

Free - Take One

# Shaqah

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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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## Step Into the Springs!

Our new book, "A Sabbath by Design" is finally in print, and we want all of you to have a copy! When it comes to the issue of the Sabbath, the problem is that many people have been taught to "Honor a Sabbath day," and they have never given the issue a second thought. We simply follow whatever religious practice we have primarily been taught, which usually encompasses going to church and/or fulfilling religious ceremony whether great or small.

What people need is not more bickering and strife over varying religious practices but a Bible based, non-denominational, thorough discussion about what the Sabbath truly is. If that is what you are looking for, then "A Sabbath By Design" is for you! Inside, you will find straight forward teaching about why the Sabbath is important, when it occurs, how we keep it holy and more. Simply put, this book is not about when to go to church, it's about why we need to "Remember the Sabbath day" God intended us all to keep holy unto Him!

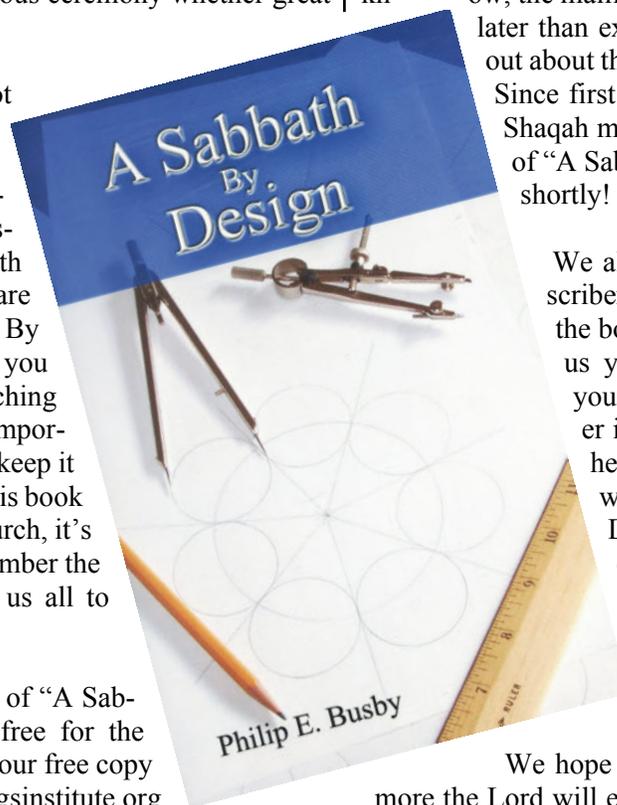
If you would like a copy of "A Sabbath By Design," they are free for the asking! The best way to get your free copy is to go to [www.livingspringsinstitute.org](http://www.livingspringsinstitute.org) and click on the "Resource Shop" button. All you need to do is check the order box for "A Sabbath By Design" and type your mailing information into the form provided. You can also get your free copy by simply writing to us at Living Springs Institute, P.O. Box 271, Loveland, CO 80539. Just tell us you would like a copy of

"A Sabbath By Design," and be sure to give us your mailing address!

Remember, if you are a regular mail subscriber to this publication or if you pre-ordered the book, your copy was sent out automatically. If you have not gotten your book before receiving this issue of Shaqah, we want you to know, the mailing date for the book was just a little later than expected. This means the book went out about the same time as this issue of Shaqah. Since first class mail is faster than book rate, Shaqah may have arrived first, but your copy of "A Sabbath By Design" should be coming shortly!

We also want to remind our e-mail subscribers that you were not sent a copy of the book automatically. Even if you gave us your regular mailing address when you subscribed, we have no idea whether it's current or not. We still have not heard from some of you; but if you would like a copy of "A Sabbath By Design," you will need to e-mail or contact us in some form to let us know you want your copy. Be sure to give us your mailing address when you write, and we will send your copy right out!

We hope this book is only the first of many more the Lord will enable us to produce. So, keep reading Shaqah and you will be the first to know what our next title is. Until then, please remember to share Living Springs Institute with others. Thank you so much for taking part in this ministry. God bless, and enjoy this issue of Shaqah!



