



The Second Coming

**A Biblical Approach
to Understanding the Evidence
that Christ has Returned**

The Second Coming

A Biblical Approach
to Understanding the Evidence
that Christ has Returned

© 2012 David Yamartino

This book is available for free download at
www.reasonstogether.com

CONTENTS

Notes and Abbreviations.....	iii
Preface and Acknowledgments.....	iv
Introduction.....	v
Chapter 1: The Second Coming.....	1
Chapter 2: Biblical Principles for the Investigation of Truth.....	7
Chapter 3: "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life".....	10
Chapter 4: The Antichrist, False Prophets, and Satan.....	13
Chapter 5: Man Cannot Add to the Bible or Preach Any Other Gospel.....	21
Chapter 6: No Other Name Under Heaven.....	24
Chapter 7: Heaven and Hell.....	32
Chapter 8: Every Eye Shall See Him.....	35
Chapter 9: Only Begotten Son of God.....	37
Chapter 10: Baptism.....	39
Chapter 11: Miracles.....	42
Chapter 12: The Resurrection of Christ.....	46
Chapter 13: Life After Death.....	51
Chapter 14: Prophecies of Jesus Fulfilled by Bahá'u'lláh.....	55
Chapter 15: Prophecies of the Old Testament Fulfilled by Bahá'u'lláh.....	61
Chapter 16: The Book Unsealed.....	69
Chapter 17: Bahá'u'lláh is a Descendant of King David.....	79

Chapter 18: Prophecies Given by Bahá'u'lláh.....	81
Chapter 19: Christ and Bahá'u'lláh	91
Appendix: The Ancestry of Bahá'u'lláh.....	100
Links	104
Bibliography	105

Notes and Abbreviations

The King James Version of the Bible has been used throughout, except where otherwise indicated in the text.

In this book certain words are capitalized such as "Return" and "Second Coming," and personal pronouns ("He," "Him" and "His") referring to God, Jesus, Bahá'u'lláh, and the Prophets in order to show their importance.

The following abbreviations are used in this book:

DB *The Dawn-Breakers*

Gleanings/GWB *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*

GPB *God Passes By*

Hidden Words *The Hidden Words of Bahá'u'lláh*

PDC *The Promised Day Is Come*

SAQ *Some Answered Questions*

TB *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*

W *Women* (Extracts from the Bahá'í Writings)

YL *Year of the Lord*

Preface and Acknowledgments

When, in March of last year, a friend expressed interest in a book I had written on understanding prophecy and the Return of Christ, I reread the book and realized that the material in the final chapters could be addressed in a more direct manner. This book is the result.

In writing *The Second Coming*, I have benefited and drawn from the work and approach of David Young, especially his book *The Resurrection of All Mankind*.

The Publication Review Task Force of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the Mariana Islands has provided indispensable input to this work.

I also wish to acknowledge Mary Wylie, Richard Dowling, Phil Turner, Gary Matthews, Vahid and Mona Yamartino, and Hushidar Motlagh for their valuable contributions.

The help of all of the above is greatly appreciated.

I have presented the following subject matter assuming a reader who believes that Jesus is the Christ and that He will return. However, it is my sincere hope that should the reader not hold these beliefs, this perspective will not deter him or her from investigating this theme.

Jesus's message of love and tolerance is an eternal call both to people of all faiths, and to people of no faith. If I am able to echo, in whatever small way, this message and to share the hope for its ultimate realization in the unity of the human race, then my aim is accomplished.

Guam, 2012

Introduction

As believers in Jesus Christ, we are aware of the promises in the Bible referring to His Return. We are also aware of the warnings given to protect us against false prophets who would rob us of that priceless heritage. In this book, using the Bible as our guide, we will investigate the claim that Christ has returned.

A more astounding claim than this can hardly be imagined. It must surely involve either the salvation of the whole world or an evil deception. The manner of Christ's First Coming was altogether surprising to the people of His time, and the claim that He could have already returned is equally surprising to the people of this age.

The Bible clearly states that we are not to simply reject every claim that comes our way. Rather, it states that it contains the guidance necessary for the believer to distinguish who is true and who is false, and we are to use this guidance as the perfect test:

Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God.

1 John 4:1

If a man love me, he will keep my words.

John 14:23

If we believe in Christ, wouldn't we follow His Words and put the spirits to the test? Let us take Jesus's admonition with faith that God will guide us through His Word.

Chapter 1: The Second Coming

The Bahá'í Faith originated in the year 1844, in the land of Persia (present-day Iran). It has now become the second-most geographically widespread religion in the world, the first being Christianity.¹ The Founder's name is Bahá'u'lláh, an Arabic title that means "The Glory of God." He claims to be the Christ returned in the Glory of the Father.

In the Bahá'í view, Christ has come the second time, as He did the first time, largely unrecognized by those who were looking for the literal fulfillment of prophecy. Bahá'u'lláh has invited the world to investigate His claim.

Bahá'u'lláh was born in 1817 in Tihran, now the capital of Iran. His life was remarkable from birth. In infancy, He never cried—a cause of astonishment to His mother. In childhood and youth He manifested a rare quality of attraction which endeared Him to all, and a wisdom surpassing that of learned men. Reminiscent of Jesus Christ, Who at the age of twelve was found conversing in the temple with the doctors who were astonished at His understanding (Luke 2:46-47), Bahá'u'lláh would converse with the religious scholars of His time, answering questions and explaining the meaning of difficult passages of scripture, although He, too, had never attended any school. By the time He was fourteen, His penetrating understanding and eloquence were widely recognized in both religious and government circles.

Bahá'u'lláh was born into a noble family. He was a direct descendant of King David. When He was a young man, He was offered a high position by the grand vazir, but He refused it, wishing instead to devote His time to ministering to the oppressed, the sick, and the poor. When He was nearly eighteen years of age, He married a young woman named Asiyyih Khánúm, tenderhearted and also of noble birth. Both had inherited large fortunes, yet

¹ 1992 Encyclopedia Britannica Book of the Year

neither was attached to luxury; rather, they were motivated by their love and concern for others:

He was most generous, giving abundantly to the poor. None who came to Him were turned away. The doors of His house were open to all. He always had many guests. This unbounded generosity was conducive to greater astonishment from the fact that He sought neither position nor prominence. In commenting upon this His friends said He would become impoverished, for His expenses were many and His wealth becoming more and more limited. "Why is he not thinking of his own affairs?" they inquired of each other; but some who were wise declared, "This personage is connected with another world; he has something sublime within him that is not evident now; the day is coming when it will be manifested.

Promulgation of Universal Peace, p. 25-26

Bahá'u'lláh's wealth and status were not to last, for He would, in time, lose everything: His wealth, His freedom, His homeland. His future was presaged by a dream that His father had when He was a child. In the dream, Bahá'u'lláh was swimming in a vast, a limitless ocean, His body radiating a light that illumined the waters. His long, black hair floated in great profusion in all directions. A multitude of fishes gathered around Him, each one holding on to the end of one hair. Fascinated by His radiant face, the fish followed Him in whatever direction He swam, and no matter how great their numbers or how firmly they clung to the hairs of His head, not one hair became detached, nor did Bahá'u'lláh suffer any injury as He swam free and unrestrained (see DB p. 119-120).

Bahá'u'lláh's father was greatly impressed by this dream, and he summoned a soothsayer who was famous in that region to interpret it. This man told Bahá'u'lláh's father:

The limitless ocean that you have seen in your dream, O Vazir, is none other than the world of being. Single-handed and alone, your son will achieve supreme ascendancy over it. Wherever He may please, He will proceed unhindered. No one will resist His march, no one will hinder His progress. The multitude of fishes signifies the turmoil which He will arouse amidst the peoples and kindreds of the earth. Around Him will they gather, and to Him will they cling. Assured of the unfailing protection of the Almighty, this tumult will

never harm His person, nor will His loneliness upon the sea of life endanger His safety.

The Dawn-Breakers, p. 119

Two significant aspects of the life of Bahá'u'lláh are the sufferings He endured and the influence that He had on the hearts of the people. When, in 1844, a Youth² from the southern city of Shiraz began calling the people to purify their hearts in anticipation of a Messenger mightier than Himself Who would usher in a New Day of God, Bahá'u'lláh began espousing this message. For this He was stripped of all of His wealth and imprisoned in the "Black Pit" dungeon in Tihran, where He spent four months suffering in the cold and filth with nearly one hundred and fifty thieves, assassins and highwaymen. Around His neck heavy chains were placed, the scars from which remained with Him for the rest of His life. While in the gloom of this pestilential prison, He had a vision, through which He was made aware of His divine Station. Years later, He wrote of this experience:

During the days I lay in the prison of Tihran, though the galling weight of the chains and the stench-filled air allowed Me but little sleep, still in those infrequent moments of slumber I felt as if something flowed from the crown of My head over My breast, even as a mighty torrent that precipitateth itself upon the earth from the summit of a lofty mountain. Every limb of My body would, as a result, be set afire. At such moments My tongue recited what no man could bear to hear.

While engulfed in tribulations I heard a most wondrous, a most sweet voice, calling above My head. Turning My face, I beheld a Maiden—the embodiment of the remembrance of the name of My Lord—suspended in the air before Me. ... Betwixt earth and heaven she was raising a call which captivated the hearts and minds of men. ... Pointing with her finger unto My head, she addressed all who are in heaven and all who are on earth, saying: 'By God! This is the Best-Beloved of the worlds, and yet ye comprehend not. This is the

² This Youth, Who took the title "The Báb," was a figure Who, much like John the Baptist, announced the imminent advent of One greater than Himself, and Who prepared the way for His coming. The Báb was born in 1819 and martyred in 1850.

Beauty of God amongst you, and the power of His sovereignty within you, could ye but understand.'

God Passes By, p. 101-102

After this transforming experience, and once released from the dungeon prison in broken health from the cruel conditions, Bahá'u'lláh was exiled immediately to Baghdad, commencing the first stage of what was to become nearly forty years of exile, imprisonment, and spiritual triumph in the path of God.

After reaching Baghdad, Bahá'u'lláh, overcome with sorrow, pondering the mission thrust upon Him, withdrew to the mountains of Sulaymaníyyih, an event reminiscent of Jesus's being led up into the wilderness at the start of His mission (Matt. 4:1). For a period of two years Bahá'u'lláh remained there, in preparation for the decades of sacrifice He would be called upon to make. Of that time, He wrote:

From My eyes there rained tears of anguish, and in My bleeding heart surged an ocean of agonizing pain. Many a night I had no food for sustenance, and many a day My body found no rest... Alone I communed with My spirit, oblivious of the world and all that is therein.

God Passes By, p. 120

Upon His return to Baghdad, Bahá'u'lláh was determined to regenerate the community of His followers, who had become disheartened and confused in His absence, and to reveal the Teachings He was ordained to give for this Day, Teachings which would guide mankind to the Christ-promised Kingdom of God on earth. The tablets and books comprising the complete Writings that convey these Teachings amount to about one hundred volumes.

Every effort was made by the clergy, by the Shah of Persia, and by the Ottoman Emperor to oppose Bahá'u'lláh and His Teachings. Twenty thousand of the early followers—men, women, and children—were brutally killed. Following Bahá'u'lláh's exile to Baghdad, He was sent to Constantinople, then to Adrianople, and finally to the Turkish penal colony of 'Akká (now a city in northern Israel), where the authorities hoped that He and His Faith would quickly die. During His forty years of imprisonment and exile, though He was constantly persecuted, having been at times scourged, stoned,

poisoned, deprived of even the barest necessities of life, He continued to manifest sacrificial love for all peoples:

We, verily, have come for your sakes, and have borne the misfortunes of the world for your salvation.

Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 10

So intense were His sufferings in the prison city of 'Akká that He has referred to it as the "Most Great Prison".

Of the significance of His suffering, He writes:

The Ancient Beauty hath consented to be bound with chains that mankind may be released from its bondage, and hath accepted to be made a prisoner within this most mighty Stronghold that the whole world may attain unto true liberty. He hath drained to its dregs the cup of sorrow, that all the peoples of the earth may attain unto abiding joy, and be filled with gladness. This is of the mercy of your Lord, the Compassionate, the Most Merciful. We have accepted to be abased, O believers in the Unity of God, that ye may be exalted, and have suffered manifold afflictions, that ye might prosper and flourish. He Who hath come to build anew the whole world, behold, how they that have joined partners with God have forced Him to dwell within the most desolate of cities!

Gleanings, p. 99

During the nineteenth century, the vast majority of the human race lived under the rule of kings. Bahá'u'lláh addressed these rulers through letters that He sent to them while in exile. He proclaimed that He had been chosen by God to deliver to mankind the teachings that would unite the world:

That which the Lord hath ordained as the sovereign remedy and mightiest instrument for the healing of all the world is the union of all its peoples in one universal Cause, one common Faith. This can in no wise be achieved except through the power of a skilled, an all-powerful and inspired Physician.

Proclamation of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 67-68

Through all the affliction and hardship He endured during the forty years of His ministry, in all the situations which presented to Him the real danger of losing His life, Bahá'u'lláh never sought to protect Himself. And no matter

what the religious leaders or government authorities attempted to do, nothing could be done to stop Bahá'u'lláh's growing influence. Banishment after banishment failed to halt the increasing number of people who recognized His power and majesty and were attracted to His teachings.

Bahá'u'lláh passed away in 1892. His Shrine, which is visited by peoples from all over the world, is located near the city of 'Akká.

For photographs of the Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh see

<http://www.bahaullah.org/shrine/photoindex>

Chapter 2: Biblical Principles for the Investigation of Truth

In the following chapters, we will test Bahá'u'lláh's claim to be the Return of Christ using the standard of the Bible. The Bible demonstrates that everything depends upon our approach. A purely literal interpretation of the Word of God led the people of Jesus's day away from Him. Such an outward interpretation, which ignored the deeper spiritual truths, led to the opposition, the persecution, and ultimately the crucifixion of Jesus. He and the apostles constantly drew attention to the inner significance contained in the Words of God. We must, therefore, recognize that the Word of God has both an outer and inner meaning.

We can see this principle operating in the prophecies of the Old Testament: John the Baptist was the return of *Elijah* (Mal. 4:5), The Messiah's Name was to be *Immanuel* (Isa. 7:14), the Messiah was to have a *throne* (Isa. 9:7), was to be a *ruler* in Israel (Mic. 5:2), etc. These prophecies, and almost all others, were fulfilled according to their figurative, not literal meaning.

From the New Testament we learn that we must be *born again* (John 3:3), that the *dead* should *bury their dead* (Matt. 8:22), and that we will be baptized with *fire* (Matt. 3:11)—all clearly statements with a spiritual significance.

The twofold nature of the Word of God is beautifully described here:

Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.

But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

1 Corinthians 2:13-14

So, there is a *natural* way and a *spiritual* way to discern the Word of God.

The Bible also explains the twofold nature of Jesus Christ. Outwardly, Jesus was a mortal and subject to human conditions such as poverty, hunger, and weakness. He walked, He slept, He hungered as any man. This is how the religious leaders, and most of the people of His time, saw Him. Yet inwardly, He was—and is—Divine and All-Powerful. He was born of a woman, yet in reality He came from Heaven. His human qualities concealed from many people His divine qualities.

He was God:

For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.

Colossians 2:9

And He was not God:

I can of mine own self do nothing: ... because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me.

John 5:30

My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?

Mark 15:34

But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, ... neither the Son, but the Father.

Mark 13:32

These words can be understood spiritually through the concept that Jesus is the image of God, explained in the Bible as follows:

In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.

II Corinthians 4:4

God can be likened to a spiritual "sun," and Jesus to a perfect mirror reflecting the light of that "sun." If you look at a mirror and say "I see the sun," you speak the truth. And if you look at the mirror and say "I see the image of the sun," you also speak the truth. In the same way, if you look at

Jesus and say "I see God," you speak the truth. And if you look at Jesus and say "I see the image of God," you also speak the truth.

Jesus cried and said, He that believeth on me, believeth not on me, but on him that sent me.

John 12:44

For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak.

John 12:49

So, the answer to the question "Is Jesus God or not God," repeatedly stated in the Bible, is "He is both."

Understanding the twofold nature of both the Word of God and of Christ is the only way to effectively decipher the prophecies of the Old Testament referring to Christ's First Coming.

Regarding the Second Coming, these same principles

Chapter 3: “I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life”

In the Gospel of John, Christ proclaims:

I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

John 14:6

Bahá'ís understand Christ to be the *Word* of God *made flesh* (John 1:14).

The Word of God is eternal:

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

John 1:1

And Christ is eternal:

Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am.

John 8:58

But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.

Micah 5:2

It is the *Word*, not the flesh, that is *the way, the truth, and the life*.

Bahá'u'lláh extols the Word of God:

The Word of God – exalted be His glory – is higher and far superior to that which the senses can perceive, for it is sanctified from any property or substance... and is none but the Command of God which pervadeth all created things. It has never been withheld

from the world of Being. It is God's all-pervasive grace, from which all grace doth emanate.

Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 140-141

Every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God is endowed with such potency as can instill new life into every human frame...

Gleanings, LXXIV

Bahá'u'lláh teaches that God the Father is utterly inaccessible to human beings, and is exalted above all human understanding:

To every discerning and illuminated heart it is evident that God, the unknowable Essence, the Divine Being, is immensely exalted beyond every human attribute, such as corporeal existence, ascent and descent, egress and regress. Far be it from His glory that human tongue should adequately recount His praise, or that human heart comprehend His fathomless mystery. He is, and hath ever been, veiled in the ancient eternity of His Essence, and will remain in His Reality everlastingly hidden from the sight of men. "No vision taketh in Him, but He taketh in all vision; He is the Subtile, the All-Perceiving."

