



THE SHEPHERD OF ISRAEL

THE PROMISE OF TOMORROW

THE GOD OF CREATION

By Albert A. Runge

When we say "The God of Creation" we imply that there is a God; and that every living thing, the world in which we live, and the entire universe have been created by Him, and that it didn't all just happen.

Then, if there is a God, we would like to know if He is interested in us; and if we don't know Him or how to find Him, what do we have to do to find Him? Then, we want to know if God is displeased with us, and if He is, what we have to do in order to please Him, assuming there are some of us who want to please Him. We also want to know if the God of Judaism is the same God as the God of Christianity.

And, finally, we want to know whether or not Jesus of Nazareth is the true Messiah of Israel as prophesied in our Hebrew Scriptures, and if He is not, who is and how will we know Him?

Every grown-up and intelligent person ought to be interested in finding answers to these questions, if they don't already know the right answers; but a great many people, absorbed in the problems of daily living, seem totally uninterested. For example, I was invited to speak before the intervarsity group of Cornell University on the subject of Messianic prophecies in the Old Testament. After my message, a young

student came up to me and said, "I don't believe in God, much less in a Messiah."

I asked him why he didn't believe in God. He answered, "If I believed in God I would have to be obligated to Him, and I do not have time to be religious."

I told him that the Bible never argues or attempts to prove that God exists. The Bible does say in Psalm 19:1, "The heavens declare the glory of God," and in Psalm 33:6, "By the word of the LORD were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth." And the Bible also says in another place, Psalm 14:1, "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God."

Many of our young people are becoming unbelievers, and I am sure they would not like to be called fools. To deny the existence of God is to say that every single thing we know does not exist. Creation is all about us and "to create" means to be able to produce things without using pre-existent things. So there can be no creation without a creator. How else can we explain the existence of ourselves, the earth, the universe?

If I were to tell you that my watch came into existence all by itself, you wouldn't believe me. Or that a field of corn had produced full-grown

ears of corn when no grains of corn had been planted in that field. Or that children and the newborn young of the animal kingdom came into being each by itself, without parents.

In Genesis, chapter 1, verse 24, are these words, "And God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature *after his kind*, cattle and creeping thing, and beast of the earth *after his kind*: and it was so." And when God created man, in verse 27. He said, in verse 28, "Be fruitful and multiply." So that God's law of reproduction, *after his kind*, was built right in, so to speak, to the first created of every creature.

If there is no creator, how did it all originate? Unbelievers in God have many explanations. One explanation I have heard is this: "Man came into existence through the process of evolution. We have descended from a form of virus."

That mankind is the result of a process of evolution is a very old theory, but it is only a theory. Many people have held to it and many still do. But the theory is based on a false premise, and the false premise is the assumption and an assumption is not a fact — that somebody must have started the process of evolution because nothing starts of itself. And whoever started it must

also have built into it a complete and continuing plan of development so that not only would it keep developing but also keep renewing its force and adding improvements. If mankind started with a form of virus, where did the first virus come from? And who built evolution into it? And what keeps it evolving?

Isn't the Bible account of creation far more believable? What does the Bible say? In the first book of Moses, the book of Genesis, chapter 1, verse 1, we find these words, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." The Hebrew word for God is *Elohim*, a plural name for God, which believing Christians accept as a name for God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. Judaism does not accept this, although many thousands of Jews believed it in the first century and many more thousands of Christian Jews accept it today. In this first verse also is the word create, the Hebrew word for which is *bara*, meaning to create out of nothingness.

Chapter 1, verse 2, of Genesis reads, "And the earth was without form and void," the Hebrew words for which are *tahu v'vohu*, meaning chaotic and empty, and this no doubt refers to the dateless past and points to all the bygone geologic ages of the earth. Many students of the Bible believe that in this dim far-off prehistoric time some fearful judgment of God fell upon the earth and left it, as the Bible says, "without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep."

Then, in this same verse we find these words, "And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters." When God's Spirit moves, He turns disorder into order. In verse 1 we read of God the Father and in verse 2 we read of God the Holy Spirit, and both are included in the plural Hebrew name *Elohim*. This is followed in verse 3 by the words, "And God said, Let there be light: and there was light," and this was the first of God's creative acts after verse 1 in which it says, "God created the heaven and the earth."

I would like to call your attention to that Hebrew word *bara* in verse 1,

chapter 1, of Genesis, which means "to create out of nothingness." As the word create is used in present-day speech it means something made out of other things already existing. Man in his pride points to every new man-made invention as a "creation," but no invention of man has been created in the meaning of the Hebrew word *bara*, "out of nothingness." It is impossible for man to create something out of nothing. That is God's prerogative alone.

What Is the Nature of God?

If when we confess that we believe in God, is it enough just to know that there is a God, a Creator? Isn't it vital for us to know something of His personality, His nature, His purpose for our lives?

After speaking before a group of people, a member of the audience came up to me and said with an air of indifference, "Oh, I believe there is a God, but so what?" I took this to mean that the person who said it failed to see any reason for recognizing God's rights in his life. This is a pretty general attitude today on the part of a great many people. We act as if the only purpose in life is to satisfy our desires, not to please God. And the Bible bears this out, for it says, "in the last days . . . men shall be lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God."

