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*“Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.”
Colossians 2:8*

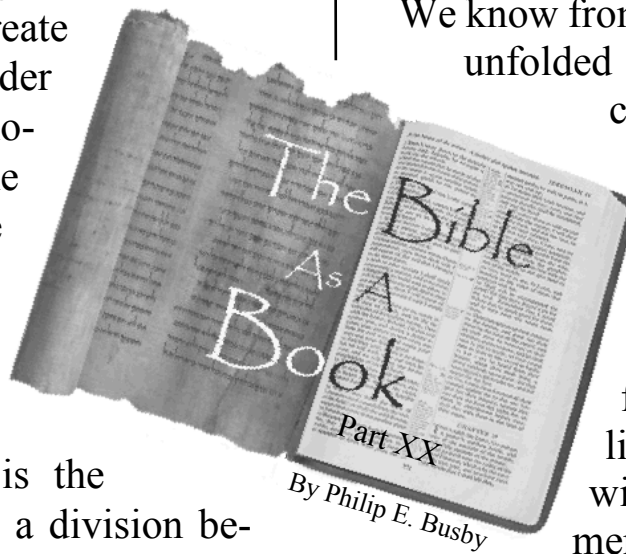
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We ended our last segment by closing out our overview of the book of Genesis, and that brings us to the second book in the Torah, which is Exodus. While Genesis gives us the story of how man was created and brings us down to why God chose to create a specific nation in order to hold His oracles, Exodus is ready to shift the focus of the narrative to specifically follow God's plan among men, which would come through His chosen nation. This is the basis for why there is a division between the book of Genesis and Exodus as opposed to there simply being a book of Genesis which contains all this information. It's not that God no longer cares about man as a whole. It is that to understand how God deals, and is dealing with man as a whole, one must be shown God's specific plan. As we have discussed before, to see the unfolding of God's plan one does not need to search on every

mountain top or under every rock in various places around the globe. Set before us, we have a specific people whom God chose to work through, and we all know who they are!



We know from Genesis how the world unfolded and how man had basically chosen to live his life in group form. We also see God's interaction with those decisions in that man would not be allowed to fully corrupt himself in living as one big group with a centralized government telling all men what to

and think. In spite of this, man still chose to live in smaller groups with centralized leadership; and as later history shows, man continued, and still continues, to attempt to pull it all back together. By the end of Genesis we see the formation, or at least the beginnings of people forming into what we would call nations. The nation of Egypt is where the family of Israel has been placed by

P.O. Box 271, Loveland, CO 80539

(970) 593-9468



the end of the book of Genesis; but God's chosen nation was not to conquer Egypt and become the world power, nor was the land of Goshen the place where God intended His nation to be based. As a young developing nation, God had placed Israel in the heart of what was clearly one of those places which contained the hopes of the Tower of Babel. The story of Exodus shows us how, from the very beginning, God has kept his people in a place where His work through them can be of great influence on the workings of man's overall choices.

Genesis shows us the story of how in the field of developing nations God planted a specific group of people to be a nation for His purposes. However, that nation had a more permanent home planned by God, and that place was in the design even before the one man whom God brought that nation through ever lived there. God called Abraham out of a territory that was also a place which contained the hopes of the Tower of Babel. It was, shall we say, a highly “developed” society, but God would not build His nation in the place Abraham was. God would bring him to the more wild and wide-open spaces of Canaan in order to solidify the point God was starting something new, and separated for His purposes. (Ex. 19:5-6) Abraham's son Isaac would get a wife from the place his father had been called out of, but he himself would never go there. Isaac's son Jacob would go back to his grandfather's home to find a wife, but God would ensure

Jacob would not stay there. Jacob would return to the promised land. God would do this mostly by blessing Jacob, which caused sinful men to despise him. This all but forced Jacob to return home; and Exodus shows us a very similar circumstance is what brings Israel out of Egypt.

Jacob had many sons, and his name was changed to the name the nation as a whole would later bear. This name, of course, is Israel, and it was, once again, not something he picked up along his journey but a directive of God. After living his life in the promised land, Jacob would find himself near the end of his life moving to Egypt where his beloved son Joseph had become a great leader! Jacob would live there until the end of his life, but Jacob's body would be returned to the promised land for burial. Joseph would, by default of his position in Egypt, be the prominent figure of the family after this; and Joseph would live his life very aware that the children of Israel would not leave Egypt for a long time. However, he too would end his life with a commandment which confirmed Egypt would not be the place for God's chosen nation to permanently call home. Joseph would command that when the day came the children of Israel left Egypt, Joseph's body would also be taken to the promised land as they went. This would establish what today we might call a “trust” among the children of Israel, for the purpose of keeping track of Joseph's body to ensure its movement from the land when Israel left. This

would also maintain the knowledge among Israel that they would, in fact, leave some day. Thus, the book that tells us from with which it all began, we know not just where we all came from but specifically where God's chosen nation came from, and where they truly belong!

Simply put, the book of Genesis ends by confirming there would be an Exodus. If you read the book of Genesis all by itself with no knowledge of any other books, you would know there must be one out there somewhere, because it truly is the beginning of a story that one just must know more about! All this makes it obvious as to why the next book in the Torah is a separate book from Genesis as well as why it is named "Exodus." Now, as to the time period covered by the book of Exodus, that can be a subject of a little debate. It really all depends on where you want to place the beginning. Exodus does a bit of the opposite of what we just talked about Genesis doing. It points backward to the fact there is more to the beginning of this story than where the book begins. It does this by leading off with a few facts which confirm it truly is the continuation you are looking for to the book of Genesis. The opening words of Exodus are, "Now these are the names of the children of Israel, which came into Egypt;..." It then goes on to list the direct sons of Jacob and tells the complete number of people in his household that came into Egypt from Canaan. The next verse tells us Joseph, who is the central figure

for why they are in Egypt to begin with, dies and his entire generation. This is setting the stage for the fact the story you are about to hear, while directly tied to the end of Genesis, is a ways down the road from where Genesis ends. Some time has passed so events could culminate and bring about the next important happenings in the development of God's chosen nation. We see this in the very next verse, which technically covers a significant time period by simply telling us that Israel, as a nation, went on to be very prosperous in Egypt. It is not until verse 8 that we come to the true beginning of the events and time period the book's story is focused on. Thus, the time covered by the book of Exodus depends on if you start from Israel's entering into Egypt, which overlaps the story and time period Genesis covers, or some time later on down into the heart of the story.

