horus. Briefly, a Seth-worshipping king, Peribsen, rises in the Second Dynasty and is followed by the Seth and Horus worshipping Khasekhemwy – possibly, from his statues, a Negro. After that, Horus worship dominates until the Fourth Dynasty, c. 2600 BC. When the racial-ethnic composition of Egypt changes, the Pharaohs become clearly white, racially, and Re’s worship syncretizes with Horus’. This is the status quo for the next millennia.

Just prior to the New Kingdom, 1640-1523 BC, Semites from West Asia, the Hyksos, conquer Egypt and establish the primacy of Seth. Mocking the Egyptians, they identify with figures like Apep, the serpent – enemy of Re, until they are overthrown by the white, possibly Aryan, dynastic founders Kamose and Ahmose of Thebes. The Eighteenth Dynasty restores the worship of Amen-Re, and champions it – until Joseph arrives in Egypt.

The Semites were able to take control of Egypt because of their efforts of the 12th Dynasty. Amenemhat I (1938 – 1908 BC) built the city of Avaris as a fortress against the Semites. By the end of the dynasty, a Semitic trading community had been allowed to develop here. By that time serpent-worship, in the form of Sobekneferu, a queen named after the crocodile-god Sobek, was manifest in the Egyptian royalty. From this base in the culture, the Semitic Canaanites are able to take over.

At the end of the 18th Dynasty, Paramessu, the Vizier under Horemheb, takes power after Horemheb dies without heir, and adopts the name Amen-mer Ramesses I, whom we know as Ramesses I. His name means “Beloved of Amen, Born of Re”. His successor is Sety Merenptah I, Setho to the Greeks, Sety I to us, “Beloved of Ptah and Seth”.

During these early reigns, Egyptian religion and culture undergoes a massive revision. Re is still worshipped, but Seth – the divine enemy, the serpent, murderer of Osiris-Re – suddenly becomes a divinity equal to the Sun God in praise, and Ramses, now tracing his blood line to the Hyksos, begins to praise this Setheo-Re-ianity.

This is very similar to the way the Jews, in the United States changed the Christian faith into Judaeo-Christianity in the 20th Century. The Pharisees of their father the Devil became equal partners in the history and religion of the American establishment, just as the Egyptian Pharaohs, not themselves Jews, elevated the religion the Jews were usurping – Semitic Seth worship – to a national faith.

Thus it is in Egypt that Seth, son of Adam, once son of the earth god Geb, became the divine ancestor of the Jews – and the seeds of the faith of Moses, complete with brazen serpents and sticks into snakes, were sown, then taught to the Hebrew people.

This rape in the land of milk and honey lasted from about 1310 BC to about 128 BC, about a 30-year period comprising the reigns of Horemheb, Ramesses I, and Sety I. With the rise of Ramesses II, though Ozymandias to the Greeks, things turned for the Jews, and the Pharaoh ended their monopoly on the grain tax. Forced to work for a living, the Jews cried out in pain as they slapped Egypt, and left under Moses with all their valuables to escape this “Holocaust”.

Moses leads the Jews out of Egypt near the beginning of Ramesses II’s reign – perhaps 1280 BC. Along with his brother Aaron, Moses gives the laws of Yahweh (the Egyptian Seth and the Greek Typhon), erects a brazen serpent for the people to worship, and canonizes the first few books of the Bible, blending in some Sumerian poetry and Chaldean mysticism with Egyptian serpents and culture.

It is difficult to date the prophets and judges of the Jews, except as being within the period c. 1280 BC, the date of the Exodus, and 1030 BC, the date of David. The clearest historical event is the conquest by the Philistines, which likely occurred during or just after the second migration of the sea peoples, approximately 1194-1156 BC, when the Peleset, or Philistines or Palestinians, conquered and settled Phoenicia and Canaan – which becomes Palestine.

The Trojan War occurs just after 1250 – perhaps 1235 – 1225 BC. After the war, the Mycenaean (Aryan) Greek alliance that conquers Troy goes South, attacking along the coast of Asia Minor, through Phoenicia and Canaan into Egypt. Mythically, they settle several cities in Palestine. In Egypt, they attack during the reign of Memeptah, c. 1224 – 1204 BC. A generation later, they attack again, with the Libyans of North Africa, during the reign of Ramesses III.

Biblically, the 40 years of Philistine rule occurred between 1160 and 1080 BC. An earlier date conforms better to the latter part of Kings, but requires significant truncation of the reigns of Moses, Joshua, Othniel, Ehuel, and Gideon. Based on historical cross-references, the Israelite evacuation of Egypt proper and the prophetships from Moses to Joshua may amount to between 5 and 15 years all together. This would place the rule of “Syria” over the Jews – presumably the Hittites or an ally – contemporary with the battle of Kadesh. Othniel, the Moabite dominance, Ehud, Deborah, the Canaanite and Midianite dominance, Gideon, Abimelech, Tola, the Ammonite dominance, Jephthah, Ibzan, Elon and Abdos thus span a period of 100 years, and Samson, Eli and Samuel – and the Philistine dominance – span a Biblically accurate period of 130 years.