Gleanings, XIX

Know thou of a certainty that the Unseen can in no wise incarnate His Essence and reveal it unto men. He is, and hath ever been, immensely exalted beyond all that can either be recounted or perceived. From His retreat of glory His voice is ever proclaiming: "Verily, I am God; there is none other God besides Me, the All-Knowing, the All-Wise. I have manifested Myself unto men, and have sent down Him Who is the Day Spring of the signs of My Revelation. Through Him I have caused all creation to testify that there is none other God except Him, the Incomparable, the All-Informed, the All-Wise." He Who is everlastingly hidden from the eyes of men can never be known except through His Manifestation, and His Manifestation can adduce no greater proof of the truth of His Mission than the proof of His own Person.

Gleanings, XX

O Children of the Divine and Invisible Essence!

Ye shall be hindered from loving Me and souls shall be perturbed as they make mention of Me. For minds cannot grasp Me nor hearts contain Me.

Hidden Words, Persian No. 66

The exalted nature of God the Father is alluded to in these words of the Old Testament:

But will God in very deed dwell with men on the earth? behold, heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house which I have built!

II Chronicles 6:18

And the Words of Jesus tell us that the Father is hidden from us :

No man hath seen God at any time.

I John 4:12

Christ manifested to the fullest, to the perfect degree, the light, the power, and the knowledge of God. Were it not for Christ, Who appeared in the flesh to give us His teachings, to show us the example of His life, to demonstrate His humility and sacrificial love, it would not be possible for humanity to enter into a personal relationship with God the Father. For we have no access to that Infinite Being except through a divine Being Who appears in human form and Whom we can see and listen to.

This is why the Bible states that Christ is the Way to the Father. He promised that He would Return, and that when He did, He would again be the Way to the Father.

Bahá'u'lláh is the Return of Christ and, therefore, the return of that Way.

Chapter 4: The Antichrist, False Prophets, and Satan

Let us look to the Bible to address the question of the antichrist, false prophets, and Satan.

The Antichrist

The term "antichrist" occurs four times in the Bible, all in the letters of John:

Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time.

I John 2:18

Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son.

Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: (but) he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also.

I John 2:22-23

Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.

Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God:

And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world.

I John 4:1-3

For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist.

II John 1:7

The Bible gives clear guidance regarding who the antichrists are. They are those who deny that Jesus is the Christ, who deny the Father and the Son, who do not confess that Jesus Christ came in the flesh. The antichrists are also equated with false prophets, and they were already in the world at the time of the writing of the epistles of John.

Bahá'u'lláh affirms that Jesus is Christ, that He is the Divine Son of God, that He did, indeed, come in the flesh, and that He was sent by the Father for the salvation of the whole world:

Know thou that when the Son of Man yielded up His breath to God, the whole creation wept with a great weeping. By sacrificing Himself, however, a fresh capacity was infused into all created things. Its evidences, as witnessed in all the peoples of the earth, are now manifest before thee. The deepest wisdom which the sages have uttered, the profoundest learning which any mind hath unfolded, the arts which the ablest hands have produced, the influence exerted by the most potent of rulers, are but manifestations of the quickening power released by His transcendent, His all-pervasive, and resplendent Spirit.

We testify that when He came into the world, He shed the splendor of His glory upon all created things. Through Him the leper recovered from the leprosy of perversity and ignorance. Through Him, the unchaste and wayward were healed. Through His power, born of Almighty God, the eyes of the blind were opened, and the soul of the sinner sanctified.

... He it is Who purified the world. Blessed is the man who, with a face beaming with light, hath turned towards Him.

Gleanings, XXXVI

Therefore, based on the Words of both the Bible and Bahá'u'lláh Himself, He cannot be the antichrist.

False Prophets

Jesus gives us clear guidance regarding the characteristics by which to identify false prophets:

Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruits. Are grapes gathered from thorns, or figs from thistles? So, every sound tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears evil fruit. A sound tree cannot bear evil fruit nor can a bad tree bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Thus you will know them by their fruits.

Matthew 7:15-20, RSV

Paul speaks of the fruits:

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.

Galatians 5:22-24, RSV

What are the fruits of Bahá'u'lláh? Here is a passage from His Writings exhorting His followers:

Be generous in prosperity, and thankful in adversity. Be worthy of the trust of thy neighbor, and look upon him with a bright and friendly face. Be a treasure to the poor, an admonisher to the rich, an answerer of the cry of the needy, a preserver of the sanctity of thy pledge. Be fair in thy judgment, and guarded in thy speech. Be unjust to no man, and show all meekness to all men. Be as a lamp unto them that walk in darkness, a joy to the sorrowful, a sea for the thirsty, a haven for the distressed, an upholder and defender of the victim of oppression. Let integrity and uprightness distinguish all thine acts. Be a home for the stranger, a balm to the suffering, a tower of strength for the fugitive. Be eyes to the blind, and a guiding light unto the feet of the erring. Be an ornament to the countenance of truth, a crown to the brow of fidelity, a pillar of the temple of righteousness, a breath of life to the body of mankind, an ensign of the hosts of justice, a luminary above the horizon of virtue, a dew to the soil of the human heart, an ark on the ocean of knowledge, a sun in the heaven of bounty, a gem on the diadem of wisdom, a shining light in the firmament of thy generation, a fruit upon the tree of humility.

And again:

O My Servants! Ye are the trees of My garden; ye must give forth goodly and wondrous fruits, that ye yourselves and others may profit therefrom. Thus it is incumbent on every one to engage in crafts and professions, for therein lies the secret of wealth, O men of understanding! For results depend upon means, and the grace of God shall be all-sufficient unto you. Trees that yield no fruit have been and will ever be for the fire.

Hidden Words, Persian No. 80

Bahá'u'lláh teaches that everyone must acquire divine virtues—the *fruit of the spirit* spoken of by Paul—and that we must work in this life for the betterment of society. These Teachings are *good fruit* by any fair standard, and Christ says that only a good Prophet can bear these fruits.

Jesus tell us:

If anyone says to you, 'Lo, here is the Christ!' or 'There he is!' do not believe it. For false Christs and false prophets will arise and show great signs and wonders, so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect.

Matthew 24:23-24, RSV

The proofs of Bahá'u'lláh's claim to be the Return of Christ are not based on any *great signs and wonders*. Miracles are not and have never been reliable proof of a Prophet. Bahá'u'lláh's proofs are based upon His life of sacrificial love and suffering in the path of God, His Teachings and the community of followers, dedicated to the betterment of the world, that He has raised up.

Peter speaks of false prophets:

But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Master who brought them, bringing upon themselves swift destruction. And many will follow their licentiousness, and because of them the way of truth will be veiled. And in their greed they will exploit you with false words.

A review of Bahá'u'lláh's life and teachings clearly demonstrates that He did not deny the Master, but instead glorifies Him. He did not suffer swift destruction. His mission lasted forty years and His Faith continues to grow to this day. And He did not show licentiousness or greed; He willingly gave up the life of luxury, wealth, and prestige that was His birthright in order to proclaim the Cause of God.

Ezekiel tells us that false prophets shall not enter into the land of Israel:

And mine hand shall be upon the prophets that see vanity, and that divine lies: they shall not be in the assembly of my people, neither shall they be written in the writing of the house of Israel, neither shall they enter into the land of Israel; and ye shall know that I am the Lord GOD.

Ezekiel 13:9

Bahá'u'lláh entered into what is now the land of Israel when He was sent there as an exile. He remained there for twenty- four years. Therefore, according to Ezekiel's words, Bahá'u'lláh cannot be a false prophet.

Jesus states that a true Prophet will glorify God, not Himself:

He that speaketh of himself seeketh his own glory: but he that seeketh his glory that sent him, the same is true, and no unrighteousness is in him.

John 7:18

Bahá'u'lláh states:

Not of Mine own volition have I revealed Myself, but God, of His own choosing, hath manifested Me. ... Whenever I chose to hold My peace and be still, lo, the Voice of the Holy Spirit, standing on My right hand, aroused Me, and the Most Great Spirit appeared before My face, and Gabriel overshadowed Me, and the Spirit of Glory stirred within My bosom, bidding Me arise and break My silence.

God Passes By, p. 102

By Jesus's own words, Bahá'u'lláh cannot be a false prophet. This is why the tree of His Faith has not been *cut down* and *thrown into the fire*. Instead

it has grown and blossomed and now reaches to all parts of the planet bringing its spiritual fruits—the love of God, the love of humanity—to nourish all peoples and heal the world of all its ills.

Satan

The objection that Bahá'u'lláh may be an agent of Satan is the same objection that the people of Jesus's time raised against Him for the same reasons.

Let us look at what the Bible says about Satan. First, we should know that "Devil" and "Satan" refer to the same thing:

And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

Revelation 12:9

Next, let us look at the characteristics that Satan has:

He [the devil] ... has nothing to do with the truth, because there is no truth in him.

John 8:44

We know that there is no truth in Satan. We also know that Bahá'u'lláh teaches the truth by glorifying Jesus, by teaching that Jesus is the Son of God, and that the Bible is divinely inspired. Therefore, the belief that Bahá'u'lláh is Satan is not biblically founded.

Paul States:

Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.

1 Corinthians 12:3

Bahá'u'lláh does call Jesus Lord:

Reflect upon the One Who was the Spirit of God [Jesus]. Though He showed forth the utmost compassion and tenderness, yet they rose up against that Essence of Being and Lord of the seen and

unseen, in such a manner that He could find no refuge wherein to rest.

The Promised Day is Come, p. 80

The following passages shed light on who and what Satan is:

From that time forth began Jesus to show unto His disciples, how that he must go into Jerusalem ... and be killed. Then Peter took Him and began to rebuke Him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord; this shall not be unto Thee. But He turned and said unto Peter, 'Get thee behind me, Satan! You are a hindrance to Me; for you are not on the side of God, but of men.

Matthew 16:21-23

Here, Christ calls Peter "Satan" because Peter is on the side of man, and not on the side of God. But certainly we don't believe that Peter was actually Satan. Christ uses the word "Satan" symbolically in order to convey that it is satanic to reject the Will of God.

Other verses in the Bible can be interpreted symbolically to illustrate the teaching that Satan is a symbol for evil:

In whom the god of this world (Satan) hath blinded the minds of them which believe not.

2 Corinthians 4:4

"Satan" can therefore be interpreted as the act of turning away from God, which, as in the case of Peter, is ultimately the source of evil. Where does Jesus say that evil comes from? Our own hearts:

For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies.

Matthew 15:19

If our heart is in the wrong place, attached to the things of this world, attached to the self and selfish desires, then from our hearts will proceed evil. Evil does not have an independent existence, but rather it is the absence of good, just as darkness is the absence of light:

Darkness is the absence of light: when there is no light, there is darkness. Light is an existing thing, but darkness is nonexistent.

Wealth is an existing thing, but poverty is nonexistent. Good exists; evil is nonexistent.

Some Answered Questions, p. 264

The Bahá'í Writings confirm that Satan exists, but that it does so not as a person or entity, but as the condition of evil:

The whisperings of Satan have been breathed to every creature.

Bahá'í Prayers, p. 314

Be fair in your judgment. Every good thing is of God, and every evil thing is from yourselves.

Gleanings, LXXVII

Just as Jesus warned that evil comes out of *the heart*, the word "Satan," in the Bahá'í Writings, describes the state of being in which a human being has submitted to his or her lower nature. We know that this power can *blind* the *minds* of them who believe not.

Indeed the actions of man himself breed a profusion of satanic power. For were men to abide by and observe the Divine teachings, every trace of evil would vanish from the face of the earth. However, the widespread differences that exist among mankind and the prevalence of sedition, contention and conflict, and the like are the primary factions which provoke the appearance of the satanic spirit.

Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 177-178

If his morals become spiritual in character, his aspirations heavenly, and his actions conformable with the will of God, man has attained the image and likeness of his Creator; otherwise, he is the image and likeness of Satan. Therefore Christ hath said, 'Ye shall know them by their fruits.'

Promulgation of Universal Peace, p. 335-336

We must look to Biblical proofs as the standard by which to judge Bahá'u'lláh and not follow the example of those who rejected Jesus without justification.

Chapter 5: Man Cannot Add to the Bible or Preach Any Other Gospel

Scripture states:

If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book.

Revelation 22:18

If we were to take this passage at its outward, literal meaning, and reject the Words of Bahá'u'lláh because they appear to add to the Bible, then, according to the Old Testament, we must also reject Jesus's Words for the same reason:

You shall not add to the word which I command you nor take from it, that you may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you.

Deuteronomy 4:2

What thing so ever I command you, observe to do it: thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it.

Deuteronomy 12:32

Although the Old Testament clearly states that no one can add to the Word, or change commandments or laws, Jesus did both. He changed the law of the Sabbath, which was to be a law **forever**, and the law of divorce. He changed the law of an "eye for an eye" and a "tooth for a tooth" and many other teachings.

As believers in Jesus, we don't have any problem with this, because He is the Christ. He has God-given authority to do whatever He wills.

The Bible tells us in both the Old and New Testaments that when Christ returns He will add, once again, to the Scriptures:

And he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths.

Isaiah 2:3

I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now.

Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth.

John 16:12-13

To "add" to the Word of God has a deeper spiritual meaning than simply adding actual words. Consider: Christianity has been broken up into sects by religious leaders who have attached their particular interpretation to Scripture and decided that the way to God is through this or that denomination, minister or church. Haven't they, in a very real sense, "added" to the Word of God? Had they followed the spirit of the command that we cannot alter the Word of God, then Christianity would have remained a single Church, as Jesus desired.

The New Testament states:

Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.

Galatians 1:8

How can we reconcile this statement with the fact that Bahá'u'lláh has revealed new laws and Teachings?

If Bahá'u'lláh is the Return of Christ, then His Revelation, His "Gospel" (which literally means "good news" or "glad tidings") is the same as the Gospel of Jesus, because through It Jesus's eternal nature is once again speaking to humanity in this day.

In the Bible we read:

Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever.

Hebrews 13:8

This verse from the Bahá'í Writings describes the unchanging nature of Christ. It refers to His Divine, not human reality.

[The Divine Christ] is the Word of God, the Eternal Bounty, the Holy Spirit. It has neither beginning nor end, for these things are related to the world of contingencies and not to the divine world. For God the end is the same thing as the beginning. ... Therefore, the reality of prophethood, which is the Word of God and the perfect state of manifestation, did not have any beginning and will not have any end ... the Holy Reality, of which Christ says, "The Father is in the Son," has neither beginning nor end."

Some Answered Questions, p. 152-153

Although the social teachings of religion change as humanity matures—as evidenced by the fact that Christ changed certain laws and teachings—the spiritual teachings never change. For example, the teachings that we should worship God, that we should tell the truth, that sex is unlawful outside of marriage, that we should treat other people the same way that we, ourselves, would want to be treated, that we should overlook the faults of others and strive to better our own characters—these teachings will never change. However, social laws such as those relating to what day we worship, what we can or cannot eat, whether or not we fast, how we pray—these are changed according to the wisdom of God.

Bahá'u'lláh says:

This is the changeless Faith of God, eternal in the past, eternal in the future. Let him that seeketh, attain it.

Gleanings, LXX

Chapter 6: No Other Name Under Heaven

In the New Testament we read:

Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.

Acts 4:12

Consider a prophecy that sheds brilliant light on the subject of names: the prophecy foretelling the coming of John the Baptist. This reveals a powerful lesson taught by Jesus Himself.

In the Old Testament it is promised that the prophet Elijah will return before the coming of the Messiah:

Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD:

Malachi 4:5

In the Old Testament (2 Kings 2:11) it states that Elijah was taken up into heaven, and he was to return to the world. However, no one with that name ever returned.

Imagine what the Jews must have expected from this prophecy: Elijah will come and will herald the Messiah - what a joy his coming will be! He will be welcomed and loved by the Jews, and will return that love, for is this not why he was to come—as a mighty sign and gift from God?

How they must have pictured in their minds Elijah descending from heaven on that chariot of fire spoken of in the Old Testament. How the religious leaders must have looked forward to His coming. Elijah would no doubt pay special respect to those of them who were maintaining the sanctity of their holy rituals, who were preserving the Jewish law, and teaching the scriptures to the people.

But let us look at what actually happened:

And his disciples asked him, saying, Why then say the scribes that Elias must first come?

And Jesus answered and said unto them, Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things.

But I say unto you, That Elias is come already, and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed. Likewise shall also the Son of man suffer of them. Then the disciples understood that he spake unto them of John the Baptist.

Matthew 17:10-13

We see here that the scribes rejected Jesus as the Christ because they were waiting for the literal fulfillment of the prophecy of Elijah—they were clinging to a name and an image that they had made in their minds.

The disciples asked John if he was Elijah:

Art thou Elias? And he saith, I am not. Art thou that prophet? And he answered, No.

John 1:21

The key to understanding Elijah's return is illustrated by Luke in the following verses:

And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God.

And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias.

Luke 1:16-17

The *spirit and power* of Elijah are what returned, not the physical body. So, in essence, Jesus taught that by "return" is meant the return of the spirit and power. Without understanding this inner meaning, we are lost in trying to understand how John could have been the return of Elijah.

Further to the theme of names, Isaiah states:

Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.

Isaiah 7:14

The Messiah's name, intended as "Immanuel," became "Jesus," and, again, there was no warning in the prophecy that this would occur.

The Bible explains that God tests our hearts:

For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

Hebrews 4:12

Bahá'u'lláh confirms that the Word of God has the power to test our hearts:

It is evident unto thee that the Birds of Heaven and Doves of Eternity speak a twofold language. One language, the outward language, is devoid of allusions, is unconcealed and unveiled; that it may be a guiding lamp and a beaconing light whereby wayfarers may attain the heights of holiness, and seekers may advance into the realm of eternal reunion. Such are the unveiled traditions and the evident verses already mentioned. The other language is veiled and concealed, so that whatever lieth hidden in the heart ... may be made manifest.