If we rundown the numbers, it goes like this. Jacob was 130 years old when he moved to Egypt (Gen. 47:8-9), which is the technical place verse 1 starts us at. This would make Joseph about 39; Genesis tells us Joseph dies at the age of 110. Thus, from the time of Israel's entering into Egypt to the death of Joseph, we have 71 years. It only stands to reason that verse 8, telling us, "Now there arose up a new king over Egypt, which knew not Joseph." did not happen immediately after Joseph's death. Thus, there is some time there. The book of Exodus ends with the finished work of the tabernacle, and

the narrative of how God would lead Israel by lifting from the tabernacle when it was time to go and resting in the places where they were to stop. There are a lot of events even between the freeing of Israel until this point, but from the time Israel was told by Pharaoh to leave Egypt to the completion of the tabernacle, there is only about a year's worth of time. Thus, the time period that brings up a real question about just how much time Exodus covers overall is what lies between the death of Joseph and the leaving of Egypt.

For that we have to look at Exodus chapter 12 verse 40. It tells us a fact that seems to solidify the numbers. It says, "Now the sojourning of the children of Israel, who dwelt in Egypt, was four hundred and thirty years." However, if you go to the genealogy given in chapter 6, you find it is not really plausible to interpret this as meaning there was 430 years from the time Jacob's family moved to Egypt until the time they were freed. If Joseph was around 39 years old when he brought his father's house to Egypt, his brother Levi would have been about 44. We know this has to be close, at the very least, because of the information given in Genesis, which shows us Jacob had most of his sons during his second seven year time period of working for Laban. (Gen. 30:25-26) Levi could not be too much older than Joseph, considering Levi was Leah's third biological son. If Levi was 44 when they went to Egypt, he lived for 93 years in Egypt because we are told he

lived to be 137. Now, if you ignore the clear indication in Exodus chapter 6 that Kohath was the middle of three sons for Levi, and say Kohath was the last, and also born in the last year of Levi's life, you can add Levi's 93 to the 133 years of Kohath's life and get 226.

If again you ignore the indication that Amram was Kohath's first son, and also say Amram was born in Kohath's last year of life, you can add the 137 years of Amram's life, bringing the total to 363. If you further say that Moses was born in the last year of Amram's life, you will find by looking at Exodus chapter 7 verse 7 that Moses was 80 years old when he came in to tell Pharaoh to let God's people go. Adding Moses' 80 years brings us to a grand total of 443! Stacking all the ages end to end as much as you can, you still only come to 13 years more than the 430 year mark. If you consider the post-flood genealogy given in Genesis chapter 11 shows an age averaging between the late twenties and the late thirties for the age various ones had the son listed as the next generation, and add to that the fact only Abraham, through miraculous health given to him by God, seems to go on past 100 to bear children, stacking the ages anywhere close to the way we just did is going along way out from what is plausible, much less probable!

The way to quantify all this is to understand that we may have been thrown off a bit by the translation of languages.

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A Matter Of Life And Death

Part V

From Living Springs' Questions and Answers

“Does the spirit leave the body at the time of death? Then Jesus comes at the end of time and takes the soul home to heaven.”

In our last segment we talked about how God uses death as a way to truly save us from our sins, and how this shows us we are not truly saved or born again until that day we are given an incorruptible form by God. This also explains why we continue to experience such things as sickness, and distress of all sorts even while attempting to live for God in the here and now. All this moved us into a discussion about some of the false ideas of men and what they tell us happens after death. Discussing what actually does happen to us is what we are going to get into in this segment of “A Matter Of Life And Death.”

When Adam and Eve sinned, God told them they were made from dust, and death would return that part of them, which was made from the earth, back to the earth. (Gen. 3:19) Once man dies there is no hope for his physical form, and this is what Job was talking about in Job 14:7-12. A tree or plant may have hope of life again after the death of its body. If there is a piece of the root which has life in it, a tree might put forth a new sprout much like it did at the very beginning of its existence and grow back to be very large. Man does not have that hope. When he dies, he dies because of some form of physical injury or deterioration. After death, this only gets worse and worse until the body is no longer recognizable as a human body. It does not even matter that there is a part of humans which lives on. Man has no ability, nor is

there any hope, no matter how long you may preserve his physical form, to raise it up again or start over in some way. When the breath is gone, it's gone. The physical form is done, and the rest is in God's hands alone!

Now, Job does use the idea of sleep in what he says, but this is because he understands there is more to us than just the body, and he is making his statement in the same context as Nicodemus. Job had not seen The Messiah's work. Job was only mulling over what he knew, and that is: in spite of the fact man is more than just flesh, the cold hard facts of life is that the physical form dies and is no more. Because of this, no one, no matter how much they served The Lord, came back from the dead. Job did not know exactly where those parts which are not of the body went, but he knew they were not coming back to be with the body!

Nicodemus asked about entering a mother's womb when Jesus told him people had to be born again to see the Kingdom of God, because Nicodemus could not see how man could physically gain life a second time. He also knew the body was a lost cause after death, and without the physical process we all know as the beginning of our lives, how else would the body be replaced? For all our attempts to take care of our bodies or find foods which bring longevity, people still die. For all our attempts to raise the dead with potions, enchantments, magic, or the like, for all our care of the body after death, people just don't come back! The only way anyone besides Jesus has ever come back from death is by the

power of God doing what He did at creation, which is also why everyone except Jesus died again.

The answer to the question we are dealing with in this writing of, "Does the spirit leave the body at the time of death?" is simply yes! The mind and the spirit are no longer in any way connected to the body after death. Death is not a sleep, nor is it a coma, of sorts. Once the physical form has lost the ability to sustain itself, or be sustained even by outside help, such as we do with many modern life support systems, it is over, and all which is not physical is detached. Once the body is truly dead, there is no more reason for us to be attached to our physical form than to any other piece of this physical universe. Our bodies are dust, and this truth becomes more and more apparent with every moment which passes after death. Also, because we no longer have a physical form which belongs to this world and the materials it consists of, we no longer have any connection to this universe which God created in Genesis 1:1. This, as we have been discussing, is the beautiful fact which allows God to turn the sting of death and the grave into a victory! (I Cor. 15:55-57)

Now, some might be tempted to argue that I myself, in this very writing, have made it a point that the tomb of Jesus was opened so we could see He was no longer there, and that included His body. This is true, but this is the difference between being raised from the dead and being born again. Remember, two main points. First, Jesus was perfect. He never sinned. The devil tried to get Him to, but Jesus never did. (Heb. 4:14-15) This brings us to another one of those odd thoughts many Christians have. Many Christians believe the devil celebrated when Jesus died, but why would he? Once Jesus was dead, and still

without sin, the devil lost all opportunity to touch Jesus. The devil is not the ruler of the place we like to call "hell." Hell is the place God prepared for the devil and those angels which followed him, and it is a place of eternal punishment. (Matt. 25:41)

While the devil and his cohorts wait to be sent to that place of eternal punishment, they are here in this universe. Without getting off on a whole study about angels and demons, and the argument as to why this is possible when we do not see angels as having physical forms, let's just remember, angels were not created in the same way humans were. At the same time, this does have relationship to why demons (which are only angels who rebelled against God) do seek out something physical to "possess." All this is why the legion of demons possessing the man who lived among the tombs, in the country of the Gadarenes, cried out to Jesus, "What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? art thou come hither to torment us before the time?" Matthew 8:29 These demons knew there was/is a set time for them to be sent into eternal punishment. However, they knew Who they were in the presence of, and they were afraid Jesus would send them to that place as Jesus cast them out of the man. That is why they requested to be allowed to go into the herd of swine.