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# Following the Biblical Stream:

By Philip Busby

Last time, we ended by talking about Genesis chapter 6 verse 9, which ends by telling us "...Noah walked with God." The verses we covered last time tell us what God's thought was. This emphasizes the fact God did not destroy man on a whim. God had been watching man all along, and that observation is what God's determination was based on. Why does the Bible take time to give us these facts? The answer is, we are far too often double minded creatures. We have a tendency to look at God as nothing greater than a man, while at the same time see Him as some untouchable power source which simply reacts with such explosiveness it can't be overcome. We are double minded in that we see God as incapable in many small everyday circumstances, while also seeing Him as so powerful and above us that He simply doesn't see or care about our everyday circumstances. The truth of God's Word tells us neither of these thoughts are valid.

God knows we have this tendency, so, His Word is laid out in a way which will hopefully help us understand God is thoughtful, gracious, and merciful. He doesn't act simply on instinct like an animal would. He doesn't simply strike us dead because we fail. However, God is very matter of fact about His determinations. There is no debating. God sees the truth before Him, and acts in righteousness. Humans do not truly have all the right information to make a judgment call in many circumstances. This leads us to negotiate our determinations and simply hope it all works out. God doesn't have this problem, so His judgment is perfect. There is no need for negotiation. This fact is what leads some people to think God is simply flying off the handle at times, and this is why we feel things will be better if we can appease God or harness Him in some way with our rituals. In truth, the only way we can see a change in God's determinations is by having a relationship with Him, by calling upon Him. However, God is never wrong; and this is why we need to be careful what we ask for! Even in those cases where God is willing to allow our pleading to change the circumstances, there are consequences to face. It's always a good practice to end all our requests the way Jesus did, by saying, "Not our will but thine be done."

Now, verse 10 turns us to the story as it unfolded "on the ground" - so to speak. We are not starting over and repeating the same information. We are turning to the details of the direct interaction between God and man which happened as a result of God's determination. This is why verse 10 tells us again that Noah begat three sons. At the time God came down and spoke with Noah about His determination, Noah had these three sons. Shem, Ham, and Japheth were living and walking on this earth. They would see the process of the ark's building from start to finish, and likely take part in it. This may seem like a small insignificant piece of information, but it's not. Verse 8 told us, "But Noah found grace in

the eyes of the Lord." It was not Noah's family or Noah's sons, it was Noah, and this is not due to Noah having no children as yet.

The Bible is pretty clear on these issues. Especially, here in Genesis. It was not Cain who loved God, it was Abel. It was not Seth's birth which is credited with men beginning to call upon the name of the Lord, it was Enos! (Gen. 4:26) Noah was the only man listed as finding grace in the eyes of the Lord. This tells us, even Noah's sons were in deep trouble. This story is not about a righteous family attempting to save the world; it's about one man whose family even needed preaching to.

Verse 11 tells us, "The earth was also corrupt before God..." In these verses, there is a definite sense that God was interacting in time. God made a determination about the condition of man. Noah found grace in God's sight. Noah had three sons at the time God came to tell Noah of His determination; and the word "also" affirms to us, the world was corrupt at that time! Meaning, God did not jump back in time or because God is not limited by time, come to Noah long before the condition of the earth had deteriorated. God gives us the opportunity to be who we choose to be. That is what this earth is all about. God does not simply judge us on the basis of what we will do. He judges us on the basis of what we have become. Time is the opportunity to change your mind! The ark would take some time to build. God would give Noah the time to do it, and mankind the time to see it happen. There would be plenty of time for man to receive the message Noah was receiving in these verses. There would be plenty of time for man to change his mind and join Noah in preparing for the coming destruction. Again, God shows us He is the same yesterday, today and forever. (Heb. 13:8) This would be a, "Whosoever will may come," situation.

Verse 11 also uses the wording, "...before God..." The world was not just corrupt; it was corrupt before God. Remember what we talked about in this study when discussing the Garden of Eden? God had created a place where His presence could directly be with us. No matter where we went in this universe, God would be there; but in the garden, God could unfailingly be walked with in the cool of the evening. This is why Adam and Eve went right to work attempting to clothe their nakedness after taking of the fruit. They may or may not have understood the omnipresence of God, but what they did know was God would be coming along to walk with them. Sure enough, they soon "...heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden..." Genesis 3:8 Sin would cause man to lose the privilege of having such direct unhindered access to God, but we would never be out of His sight.

