

Joseph of Arimathea and David's Throne *in Britain!*

We get a fleeting glimpse in the New Testament. This great man of YEHOVAH God strides onto center-stage, commands our attention for a few brief verses then, just as quickly, disappears - - never to be heard from again! Yet this man, whose life is just as fascinating or as intriguing as that of Paul or Peter, performed a VITAL mission in the plan of YEHOVAH God! As a close relative of the Messiah himself, Joseph of Arimathea carried the Pharez branch of the royal line of Judah to the tin islands of Britain where it merged with the line of Zarah already present in the islands. Read how the two lines merged in the person of the famous King Arthur and NOT by a fictitious marriage between a daughter of King Zedekiah and the Irish prince Heremon.

by John D. Keyser

Matthew records in chapter 27: "Now when evening had come, there came A RICH MAN from Arimathea, named JOSEPH, who himself had also become A DISCIPLE OF JESUS. This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate commanded the body to be given to him. And when JOSEPH had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, and laid it in his new tomb which he had hewn out of the rock; and he rolled a large stone against the door of the tomb, and departed." (Verses 57-60, NKJV).

With these words Joseph of Arimathea disappears from the pages of the Bible.

The other gospels cover the SAME EVENTS, adding details that Matthew doesn't mention. We read in Mark:

Now when evening had come, because it was the Preparation Day, that is, the day before the Sabbath, Joseph of Arimathea, a PROMINENT COUNCIL

MEMBER, who was himself WAITING FOR THE KINGDOM OF GOD, coming in and taking courage, went in to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Pilate marveled that He was already dead; and summoning the centurion, he asked him if He had been dead for some time. And when he found out from the centurion, he granted the body to Joseph. Then he bought fine linen, took Him down, and wrapped Him in the linen. And he laid Him in a tomb which had been hewn out of the rock, and rolled a stone against the door of the tomb. -- Verses 42-46, NKJV.

Luke adds little that is not covered by Matthew and Mark: "And behold, there was a man named Joseph, A COUNCIL MEMBER, A GOOD AND JUST MAN. HE HAD NOT CONSENTED TO THEIR COUNSEL AND DEED. He was from Arimathea, a city of the Jews, who himself was also waiting for the kingdom of God. This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Yeshua. Then he took it down, wrapped it in linen, and laid it in a tomb that was hewn out of the rock, where no one had ever lain before." (Luke 23:50-53, NKJV).

John, the apostle of love, tells us a little more:

After this, Joseph of Arimathea, being a DISCIPLE OF JESUS, BUT SECRETLY, FOR FEAR OF THE JEWS, asked Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus; and Pilate gave him permission. So he came and took the body of Jesus. And NICODEMUS, who at first came to Jesus by night, also came bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds. Then they took the body of Jesus, and bound it in strips of linen with the spices, as the custom of the Jews is to bury. Now in the place where He was crucified there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb in which no one had yet been laid. So there they laid Jesus, because of the Jews' Preparation Day, for the tomb was nearby. -- John 19:38-42, NKJV.

To most readers of the Bible, therefore, Joseph of Arimathea is remembered in passing as the rich man who took the body of the Messiah down from the tree and placed it in his own private sepulcher. He then silently passes out of the Scriptural record leaving no trace whatsoever in the Word of YEHOVAH God!

As E. Raymond Capt notes: "Strangely, the Bible has nothing further to say about Joseph of Arimathea, following the crucifixion. Surely this man who was a disciple of Jesus; who had shown rare courage in begging the body of Jesus, would have become a close follower of Christ after the transforming experience at Pentecost. The Bible never mentions him again, yet we are not left in the dark concerning the DOMINANT ROLE Joseph played in the spreading of Christianity." (*The Traditions of Glastonbury*. Artisan Sales, Thousand Oaks, CA. 1983, p. 21).

WHO was this man who, in all probability, risked the wrath of the Jewish authorities when he requested the body of the Messiah for burial?

A Man of Substance!

In reading these verses from the Bible we can glean a number of things. First, and foremost, is the fact that he was a RICH MAN from Arimathea. Ancient traditions note that Joseph was a man of refinement, well educated and possessing many talents. He evidently had extraordinary political and business abilities that helped him to become one of the wealthiest men in the world of that time. His financial and social standing can be estimated when we realize that he owned a palatial home in the city of Jerusalem and a country estate just outside the confines of the city. These same traditions reveal that Joseph also owned another spacious estate several miles north of Jerusalem at ARIMATHEA -- which is known today as Ramallah.

Ramallah was the birthplace of Samuel the prophet and is called, in the Greek Septuagint version of the Old Testament, Arimathaim. This town was located on the busy caravan route between Nazareth and the Holy City, and may therefore have been a large factor in Joseph's choice of a profession. All the information we have about Joseph indicates that he was a man of unusual business abilities within the Jewish and Roman trading circles of his day.

All four of the gospels state that he was "a disciple of Jesus" who was himself "waiting for the kingdom of God." John adds that Joseph was a disciple of Yeshua "secretly, for fear of the Jews." It is obvious, then, that Joseph of Arimathea was well aware of the person and ministry of the Messiah in his homeland and, in order to protect his standing and business interests, was a "secret" disciple of Yeshua. The religious hierarchy of the day, made up of the Pharisees and Sadducees, could have easily ruined Joseph if they were aware of his religious affiliation. Therefore Joseph chose, at this time, to keep his connection with the Messiah secret. However, there is more to Joseph's connection with the Messiah than meets the eye!

Luke mentions that Joseph was a COUNCIL MEMBER, and Mark adds "PROMINENT" to the term council member. This would indicate that he was a member of the GREAT COUNCIL or SANHEDRIN of the Jews -- the supreme national tribunal established at the time of the Maccabees, or perhaps earlier in the time of Ezra.

That Joseph was present at the trial of Yeshua before the Sanhedrin is evident by Luke's comment that Joseph "had not consented to their counsel and deed." In fact, there is evidence that Joseph of Arimathea led an impassioned defense of the Messiah at the trial. In the crowded assembly of the Sanhedrin, the Messiah was led to face Caiaphas and his father-in-law Annas who, as the reigning High Priest of Judaism, represented the Sadducean families of which they were members.

George F. Jowett relates what transpired:

Contrary to the common belief that Jesus was completely surrounded by enemies at that strange midnight trial, the light of recent findings prove it to have been very much otherwise.

That Jesus was encompassed by a vengeful, hostile group who sought His total extinction is substantiated, but THE BRILLIANT BATTLE FOR THE DEFENCE against the savage demands for destruction has, unfortunately, never been sufficiently reported. Today, we know the trial for life was fought out on the floor of the Sanhedrin with all the stormy violence of a bestial, prejudiced fury on one side and the granite uncompromising courage of the defence by men who knew that by the very act of their challenge they had signed and sealed their own death warrant. -- ***The Drama of the Lost Disciples***. Covenant Publishing Co. Ltd., London. 1980, p. 13.

Jowett goes on to say that "on this particular occasion we see the opposition potent with prejudice, slashing at Christ with their verbal darts, subtly fanning the flame of antagonism against Him. On the other side, we see the champions of the defence striking back with rapier swiftness. The history of the Trial, as it has come down to us, shows that the defence fought back with all the resolute heroism of fearless warriors, invincible in the courage of their firm convictions."

The defense of the Messiah by Joseph and those who supported him must have been brilliant, and a classic in the legal annals of Judea at the time. When the vote was cast, forty out of the seventy-one legislative members of the Sanhedrin voted for the dismissal of the case and the freedom of the Messiah. This the Sadducees never forgot. They controlled all the wealthy ruling families of Jerusalem and the surrounding areas -- with the exception of the intrepid Joseph! His influence was so great that it stretched beyond the boundaries of Jewish politics into the high places of Roman administration. "He is the man who at this stage of events quietly moves into the scene. He was the power behind the throne who backed up the exhortations of the Liberal Party in the Sanhedrin, and the man who stood behind the defence of Jesus with his resourceful support on that fateful night" (*ibid.*, p. 15).

At this point Caiaphas demanded that Yeshua be tried before Pontius Pilate, the Roman Procurator of the Roman Province of Palestine, on the charge of treason. What happened next is recorded in the pages of the Bible.

The British Tin Industry

In the Latin Vulgate of the Gospel of Mark (15:43) and Luke (23:50) we find the term "DECURIO" used instead of "COUNCIL MEMBER" to describe Joseph's office or

occupation. In Jerome's (Catholic scholar, 345?-420 A.D.) translation of the Vulgate the term "NOBILIS DECURIO" is used -- the NOBLE DECURIO!

Not only that, but early documents of Britain and Gaul refer to Joseph in the same manner. The Welshman Maelgwyn of Llandaff calls Joseph the "NOBILIS DECURIO," as well as Rabanus Maurus (776-856 A.D.), Archbishop of Mayence and writer of the manuscript called the ***Life of St. Mary Magdalene***.

A copy of this document is to be found in the Magdalen College Library at Oxford, England, and dates from the early part of the fifteenth century. No history is known of this manuscript; but it is neatly written on parchment and beautifully illuminated in colors and in gold. Experts note that the writing and illumination is very similar to that of the manuscript copy of the Tertius Opus of Roger Bacon in the Bodleian Library of the University of Oxford, which is generally considered to date from the end of the fourteenth or beginning of the fifteenth century.

It is abundantly clear that this copy of the ***Life of St. Mary*** from Rabanus' original is written by a professional scribe. The careful "illumination," the various copying errors, and the fact that at the end of the manuscript the writer goes on to transcribe a homily (sermon) of Origen (the celebrated writer, teacher and theologian of antiquity) on Mary Magdalen, lends credence to this being a faithful copy of the original.

As J.W. Taylor notes, "the original work of which this is a copy was undoubtedly written either by Rabanus himself, or its author must have made considerable use of the Homilies of Rabanus, for the general style and composition of the work (as M. Faillon has well shown) CLOSELY FOLLOWS that of its reputed author." (***The Coming of the Saints***, p. 81).

The book in the Magdalen College Library has been recognized as a work of Rabanus in past centuries, and appears as such in the well-known list or catalog of William Cave (***Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Historia Literaria***, vol. ii, p. 38 Oxford, 1740-1743).

In the 22nd chapter of this manuscript an account of the embalming and burial of the Messiah by Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus is related, along with a detailed description of the mausoleum and sepulcher that Joseph had hewn out of the rock for his own use. Then the manuscript states that Joseph was known as the NOBILIS DECURION.

Gildas Badonicus (516- 570 A.D.), one of the earliest British historians, also refers to Joseph as "NOBILIS DECURIO." What does this Latin title mean?

In the Roman Empire of the time of the Messiah, the term "DECURIO" was commonly used to designate AN OFFICIAL -- UNDER ROMAN AUTHORITY -- WHO WAS IN CHARGE OF METAL MINING. The implication is that Joseph was a PROVINCIAL

ROMAN SENATOR in charge of Rome's overseas mining interests. Ivor C. Fletcher adds that "the office seems to have been a lucrative and much coveted one. Cicero [Roman writer, statesman and orator (106-43 B.C.)] remarked that it was easier to become a Senator of Rome than a DECURIO in Pompeii." (***The Incredible History of God's True Church***. Triumph Publishing Co., Altadena, CA. 1984, p. 54). The office of Decurio is also known to have existed UNDER THE ROMAN ADMINISTRATION IN BRITAIN!

It is an historical fact that TIN was mined and exported to the European continent in large quantities from CORNWALL, ENGLAND, during the Roman period (***Funk & Wagnalls New Encyclopedia***, vol. 23, pp. 163-164). The ***Encyclopedia Britannica*** reports that "tin was IMPORTED FROM CORNWALL INTO ITALY after, if not before, the invasion of Britain by Julius Caesar. (1943 edition. Vol. 22, p. 233). The tin mines of Cornwall were a major source of this metal; and in Roman times the metal was IN GREAT DEMAND because tin was used in the making of alloys.

In his book entitled ***Roman Britain***, I. A. Richmond tells of the development and growth of the British tin industry and trade with the continent of Europe:

Much of the most famed of British metals in the days before the Roman occupation was TIN. The vivid accounts by Diodorus Siculus [1st century B.C. Greek historian], of overland pack-horse transport of CORNISH TIN from the Gallic [French] coast to Narbo (Narbonne) in the FIRST CENTURY B.C., and of the ISLAND EMPORIUM ON THE BRITISH COAST, from which merchants obtained it, all speak of a brisk and flourishing early trade, monopolized in Caesar's day by the Beneti of Brittany. -- Page 156.