You who believe in God, have you ever asked yourself what God is like? I was told by a man, "My conscience is God. It is the awareness of good," he explained. I told him of a tribe in Africa which believed it was good to sacrifice human beings to their god. I asked him, "Would you say that their awareness of good was God?" He quickly retorted, "No!" We ought never to confuse a divine principle with the divine Person. God is good but goodness is not God. Goodness is a principle of God's character.

God is a Spirit, a Person. In Genesis, chapter 1, verses 26 and 27, we read, "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. . . . So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he

them." Therefore, we have eyes to see, ears to hear, a mouth to speak, hands to work, feet to walk, and a brain to think. I am a person, for I have all these faculties and members, being made in the image of God. God Himself is a living, intelligent Being, a Spirit, a Person.

What Is Your Relationship to God?

Is it enough to know that there is a Creator? Isn't it necessary to know something about Him? His nature, His personality, His purpose for our lives? How can we find out these things? By seeking to find God. Our Hebrew prophet Jeremiah told us plainly in chapter 29:13 and 14, "Ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart. And I will be found of you, saith the LORD." And Paul, the great Jewish missionary to the Gentiles, says, "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself." And King David tells us in Psalm 95:7, 8, "Today, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your heart." But God also says in Genesis 6:3, "My Spirit shall not always strive with man," in which we are warned not to delay our search for God. So God's message to all who have not hardened their hearts to His voice is, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

We are either children of darkness or children of light, and if children of light then we have no difficulty in recognizing the true Light, our Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ, of whom it is said, "In him was life and the life was the light of men." But if we are children of darkness, then the Bible says, "The light shineth in darkness and the darkness comprehendeth it not."

Who is this Light? Jesus the true Messiah of Israel. Pray this simple prayer to the God of Israel, "Blessed art thou, Lord, King of the universe. Open my eyes that I may see Thy Light. Open my ears that I may understand Thy Truth."

God is waiting to translate every one who is willing from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of Light. △

THE GOD OF MIRACLES

By Isobel Smith

I am of Orthodox Jewish parentage and born in New York City in the early 1900's. I attended the Park Avenue Synagogue in that City.

My family kept the Sabbath rigidly, and all of us bore the ridicule of the Gentiles in the neighborhood. My father died when I was only three years of age, the youngest in a family of four children. My mother faithfully wore her prayer shawl and chanted portions of the Books of Moses. My first recollection of Christianity was a radio broadcast in New York City called "Message to Israel." Although I listened often, the vital truths did not penetrate my heart until years later.

I married in 1931 and had two lovely daughters. Then, because of constant illnesses caused by allergies and chronic pneumonia and pleurisy, we moved west at doctor's orders. Feeling that there was something lacking in our lives, I persuaded my husband to take us to church. We tried one denomination after another, but God alone saw the need and knew how to meet it.

One Sunday afternoon my husband and one daughter and myself were on the way to visit the new home of a friend's daughter. Suddenly and without any warning a sensation of not feeling good came over me, and just as suddenly, I became violently ill. By the time my husband got me home and in bed my condition became desperate. An urgent telephone call brought only the news that our doctor was out of town! In desperation, my husband called a friend who did nursing work in a local hospital. My friend found that my pulse was nearly gone and called a heart specialist. By this time I was unconscious and my life hung by a thread.

The day after my arrival at the hospital I suffered another heart attack and this in turn was followed by a stroke. My husband was told that I would not live through the day. My entire left side was paralyzed, and even if it were possible for me to survive, my left leg would always drag and my left arm would be useless. For thirteen days I was

constantly under oxygen and not even a drop of water passed through my lips. My first visitor was a minister and after he prayed for me, I felt much strengthened physically. The constant intravenous was causing me much discomfort and I prayed for three days that the doctor would remove it. Though I could not have said why, I was prompted to lay aside Jewish traditions and, for the first time in my life, I prayed "In the Name of Your Son!"

Six weeks rolled past and the Passover season came. The night before Easter I asked for some sign that I would be going home, and once more I prayed "In the Name of Jesus!" When my breakfast tray came in on Easter morning, it bore a small card and the words on it were emblazoned into my mind: "He is risen! There is a living Savior!"

A rabbi came to see me. The Jewish Community Center had sent me a large carton of Passover cake, wine, fruit and candies. Wide-awake now but confused over spiritual issues, I asked for another sign. God had sent me the proclamation of a risen, living Savior, Jesus of Nazareth, the Messiah, but I asked for one more sign. Suddenly, something happened! The room became diffused with beautiful light. A voice spoke saying, "I am the Light. Come ye and follow me." The presence of God filled my hospital room and I knew then that the Lord Jesus was truly my Messiah, the Holy One of Israel!

The minister came often and brought me a New Testament. He did not know that I was asking a question in my heart — one that has been asked down through the years: "What must I do to be saved from the penalty of my sins?" By this time the nurses were in a state of confusion about me. There I was with Passover delicacies from the Jewish Center. Someone had pinned a rosary to my pillow and I had the New Testament on my night stand. What they did not see was a Jewish heart made clean and whole through the blood of God's sacrifice for a lost world.