What the Bible tells us is that here in this world we need to, "Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." Ephesians 6:11-12 Jesus living in this world in flesh which was able to be corrupted, which is proven by the fact Jesus was able to be killed on the cross,

was the devil's only chance to destroy God Himself! Never before and never again has the devil had such an opportunity; but once Jesus died, never having sinned even once, that all came to an end! Because Jesus was perfect, he did not deserve the judgment of death; yet not only had He died, it was truly the sin of other men which caused His death. This is why Jesus was raised, not in like flesh as He had had before His death, but He was - for lack of a better term - transformed into a new incorruptible form. Sin would no longer be able to kill Him or touch Him in any way!

This is a major point, and one which we should try to grasp. Jesus came, not just to show us God can resurrect the dead. He already did that with men such as Lazarus. The story tells us Jesus specifically waited for Lazarus to not only die before He came to Lazarus' house, but Jesus held off coming so Lazarus would be in the grave for awhile. Jesus wanted there to be no doubt that Lazarus was not just in a coma, or the like. Lazarus was - as we say - stone dead, and by the time Jesus comes and tells them to roll the stone away from the tomb, Lazarus' sister even points out that is really not something one would want to do. Her fear was that surely by that time Lazarus' body stunk! Jesus not only had the stone rolled away, in spite of this warning, but caused Lazarus to come out of that tomb alive, and still bandaged in his burial cloths, just to prove it was truly the same man! (John 11)

The point is: at any time God can animate, or reanimate, any part of this universe with the power of life, just as He did at creation. In doing this, He can also place the mind and the spirit back in a reanimated body, which is what He did with Lazarus. As amazing as this

is, Jesus would be raised differently. Because of His perfection, Jesus' actual body would be transformed into a new form which would never be able to die, be killed, or corrupted! The scripture even specifically points out that Jesus' body, which died on that cross, would not be left in the grave to deteriorate and stink as Lazarus' had. On the day of Pentecost, Peter quotes this fact, prophesied by David in the sixteenth Psalm. "For David speaketh concerning him, I foresaw the Lord always before my face, for he is on my right hand, that I should not be moved: Therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad; moreover also my flesh shall rest in hope: Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption." Acts 2:25-27 He says, "...my flesh shall rest in hope:..." not because his flesh will be resurrected, but because of Christ's work, he as an individual can die, leaving the flesh behind, without worry or concern for what will happen to those parts still alive.

Our second point about Jesus' body, which goes hand in hand with the one we just covered, is the fact Jesus' body was not made from this world! Remember all that stuff about how we are made an individual because our parents shared a part of their life in order to form ours? Well, that did not happen with Jesus. A lot of Christians like to go on about Mary being the mother of Jesus, and this too has connection, as so many things do, to religious practices outside of Christianity. These things have to do with worshiping the flesh, and that is why a most prominent thing in ancient religions, the world over, is the worship of fertility. Worshiping fertility has a direct relationship to the fact, in man's heart of hearts, he understands life does not come from nonlife! That being said, we should also

understand, Jesus did not come from Adam's life!

In a way, we are all Adam, but Jesus is not. Christians are clear on the fact Joseph was not truly Jesus' father. However, Mary was no more His mother! Neither of them provided anything to create Jesus' physical form. The Bible tells us Jesus was conceived by The Holy Ghost, and placed in Mary's womb. (Matt. 1:18-21, Luke 1:30-35) Normal human conception takes male and female acting together, and conception takes place long before the new baby travels to the womb. God is not slack concerning His promises, nor the details of how serious He is that we live the life He created us to live! (II Pet. 3:9) Mary was an incubator only so Jesus could live life from the very moment of conception every human following Adam and Eve had lived from. Mary was not, in any way, genetically Jesus' mother!

Now, if we put these two facts together, we see the truth: Because He had no sin, Jesus' body could be resurrected without the corruption of personal sin. Because He was not of the line of Adam, He could be resurrected without the corruption of the sin of those who had come before Him. (I Cor. 15:45) Because these two facts are true, Jesus' actual body was resurrected! This gave Him the ability to walk this world, as well as the ability to leave it. Our bodies, on the other hand, cannot be resurrected in this same way; and contrary to classical human thought, it would be detrimental if we had to, in some form or another, drag these bodies, or any part of them, along with us after death. We will not stay the same, even if we are still living in these bodies at the time of Jesus' return, "...we shall be changed." I Corinthians 15:52 Jesus' body was truly resurrected, but He did not go through this process of death

and resurrection so we could be raised like Lazarus and die again someday. Jesus did what He did so we could share in His resurrection, which only He could accomplish! (Rom. 6:5-10)

This is why we say The Messiah is the first fruits among many! However, the true heart of our question, which we want to get to and understand, is the fact that while Jesus was the first to be raised incorruptible, He was not the first to ever die. What about Noah, Job, Abraham, etc.? How could they be "saved"? These men had been dead for centuries, even millenniums before The Messiah ever came! If Jesus was the first, what happened to them? Again, if we do not raise immediately or just a day or two after death, what happens to us? This, in many ways, is what Nicodemus was wondering about, and what needs to be understood in order to answer the question we are dealing with in this writing!

Again, when death happens to these physical forms, everything which is not of the body - that being the mind and the spirit - leaves the body behind! After an individual dies, the rest of humanity goes on living and walking day by day in the time sequence God put in place during creation. This is why funerals are not for the dead; they are for the living. The person who has "passed on," knows nothing of what is going on, because they are no longer connected to this universe. This also means they are not looking down from above on what you are doing with their body or your life. In fact, the idea of the spirit and mind being unconscious after death - like a sleep - is a more appropriate thought than believing the soul is floating around watching what is going on.

The idea that our loved ones are looking

A Matter Of Life And Death continued on pg. 17

Following the Biblical Stream:

By Philip E. Busby

We ended last time by discussing Genesis chapter 11 verse 5, which is the fact God came down to see the city and the tower that man was building. We also talked about the fact there is more in-between verse 5 and 6 than most people ever think about. There may be nothing specifically recorded in-between these verses, but that does not mean God did not speak to anyone about what was going on. In truth, God likely spoke to many individuals. What is important to keep in mind is that man was not, at this point in time, in the place he was just before the flood. God is not grieved that He ever made man, God is simply coming down to be with man; and unlike the days of Noah, when there was no one with whom God could commune except Noah, the truth here is likely that God was able to interact with several individuals. God's ultimate decision in this situation would be based on the fact men's hearts had not gotten as bad as they had in the days before the flood, and there were many still willing to hear God's voice.