Diodorus Siculus himself, in book V of his history of the world, details the British tin industry:

They that inhabit THE BRITISH PROMONTORY OF BELERIUM [old name for Cornwall], by reason of their converse with merchants, are more civilized and courteous to strangers than the rest. THESE ARE THE PEOPLE THAT MAKE THE TIN, which with a great deal of care and labour they dig out of the ground; and that being rocky, the metal is mixed with some veins of earth, out of which they melt the metal and then refine it. Then they beat it into four square pieces like a die and carry it TO A BRITISH ISLE, near at hand, CALLED ICTIS. For at low tide, all being dry between them and the island, they convey over in carts ABUNDANCE OF TIN. But there is one thing that is peculiar to these islands which lie between Britain and Europe: for at full sea they appear to be islands, but at low water for a long way they look like so many peninsulas. Hence the merchants transport the tin they buy of the inhabitants of Gaul, and for thirty days' journey they carry it in packs upon

horses' backs THROUGH GAUL TO THE MOUTH OF THE RIVER RHONE.

And again:

This TIN METAL is transported OUT OF BRITAIN INTO GAUL, the merchants carrying it on horse-back THROUGH THE HEART OF CELTICA TO MARSEILLES and the city called NARBO. -- **Diodorus Siculus**, Booth's translation, vol.i, p.311.

The promontory of Cornwall is rich in the remains of old mining works and debris. The Phoenicians were probably the first to utilize Cornish tin; and some mines, like the Ding-Dong Mine, can be traced to a high antiquity. The oldest crude pits containing smelted tin are called "JEWS' HOUSES," the tradition being that THE TIN MINES OF CORNWALL were "WROUGHT BY THE JEWS with pickaxes of holm, box and hartshorn -- tools sometimes found among the rubble of such works." These date to very remote times.

There is hardly a tin-bearing spot in Cornwall that has not been worked over by the "OLD MEN," -- as the ancient miners of the land are always called. "...upon whatever spot the OLD MINER has worked there we are told the Phoenician has been or THE JEW has mined. The existence of the terms "JEWS' HOUSES," "JEWS' TIN," "JEWS' LEAVINGS," "ATTALL" and "ATALL SARACEN," prove the connection of these strangers with the Cornish miners." (***Romances of the West***, by Hunt. London, 1872).

In Polwhele's ***History of Cornwall*** (Falmouth, 1803) we read that "the OLDEST smelting-places are called 'JEWS' HOUSES,' the old blocks of tin occasionally found are called 'JEWS' PIECES,' and the stream works of tin that have been formerly deserted by the labourers are called 'JEWS' WORKS' or 'ATTALL SARACEN.' The JEWS appear to have called themselves, or were called by the Britons of Cornwall, 'SARACENS.' "

All through the land of Cornwall the ancient presence and influence of the JEWS is marked by names and places like "BOJEWYAN" (ABODE OF THE JEWS), "TREJEWAS" (JEWS' VILLAGE) and "MARKET JEW." These, as well as the historical "JEWISH WINDOWS" in St. Neot's church and other Jewish monuments and memories, abundantly supplement the older traditions of the "JEWS' HOUSES" and "JEWS' LEAVINGS."

The ***Encyclopedia Britannica*** (1943 edition) notes that "the wealth of CORNWALL...lies not so much in the soil, as UNDERGROUND and in the surrounding sea. Hence the favourite Cornish toast, "fish, tin and copper." The tin of Cornwall has been known and worked FROM THE BRONZE AGE. By ancient charters the "TINNERS" were exempt from all jurisdiction (save in cases affecting land, life and limb) other than that of the Stannary Courts, and peculiar laws were enacted in the Stannary parliaments. A TAX on the tin, after smelting, was paid to the earls and dukes of

Cornwall." (Vol. 6, p. 453).

What does all this have to do with Joseph of Arimathea? Just this: Along with the traditions of Jewish presence in Cornwall, THERE ARE TRADITIONS OF JOSEPH having visited the area in the course of his mining business. Fragments of poems and miners' songs, handed down through the centuries, make FREQUENT REFERENCE TO JOSEPH. One refrain runs, "Joseph was a tin man, Joseph was in the tin trade." (*Cornwall*, by S. Baring-Gould, p. 57). In the ***Guide to Penzance, Land's End and Scilly***, the author states that "there is a traditional story that JOSEPH OF ARIMATHEA was connected with MARAZION [a small seaport of Cornwall -- 2 miles east of Penzance] when he and other Jews traded with the ancient tin-miners of Cornwall" (5th edition, Ward, Lock and Co., London).

Is it really so incredible that Joseph of Arimathea had commercial interests in the British Isles -- the Cassiterides or "Tin-Islands" of the ancient world? After all SENECA, the Roman philosopher, dramatist and statesman who was appointed tutor to Nero and had great influence with the emperor, amassed great wealth as a result of his business interests and investments in Britain. Unfortunately, Seneca obtained his vast fortune by trickery and promoting usurious loans to the British. Joseph, on the other hand, was impeccably honest in all his business transactions. Virtually all the early records and traditions concerning Joseph ASSOCIATE HIM WITH THE MINING ACTIVITIES OF CORNWALL AND THE MENDIP HILLS OF SOMERSET!

The Royal Link

Some early historical manuscripts refer to Joseph as "Joseph de MARMORE" as well as "Joseph of Arimathea." "Mar" is an Eastern term for LORD and "more" or "mawe" signifies GREAT. Therefore, his title would mean "the Great Lord Joseph of Arimathea" - a title that has great significance, as we shall soon see!

WHY would Joseph be given such a title in the manuscripts? WHY would he be called "the Great Lord Joseph of Arimathea"? BECAUSE HE WAS OF THE ROYAL LINE DESCENDED FROM KING DAVID, and this title was in keeping with his birth as A PRINCE OF THE HOUSE OF DAVID! That makes him related to the Messiah!

Ivor C. Fletcher reveals why this is apparent:

The gospel record of Joseph burying the body of Jesus in his own sepulchre STRONGLY SUPPORTS THIS TRADITION. A casual reading of the account would lead one to assume that Joseph claimed the body from Pilate on the grounds of being a friend or follower of the dead man.

This is far from the case, however. The chief priests, with the permission of

Pilate, had made special arrangements regarding the security of the body of Jesus for the express purpose of keeping it out of the hands of His followers (Matt. 27:62-66).

We are told that Joseph did not reveal at that time that he was a follower of Jesus. He was a disciple "secretly for fear of the Jews" (John 19:38).

If Joseph did not approach Pilate on the grounds of being a disciple, WHAT EXACTLY WAS HIS STATUS?

The only grounds which he could have had which would be in agreement with Jewish AND Roman law and at the same time avoid giving offence to the chief priests, would be as THE NEAREST RELATIVE OF THE DEAD MAN.

With that pronouncement Fletcher continues:

Under both Jewish and Roman Law it was the responsibility of the NEAREST RELATIVES to dispose of the dead, regardless of the circumstances of death.

Mary, the mother of Jesus, would clearly be in no fit emotional state for such a task, which would have been considered "man's work" anyway. The brothers of Jesus as young men or teenagers would have lacked the maturity to perform such a duty, LEAVING JOSEPH (ACCORDING TO TRADITION THE UNCLE OF MARY) THE NEXT IN LINE.

Unless Joseph had STRONG LEGAL GROUNDS, as described, for claiming the body, the Jews would have RESISTED the idea of a man -- whom they hated and had caused to be executed -- given the honour of being buried in a private sepulchre, instead of the official burial place for criminals.

The last time that Joseph, the legal FATHER of Jesus, is mentioned in scripture is when Jesus is twelve years old (Luke 2:44-52). From then on the Bible speaks only of His mother and brothers. The clear implication is that Joseph died when Jesus was a young man or teenager. The people of his home town of Nazareth asked the question, "Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary? (Mark 6:3). A son would only be spoken of in this way if the father were dead.

Under Jewish law THE NEAREST MALE RELATIVE would have the clear responsibility to assist the widow and her children. As we saw earlier, this role would almost certainly be taken up by JOSEPH OF ARIMATHEA. -- ***The Incredible History of God's True Church***, pp. 53-54.

E. Raymond Capt also shows that it had to be a RELATIVE who claimed the body of the

Messiah:

It is quite obvious that the husband (Joseph the widower and carpenter) of Mary died while Jesus was young. Under both ROMAN AND HEBREW LAW, the NEXT MALE KIN automatically becomes the LEGAL GUARDIAN of the family. In this case it was Joseph of Arimathea....

We also cannot overlook the fact that Joseph "went in BOLDLY unto Pilate...and (Pilate) gave the body to Joseph." (Mark 15:43-45) The Sanhedrin had declared Jesus a criminal. According to both ROMAN AND JEWISH LAW, unless the body of an executed criminal was immediately claimed BY THE NEXT OF KIN, the body of the victim was cast into a common pit, where as with others, all physical record of them was completely obliterated. Certainly, the fanatical Sadducean element of the Sanhedrin who sought the total extinction of Jesus, even in death, would have allowed NOTHING SHORT OF A LEGAL CLAIM on the body of Christ. -- ***The Traditions of Glastonbury***, pp. 19-20.

We must also realize that Joseph of Arimathea was a man whom the Sadducees DARED NOT OPPOSE without running up against the Roman administration of the land. Joseph's influence was so great it stretched beyond the borders of Judea into the upper echelons of Roman authority. The Sadducees, therefore, had to defer to Joseph's claim. Joseph's act of claiming the body of the Messiah made him a MARKED MAN, and the hatred of the Sadducees toward him must have been surpassed only by their hatred of Yeshua. Also, we must remember, it was Joseph who led the defense of Yeshua before the Sanhedrin. This did not win him too many points with the Jewish authorities!

Ancient traditions, held close to the heart of the Eastern Church, claim that Joseph was related to the Messiah and was, in fact, His GREAT-UNCLE! The Jewish TALMUD states that Joseph was the YOUNGER BROTHER OF THE FATHER OF MARY, and therefore was her uncle and a GREAT-UNCLE TO YESHUA. George F. Jowett, in his book ***The Drama of the Lost Disciples***, also states that "according to the ***Talmud***, Joseph was the YOUNGER BROTHER OF THE FATHER OF THE VIRGIN MARY. He was her uncle, and therefore a great-uncle to Jesus." (P.18). The ***Harleian Manuscripts*** in the British Museum (38-59f, 193b) further support the claims that Joseph of Arimathea was uncle to Mary the mother of Yeshua. One of the manuscripts adds that he had a daughter, ANNA, calling her "consobrina" or COUSIN OF MARY. In the ***High History of the Holy Grail*** it plainly states that "Joseph was his [the Messiah's] mother's uncle" and "this Joseph, as the Scripture witnesseth, was his [the Messiah's] UNCLE" (Appendix M, ***The Coming of the Saints***, by J. W. Taylor, p. 245). This explains the close relationship the Messiah had with Joseph of Arimathea.

George F. Jowett remarks on this relationship:

During the lifetime of Jesus there constantly appears reference to his association with a RELATIVE at Jerusalem. Profane history is more positive on the matter, identifying the connection with Joseph. As we study the old records we find there is a valid reason for the close association of Jesus and his family with Joseph. It is quite obvious that the husband of Mary died while Jesus was young. Under Jewish law such a circumstance automatically appointed THE NEXT MALE KIN OF THE HUSBAND, in this case Joseph, legal guardian of the family. This fact explains many things. History and tradition report Jesus, as a boy, frequently in the company of His UNCLE, particularly at the time of the religious feasts, and declares that JESUS MADE VOYAGES TO BRITAIN with Joseph in his ships. CORNISH TRADITIONS abound with this testimony and numerous ancient landmarks bear HEBREW NAMES recording these visits.

Jowett continues:

Even during the short period of the ministry of Jesus there is definitely shown to exist A CLOSE AFFINITY between them, far greater than one would expect from an ordinary guardianship. It was fatherly, loyal, with a mutual affection death could not sever.

We know that Joseph never forsook his nephew. He stood by Him as a bold, fearless defender at the notorious trial, and DEFIED THE SANHEDRIN by going to Pilate and boldly claiming the body when all others feared to do so. His arms were the first to cradle the broken corpse when taken down from the cross and place it in the tomb. After death he continued to protect the mutilated body of Jesus from the conspiring minds of the Sadducees. He risked his all, wealth, power and position in those crucial years fulfilling his obligation as guardian of Jesus and of the family of Mary. He loved Jesus dearly. The disciples spoke of Joseph with an affectionate regard. They wrote he was a "just man," a "good man," "honourable," and "a disciple of Jesus." The latter clearly indicates that all through their association Joseph must have encouraged Jesus in His great work and that he was aware of the mystery of His birth and probably His destiny. All evidence proves that Joseph believed in the validity of all Jesus taught and ultimately suffered for. -- ***The Drama of the Lost Disciples***, pp. 18-19.

This, then, was the man YEHOVAH God used to ESTABLISH THE DAVIDIC LINE OF PHAREZ in the final home of the wandering ten tribes of Israel! It was JOSEPH, not Jeremiah, who planted the seed of David in the islands of Britain. And what better man than Joseph with his great mercantile fleet and mining interests in Britain, coupled with a

deep LOVE OF THE TRUTH of YEHOVAH God, to transfer the SEED OF DAVID and establish the Church of YEHOVAH God in the tin islands of Britain?