FBS continued on pg 7

# *A Reprobate Mind*

## *Part I*

From Living Springs' Questions and Answers

Is there forgiveness for a reprobate mind?

One of the first things we must do to understand this issue is to look at the word "reprobate." This word and its plural form are used about seven times in the King James Version of the Bible. Only one of these is in the Old Testament and the rest are all in the new. This means only one of these appearances (The one in the Old Testament) is translated from a Hebrew word. The other six come from Greek, and whether plural or not, all six come from the same Greek word. To make it all even more simple, both the Hebrew word and the Greek word mean the same thing. Where the complication comes in is when we look at the English. The word "reprobate," in English, has become a concept, more than a word with a basic meaning. When you look up "reprobate" in some English dictionaries, all you will find for a definition is something about an immoral person. This is not a good definition; because in spite of the fact reprobate may describe a person who is immoral, every immoral person is not a reprobate. So, this is a great disservice by the writers of the dictionary, but it's not an excuse to change the word reprobate in newer "translations" of the Bible.

The truth of the matter is, we do not use a word in modern everyday English which means the same thing as reprobate. Some would say the word could be replaced with something like "depraved," but that doesn't cut it. Depraved doesn't mean the same thing at all. Depraved is related to deprived which is to say something has been withheld or taken from you. This carries a sense of force with it. It's to say something is lacking, and the reason for that may be circumstances or a specific action taken on the part of another. If someone is deprived of food, it is not necessarily their fault. Deprivation is the effect of a cause. Deprivation is also considered much more of a reversible state. To be deprived of water or food may lead to an irreversible state; but then we would not say you were deprived, we would state you were dead! Reprobate, on the other hand, is not reversible. The word carries the sense of final judgment and irreversibility. The word reprobate is more akin to the word "worthless." However, even worthless doesn't say it right. Worthless is too broad in that it has more to do with overall value. In our modern world, worth is often related to money. To say something is worthless is to say it's not going to bring anything at market. This is to say it has no value in anyone's eyes; thus, we might refer to such an item as trash or garbage, and that interpretation just goes too far.

The word reprobate carries the sense, not of total worthlessness, but of worthlessness as it relates to a specific cause. To be more clear, it's to say something which is designed for a specific purpose is found to be unusable for that purpose; and as I said before, it also carries a permanence. If something is reprobate, it's to say the thing was meant to be used or designed to be used for a purpose but was ultimately deemed not good enough for that purpose; thus, it was cast aside. An example of this is actually seen in the verses of the Old Testament where reprobate is found. Jeremiah chapter 6 verse 30, mentions "Reprobate silver..." Today we don't often talk about this when it comes to silver but we do when it comes to gold and jewels. When talking about gold, we often talk about its karat weight. This number refers to how pure the gold is. This became very important because gold is a precious metal whose value, especially before the time of electricity, is derived from being aesthetically pleasing. So, when you go to buy a hunk of gold which weighs a certain amount, you want to know just how much of that hunk is actually gold.

Today, your average consumer often only thinks of the karat weight as relating to the fact the purer the gold the more shiny and pretty it is, but that is not the basis of the measurement. Though it may be true, the purer the gold the better it is to look at, most consumers cannot tell the difference until the purity gets very low. The real issue is for the buyers of gold. They want to know how much gold they are actually getting so they will know how far it will go in covering things they want to make attractive. They also do not want gold which will fall apart because of the corruption in it. This is why in times gone by, buyers would bite gold to see if there was enough gold to react the way gold should. If the object was merely something soft just covered with gold or if there was too much corruption in it, the object would break or crumble. If the object was mostly something hard like rock or iron, one could tell it was too hard to be gold.

In our modern world, purity of gold actually means a lot when it comes to electronics, because gold is a very good conductor of electricity. However, the things which corrupt gold are not. For gold wiring to be of value it has to be of at least a certain purity. There is no reason to pay the price for gold wiring if it's not pure enough to outperform, or even be worse than, a much cheaper metal-like copper. So, here too, the amount of wiring which can be made from a given lot of gold is all dependant on how much of the substance you are buying is actually gold. Karat weight is meant to tell just that.