Now, the interactions God had with individuals would have been numerous and there would have been too many to record the specifics of them all. The opinions would also have been greatly varied, and there probably was not even a significant consensus on the matter for there to be recorded even samples which would

have justly conveyed the attitude overall or even large segments of the population. When considering all this, we should remember, at this time, people were still living far longer than we live today on average. At only about a hundred years removed from the flood, God was not strictly dealing with a new generation which had not known the flood and/or Noah himself. Genesis chapter 9 verse 28 tells us Noah lived 350 years after the flood. Ham Shem, and Japeth were still alive at this time. Barring a few untimely deaths, most of Noah's grandchildren, who were raised together as a family unit with Noah as the elder, were directly involved in the city and tower building. There simply would have been too many people still walking the earth who knew days when Noah and his family talked with God directly, for there to be no one who would interact with God by this point.

There is also the fact that, as we talked about in our last segment, this was the beginning of such things. There would have been many people going along with this idea of building a tower and a city who truly did not have an understanding that what they were doing was involving themselves in something that was intended to, or simply would, shut God out of the lives of men. They were not truly taking the mark of the beast, even in their

hand, because they had nothing to go on as to what taking this path might ultimately mean to their walk with God. God had not yet given the instructions that we know as God's Word today, and this is due to the fact much of why God's Word would be helpful to people in such a situation is because it records past events people such as those at the tower were involved in. These are the events that precipitated the giving of God's written Word. What these people did have was the knowledge of good and evil, which the tree in the Garden of Eden had granted to Adam and Eve. However, this was for many far too large an issue for them to see the possible outcome. This is yet another example of exactly why God didn't want man to have the knowledge without the training to go along with it, and this is why we see verse 5's words. What the people were not taking advantage of, which they should have been doing, was taking the time to seek God and His direction on whether this was a good thing or not. Because God created us to interact with Him, God comes directly down to see and interact with what the people were doing, in spite of their lack of calling upon Him. Even if they were in the midst of making a great mistake, God was still there for them to talk to. God did this even for Cain after he became the first murderer in the world. (Gen. 4:8-16)

All this means we are not looking at a world where the thoughts of men were only evil continually, but one where man's knowledge about what life is really

all about was swaying from the fact that communing with God was/is our true purpose. This goes back to what we talked about in our last segment, which was if man had been building this structure for the purpose of serving God and sanctifying a place on the earth for His presence, all would have been different! God's interaction with the people on the earth verified what, of course, God already knew, which was the fact, that was not the intent of the tower. The individual interactions of God with those on the earth, building the tower and city, no doubt ranged from those who said, we like this and think it's a great idea all the way to those who said we hate this but it's what everyone is into right now. For some it was a dream to do such a project in spite of the fact they had not consulted God about it. For others it was that their family and/or friends were or wanted to be involved. Because this situation was not about things being so bad there was only one man who found grace in the eyes of The Lord, and because there would still at this point have been many individual opinions, which is exactly what God was attempting to preserve, we are given, not the diverse opinions about why they were all involving themselves, but the final determination of what God needed to do about it!

Thus, verse 5 tells us God came down to interact with man, and verse 6 tells us the determination God came to on the basis of that interaction. In verse 6 we have another one of those times that show

us God discusses stuff, even if He is talking to no other individual of any kind. Again, we do this as humans; and if we are aware of the fact we are a triune being, made in the image of God, we understand why. This discussion in verses 6 & 7 has to do with God taking the time - or a better way to say it might be to say, God is showing us that He was being complete about the decision. God was not just making the decision on the basis of what The Father thought without the input from The Son and The Holy Ghost. This may seem like a very weighty subject to grasp, and in a way it is. However, this is the balance we so often lack in our lives. We often get ourselves in trouble because we make choices on the basis of just what makes the flesh feel good, and often just in the moment. We tend to ignore the spirit telling us a choice we are making will have negative affects, even in the long term, and more and more people seem to never use their mind to overcome the flesh, even knowing there will be long-term damage suffered even by the flesh. God wants us to see in these verses that He is not making a rash or unbalanced decision. What God is about to do is based on all the facts about what is best for us!

The first thing God points out in this process is the fact man is “one.” At first glance - and it is certainly what many people teach on the subject - it would seem God is saying what we just dis-

cussed about there being various opinions is untrue. To many, this simply means man had all one thought and were going ahead with something unrighteous in total agreement. I believe this is a wrong way to see the situation. What God is pointing out is not that there were no differing opinions or reasons for why the tower and city were being built, but that in spite of their unique individual perspectives, they were such a close-knit group, those perspectives could not flourish. If they were truly all of one opinion on this issue, and the reason for going forward with the project was bad, we would be back to God saying: if this is what man chooses to do with his life, there is no reason for him to continue!

God wants us to be the individuals He created us to be, but it is the interpretation - or should we say, misconstruing - of evil men that individuality is somehow not “loving” to others. The idea is that if one person has their own thoughts and feelings, which do not mesh with the group enough to directly benefit the group, that person is the one in the wrong because they do not care about the larger community! This is why the people in our world today, who seem to shout the loudest about the need and respect for diversity, are the ones who have the biggest problem with freedom and individual opinion. They concern themselves with the issue of diversity only because they are worried about the ways it distinguishes people and keeps them from ben-

efiting the whole in a way a conformist would, not because they care about the individual. They would say they are trying to protect against hatred, but it often turns out to be they who exhibit hate the most, especially when a person or persons' individuality and/or opinion(s) gets in the way of us all working as a group! This is what was no doubt being preached at the Tower of Babel. The obligation to work together, in spite of how wrong a path we are being asked to follow, comes through the teaching that having individual desires is considered selfish! God was getting ready to do what He was going to do because, in many ways, God wanted to protect, especially, those who might desire righteousness from this very evil and easily manipulative argument. God saw that even those who disagreed with the idea were going along with it anyway. They just felt too obligated, or in being a good family and/or community member it was only right for them to think about their neighbor and help even with a project that was far from being a necessity, or true helping hand to a brother or sister in need.

