

Appendix 7a: The Stone of Destiny-The Throne of Britain: Its Biblical Origin and Future

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Appendix 7: The Stone of Destiny

In November 1996, after 700 years beneath the coronation chair in Westminster Abbey in London, a sandstone block known as the Stone of Scone or Stone of Destiny was returned to Scotland “to the skirl of pipes, toasts of whiskey and a school holiday” (The Los Angeles Times, Nov. 16, 1996). In early medieval times, Scottish kings had been crowned upon this stone at Scone (pronounced skoon) near modern Perth until 1296, when the English king Edward I took it to London—thereafter to be the seat of the kings of England. Eventually, the Scottish dynasty itself would follow the stone, being transferred to London.

What was so special about this chunk of rock, which now sits in Edinburgh Castle? Before its removal from the coronation chair at Westminster, a sign nearby identified it as “Jacob’s Pillow Stone.” The following explanation appeared in the official guidebook:

“Coronation Chair—the Coronation Chair was made for Edward I to enclose the famous Stone of Scone, which he seized in 1296 and brought from Scotland to the Abbey . . . Legends abound concerning this mysterious object and tradition identifies this stone with the one upon which Jacob rested his head at Bethel—‘And Jacob rose up early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put for his pillows, and set it up for a pillar, and poured oil on the top of it’ (Genesis 28:18). Jacob’s sons carried it to Egypt and from thence it passed to Spain with King Gathelus, son of Cecrops, the builder of Athens.

“About 700 BC it appears in Ireland, whither it was carried by the Spanish king’s son Simon Brech, on his invasion of that island. There it was placed upon the sacred Hill of Tara, and called ‘Lia-Fail,’ the ‘fatal’ stone [i.e., stone of fate], or ‘stone of destiny’ . . . Fergus Mor MacEirc (d. 501?), the founder of the Scottish monarchy, and one of the Blood Royal of Ireland, received it in [the area of Iona in southwest] Scotland, and Kenneth MacAlpin (d. 846) finally deposited it in the Monastery of Scone (846)” (Westminster Abbey Official Guide, 1994, pp. 46-47).

A newer Scottish guidebook, though its authors consider all of this mythical fancy, further relates: “A song about the Stone was composed in England, probably shortly after the death of Edward I in 1307. In this it is stated that Scota, Pharaoh’s daughter, brought the stone directly from Egypt to Scotland, to a place close to Scone. Twenty years later William de Rishanger offered further elaboration when he wrote that [Scottish King] John Balliol sat on ‘the royal stone which Jacob placed under his head when he was going from Beersheba to Haran’” (David Breeze and Graeme Munro, *The Stone of Destiny: Symbol of Nationhood*, 1997, p. 16).

This is an astonishing tale. Might there be any truth in it? We should start with a closer look at what the Bible has to say.

Jacob's pillow—and pillar

God had promised the Hebrew patriarch Abraham that through his descendants would come great nations and kings. The same promise was reaffirmed to his son Isaac and then to Isaac's son Jacob. While Jacob slept on the ground in Canaan, he dreamed of a ladder extending to heaven with angels ascending and descending on it (Genesis 28:10-12). According to John Rogerson's *Atlas of the Bible*: "A vivid description of the site of Bethel, and of the remarkable stones to the north of the village that may underlie the dream, has been provided by the American scholar J.P. Peters in 1904: 'You are far above Jerusalem, which is visible away to the south. You look over a succession of hills and then across the huge, deep cleft of the Jordan valley to Gilead and Moab beyond . . . just here, occurs a freak of nature so singular that it is difficult to convince oneself that nature and not man is the author. Huge stones seem to be piled one upon another to make columns nine or ten feet or more in height . . . Whoever stands on the hillside above Bethel, especially toward evening, understands with a new understanding the fascinating story of Jacob's flight when night overtook him near Bethel, and there on the height, which was so much nearer to heaven than all the country round about him, he saw the 'ladder'" (1985, p. 153).

Above the ladder was God, telling him that his descendants would be great colonizers—spreading far abroad across the face of the earth (verses 13-14). God then said, "Behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you until I have done what I have spoken to you" (verse 15). While this applied to Jacob personally, it also seemed to be a promise to Jacob's descendants, relative to their colonizing abroad over the earth. Eventually, they would return to the Land of Promise.

When Jacob awoke, He exclaimed: "How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven!" The Great God of the universe, he realized, had been there with him where he slept.

Then, in an event that would have great significance in time to come if the later accounts are true, "Jacob rose up early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put for his pillows, and set it up for a pillar, and poured oil upon the top of it. And he called the name of that place Bethel [or Beth-El]"—that is, literally, House of God (verses 18-19, KJV). In Jacob's dream, it was by this stone, apparently the base of the ladder, that God's angels stepped out into the world at large to carry out His will.