The Book of Certitude, p. 254-255

Names have meaning, and they function as titles in the Bible. Elijah means "Yahwe is my God." John means "God is gracious." Immanuel means "God with us." Jesus means "He Who Saves."

And Bahá'u'lláh means "The Glory of God."

Jesus said that He would come with a new name:

Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name.

Revelation 3:12

He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it.

To the Bahá'ís, Christ has returned in the Glory of the Father, and has returned with His new name, Bahá'u'lláh.

The objection that Bahá'u'lláh cannot be the Return of Christ because of His Name is based on the same reasoning as the objection that John cannot be Elijah, or that Jesus cannot be Immanuel.

There are other titles mentioned in the Old Testament that refer to Jesus: Prophet, Faithful Priest, Redeemer, Son, Lord, Shepherd, Servant, Holy One, Leader, Commander. These are a few among the many names and titles given to Him. But at the time that they were given, no one could have imagined that they would refer to the Son of a carpenter. It was only after Jesus appeared that their meaning became evident.

This same principle applies to two titles that Jesus Himself gave, and which refer to Bahá'u'lláh.

Jesus spoke of His Return, and also of the coming of the *Comforter* and of the *Spirit of Truth* which, He makes clear, refer to the same reality.

Christ said:

And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever;

Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.

John 14:16-17

But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

John 14:26

But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me.

John 15:26

Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.

He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you.

John 16:13-14

Bahá'u'lláh proclaims that He is the *Comforter* that Jesus promised:

The Comforter Whose advent all the scriptures have promised is now come that He may reveal unto you all knowledge and wisdom. Seek Him over the entire surface of the earth, haply ye may find Him.

The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 104-105

In the following tablet addressed to the rulers of the Christian world, Bahá'u'lláh identifies Himself as the *Spirit of Truth*:

O kings of Christendom! Heard ye not the saying of Jesus, the Spirit of God, 'I go away, and come again unto you?' Wherefore, then, did ye fail, when He did come again unto you in the clouds of heaven, to draw nigh unto Him, that ye might behold His face, and be of them that attained His Presence? In another passage He saith: 'When He, the Spirit of Truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth.' And yet, behold how, when He did bring the truth, ye refused to turn your faces towards Him, and persisted in disporting yourselves with your pastimes and fancies. Ye welcomed Him not, neither did ye seek His Presence, that ye might hear the verses of God from His own mouth, and partake of the manifold wisdom of the Almighty, the All-Glorious, the All-Wise. Ye have, by reason of your failure, hindered the breath of God from being wafted over you, and have withheld from your souls the sweetness of its fragrance.

Gleanings, CXVI

Bahá'u'lláh explains that the Return of Christ and the coming of the *Comforter* are the same:

To them that are endowed with understanding, it is clear and manifest that, when the fire of the love of Jesus consumed the veils of Jewish limitations, and His authority was made apparent and

partially enforced, He, the Revealer of the unseen Beauty, addressing one day His disciples, referred unto His passing, and, kindling in their hearts the fire of bereavement, said unto them: 'I go away and come again unto you.' And in another place He said: 'I go and another will come, Who will tell you all that I have not told you, and will fulfil all that I have said.' Both these sayings have but one meaning, were ye to ponder upon the Manifestations of the Unity of God with Divine insight.

The Book of Certitude, p. 20

Christ speaks of what the Comforter would do when He came:

Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.

And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.

John 16:7-8

Bahá'u'lláh, in His Writings, does reprove the world of sin, as Jesus promised:

Gracious God! So great is the folly and perversity of the people, that they have turned their face toward their own thoughts and desires, and have turned their back upon the knowledge and will of God—hallowed and glorified be His name!

The Book of Certitude, p. 171

Though immersed in the ocean of misbelief, yet with your lips ye profess the one true faith of God.

Hidden Words, Persian No. 20

Bahá'u'lláh glorifies Jesus, as Jesus said that He would:

Reflect how Jesus, the Spirit of God, was, notwithstanding His extreme meekness and perfect tender-heartedness, treated by His enemies. So fierce was the opposition which He, the Essence of Being and Lord of the visible and invisible, had to face, that He had nowhere to lay His head. He wandered continually from place to place, deprived of a permanent abode.

Gleanings, XXIII

It was also prophesied by Jesus:

And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd.

John 10:16

Jesus did not say that these other sheep would know Him as Jesus (His flesh) but that they would recognize His Voice (the Eternal Word).

Of course, these statements of Jesus are subject to widely differing interpretation. Some Christians say that the "Spirit of truth" came at Pentecost. Now consider: if the Spirit of Truth was to guide the Church into all truth, and the Spirit of Truth had come some two thousand years ago, why then, has Christ's Faith been split into so many sects? Isn't "truth" one?

Paul himself states, long after Pentecost, that all truth had not been revealed during his time:

For we know in part, and we prophesy in part.

1 Corinthians 13:9

Bahá'u'lláh has said that He is the Spirit of Truth, and that He has come to guide us into all truth. He has unsealed the Scriptures, as prophesied by Christ, explaining their meaning, revealing their inner significance. Like Jesus, He came with a new Name, one that no one was expecting.

Bahá'u'lláh means the "Glory of God," the "Glory of the Lord," the "Glory of the Father." This name is mentioned many times in the Bible. Below are a few instances:

For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works.

Matthew 16:27

The prophet Ezekiel was exiled to Babylon near the ancient river of Chebar which was located near the present-day city of Baghdad where Bahá'u'lláh spent ten years of His exile. There Ezekiel wrote this reference to Bahá'u'lláh's name:

Then I arose, and went forth into the plain: and, behold, the glory of the LORD stood there, as the glory which I saw by the river of Chebar: and I fell on my face.

Ezekiel 3:23

Again, Ezekiel writes:

And, behold, the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the east.

Ezekiel 43:1

Bahá'u'lláh arrived in what is now Israel from the way of the east. He was exiled there from Adrianople by the Sultan of the Ottoman Empire.

Chapter 7: Heaven and Hell

The Bible and the Bahá'í Writings teach that in this life and the next, there is reward and punishment. Although the Bahá'í Writings use the same two-fold language as the Bible, they clearly state that references to heaven and hell as physical places are symbolic and have deeper spiritual significance.

Some references in the Bible seem to signify that heaven is a physical place:

Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.

Acts 1:11

But Jesus refers to heaven as something that cannot be a physical place:

And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven.

John 3:13

The Jews wondered what Christ meant by His references to coming down from heaven:

And they said, Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? how is it then that he saith, I came down from heaven?

John 6:42

Bahá'u'lláh, referring to the Prophets of God, reveals the spiritual meaning of "heaven":

The term 'heaven' denoteth loftiness and exaltation ... These ancient Beings, though delivered from the womb of their mother, have in reality descended from the heaven of the will of God. Though

they be dwelling on this earth, yet their true habitations are the retreats of glory in the realms above.

The Book of Certitude, p. 67

Thus, Jesus, while on the earth, was, as He Himself stated, also in heaven. His divine reality is exalted above physical existence.

Jesus also teaches that heaven is our true home. Although the Old Testament speaks little of eternal life, this is a constant theme of Jesus's teachings. This earthly life is fleeting, but the next life is eternal. We should not become saddened when *men shall ... persecute* (Matt. 5:11) us, but instead, we should *rejoice* and be *exceeding glad* for *great is our reward in heaven* (Matt. 5:12). We should not store our *treasures* here on *earth*, where *moth and rust* will destroy them, and *thieves* will *steal* them (Matt. 6:19), but rather we should lay up our treasures in *heaven* (Matt. 6:20).

The term "heaven" refers to the spiritual world, not some form of physical world or place. It is the condition experienced by the soul that has gained spiritual qualities:

The immortality of the spirit is mentioned in the Holy Books; it is the fundamental basis of the divine religions. Now punishments and rewards are said to be of two kinds: first, the rewards and punishments of this life; second, those of the other world. But the paradise and hell of existence are found in all the worlds of God, whether in this world or in the spiritual heavenly worlds. Gaining these rewards is the gaining of eternal life. That is why Christ said, 'Act in such a way that you may find eternal life, and that you may be born of water and the spirit, so that you may enter into the Kingdom.'

The rewards of this life are the virtues and perfections which adorn the reality of man. For example, he was dark and becomes luminous; he was ignorant and becomes wise; he was neglectful and becomes vigilant; he was asleep and becomes awakened; he was dead and becomes living; he was blind and becomes a seer; he was deaf and becomes a hearer; he was earthly and becomes heavenly; he was material and becomes spiritual. Through these rewards he gains spiritual birth and becomes a new creature. He becomes the manifestation of the verse in the Gospel where it is said of the

disciples that they 'were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God' (John 1:13).

Some Answered Questions, p. 223-224

Just as by “heaven” is meant the spiritual condition of the soul that has been born *of God* (John 1:13), by “hell” is meant the condition of the soul that is deprived of spiritual qualities:

For just as the effects and the fruitage of the uterine life are not to be found in that dark and narrow place, and only when the child is transferred to this wide earth do the benefits and uses of growth and development in that previous world become revealed—so likewise reward and punishment, heaven and hell, requital and retribution for actions done in this present life, will stand revealed in that other world beyond.

Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, p. 185

Chapter 8: Every Eye Shall See Him

The Book of Revelation speaks of the nature of Christ's Return:

Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him.

Revelation 1:7

To understand what this verse may mean, consider the following verses from Luke:

As it is written in the book of the words of Esaias the prophet, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.

Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low; and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways shall be made smooth;

And all flesh shall see the salvation of God.

Luke 3:4-6

Luke states that this prophecy of Isaiah (Esaias) was fulfilled by the coming of Jesus the Christ. The first verse, referring to John the Baptist, could be interpreted to have been fulfilled literally. However, the rest of the prophecy must be interpreted spiritually.

Was every valley filled and every mountain and hill brought low? Not literally.

Were the crooked made straight and the rough ways made smooth? Not literally.

And, did *all flesh* see the salvation of God? Did every person alive see Jesus? Not literally.

In whatever way this prophecy is interpreted, the prophecy that *every eye shall see him*, relating to Christ's return, should also be interpreted.

Thus, the fact that every eye has not literally seen Bahá'u'lláh cannot be raised as an objection to His claim.

And how can we reconcile *every eye shall see him* with the prophecies that Christ will come as a *thief*?

Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.

Revelation 3:3

Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth.

Revelation 16:15

The prophecy states that *every eye shall see him*—it does not state that every one who sees Him will recognize Him or believe in Him. Many people saw Christ at His First Coming, yet failed to believe in Him.

Also, consider these Words of Jesus, speaking of His Return:

But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.

But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark,

And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. ...

Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come.

But know this, that if the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up.

Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh.

Matthew 24:36-44

Jesus refers to the fact that the people did not know until after the flood came that Noah was from God. When do we know that the thief has come? After he has come.

Chapter 9: Only Begotten Son of God

The Gospel of John states:

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

John 3:16

The Bible states that *God is a Spirit* (John 4:24). So the relationship of Jesus to God the Father is a spiritual one and is exalted above physical existence:

That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

John 3:6

The Gospel of Luke states that Adam was also the son of God:

Which was the son of Enos, which was the son of Seth, which was the son of Adam, which was the son of God.

Luke 3:38

So, since Adam was the son of God, and therefore begotten of God, was Jesus the only begotten Son of God? And who was begotten first?

The New Testament refers to Jesus as the "Son of man" about twice as often as it refers to Him as the "Son of God." Was Jesus the Son of God? Yes. Was He the Son of Man (human)? Yes. This was His dual nature.

The title "Son of God" denotes Christ's station, the station of the Son. This station is glorified in the following verses:

God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets,

Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds;

Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;

Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.

For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son?

And again, when he bringeth in the firstbegotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him.

And of the angels he saith, Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire.

But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom.

Hebrews 1:1-8

Just as *Son of God* has a spiritual significance and reality, so too, does the meaning of Bahá'u'lláh's name.

Chapter 10: Baptism

In the Bible we read that baptism is essential for salvation:

He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.

Mark 16:16

One objection that some Christians have to the Bahá'í Faith, is that Bahá'ís do not practice the ritual of baptism with water. But is baptism with water essential?

John answered, saying unto them all, I indeed baptize you with water; but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire.

Luke 3:16

John baptized with water, but the baptism of Jesus is *with the Holy Ghost and with fire*. The following verses from the Book of Acts describe the experience of Peter, showing us that baptism with physical water is not a requirement for receiving the Holy Ghost, for the Holy Ghost is received by people without it:

While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. ...

Can anyone object to their being baptized, now that they have received the Holy Spirit just as we did?

Acts 10:44,47 (NIV)

And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning.

Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost.

Those who were baptized in the presence of Peter, as described in the above verses, were in truth baptized by the baptism of Christ as John said it would be—*with the Holy Ghost and with fire*. Therefore, baptism with water is not required to receive the Holy Ghost, or for that matter, to attain faith in Christ. Baptism with water is a **symbol** of the baptism of Christ—not the **substance**.

For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body.

1 Corinthians 12:13

Baptism, therefore, has a spiritual significance.

And again, consider the criminal who was crucified with Christ:

And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise.

Luke 23:43

Clearly, this man was saved—through the promise of being with Christ that day in paradise—but was not baptized with water.

The Bahá'í Writings explain:

Man cannot free himself from the rage of the carnal passions except by the help of the Holy Spirit. That is why He says baptism with the spirit, with water and with fire is necessary, and that it is essential—that is to say, the spirit of divine bounty, the water of knowledge and life, and the fire of the love of God. Man must be baptized with this spirit, this water and this fire so as to become filled with the eternal bounty. Otherwise, what is the use of baptizing with material water? No, this baptism with water was a symbol of repentance, and of seeking forgiveness of sins.

But in the cycle of Bahá'u'lláh there is no longer need of this symbol; for its reality, which is to be baptized with the spirit and love of God, is understood and established.

Some Answered Questions, p. 92

So, although Bahá'ís realize that baptism is an essential aspect of salvation, and that they themselves need this grace, their interpretation of

the meaning of baptism is clearly not the baptism of John, which was with physical water, but the baptism whereby the Christ was to baptize.

Chapter 11: Miracles

Anyone who claims to be the Christ will meet with the question: Can you produce a miracle? This question was asked of Jesus, and it was asked of Bahá'u'lláh.

The Bible tells us that those who asked this question of Jesus were motivated by malice:

And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread.

Matthew 4:3

Then certain of the scribes and of the Pharisees answered, saying, Master, we would see a sign from thee.

But he answered and said unto them, An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas.

Matthew 12:38-39

In the following verses, John refers to a prophecy of Isaiah relating to the miracles of Jesus:

But though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him:

That the saying of Esaias the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spake, Lord, who hath believed our report?

John 12:37-38

By the authority of Jesus, miracles are not conclusive proof that someone is the Christ, for He tells us not to believe in someone because they show *great signs and wonders* (Matt. 24:24). In the following verses, Jesus gives us perspective on the performance of miracles, revealing that faith in Him and obedience to His Teachings give life, not miracles:

Jesus answered them and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled.

Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed.

Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God?

Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.

They said therefore unto him, What sign shewest thou then, that we may see, and believe thee? what dost thou work?

Our fathers did eat manna in the desert; as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat.

Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven.

For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world.

Then said they unto him, Lord, evermore give us this bread.

And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.

John 6:26-35

Bahá'u'lláh was also asked to perform miracles:

It often happened that in Baghdad certain Muhammadan ulamá [Muslim priests], Jewish rabbis and Christians met together with some European scholars, in a blessed reunion: each one had some question to propose, and although they were possessed of varying degrees of culture, they each heard a sufficient and convincing reply, and retired satisfied. Even the Persian ulamá who were at Karbilá and Najaf chose a wise man whom they sent on a mission to Him; his name was Mullá Hasan Amú. He came into the Holy Presence, and proposed a number of questions on behalf of the ulamá, to which Bahá'u'lláh replied. Then Hasan Amú said, 'The ulamá recognize without hesitation and confess the knowledge and virtue of Bahá'u'lláh, and they are unanimously convinced that in all learning

he has no peer or equal; and it is also evident that he has never studied or acquired this learning; but still the ulamá say, "We are not contented with this; we do not acknowledge the reality of his mission by virtue of his wisdom and righteousness. Therefore, we ask him to show us a miracle in order to satisfy and tranquilize our hearts."

Bahá'u'lláh replied, 'Although you have no right to ask this, for God should test His creatures, and they should not test God, still I allow and accept this request. But the Cause of God is not a theatrical display that is presented every hour, of which some new diversion may be asked for every day. ...

'The ulamás must, therefore, assemble, and, with one accord, choose one miracle, and write that, after the performance of this miracle they will no longer entertain doubts about Me, and that all will acknowledge and confess the truth of My Cause. Let them seal this paper, and bring it to Me. This must be the accepted criterion: if the miracle is performed, no doubt will remain for them; and if not, We shall be convicted of imposture.' The learned man, Hasan Amú, rose and replied, 'There is no more to be said;' he then kissed the knee of the Blessed One although he was not a believer, and went. He gathered the ulamá and gave them the sacred message. They consulted together and said, 'This man is an enchanter; perhaps he will perform an enchantment, and then we shall have nothing more to say.' Acting on this belief, they did not dare to push the matter further.

Some Answered Questions, p. 28-30

As illustrated in this story, Bahá'u'lláh, like Christ, refused to produce signs and wonders for the entertainment of doubters. Although miracles can constitute a compelling proof for those who witness them, for others they are subject to question. As we read from the above story and in the New Testament, even those who witness them, if their purpose is to oppose Him, will not believe.

The Bahá'í understanding of the purpose and significance of miracles is presented in the following passages:

The meaning is not that the Manifestations are unable to perform miracles, for They have all power. But for Them inner sight, spiritual healing and eternal life are the valuable and important things. Consequently, whenever it is recorded in the Holy Books that such a

one was blind and recovered his sight, the meaning is that he was inwardly blind, and that he obtained spiritual vision, or that he was ignorant and became wise, or that he was negligent and became heedful, or that he was worldly and became heavenly.