During this period, until the reign of the Hezekiah and later the discovery of the Deuteronomist texts, the Yahwehist religion experienced little innovation, primarily confirming itself to conflict over the relative merits of Moses and Aaron in the founding of the Yahwehist faith. At no time prior to the return from Babylon can Yahweh have been said to have been the popular God of the Jews, nor can Yahwehism be equated with Judaism, as it can after 550 BC. As even Moses makes clear, the religion of the Golden Calf – likely the worship of the Egyptian syncretism Isis-Hathor, under the name Asherah, where it was syncretized with the Phoenician Astarte and Babylonian Ishtar, among others – was the form of popular worship, with a brief exception for Baal, from the time of the Exodus until the Assyrian and Babylonian captivities.

Using these time estimates also gives a result compatible with the descent of David from Judah, which is ten generations: Perez, Esrom, Aram, Aminadab, Naason, Salmon, Boaz, Obed, Jesse and David – about 300 years. It also exposes some of the genealogical issues of the Bible, as Samuel, an early contemporary of David, has sixteen generations in the same period, while Joshua, a contemporary of Aminadab and Naason, has ten generations over the maybe 30-50 year period between him and Ephraim, son of Joseph. This kind of information is inconsistent and cannot be internally reconciled.

The inaccuracy and inconsistency of the genealogies of the Old Testament should be no surprise. The most famous genealogical inconsistency, of course, is that of Christ in the New Testament, where Jesus is, in Matthew 1:16, descended from the kings of Judah, and, in Luke 3:23-38, descended from Nathan the prophet. Some view these errors as “proof” that Jesus was not historical, but these are common errors in mythical histories, even among works by the same author. Herodotus, Thucydides, and Plutarch differ on the genealogy of the kings of Sparta – but Sparta existed, as did Leonidas. The Heimskringla, the Prose Edda, and the Poetic Edda give differing accounts of the lineage of the Norse kings – but Harold Hardrada and Halvdan the Black are historical figures, as is Iormunrekk of the Goths and Etzel the Hun.

The kingship in Israel is established about 1034 BC under Saul and continues under his son Ishboseth, or Eshbaal. The name is interesting because it incorporates the deity Baal, which appears to be equated with the Jewish-Egyptian borrowing Seth, just as Jonathan’s son Meribbaal (Egyptian for “beloved heart of Baal”) is transliterated as Mephiboseth. As Yahweh and Seth were later syncretized, this is an interesting insight into how the Jews came to conceive of their creator god. Yahweh either replaced Baal – or absorbed him.

David comes to power about 1032 BC, Solomon about 993 BC. Solomon is interesting because of his association with the Masonic idol, Hiram of Tyre, who designs and builds Solomon’s Temple. Tyre was a Phoenician colony founded, mythically, by Belus and Teucer, who also founded the Houses of Argos – Tiryns (ancestors of the Greeks Perseus and Heracles) and Troy. Tyre was also founded in conjunction with their brother Agenor, or Phoenix, from which comes the name, Phoenicia. The Egyptians knew it as Fenkhu. The mythical founding of Phoenicia almost certainly occurred during the first wave of Mycenaean settlement in the Mediterranean – circa 2200 – 2000 BC, contemporary with Troy. Both were inhabited before that time, and the Phoenicians appear to have been primarily a Semitic people – though their religion incorporates both Aryan and Semitic motifs. Seafarers, they appear to have founded both Minoan Crete and Carthage, among other settlements. By 1000 BC, the time of Hiram, they would have been exposed to other Aryan influences, including the Hittites, the Mittanni, and Peleset Philistines.

Solomon’s reign ends during the reign of Shoshenq I, the Libyan king of Egypt.

One has to fudge a bit to make this happen without butchering the timeline. If Solomon began his reign 993 BC, he ended it circa 954 BC. Shoshenq I is Pharaoh 945-924 BC. In ancient history, this is about as good as disparate sources get. Either can be fudged a bit up or down.

Also, Solomon marries the daughter of Pharaoh who reigns more than 20 years, and does so near the beginning of his reign. This is either Siamun, 984-959 BC, or Psusennes I, 1045-997 BC. Fudging backwards is a better fit, because during the reign of Psusennes I, historical Israel made all sorts of mathematical borrowings from Egypt, adopting Egyptian weights and measures, among other things. But this makes it hard for Solomon to have reigned during Shoshenq I, even with 40 years under his belt. Fudging forward corrects that, and still places him in power at a time when Egyptian math and geometry is changing Jewish culture.

After Solomon, we enter historical time, and a relatively mundane series of religious and civil wars between the followers of the Golden Calf, Baal, other gods, and Yahweh ensues. Judah wars with Samaria. Judaea is more stable, with a regular succession, and a general devotion among its kings to Yahweh. Samaria has more civil wars and dynasties, and never adheres to Yahweh. Ironically, many believe Samaria to have been the nation of the “true” Israelites.