"Then Jacob made a vow, saying, 'If God will be with me, and keep me in this way . . . so that I come back to my father's house in peace, then the LORD shall be my God. And this stone which I have set as a pillar shall be God's house . . .'" (verses 20-22).

Decades later, God indeed did bring Jacob back. Now renamed Israel, meaning "Prevailer with God," he returned to Bethel, where God informed him, "A nation and a company of nations

shall proceed from you, and kings shall come from your body” (35:11). Then he anointed the pillar stone again and once more called the place Bethel (verses 14-15).

The shepherd stone

This stone surely must have some significance to feature so prominently in Genesis. It is interesting that the promise of a line of kings is concomitant with mention of it—and that the stone is anointed just as the kings later will be.

Of course, the ultimate anointed figure in Scripture is the Messiah, Jesus Christ. Indeed, the word “messiah” is the English form of the Hebrew *mashiach*, which means “anointed.” The Greek word for “anointed” is *christos*—that is, Christ. When those of Jesus’ day referred to Him as “Jesus Christ,” they were effectively saying “King Jesus.” He is the coming King of Kings who will receive the throne of Israel from the line of David.

In Daniel 2, we are told of a prophetic dream in which a stone “cut out without hands” strikes and shatters an image representing the succession of gentile empires ruling this world—and then grows into a great mountain filling the whole earth (verses 34-35). That stone ending man’s wayward civilization and growing into the worldwide mountain represents the setting up the Kingdom of God over all nations (verses 44-45).

The stone itself is obviously the Messiah, Jesus Christ, who is often portrayed as a stone or rock (see 1 Corinthians 10:4; Psalm 18:2; Matthew 16:18; Romans 9:33; Ephesians 2:20; 1 Peter 2:6-8). Regarding Jacob’s dream, then, the angels of God go out into the world of man and return to heaven via Christ—that is, by His command.

In delivering a prophecy about the descendants of Joseph, Jacob said, “From there is the Shepherd, the Stone of Israel” (Genesis 49:24). The New Revised Standard Version says, “the Shepherd, the Rock of Israel.” This would seem to be a reference to Jesus Christ, the Chief Shepherd (compare 1 Peter 5:3) and, as we’ve seen, the spiritual Rock. And perhaps the prophecy does refer to Him on one level. Yet Jesus did not come from Joseph—neither by ethnic descent nor by territorial origin. “For it is evident that our Lord arose from Judah” (Hebrews 7:14). And in the end He will come from heaven, not from Joseph’s land.

So to what was Jacob’s prophecy primarily referring? What the New King James Version renders as “the Shepherd, the Stone of Israel” should perhaps actually be translated “the shepherd stone of Israel.” The Ferrar Fention Translation has “Israel’s guardian stone.” This would fit the anointed stone of Jacob at Bethel because Bethel was located in what became the territory of Ephraim, one of the two tribes of Joseph. Thus, it seems that Jacob’s prophecy primarily concerned the anointed Bethel stone. But this stone was clearly a physical type of the ultimate, true anointed stone—Jesus the Messiah.

Symbol of monarchy

Concerning Bethel, we should remember that Jacob gave that name, meaning “God’s House,” to not just the place where the stone lay but also to the stone itself. Consider, furthermore, that

the prophet Nathan later told David, “Also the LORD tells you that He will make you a house” (2 Samuel 7:11)—by which he meant a royal dynasty (verses 12-29). Yet, as elsewhere explained, Israel’s kings “sat on the throne of the LORD” (1 Chronicles 29:23; 2 Chronicles 9:6-8). Thus, David’s dynasty was not just his own house—it was also God’s house, Hebrew Bethel. So perhaps the anointed Bethel stone came to symbolize the monarchy.

We should also consider that Jacob set the Bethel stone as a “pillar”—a matsebah or standing stone. A pillar conveys the idea of a structural support. Indeed, pillars were often seen as upholding the heavens. Jesus Christ, the ultimate pillar, “sustains the universe with his word of power” (Hebrews 1:3, Moffatt Translation). The Church of God, of which Jesus is the “chief cornerstone” (Ephesians 2:20), is the “house of God . . . the pillar and ground of the truth” (1 Timothy 3:15). Indeed, all of God’s saints are anointed pillar stones who will one day inherit David’s throne along with the ultimate anointed pillar stone Jesus Christ (see 1 John 2:27; 1 Peter 2:4-5; Revelation 3:12, 21). This is the glorious future of the Davidic monarchy. It is interesting that the Stone of Scone has been used as a coronation stone for untold centuries. Do we find any parallel in Scripture? Yes! Notice the details of the crowning of Judah’s King Joash of the line of David at the temple of God in Jerusalem around 835 B.C.: “And he [Jehoiada the priest] brought out the king’s son [Joash], put the crown on him, and gave him the Testimony; they made him king and anointed him, and they clapped their hands and said, ‘Long live the king!’ Now when [the usurper queen] Athaliah heard the noise of the escorts and the people, she came to the people in the temple of the LORD. When she looked, there was the king, standing by a pillar according to custom; and the leaders and the trumpeters were by the king” (2 Kings 11:12-14).