The Missing Years!

The pages of the Bible are strangely silent concerning Yeshua's life between the ages of 12 and 30. The only incident of His childhood is to be found in Luke 2, where He goes missing and is found sitting in the midst of the teachers at the Temple:

And when He was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem according to the custom of the feast. When they had finished the days, as they returned, the Boy Jesus lingered behind in Jerusalem. And Joseph and His mother did not know it; but supposing Him to have been in the company, they went a day's journey, and sought Him among their relatives and acquaintances. So when they did not find Him, they returned to Jerusalem, seeking Him. Now so it was that after three days they found Him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, both listening to them and asking them questions. And all who heard Him were astonished at His understanding and answers. -- Verses 42-47.

The last mention in the New Testament of the boy Yeshua is found in Luke 2:52, which simply states: "And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men." Then there is a gap of eighteen years in the life of the Messiah -- eighteen years in which the New Testament is totally silent about the activities and whereabouts of the growing Messiah. Most people have thought that Yeshua lived in the town of Nazareth, working as a carpenter until he commenced his ministry at the age of thirty. However, there are a number of implications in the New Testament that indicate otherwise -- that indicate he was OUT OF THE CONFINES OF PALESTINE during these years!

Notice what Luke says in Luke 4:16-22: "So He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up. And as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up to read...And the eyes of all who were in the synagogue were fixed on Him...So all bore witness to Him, and marveled at the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth. And they said, 'Is this not Joseph's son?' " There are a couple of things that stand out here. First of all, the use of the expression, "where He had been brought up," seems to imply that while the Messiah had spent his childhood in Nazareth, he had not continued to live there. Obviously, he had not lived there for some time. This impression is reinforced by the question his hearers ask in the synagogue: "Is this not Joseph's son?" -- almost as if they were in doubt regarding his identity.

The same incident is recorded in Matthew 13, with added questions posed by the synagogue worshippers: "Is this not the carpenter's son? Is not His mother called Mary? And His brothers James, Joses, Simon, and Judas? And His sisters, are they not all with

us? WHERE then did this Man get all these things?" (verses 55-56). Clearly, they were not very familiar with Yeshua! He was such a STRANGER to them that the people could not even refer to him by name, but only by his relationship to the other members of his family whom they knew. "WHERE then did THIS MAN get all these things" clearly indicates that the Messiah did not receive his knowledge in the town of Nazareth!

Let us now investigate another passage in the New Testament which indicates the Messiah's absence from the area:

After they arrived in Capernaum the men collecting the TWO DRACHMAS [tax] approached Peter and said: 'Does your teacher not pay the TWO DRACHMAS [tax]?' He said: 'Yes.' However, when he entered the house Jesus got ahead of him by saying: 'What do you think, Simon? From whom do the kings of the earth receive duties or HEAD TAX? From their sons or from the STRANGERS?' When he said: 'From the STRANGERS,' Jesus said to him: 'Really, then, the sons are tax-free. But that we do not cause them to stumble, you go to the sea, cast a fishhook, and take the first fish coming up and, when you open its mouth, you will find a STATER COIN. Take that and give it to them FOR ME AND YOU.' (Matthew 17:24-27, ***The Kingdom Interlinear Translation of the Greek Scriptures***).

In a number of Bible translations they call the "TWO DRACHMAS" Temple tax, however the Temple tax was paid with a Jewish shekel-- a coin especially minted for that purpose. In the above passage we find Yeshua being asked about his liability to pay the two drachmas or "strangers' tax" which was a Roman poll-tax levied against FOREIGN VISITORS to Capernaum. Most often, these were merchants and traders who conducted their business there. Evidently the tax collector considered Yeshua a "stranger" or a "foreign visitor." When we consider this incident, there is more than a suggestion that Yeshua had been absent from Palestine for a considerable length of time.

The same conclusion becomes apparent when we consider John the Baptist's reaction to the Messiah. E. Raymond Capt explains:

When Jesus appears upon the banks of the Jordan River where John was baptizing, the Baptist seems scarcely to recognize Jesus, even though they were first cousins and must have known each other during their early childhood. Finally, John recognizes who the STRANGER is and exclaims: "Behold the Lamb of God!" Now, if Jesus had been living in Nazareth all those surely John would not have appeared puzzled as to His identity. Then, later, John sent two of his disciples to make a peculiar query: "Are you he who should come or look we for another?" Apparently, the two had not met for years since John displays a profoundly IMPERFECT KNOWLEDGE of the

One whom he was proclaiming. -- ***The Traditions of Glastonbury***, p. 6.

There is yet another incident in the New Testament indicating that Yeshua was absent from his homeland for a considerable period of time. In the book of John we read the following:

Philip found Nathanael and said to him, "We have found Him of whom Moses in the law, and also the prophets, wrote -- Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." And Nathanael said to him, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" Philip said to him, "Come and see." Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward Him, and said of him, "Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!" Nathanael said to Him, "HOW DO YOU KNOW ME?" Jesus answered and said to him, "Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you." -- John 1:45-48.

Nathanael lived in Cana of Galilee, which is located about five miles from the city of Nazareth. If Yeshua had been living at Nazareth during his youth -- some eighteen years -- it seems very strange that Nathanael would not have known him. Both Nathanael and Philip should have been acquainted with Yeshua's command of the Scriptures -- it would have been known far and wide! Not only that, but would the very Son of YEHOVAH God have no effect upon the community in which he supposedly lived for eighteen years? The implication can only be that Yeshua had not been in Palestine for a long period of time.

Now, naturally, this brings to mind the following questions: If Yeshua was absent from Palestine for what appears to be a considerable period of time, then WHERE was he between the ages of 12 and 30? Is there any evidence that sheds light on his whereabouts during these years? The answer is a definite YES!

The Traditions of Cornwall

"Legends exist that Jesus traveled far and wide. The religious teachers of INDIA assert He had dwelt among them studying there for three years before traveling on to what is now Tibet. Ancient religious books of India record Jesus visiting the Himalayan kingdom of Nepal. Other traditions take Jesus to Egypt" (***The Traditions of Glastonbury***, p. 7). While it is certainly possible that Yeshua did visit other countries, the STRONGEST and MOST PERSISTENT traditions place a young Yeshua in CORNWALL and the ISLE OF AVALON near the little Somerset town of Glastonbury in England!

A number of legends link the boy Yeshua, and Joseph of Arimathea his uncle, with THE TIN MINES OF CORNWALL. One story relates how Yeshua and Joseph often anchored their ship in the natural harbor at THE MOUTH OF THE CAMEL RIVER to come ashore and collect water for the ship. "Nearby, is an ancient well that since olden times has

been known as 'JESUS' WELL.' It was regarded as having healing powers. For centuries pilgrims came to the well and the remains of a chapel, erected over it, are still discernible. Records of its existence go back to the 13th century, but even then, the date and origin of its name is unknown." (***The Traditions of Glastonbury***, p. 29).

Another story tells how Yeshua, visiting the mines of Cornwall with his uncle Joseph, taught the miners how to extract tin from the ground and PURGE IT of the ore wolframite. At the same time, according to local tradition, Joseph also taught the boy Yeshua how to extract the tin and purge it. Is it not significant that Malachi the prophet, in his prophecy and analogy of Yeshua, casts the Messiah in the ROLE OF A REFINER OF METALS (Malachi 3:2-3)? Malachi mentions silver, and it is a fact that silver was often extracted from Mendip lead during the time of the Messiah.

Associated with the mines of Cornwall are the mines of the MENDIP HILLS, north of Glastonbury -- in the county of Somerset, England. During Roman times these mines produced lead, copper and other metals which form alloys with tin. The great war-machine of the Roman Empire consumed vast quantities of these alloys in the production of weapons. There are traditions among the people of the hill country of Somerset that Joseph, after first seeking tin from the SCILLIES (islands off of Cornwall) and in Cornwall itself, came to the Mendips -- accompanied on a number of occasions by a YOUTHFUL YESHUA.

E. Raymond Capt notes that "at the parish Church of PRIDDY, high on the top of the Mendips, they have an old saying: 'As sure as OUR LORD WAS AT PRIDDY.' And a carol sung by the children of PRIDDY begins: 'JOSEPH WAS A TIN MERCHANT, a tin merchant, a tin merchant,' and goes on to describe him arriving FROM THE SEA IN A BOAT [WITH THE BOY YESHUA]." (***The Traditions of Glastonbury***, p. 34).

St. Just, in CORNWALL, also has LEGENDS OF YESHUA COMING TO THE DISTRICT. Among the many traditions is one that relates the story of a STONE Yeshua stepped on when he first landed there. In 1932, while cleaning out a blocked CULVERT, workmen came across a flat stone covered with curious and unintelligible markings. Since this stone was blocking the flow of water from a well known as the "CHRISTENING WELL," the people of St. Just immediately thought that it was the one of legend -- the one the Messiah stepped on when He landed. They reasoned that the strange markings on it were placed there later when the identity of their visitor became known. "Even before the finding of the stone, the old folks would tell visitors to the area the Holy Legend of Christ COMING THERE AS A BOY WITH HIS UNCLE. They spoke of the legend and 'it was as much of your life was worth' to express any doubt about Christ coming to ST. JUST" (*ibid.*, p. 33).

The old Ordinance maps of the west part of CORNWALL show two rich lodes or veins of TIN, bearing the names "CORPUS CHRISTI" (BODY OF CHRIST) and "WHEEL OF

JESUS." (Wheel is an old Cornish word for "mine").

Another LINK between YESHUA AND THE TIN TRADE OF CORNWALL is found in St. Anthony-in-Roseland. Here is located an almost unknown structure called "Place Manor Church" with a Pre-Norman stone arch over the South Door. Carved in this arch are ancient pictographs -- estimated to be more than a 1000 years old -- telling the story of Yeshua and his uncle coming to Place for tin. According to the pictographs their boat got into difficulties during a storm, and was washed ashore on the headland where the modern lighthouse now stands. The operators of a local trading post managed to bring Joseph's damaged boat into the sheltered side of the headland, by Place, where repairs were carried out. Joseph and Yeshua stayed at the trading post while the boat was being repaired. The pictographs go on to say that before they left the area, they erected a stone with an account of their visit there.

Scattered throughout the tin mining areas of Cornwall are to be found a number of very ancient CELTIC CROSSES called "TUNIC CROSSES." These crosses, found alongside roads and in church cemeteries, are of a type found NOWHERE ELSE IN THE BRITISH ISLES -- or anywhere else in the world, for that matter! States E. Raymond Capt: "On one side of the cross is a crudely cut Christian cross and on the other, THE FIGURE of what can only be A BOY, DRESSED IN A KNEE-LENGTH TUNIC. Here we have NOT a crucified Messiah, nailed to a cross, but A YOUTH WITH HIS ARMS OUTSTRETCHED IN AN ATTITUDE OF BLESSING. These crosses may well portray the AGE-OLD MEMORY of the visits of the young Jesus to these shores in the company of His uncle Joseph" (*The Traditions of Glastonbury*, p. 34).

Apart from the places already mentioned, West County traditions also associate St. Michael's Mount, Redruth and Glastonbury with a visit from Jesus. Ivor C. Fletcher uncovered a tradition in Upper Galilee that tells of a visit to Glastonbury:

Among the Maronite and Catluei villagers of Upper Galilee the tradition lingers that Jesus as a youth became a shipwright on a trading vessel from TYRE, one of the biblical "ships of Tarshish."

According to the story, He was storm-bound on the WESTERN COASTS OF ENGLAND throughout the winter. The location of the visit is given as "THE SUMMERLAND," a name often used in ancient times for the modern COUNTY OF SOMERSET. A district associated with this visit to Somerset is known as "PARADISE." This place is sometimes found on old maps of the area. -- *The Incredible History of God's True Church*, p. 51.

Yeshua at Avalon

The strongest and the most persistent traditions place the young Yeshua on the mystical

island of AVALON -- later to become the little Somerset county town of Glastonbury. Here, as the story goes, Yeshua and his uncle constructed a wattle hut similar to those at the nearby Glastonbury Lake Village. The site they chose was at the base of a hill from which ran a spring of water, later known as Chalice Well.

In early times AVALON was a small island at the back of a large, marshy estuary known as the Uxella. The estuary was covered by waters from the Bristol Channel, and received the waters of the rivers Axe, Parret and the Brue. The River Brue was a navigable river from the foot of the nearby Mendip Hills to the sea -- just south of Bristol.

Rising above the landscape is the hill, known today as Glastonbury Tor. Once a place of Druid worship, the 500 foot *tor* may have also been the chief stronghold of one Melwas, king of the "Aestive Regio" (the Summer Kingdom) of Somerset. It is likely that the *tor* stronghold was the political center of a much wider area than Glastonbury.