Some Answered Questions, p. 102

Recollect that Christ, solitary and alone, without a helper or protector, without armies and legions, and under the greatest oppression, uplifted the standard of God before all the people of the world, and withstood them, and finally conquered all, although outwardly He was crucified. Now this is a veritable miracle which can never be denied. There is no need of any other proof of the truth of Christ.

The outward miracles have no importance for the people of Reality. If a blind man receives sight, for example, he will finally again become sightless, for he will die and be deprived of all his senses and powers. Therefore, causing the blind man to see is comparatively of little importance, for this faculty of sight will at last disappear. If the body of a dead person be resuscitated, of what use is it since the body will die again? But it is important to give perception and eternal life—that is, the spiritual and divine life. For this physical life is not immortal, and its existence is equivalent to nonexistence. So it is that Christ said to one of His disciples: 'Let the dead bury their dead;' for 'That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.'

Some Answered Questions, p. 101

Chapter 12: The Resurrection of Christ

The Bible tells us that Jesus Christ was raised from the dead two days after His crucifixion:

And when they had fulfilled all that was written of him, they took him down from the tree, and laid him in a sepulchre.

But God raised him from the dead:

And he was seen many days of them which came up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are his witnesses unto the people.

Acts 13:29-31

Some verses in the New Testament describe a resurrection of Christ's physical body and its assumption into the physical heaven. Other verses describe the spiritual nature of the Resurrection. The Bahá'í understanding of the Resurrection is that it was a divine, spiritual body that was resurrected and seen by the apostles.

Paul speaks of the spiritual nature of the Resurrection:

So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption:

It is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power:

It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body. ...

Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.

1 Corinthians 15:42-44, 50

God is a spirit (John 4:24), and since Christ is the Son of God, His reality is, most importantly, spiritual. Christ was the Resurrection even before He was crucified:

I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live.

John 11:25

So "resurrection" clearly has a deep spiritual significance.

Christ was seen risen by His apostles; He spent time with them, taught them, ate with them. However, many times when Christ appeared to His disciples after His crucifixion, they did not recognize Him. How could this be? Wouldn't they have recognized Him if He appeared to them with His physical body? Remember that Paul says that he was a witness to the Resurrection, and yet He only saw a bright light. Could it be that Christ's appearances after the Resurrection were spiritual experiences, such as Paul describes? A reference to Christ in Hebrews reads *Who in the days of his flesh*, indicating a distinction between his body of flesh, which He had *in the days of his flesh* (now past), and his spiritual body, which is the condition in which He now exists.

What does the word "flesh" mean, as spoken in the Bible? Jesus raised the station and meaning of the word "flesh":

I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.

The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying, How can this man give us his flesh to eat?

Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.

Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day.

For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed.

He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him.

As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me.

This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever.

These things said he in the synagogue, as he taught in Capernaum.

Many therefore of his disciples, when they had heard this, said, This is an hard saying; who can hear it?

When Jesus knew in himself that his disciples murmured at it, he said unto them, Doth this offend you?

What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before?

It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.

John 6:51-63

Those disciples who interpreted these words of Jesus in a physical sense—and there were many—left Him because of them. But to those who could perceive their inner significance, how meaningful were His words. He compares His body to His Teachings. Should He ascend to Heaven, His disciples should know that His Words, not His body, are spirit and life.

The Bahá'í understanding is this:

The reality of Christ, the Spirit of Christ, the perfections of Christ all came from heaven. Consequently, by saying He was the bread which came from heaven He meant that the perfections which He showed forth were divine perfections, that the blessings within Him were heavenly gifts and bestowals, that His light was the light of Reality. He said, "If any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever." That is to say, whosoever assimilates these divine perfections which are within me will never die; whosoever has a share and partakes of these heavenly bounties I embody will find eternal life; he who takes unto himself these divine lights shall find everlasting life. How manifest the meaning is! How evident! For the soul which acquires divine perfections and seeks heavenly illumination from the teachings of Christ will undoubtedly live eternally.

The Promulgation of Universal Peace, p. 450-451

So, Christ's flesh is His divine perfections, His heavenly teachings. This is the flesh that He commanded us to eat.

If Christ were actually dead for two days then how could He have promised the man who was crucified with Him that He would be with him that same day?

Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise.

Luke 23:43

Clearly, Christ's spirit, His divine soul, did not die on that day, but was alive and in heaven. This is also confirmed by the following verses:

And Jesus cried with a loud voice, and gave up the ghost.

Mark 15:37

If He *gave up the ghost*, then where did it go?

And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, he gave up the ghost.

Luke 23:46

Christ commended His spirit into His Father's hands. His spirit left His body and went to the Father. He was with the man who was crucified with Him on that same day.

The Bahá'í Writings explain:

Therefore, we say that the meaning of Christ's resurrection is as follows: the disciples were troubled and agitated after the martyrdom of Christ. The Reality of Christ, which signifies His teachings, His bounties, His perfections and His spiritual power, was hidden and concealed for two or three days after His martyrdom, and was not resplendent and manifest. No, rather it was lost, for the believers were few in number and were troubled and agitated. The Cause of Christ was like a lifeless body; and when after three days the disciples became assured and steadfast, and began to serve the Cause of Christ, and resolved to spread the divine teachings, putting His counsels into practice, and arising to serve Him, the Reality of Christ became resplendent and His bounty appeared; His religion found life; His teachings and His admonitions became evident and visible. In other words, the Cause of Christ was like a lifeless body until the life and the bounty of the Holy Spirit surrounded it.

Paul confirms that the “body” of Christ refers to the Church:

For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.

Ephesians 5:30

Bahá'ís believe that this is the body—the Church—that was resurrected after the crucifixion. The eternal Spirit of Christ, which has existed for all time did not die, nor does Christ need a physical body now that He has left the earth.

After the martyrdom of Christ, to Whom be glory, the disciples were greatly disturbed and disheartened. Even Peter had denied Christ and tried to shun Him. It was a woman, Mary Magdalene, who confirmed the wavering disciples in their faith, saying, 'Was it the body of Christ or the reality of Christ that ye have seen crucified? Surely it was His body. His reality is everlasting and eternal; it hath neither beginning nor ending.'

The Promulgation of Universal Peace, p. 282

The spiritual nature of Christ's reality is demonstrated in the daily lives of His followers:

For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.

Matthew 18:20

If we truly believe this, then we are testifying that His spirit, not His physical body, is His true reality.

Chapter 13: Life After Death

The Gospel of Luke states.

To day shalt thou be with me in paradise.

Luke 23:43

With these words, Jesus addressed one of those who were crucified with Him. His words assure us that there is life after death.

In other passages from the Bible, the life to come is extolled:

Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.

Ecclesiastes 12:7

Indeed, I cannot decide between the two. I have the desire to leave this life and be with the Messiah, for that is far better. But for your sake it is better that I remain alive.

Philippians 1:23-24 (NIV)

As we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord.

We live by faith, not by sight.

We ... would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord.

2 Corinthians 5:6-8 (NIV)

Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal:

But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal:

Matthew 6:19-20

While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.

2 Corinthians 4:18

The Bahá'í Writings confirm that the soul is immortal:

And now concerning thy question regarding the soul of man and its survival after death. Know thou of a truth that the soul, after its separation from the body, will continue to progress until it attaineth the presence of God, in a state and condition which neither the revolution of ages and centuries, nor the changes and chances of this world, can alter. It will endure as long as the Kingdom of God, His sovereignty, His dominion and power will endure. It will manifest the signs of God and His attributes, and will reveal His loving kindness and bounty. The movement of My Pen is stilled when it attempteth to befittingly describe the loftiness and glory of so exalted a station. The honor with which the Hand of Mercy will invest the soul is such as no tongue can adequately reveal, nor any other earthly agency describe.

Gleanings, LXXXI

Thou hast asked Me concerning the nature of the soul. Know, verily, that the soul is a sign of God, a heavenly gem whose reality the most learned of men hath failed to grasp, and whose mystery no mind, however acute, can ever hope to unravel. It is the first among all created things to declare the excellence of its Creator, the first to recognize His glory, to cleave to His truth, and to bow down in adoration before Him. If it be faithful to God, it will reflect His light, and will, eventually, return unto Him. If it fail, however, in its allegiance to its Creator, it will become a victim to self and passion, and will, in the end, sink in their depths.

Gleanings, LXXXII

The nature of the soul after death can never be described, nor is it meet and permissible to reveal its whole character to the eyes of men. The Prophets and Messengers of God have been sent down for the sole purpose of guiding mankind to the straight Path of Truth. The purpose underlying Their revelation hath been to educate all men, that they may, at the hour of death, ascend, in the utmost purity and sanctity and with absolute detachment, to the throne of

the Most High. The light which these souls radiate is responsible for the progress of the world and the advancement of its peoples. They are like unto leaven which leaveneth the world of being, and constitute the animating force through which the arts and wonders of the world are made manifest. Through them the clouds rain their bounty upon men, and the earth bringeth forth its fruits.

Gleanings, LXXXI

In the beginning of his human life man was embryonic in the world of the matrix [mother's womb]. There he received capacity and endowment for the reality of human existence. The forces and powers necessary for this world were bestowed upon him in that limited condition. In this world he needed eyes; he received them potentially in the other. He needed ears; he obtained them there in readiness and preparation for his new existence. The powers requisite in this world were conferred upon him in the world of the matrix...

Therefore, in this world he must prepare himself for the life beyond. That which he needs in the world of the Kingdom must be obtained here. Just as he prepared himself in the world of the matrix by acquiring forces necessary in this sphere of existence, so, likewise, the indispensable forces of the divine existence must be potentially attained in this world.

What is he in need of in the Kingdom which transcends the life and limitation of this mortal sphere? That world beyond is a world of sanctity and radiance; therefore it is necessary that in this world he should acquire these divine attributes. In that world there is need of spirituality, faith, assurance, the knowledge and love of God. These he must attain in this world so that after his ascension from the earthly to the heavenly Kingdom he shall find all that is needful in that life eternal ready for him.

That divine world is manifestly a world of lights; therefore, man has need of illumination here. That is a world of love; the love of God is essential. It is a world of perfections; virtues, or perfections, must be acquired. That world is vivified by the breaths of the Holy Spirit; in this world we must seek them. That is the Kingdom of everlasting life; it must be attained during this vanishing existence.

The Promulgation of Universal Peace, p. 225-226

The human spirit may be likened to the bounty of the sun shining on a mirror. ... This perfected body can be compared to a mirror, and the human spirit to the sun. Nevertheless, if the mirror breaks, the bounty of the sun continues; and if the mirror is destroyed or ceases to exist, no harm will happen to the bounty of the sun, which is everlasting.

Some Answered Questions, p. 143-144

Chapter 14: Prophecies of Jesus Fulfilled by Bahá'u'lláh

Jesus gave three promises relating to the time of His Return, which we will examine in this chapter.

First Time Prophecy

And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?

Matthew 24:3

In answer to this question, Jesus prophesied:

And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.

Matthew 24:14

A similar prophecy is found in Mark, wherein Jesus says:

And the gospel must first be published among all nations.

Mark 13:10

Note that Jesus says *unto all nations*, not unto all persons. Christian scholars recognize that it was sometime in the 1840's that the Gospel had reached all nations. It had reached even to the heart of Africa by 1844, the year of the birth of the Bahá'í Faith.

Second Time Prophecy

And they asked him, saying, Master, but when shall these things be? and what sign will there be when these things shall come to pass?

Luke 21:7

Jesus tells them:

And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.

Luke 21:24

Just as Christ had foretold, Jerusalem was destroyed (by the Romans) in both the first and second centuries after His crucifixion. The Jews fell *by the edge of the sword* and were *led away captive into all nations*.

After the Romans, the Muslims conquered Jerusalem and strictly prohibited the Jews from entering the city. So the Gentiles were the only people who by law were allowed to live in Jerusalem. This continued for many centuries until the Ottoman Empire was forced by Western countries during the 1800's to break with their policy of religious intolerance and recognize the rights of other religions. This process took some decades and is evidenced by several documents signed in 1844—the year that the Bahá'í Faith began. The Jewish people gradually began to return to the Holy Land, fulfilling this prophecy.

Isaiah prophesied that God would *assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth*. (Isa. 11:12). But what year did the Jewish people first begin to conceive the idea of returning to the Holy Land? It was the year 1844. In that very year, a Jewish man named Mordecai Noah, who had made the return of the Jewish people to the Holy Land the focus of his life, delivered a number discourses which were published the following year. His message reflected the fact that the *times of the Gentiles were fulfilled*. He said: "... the Almighty ... threw the mantle of his Divine protection over his chosen people, and has preserved them amid unheard-of dangers to this very day ... the same people ... he had brought out of Egyptian bondage, and ... given the land of Israel ..., and who is now leading us back in peace and happiness to repossess our ancient and promised heritage."³

Further evidence that *the times of the Gentiles* were fulfilled in 1844 comes from the Book of Revelation, a major theme of which is Christ's Return:

³ Noah, M. M. *Discourse on the Restoration of the Jews* New York: Harper & Brothers, 1845, pp. 24-25 (Cited from *Lord of Lords*, by Hushidar Motlagh)

But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months.

Revelation 11:2

This prophecy predicts that the temple (at Jerusalem) will be given unto the Gentiles (non-Jews) for forty-two months. Forty-two months is equal to 1260 days (each month, equaling 30 days in Biblical prophecy). Several passages in the Bible use the word day to mean year. One outstanding instance of this principle of “a day for a year” is Daniel’s prophecy of 70 weeks (490 days), predicting the First Coming of Christ (See also Numbers 14:34, Ezekiel 4:6).

Thus, “1260 days” means 1260 years. At the end of this 1260-year period, according to Revelation, *the times of the Gentiles* will be fulfilled.

It is a historical fact that in the Muslim calendar observed within the lands where Daniel, Ezekiel, and Nehemiah all lived for some time—the year 1260 is the year 1844 of the Christian calendar. Thus, another prophecy of Jesus regarding His return was fulfilled in 1844, the year the Bahá’í Faith began.

Third Time Prophecy

Again, in Matthew, in answer to the question regarding the time of His Return, Jesus replies:

When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand.)

Matthew 24:15

Here is the prophecy of Daniel that Jesus spoke of:

Then I heard one saint speaking, and another saint said unto that certain saint which spake, How long shall be the vision concerning the daily sacrifice, and the transgression of desolation, to give both the sanctuary and the host to be trodden under foot?

And he said unto me, Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed.

Daniel 8:13-14

Daniel refers to the sanctuary, which is in the *holy city* being *trodden under foot*. Revelation echoes this same theme, as seen above: *and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months*.

Jesus clearly states that His reference to Daniel's prophecy relates to the time of His Return. Daniel states that the time for the fulfillment of this transgression, this abomination, is *two thousand and three hundred days*. As mentioned above, in the language of prophecy "2,300 days" signifies 2,300 years. We know when the 2,300-year time period begins because the Angel Gabriel tells Daniel.

In Daniel, Chapter 8, Daniel states that while he was trying to understand this vision, he saw the Angel Gabriel and heard a voice that said *Gabriel, tell this man the meaning of the vision* (Dan. 8:15-16 NIV). Gabriel then proceeded to explain to Daniel the meaning of the vision, but in the end, Daniel admits that he still did not understand.

In Chapter 9 of Daniel, he pours out his heart in prayer to God, and in answer to this prayer, Gabriel returns to help him understand the vision (Dan. 9:23). Among the things that Gabriel tells Daniel are: 1) the number of years that relate to the Jewish people, and 2) the point in time at which the vision begins.

1) The number of years that relate to the Jewish people:

Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy.

Daniel 9:24

Seventy weeks times seven days for each week equals 490 days. In the language of prophecy, this "490 days" signifies 490 years. This prophecy is recognized by Christians as referring to the first coming of Christ—the anointing of *the Most Holy*.

2) The point in time at which the vision begins:

Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah

the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times.

Daniel 9:25

Here Daniel states the prophecy of the 70 weeks in a different way, explaining it as 69 weeks—after which (during the 70th week) the Messiah shall be *cut off* (Dan. 9:26), meaning Christ shall be crucified.

The vision begins from the going forth of *the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem*. In 457 B.C., Artaxerxes, king of Persia, issued a decree on the first day of the Jewish calendar month of Nisan (March 21), which eventually resulted in the rebuilding of the Temple of Solomon in Jerusalem. It was 490 years after the decree to rebuild the temple, when Christ was 33 years of age, that He was crucified.

Daniel had predicted with complete accuracy the year of Christ's First Coming. He also predicted the year of His Return.

The first 490 years of the 2,300-year prophecy relate to the Jewish people, and to the First Coming of Christ. In the verse *Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people*, the word in the original Bible manuscript that is translated as "determined" is the Hebrew word *chathak*⁴. Some of the meanings of this word are "to cut," "to divide," and "to be marked out." These 490 years, then, are to be "marked out" of the 2,300-year period.

After this time period, the time of the Jews was fulfilled. But both Jesus and Gabriel state that "2,300 years" refers to the time of the end—the Second Coming. And 2,300 years after *the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem* brings us to March 21, 1844. This is the time that Christ said He would appear, and the year the Bahá'í Faith began. Thus, with these extraordinary prophecies, Daniel links Christ and Bahá'u'lláh together. (For a fuller discussion of these prophecies, see *Every Eye Shall See*, Chapter 3: When Shall These Things Be?)

We see that all three of these promises Jesus made to His disciples point to the year 1844: 1) The Gospel would be preached to all nations, 2) The times of the Gentiles would be fulfilled, and 3) The words of Daniel regarding the abomination of desolation would be fulfilled.