Now, we would probably never use the word reprobate when it comes to gold, because gold is fairly easy to purify. No matter how little gold is in or on something, the gold, for the most part, is able to be separated and used. However, this is not so much the case with something like stone, and this is most obvious when it comes to diamonds. Diamonds also have a carat weight, but for diamonds, the word is spelled with a “c” instead of a “k,” and this is because when it comes to precious stones, we are talking about something a little different. Carat weight is important with precious stones, because it refers to the stone’s size. Unlike metal, you can’t increase the size of a diamond by simply melting more of it together. That is why we do not often say “diamond,” we say, “a diamond.” We may be looking for a big diamond or we may be looking for a small diamond, but what really separates the good from the bad is what we call clarity and color.

The color can vary from diamond to diamond, and just like the size, what people want can determine what is most valuable. However, when you get into the subject of clarity, you are talking more about what really makes a diamond useful as a “jewel,” and that’s its sparkle. Now, sparkle can also be greatly affected by inclusions. Inclusions are impurities just like in metal, and just like metal, these impurities can affect the diamonds usefulness. Since diamonds are translucent, those things trapped in a diamond are often visible; and this is why the carat weight is important to a diamond’s size. Unlike metal, diamonds cannot be melted down for the purpose of separating out impurities. If a diamond has an inclusion, the only way to get rid of it is to cut it out, and every time you cut a diamond it gets smaller. The bottom line is that you can’t purify a diamond, you just have to use the parts which are already good enough to serve the purpose you want a diamond for.

So, what we see in a jewelry store is not what a diamond straight out of the ground looks like. Jewel diamonds are cut by a highly trained individual who takes the time to look at the whole chunk of diamond which came out of the ground, and decide whether the diamond should be made into one jewel or multiple jewels. They also choose what the shape of each jewel should be. These choices are often affected by the placement of inclusions which are in a raw diamond. They are looking for the best way to leave as few of these inclusions in each jewel as reasonably possible. So, there is a direct relationship between the number of inclusions and the size and number of good jewels you can get out of a raw diamond. However, some raw diamonds simply have too many inclusions in them to be made into a jewel of any value. There simply may be no way to cut around all the inclusions and leave only an attractive stone. Other diamonds may also be deemed unworthy of being made into jewels because they are of such poor clarity or bad color. This is where we would rightfully use the word “reprobate!”

Now, diamond dealers do not tend to call these rejected stones “reprobate”; they would prefer to say the stone is

“not of jewel quality,” but this example is very good for understanding the word “reprobate.” If a professional jeweler looks at a raw diamond and determines it is not of jewel quality, then to the world of jewelry, that diamond is reprobate. However, this doesn’t mean these stones are altogether useless. Diamonds can still be used in things like cutting tools or other applications where properties such as their hardness is valuable in spite of the diamond’s other shortcomings. No one is going to care what the clarity of the diamonds in their diamond tip blade is. So, while not of jewel quality, these stones may have other uses; but to the one who desires to cut a jewel, these stones are reprobate.

This is why Jeremiah refers to reprobate silver. Today, we have technology which helps us determine what is pure silver and what is not, but in Jeremiah’s day that was not so much the case. Now, with gold, the purer the gold the better; but silver is not always valued on the basis of its purity. Silver can be combined with other elements to make alloys. Sterling silver is an alloy of mostly silver and a little copper, but once done, it would not be easy to separate the silver from the copper. Simply based on its color, silver can be much harder to separate from other metals just by sight. Aluminum is a very plentiful element in the earth which looks a lot like silver. In fact, silver and aluminum are both valued in making mirrors because of their reflective qualities. However, aluminum is, in no way, as hard as silver; and thus, aluminum would not work for many other applications silver is good for. Much the same can be said of lead. So, if you thought you had silver but in fact you had too high a mixture of silver and something else, you might make an item which silver was normally used for and find you had not used pure enough silver. In these cases, the item simply may not have worked for its intended purpose, and because it was not easy to separate silver from certain other metals, the silver the item was made of could not be simply taken back to the smith to be purified. Because the silver was not truly silver, or not enough true silver, to be used for the purposes silver was used for, it was deemed “reprobate silver.”