Archaeologist E. Raymond Capt notes that "the earliest name of Glastonbury was "YNIS-WITRIN" (*Ynys gyrdyn* -- British; *Glaestingabyrig* -- Anglo-Saxon) or the "GLASSY ISLAND." Later, when it was found to be fruitful and ideal for the cultivation of apples, it was called "INSULA AVALONIA," or Isle of the Apple Trees. AVAL, in Welsh [Celtic], means apple. Just how this area came to be known by the name "GLASTONBURY" remains in doubt. One suggestion is that the origin of Glastonbury is in "Glaestingaburgh," the hill fort of the Flaestings, a family who settled in the area. Another, and more accepted theory is that the CELTIC word for green is "Glas" and hill is "ton." GLASTON is therefore "the green hill," so named after the tor, or mount that dominates the landscape." (*The Traditions of Glastonbury*, p. 13).

When the Saxons arrived in the 6th century A.D., they built a town about a half mile from the *tor* and obtained a charter, adding "borough" or "bury" to the original name -- thus "Glaston-bury."

Tradition and written testimony assert that Yeshua did indeed reside on the Island of Avalon, and there created a building to live in which was later called a "church." A wealth of ancient writers, both ecclesiastical and secular, affirm this. For more than a thousand years it was commonly spoken of as "the church [home, house] built NOT BY HUMAN ART." Augustine, the Catholic monk who was sent to evangelize Britain by Pope Gregory I, was quite familiar with the facts and the existence of this structure. In a letter to Pope Gregory (*Epistolae ad Gregorium Papam*) Augustine writes with obvious delight and at great length about the "church":

In the Western confines of Britain there is a certain ROYAL ISLAND of large extent, surrounded by water, abounding in all the beauties of nature and necessities of life. In it the first Neophytes of Catholic Law, GOD BEFOREHAND ACQUAINTED THEM, found a church constructed by no

human art, BUT DIVINELY CONSTRUCTED, OR BY THE HANDS OF CHRIST HIMSELF, for the salvation of His people. The Almighty has made it manifest by many miracles and mysterious visitations that He continues to watch over it as sacred to Himself, and to Mary, the Mother of God.

Augustine's statement in his letter is verified by the Saxon historian, William of Malmesbury, who wrote in the twelfth century. His last work, ***De Antiquitate Glastoniae***, mentions the little wattle house. Other works, such as ***De origine Ecclesiae Britannicae*** by Elvan of Avalon (a British scholar educated in the School of Joseph of Arimathea at Avalon -- circa 180 A.D.); ***Relat. Hist. de rebus Anglicis Act***, by Pitsaeus; ***De Sancto Joseph at Aramathia***, by Capgrave; ***The Magna Tabula of Glastonbury***, at Haworth Castle; ***John of Glastonbury***, by Hearne; Bede's ***Ecclesiastical History***; the British historian Gildas and Geoffrey of Monmouth also make mention of the wattle "church" built by the Messiah.

William of Malmesbury also recites the well-known story of St. David who went to Glastonbury in 540 A.D. In 546 A.D. David enclosed the original wattle structure in LEAD in order to preserve it, and erected a pillar on the site with a brass tablet bearing record to the fact.

With the passage of time the little wattle house became an object of deep veneration by all, and many swore oaths by the old "church" very much like people today swear an oath on the Bible. William of Malmesbury wrote:

The church of which we are speaking (Glastonbury) from its antiquity called by the Angles, by way of distinction, "EALDE CHICHE," that is the "OLD CHURCH" of wattle work at first, SAVOURED SOMEWHAT OF HEAVENLY SANCTITY EVEN FROM ITS VERY FOUNDATION, and exhaled it over the whole country, claiming SUPERIOR REVERENCE, though the structure was mean....Men of that province had no oath more frequent, or more sacred than to swear by the Old Church, fearing the swiftest vengeance on their perjury in this respect. In the meantime it is clear that the depository of so many saints may be deservedly called an HEAVENLY SANCTUARY UPON EARTH...who there more especially chose to await the day of resurrection under the protection of the Mother of God. -- ***Acts of the Kings of the English***, bk. I, ch. 2.

For centuries before the island of AVALON was renamed GLASTONBURY by the invading Saxons, two names were frequently found in the writings of the old scribes -- clearly referring to something of great importance. Usually no explanation is given, indicating that the people of the day were quite familiar with the names. "To the Priesthood and historians of those enthralling years, the TWO NAMES employed designating the particular place were 'SECRETUM DOMINI' and 'DOMUS DEI.' The first

title means 'THE SECRET OF OUR LORD' and the second, 'THE HOUSE OR HOME OF GOD.' The explanation given is that the LITTLE WATTLE TEMPLE WAS THE HOUSE, OR HOME OF GOD, BECAUSE THEREIN HE DWELT, and the Secret of the Lord was the Dowry and dedication of the same to His mother" (*The Drama of the Lost Disciples*, p. 144).

This is not myth, legend or unsupported tradition. The title is officially recorded in the ancient names found in the famous DOMESDAY BOOK -- a document that embodies the results of a statistical survey of England carried out by order of William I, King of England. The survey, made in 1086, was an attempt to register the landed wealth of the country in a systematic fashion, in order to determine the revenues due to the king. The term DOMESDAY is a corruption of DOOMSDAY (the day of the final judgment), and the work was so named because its judgments regarding levies and assessments were final and irrevocable. The entry says: "The DOMUS DEI, in the great monastery of Glastonbury, called The Secret of Our Lord. This Glastonbury Church possesses in its own ville XII hides of land which have never paid tax."

The Education of the Messiah!

Finally, there is evidence that Yeshua attended school in Britain! During the first century A.D. Britain was known throughout the Roman world for the excellence of its educational system. Gildas states, in the *Cottonian Manuscript*, that the British universities of Yeshua's time were the largest in the world -- both in size and in attendance -- with a listing of sixty large universities and an average attendance of over sixty thousand students! The wealthy and the aristocracy of the Greek and Roman worlds sent their children to Britain to study law, science and religion.

The wise men of India, in their ancient books known as the *Rig-Vedas*, make mention that Britain was a great center of religious learning. The great library at the abbey in Glastonbury housed the largest known collection of books outside the library of Alexandria in Egypt! The fact is, ancient Britain had then acquired great stature in the world, with institutions of learning and attendance rivaling those of advanced nations today!

Ivor C. Fletcher expounds on this:

Britain, during the first century A.D., would have been an ideal place to study and develop skills in various aspects of the building industry.

Eumenius states that British architects were in great demand on the Continent during his day. Several writers mention the skills of British craftsmen, especially in the metal working industries.

The enameling process was invented in Britain. A superb example of the local "La Tene" art is the famous Glastonbury bowl which was produced about the time of Christ. There is little doubt that Jesus could have developed many skills from British craftsmen. -- ***The Incredible History of God's True Church***, pp. 56-57.

The Bible indicates that Yeshua was a public speaker par excellence. He had a tremendous impact on the crowds that gathered around him, "and they were struck with awe at his mode of instruction." (Mark 1:22). Not only was he a good speaker -- he was also an EDUCATED speaker! The New Testament records that the people of his home town of Nazareth were astonished at his preaching: "So all bore witness to Him, and marveled at the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth" (Luke 4:22).

Remarks Ivor C. Fletcher:

It is very clear that not all of His formal education and public speaking training had been received at Nazareth. If His training had been merely the product of a local school or college then the people would not have been so astonished.

It is unlikely that higher education of that calibre was even available in a provincial town such as Nazareth. Nathanael implied this in his remark: "Can any good thing proceed from Nazareth?" (John 1:46).

Jerusalem was the academic headquarters of the nation, yet Jesus had not trained among the professional public speakers here either. Mark relates that: "HE TAUGHT THEM, as possessing authority, and not as the scribes" (Mark 1:22).

The Jews were deeply puzzled by this very fact. They asked the question: "How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?" (John 7:15).

The Weymouth translation renders this: "How does this man know anything of books," they said, "although he has NEVER BEEN at any of the schools?" -- ***Ibid.***, p. 57.

The Bible indicates that Yeshua was an educated man and a superb public speaker. It is evident that he did not receive such an education at any college in Galilee or Judea. However, he most certainly could have received such an education in Britain! If Yeshua had visited Britain, and was educated there ACCORDING TO THE TRADITIONS, he would have found some sixty colleges or universities to choose from. Ivor C. Fletcher comments on the QUALITY of the British educational system:

The educational standards were such that students came not only from the British nobility but also from several FOREIGN NATIONS. It is said that even

PONTIUS PILATE, as a young man, studied in Britain.

A very high standard in oratory or public speaking was often attained by first century Britons. Tacitus records on a word by word basis the speeches of several high ranking Britons of his day.

Such speeches were often colourful, stirring and inspiring, much like, in some ways, the speeches of Jesus.

A few hundred years before the time of Christ, the Greek writer STRABO described an EDUCATED BRITON of his day, Abaris, as follows: "He was easy in his address; agreeable in his conversation; active in his dispatch and secret in his management of great affairs; diligent in the quest of wisdom; fond of friendship; trusting very little to fortune; yet having the entire confidence of others, and trusted with everything for his prudence. HE SPOKE GREEK WITH A FLUENCY THAT YOU WOULD HAVE THOUGHT THAT HE HAD BEEN BROUGHT UP IN THE LYCEUM."

It may be mere coincidence but Jesus had far more of the QUALITIES AND TALENTS OF AN EDUCATED BRITON than He ever did of an educated Jew of the same period. -- *Ibid.*, p. 58.

It is NOT mere coincidence -- Eastern and Western traditions claim Yeshua completed his education in Britain!

William Blake, British poet born in London in 1757, was familiar with the stories associated with Glastonbury and the presence of the Messiah in the British Isles. In his beautiful poem entitled **Jerusalem**, Blake pens his thoughts in a tender and loving way:

And did those feet in ancient time
Walk upon England's mountains green?
And was the Holy Lamb of God
On England's pleasant pastures seen?
And did the Countenance Divine
Shine forth upon our clouded hills?
And was Jerusalem builded here
Among those dark Satanic mills?

Bring me my bow of burning gold!
Bring me my arrows of desire!
Bring me my spear! O clouds unfold!
Bring me my chariot of fire!
I will not cease from mental fight
Nor shall my sword sleep in my hand,

Till we have built Jerusalem
In England's green and pleasant land.

The Death of the Messiah and the Saulian Persecution

When Joseph of Arimathea went to Pilate to claim the body of the Messiah, he really sealed his fate as far as the Sanhedrin was concerned. It was bad enough when Joseph defended the Messiah before the hastily assembled group of Jewish leaders; now he was rubbing salt into an already festering wound! Yeshua was charged by the Jewish authorities with the most heinous of crimes -- that of BLASPHEMY (see Matt. 26:65). This meant that the Messiah was looked upon by the Sanhedrin as "accursed of God"; and Joseph, because of his long association with him and the "heresy" he promoted, was looked upon in a similar vein.

Joseph's audience with Pilate to retrieve the Messiah's body was, in the eyes of the Sanhedrin, a slap in the face and perceived as a defilement of Jewish law. Because the Messiah was considered "accursed of God," even the instrument of death and the very soil it stood in was defiled. The apostle Paul said that the TREE (the *stauros*) the Messiah died on was reckoned "a shame" (Hebrew 12:2) and he called the crosspiece (Latin -- *patibulum*) "the reproach" -- see Hebrews 13:13. In other words, all the instruments of death were "accursed" because they came into contact with the "accursed one" -- the Messiah! How this was dealt with by the Jewish authorities is explained by Ernest L. Martin:

The essential teaching on how to CLEANSE the land of such "accursedness" is found in Deuteronomy 21:22,23, and in the previous verse 21 it says this purging was to be done by BURNING (Hebrew: bahgar). In the Old Testament example of such purging, it was thought necessary to BURN THE POSSESSIONS of such an "accursed one" because the abominable sin of the person was even TRANSFERRED TO THE THINGS OWNED BY THE SINNER (since he had touched them and this reckoned even his possessions "accursed". This was the case with the things belonging to ACHAN who sinned so grievously in the time of Joshua (Josh. 7:15, 24-26). What happened was that Achan himself was killed (with his children and animals) and all his "accursed" things were burnt up together with him. This practice of utter destruction was considered the only way to purify the land of Israel from such defilements....

To keep the land from being polluted, Christ HAD TO BE DESTROYED before sundown and the "accursed" *stauros* had to be burnt up so that no person could ever touch it again....

What the Jewish authorities wanted to do was to take the dead body of Christ

AND the "accursed" (shameful) tree and BURN THEM UP TOGETHER just as the Israelites did with Achan in the Old Testament. -- ***Secrets of Golgotha***. ASK Publications, Alhambra, CA 1988, pp. 180-181.