4 See Strong's Lexicon Hebrew reference number 2852

As the year 1844 approached, based on these three promises of Jesus, over a thousand Christian ministers in Great Britain and the United States alone were preaching the imminent Return of Christ. They eagerly awaited His Coming. Some of their followers gave away all of their possessions. When Christ did not return with the great outward signs that they were expecting, this led to what is known today as the Great Disappointment.

Prophecies are rarely given in an open, unequivocal, and easy-to-understand manner. They are almost always couched in symbols, metaphors and mysteries, and are only understood after they have been fulfilled. In response to the questions posed to Him about the time of His Return, Jesus could have told His disciples: I will return 1,844 years after my birth. But the Bible never gives such plain signs of things to come. This is why Matthew states, after Christ's response to His disciples, *whoso readeth, let him understand*. Just as it did upon Christ's First Coming, it takes a searching heart to recognize Him at the Second Coming.

Chapter 15: Prophecies of the Old Testament Fulfilled by Bahá'u'lláh

Bahá'u'lláh has fulfilled many prophecies of the Old Testament. In this chapter we will look at some of the prophecies of Ezekiel, Micah and Isaiah.

Ezekiel

And the glory of the LORD came into the house by the way of the gate whose prospect is toward the east.

Ezekiel 43:4

And, behold, the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the east: and his voice was like a noise of many waters: and the earth shined with his glory.

Ezekiel 43:2

Bahá'u'lláh's name means "Glory of the Lord", or "Glory of God." He came to Israel from the east, for His birthplace is Tihran, Persia (now Iran), which is directly east of Israel. And He did come by way of the "gate." Like Christ, Bahá'u'lláh also had a herald. Christ's herald was John the Baptist. Bahá'u'lláh's herald, who was a Prophet in His own right, was a young man called "The Báb." This title, when translated into English, means "the Gate." The Báb prepared the way for Bahá'u'lláh, Whom he described as *Him Whom God shall make manifest*.

Micah

In that day also he shall come even to thee from Assyria, and from the fortified cities, and from the fortress even to the river, and from sea to sea, and from mountain to mountain. ...

Feed thy people with thy rod, the flock of thine heritage, which dwell solitarily in the wood, in the midst of Carmel: ...

According to the days of thy coming out of the land of Egypt will I shew unto him marvellous things.

Bahá'u'lláh came *from Assyria*, which was an ancient empire that included parts of Iran, Iraq, Turkey, and what is now Israel. Bahá'u'lláh was born in Iran and was exiled to Iraq, to two cities in Turkey, and finally to the prison city of 'Akká, in the north of what is now Israel.

Bahá'u'lláh came *from the fortified cities*: He was exiled to the cities of Constantinople and 'Akká, both of which had enormous fortifications built around them.

Bahá'u'lláh came *from the fortress even to the river*: After Bahá'u'lláh was released from the mighty prison of 'Akká, while still a Prisoner in that region, He would at times visit a garden outside of the city. He named this garden "Paradise." It was surrounded on both sides by the river Belus, which had split into two streams at that point before flowing into the Mediterranean Sea. There He would delight in the beauty of nature, of which He had been deprived for so many years due to His incarceration.

Bahá'u'lláh came *from sea to sea*: When exiled from Baghdad to Constantinople, He sailed on the Black Sea, and when exiled from Adrianople to 'Akká, in the north of Israel, He crossed the Mediterranean Sea. He, the Glory of the Lord, had arrived in the Holy Land by way of the east—driven there by His enemies, who, though they were attempting to eliminate Him and extinguish His Faith, were fulfilling the prophecies of the Old and New Testaments.

Bahá'u'lláh came *from mountain to mountain*: Just as Jesus withdrew into the wilderness at the beginning of His mission, so Bahá'u'lláh also withdrew, after receiving His revelation, for a period of two years. He went into the mountains of Kurdistan, in northeastern Iraq. He lived for some time in utter seclusion on a mountain called Sar Galú. Also, towards the end of His earthly life, while in the Holy Land, Bahá'u'lláh pitched His tent on Mount Carmel, as mentioned by Micah. "Carmel" means "Vineyard of the Lord," and He, the *Lord of the Vineyard* (Mark 12:9), while standing in the vicinity of the Cave of Elijah, revealed the Tablet of Carmel, in which He states:

Call out to Zion, O Carmel, and announce the joyful tidings: He that was hidden from mortal eyes is come! His all-conquering sovereignty is manifest; His all-encompassing splendour is revealed.

Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 4

Micah's prophecy gives the exact time period that the Promised One will feed His flock. He says that it will be *according to the days of thy coming out of the land of Egypt*. The Jews wandered for 40 years after coming out of Egypt. Bahá'u'lláh's mission lasted from 1852 to 1892—exactly 40 years—during which Bahá'u'lláh revealed the teachings and guidance He received from God. His Teachings deal with the spiritual, social and economic welfare of humanity. Thus, for 40 years, God showed to Bahá'u'lláh *marvelous things*, which He fed to His flock.

Another prophecy of Micah refers to the Second Coming:

But in the last days it shall come to pass, that the mountain of the house of the LORD shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and people shall flow unto it.

And many nations shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths.

Micah 4:1-2

In the Tablet of Carmel Bahá'u'lláh ordained that the world center of His Faith would be established on Mount Carmel. The supreme governing body of His Faith, the Universal House of Justice, which is democratically elected every five years, now directs the affairs of His Faith. Bahá'u'lláh states that this institution is divinely guided and protected. Its seat is a beautiful structure situated within magnificent gardens on Mount Carmel. It is visited by peoples of all nations.

Isaiah

It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing: the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon, they shall see the glory of the LORD, and the excellency of our God.

Isaiah 35:2

The Plain of Sharon spoken of by Isaiah lies at the foot of Mount Carmel. This prophecy was fulfilled by Bahá'u'lláh's visit to that mountain.

For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called

Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.

Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.

Isaiah 9:6-7

These verses are understood by Christians as a prophetic reference to Christ. However, if we consider it carefully, we see that it does not refer to His First Coming, but rather to His Return.

Jesus made it clear that the government was not to rest upon *his shoulder*, for He said: *Render therefore unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's; and unto God the things that are God's* (Matt. 22:21). He also said: *My kingdom is not of this world* (John 18:36). Although Jesus did not ordain any administrative order by which His Faith would govern humanity, He promised that the Kingdom of God would be established on earth:

Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.

Matthew 6:10

Bahá'u'lláh prescribes the reorganization of society through the principle of the oneness of mankind. The institutions He has ordained are for the purpose of building and maintaining unity so that the Will of God may be *done in earth*. Bahá'í national and local spiritual assemblies have been established all over the world and are administering to the affairs of their communities. There is no clergy in the Bahá'í Faith. Bahá'ís are working towards the transformation of society in villages and neighborhoods through programs aimed at the development of the devotional character of the community, the spiritual education of children, the directing of the energy of the youth towards the construction of a better world, and the development of the capacity of all peoples for service.

Isaiah's prophecy uses the title *Counsellor* in reference to Christ upon His Return. Bahá'u'lláh refers to Himself as "Counsellor" and throughout His Writings He counsels humanity:

Hearken unto the Voice of this benevolent Counsellor, calling aloud, unveiled and manifest, before the faces of kings and their

subjects, and summon the people of the world, one and all, unto Him Who is the Lord of Eternity.

Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 44

The well-being of mankind, its peace and security, are unattainable unless and until its unity is firmly established. This unity can never be achieved so long as the counsels which the Pen of the Most High hath revealed are suffered to pass unheeded.

Gleanings, CXXXI

Be ye as the fingers of one hand, the members of one body. Thus counselleth you the Pen of Revelation, if ye be of them that believe.

Gleanings, LXXII

O Son of Spirit! My first counsel is this: Possess a pure, kindly and radiant heart, that thine may be a sovereignty ancient, imperishable and everlasting.

Hidden Words, Arabic No. 1

Isaiah's prophecy refers to *the everlasting Father*. In His Tablet to Pope Pius IX, Bahá'u'lláh refers to His coming in the station of the "Father":

The Word which the Son concealed is made manifest. It hath been sent down in the form of the human temple in this day. Blessed be the Lord Who is the Father! He, verily, is come unto the nations in His most great majesty. Turn your faces towards Him, O concourse of the righteous... This is the day whereon the Rock (Peter) crieth out and shouteth, and celebrateth the praise of its Lord, the All-Possessing, the Most High, saying: `Lo! The Father is come, and that which ye were promised in the Kingdom is fulfilled!...' My body longeth for the cross, and Mine head waiteth the thrust of the spear, in the path of the All-Merciful, that the world may be purged from its transgressions...

Proclamation of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 84-85

Isaiah's prophecy also mentions the title *Prince of Peace*. The establishment of peace was not the mission of the First Coming. Jesus's own words attest to this:

Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword.

Matthew 10:34

Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you, Nay; but rather division:

Luke 12:51

The mission of Bahá'u'lláh, on the other hand, was precisely to bring peace to the world. He writes:

O rulers of the earth! Be reconciled among yourselves, that ye may need no more armaments save in a measure to safeguard your territories and dominions. Beware lest ye disregard the counsel of the All-Knowing, the Faithful.

Be united, O kings of the earth, for thereby will the tempest of discord be stilled amongst you, and your peoples find rest, if ye be of them that comprehend. Should anyone among you take up arms against another, rise ye all against him, for this is naught but manifest justice.

The Promised Day is Come, p. 27

The time must come when the imperative necessity for the holding of a vast, an all-embracing assemblage of men will be universally realized. The rulers and kings of the earth must needs attend it, and, participating in its deliberations, must consider such ways and means as will lay the foundations of the world's Great Peace amongst men. Such a peace demandeth that the Great Powers should resolve, for the sake of the tranquillity of the peoples of the earth, to be fully reconciled among themselves. Should any king take up arms against another, all should unitedly arise and prevent him. If this be done, the nations of the world will no longer require any armaments, except for the purpose of preserving the security of their realms and of maintaining internal order within their territories. This will ensure the peace and composure of every people, government and nation.

Gleanings, CXVII

We desire but the good of the world and the happiness of the nations; yet they deem Us a stirrer up of strife and sedition worthy of

bondage and banishment... That all nations should become one in faith and all men as brothers; that the bonds of affection and unity between the sons of men should be strengthened; that diversity of religion should cease, and differences of race be annulled—what harm is there in this?... Yet so it shall be; these fruitless strifes, these ruinous wars shall pass away, and the 'Most Great Peace' shall come... Yet do We see your kings and rulers lavishing their treasures more freely on means for the destruction of the human race than on that which would conduce to the happiness of mankind... These strifes and this bloodshed and discord must cease, and all men be as one kindred and one family... Let not a man glory in this, that he loves his country; let him rather glory in this, that he loves his kind.

Proclamation of Bahá'u'lláh, p. VIII

Bahá'u'lláh acknowledges that Isaiah wrote of Him:

This is an Announcement wherewith the hearts of the Prophets and Messengers have rejoiced. This is the One Whom the heart of the world remembereth, and is promised in the Books of God, the Mighty, the All-Wise. ... I am the One Whom the tongue of Isaiah hath extolled, the One with Whose name both the Torah and the Evangel were adorned.

The Promised Day is Come, p. 34

Peruse that which Isaiah hath spoken in His Book. He saith: 'Get thee up into the high mountain, O Zion, that bringest good tidings; lift up thy voice with strength, O Jerusalem, that bringest good tidings. Lift it up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah: "Behold your God! Behold the Lord God will come with strong hand, and His arm shall rule for Him." This Day all the signs have appeared. A Great City hath descended from heaven, and Zion trembleth and exulteth with joy at the Revelation of God, for it hath heard the Voice of God on every side.'

The Promised Day is Come, p. 77

For a complete discussion of the fulfillment of prophecy by Bahá'u'lláh, the reader may want to consider the following works:

Every Eye Shall See, by Gary Matthews

The Challenge of Bahá'u'lláh, by Gary Matthews

He Cometh With Clouds, by Gary Matthews

I Shall Come Again, by Hushidar Motlagh

Lord of Lords, by Hushidar Motlagh

King of Kings, by Hushidar Motlagh

A Thief in the Night, by William Sears

The Prophecies of Jesus, by Michael Sours

Chapter 16: The Book Unsealed

The Bible states that the meaning of scripture is sealed until the last times:

And he said, Go thy way, Daniel: for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end.

Daniel 12:9

Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God.

1 Corinthians 4:5

The New Testament tells us Who will open the seals:

And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof?

And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof.

Revelation 5:2,5

Bahá'u'lláh is a direct descendant of King David and from the tribe of Judah (see Chapter 17).

Bahá'u'lláh has unsealed *the book* with one of His major Writings, The Book of Certitude. The circumstances of the revelation of this book are extraordinary. Revealed in Baghdad about two years before His exile to Constantinople, the book was a response to questions posed to Bahá'u'lláh, Who wrote it within the space of forty-eight hours. This book "broke the 'seals' of the 'Book' referred to by Daniel, and disclosed the meaning of the 'words' destined to remain 'closed up' till the 'time of the end.'" (GPB p. 139)

In this book, Bahá'u'lláh proclaims that there is only one God, "unknowable, inaccessible, the source of all Revelation, eternal, omniscient, omnipresent and almighty," asserts that Divine revelation has been progressive throughout the ages, "affirms the unity of the Prophets, the universality of their Message, the identity of their fundamental teachings, the sanctity of their scriptures, and the twofold character of their stations," refers to and explains the symbolic passages of the New Testament, "enumerates the essential prerequisites for the attainment by every true seeker of the object of his quest; ... upholds the purity and innocence of the Virgin Mary ... Well may it be claimed that of all the books revealed by the Author of the Bahá'í Revelation, this Book alone, by sweeping away the age-long barriers that have so insurmountably separated the great religions of the world, has laid down a broad and unassailable foundation for the complete and permanent reconciliation of their followers." (GPB p. 139)

To see how Bahá'u'lláh explains the meaning of scripture in The Book of Certitude, let us look at two verses from Matthew in which Jesus speaks of His Return, followed by Bahá'u'lláh's Words.

Words of Jesus:

Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken:

Matthew 24:29

Words of Bahá'u'lláh:

And now, concerning His words – 'The sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give light, and the stars shall fall from heaven.' By the terms 'sun' and 'moon,' mentioned in the writings of the Prophets of God, is not meant solely the sun and moon of the visible universe. Nay rather, manifold are the meanings they have intended for these terms. In every instance they have attached to them a particular significance. Thus, by the 'sun' in one sense is meant those Suns of Truth Who rise from the dayspring of ancient glory, and fill the world with a liberal effusion of grace from on high. These Suns of Truth are the universal Manifestations of God in the worlds of His attributes and names. Even as the visible sun that assisteth, as decreed by God, the true One, the Adored, in the development of all

earthly things, such as the trees, the fruits, and colours thereof, the minerals of the earth, and all that may be witnessed in the world of creation, so do the divine Luminaries, by their loving care and educative influence, cause the trees of divine unity, the fruits of His oneness, the leaves of detachment, the blossoms of knowledge and certitude, and the myrtles of wisdom and utterance, to exist and be made manifest. Thus it is that through the rise of these Luminaries of God the world is made new, the waters of everlasting life stream forth, the billows of loving-kindness surge, the clouds of grace are gathered, and the breeze of bounty bloweth upon all created things. It is the warmth that these Luminaries of God generate, and the undying fires they kindle, which cause the light of the love of God to burn fiercely in the heart of humanity. It is through the abundant grace of these Symbols of Detachment that the Spirit of life everlasting is breathed into the bodies of the dead. Assuredly the visible sun is but a sign of the splendour of that Day-star of Truth, that Sun Which can never have a peer, a likeness, or rival. Through Him all things live, move, and have their being. Through His grace they are made manifest, and unto Him they all return. From Him all things have sprung, and unto the treasures of His revelation they all have repaired. From Him all created things did proceed, and to the depositories of His law they did revert.

The Book of Certitude, p. 33-34

Hence, it is clear and manifest that by the words 'the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven' is intended the waywardness of the divines, and the annulment of laws firmly established by divine Revelation, all of which, in symbolic language, have been foreshadowed by the Manifestation of God.

The Book of Certitude, p. 41

O concourse of bishops! Ye are the stars of the heaven of My knowledge. My mercy desireth not that ye should fall upon the earth. My justice, however, declareth: 'This is that which the Son [Jesus] hath decreed.' And whatsoever hath proceeded out of His blameless, His truth-speaking, trustworthy mouth, can never be altered.

Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 14

Words of Jesus:

And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

Matthew 24:30

Words of Bahá'u'lláh:

And now, concerning His words: 'And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven.' By these words it is meant that when the sun of the heavenly teachings hath been eclipsed, the stars of the divinely-established laws have fallen, and the moon of true knowledge—the educator of mankind—hath been obscured; when the standards of guidance and felicity have been reversed, and the morn of truth and righteousness hath sunk in night, then shall the sign of the Son of man appear in heaven. By 'heaven' is meant the visible heaven, inasmuch as when the hour draweth nigh on which the Day-star of the heaven of justice shall be made manifest, and the Ark of divine guidance shall sail upon the sea of glory, a star will appear in the heaven, heralding unto its people the advent of that most great light. In like manner, in the invisible heaven a star shall be made manifest who, unto the peoples of the earth, shall act as a harbinger of the break of that true and exalted Morn. These twofold signs, in the visible and the invisible heaven, have announced the Revelation of each of the Prophets of God, as is commonly believed.

The Book of Certitude, p. 61-62

And now regarding His words, that the Son of man shall 'come in the clouds of heaven.' By the term 'clouds' is meant those things that are contrary to the ways and desires of men. ... These 'clouds' signify, in one sense, the annulment of laws, the abrogation of former Dispensations, the repeal of rituals and customs current amongst men, the exalting of the illiterate faithful above the learned opposers of the Faith. In another sense, they mean the appearance of that immortal Beauty in the image of mortal man, with such human limitations as eating and drinking, poverty and riches, glory and abasement, sleeping and waking, and such other things as cast

doubt in the minds of men, and cause them to turn away. All such veils are symbolically referred to as 'clouds.'