With these examples, we should understand what the word “reprobate” means. It does not simply mean a thing is useless in every shape and form; it means something is not useful for the purposes it’s meant to be used for. This is a judgment call on the part of the one who made the item or is familiar with what it was to be used for. This is why the word “reprobate” is used in the Bible. Man was created for a purpose, and that purpose can be defined in no simpler terms than to say we were created to commune with God!

Next time, we will talk about the relationship God wants to have with us and why the choices we make are so vital to having or not having that relationship.

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

# Do You Trust Me?

By Ruth Busby

That was the sobering question from God, when, at the end of my rope, I realized I could be walking through the Valley of the Shadow of Death. He leadeth me beside the Raging River, and I was scared to death---Literally!

In mid December, I found out four of my coronary arteries were clogging up---again! Two were almost completely blocked, and the others were close seconds.

The solution from the doctors was bypass surgery---again! Been there done that nine years previously. My first response was, no way am I taking that route again! Being pressured from medical professionals to loving family members, I was fast falling apart emotionally.

I was praying, but an underlying current was stirring my thought pattern---some of you know the feeling. I felt a surge of depression and, at times, could not hold back the tears.

I called my younger son (who is also my minister) and started asking questions about death and being ready to die. I had lived for the Lord almost all my life, but knew there were things in my life that might keep me from going to be with Him. I was afraid of dying; and I knew I shouldn't be! I always told myself I wasn't, but now I was faced with reality---and I was scared. He talked with me at length, not about living or dying so much, but why I wanted to live or die. Did I want to go to heaven because I didn't want to go to hell? Or, did I want to go to heaven to be with God? Setting under his teachings---for that is what God has called him to be in the five-fold ministry---I know that hell will be a place where God's presence will not be, unlike here on earth, where the Holy Spirit's presence is. Do I love the Lord and want to be with Him for eternity? Or, do I want to just squeak by so I won't go to hell? As we talked, I realized that was kind of what I had been doing. Slowly but surely, I had been becoming passive about the things of God, and letting the things of this world overtake my relationship with Him. I begin to realize, nothing on this earth is worth it. For as the scripture says, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." Matthew 6:19-21

I knew from years of living for the Lord, I needed to step it out with the options presented---although bypass surgery was not one of those options I would consider, because I could get no peace about that.

As they ran me through the gamut of test and consultations, the options were becoming few to none. After checking my test results, several cardiac and conferring professionals together, decided bypass was my best, and probably, my only option. So they scheduled me to see the cardiac surgeon. Needless to say, I was braced for an argument, but also had a few questions.

I had requested prayer from the few sources God had led me to talk to; and, of course, with fear and trembling, constantly praying within myself.

My husband and I were taken back when the surgeon came in and announced he didn't really want to do another bypass on me, and explained his reasons why. Was I relieved? Was I more afraid? What would this mean? Sure I had told everyone I wouldn't go through bypass surgery again. Then, smack--in my face--that was no longer an option, "according to the surgeon himself."

It's easy to pray for rain when the sky is full of rain clouds, but not so easy when you're in the middle of the desert, the hot sun beating down on you, with no cloud in the sky.

He showed us the angiogram results on the monitor, because I wanted to see and understand for myself just where the blockages were and how severe. It's quite sobering to see your beating heart working to overcome the nearly closed arteries that send life-giving blood throughout your body.

We left there with our spirits low with what we had just heard and seen; but deep within my soul, I knew the Lord had just given the answer to one of the steps being taken. Back to the cardiologist for further steps/options!

God was already directing me toward more of a natural approach, as He had designed my body for from the beginning of creation.

Once he knew I was considering alternatives, my oldest son was of tremendous help, as he was on the internet daily---which I know little about---searching out other natural alternatives and ideas. He was a real blessing as he stood by me with not only encouragement, but example: as he started utilizing most of the information himself, and praying for me with all his heart.

The cardiologist came in with nothing new. He had already told me the difficulty and risk of stents--in my particular case--but he was backed against a wall and could only go back to that option. They would try a couple and

that would give me some relief. I had learned of a procedure called External Counter Pulsation, and with great encouragement and expectation, ask if I could try it. But my hopes were quickly doused as he told me that would not work for my situation, because of the location of the blockages. With all the doors pretty much shut, I knew my second step had been removed.