This is WHY Joseph of Arimathea sought an urgent audience with Pilate -- he had to claim the Messiah's body before the Jewish authorities could burn it to ashes. In doing so, however, he fueled the anger and hatred of the religious authorities.

Following the retrieval and the resurrection of the Messiah, the anger of the ruling priesthood of the Sanhedrin exploded to the surface. In secret conclave they plotted and planned a campaign of unrelenting persecution against the newly formed Church of YEHOVAH God. Maliciously, they determined to exterminate or imprison all those who followed "The Way" -- and Joseph was at the top of the list! Soon a great persecution swept through the land.

Saul (who was later to become Paul) raged through Jerusalem and the surrounding countryside, aiding the vengeful Sanhedrin in their pogrom against the followers of the Messiah. He struck quickly and viciously. Members of the Church of YEHOVAH God -- whether they were Greek, Roman or Jew -- were openly (or in secret) struck down like vermin. No mercy was shown. The records of the time indicate that the prisons of Judea were filled to capacity with the unfortunate victims of the persecution.

The first notable victim Saul seized upon was Stephen. Along with Peter, John and others, Stephen had defied the Sadducees by vigorously preaching the Kingdom of YEHOVAH God throughout the city of Jerusalem. Thousands were converted daily, a fact which further infuriated the corrupt Sadducean priesthood. Fate soon caught up with Stephen; and he was stoned to death by the minions of the Sanhedrin as Paul looked on.

George Jowett writes that "so fierce was Saul's vindictive purge that he wrought havoc within the Church at Jerusalem. The boundaries of Judea could not confine him. Illegally, he trespassed far within Roman territory where he hounded the devotees without censure or interference from the Roman administration. No doubt the Romans felt Saul was doing them a service, and a good job in ridding them of what they considered an undesirable religious pestilence." (***The Drama of the Lost Disciples***, p. 30).

Throughout this terrible time Joseph of Arimathea remained the fearless, stalwart protector of the disciples of the Messiah -- and especially the women. On every possible occasion he placed himself between them and their vengeful enemies -- using his power and influence to avert danger to his brethren. Saul's fury knew no bounds. Try as they may, Joseph's position as a Roman official prevented Saul and his partners in crime from harming his person, or those whom he personally defended.

Nevertheless, it soon became a losing battle. Within FOUR YEARS after the death of the Messiah (35 A.D.) many of the Christians were scattered out of Jerusalem and Judea. There can be little doubt that the ships of Joseph's vast mercantile enterprises carried the numerous refugees to safety in other lands. This fearless and indomitable man of YEHOVAH God spared neither help nor wealth in aiding all the people he could.

The Boat Without Oars!

The time came when the Sanhedrin finally caught up with Joseph and his faithful companions. Frederic Mistral, the French Provencal poet who lived in the nineteenth century (1830-1914), relates what happened in his work called ***Mireio*** -- published in 1859.

According to this, after Saul's persecution Joseph and his companions were thrust into A BOAT WITHOUT OARS OR SAILS by the Jews, who were glad to be finally rid of them. This occurred, according to Mistral, on the coast of Palestine -- somewhere near to Mt. Carmel. Thrust into the boat with Joseph were Lazarus, Trophimus, Maximin, Cleon, Eutropius, Sidonius (Restitutus, "the man born blind"), Martial and Saturninus. Included in the boat were also Mary, wife of Cleopas; Salome; Mary Magdalene; Martha and the maid of the two latter, Marcella.

The poem relates that as the boat was drifting out to sea Sarah, the handmaid of Salome and Mary Cleopas, cast herself into the sea to join her mistress, and by the help of Salome was brought into the boat. After beating about the Mediterranean for some time, the boat drifted to THE COAST OF PROVENCE IN GAUL (FRANCE) and, following the RIVER RHONE, ARRIVED AT ARLES, which was eventually converted to Christianity by the preaching of Trophimus.

Mistral drew his material from the Provencal traditions as they live today in the scattered homesteads of the Camargue, and in the minds and hearts of all the people in the adjacent countryside.

Further information can be found in the ***Ecclesiastical Annals*** of the sixteenth century Vatican librarian, CARDINAL CAESAR BARONIUS (1538-1609 A.D.). Baronius, an historian of great integrity who was known for his uncompromising treatment of the truth, discovered a document of great antiquity in the Vatican archives. To his fascination, the manuscript revealed that in THE YEAR 35 A.D. Joseph of Arimathea and a group of companions that included Lazarus, Mary Magdalene, Martha and a number of others, WERE CAST ADRIFT IN A BOAT from the coast of Palestine by PERSECUTING JEWS.

In that year the party mentioned was exposed to the sea in A VESSEL WITHOUT SAILS OR OARS. The vessel drifted finally TO MARSEILLES and

they were saved. From Marseilles JOSEPH AND HIS COMPANY PASSED INTO BRITAIN and after preaching the Gospel there, died. (***Ecclesiastical Annals***, under section A.D. 35).

On commenting about this information from Cardinal Baronius, Ivor C. Fletcher notes:

No trace of Joseph in Palestine is found after about A.D. 35, no record of any martyrdom and no reference to his movements outside of the areas of Britain and France. The information given by Baronius relating to the enforced voyage to Marseilles of Joseph and his companions seems THE MOST LIKELY AND LOGICAL ACCOUNT OF HIS MOVEMENTS. -- ***The Incredible History of God's True Church***, p. 73.

The Cardinal's ***Annals*** quote the ***Acts of Magdalen***, which we have already discussed, for the record of the voyage to Marseilles and the spreading of the gospel in the south part of Gaul.

In chapter 37 of the ***Acts***, after listing the names of Joseph's companions in the OARLESS BOAT, Rabanus Maurus goes on to describe their dangerous voyage: "Leaving the shores of Asia and favoured by an east wind, they went round about, down the Tyrrhenian Sea, between Europe and Africa, leaving the city of Rome and all the land of Italy to the right. Then happily turning their course to the right, they came near to the city of Marseilles, in the Viennoise province of the Gauls, where the RIVER RHONE is received by the sea. There, having called upon God, the great King of all the world, they parted; each company going to the province where the Holy Spirit had directed them, presently preaching everywhere, 'the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following.'"

Gladys Taylor, in her book ***Our Neglected Heritage***, takes note of the same incident:

Caesar Baronius, the church historian who was also appointed librarian of the Vatican in 1596, wrote in his magnum opus, ***Annales Ecclesiastici***, of the finding in the Vatican Library of a most ancient manuscript in which was described the voyage of a company of our Lord's friends, travelling in an OLD BOAT which had been abandoned by its master and was WITHOUT OARS OR SAILS, who LANDED AT MARSEILLES, whence they spread out over SOUTHERN FRANCE where many churches record them as their founders. Among this company is JOSEPH OF ARIMATHEA, who is not mentioned as founder of any of these churches, a fact which suggests that he may have journeyed on and could not have spent much time in southern France. Baronius dates the arrival of this boat to A.D. 35. -- Covenant Books, London. 1969, p. 15.

Further confirmation of the voyage of Joseph and his companions can be found in the

Otia Imperialia, a book written by Gervais de Tilbury who was Marshall of the Kingdom of Arles (in France) in the year 1212. Dedicating the book to Otho IV, Tilbury writes about the old church of Les Saintes Maries in the Camargue:

There, on the seacoast, one sees the first of Continental churches which was founded in honour of the most blessed mother of our Lord, and consecrated by many of the seventy-two disciples WHO WERE DRIVEN FROM JUDEA AND EXPOSED TO THE SEA IN AN OARLESS BOAT: Maximin of Aix, Lazarus of Marseilles, the brother of Martha and Mary, Eutrope of Orange, George of Velay, Saturninus of Toulouse, Martial of Limoges, in the presence of Martha, Mary Magdalene and many others.

"The tradition of Joseph of Arimathea and his companions in the oarless boat was accepted by the whole LATIN CHURCH for over a thousand years. For proof of this we have only to turn to the BREVIARY (book of prayers, hymns, psalms and readings used by Roman Catholic priests) at ST. MARTHA'S DAY, JULY 29th. There we find a LECTON FOR THE SECOND NOCTURNE (NIGHT) which tells how Mary, Martha and Lazarus, with their servant Marcella, and Maximin, one of the seventy-two disciples, WERE SEIZED BY THE JEWS, PLACED IN A BOAT WITHOUT SAILS OR OARS, AND CARRIED SAFELY TO THE PORT OF MARSEILLES. Moved by this remarkable fact, the people of the neighbouring lands were speedily converted to Christianity; Lazarus became bishop of Marseilles, Maximinus of Aix... and...Martha ...died on the fourth day before the Kalends of August, and was buried with great honour at Tarascon." (***Monuments Inedits***, By Faillon. Vol. ii, p. 114).

There are many other sources, including Greek and Roman authorities that tell the story of Joseph and the oarless boat. Even the ***Jewish Encyclopedia***, under the title "Arles," mentions that the first Jews in Arles arrived by boat without captain, sails or oars.

Another source adds that "without sails and oars, they drifted with the wind and the currents arriving unharmed at CYRENE, in northern Africa. After obtaining sails and oars, the little party of refugees followed the trade route of the Phoenician merchant ships as far west as Marseilles, France." (***The Traditions of Glastonbury***, p. 37).

The South of France

Joseph of Arimathea was no stranger to the city of Marseilles. As the chief port in the continent of Europe for the export of tin and lead, the ships of Joseph were probably a common sight in the harbor. It has been said that Joseph's name was as well known in the area as the names of Carnegie, Schwab and Bethlehem Steel are to us today. It can therefore be assumed that Joseph had many influential friends at Marseilles who would gladly welcome him amongst them.

Marseilles, situated in southern France on the Mediterranean coast, is the capital of the department (province) of Bouches-du-Rhone. Sitting slightly east of the mouth of the Rhone, the city was originally called MASSALIA and was founded circa 600 B.C. by mariners from Phocaea in Asia Minor. There is, however, evidence that Marseilles was settled by the Phoenicians at a much earlier date; and the name of the city is taken from the Phoenician word for "settlement."

J. W. Taylor records that

the great port of Massilia, the modern Marseilles, by means of which most of the intercourse between Provence and the rest of the civilized world was carried on, was quite an old city in the early days of Christianity. Founded by the Greeks some six centuries before the birth of our Lord, it had steadily increased in size and in importance as the commerce of the world had widened. Pytheas sailed from Marseilles when he made his first voyage to British waters in 350 B.C., and consequently at this early date, Marseilles must have been a maritime centre of very considerable importance (***The Coming of the Saints***, p. 111).

A fascinating account of both Marseilles and the surrounding countryside is found in the works of STRABO -- Greek geographer and historian of the time of the Messiah (63? B.C. - 24? A.D.). Strabo's account, therefore, shows the city that Joseph did business in, and later arrived at in the "oarless" boat. Strabo writes:

Marseilles, founded by the Phocaeans, is built in a stony region. Its harbour lies beneath a rock which is shaped like a theatre, and looks toward the south. It is well surrounded with walls, as well as the whole city, which is of considerable size. Within the citadel are placed the "Ephesium" and the temple of the Delphian Apollo. The "Ephesium" is the temple consecrated to Diana of Ephesus. All the colonies sent out from Marseilles hold this goddess in peculiar reverence, preserving both the shape of her image and also every rite observed in the metropolis.

The Massilians live under a well-regulated aristocracy. They have a council, composed of six hundred persons, called Timuchi, who enjoy this dignity of life. Fifteen of these preside over the council and have the management of current affairs; these fifteen are in their turn presided over by three of their number, in whom rests the principal authority; and these again by one.

No one can become a Timuchus who has not children, and who has not been a citizen for three generations. The country abounds in olives and vines, but on account of its ruggedness the wheat is poor; consequently the people trust more to resources of the sea than of the land, and avail themselves fully of

their excellent position for commerce.