This tower should have been something anyone who desired to could work on, without being the all consuming project of mankind. What God was combating in what He was about to do was not simply the fact that together man can accomplish a great deal, but that the truth was being twisted. (Isa. 5:18-24, Rom. 12:9-21) Far too often it is far too easy for evil people to get their way, even

among those who are righteous, because they can play on the idea and fact that righteous people are obligated to be loving and caring to others. One of the big things which took man down into uselessness before the flood was that the people who served God started taking wives from among those who did not. This brought family ties, not just to a spouse who did not hold the same morality, but to their family as a whole. When there was separation between the groups of those who were attempting to serve God and those who were not, the people who served God were dealing as people who believed in love and respect for others among those who also believed in showing love and respect. Once the two groups started to intermingle, righteous people were then faced with the daily reality of trying to deal in love and respect with people who would judge them on the basis of every wrong move they made and use it as a wedge to get what they wanted because they felt no obligation to live righteously themselves. The sad truth to all this is that the devil has found this is one of the greatest weapons he has ever known! (II Cor. 6:14-18)

When we see God pointing out in verse 6 that the people were one, this is the problem He is talking about. This precipitates the next part of the statement we see in verse 6, which is God pointing out, not only is man one, but the heart of why this is possible is because man all spoke one language. From the beginning of creation it has not been God's intent to

force man to do what He wants. If it were, we would all simply be doing the will of God in our lives. However, in creating a freewilled individual, God created people who could make choices of their own. What God wants to do is instruct man, and on the basis of those instructions in righteousness, which is the true necessity for our living together, see people choose to be what each individual wants to be. This is why we were given the option of taking from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil in spite of its consequences; and even when God came down before the flood, it was not His intent to change the heart of man to be what He wanted by literally reprogramming man's mind. Thus, God set forth a deadly future for man that only had one logical path of escape. God Himself provided for that path, and left the choice up to the individual. People would either believe and get on the ark, or man would choose not to believe or care about anything other than what he wanted to do day by day. Most chose the latter right up to the day the rain began to fall. (Matt. 24:35-39) Even then the only reason they may have wanted on the ark was that it was becoming clearer and clearer with each raindrop that they were going to die. However, by that time, the door of the ark had already been closed!

When it comes to the time of the tower, God, once again, was not going to reach down and affect man's mind in a way which was like reprogramming a device of some kind, and change man's

individuality. What God wanted to do was strike at the heart of what made it possible for evil men to corrupt everyone in the world. That ability unfortunately came through a gift God had given us so we could truly interact with each other with ease, and that was the fact man all spoke the same language. As we talked about in an earlier segment, man was not just of one language but one speech. They understood what each other was saying in a way we do not appreciate today. The concept of having a spoken language that another could not easily understand was literally foreign to them. They simply had no thought about this because language was a totally different thing to them than it is to us. Today, we talk about "the language barrier." To them language was exactly the opposite. It was the means of going forward with whatever anyone wanted to do with another!

The next part of the statement in verse 6 is, "... and this they begin to do:..." The evidence we are talking here about something that is not just about this one tower and city, but something more fundamentally wrong and damaging to the human race, is found right here in this statement. God is not just talking about the tower and the city, but the fact a scheme of sorts has reared its ugly head. All we have been discussing over the last several segments has come together. Man has chosen to look at individual men to be leaders over groups of individuals, even when those individuals are not direct

family members. These people who think this way had determined to make a name for themselves, which would keep man obligated and together before individuals could go out and explore life for themselves, finding and becoming what they and their interactions with God and others will make them. The end result of all these desires and efforts had been affective, without a doubt. When God came down to see the city and tower, it was not in a completed form. God came down to interact with what they were in the process of doing. What God tells us here is not that the problem was men fighting among themselves, but that no one was able and/or willing to stand up and make note of this being wrong. There was no one who had escaped this project and way of life, for any reason! Yes, the completion of the project and all it would have meant to later generations is part of what God is concerned about, but not because the tower was currently complete and already affecting men in a negative way. God was concerned about all mankind simply on the basis they were able to get the whole thing off the ground in the first place. This fact alone was a very disturbing fact!

The next statement shows what we are talking about, for God says, "...and now nothing will be restrained from them,..." The whole point here is that if they had begun to do this, it showed a success in looping all men into one thing, using an unrighteous tactic that had no limitation

under the existing circumstances. The leaders and people who desired this tower were not just going to have success in completing this project, but they were truly going to control all of mankind using the same tactics they used to get this started. The idea of centralized government was reaching a climax before anyone had much of a thought about what that would mean or look like! Men controlling men, for the purposes they chose, was becoming inescapable. Today we look in many parts of the world and see governments that we think of as very bad, and what many people desire is to see those governments converted to a better form of government. Sometimes this has success, but very often it has unstable results and downright disastrous affects. The truth is, taking out leaders that even many people see as a big problem often falls victim to the truth that the devil you know is better than the devil you don't know. This is a proof that human governments, and the people often drawn to be in it, are not, as often as people would like to hope, made up of the best things and people. This has to do with what we are talking about here at the Tower of Babel. I'm not saying all people in government are bad, but too often the people drawn to the power are those whom God was concerned with here in Genesis chapter 11. They are the people who desire to do great things not so much for, but with all mankind. These ideas can seem like a good thing to many people, and can in fact come about with

some of the best intentions, but God tells us they are not.

This is ultimately true because of what God finishes His statement with in Genesis chapter 11 verse 6, and that is, "...which they have imagined to do." There's that word again - "imagine." When God came down to men before the flood, He determined that every imagination of the thoughts of man's heart were evil on a continual basis. (Gen. 6:5-6) What we are seeing here is God saying, not that we have come to that place again, but that from what is already showing in the fact this tower and city is even able to be started, is a road God is not just going to set back and let us so easily go down. Maybe the simplest way to put it is to say, we need constraints! It is so easy for man to go off on a plan conceived in his mind that is not of God and will be a detriment to his life, without even consulting God about it. This can not be allowed to go hand in hand with a great ease for men who desire evil things to simply obligate even those who desire the right things in life, into being a part of what makes their plans a reality. The proof was right there on the ground. Under the circumstances of man being all of one language, it was just too easy to bring everyone together; and since this was a known fact, there would be no stopping those who would plot and scheme to get what they wanted, even on a worldwide scale.

This was a power God would not al-

low a man or group of men to have, because only a truly pure, all knowing, completely righteous in every way man could be entrusted with such power. Thus, God did not just set a barrier in the way of men to accomplish this at the tower, but He set in motion an answer to the necessity of such a leader. He did this because of a fact we clearly see today. We are not like the people at the Tower of Babel in that we do understand, in a way far greater than any people of the past, what it would mean to have a one world governing power. Yet a majority of people on this planet still want to see it happen in spite of the fact God has shown it is not possible for it to be a good thing without a perfect leader, which they cannot provide! To once again save us from ourselves, God did not just confound our languages, but He went about establishing a nation among the nations through which a perfect man could be brought, and from which such a man could rule the entire world. Those who know this man await His return with greater anticipation each passing day! (Rev. 19:11-21)

Now, verse 7 is a very interesting verse. It starts with the words, "Go to, let us go down,..." The determination as to what had to be done and why, was set. The only thing left to do was execute it. While we have what seems to be a very short description of the fact what God determined was exactly what happened, there is, in reality, quite a bit here about how it was done. First, there is that truth

of movement, which when we think about God being everywhere can seem to be irrelevant. Why does God have to “go” anywhere? Yet we see this in many places in the Bible, and it has a direct relationship to God eventually coming down to walk among us in actual physical form. (Matt. 1:22-23) God set the rules about how this universe works, and He deals with us on a level we can understand. In my experience, when people talk about what happened at the Tower of Babel, they tend to talk in terms as if everyone was building away one day, and suddenly as one person asked something of another or instructed another, they found they no longer understood what each other was saying. From the words here in Genesis and from what we know to be true on the ground in real time throughout history, there is the definite indication that is not what happened! If you think again about what we talked about before in saying the entire earth was of one language and one speech, you realize you have to separate the two. Being of one language is not the same as being of one speech, and both words are used in this verse.