Recovering rapidly now, I returned home and told God of my earnest desire to work for Him. My

husband and daughter came to believe in the Jewish Messiah. There was one more attack almost two months after my return home. My leg still drags, but you would have to look for it to even notice. I am using my left hand and arm with ease doing all my own housework. I am not free of pain, but, remember, I had been told I would be completely helpless and unable to do anything. The God of miracles has healed me as well as saving my soul!

Do you want to know the God of Creation — the God of Miracles? He is the God Who is waiting to have us come to Him in the only way in which He has told us to come, through His only begotten Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. We need to confess our sins and accept our long promised Messiah as our atonement. Then we have peace — true Shalom. Ask God to show you His ways and His truth for He is the God of our salvation. △

MESSIAH'S TWO MINISTRIES

By Albert A. Runge

I was speaking with a very Orthodox Jewish Rabbi in his office a few weeks ago. I asked him if he believed in the coming of the Messiah. "Oh, yes," he replied. My second question was, "How will He come?" He said that he always was taught that he would come from Heaven on a white horse. I asked him if he would tell me the name of the Messiah, and he answered, "I do not know His name, but I know He is the Son of David." I then asked him something that seemed to surprise him. "How can David beget a son in Heaven when his body has decayed in the earth for centuries?"

You see, first the Messiah had to be born to fulfill the prophecy that he was the Son of David. Then he would return from Heaven. Zechariah 9:9, the prophecy of the first coming of the Messiah, is very clear. "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee; he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass."

The prophet tells us four things about His coming. 1. He is just, for in the nature of the Messiah there would be no lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, or the pride of life. He and He alone would be sinless and perfect. 2. We are told that He comes having salvation. The objective of His first coming is not to establish His kingdom over the nations of men but His kingdom in the hearts of men. He brings salvation. You will not be able to appreciate this term unless you have a true sense of your lostness and sinfulness.

Jeremiah, the prophet, knew the condition of the human race and wrote in his prophecies that Israel's shame and confusion cover her. For she sinned against the Lord her God and has not obeyed the voice of the Lord, God is still speaking to hearts today through His spirit, but man is still resisting the call of reconciliation. In order for the Messiah to bring salvation, He had to fulfill the Levitical covenant. There had to be provided a sin sacrifice. We are told concerning the Messiah's coming in Isaiah's prophecies, Chapter 53: "And he bare the sin of many." Some of our ancient Rabbinic scholars became confused, for they found two ministries for the Messiah in the Old Testament and they conceived of two separate Messiahs: Messiah, the son of Joseph, and Messiah, the son of David. Messiah, the son of Joseph, was to die in his suffering. Therefore he was called, "the suffering Messiah." Messiah, the son of

David, is to reign over the earth. Therefore, he is called, "the king Messiah."

What these Rabbis failed to appreciate was the power of God. For God is able to raise the dead Messiah to life again and exalt him to kingship. There is only one Messiah, the same One Who came to bring salvation through His own sufferings, the One Who shall come to reign over the entire earth. Zechariah also foretold that at His first coming He would come lowly. When the Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth, came into the world, He was born in poor circumstances. He never sought for material wealth, only the accomplishment of the will of God. You say, "If Jesus was the Messiah, why then did the Jewish nation reject Him?" The rejection of the Messiah was predicted through our Jewish prophet Isaiah, "Thus saith the Lord, the Redeemer of Israel, and his Holy One, to him whom men despiseth, to him whom the nation abhorreth" (49:7). Had Jesus Christ been accepted by the nation of Israel, or may I say, by any nation, He would then have not fulfilled this prophecy. There has never been a truly Christian nation in which all the population believes in the Messiah, Jesus Christ.

No Biblical scholar would ever deny that Jesus Christ lived a righteous life, but in spite of His goodness, His kindness and compassion, He was rejected in His earthly ministry; He is being rejected in His

Heavenly ministry; and He is being rejected in the present ministry, not just by the Jews, but by the Gentiles as well.

Salvation is for the individual. God is concerned about you and God calls to you through the prophet Isaiah, 49:8, "Thus saith the Lord, in an acceptable time have I heard thee, and in a day of salvation have I helped thee." If you call to God in prayer and sincerely seek him, you will find that He has already been seeking for you.

Dear friends our only desire is that you might believe in Jesus the Messiah, the redeemer. Call upon Him today and He will answer you. △

FREE OFFER—Send for booklet, "The Wonderful God of Israel" telling of God's Relationship to Israel as expressed in His dealings with His people. Write to:

THE PROMISE OF TOMORROW
BOX 1331
ENGLEWOOD CLIFFS, N.J. 07632

IN THIS ISSUE:

The God of Creation: Is He interested in us? How do we find Him? How do we please HIM? Is Jesus the Messiah?

The God of Miracles: How Isabel Smith, a Jewish wife and mother, found Him to be a God of miracles.

Messiah's Two Ministries.

THE PROMISE OF TOMORROW

P.O. BOX 1331 • ENGLEWOOD CLIFFS • N.J. 07632