Strabo continues:

The people of Marseilles possess dry-docks and amouries. Formerly they had an abundance of vessels, arms and machines, both for the purpose of navigation and for besieging towns; by means of which they defended themselves against the barbarians, and likewise obtained the alliance of the Romans, to whom they rendered many important services, the Romans in their turn assisted in their aggrandisement. Sextius, who defeated the Salyes, founded not far from Marseilles a city which was named after him and the hot water found there (Aquae Sextiae, now AIX). Here he established a Roman garrison and drove from the sea coast which leads from Marseilles to Italy, the barbarians whom the Massilians were not able to entirely keep back. The land which the barbarians abandoned he presented to the Massilians, and in their city are laid up heaps of booty taken in NAVAL ENGAGEMENTS against those who disputed the sea unjustly. Formerly they enjoyed singular good fortune as well in other matters as also in their amity with the Romans, but since the war of Pompey against Caesar, in which they sided with the vanquished party, their prosperity has in some measure decayed. Nevertheless some traces of their ancient industries may still be seen among the inhabitants, especially the making of engines of war and SHIP-BUILDING. Now that the surrounding barbarians under the dominion of the Romans are daily becoming more civilized, and leave the occupation of war for business of towns and agriculture, there is no longer the same attention paid to these objects by the people of Marseilles. The aspect of the city at the present day is a proof of this. All who profess to be men of taste turn to THE STUDY OF ELOCUTION AND PHILOSOPHY. The city for some time back has become quite A SCHOOL FOR THE BARBARIANS, and has communicated to the Galatae such A TASTE FOR GREEK LITERATURE that they even draw contracts on the Greek model. Further, AT THE PRESENT DAY IT SO ENTICES THE NOBLEST OF ROMANS THAT THOSE DESIROUS OF STUDYING RESORT THITHER IN PREFERENCE TO ATHENS. These, the Galatae observing, and being at leisure on account of peace, READILY DEVOTE THEMSELVES TO SIMILAR PURSUITS, and that not merely individuals but the public generally; PROFESSORS OF THE ARTS AND SCIENCES, AND LIKEWISE OF MEDICINE being employed not only by private persons but by towns for common instruction.

We see here that Marseilles was not only a great ship-building and trading center, but also a great center of learning, greater evidently than even the city of Athens -- long known for its educational system! In fact, Marseilles was one of the FOUR GREATEST CITIES OF CIVILIZATION during Roman times, competing with Ephesus, Athens and

Rome as a center of commerce and learning. "Specially connected by race and religion with the older civilization and learning of the East, it yet stood in the very van of Western progress, and drank daily of the strength and vitality of Roman spirit and power which ebbed and flowed as in a ceaseless stream through the very heart of it" (***The Coming of the Saints***, p. 114).

Great roads passed through Marseilles to the west and to the north -- the great western road slicing through Narbonne into Spain, and the great northern road leading through Arles, Vienne and Lyons to the north parts of Gaul and across the sea to Britain. Both of these roads were in constant use by civilians and the Roman military. During the reigns of Claudius and Nero, the Romans were engaged in a war with the British, and a continual stream of troops passed along this road to and from Britain. Claudius himself, at the head of his troops, undertook a forced march from Rome through Marseilles and along the great northern road to Britain.

Strabo also describes the city of NARBONNE, another city important to the tin trade and situated west of the River Rhone. Founded by the Romans in 118 B.C. and their first colony beyond the Alps, Narbonne was a leading port up until the 13th century when its harbor silted up.

These descriptions by an almost contemporaneous author give us a graphic picture of the civilization of Marseilles and the Rhone valley during the time of Joseph. This was no barbarous country -- some distant backwater of the Empire! It was a rich and prosperous region, full of learning and education that rivaled the great centers of the Roman Empire. This was the area that received Joseph and his refugee companions as their boat put to shore after the tenuous voyage from Palestine.

A great many local traditions have been handed down in THE MARSEILLES AREA regarding the arrival and later activities of Joseph of Arimathea and his little band of refugees. Ivor C. Fletcher notes that "it is a clear historical FACT that SOUTHERN FRANCE was one of the FIRST AREAS IN THE WEST to receive the gospel message."

One local tradition tells of the boat without sails or oars drifting to the coast of Provence and, after following the RIVER RHONE, arriving at the city of ARLES. As we have already seen in the ***Jewish Encyclopedia***, the first JEWISH SETTLERS in the area are said to have "come in a boat which had been deserted by its captain."

In the Spanish town of CIUDAD RODRIGO, we find another version of the same legend. This simply states that Mary Salome, Mary Cleopas, Mary Magdalene (the sister of Lazarus), Lazarus, Maximin, Chelidonius, Marcella and JOSEPH OF ARIMATHEA came to AQUITAINE GAUL and there preached the gospel of the Kingdom of God, "as the histories of the Gauls and the local traditions plainly teach."

A number of the RHONE VALLEY CHURCHES trace their origins back to LAZARUS

and other of Joseph's companions in the boat. On the south side of the old harbor at Marseilles -- near the Fort St. Nicolas -- stands the CHURCH OF ST. VICTOR, built in the 13th century and once attached to an abbey founded early in the 4th century. "With its lofty crenellated walls and square towers built of large blocks of uncemented stone, it resembles a fortress" (*Encyclopædia Britannica*, 1943 edition. P.965). The Church of St. Victor was constructed above CRYPTS dating mainly from the 11th century. These crypts embody architecture of both the Carolingian period and THE EARLY CENTURIES OF THE CHRISTIAN ERA. Tradition reveals that LAZARUS INHABITED THE CATACOMBS UNDER ST. VICTOR, and many "momentos" of his stay in Marseilles can still be seen.

Author J. W. Taylor visited the Church of St. Victor in Marseilles, and relates what he saw:

A door on the south side of the nave leads down to a subterranean church, large and lofty, which dates from the fourth century. This was built by the Cassianite monks, and from its position has been untouched and could not well be destroyed through all the centuries since.

And all this vast fourth-century church has been visibly built around A STILL OLDER NATURAL CAVE OR GROTTA known as the ORIGINAL FIRST-CENTURY CHURCH OR REFUGE OF ST. LAZARUS....

The great height of this underground abbey church, its darkness, its stillness, the few scattered but perfect round pillars supporting the roof, and the 'FIRST-CENTURY CHAPEL' which is enshrined by it, all combine to produce a picture of early Christian life and architecture, striking and irresistible.

No explanation that I know of has been, OR CAN BE, offered other than that OFFERED BY TRADITION -- that here was the place where LAZARUS OF BETHANY lived and preached and ministered and died, and that therefore within some two hundred or three hundred years afterwards this church was built in honour of HIS MEMORY and to enshrine his body which was then present here.

And all through the ages ever since this faith has been firmly held, and lives as strong today as ever. If we come back from the crypt or subterranean church into the (upper) church of St. Victor, at the west end of the nave, under the organ-loft, we find a life-sized STATUE OF ST. LAZARUS...and underneath the statue two pieces of stone REMOVED FROM THE OLD SEPULCHRE AT BETHANY out of which our Saviour raised him. On the pediment of the statue is this inscription:

'Divo Lazaro

a Christo suscitato
qui Massiliensium primus
Apostolus
hujus ecclesiae crytam
ministerium et passione
illustravit.

In memoriam missionis
A.D. MDCCCXCVII
grato animo parochus
fidelesque
S. Victoris dedicant.'

Faillon, in his ***Monuments Inedits*** (Paris, 1859 & 1865), summarizes Lazarus' journey to Marseilles and his preaching there:

Tradition states that St. LAZARUS, after the ascension of Jesus Christ, remained for a time in the company of the Apostles, with whom he took charge of the Church which was at Jerusalem. After this he went to the island of Cyprus in order to escape from the persecution which arose (about Stephen).

Having filled there for several years the office of a missionary priest, HE ENTERED INTO A SHIP, AND TRAVERSED THE SEA, BY THE GRACE OF GOD ARRIVED AT MARSEILLES, the most celebrated town of Provence. Here, exercising the functions of his priesthood, he served God, to whom he had entirely consecrated his life, in righteousness and true holiness. He preached the word of Life to those who had not yet received it, and gained many converts to Jesus Christ. -- Vol. ii, p. 114.

The city of Marseilles controlled irregular patches of coastline and towns all along the Mediterranean coast. They were under the protection of Rome and generally lived in harmony with the Roman government, but had their own government and managed their own affairs as Strabo just described.

Above this area was PROVINCIA or the NARBONNAISE, which extended from immediately above Marseilles to as far as Vienne. This seems to have been a Roman district, under direct control of the Roman government and especially colonized by Rome. In fact, it belonged to Rome long before the rest of Gaul was conquered, and was known as PROVINCIA GALLICA all during this time of conquest and for a long time afterwards. The rest of the continent above it was known as GAUL or GALLIA. Just over the border in Gaul was LUGDUNUM or LYONS -- the capital of the Segusii who were at this time also under Roman control or supervision.

Probably here also a measure of self-government was allowed by the Romans. We therefore find, in the south of France in the first and second centuries, THREE NOTABLE DISTRICTS AND GOVERNMENTS: The Massilian in MARSEILLES, the Romans in PROVINCIA GALLICA, and in Lugdunum or "LYONS of the Gauls" a modified local government with Roman occupation and control.

To the middle district -- or Provincia Gallica -- which was almost as Roman as Rome was, came another companion of Joseph in the boat -- TROPHIMUS.

Trophimus settled in the city of ARLES, which was formerly called ARELATE. Some 54 miles northwest of Marseilles, Arles stands on the left bank of the Rhone where the river divides to form its delta. Arles was an important city at the time of Julius Caesar's invasion, and later became the seat of the prefecture of the Gauls and one of the foremost cities in the western empire. Today the city still contains some of the old Roman buildings -- including an arena that holds more than 25,000 people. "St. Trophimus is known there AS THE FIRST BISHOP OF THE CITY" (*The Coming of the Saints*, p. 132).

Some stones, said to be from the first-century meeting-place built by him, are still standing, and the later cathedral (originally dedicated to Stephen) was rededicated to the MEMORY OF TROPHIMUS when his body was removed here in 1152. "The cathedral is still called the cathedral of St. Trophime, and the TOMB OF ST. TROPHIMUS forms a font or baptistry on the left side of the nave as you enter it" (*ibid.*, p. 132). His body was subsequently moved to AUTUN.

Local traditions state that he came from the East, was of Greek nationality and the personal friend of Paul and Peter. One tradition claims that Paul visited him on one of his missionary journeys, and the house (or the site of the house) in which they met is known today as "La maison des Saints." According to George F. Jowett, "Trophimus was sent to Gaul by Joseph [of Arimathea]...He was consecrated the first bishop of Arles and there performed an outstanding service...His Christianizing endeavours embraced a large area which formed the DISTRICT OF NARBONNE. He became the first Metropolitan of the Narbonne, with Arles as his Bishopric. For centuries it continued to be a prominent stronghold of the Christian faith in Gaul" (*The Drama of the Lost Disciples*, p. 165).

MAXIMIN'S PRESENCE in the south of France is remembered by the little town named after him -- ST. MAXIMIN. Thirty to forty miles from Marseilles by train, the village sits in an extensive, cultivated plain full of vineyards and olive gardens. The plain itself is surrounded on almost every side by distant high mountains or hill ranges. In the center of this fruitful plain is what appears to be one vast towering structure -- the big white church of St. Maximin. From the distance the adjoining town is hardly visible, and one sees nothing else but the church until entering St Maximin itself, when the church

disappears from view.

The village itself is a quiet, semi-Eastern-looking town, with high white houses and a small central "Place" or plaza. The plaza contains a fountain and four sets of trees to form a promenade. On one side of the plaza a lane leads up to the church. Here, and in the surrounding countryside, the MEMORY OF MAXIMIN is the strongest.

With regard to another of Joseph's companions, SIDONIUS or RESTITUTUS (the man or boy born blind), we are told in a PROVENÇAL TRADITION that he accompanied the Bethany family to Provence. But of his life after arriving in southern France, we have two different traditions. One states that he was the same as CHELIDONIUS and worked with Maximin, after whose death he took charge of the Church of God at AIX. The other tradition identifies his history with the little VILLAGE OF ST. RESTITUT and the more important old town of St. Paul Trois Châteaux (the old Roman colony of Augusta Tricastinorum), of which church he is said to have been the leader and founder.

The Church of "St. Restitut" is said to have formerly contained his relics. Notes Augustus J. C. Hare, "its west bay, which has the appearance of a tower, is surmounted by a cupola and contains two storeys. In its lower storey (is) the TOMB OF ST. RESTITUT" (***South-Eastern France***, London, 1890).

MARTIAL, accompanied by his father and mother (Marcellus and Elizabeth), Zaccheus (the publican of the gospels) and JOSEPH are represented as arriving at LIMOGES in the first century. Martial remained at Limoges (the ancient Lemovices and Augustoritum) and old Aquitaine legends, going back at least as far as the 10th century, say he was the FIRST missionary apostle of Limoges (***Fastes Episcop***, vol. ii, p. 104).

The other Christians who accompanied Joseph in the little boat, also left their imprint in the traditions of southern France. Rabanus states that EUTROPIUS "was the first Bishop of Aquitaine" and preached at ORANGE (Aurasicum) and SAINTES (Sanctonas), whereas SATURNINUS preached at TOULOUSE (Tolosam) where he was killed by a mob who threw him down from the capitol.

On to Avalon!

While there are STRONG TRADITIONS surrounding the companions of Joseph in southern France, the traditions of Joseph himself having resided here are nonexistent! As we have seen, the legends of Provence show that Joseph came to Marseilles and the Rhone Valley as one member of the group that arrived in the disabled boat. However, the evidence seems to indicate that he simply passed through this region to another destination. We find faint traces of him at LIMOGES (in company with Martial) and at ROCAMADOUR, the traditional dwelling-place of Zaccheus, who is said to have journeyed WITH JOSEPH OF ARIMATHEA and Martial as far as this town, "and to have

stayed here because of its resemblance to his old home in Palestine" (*The Coming of the Saints*, p. 203).