As I told the cardiologist my decision to try a more natural route, for now, instead of opting for the stents, he reminded me of the risk, but was very much agreeable to my decision---not knowing exactly what to do with me himself.

The tears, the anxiety and depression was at an all-time high---so I thought! Because, while going through all this, they thought they saw something in my right breast, and wanted me to see my regular doctor. So, I made an appointment, just to ease everyone's mind; while at the same time being very confident nothing would come of it, since I had no family history of cancer.

After checking, my doctor said she found nothing suspicious, but would like me to get a mammogram just to be sure. Reluctantly, but to satisfy everyone involved, I did so.

After a dozen pictures, and two and one half hours later, I was told---you guessed it---they saw something; not in my right, but in my left breast. The next step---an ultrasound, because they needed a closer look. All I could think is this can't be happening on top of everything else. "God, what is going on?" After about four hours, very apprehensive, and on the verge of tears, I was in a room, very reluctantly setting-up an appointment for a biopsy.

As my husband drove me home, tears running down my face, I can't explain the gamut of emotions I was experiencing.

Beaten down and depressed, I walked into our home and saw our oldest son waiting in anticipation for the results. All I could get out of my mouth was, "I've got more 'good news,'" and burst into tears.

The next twenty-four hours were filled with prayer, trying to find a peace about which way to go. If there's one thing I've learned, it's stand still if you don't know which way to go. So, I called and postponed the biopsy. My husband called our youngest son and told him the findings. I couldn't bring myself to talk about it anymore, right then.

The next Sabbath (Saturday) in service, I couldn't even request prayer, for I knew I'd fall to pieces. After looking over at me, my husband said, "you need prayer," and the

flood gates opened again! As I opened up my feelings and ask questions about pros and cons of the things of God, my son (as my minister) explained the ways of God and my part in making a decision---not which decision to make. Peace started to come, and I knew the answer was on it's way.

I could not get a peace about the biopsy, but was apprehensive about doing nothing.

My regular doctor had gotten the results, and was on the phone early one morning to make sure I was going to get the biopsy, and quite disdained with me for postponing it. She assured me she would get back with me in a few days.

Every time someone---whether family or others---would urge me to go through with it, the tears and that sick feeling of depression would return. I sensed the anticipation of hope my husband felt, and understood as a spouse; but he was very understanding and knew, ultimately, it was my decision.

My two sons were the only ones who didn't pressure me to do any of it, for they understood it was between me and my Lord. They stood by me in whatever decision I made; at the same time, letting me know they loved me. Reading God's word, praying, and having them stand behind me was the pillar I leaned upon.

Then, one day as I was praying, a still small voice from within seem to say, "Do you trust Me?" Not to heal you, but to accept whatever route I choose to take you! I slowly--but finally--was receiving a peace and the answer I had been seeking; and I was realizing I needed to trust God in whatever happens from here, to surrender my will to Him and let His will be done. My prayers changed. I was not praying for God to heal me, but to keep me and guide me from here. My thought pattern changed. It was no longer a matter of living or dying. It IS a matter of whether I live on this earth or go to live with my Lord! I finally have come to the realization--as Paul said in Phil. 1:21, "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." If God has further work on this earth for me to do, only He knows; and when my work is done, only He knows. The old saying is true---"Only one life will soon be past; only what's done for Christ will last."

I now realize---which is something I had become passive about---my life in this old world is but a vapor, and as the old song says, "This world is not my home, I'm just a passing through; my treasures are laid up, somewhere beyond the blue." Through all of this, God brought me back to that realization.

I truly have a peace, and the fear is gone. For you see, from the beginning, I really had nothing to fear at all!

## FBS continued from pg 2

The question is always one of, how close do we desire to be? This is not a question which can be answered verbally. It's a question of the heart! Are we willing to seek the Lord with our heart? This is a question which is answered in our actions. In I Corinthians 6:19, Paul asks the question, "know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?" Is our prayer for the Lord to prepare us to be a sanctuary for His presence, and are we willing to follow the instructions we receive from the Lord in order to prepare? We can pray all we want, but if we are unwilling to do the work of cleaning our house, we will never truly have the Lord's presence deep in our lives. This is why James 2:17 tells us, without works our faith is dead. We can say we want a relationship with God (faith), but if we do not take the actions necessary to allow His presence to draw nigh unto us, what we say is meaningless!