The Book of Certitude, p. 71-72

Were these men, therefore, to discover suddenly that a Man, Who hath been living in their midst, Who, with respect to every human limitation, hath been their equal, had risen to abolish every established principle imposed by their Faith—principles by which for centuries they have been disciplined, and every opposer and denier of which they have come to regard as infidel, profligate and wicked—they would of a certainty be veiled and hindered from acknowledging His truth. Such things are as 'clouds' that veil the eyes.

The Book of Certitude, p. 74

Bahá'u'lláh has shown us how we might understand the symbolic verses in the Bible, if we take the time and care to study and ponder them in light of His Words. He has not explained every single verse of the Bible—the Bible does not tell us that the Spirit of Truth will explain everything; it says that He will **guide** us. Understanding does not come to us without effort on our part. Referring to *The Book of Certitude*, Bahá'u'lláh states:

In fact, all the Scriptures and the mysteries thereof are condensed into this brief account. So much so, that were a person to ponder it a while in his heart, he would discover from all that hath been said the mysteries of the Words of God, and would apprehend the meaning of whatever hath been manifested by that ideal King.

The Book of Certitude, p. 237

It is not only in *The Book of Certitude* that Bahá'u'lláh explains the meaning of Scripture and helps us to understand it. Many of His other Writings shed light on the spiritual significance of the Word of God. Here is an example in which Bahá'u'lláh addresses the meaning of certain passages from the Book of Revelation:

Verses from Revelation:

His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire;

And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters.

And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp twoedged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength.

Revelation 1:14-16

And unto the angel of the church in Thyatira write; These things saith the Son of God, who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet are like fine brass.

Revelation 2:18

And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.

Revelation 19:15

An explanation by Bahá'u'lláh from a book entitled *Gems of Divine Mysteries*:

Meditate then upon the utterance of one of the Prophets as He intimated to the souls of men, through veiled allusions and hidden symbols, the glad-tidings of the One Who was to come after Him, that thou mayest know of a certainty that their words are inscrutable to all save those who are endued with an understanding heart. He saith: 'His eyes were as a flame of fire,' and 'brass-like were His feet,' and 'out of His mouth goeth a two-edged sword.' How could these words be literally interpreted? Were anyone to appear with all these signs, he would assuredly not be human. And how could any soul seek his company? Nay, should he appear in one city, even the inhabitants of the next would flee from him, nor would any soul dare approach him! Yet, shouldst thou reflect upon these statements, thou wouldst find them to be of such surpassing eloquence and clarity as to mark the loftiest heights of utterance and the epitome of wisdom. Methinks it is from them that the suns of eloquence have appeared and the stars of clarity have dawned forth and shone resplendent. ...

Know then that He who uttered these words in the realms of glory meant to describe the attributes of the One Who is to come in such veiled and enigmatic terms as to elude the understanding of the people of error. Now, when He saith: 'His eyes were as a flame of fire,' He alludeth but to the keenness of sight and acuteness of vision of the Promised One, Who with His eyes burneth away every veil and

covering, maketh known the eternal mysteries in the contingent world, and distinguisheth the faces that are obscured with the dust of hell from those that shine with the light of paradise. Were His eyes not made of the blazing fire of God, how could He consume every veil and burn away all that the people possess? How could He behold the signs of God in the Kingdom of His names and in the world of creation? How could He see all things with the all-perceiving eye of God? Thus have we conferred upon Him a penetrating vision in this day. Would that ye believe in the verses of God! For, indeed, what fire is fiercer than this flame that shineth in the Sinai of His eyes, whereby He consumeth all that hath veiled the peoples of the world? ...

As to the words 'brass-like were His feet,' by this is meant His constancy upon hearing the call of God that commandeth Him: 'Be thou steadfast as thou hast been bidden.' He shall so persevere in the Cause of God, and evince such firmness in the path of His might, that even if all the powers of earth and heaven were to deny Him, He would not waver in the proclamation of His Cause, nor flee from His command in the promulgation of His Laws. Nay rather, He will stand as firm as the highest mountains and the loftiest peaks. He will remain immovable in His obedience to God and steadfast in revealing His Cause and proclaiming His Word. No obstacle will hinder Him, nor will the censure of the froward deter Him or the repudiation of the infidels cause Him to waver. All the hatred, the rejection, the iniquity, and the unbelief that He witnesseth serve but to strengthen His love for God, to augment the yearning of His heart, to heighten the exultation of His soul, and to fill His breast with passionate devotion. Hast thou ever seen in this world brass stronger, or blade sharper, or mountain more unyielding than this? He shall verily stand upon His feet to confront all the inhabitants of the earth, and will fear no one, notwithstanding that which, as thou well knowest, the people are wont to commit. ...

And further He saith: 'Out of his mouth goeth a two-edged sword.' Know thou that since the sword is an instrument that divideth and cleaveth asunder, and since there proceedeth from the mouth of the Prophets and the Chosen Ones of God that which separateth the believer from the infidel and the lover from the beloved, this term hath been so employed, and apart from this dividing and separating no other meaning is intended. Thus, when He Who is the Primal Point

and the eternal Sun desireth, by the leave of God, to gather together all creation, to raise them up from the graves of their own selves, and to divide them one from another, He shall pronounce but one verse from Him, and this verse will distinguish truth from error from this day unto the Day of Resurrection.

Gems of Divine Mysteries. P. 52-56

Bahá'u'lláh's spiritual interpretations are in full harmony with the Bible. Let us look at one example of this.

The following prophecy of Joel from the Old Testament speaks of great outward signs. Although these outward signs did not occur, the New Testament states that this prophecy was fulfilled during the time of Jesus.

Prophecy of Joel:

And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions:

And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit.

And I will shew wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke.

The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the LORD come.

Joel 2:28-31

In the Book of Acts, Peter refers to this prophecy and states that it was fulfilled. We know that Peter must have understood the prophecy spiritually, because many of the signs mentioned by Joel were not fulfilled literally:

But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judæa, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words:

For these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day.

But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel;

And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters

shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams:

And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy:

And I will shew wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke:

The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come.

Acts 2:14-20

Knowledge Shall be Increased

A fascinating aspect of the unsealing of *the book* is given to us in the book of Daniel, wherein it states:

But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased.

Daniel 12:4

These words of Daniel have been fulfilled. Through the coming of Bahá'u'lláh, like a spiritual sun rising, the world has experienced a tremendous increase in knowledge. More people travel *to and fro* in this day than at any other time in history.

Jesus uses the analogy of the physical growth of a tree to explain how we will be helped to recognize the time of His Return:

Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh:

So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors.

Matthew 24:32

When do we see that this change referred to by Daniel and Jesus began?

An astonishing fact of history is that the famous first message sent by Samuel B. Morse on his newly-constructed telegraph system, which ran between Washington D.C. and Baltimore, was sent on May 24, 1844—one day after the Bahá'í Faith commenced in Persia. The words chosen for that telegraphic message were quoted from the Book of Numbers, 23:23: *What*

hath God wrought! Morse was a born-again Christian. He felt "the assurance that his Creator had chosen him to be a great benefactor to mankind." (YL p. 113) His invention anchored the age of electronic communications. It was given to mankind by God to provide the means whereby humanity could live as *one fold* (John 10:16), and to enable the birth of a world civilization wherein humanity could freely communicate.

Chapter 17: Bahá'u'lláh is a Descendant of King David

The Old Testament states that the Messiah will be a descendent of David. Jesus states that He was:

I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star.

Revelation 22:16

Bahá'u'lláh also states that He is a descendant of David:

The Most Great Law is come, and the Ancient Beauty ruleth upon the throne of David. Thus hath My Pen spoken that which the histories of bygone ages have related.

Proclamation of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 89

How is it that Bahá'u'lláh, Who was born in Persia, could be a descendant of King David, who was born in Bethlehem and died in Jerusalem? The answer to this question is that after the time of King David, the Jews were exiled eastward, from their home in Israel to the city of Babylon. This fact of history provided the circumstances for the fulfillment of this prophecy.

Bahá'u'lláh came from a noble family descended from the last of the Sásánian Kings of ancient Persia. The patriarch of this dynasty was named Sásán. Sásán's father was Cyrus the Great, who is mentioned in the book of Ezra:

Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, The LORD God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth; and he hath charged me to build him an house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah.

Ezra 1:2

Sásán's mother was a Jewish woman named Rahab. Rahab was the sister of Zorobabel, who is mentioned in both of the genealogies of Jesus that are given in the New Testament. Matthew and Luke state:

And after they were brought to Babylon, Jechonias begat Salathiel; and Salathiel begat Zorobabel.

Matthew 1:12

Which was the son of Joanna, which was the son of Rhesa, which was the son of Zorobabel, which was the son of Salathiel, which was the son of Neri.

Luke 3:27

Thus, Cyrus the Great's wife was a descendant of King David of Judah. Bahá'u'lláh is, therefore, a direct bloodline descendant of David, fulfilling the prophecies that the Messiah will be of the seed of David, son of Jesse.

And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots:

And the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD;

And shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the LORD: and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears:

But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked.

And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins. ...

And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious.

Isaiah, 11:1-5,11

A detailed description of the lineage of Bahá'u'lláh showing His relation to King David is presented in the Appendix.

Chapter 18: Prophecies Given by Bahá'u'lláh

In the Bible we are told that God knows the future and that He will cause whatever events are necessary in order to make His prophecies come true:

I am God, and there is none like me.

I make known the end from the beginning, from ancient times, what is still to come. I say: My purpose will stand, and I will do all that I please.

From the east I summon a bird of prey; from a far-off land, a man to fulfill my purpose. What I have said, that will I bring about; what I have planned, that will I do.

Isaiah 46:9-11 (NIV)

And in the verses below, we see that if the predictions of a prophet do not come true, then that prophet is false:

And if thou say in thine heart, How shall we know the word which the LORD hath not spoken?

When a prophet speaketh in the name of the LORD, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the LORD hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously: thou shalt not be afraid of him.

Deuteronomy 18:21-22

Jesus also confirms the importance of prophetic knowledge when He says *and he will shew you things to come* (John 16:13).

No one can predict future events with complete accuracy unless He is of God. And this is what Bahá'u'lláh has done:

We have laid bare the divine mysteries and in most explicit language foretold future events.

Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 241

Most of the things which have come to pass on this earth have been announced and prophesied by the Most Sublime Pen. ...

All that hath been sent down hath and will come to pass, word for word, upon earth. No possibility is left for anyone either to turn aside or protest.

Epistle to the Son of the Wolf, p. 148, 150

Bahá'u'lláh's letters to the kings and rulers of the world, whom He addressed collectively and individually, fulfilled these words of the Isaiah:

And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people.

Isaiah 2:4

And it shall come to pass in that day, that the LORD shall punish the host of the high ones that are on high, and the kings of the earth upon the earth.

Isaiah 24:21

From His prison, Bahá'u'lláh wrote:

O kings of the earth! He Who is the sovereign Lord of all is come. The Kingdom is God's, the omnipotent Protector, the Self-Subsisting. Worship none but God, and, with radiant hearts, lift up your faces unto your Lord, the Lord of all names. This is a Revelation to which whatever ye possess can never be compared, could ye but know it. We see you rejoicing in that which ye have amassed for others, and shutting out yourselves from the worlds which naught except My Guarded Tablet can reckon. The treasures ye have laid up have drawn you far away from your ultimate objective. This ill beseemeth you, could ye but understand it. Wash your hearts from all earthly defilements, and hasten to enter the Kingdom of your Lord, the Creator of earth and heaven, Who caused the world to tremble, and all its peoples to wail, except them that have renounced all things and clung to that which the Hidden Tablet hath ordained.

Proclamation of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 5

Not one of the rulers of His day was found to investigate His claim. He warned, and then predicted, the downfall of those who turned a deaf ear to His words.

Below are brief descriptions of some of Bahá'u'lláh's prophecies.⁵

Fall of Napoleon III and the loss of his empire

Napoleon III of France was the most prominent and influential monarch of the western world at the time of Bahá'u'lláh. In Bahá'u'lláh's first Tablet to him, He proclaimed that He was from God and commanded the emperor to *give ear to His Voice*. Napoleon is reported to have flung down the Tablet and said "If this man is God, I am two gods!" (PDC p. 52)

Because of this, Bahá'u'lláh wrote a second Tablet to Napoleon in which He states:

Hadst thou been sincere in thy words, thou wouldst have not cast behind thy back the Book of God, when it was sent unto thee by Him Who is the Almighty, the All-Wise. We have proved thee through it, and found thee other than that which thou didst profess. Arise, and make amends for that which escaped thee. Erelong the world and all that thou possessest will perish, and the kingdom will remain unto God, thy Lord and the Lord of thy fathers of old. It behoveth thee not to conduct thine affairs according to the dictates of thy desires. Fear the sighs of this Wronged One, and shield Him from the darts of such as act unjustly.

For what thou hast done, thy kingdom shall be thrown into confusion, and thine empire shall pass from thine hands, as a punishment for that which thou hast wrought. Then wilt thou know how thou hast plainly erred. Commotions shall seize all the people in that land, unless thou arisest to help this Cause, and followest Him Who is the Spirit of God in this, the Straight Path. Hath thy pomp made thee proud? By My Life! It shall not endure; nay, it shall soon pass away, unless thou holdest fast to this firm Cord. We see abasement hastening after thee, whilst thou art of the heedless.

The Summons of the Lord of Hosts, p. 72

5 For those interested in further study, thirty prophecies of Bahá'u'lláh and their fulfillment are discussed with wonderful succinctness and clarity in a book entitled *Every Eye Shall See*, by Gary Matthews. Two other books by the same author, *The Challenge of Bahá'u'lláh* and *He Cometh With Clouds*, fully document the circumstances by which each one of these prophecies has been dramatically fulfilled.

Bahá'u'lláh wrote these words in 1869. Less than a year later, Napoleon was defeated in what was, at that time, the greatest surrender recorded in modern history.

The destruction of the German Empire in two wars on German soil

In His Writings, Bahá'u'lláh addresses William I, the newly acclaimed emperor of a unified Germany, and tells him to hearken unto His Voice, the Voice of God, Himself. Bahá'u'lláh bids William to remember Napoleon, the one who *cast the Tablet of God behind him*, and to think deeply about the end that he suffered:

Do thou remember the one whose power transcended thy power, and whose station excelled thy station. Where is he? Whither are gone the things he possessed? Take warning, and be not of them that are fast asleep. He it was who cast the Tablet of God behind him when We made known unto him what the hosts of tyranny had caused Us to suffer. Wherefore, disgrace assailed him from all sides, and he went down to dust in great loss. Think deeply, O King, concerning him, and concerning them who, like unto thee, have conquered cities and ruled over men. The All-Merciful brought them down from their palaces to their graves. Be warned, be of them who reflect. ...

O banks of the Rhine! We have seen you covered with gore, inasmuch as the swords of retribution were drawn against you; and you shall have another turn. And We hear the lamentations of Berlin, though she be today in conspicuous glory.

Kitáb-i-Aqdas, p. 51, 53

World War I and World War II devastated the German empire, fulfilling this prophecy.

Fall and destruction of the Ottoman Empire, the Sultanate, and the Caliphate

During Bahá'u'lláh's lifetime, Persia was under the rule of the Ottoman Empire, whose capital was Constantinople. At the instigation of the Persian government, the Ottoman rulers exiled Bahá'u'lláh four times, without cause, without even investigating the false accusations made against Him. The tyrannical Sultan Abdu'l-'Aziz issued three of the four decrees exiling

Bahá'u'lláh, subjecting Him and His Faith to great cruelty and suffering. At that time, the Ottoman Empire had reached its sixth century. The sultan ruled the Ottoman Empire through the institution of the Sultanate, and the Faith of Islam through the Caliphate.

Bahá'u'lláh predicted the downfall of the sultan and his ministers, the destruction of Constantinople, the future sufferings of the Ottoman Empire and its eventual extinction, and the fall of the Caliphate.

Bahá'u'lláh summoned the sultan with these words:

Hearken, O king! to the speech of Him that speaketh the truth, Him that doth not ask thee to recompense Him with the things God hath chosen to bestow upon thee, Him Who unerringly treadeth the Straight Path ... Observe, O king, with thine inmost heart and with thy whole being, the precepts of God, and walk not in the paths of the oppressor ... Place not thy reliance on thy treasures. Put thy whole confidence in the grace of God, thy Lord ... Overstep not the bounds of moderation, and deal justly with them that serve thee ... Set before thine eyes God's unerring Balance, and, as one standing in His presence, weigh in that Balance thine actions, every day, every moment of thy life. Bring thyself to account ere thou art summoned to a reckoning, on the Day when no man shall have strength to stand for fear of God, the Day when the hearts of the heedless ones shall be made to tremble.

The day is approaching, when the Land of Mystery [Adrianople], and what is beside it shall be changed, and shall pass out of the hands of the king, and commotions shall appear, and the voice of lamentation shall be raised, and the evidences of mischief shall be revealed on all sides, and confusion shall spread by reason of that which hath befallen these captives at the hands of the hosts of oppression. The course of things shall be altered, and conditions shall wax so grievous, that the very sands on the desolate hills will moan, and the trees on the mountain will weep, and blood will flow out of all things. Then wilt thou behold the people in sore distress.

Soon, will He seize you in His wrathful anger, and sedition will be stirred up in your midst, and your dominions will be disrupted. Then will ye bewail and lament, and will find none to help or succor you... Be expectant, however, for the wrath of God is ready to overtake

you. Erelong will ye behold that which hath been sent down from the Pen of My command.