The source of the Judaea-Samaria split is Solomon’s abandonment of Yahweh for the gods of his many wives. He turns his temple to Yahweh over to other gods. Rehoboam, Solomon’s son, adopts his father’s multiculturalism, and is challenged by Jeroboam I of Samaria, who leads the revolt that establishes that country – but who also favors the Golden Calf faith of Egypt. This remains the national faith of Samaria until the Assyrian captivity of 721 BC. The people of Judaea continue to worship Asherah, likely the same or a similar faith, until the Babylonian captivity of 586 BC, with a brief disruption during the reign of Hezekiah (circa 726-698 BC).

A word on the Assyrian captivity may be appropriate here, as the fate of the “lost” tribes of Israel has been a powerful theme in both Jewish and Christian myth. Most of the Jews of the modern world claim descent from the lost Israelites, and their claims to Jewish descent are weak. Essentially, a Turko-Mongolic people of Central Asia, migrated in the 7th Century AD, as had many before and after, into the region of the Black Sea, where they founded the empire of the Khazars. Spontaneously and en masse, they converted to Judaism, possibly to remain neutral in the conflict between Christianity and Islam. The Jewish theory is that these Khazars were the lost Assyrian Israelites, found after 1400 years. This claim is little more than an assertion, no real evidence supports it, and the Assyrians never dwelt above the Caucasus Mountains after their initial descent into Mesopotamia.

Similarly, weak are the claims of British Israelites and adherents of Christian Identity that the Britons and/or the Germanic peoples of Europe are the lost Assyrian tribes. The theology and metahistory of Christian Identity varies widely, and often derives from questionable historical sources, including Bede’s efforts to link the Britons to Troy, and similar popular Dark Age motifs. The biggest problem is that both the Germanic and British peoples were established in or near their homelands circa 1500 BC, or just after – possibly with the exception of an Odinist migration from the Black Sea region circa 150 –50 BC. Also, Germanic and Celtic myth does not find basis in Semitic motifs. Sometimes they have clearly syncretized Semitic motifs into their existing faiths, but, at their core, possibly excepting the Aesti of Estonia, they do not worship an Earth Mother at the head of their pantheon.

What most likely happened to these tribes after 721 BC is what happened to the Jews who chose not to return from Babylon – they disappeared, having integrated into the society of their captors.

Baal worship, possibly the religion of Saul and Eshbaal circa 1034 BC, emerged as a major threat to both Yahwehism and the Golden Calves between 900 and 855 BC. Both faiths crushed it – both Jehu the Calf-worshipper in Samaria and Jehoash the Yahwehist in Judah. But what lasting impact Baal may have had on Yahweh is unclear. Seth was equated with Yahweh. Seth was equated with Baal. The question is whether Yahweh and Baal were competing images of Seth, or complementary ones.

Molech, probably the Hittite-Aryan fire god, also briefly challenges Yahweh – Ahaz, adopts his worship just prior to the Assyrian invasions, and Manasseh revives it during the period of Assyrian power that vassalized Judea and reached its apex with the conquest of Egypt and the toppling of the Nubian pharaohs, 656 BC. Josiah, 642-616 BC, suppresses the practice, but the influence of the Egyptian pharaoh Necho II revives it, and it remains a constant into the Babylonian captivity, 586 BC.

Yahweh, though makes a brave effort against these foreign contenders, and the religiosity of Hezekiah and the discovery of the Deuteronomist texts under Josiah leads to revivals and the suppression of other gods. Nominally found during restoration work on Solomon’s Temple, the laws of Deuteronomy and some other books are appended to the Biblical core by Josiah which had remained stable, with some rewrites, since shortly after Moses, and used to consolidate Hezekiah’s political power.

Had Babylon not taken the Jews into captivity in 586 BC, the worship of Yahweh may have gone the way of Re, Marduke, Baal, Dagon and Molech. Polytheistic and far from fanatical, the Jewish people make little pretext that their gods and goddesses were “the one true god”. But Babylon changed this, by giving he Yahwehists the opportunity to take control of society that they had really never had before.

Cyrus of Persia comes to power 550 BC and conquers Babylon shortly thereafter. Ezra the prophet, a fanatic Yahwehist on the model of Hezekiah, seizes this opportunity to ingratiate himself with the king. Cyrus is persuaded to give Ezra an exclusive charter to rebuild Jerusalem and its Temple – Ezra accepts. The vast majority of the Jewish people do not return from Babylon – but Ezra, with his small hard core of followers, uses the opportunity to create a theocratic utopia.

The other peoples of Palestine object – and Cyrus’ successor, Artaxerxes, listens. But, eventually, Darius is persuaded to finance the completion of the Temple. In the mean time, Ezra has not only consolidated his position, but also led a general revision of the Bible, adding several books, and firmly establishing the doctrine of monotheism.

And with that, the stage is set for the emergence of the Pharisees, the prototype of the Magian faiths who would play such a role in the future of world history. We will rejoin them in Volume 6 of this work, when we will trace their rise through the Mediterranean’s Hellenistic period, the challenge they faced from Christ, the rise of their influence in Rome, and their religion’s fulfillment among the Turkish, Arabic and Persian peoples of Asia, both in Ashkenazic Judaism and Islam.