In summary we find:

1/. At Marseilles and Ste. Baume we find cave churches or dwelling-places of the early Christians, held as such since time immemorial and identified with Lazarus and one of the Maries. Joseph of Arimathea is said to have come with them AND PASSED ON (Local tradition and *Life of Rabanus*).

2/. At Limoges and Rocamadour we find a similar cave-shelter and the traditional coming of Jewish missionaries in the first century, one of whom is Joseph of Arimathea. Zaccheus and Martial remain, while JOSEPH PASSES ON (Tradition).

3/. At Morlaix a disciple of Joseph -- Drennalus -- is said to have preached in 72 A. D. Again, at Fecamp (along the coast from Morlaix) we find the legend of the washing ashore of the trunk of a fig-tree belonging to Joseph of Arimathea. The name (Ficus Campus) Fecamp is believed to have arisen from this legend. (*Tradition and North-Western France*, by Augustus Hare. George Allen, 1895).

4/. In Cornwall we find traditions of Joseph arriving in a boat with a young Yeshua. HE PASSES ON (tradition).

So WHERE did Joseph go -- WHERE did he finally stop and do the Work of YEHOVAH God?

Researcher George Jowett notes:

How many of the disciples were with him [JOSEPH] during HIS SHORT STAY IN GAUL it is difficult to say. It is amazing how nonchalantly the records deal with this important matter. Various existing records agree in part with the Baronius record [Annales Ecclesiastici, vol. I, p. 327], naming among the occupants of the castaway boat Mary Magdalene, Martha, the handmaiden Marcella, Lazarus whom Jesus raised from the dead, and Maximin the man whose sight Jesus restored. Then non-committally the report read, 'AND OTHERS.' -- *The Drama of the Lost Disciples*, p. 63.

A number of records state that PHILIP (one of the 12 disciples) was included in the phrase "and others." There is a wealth of uncontested testimony proving that Philip went to Gaul where he received Joseph when he arrived at Marseilles, and APPOINTED HIM APOSTLE TO BRITAIN! It is well known that a great number of converts had left Palestine during the Saulian persecution -- very probably on ships belonging to Joseph. Philip was one of them.

Not long after Joseph's arrival in southern France, a British delegation arrived at Marseilles to greet him and extend an invitation for him to return with them to Britain. The delegation was sent by KING ARVIRAGUS and, through them, he offered Joseph lands, a safe haven and protection against Roman persecution. "Arviragus was prince of the noble SILURES OF BRITAIN, in the Dukedom of Cornwall. He was the son of King Cunobelinus, THE CYMBELINE OF SHAKESPEARE FAME, and cousin to the renowned British warrior-patriot, CARADOC, whom the Romans named CARACTACUS. Together they represented the ROYAL SILURIAN DYNASTY, the most powerful warrior kingdom in Britain, FROM WHOM THE TUDOR KINGS AND QUEENS OF ENGLAND HAD THEIR DESCENT" (*The Drama of the Lost Disciples*, p. 68).

Joseph gladly accepted the British invitation and made ready to embark for Britain with a specially chosen group of companions. Philip, it is reported, consecrated Joseph in the year 36, and from then on Joseph of Arimathea became known as "THE APOSTLE TO BRITAIN."

Without a doubt Joseph was attracted to the Sacred Isle of AVALON for reasons other than the opportunity to preach the gospel to the people of Britain. Evidently ARVIRAGUS AND JOSEPH WERE WELL KNOWN TO EACH OTHER prior to the delegation's invitation, and this is quite believable when we realize Joseph more than likely acquired many friends in the south of Britain during the years he looked after his mining interests in Cornwall and Somerset.

After leaving their friends behind in the Rhone Valley, Joseph and his new group of companions -- twelve in all -- headed along the great northern road to the north coast of France. We can retrace their journey step by step. From the city of Marseilles up the Rhone River as far as Arles or farther; then a journey of thirty days across Gaul, through the country of the Lemovices to the seacoast of Brittany; the stopover at Limoges; the arrival in Brittany at either Vannes or Morlaix and, finally, four days' sailing across the English Channel to Cornwall. Legend relates that after reaching the coast of Brittany, Joseph and his eleven fellow-travelers sailed from Morlaix to FALMOUTH in England. From here they continued on to Cornwall.

If we turn to the poem *Mort d'Arthur*, we find mentioned that Joseph, his son Josephes and the rest of the group arrived at a place called "SARRAS." In book xiii, cap. 10 the narrative goes on to say that the "SARACENS" (of Sarras) under King Tolleme la Feintes were fighting against the Britons under King Evelake. Evidently King Evelake was a local leader belonging to one of the provinces of Britain, and the Saracen (Tolleme) "which was...a rich king and a mighty [one]," is related as marching to meet him, and the encounter seems to have taken place on the British side of the Channel. "Moreover -- and this is of further interest -- King Tolleme the 'Saracen' is said to have been the 'cousin of King Evelake, so that although they were at war with each other and apparently of different nationality, ties of marriage had taken place between the

'Saracens' and the ancestors of King Evelake" (*The Coming of the Saints*, pp. 149-150).

Are not these "SARACENS" under the leadership of the wealthy King Tolleme none other than the JEWISH TIN WORKERS of Cornwall? We have already seen that the Jews of Cornwall "appear to have called themselves or were called by the Britons of Cornwall 'SARACENS.'"

The narrative in the poem goes on to say that the "Saracens" turned a deaf ear to the message of Joseph and his companions, however King Evelake and the Britons were kindly disposed towards him and were more or less won over by the teaching of Joseph and his son. Isn't that interesting?

From Cornwall two traditional routes are found in the legends of Glastonbury tracing Joseph and his group to their final destination. One tradition has the little group traveling OVERLAND from Cornwall to Avalon while, according to the other legend, "the refugees sailed around the southern tip of England, passing what is today known as 'Land's End.' Then following the west coast, they sailed northward to the Severn Sea. From there they entered the estuaries of the rivers Parrot and Brue. Following the River Brue eastward, they arrived at a little cluster of islands about twelve miles inland from the coast, JOSEPH'S DESTINATION WAS THE ISLE OF AVALON, suitable as a quiet retreat... [and] a place they knew had already been hallowed by the presence of their Master [the Messiah]" (*The Traditions of Glastonbury*, pp. 38-39).

The Royal Welcome

When Joseph and his companions arrived at Avalon, they were met by King Guiderius and his brother ARVIRAGUS -- who was a king of the royal Silures of Britain. As we have seen, Joseph and Arviragus were old friends and, as a result of this friendship, the king gave Joseph and his companions TWELVE HIDES OF LAND -- a hide for each disciple. Since each hide represented 160 acres, the sum total of the grant was 1,920 acres. It is an interesting fact that in the last century, when the United States of America was expanding westward, grants of land were given to settlers-- 160 acres per person or family!

E. Raymond Capt writes about this grant of land to the refugees from the East:

King Arviragus is recorded as having granted to Joseph and his followers, "twelve hides" of land, tax free, in "Yniswitrin," described as a marshy tract -- afterwards called the "Isle of Avalon." Confirmation of this Royal Charter is found in the official DOMESDAY BOOK of Britain (A.D. 1086) which states: "The Domus Dei, in the great monastery of Glastonbury, called the Secret of the Lord. This Glastonbury Church possesses, in its own villa XII hides of land

which have never paid tax." (Domesday Survey folio p. 249b.) This notable act of the King gave the recipients many British concessions, including the right of citizenship with its privileges of freedom to pass unmolested from one district to another in time of war. [This "right" proved invaluable in the later preaching of the gospel to the British.] The grant was given to them as "Judean refugees." (Quidam advanae -- 'certain strangers' -- old Latin. In Later Latin, "Culdich" or Anglicised, "Culdees.") -- *The Traditions of Glastonbury*, p. 41.

At first, according to William of Malmsebury, Arviragus and his subjects were not receptive to the Gospel message preached by Joseph and his companions:

In the year of our Lord, 63 [actually, it was earlier], twelve holy missionaries, with Joseph of Arimathea (who had buried the Lord) at their head, came over to Britain, preaching the Incarnation of Jesus Christ. THE KING OF THE COUNTRY AND HIS SUBJECTS REFUSED TO BECOME PROSELYTES TO THEIR TEACHING, but in consideration that they had come a long journey, and being somewhat pleased with their soberness of life and unexceptional behaviour, the king, at their petition, gave them for their habitation a certain island bordering on this region, covered with trees and bramble bushes and surrounded by marshes, called Ynis-wytrin. -- Written 1126 A.D. from "the writings of the ancients" which he found at Glastonbury Abbey.

Afterwards, however, Arviragus must have become converted because *Hardyng's Chronicle* (a fifteenth-century writing based upon much earlier works) gives the following passage about Joseph and Arviragus:

Joseph converted this King Arviragus
By his prechyng to know ye laws divine
And baptised him as write hath Nennius
The chronicler in Britain tonque full fyne
And to Christian laws made him inclyne.

With the gift of the twelve hides of land came the PROTECTION Arviragus offered against intrusion by the legions of Rome. During the middle of the first-century A.D. the countryside on both sides of the Severn was held by the British in comparative security, being OUTSIDE the main lines of Roman conquest.

It is a remarkable fact that despite the bitter determination of the Roman Empire to persecute, uproot and destroy everything that was Christian in Britain -- despite the pillaging and burning of monasteries, churches and libraries by Roman, Saxon, Dane and Norman -- not once was the sanctity of Avalon defiled. These are the lands which Roman writers referred to as "territory inaccessible to the Roman where Christ is taught."

Behind the wall of protection formed by Arviragus and his Silurian warriors Joseph, and the disciples of the Messiah who frequently visited the area, were safe from harm, and free to preach and teach the Kingdom of YEHOVAH God to the local inhabitants.

After they received title to the land, the little band built homes for themselves out of wattle and daub -- following the practice of the Celts who inhabited the area. The abbey records, quoted by William Malmsebury, show that Joseph and his companions also built a meeting-place: "These holy men built a chapel of the form that had been shown them. The walls were of osiers wattled together." From research undertaken by the late F. Bligh Bond, F.R.I.B.A. (member of the Somerset Archaeological Society and formerly director of excavations at Glastonbury Abbey) this meeting-place constructed by Joseph and his men was circular, having a diameter of 25 feet, with the twelve huts of Joseph and his companions forming a circle around it. All the buildings were evidently enclosed in a circular stockade to keep out wild animals. The center building, or the meeting-place, may have incorporated or covered the earlier structure built by the Messiah when he was at Glastonbury.

Although Malmsebury describes the wattle meeting-place as "rude and misshapen," its wall was without a doubt built in the custom of the day -- timbered pillars and framework, doubly wattled inside and out. The roof was thatched with reeds. as author Capt notes, "often painted or washed with lime, these wattle buildings withstood the most severe weather." Even castles of the day were built of the same material. Giraldus Cambrensis, speaking of Pembroke Castle wrote: "Arnulphus de Montgomery, in the days of Henry I (A.D. 1068-1135) built a small castle of twigs and slight turf." According to Ovid in ***Faesti ad Fest Roma***, the primitive Capital of Rome was of similar construction.

Spreading the Gospel

This little settlement on the Isle of Avalon soon became the center of a missionary effort that spread throughout the land and across the English Channel into Europe. Joseph wasted no time in proclaiming the good news of the Kingdom of YEHOVAH God to all who would listen.

In examining the early records there does not appear to have been any national or general acceptance of YEHOVAH's Truth in Britain for over a hundred years after Joseph arrived -- although the gospel was preached in foreign countries by MANSUETUS, BEATUS and MARCELLUS during the intervening century. Mansuetus (also known as St. Mansuy), an Irish or Caledonian Briton, became founder of a Church of YEHOVAH God at Toul in Lorraine, and his death is placed at 89 A.D. This is confirmed by a second-century Christian sarcophagus discovered at Malaincourt in Lorraine, which bears an inscription indicating that it was the tomb of one of Mansuetus' friends who accompanied him from Britain (***Acta Sanctorum***, Supplement, vol. i, pp. 313, 343, 349).

Suetonius Beatus is said by the old records to have been converted in Britain, baptized by Barnabas, a companion of Aristobulus, and to have afterwards become the Apostle of the Helvetians (Swiss). He died at Under Seven in Helvetia, 110 A.D. This is validated by local traditions and the cave of Beatus on the borders of Lake Thun. Beatus is remembered in the area as a British missionary, and the site of his first meeting-place is still shown. The district around Interlaken, "Unterseen" and Beatenberg is full of old traditions regarding him.