What we also see in these words is the fact all three parts of God are directly involved in this task. To some this may not seem to be significant at all, but we should consider that when Jesus was sent to this earth, it was truly The Son doing a work His Father had sent Him to do. Jesus is acknowledged by and teaches us to pray to The Father which is in heaven.

(Matt. 10:32-33, Luke 11:1-4) He tells us upon His leaving He will ask The Father to send The Holy Ghost. (John 14:15-17, 16:7-16) However, here in verse 7 of Genesis chapter 11, God says, “...let us go down,...” You see it is a truth that God is everywhere, but the Garden of Eden, (Gen. 3:8-11) the burning bush, (Ex. 3:1-8) the tabernacle, (Ex. 40:34-38) the temple, (I Kin. 8:1-11) and then The Holy Ghost (Acts 2:1-4) all show us there is a principle that - for lack of a better way to explain it - might best be described as the concentrated presence of God. This is not mysticism, it is simply to point out there is a difference between God being everywhere and His unmistakable, intentional actions. Verse 7 tells us this confounding of the languages was going to be one of those actions which man was going to understand God had done something directly, and it was something no man could ever have done. Also, this change that was to be made in man was not just a physical change, or a mental change. The confounding of the languages was about a work each of the three parts of God would be involved in. Our mind, our body, and our spirit would be affected. The entire way in which we communicate with each other on all levels would be touched. This is one of the main reasons we simply can not imagine what we lost in the confounding of the languages!

Until next time, Shalom!

down on us is another false thought which simply comes from fleshly-minded people. It's fascinating how much we complain about the hardships of this life, but still want to remain connected to this physical world even when we no longer have a physical body to connect us to it. For this, there is another interesting story from yet another ancient culture which is still given homage to in many cultures today. That story is the one of Jack and his lantern. The story says Jack was such a bad person, not only could he not get into heaven, but the devil didn't even want him in hell. The fact the devil does not have this authority is one we have already covered. However, that's how the story goes, and this shows us a truth we should remember, which is: even Satan does not want to be the devil. (II Cor. 11:14) Now, because Jack has no place to go, Jack was left in the darkness where he did not desire to remain. In this darkness, Jack somehow found the physical objects of a turnip, and a candle. He also somehow found the means to light the candle. Then he proceeds to hollow out the turnip and carve a scary face in it to ward off evil spirits along the way. (As if there could be a more evil spirit than the story tells us Jack was.) After doing all this, Jack puts the lit candle in the turnip and uses the turnip as a lantern. This lantern of Jack's - or Jack-o-lantern to be more culturally correct - Jack uses to find his way back to earth, which is an act that would require a physical path of some sort, even if he was able to float through space!

Unlike the Egyptian philosophy, this story is not really about being connected to one's physical body. However, one of its greatest values may be in that it shows us Ephesians 6:12 is true. Our true enemy in this world is not flesh and blood; and once again, we should remember the story of the demons

who talked to Jesus. (Matt. 8:28-32) The story of Jack gives credit to the idea we lose our body upon death. Because Jack does not go to heaven, hell, or any place which would simply be a traditional holding place for the dead, it's more like the idea people have about their relatives and loved ones floating around. However, these kinds of philosophies have to do with being somehow connected to this physical realm and the ability to interact, or at least view what is going on here, without having a physical form.

People like to think there is a physical connection between this world and where we go upon death, or that we really never leave this physical realm at all. The Egyptians, and those who hold to grave sleeping, believe the connection is through that pile of dust which was our physical form. The story of Jack is about not having a body at all, but still being possible to manipulate physical objects! Either way, this is holding on to the hope that without the body it may be possible for the spirit and mind to hang around or get back to the here and now.

The truth of the matter is that the only forces able to hang around as invisible are those of the devil and his angels! We could go into this more deeply, but again, angels were not created like us, and the word "angel" simply denotes the fact they are God's messengers. This fact is why we often call those who are no longer serving God by that other word - "demon." Maybe the simplest way to put it is to say angels were created with different abilities. In the book of Job, we see Satan coming before God; and when asked where he has been, Satan replies he has been walking to and fro on the earth. (Job 1:6-7) This shows an ability to go from one place to the other. Humans were not created with this ability, nor were they created for this purpose.

When we go to the book of Revelation, we find the dragon (which is Satan in representative form), along with the angels which followed him, were cast out of heaven and onto the earth. Satan, at that point, is trapped in our time sequence, and it is specifically pointed out that he is very angry about the fact he has little time to work with. (Rev. 12:7-12) What makes Jack's story interesting is the fact it tells us only someone utterly evil would end up in Jack's predicament. This mirrors the truth the Bible tells us, and is the reason so many believe they should use jack-o-lanterns of their own - especially on certain nights of the year - to ward off the evil spirits which may not only find their way to this earth, but to your very door's threshold, where if you do not treat them, they will trick you!

The truth for humans goes back to our creation. God formed the human body out of the dust of this ground, then God breathed the breath of life into that body. The body is more than a shell; it's a part of us, and it's the part of us which connects us to this physical realm! This is why we need a Saviour, and not as some suggest - simply a "guide!" As we live here in the physical, we can do whatever we want within the bounds of what is physically possible. It is simply up to us. This is why God gave man the physical ability to make choices from the very start, by giving them the physical ability to take of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, as well as the Tree of Life. The body is why we can speak, see, hear, smell, and touch things. We lose all those abilities, when it comes to this physical place, when our bodies are gone. This is why those who have died are not looking down on you from above. They are not walking among you as invisible spirits. Man was made with a physical form for those purposes, and all

those purposes also have to do with spending time!

Remember what I said about God dividing the light from the darkness during creation, and that being God creating time as we know it? Well, that is where the understanding comes! The physical realm is more than just a touchable, viewable place. It's also a place which regulates how we can take action, and what regulates us is that thing we call time! This entire, physical realm is what I like to call a fishbowl, of sorts. We may not understand exactly what exists outside of our fishbowl, but we have to live in it in order to function in the way we were created to function. This is precisely why, if we are going to leave this place, Jesus had to go and prepare a new place for us! God created us to live in a day and night, one foot in front of another way, and to do this, you literally need to have feet. You also have to have a place to use those feet! In many ways, I think there is a part of every human which understands this whether we have taken the time to consider it or not. This is why people are comforted by the idea our soul may be able to lurk around here in some way whether conscious or not. We simply do not know where else it could go!

In our next segment we will talk about the possibilities of where we can go after death, and what this means to the dynamics of what happens to our mind and spirit upon the death of our physical form. This will lead us directly into the answer to our question. Until then, I pray you will grow in His assurance and comfort, as you prepare your life to meet The Lord at His return!