The Promised Day is Come, p. 60-61

All of the dire warnings that Bahá'u'lláh issued came true. A remarkable series of calamities—wars, disease, revolutions, massacres—befell the people and government. Eight years after the final exile of Bahá'u'lláh to the prison city of 'Akká, Sultan 'Abdu'l-Aziz was overthrown. Four days after this, he was assassinated. The succession of disasters that bankrupted and devastated the empire finally resulted in its extinction. By 1923, having entered its seventh century, the Ottoman Empire was no more. The following year, the Caliphate was abolished.

Downfall of the Shah of Iran and of the Qajar Dynasty

The ruler of Iran during Bahá'u'lláh's lifetime was Násiri'd-Dín Shah. His reign was stained by many cruel atrocities, including the execution of Bahá'u'lláh's Herald; the imprisonment of Bahá'u'lláh; His exiles to Baghdad, Constantinople, Adrianople and 'Akká; and the torture and death of thousands of Bahá'ís in an attempt to strangle the Faith in the land of its birth. To him Bahá'u'lláh wrote:

O King! I was but a man like others, asleep upon My couch, when lo, the breezes of the All-Glorious were wafted over Me, and taught Me the knowledge of all that hath been. This thing is not from Me, but from One Who is Almighty and All-Knowing. And He bade Me lift up My voice between earth and heaven, and for this there befell Me what hath caused the tears of every man of understanding to flow. The learning current amongst men I studied not; their schools I entered not. Ask of the city wherein I dwelt, that thou mayest be well assured that I am not of them who speak falsely. This is but a leaf which the winds of the will of thy Lord, the Almighty, the All-Praised, have stirred. Can it be still when the tempestuous winds are blowing? Nay, by Him Who is the Lord of all Names and Attributes! They move it as they list. The evanescent is as nothing before Him Who is the Ever-Abiding. His all-compelling summons hath reached Me, and caused Me to speak His praise amidst all people. I was indeed as one dead when His behest was uttered. The hand of the will of thy Lord, the Compassionate, the Merciful, transformed Me.

The Summons of the Lord of Hosts, p. 98

Bahá'u'lláh denounced the shah as the *Prince of Oppressors* and wrote that soon he would be made *an object-lesson for the world* (GPB, p. 225).

In 1896, Násiri'd-Dín Shah was assassinated on the eve of his jubilee—a celebration intended to be so elaborate that it would have been regarded as the greatest day in the history of his nation. After his death, the dynasty that he represented steadily declined and ended in 1925.

Success of Queen Victoria's Reign

Bahá'u'lláh praised Queen Victoria for her actions. In His tablet to her, He wrote:

We have been informed that thou hast forbidden the trading in slaves, both men and women. ...

We have also heard that thou hast entrusted the reins of counsel into the hands of the representatives of the people. Thou, indeed, hast done well, for thereby the foundations of the edifice of thine affairs will be strengthened, and the hearts of all that are beneath thy shadow, whether high or low, will be tranquillized.

The Summons of the Lord of Hosts, p. 89-90

It is said that Queen Victoria, upon reading the Tablet revealed for her by Bahá'u'lláh, remarked: "If this is of God, it will endure; if not, it can do no harm." (PDC, p. 65)

Not only was Queen Victoria's reign prosperous, but it represents one of the longest reigns in modern history, for she was in the 64th year of her reign when she passed away. And, although not an absolute monarchy, the British Crown still endures. It is astonishing to note that Queen Elizabeth II is the constitutional monarch of sixteen sovereign states known as the Commonwealth realms. Bahá'u'lláh's words of praise to Queen Victoria were prophetic, indeed.

The Bahá'í Faith Will Remain United

Bahá'u'lláh proclaims that this is the *Day which shall never be followed by night, the Springtime which autumn will never overtake* (GPB, p. 99), These are references to the fact that His Faith will never suffer from division.

Bahá'u'lláh has protected His Faith from division by the power of the Covenant which He has established in His Will, written with His own hand in the clearest terms. In it, He states that the authority to interpret His Word and maintain the unity of His Faith would pass to His eldest son, 'Abdu'l-Bahá. Bahá'u'lláh also prescribed the institutions that would govern the affairs of His Faith. In this way, He has protected His Faith from the man-made dogmas and institutions that have been the cause of conflict and division in past ages.

Although since the Faith began there have been Bahá'ís who, driven by ego, have attempted to gather their own following, and there have been persons outside the Faith who would hope for the Bahá'í Faith to split, nothing more than momentary breaches of unity have ever occurred, and the Bahá'í Faith has continued to grow, singular and unimpeded, for almost 170 years.

* * *

In addition to the specific prophecies made by Bahá'u'lláh, some of which are discussed above, there is another class of "prophecy" made by Bahá'u'lláh which should be mentioned here: His vision of the future of society.

To put into perspective Bahá'u'lláh's insight we must consider that He was born and grew up in a society that in many ways was profoundly superstitious, prejudiced, and fanatical. Bahá'u'lláh never attended school. He spent most of His life as an exile and prisoner of the Ottoman Empire, experiencing the cruelest deprivation. All of His Writings were revealed spontaneously and with great rapidity—either written by His own hand or recorded by one of His followers as He revealed them. His Words were never premeditated, never revised or corrected, never changed. All of His Words—even entire books—were revealed in final form from beginning to end. Indeed, He was like a perfect mirror reflecting the Words revealed by God. Once the light of the sun strikes a mirror and is reflected, there is no way to take back the light. And so it was with Bahá'u'lláh's Words; once they were uttered, they were final. He wrote extensively—the equivalent of one hundred volumes over a period of forty years. Many of His writings on the prerequisites for the establishment of a thriving, spiritual world civilization were so far-sighted that it has only been with the passage of time that the

world has appreciated their value. Some of His Teachings are still considered utopian, and will only be realized after mankind endures further suffering because of its neglect of spiritual values.

What did Bahá'u'lláh have to say about the future?

He predicted the eventual unification of the human race. The principle enshrined in His words *Ye are the fruits of one tree, and the leaves of one branch* (GWB, CXXXII) is increasingly used by society at large as the standard by which all efforts at social progress are measured. His proclamation of the oneness of humankind, uttered at a time when it was common for certain peoples to think that others were sub-human, has since been confirmed by every human science: biology, anatomy, genetics, sociology, anthropology, physiology, and psychology, to name some.

Bahá'u'lláh predicted the establishment of world peace after a period of great suffering. He wrote that peace will come in two stages, which He referred to as the Lesser Peace and the Most Great Peace. After the lack of response to His message, Bahá'u'lláh admonished the rulers:

Now that ye have refused the Most Great Peace, hold ye fast unto this the Lesser Peace, that haply ye may in some degree better your own condition and that of your dependents.

The Promised Day is Come, p. 27

The Bahá'í Writings state that the Lesser Peace, in which the nations of the world will reluctantly implement Bahá'u'lláh's principle of collective security—unaware that the guiding Hand of God is directing their destiny—will come about as a result of immense suffering which humanity will bring upon itself. The Lesser Peace will represent the end of war, but will not represent an end to mankind's suffering, which will continue to deepen because of its lack of spirituality. The Most Great Peace, on the other hand, will be the result of the maturation of humankind consequent to its spiritualization over a long period of time.

Bahá'u'lláh predicted the establishment of the full equality of women and men. His teaching that *women and men have been and will always be equal in the sight of God* (W, p. 54) was revealed at a time when women in any country didn't even have the right to vote, when they were oppressed in one form or another in every nation. But now, increasingly, this principle is

recognized as vital to the future of humanity. The Bahá'í Writings state that this principle is one of the most important, though less acknowledged, prerequisites to the establishment of world peace, for it is only when women are accorded full participation in the life of society that their collective desire for peace will be realized.

Bahá'u'lláh predicted that the world would one day adopt an auxiliary language to facilitate communication among peoples in order to remedy the fundamental lack of communication which undermines efforts towards peace. He wrote:

The day is approaching when all the peoples of the world will have adopted one universal language and one common script. When this is achieved, to whatsoever city a man may journey, it shall be as if he were entering his own home.

Proclamation of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 115

Although when Bahá'u'lláh wrote these words, the adoption of a world language seemed inconceivable, it now appears inevitable.

Bahá'u'lláh predicted the explosion of scientific knowledge. He stated: *In the days to come, ye will, verily, behold things of which ye have never heard before, and referred to the most marvelous sciences that would be manifest ... in the course of time at the bidding of Him Who is the Almighty, the All-Knowing* (GWB, LXXIV). The stupendous advances in science that have occurred since the time of His statements on this subject have all confirmed His prophetic knowledge.

Chapter 19: Christ and Bahá'u'lláh

Like Jesus, Bahá'u'lláh announced that He was from God. He was opposed by the people and religious leaders of His time who subjected Him to the greatest cruelties. He was fearless and steadfast in the face of this persecution and did not fall short in His love for God. Like Jesus, He never attended any school, yet possessed a knowledge and wisdom surpassing that of all others. His Words and sacrificial love inspired and transformed those who recognized Him. He raised up a community of followers that have gone out into the world to give their lives and their lifetimes to spread His message of redemption. Like Jesus, He appeared to a people who would rather ask for a miracle than follow One Whose message was a call to humility and self-sacrifice. He acknowledged the Prophets of the past, and raised the standard of Faith with new guidance and teachings. Like Jesus, He was recognized by only a few at the beginning, and though these few were opposed and oppressed by powerful religions and governments and scorned by the learned and wealthy, and though they were outwardly weak and insignificant, nothing could stop the onward march of His Faith from enveloping the world. Like Jesus, He lived a sinless life of self-sacrifice and resignation to the Will of God, gaining nothing for Himself except the good pleasure of God.

Over twenty thousand souls have sacrificed their lives for the establishment of the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh. His followers in the land of its birth still face cruel persecution. Jesus spoke of this persecution:

Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake.

Matthew 24:9

Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.

Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.

Matthew 5:11-12

Bahá'u'lláh explains that the religion of God has always grown through such opposition:

Verily God hath made adversity as a morning dew upon His green pasture, and a wick for His lamp which lighteth earth and heaven.

Epistle to the Son of the Wolf, p. 17

The Faith of God has been opposed in every age. We read in the Bible of the sufferings of the Prophets of the Old Testament, of the people of God, of Jesus Christ, and of His followers. The Book of Revelation describes in symbolic language the fierce opposition that will also greet the Christ at His Return.

In the following passages, Christ and Bahá'u'lláh tell us that the religious leaders have been the cause of this suffering:

Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because ye build the tombs of the prophets, and garnish the sepulchres of the righteous,

And say, If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets.

Wherefore ye be witnesses unto yourselves, that ye are the children of them which killed the prophets.

Matthew 23:29-31

Leaders of religion, in every age, have hindered their people from attaining the shores of eternal salvation, inasmuch as they held the reins of authority in their mighty grasp. Some for the lust of leadership, others through want of knowledge and understanding, have been the cause of the deprivation of the people. By their sanction and authority, every Prophet of God hath drunk from the chalice of sacrifice, and winged His flight unto the heights of glory. What unspeakable cruelties they that have occupied the seats of authority and learning have inflicted upon the true Monarchs of the world, those Gems of divine virtue!

The Book of Certitude, p. 15

Bahá'u'lláh, however, also states that those religious leaders who follow the true spirit of their religion are a blessing to humanity:

Those divines ... who are truly adorned with the ornament of knowledge and of a goodly character are, verily, as a head to the body of the world, and as eyes to the nations. The guidance of men hath, at all times, been and is dependent upon these blessed souls.

The Promised Day is Come, p. 110-111

Bahá'u'lláh teaches that all people have the right to investigate truth for themselves:

O Son of Spirit! The best beloved of all things in My sight is Justice; turn not away therefrom if thou desirest Me, and neglect it not that I may confide in thee. By its aid thou shalt see with thine own eyes and not through the eyes of others, and shalt know of thine own knowledge and not through the knowledge of thy neighbor. Ponder this in thy heart; how it behooveth thee to be. Verily justice is My gift to thee and the sign of My loving-kindness. Set it then before thine eyes.

Hidden Words, Arabic No. 2

The Bahá'í Writings also state:

God has given man the eye of investigation by which he may see and recognize truth. He has endowed man with ears that he may hear the message of reality and conferred upon him the gift of reason by which he may discover things for himself. This is his endowment and equipment for the investigation of reality. Man is not intended to see through the eyes of another, hear through another's ears nor comprehend with another's brain. Each human creature has individual endowment, power and responsibility in the creative plan of God.

The Promulgation of Universal Peace, p. 293

The proof of the Prophet is:

The penetration and potency of His Word, the cultivation of heavenly attributes in the hearts and lives of His followers and the bestowal of divine education upon the world of humanity. This is absolute proof.

The Promulgation of Universal Peace, p. 341

Christ and Bahá'u'lláh have both manifested this proof through their lives and the influence that They have had on the world.

The purpose of all Divine Revelation has been not only to guide the believer along the path to personal salvation, but to prepare the human family as a whole, through a vast historical process, to reach its ultimate destiny and accept the Promised One at His Coming. What greater event than this can be conceived, through which the life of humanity will be completely transformed?

The words of Bahá'u'lláh, addressed to the Christians, invite them to claim that divine inheritance bequeathed by Jesus, some two thousand years ago, when to His beloved disciples He gave the glad tidings that He would Return:

Say, O followers of the Son [Jesus]! Have ye shut out yourselves from Me by reason of My Name? Wherefore ponder ye not in your hearts? Day and night ye have been calling upon your Lord, the Omnipotent, but when He came from the heaven of eternity in His great glory, ye turned aside from Him and remained sunk in heedlessness.

Consider those who rejected the Spirit [Jesus] when He came unto them with manifest dominion. How numerous the Pharisees who had secluded themselves in synagogues in His name, lamenting over their separation from Him, and yet when the portals of reunion were flung open and the divine Luminary shone resplendent from the Dayspring of Beauty, they disbelieved in God, the Exalted, the Mighty. They failed to attain His presence, notwithstanding that His advent had been promised them in the Book of Isaiah as well as in the Books of the Prophets and the Messengers. No one from among them turned his face towards the Dayspring of divine bounty except such as were destitute of any power amongst men. And yet, today, every man endowed with power and invested with sovereignty prideth himself on His Name. Moreover, call thou to mind the one who sentenced Jesus to death. He was the most learned of his age in his own country, whilst he who was only a fisherman believed in Him. Take good heed and be of them that observe the warning.

Consider likewise, how numerous at this time are the monks who have secluded themselves in their churches, calling upon the Spirit, but when He appeared through the power of Truth, they failed to

draw nigh unto Him and are numbered with those that have gone far astray. Happy are they that have abandoned them and set their faces towards Him Who is the Desire of all that are in the heavens and all that are on the earth.

They read the Evangel and yet refuse to acknowledge the All-Glorious Lord, notwithstanding that He hath come through the potency of His exalted, His mighty and gracious dominion. We, verily, have come for your sakes, and have borne the misfortunes of the world for your salvation. Flee ye the One Who hath sacrificed His life that ye may be quickened? Fear God, O followers of the Spirit, and walk not in the footsteps of every divine that hath gone far astray. Do ye imagine that He seeketh His own interests, when He hath, at all times, been threatened by the swords of the enemies; or that He seeketh the vanities of the world, after He hath been imprisoned in the most desolate of cities? Be fair in your judgement and follow not the footsteps of the unjust.

Open the doors of your hearts. He Who is the Spirit verily standeth before them. Wherefore banish ye Him Who hath purposed to draw you nigh unto a Resplendent Spot? Say: We, in truth, have opened unto you the gates of the Kingdom. Will ye bar the doors of your houses in My face? This indeed is naught but a grievous error. He, verily, hath again come down from heaven, even as He came down from it the first time. Beware lest ye dispute that which He proclaimeth, even as the people before you disputed His utterances. Thus instructeth you the True One, could ye but perceive it.

The river Jordan is joined to the Most Great Ocean, and the Son, in the holy vale, crieth out: 'Here am I, here am I O Lord, my God!', whilst Sinai circleth round the House, and the Burning Bush calleth aloud: 'He Who is the Desired One is come in His transcendent majesty.' Say, Lo! The Father is come, and that which ye were promised in the Kingdom is fulfilled! This is the Word which the Son concealed, when to those around Him He said: 'Ye cannot bear it now.' And when the appointed time was fulfilled and the Hour had struck, the Word shone forth above the horizon of the Will of God. Beware, O followers of the Son, that ye cast it not behind your backs. Take ye fast hold of it. Better is this for you than all that ye possess. Verily He is nigh unto them that do good. The Hour which We had concealed from the knowledge of the peoples of the earth and of the favoured angels hath come to pass. Say, verily, He hath testified of

Me, and I do testify of Him. Indeed, He hath purposed no one other than Me. Unto this beareth witness every fair-minded and understanding soul.

Though beset with countless afflictions, We summon the people unto God, the Lord of names. Say, strive ye to attain that which ye have been promised in the Books of God, and walk not in the way of the ignorant. My body hath endured imprisonment that ye may be released from the bondage of self. Set your faces then towards His countenance and follow not the footsteps of every hostile oppressor. Verily, He hath consented to be sorely abased that ye may attain unto glory, and yet, ye are disporting yourselves in the vale of heedlessness. He, in truth, liveth in the most desolate of abodes for your sakes, whilst ye dwell in your palaces.

Say, did ye not hearken to the Voice of the Crier, calling aloud in the wilderness of the Bayán, bearing unto you the glad-tidings of the coming of your Lord, the All-Merciful? Lo! He is come in the sheltering shadow of Testimony, invested with conclusive proof and evidence, and those who truly believe in Him regard His presence as the embodiment of the Kingdom of God. Blessed is the man who turneth towards Him, and woe betide such as deny or doubt Him.