According to 2 Chronicles 23:13, he “stood by his pillar”—evidently not one personally owned by him before but one that was “his” because it was the pillar of the Davidic dynasty of which he was the current representative. Similarly, around 621 B.C., another Davidic king, Josiah, “stood by a pillar and made a covenant before the LORD, to follow the LORD and to keep His commandments and his testimonies and statutes . . .” (2 Kings 23:3).

The Hebrew in these passages is even more interesting, for it literally says the king stood upon the pillar (see Adam Clarke’s Commentary, 1967, note on 2 Kings 11:14; E.W. Bullinger, The Companion Bible, 1990, note on 23:3). And, as stated, this was the common custom for anointing the Davidic kings. Today’s British monarchs are crowned upon the Stone of Scone, though sitting upon it.

But was Judah’s coronation pillar stone the same stone that Jacob anointed at Bethel? There would not seem to be any other stone that would merit such a role in the crowning of the Davidic kings. Yet we should ask: Is there any evidence that Jacob or his descendants took this stone from Bethel?

Leading the march?

Since Jacob reckoned the stone as “God’s house,” it is quite likely that he would have wanted the stone with him—not in some idolatrous sense but simply as a symbolic keepsake of his covenant with God and God’s promises to Him. And since Jacob did not dwell at Bethel, he would have to have removed it from there to keep it with him and his family. He knew that God was not a mere local deity and that God’s House was essentially wherever God’s people were. Indeed, just as God’s house in the New Testament is His Church, His house in the Old Testament was the whole house of Israel—the nation in covenant with Him beginning with its forefathers—and the later ruling house of David.

Now, did Jacob have the “shepherd stone” with him in Egypt when he mentioned it in the prophecy related earlier? Did those of the Old Testament “church in the wilderness” (Acts 7:38,

KJV) have it with them when they left Egypt? In 1 Corinthians 10:4, the apostle Paul says, “They drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them, and that rock was Christ” (NIV). God was referred to as the Rock in Moses’ day (Deuteronomy 32:4). And as Paul explained, the Rock—the God—the people knew at that time was the one who became Jesus Christ. He dwelt with the people in the pillar of cloud and fire (Exodus 13:21), by which He led and shepherded them.

The preincarnate Jesus Christ—the Shepherd in the pillar—was the spiritual Rock or Stone that accompanied Israel. But is it not possible that there was also a physical pillar stone that accompanied the people—an earthly type of the true Pillar Stone who led them? That such an earthly type existed is certain—it was Jacob’s anointed Bethel stone. The question is whether the stone was with Israel at this time or not. Yet surely it must have been—or how could it have served as a type at all? How could it have been considered a shepherding stone if it was far away from the flock?

Indeed, some believe that when God in the person of Christ said He would stand “on the rock” at Horeb or Mount Sinai, causing water to miraculously flow from it upon Moses striking it for the people to drink (Exodus 17:6), He was referring to the stone of Jacob. The same is believed of “the rock” out of which water was made to flow at Kadesh (Numbers 20:7-13). Though we can’t be sure, this is not out of the question because in both places a particular rock is meant yet not identified. Moreover, since the stone of Bethel was a physical type of the spiritual Rock from which the people drank in an ultimate sense, this would fit quite well. Indeed, how appropriate in the first instance that the divine King of Israel at the time would be standing upon the pillar stone.

In any case, it would certainly appear that the stone of God’s house was with God’s house in the wilderness. And consider further: To be a shepherding stone, Jacob’s pillar must have been placed in front of the moving camp of Israel to lead the way—just as the pillar of cloud and fire went before. And Numbers 2 reveals that the tribe who led the march in Israel’s wilderness travels was Judah! It seems likely, therefore, that in the vanguard of Israel, where

the standard of Judah, with its heraldic lion, went before the people, the Bethel stone was right there also. This, then, may be how the stone came to be associated with Judah—even though it was from the territory that would be allotted to Joseph’s descendants.

It would certainly appear that Jacob’s pillar, an important symbol of anointed kingship, came to be used by the Davidic kings of Judah as the coronation pillar stone mentioned in Scripture.

Baetylus stones

More evidence of the stone being taken from Bethel by Jacob and then linked with Judah comes from what might at first blush seem an unlikely source—Greek history and mythology. However, many of the ancient Greeks were Israelite, as explained in **Appendix 2** and elsewhere in this publication. Indeed, the rulers of ancient Greece, as explained in **Appendix 3**, traced their lineage to the god Zeus (Jupiter) and his father Cronus (Saturn)—and writings attributed to the ancient Phoenician historian Sanchuniathon mention “Kronos, whom the Phoenicians call Israel,” that is, Jacob, and his son “Jehud” or Judah, parallel with Zeus (see **Appendix 3: “Aegean Royal Lines From Zerah”**).

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