***Questions submitted to the Institute,
answered by Philip E. Busby.***

There is a simple fact that seems to escape people who talk about the “peace process” and the state of Israel. Many people live under a government which is not of their choosing. Native Americans are a prime example of this, and there are many more examples all over the world. Governments come and governments go. Some last a very long time and some do not. Very often, over the course of time, people living on a specific spot have not, do not, and will not get to choose under which government they live. War and changing political circumstances reshape our world all the time. When it comes to Israel, people want us to believe that those people living on the land before the existence of the modern state of Israel are suffering simply because a state, that had not for a time been, now exists. This is simply untrue!

Not only do the facts support the truth that many people living in the area today live better lives since the establishment of the state of Israel, but one needs to understand first and foremost that Jewish people were living on the land before the establishment of the state as well. This is not, as the media so often tries to tell us, a situation where a native people lived in a specific spot and one day a colonial power or the like sent a large contingency of people to “settle” the land, leaving the indigenous population to suffer by being pushed off their land and out of their homes. It does not matter whether you believe the Bible or not, or even that it contains some historical truth, our modern knowledge tells us Jewish people are, at the very least, no less indigenous to the land than those who have, for very political reasons, chose to take on the name “Palestinians.”

A Time To Choose!

By Philip E. Busby

Jews, Arabs, and others who would identify themselves with other

ethnic groups lived on this land before the modern state of Israel was established. Muslims have lived on the land over several of the preceding centuries; and Muslim activity has, in fact, ruled the land at times, often as part of what was called an empire. However, Jews have lived on this land for millenniums, and their claim is far older than any Muslim government. Even if one claims that both parties have an equal claim to the land, which much of the propaganda against the Jews tries to deny, there is still, in a modern world, only the question of what kind of government has been established over the land?

Again, many ethnic groups live together on land which is controlled by a certain governing body that was not of their choosing, and one that does not consider, much less promote, their particular culture. This is why the solution most of the “free world” claims to believe in is the attempt to make a governing body a democracy. The whole idea of this kind of government is that it is suppose to give the opportunity for everyone living in a particular area the chance to participate in the process of government; and because this is true, such a government, no matter how based in one cultural tradition or another, should give the freedom for those who do not share that cultural belief, or form, the opportunity to practice their own. This means the question is not really about the state of Israel verses some other government. If a democracy, especially one as well ran as the government of Israel, is not the answer to the problem, one has to ask, what is?

Yes, there is a government in control of a large portion of the land between the Jordan and the Mediterranean; and yes, this government is primarily based on the Jewish culture just as America was originally based on Protestant Christianity. However, even more so than it was in the early history of America, the state of Israel is a place where even in spite of those things done for security purposes, there is truly freedom for all. Again, unlike the media propaganda promotes, the non-Jewish population is not being forced into subjection or out of their homes and off their lands, at least not by the Israeli government. Those who today claim to have been so treated are misconstruing the facts, because what they actually did was leave their homes in the hope of joining the armies and countries that promised they would destroy the newly formed modern nation of Israel. The idea that such combatants would simply be able to return after taking such action against a state is ridiculous in any part of the world!

The inescapable truth is not that people who are non-Jewish can not live their lives in peace and prosperity under the Israeli government, especially since so many actually do; it is that they do not want to live with Jews. What the world is clamoring about is not that the Israeli government refuses to treat all its citizens equally and fairly, but that it is considered an imposition to many different people that anyone would have to live among Jews, especially in a nation founded on Jewish culture. Of all the times for people to choose to look at a situation by putting themselves in another person's shoes, I suppose it should not surprise the true believer in the God Who created us all that

the world has chosen this opportunity. It seems many people think about what it would be like to live among so many Jews and shudder at the thought. It would seem no one cares or wants to talk about what or where all the Jews living in Israel would go if the state was shut down, even in light of the fact the argument about Israel is clearly that the non-Jewish population must have the entire land free of Jews! I'm afraid the truth is the world has thought about this and that is the very reason it has not yet raised up and attempted to shut down Israel in order to solve the Middle East conflict which seems to continually bother everyone in the world!

When it comes to the brass tacks of it all, it seems more and more the only thing there is true freedom in this world to do is show a hatred for God's chosen people. You can tell Jews they can not build new homes for their families on land they have actually purchased with their own hard earned money. You can suggest or outright shout from the housetops that the very existence of a state founded on Jewish culture should be destroyed or usurped. You can even go to great lengths to make sure none of your wealth is invested in such a state, or any company willing to do business with such a state, and all that is just fine. However, I'm sure the simple writing of an article in support of God's chosen nation will be attacked as "incitement to violence," and the fact it appears in the pages of a non-profit ministry organization's publication - illegal! Once again, a clear line is being drawn in our world, but the question is, which side are you really on? ☆

The Bible As A Book continued from pg. 4

If we look at the Septuagint, we glean a hint about what was for - lack of a better term - "lost in the translation." The Septuagint was an attempt by scholars, in and about the third century before Christ, to take the Hebrew Bible into the Greek language, in no small part because of the many Jews who no longer spoke and/or read Hebrew. There were even many Jewish leaders who believed giving up Hebrew altogether in favor of Greek was a good thing. While translation issues are not the reason to argue there is no place for Bibles translated into other languages aside from the original, they certainly make an indisputable case for having people who maintain the original. The Jewish people are those entrusted with this task, and there have always been, at the very least, some among the nation we can be thankful to God for that have stood firm in doing this. We should be thankful even if it seems to our not burdened with the responsibility minds, that at times they go a little too far in their exclusion of others!

Getting back to the case at hand - the Septuagint translation shows us there may be a little more to this verse than what we get in some other versions. To be clear, I'm not teaching that the Septuagint is a more pure version than many others, because it certainly has its missteps. However, what we just covered here shows us there is something we are missing in this particular case, and the Septuagint may at least give the clue as to what it is. In the Septuagint, Exodus chapter 12 verse 40 says, "And the sojourning of the children

of Israel, while they sojourned in the land of Egypt and the land of Canaan, was four hundred and thirty years." Whether this is a good translation job or something else, may be in question; and that fact alone likely has a lot to do with why we do not see these words in the King James Bible. However, in either case, the idea does explain a great deal.

Abraham was 75 years old when God called him to move on into Canaan after his father's death in Haran. Isaac was born when Abraham was 100 years old. (Gen. 21:5) This gives us 25 years of Abraham being in Canaan before the birth of his son. Isaac was 60 years old when Jacob was born. (Gen. 25:26) This brings us to 85 years. Jacob was 130 when he moved his family from Canaan to Egypt. (Gen. 47:9) This gives us three generations, and a total of 215 years. Now, if you look at Exodus chapter 6 you see there is Levi, who enters the land of Egypt as a grown man but not as old as Abraham was when he came to Canaan. Levi's son Kohath has a son named Amram, who is the father of Moses. This represents four generations which did not likely have their sons as old as Abraham had Isaac and even Isaac had Jacob. If we also consider God was directing all this, the idea that the time period from the entering of Egypt to their leaving accounts for only, and exactly, half of the 430 year period given in Exodus 12:40, is a good one!