Announce thou unto the priests: Lo! He Who is the Ruler is come. Step out from behind the veil in the name of thy Lord, He Who layeth low the necks of all men. Proclaim then unto all mankind the glad-tidings of this mighty, this glorious Revelation. Verily, He Who is the Spirit of Truth is come to guide you unto all truth. He speaketh not as prompted by His own self, but as bidden by Him Who is the All-Knowing, the All-Wise.

Say, this is the One Who hath glorified the Son and hath exalted His Cause. Cast away, O peoples of the earth, that which ye have and take fast hold of that which ye are bidden by the All-Powerful, He Who is the Bearer of the Trust of God. Purge ye your ears and set your hearts towards Him that ye may hearken to the most wondrous Call which hath been raised from Sinai, the habitation of your Lord, the Most Glorious. It will, in truth, draw you nigh unto the Spot wherein ye will perceive the splendour of the light of His countenance which shineth above this luminous Horizon.

O concourse of priests! Leave the bells, and come forth, then, from your churches. It behoveth you, in this day, to proclaim aloud the Most Great Name among the nations. Prefer ye to be silent,

whilst every stone and every tree shouteth aloud: 'The Lord is come in His great glory!?' Well is it with the man who hasteneth unto Him. Verily, he is numbered among them whose names will be eternally recorded and who will be mentioned by the Concourse on High. Thus hath it been decreed by the Spirit in this wondrous Tablet. He that summoneth men in My name is, verily, of Me, and he will show forth that which is beyond the power of all that are on earth. Follow ye the Way of the Lord and walk not in the footsteps of them that are sunk in heedlessness. Well is it with the slumberer who is stirred by the Breeze of God and ariseth from amongst the dead, directing his steps towards the Way of the Lord. Verily, such a man is regarded, in the sight of God, the True One, as a jewel amongst men and is reckoned with the blissful.

Say: In the East the light of His Revelation hath broken; in the West have appeared the signs of His dominion. Ponder this in your hearts, O people, and be not of those who have turned a deaf ear to the admonitions of Him Who is the Almighty, the All-Praised. Let the Breeze of God awaken you. Verily, it hath wafted over the world. Well is it with him that hath discovered the fragrance thereof and been accounted among the well-assured.

O concourse of bishops! Ye are the stars of the heaven of My knowledge. My mercy desireth not that ye should fall upon the earth. My justice, however, declareth: 'This is that which the Son hath decreed.' And whatsoever hath proceeded out of His blameless, His truth-speaking, trustworthy mouth, can never be altered. The bells, verily, peal out My Name, and lament over Me, but My spirit rejoiceth with evident gladness. The body of the Loved One yearneth for the cross, and His head is eager for the spear, in the path of the All-Merciful. The ascendancy of the oppressor can in no wise deter Him from His purpose. We have summoned all created things to attain the presence of thy Lord, the King of all names. Blessed is the man that hath set his face towards God, the Lord of the Day of Reckoning.

O concourse of monks! If ye choose to follow Me, I will make you heirs of My Kingdom; and if ye transgress against Me, I will, in My long-suffering, endure it patiently, and I, verily, am the Ever-Forgiving, the All-Merciful.

O land of Syria! What hath become of thy righteousness? Thou art, in truth, ennobled by the footsteps of thy Lord. Hast thou

perceived the fragrance of heavenly reunion, or art thou to be accounted of the heedless?

Bethlehem is astir with the Breeze of God. We hear her voice saying: 'O most generous Lord! Where is Thy great glory established? The sweet savours of Thy presence have quickened me, after I had melted in my separation from Thee. Praised be Thou in that Thou hast raised the veils, and come with power in evident glory.' We called unto her from behind the Tabernacle of Majesty and Grandeur: 'O Bethlehem! This Light hath risen in the orient, and travelled towards the occident, until it reached thee in the evening of its life. Tell Me then: Do the sons recognize the Father, and acknowledge Him, or do they deny Him, even as the people aforetime denied Him [Jesus]?' Whereupon she cried out saying: 'Thou art, in truth, the All-Knowing, the Best-Informed.' Verily, We behold all created things moved to bear witness unto Us. Some know Us and bear witness, while the majority bear witness, yet know Us not.

Mount Sinai is astir with the joy of beholding Our countenance. She hath lifted her enthralling voice in glorification of her Lord, saying: 'O Lord! I sense the fragrance of Thy garment. Methinks Thou art near, invested with the signs of God. Thou hast ennobled these regions with Thy footsteps.' ...

Say: Blessed the slumberer who is awakened by My Breeze. Blessed the lifeless one who is quickened through My reviving breaths. Blessed the eye that is solaced by gazing at My beauty. Blessed the wayfarer who directeth his steps towards the Tabernacle of My glory and majesty. Blessed the distressed one who seeketh refuge beneath the shadow of My canopy. Blessed the sore athirst who hasteneth to the soft-flowing waters of My loving-kindness. Blessed the insatiate soul who casteth away his selfish desires for love of Me and taketh his place at the banquet table which I have sent down from the heaven of divine bounty for My chosen ones. Blessed the abased one who layeth fast hold on the cord of My glory; and the needy one who entereth beneath the shadow of the Tabernacle of My wealth ... Blessed the man who hath sought enlightenment from the Day-Star of My Word. Blessed he who hath attired his head with the diadem of My love. Blessed is he who hath heard of My grief and hath arisen to aid Me among My people. Blessed is he who hath laid down his life in My path and hath borne manifold hardships for the sake of My Name ... Blessed is he who

hath remained faithful to My Covenant, and whom the things of the world have not kept back from attaining My Court of holiness. Blessed is the man who hath detached himself from all else but Me, hath soared in the atmosphere of My love, hath gained admittance into My Kingdom, gazed upon My realms of glory, quaffed the living waters of My bounty, hath drunk his fill from the heavenly river of My loving providence, acquainted himself with My Cause, apprehended that which I concealed within the treasury of My Words, and hath shone forth from the horizon of divine knowledge engaged in My praise and glorification. Verily, he is of Me. Upon him rest My mercy, My loving-kindness, My bounty and My glory.

Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 9-18

Appendix: The Ancestry of Bahá'u'lláh

By Phil Turner ⁶ ⁷

The ancestry of Bahá'u'lláh reaches back to the dynasties of ancient Persia. One of the most meaningful lines of descent to students of the Bible comes from the marriage of King Cyrus of Persia to a woman named Rahab, who was a descendant of King David of Judah. Bahá'u'lláh's relationship to this marriage is through their son, Sásán, the patriarchal ancestor of the Sásánian dynasty of Persian kings.

Hasan Balyuzi, the eminent historian of Bahá'u'lláh's life, wrote:

"It is to Yazdigird III, the last Sásánian monarch to occupy the throne of Irán, that the genealogy of Bahá'u'lláh can be traced..."⁸

Balyuzi substantiated this statement that Bahá'u'lláh was a descendant of the Sásánian kings by citing the results of the research of Mírzá Abu'l-Faḍl, an eminent Bahá'í teacher and scholar:

"Mírzá Abu'l-Faḍl writes that he was, in the course of his investigation, particularly impressed by the fact that so severe and unsympathetic a critic of the Bahá'í Faith (and so hostile a commentator) as Riḍá-Qulí Khán-i-Hidáyat, entitled the Amíru'sh-Shu`ara' (The Emir of Poets), had admitted in the Nizhád-Námih (The Book of Ancestry), that the Núris of Mázindarán are descended from Chosroes I, the renowned Sásánian monarch known as `Adil (The Just). And final confirmation came from Hájí Mírzá Riḍá-Qulí, a

⁶ [Reprinted with permission from "Every Eye Shall See" by Gary Matthews (Knoxville, Stonehaven Press, 1999), p. 77-78 DCY]

⁷ Revised and Reprinted with permission from "The Greater Covenant in the Bible: A Study Guide" (Oklahoma City: VIP Printing, 1992), pp. 169-171

⁸ H.M. Balyuzi, *Bahá'u'lláh: The King of Glory* (Oxford, George Ronald, 1980), p. 9.

half-brother of Bahá'u'lláh, who told Mírzá Abu'l-Faḍl categorically, in answer to his query, that the Núrís possessed a genealogical table tracing their line back to Yazdigird the Sásánian.”⁹

Among the genealogies published by the meticulous Muslim historian aṭ-Ṭabari in his comprehensive history of prophets and kings¹⁰ was that of the Sasanian dynasty of Persian kings. It traced their lineage back to Sásán the Great, son of the legendary Persian king, Bahman, and then further back to King Lohrasb, who lived shortly before the time of the Prophet Zoroaster:

“Firúz, son of Yazdigird, son of Bahrám, son of Yazdigird, son of Shápúr, son of Hormuz, son of Narsí, son of Bahrám, son of Hormuz, son of Shápúr, son of Árdashír, son of Bábak, son of Sásán(III), son of Bábak, son of Sásán(II), son of Dah-Áfaríd, son of Mehr-Máh, son of Sásán(I), son of Bahman, son of Isfandiyar, son of Gushtásb, son of Lohrásb.”¹¹

Elsewhere in his history, aṭ-Ṭabari spoke of the mother of Sásán. He described her as a descendant of the kings of Judah:

“The mother of Bahman's son was the slave Rahab bint Pinchas, of the children of Rehoboam b. Solomon b. David. Bahman appointed Rahab's brother Zerubabel b. Shealtiel king over the Israelites, transferred to him the office of the exilarch, and returned him to Palestine, upon Rahab's request. Bahman died and left (the following) offspring: two sons, Darius the Great and Sásán, and daughters Khumani, who ruled after him, and Franik and Bahman Dukht.”¹²

The circumstances of Zerubbabel's appointment described above identify Bahman unmistakably. The Persian king who appointed Zerubbabel and

⁹ Ibid., p. 11

¹⁰ Abú-Ja'far Muhammad Ibn Jarír aṭ-Ṭabari, *al-Rasul-wa'l-Mulúk*, Aṭ-Ṭabari was born in the year 839 AD in Amul, and died in 923 AD in Baghdád.

¹¹ Quoted by N. Madjzoub on page 758 of his unpublished manuscript, *The Ancestry of the Prophets*, which resides on file at the Bahá'í World Centre in Haifa, Israel. Translated from Persian to English by Farhang Ala'i.

¹² Tabari, *The Ancient Kingdoms*, vol IV of *The History of al-Tabari* (Ta'rikh al-rusul wa'l-muluk), translated and annotated by Moshe Perlmann, State University of New York (Albany, New York Press, 1987), pp. 82-83.

ordered his return to Jerusalem was Cyrus the Great, according to chapters 1 and 2 of the book of Ezra. A Christian historian of a later period confirmed the veracity of aṭ-Ṭabari's statement. Bar-Hebraeus (Arabic Ibn al-`Ibrí), who became the assistant patriarch of the Eastern Jacobite Church in the city of Marágheh in Ádhirbáyján in 1264 A.D., left this record:

"Cyrus the Persian reigned thirty-one years, and conquered Iraq, Khurásán, Armenia, Syria, and Palestine, and invaded India, killing their king. This Cyrus married the sister of Zerub'babel, son of Shealtiel, son of Jehoiachin¹³, son of Jehoiakim, the king of Judah. And after he married her, she became highly esteemed in his sight, and he said to her, "Ask of me whatever you want," so she asked for the return of the children of Israel to Jerusalem and that he grant them permission to rebuild it. ... And because of the mixing of Cyrus with the offspring of David, Isaiah the prophet said of him before he was born, `God said to his anointed one, Cyrus, whose right hand I have strengthened ¹⁴...' " ¹⁵

A well-traveled Arab historian named Mas`udi, noted for his impartiality in his writings, also affirmed that the mother of Sásán was Jewish:

"The mother of Sásán the Great was from the captured children of Israel ... " ¹⁶

Giving the genealogy of Sásán's mother in more detail, aṭ-Ṭabari recorded:

¹³ Jehoiachin is also called Jeconiah and Coniah. See Aid to Bible Understanding, p. 878

¹⁴ Isaiah 45:1. Compare RSV: "Thus says the Lord to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have grasped..."

¹⁵ Bar-Hebraeus, Gregorius of Melitene, *Taríkh Mukhtasar al-Duwal* (Condensed History of Nations). The publication and annotation of the book was supervised by the Jesuit Father Antoine Salihani. First printed in 1890. Reprinted in Beirut, Lebanon in 1958 by the Catholic Press. This excerpt from pp. 47-48 translated from Arabic to English by Abir Majid.

¹⁶ Abu'l-Hasan `Alí Ibn Husayn Mas`údí, *Murúj adh-Dhahab wa Ma`ádin al-Jawáhir* (The Meadows of Gold and Mines of Gems); translated to Persian by Abu'l-Qasim Payandeh, Book Translation and Distribution, Inc., Teheran, 1344 A.H. (1965 A.D.), p. 242. (English translation of the quote courtesy of Mr. Farhang Ala'i). Mas`údí was born in Baghdad about 896 A.D. and died in Egypt about 956 A.D.

"Sásán's mother was the daughter of Shealtiel (?)¹⁷ b. Jochanan b. Oshia b. Amon b. Manasseh b. Hezekiah b. Ahaz b. Jotham b. Uzziah b. Joram b. Jehoshaphat b. Abijah b. Rehoboam b. Solomon b. David." ¹⁸

This genealogy agrees with that of Zerubbabel (Zorobabel) as given in Matthew 1:6-12¹⁹, and establishes beyond any doubt that Sásán's mother was a direct descendant of King David of Judah.

Thus Sásán the Great mixed in his veins the royal blood of his father, Cyrus the Great, and of his mother Rahab, who was a descendant of King David, the son of Jesse. Bahá'u'lláh, being a direct descendant of the Sásánian kings, bore the same lineage.

"Sásán's mother was the daughter of Shealtiel (?)²⁰ b. Jochanan b. Oshia b. Amon b. Manasseh b. Hezekiah b. Ahaz b. Jotham b. Uzziah b. Joram b. Jehoshaphat b. Abijah b. Rehoboam b. Solomon b. David." ²¹

This genealogy agrees with that of Zerubbabel (Zorobabel) as given in Matthew 1:6-12²², and establishes beyond any doubt that Sásán's mother was a direct descendant of King David of Judah.

Thus Sásán the Great mixed in his veins the royal blood of his father, Cyrus the Great, and of his mother Rahab, who was a descendant of King David, the son of Jesse. Bahá'u'lláh, being a direct descendant of the Sásánian kings, bore the same lineage.

¹⁷ [Question mark not found in original Arabic, but added by the translator; reason not indicated. DCY]

¹⁸ Tabari, vol IV, p. 83-84.

¹⁹ Matthew includes one link (Asa, between Abijah and Jehoshaphat) omitted by aṭ-Ṭabari - GLM

²⁰ [Question mark not found in original Arabic, but added by the translator; reason not indicated. DCY]

²¹ Tabari, vol IV, p. 83-84.

²² Matthew includes one link (Asa, between Abijah and Jehoshaphat) omitted by aṭ-Ṭabari - GLM

Links

The following links provide information on Bahá'u'lláh and the Bahá'í Faith.

A photographic narrative of the life of Bahá'u'lláh:

www.bahaullah.org

International Bahá'í Website:

www.bahai.org

About the Bahá'í Faith:

www.info.bahai.org

Selected Writings:

www.reference.bahai.org

Photographs of the Bahá'í community, historical figures, events and activities, houses of worship, and holy places:

www.media.bahai.org

Bibliography

Bahá'í and other literature referenced in this book is listed below. The Writings of Bahá'u'lláh's son, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, who was appointed by Him as His Successor and the sole interpreter of His Word, are also considered Bahá'í Scripture.

'Abdu'l-Bahá. *The Promulgation of Universal Peace*. Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1982.

'Abdu'l-Bahá. *Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá*. Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1997.

'Abdu'l-Bahá. *Some Answered Questions*. Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1981.

Bahá'í Prayers. Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 2002.

Bahá'u'lláh. *The Book of Certitude (Kitáb-i-Íqán)*. Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1974.

Bahá'u'lláh. *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*. Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1988.

Bahá'u'lláh. *Gems of Divine Mysteries*. Haifa: Bahá'í World Centre, 2002.

Bahá'u'lláh. *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*. Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1976.

Bahá'u'lláh. *The Hidden Words of Bahá'u'lláh*. Bundoora: Bahá'í Publications, Australia, 2003.

Bahá'u'lláh. *The Kitáb-i-Aqdas*. Haifa: Bahá'í World Centre, 1992.

Bahá'u'lláh. *Proclamation of Bahá'u'lláh to the Kings and Leaders of the World*. Haifa: Bahá'í World Centre, 1967.

- Bahá'u'lláh. *The Summons of the Lord of Hosts*. Haifa: Bahá'í World Centre, 2002.
- Bahá'u'lláh. *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh Revealed After the Kitáb-i-Aqdas*. Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1988.
- The Dawn-Breakers: Nabíl's Narrative of the Early Days of the Bahá'í Revelation*, Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1932.
- Matthews, Gary. *Every Eye Shall See*. Knoxville: Stonehaven Press, 1999.
- Meister, Charles W. *Year of the Lord*. Jefferson: McFarland & Company, Inc. Publishers, 1983.
- Motlagh, Hushidar. *Lord of Lords*. Mt. Pleasant: Global Perspective, 2000.
- Shoghi Effendi. *God Passes By*. Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1974.
- Shoghi Effendi. *The Promised Day Is Come*. Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1996.
- Shoghi Effendi. *The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*. Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1974.
- Star of the West* (US Bahá'í newsletter during the time of 'Abdu'l-Bahá,). Oxford: George Ronald, 1978.
- Women* (Extracts from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, Shoghi Effendi, and the Universal House of Justice),.Thornhill, Ontario: National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Canada, 1986.
- Young, David. *The Resurrection of All Mankind*. Spokane: Spokane Bahá'í Library, 2000.