Marcellus, the first British martyr, founded churches at Tongres and Triers, and is said to have been martyred in 166 A.D.

These three men are remembered as BRITISH MISSIONARIES, and it is difficult to believe that they would have wandered about on the other side of the Channel preaching the gospel if their own country had meanwhile remained ignorant of the Truth. There is little doubt that the British historian Gildas was right in picturing the Britons as very slow in receiving the Truth -- even though it was brought to them in the very earliest years. And those in whom the gospel message took root in the area of Glastonbury, naturally turned to those who were ready to receive their message, even at the cost of long journeys to distant cities and to far countries.

The Vetusta Ecclesia of Glastonbury remained as a witness for the Truth of YEHOVAH God; but it was not until the year of the great persecution at Lyons and Vienne in Gaul (177 A.D.) that we find any indication of a widespread Christianity in Britain.

It appears that it was toward the end of the second century that YEHOVAH's Truth received its main impetus, and that up to that time its progress had been slow. "From the writings that have come down to us it may reasonably be gathered that FEW CONVERTS were made by the original missionaries, but that their holy lives (and possibly descendants) had kept the memory of their religion green and fragrant, and that the Church of Glastonbury still remained a monument of their devotion" (***The Coming of the Saints***, p. 160).

From this time forward the Church of YEHOVAH God in Britain must have grown rapidly, for at the end of the third century and the beginning of the next (300-305), when the great DIOCLETION PERSECUTION had begun, a GREAT NUMBER of British Christians (according to Gildas) suffered for the Truth -- among them Alban, Amphibalus, Julius, Aaron, Stephanus and Socrates.

About this time, even the JEWS OF CORNWALL accepted the Truth of YEHOVAH God! Records show that Kelvius, son of Solomon, DUKE OF CORNWALL, not only accepted Christianity but became a minister; and a man by the name of Moses -- said to be British, but presumably of some HEBREW relationship -- became an APOSTLE TO THE "SARACENS"!

Entering His Rest

No apostle, not even Paul, led a life more filled with high purpose, enterprise and achievement than did Joseph the uncle of the Messiah! In spite of the many sorrows that had darkened his life, Joseph's personal triumphs in spreading the teachings of the Messiah, from Avalon to the far reaches of the British Isles and across the Channel into Europe, far outweighed the tragedies he had shared and witnessed. He saw his British friends meet and shatter the legions of Rome -- pushing back all that Rome could muster. During these years in which the soil of Britain became saturated with the blood of friend and foe alike, not once did the foot of a Roman soldier penetrate the protective line of British warriors that guarded the secrets of Avalon. This incredible defense was carried out under the dual leadership of the Pendragon Caradoc (Caractacus) and King Arviragus.

Joseph witnessed the British defeat at Brandon and the treacherous betrayal of Caractacus into captivity with all his royal family, followed by the Roman pardon of the British king. He saw the slaughter of the defenseless and the atrocious massacre at Menai -- which led to the revolt of the British Queen Boadicea and the torching of Roman London, Colchester and St. Albans with over 80,000 Roman deaths. "Through it all there was a continuous flow of converts aflame with the fire of the Gospel, spreading from Avalon into the land and camp of the enemy, valorously defiant. The martyrdom of Aristobulus and Simon Zelotes in Britain must have wrung his heart, but the...mission of St. Paul in Wales with the royal British must have soared his stalwart heart" (***The Drama of the Lost Disciples***, pp. 228-229).

Joseph lived to see all but one of the original apostles of the Messiah go to their rest. James, the brother of John, had been put to the sword by Herod in 64 A.D. And James, the brother of Jesus, was hurled down from a pinnacle of the Temple to his death in 69 A.D. Only John outlived Joseph. Evidently, he was one of the very few apostles and disciples of the Messiah to die a natural death at the advanced old age of 101.

Fifty-two years after Joseph had tenderly placed the body of his nephew Yeshua into his own personal tomb, this intrepid man of YEHOVAH God passed into history on JULY 27, 82 A.D. Loving hands and heavy hearts laid Joseph to rest among the Christian company that had preceded him -- near to the little wattle meeting-place which he and his companions had built over forty years before when they arrived on British soil.

Cressy, in his ***Church History of Brittany***, wrote: "Joseph was buried near the little wattle church he built." Melchin, who wrote circa 560 A.D., recorded: "The disciples...died in succession and were buried in the cemetery [on the Isle of Avalon]. Among them, Joseph of Marmore, named of Arimathea, receives perpetual sleep, and he lies in linea bifurcata near the south corner of the oratorio, which is built of hurdles [wattles]" (Quoted by John of Glastonbury).

According to George F. Jowett, on the stone lid of the sarcophagus in which his bones were later buried, under the initials of Joseph of Arimathea, are inscribed these immortal words: "Ad Brittanos veni post Christum Sepelivi. Docui. Quievi." (To the Britons I came after I buried the Christ. I taught, I have entered my rest.) "In these few simple words are contained more tragedy, romance, and drama than in any other inscription ever written; words so characteristic of all the faithful Apostles of Christ, seeking no self-justification, merely a simple record of a duty performed" (*ibid.*, p. 229).

Maelgwyn of Avalon -- writing about 450 A.D. -- describes the place of burial in these words:

Joseph of Arimathea, the NOBLE DECURION, received his everlasting rest with his eleven associates in the Isle of Avalon. He lies in the southern angle of the bifurcated line of the Oratorium of the Adorable Virgin.

Long before the era of Maelgwyn, a magnificent abbey had been constructed over the original site -- enclosing the wattle house of the Messiah in lead for its preservation, along with relics of Christians past. All the early and later authorities, such as John of Teignmouth, Leland, Hearne and Morgan, refer to the SAME RESTING PLACE of Joseph as cited by Maelgwyn; and seldom do they fail to quote the inscription as it appeared on Joseph's tomb.

The erudite Archbishop Ussher refers to William of Malmesbury as "our chief historian." Leland and others call William "an elegant, learned, and faithful historian." William lived in the famous Glastonbury Abbey on two different occasions in order to complete his outstanding manuscript. At that time, before the great fire of 1184, all the ancient records and manuscripts were in existence and at his disposal. He also CONFIRMS the time and place of Joseph's death and burial.

Archbishop Ussher, himself a historian of great repute, writes in his carefully detailed work of "St. Joseph's burial in the bifurcated line next to the corner of St. Mary's Chapel and of the silver and white cruets containing the sweat and blood of Christ buried with him."

The remains of Joseph of Arimathea lay undisturbed until 1345 A.D. During this year one JOHN BLOOM of London was given permission by King Edward III to dig for the body of Joseph -- provided he first receive the consent of the Abbot and the monks of Glastonbury. When this was duly granted, John Bloom located and RECOVERED THE REMAINS of Joseph. R. de Boston, a monk in the Lincolnshire Monastery, simply recorded: "The bodies of Joseph of Arimathea and his companions were found in Glastonbury."

Archbishop Ussher, in his book, provides a copy of the license, copied from the royal archives in the Tower of London, given by Edward III in 1345, to John Bloom of London,

with the right to excavate the body of Joseph underneath the enclosure of the monastery. Ussher also records that the body of Joseph was found exactly where all had stated it rested. The license was signed by King Edward on June 8, 1345. Ussher also quotes from the "Record of the burial of St. Joseph and his companions," from The Great Register of the Monks of Glaston.

Another reference to the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea at Glastonbury is presented by Lionel Smithett Lewis, who spent most of his 86 years searching the archives for information about Joseph at Avalon. He writes:

The body of St. Joseph, whose burial at the wattle church of St. Mary was recorded by Maelgwyn of Avalon, writing about A.D. 450, lay undisturbed till the year 1345, when Edward III gave his license to John Bloom of London to dig for the body if the Abbot and monks permitted, and just as the discovery of the bones of King Arthur at Glastonbury in 1190 were recorded in far-away Essex by the monk Ralph de Coggeshall, so in a far-away monastery in 1367 we find a monk recording that "the bodies of Joseph of Arimathea and his companions were found at Glastonbury."

The remains of St. Joseph were put in a silver casket which could be raised at will from a stone sarcophagus, the base of a shrine to which the frequent pilgrimage was made. This stone altar tomb, the base of the shrine, like the Holy Thorn, survived the Reformation.

Lewis continues:

Holinshed, in his "Chronicle," A.D. 1577, speaks of St. Joseph's sepulchre as being still at Glastonbury, and the learned John Ray in his "Itinerary" records that on June 2, 1662, "We saw Joseph of Arimathea's tomb and chapel at the end of the church." As we have seen, the Holy Thorn was cut down in the Great Rebellion. The aftermath of the same period saw the altar tomb of St. Joseph leave its shrine. During the Commonwealth a Nonconformist divine was put in as incumbent of the Parish Church. In 1662 this interloper was turned out and a Churchman instituted. It was that very same year, in which by God's Providence John Ray came to Glastonbury and saw the tomb in the ruined chapel. Later in the year, tradition says, from fear of Puritanical fanaticism like that which destroyed the Holy Thorn, silently, hastily at night, the altar tomb was removed from the ruined shrine in St. Mary's Chapel at the Abbey, and placed in the churchyard of the Parish Church for protection outside of the East end of St. Mary's Chapel in that Church. There it remained till the AUTUMN OF 1928, when loving hands brought it reverently into the Church, and placed it in the ancient St. Katherine's Chapel, the North Transept.

Moreover, there is a plinth inside to receive the silver ark with the Saint's remains. A glass top was put on the tomb that all generations might see what was found. -- ***Glastonbury, the Mother of Saints***.

It was Lewis himself who discovered Joseph's Altar Tomb that had been buried in the churchyard for some 266 years. One autumn day (in 1928), while walking by the ancient cemetery, Mr. Lewis stubbed his toe on a stone object protruding from the ground -- evidently lifted out of the ground by frost. Upon excavation, the stone object turned out to be Joseph's long lost tomb.

Today the stone sarcophagus shows evidence of having been wrenched from its original resting place -- the work evidently being done by some strong metal lever or bar. According to E. Raymond Capt, "the silver casket (containing the bones of St. Joseph) allegedly reposing in the tomb are missing. However, the sarcophagus contains a "plinth" or base, which would have held such a casket" (***Traditions of Glastonbury***, p. 94).

The Line of Pharez in Britain

Although Joseph and his companions did not see any great number of people converted to the Truth of YEHOVAH God during their years in Britain, YEHOVAH's MAIN PURPOSE for leading Joseph to the Isle of Avalon was accomplished! THE LINE OF PHAREZ, to which Joseph belonged as uncle of the Messiah, was TRANSFERRED TO BRITAIN (in his own person) -- which was already long the home of the line of Zarah! At a later date, the TWO LINES MERGED, thus healing the breach.

Brutus, descended from the Trojans of Troy -- who in turn were descended from Zarah -- arrived in Britain in approximately 1100 B.C. His line, strengthened over the centuries by the invading Saxons and Normans, and eventually merging with the Milesian branch of the line of Zarah in Ireland, has ruled the British Isles ever since without any major interruption.

During the time of King Zedekiah of Judah, it is claimed that Jeremiah the Prophet brought a daughter of Zedekiah to Ireland -- where she supposedly married into the line of Zarah. However, there is NO RECORD whatsoever in the ancient annals of Ireland, Scotland, Wales or England that makes mention of this ever occurring!

Various groups, including the British-Israelites and a number of the Churches of YEHOVAH God, still cling to this erroneous tradition, completely OVERLOOKING the role Joseph of Arimathea played when he arrived in Britain during the first century of our era. That Joseph was met by a reigning king of the Zarah line when he stepped ashore in Britain should tell us something right there! YEHOVAH God was directing the affairs of His people Israel in the islands of the sea, to bring about the healing of the breach and

the fulfillment of Genesis 49:10, which says: "The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh comes..."

Centuries earlier, King David of Israel visited Ireland and established his throne there under the Irish name of Ollamh Fodhla. However his line, after 137 years, apparently came to an abrupt close when a rival royal house of the line of Zarah took the throne by force. As far as history and tradition is concerned, the line of Pharez in Ireland disappeared with Oilioll -- the last king of David's line (934-918 B.C.).

Therefore, as a thorough search of the ancient records shows, it was JOSEPH -- not Jeremiah -- who planted the Davidic line of Pharez in the British Isles! Centuries later, in the time of the famous King Arthur of the Round Table, THE TWO LINES MERGED AND THE BREACH WAS HEALED!!

The story of Joseph of Arimathea, filled with adventure, drama, tragedy and immense courage, has long been overlooked by the Churches of YEHOVAH God. This fearless man of YEHOVAH rightfully belongs at the leading edge of the missionary effort to spread the Word of YEHOVAH God to all nations. He stands shoulder-to-shoulder with Paul, Peter and the others who left their indelible footprints in the far reaches of the Roman Empire and beyond.

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