So to count the time Exodus covers, one can say that from the time Jacob moves his family to Egypt until the time

Moses leads them out there is 215 years. After that we can start counting the time on the basis of the calendar God wanted Israel to use, because Moses is told the month in which the original Passover took place, and Pharaoh told Israel to leave, would be the first month of the year unto Israel. (Ex. 12:1-2) We are also told the raising of the tabernacle, which is the final event of Exodus, took place right at the start of the first month of Israel's second year. (Ex. 40:17) This gives us one year from the leaving of Egypt to the raising of the tabernacle. Putting this all together (without sweating over the individual months and days of course), it comes out like this. Verses 1 through 6 of Exodus chapter 1 covers about 71 years. Moses' life from his birth to the release from Egypt covers 80. (Ex. 7:7) Verse 7 through to the birth of Moses would then cover 64 years, and lastly, one year is covered after Israel leaves Egypt. Thus, Exodus covers 216 years, if you go from the overlap with Genesis' part, which tells of Israel's family moving to Egypt, and it covers 145 years if you leave out the overlap. If you leave off the years that brings us to the point where the story really begins in earnest, which is the why and how God brought Israel back out of Egypt, the story covers just over 81 years. If you really want to bring it down and leave off the first couple of chapters that tell the lead up information about what happened to Israel, and specifically Moses' up to the time he was called to lead

them out, all the rest happens in the space of only about 2 years!

Now, as is the case for all the books in the Torah, the book of Exodus was written by Moses. To some this may seem like the book is just his account of the events, since he was literally living most of what is covered. However, this is a wrong way to see this book. The idea of certain books containing a bit of perspective is something we can say about some of them, but even then we should be careful to understand God had His direct hand on their accuracy and what they cover. Books such as the Chronicles and Kings have some perspective to them, as they were written as a record, by many authors, over a considerable amount of time, as time unfolded. However, when we see books such as this we often see repetitiveness. For the most part, the books of the Kings covers the same time period as the Chronicles. These two writings of Chronicles and Kings even refer to each other many times. (I Kin. 14:19, II Chron. 24:27)

The Gospels are the other good example. Of these we have four. Again, I want to emphasize the point that we are not talking about accuracy, as in the idea we are getting just one person's recollection of what happened, but there is certainly a personal aspect to the historical information we are given. When it comes to the gospels this is true like no other book(s), and there is a reason for this, which we

will talk about when we get to them. The shorthand reason is that at times we need a personal touch and feeling to be convinced we are not dealing with a God Who is trying to be mysterious to us in any way. We are dealing with the God Who created us and wanted to walk directly by our side in the Garden of Eden and elsewhere. The Gospels are the telling of this in conveying the story of how God became Emmanuel like never before! (Matt. 1:22-23) When it comes to books such as Exodus however, the human interest part comes in that we are seeing humans interacting with God, and in no way was/is any personal perspective of the writer something intended to be included. Thus, even a book such as Exodus, which was mostly experienced by the man who put writing instrument to writing material, is not just his retelling of the tale, but a word for word, dictated by God, manuscript of what took place.

These facts are why we can not say for sure exactly when a book like Exodus was written, other than to say sometime in Moses' lifetime. Some would suggest a book such as this one was written like a Chronicle as the events unfolded, but from the story itself there does not appear to be time for Moses, of all people, to do that. The children of Israel literally left Egypt so fast they did not have time to knead their dough; and thus, we have unleavened bread, not just as a commandment to symbolize something, but also as a direct historical fact. We also see God writing the Ten Commandments with His own finger. (Ex. 31:18) God wrote them

down because Moses was not in the process of writing a book at the time. Also, during the building of the tabernacle we do not see Moses going off of written instructions. Moses was told to follow the pattern, "...which was shewed thee in the mount." Exodus 25:40 The words that things were done according to what Moses saw are recorded, but not a detailed description of what he saw. This shows God specifically putting certain details in while leaving others completely out. Only God could have directed this, and without believing God set Moses down to write the book of Exodus, one must believe Moses' age, growing experiences, and time constraints would have seriously interrupted and generally effected the flow of the writing, especially across all the books of the Torah!

Now, in talking about Genesis, I said it was a solid history. This because of two main factors. One, it hands off directly to another book chronologically (that book being Exodus); and two, it is the only book which covers its time period. (This is predominantly true in spite of the slight overlap of information at the beginning of Exodus.) Exodus is also a solid history book, but yet a little different. It does hand off to another book chronologically, but that book is Numbers, not Leviticus. It also differs in that Exodus is not the only book to cover its time period. Leviticus gives us information, some of which was granted during that last year of time Exodus covers. Deuteronomy also gives some repeat information, but neither of these facts really disrupt the fact Exodus

is still a framework of the historical facts of its time. When talking about Deuteronomy, you are talking about the verbal repeating of many events and facts, by Moses, to the next generation. Meaning, Deuteronomy is not really the covering of the same time period as the book of Exodus. When talking about Leviticus, we are not talking about so much the covering of the same time period, but the cataloging of facts, some of which were given during Exodus' time period. Leviticus is more in line with what today we are looking for when we say these are "law" books.

Exodus, like we talked about already, is separated from Genesis in that it is taking us into the specifics of not just how God grew a nation of people to call His own, and why He did it, but what God intends to do with them. The book of Exodus is the true beginning of written law, in that it tells us the story of how the laws of God were granted. Thus, it is like Genesis in that it covers human events, telling us actual real life happenings. At the same time, because those happenings include the giving of law, we read the specific wording of laws in this book. This shows us that truth we talked about early on in this series. While God eventually came down among men and gave a direct law, some of which was literally written in stone, God's law is not about a list of dos and don'ts, it's about showing us how to live our lives before God in an everyday walk. For Israel, the law was a

very embedded thing into their lives, and that is the point. As God gave them the law it shaped and formed their lives, and nation.

Israel came out of the land of Egypt with a lot of knowledge and wealth, but with little national identity. Their national identity would come through not just the holding of a catalog of laws, but in the fact those laws had practical application for their survival as a nation. We see this clearly in the book of Exodus, and this truth reaches out to all people. While non-Jews are not even allowed to participate in certain applications and/or rituals of the law, we should glean from this the knowledge that if we also want to be the true people of God, we are not to mimic those things with contrived or already established rituals of our own. We should see just how much our salvation is never going to be found in the rituals of men, even if those rituals are given by God. Our salvation is about learning and growing in our relationship with God, which can be greatly encouraged and expanded through the application of the laws we find in God's Word whether they seem like a do or a do not!

Let's stay in God's Word!

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