In Genesis 6:11, we are told the world was corrupt "...before God..." because even with the principles of God being able to stay a distance from us so His Holiness does not strike us dead, man's corruption had reached out in a way which came before God. Another way to carry the meaning of the original Hebrew here would be to say, man's corruption had turned its face toward God. It came before God in the way a person comes before the throne of a king. This demanded that God, in His righteousness, take action. Corruption was what man's existence was offering up to God. God could no longer stand back and, by doing so, allow man the freedom to travel the path he had chosen. This is also, in no small part, due to what the second part of the verse tells us, and that is the fact the earth was "...filled with violence."

Now, when we think of the word "violence" today, we have an interpretation which leans heavily to the thought of physical force being used to cause physical damage. We think of extensive, sudden, or prolonged physical abuse and/or injury to another person or property. The truth is, we don't think in the terms the Bible is talking about and it's hard to get us to. Violence is all those actions we think of, but the word "violence" also refers to every wrong doing, right down to the simple injustices of life. Wrong is violent because wrong always has negative consequences which resonate far more than we want to admit. Sadly, we do not see simple injustice as being violence, largely because we have come to a place where we believe a certain amount of injustice is acceptable, even necessary at times. In our minds, wrong is not wrong which needs to be judged. Wrong is all part and parcel of everyday life. We see certain wrongs as almost a necessary balance to doing right. When we tell our children, "life isn't always fair," we are not simply trying to prepare them for the facts of this sin filled world, which will affect their lives, we are often instructing them on how they will need to play the game! (Matt. 24:35-39)

Verse 12 emphasizes the truth again that God pulls away from us. The earlier verses have already assured us God knew exactly what was going on as it happened, but God wants us to know He came down and "...looked upon the earth," as well. This also emphasizes God was still accessible to man. God is about to speak directly to Noah. If one man could have this kind of contact with God, anyone who desired to, could also have heard God's voice. His presence was here in a way which was unmistakably available. Anyone who wished to call upon the name of the Lord had an opportunity to do so. The prophet Isaiah instructs us to, "...call ye upon him while he is near..." Isaiah 55:6, and that is exactly what the people of Noah's day had the opportunity to do. This is why we see what, in English, seems to be just a repeat of what we were told before, "...and, behold, it was corrupt;..." Man had an opportunity, even in a world filled with violence, to call out unto God for help. If man was just in this state because he was a victim of circumstances, well, God was there to pull him up. If there had been any crying for help, they would be saved; but behold there was none crying unto the Lord in spite of the state the world had come to.

"...for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth." The people were not calling out for a saviour because they didn't think they needed one. When we see the story, we think so much about the struggle between good and bad. We think of the idea that the good had lost out, and riots, rape, drunkenness, murder, etc. had taken grip of the world. We look at that word "violence" and think of a world which was tearing itself apart because man could not figure out how to administer and enforce the law. However, that is not what we are told. The people were marrying and giving in marriage. (Matt. 24:38) There were those living in leisure and wealth. There were those living in poverty and obscurity. Sure, they were drunken, but it was socially acceptable. Sure, there was murder, but they felt they had the right to choose. In man's eyes, the world was not tearing itself apart in a state of unworkability. The ways of righteousness were simply not what was important to them. The world was corrupt because all the people had accepted a way of life contrary to the way God intended them to live. Those who were being done wrong by the system were just as eager to bite, steal, and lie for a chance to be on the top of the heap as those already on the top. Worrying about God's righteousness was only a way to assure you would never flourish in the system! (Rev. 13:11-18)

So, verse 13 tells us what God had to say about all this to the one man who had found grace in the His eyes. God tells Noah, "The end of all flesh is come before me;..." This is not the statement we think it is. God was not saying He would destroy all flesh, but that the way man had chosen to live would result in the end of all flesh. God had reached out to man, but there was simply no one listening. God was informing Noah that if He allowed man to continue down the path he was on, there would simply be nothing left!

The Bible tells us flesh is corruptible. (I Cor. 15:54) This means it's pliable and flexible. The flesh can bear the scars of sin for a season. It can even get certain pleasures out of it. (Heb. 11:24-26) That was the point in making us in fleshly forms to begin with. God had given man a place where he could choose to do things the way he wanted. People say, God created man in perfection, but that isn't really the right way to look at it. God created man in innocence. In the beginning, man did not even have the knowledge of good and evil in him. That is why I say the flesh was meant to be pliable and flexible. God had built into us a tolerance for mistakes which perfection cannot handle! To be perfect, is to know not only how to do good, but to do it perfectly. To make a mistake of any kind under such circumstances is to not only know to do good and fail to do it, but fail to do it with absolutely no reason but that you chose specifically not to!

We, from the beginning, were created in the grace of God. God knew from day one we would not be perfect in all our ways. We would make mistakes; and in making them, we would gain a greater understanding of what it meant to be righteous. Our perspective would be something very different from that of the angels. Our perspective on righteousness would be hard earned, by walking down a long road of truth and consequences. This is the answer to the question people ask about why did God create us if He knew we were going to fall? An allowance for failure was built right into us. We did not have to fail in the way Adam and Eve did, and be removed from the Tree of Life, but falling down and getting up again was an intentional part of our creation. It would bring a deep and thorough understanding of what sin was, and why it is sin. Our judgments could be based on not just the idea of, we were told not to, but on the opportunity to see firsthand why. We were not intended to just have a knowledge of righteousness. We were meant to grow and obtain a grasp of the dynamics as well!

These facts did not change when Adam and Eve took of the fruit God told them not to take. The problem is not that we as humans can be corrupted by sin. Jesus is the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. (Rev. 13:4-9) God's plan from the very beginning was capable of taking care of the fact this corruptible would need to take on incorruptibility. The problem is, many do not choose to care about righteousness and those dynamics we were meant to grasp. They do not care about the destructive force of sin. Many people do not want to die but they don't really care about the real reason we die. In spite of all man's searching for the Tree of Life, The Fountain of Youth, the genetic reasons for why our bodies grow old and die, in this life many people have shown they would rather die after living a short existence of sin than to have eternity in the ways of righteousness. This is the choice God gave to man. In the days of Noah, all flesh had chosen the ways of sin and the wages of it, over the gift of God: which is eternal life. (Rom. 6:23) So,

the end of this fleshly existence and all it has to offer had come before God. There was simply no point in a world of people living and dying in a cycle of sin filled lives. This is why God took man from The Tree of Life in the first place. Man, in this state, had "filled" the earth with violence. Man had done this by the actions he chose to take. Verse 13 tells us, it was "...through them;..." this had happened. Thus, the obvious conclusion was to destroy man "with" the earth.

Here is another point we must not miss. God said in verse 7 He would destroy man, "...from the face of the earth;..." but here in verse 13, God says He will destroy them, "...with the earth." God's destruction of man would not be a destruction like the end of the world described in Revelation. John says in Revelation 21, "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea." There will come a time when this creation will end in a way which man has no control over. The end John sees is an end which comes in a way which leaves nothing but that which is not the flesh of this creation. This is something I don't think we can even wrap our minds completely around; but in the case of the flood, this would not be so. God would destroy things with things!

This would leave man with the option of using his time and energy in a way which would save his life. If man could give up the pleasures of sin for a season, if man could lay aside building things he hoped would last forever, and put in the sweat and blood necessary to build a way of escaping the coming destruction, man could save his life. In fact, God would even give the task to the one righteous man living on the earth, so that all others would have to do was believe there was at least enough of a credible threat that they should board the ark. God gave Noah a physical, hammer to nail solution, for surviving the coming destruction! Noah would be given specific instructions for how to build a physical craft out of physical materials which would save whomever went inside from the destruction God had planned. Just as Adam and Eve had a simple choice in the garden, to take or not to take of the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, the people of Noah's day would have a simple choice of, to board or not to board an ark of safety. In doing this, God was giving man a physical choice he could control, and clearly understand he could control. All Adam and Eve had to do to live was not eat. All the people of Noah's day had to do was get on a pre-prepared ark.

The choice has always been simple! Man was hung up on physicality, and God made the escape of the coming destruction a physical action. God could have destroyed the world in any way He chose to, but He chose to destroy it, "...with the earth."

Until next time, Shalom!