

Free - Take One



# Shaqah

שפדאן

*“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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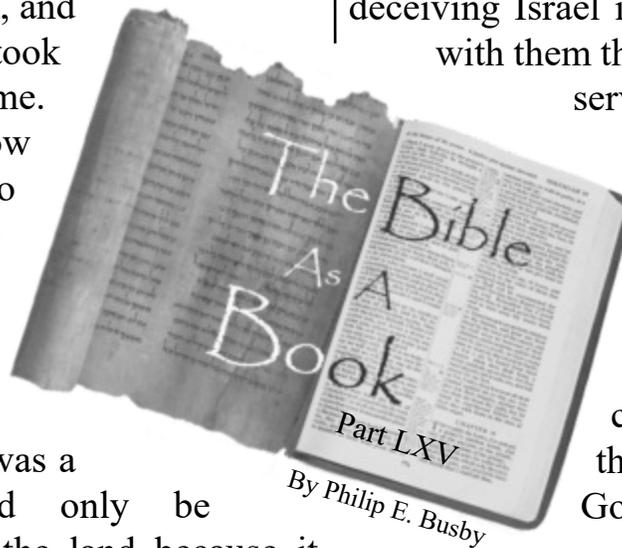
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As we continue our overview of the Book of Joshua, last time we talked about how Israel had to deal with the sin in their midst which had caused them to be defeated in their first attempt to take the city of Ai. After they had done that we talked about how the city was taken quite differently than the original plan, and on top of that Israel took two cities at the same time.

We also talked about how Israel went on to accomplish the ceremony at Mount Ebal, which God had given to Moses long before the nation entered the land. This was a ceremony that could only be accomplished once in the land because it was given a specific spot on which to do it. In this ceremony we see our first really good example of Joshua following the Law in writing the words of the Law on the things Israel built and set up in the land. We also see the Law being read to the nation as Moses had emphasized should continually be done. Thus, we covered a lot of firsts for the nation as they were now on the promised land and able to begin following the Law in

its fullest more and more. Of course, a large portion of our last segment was about how the people on the land responded to Israel, as we see most of the main cities in this southern part chose to bind together in a pact of declaring Israel's destruction top priority. However, one city chose the path of deceiving Israel into making an agreement with them that would cause them to be

servants of Israel but spare them destruction. In many ways, all this led Israel to begin their sweep across the south of Canaan to systematically destroy city after city (along with the people in them) just as God desired Israel to do.



Israel had accomplished a great deal of what they did due to the fact major cities, or more correctly their kings, went out against Israel. What we see at the first of all this is Israel destroying Jericho and then Ai along with Bethel. Once that was done, it could be said Israel had no choice but to fight due to the fact the Canaanites brought the battle to Israel. I don't mention that fact because I believe Israel needed/needs

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justification to destroy the people of the land, but to simply point out few to none in Canaan had any desire to simply allow Israel to live among them or make a peace treaty with them. As we go into Chapter 11 of the Book of Joshua we see this continuing to be true. By the beginning of Chapter 11 Israel had in its possession most all the southern part of Canaan, which was/is the real heart of what God wanted Israel to take. This heart of the land issue does not mean it was all Israel was to take, but it was certainly the logical choice in being the first land Israel was to possess. God had originally wanted to bring the nation up from the south and work to take this very same area. However, due to their disbelief Israel ended up entering mostly north of this area and working down. It was only a technicality not a change to God's true plan, and to be clear on what I'm really getting at we need to remember God had told Israel He wouldn't give them the land all at once or it would go wild as they would not be able to maintain it. (Deut. 7:22)

Of course, Israel by this time, some forty years after they were suppose to enter the land, was a much larger group of people. How much this fact was offset by the fact Israel had land to the east of Jordan is hard to say. In any case, once Israel had the heart of the promised land it is only logical to see the plan was not going to look exactly the same as it would have if Israel had entered forty years earlier. It was also up to God how much of the land Israel was to take at a time, and it seems clear this was shown to them by those Canaanites who practically forced Israel's hand in attacking first. This would continue as a king in the north would act next. The king of Hazor, which is a city

almost as far north as the large lake north of the Sea of Chinnereth (Sea of Galilee by New Testament times), contacted three specific kings to the south of him along with most all the kings in the area going from the Mediterranean to the Jordan, and from basically where Israel had already taken in the south to kings north of the land Israel had taken even on the east of Jordan. This group would include many of the major Canaanite people whose names we are familiar with, and represent all the armies in the north of Canaan. The king of Hazor would gather this massive group of kings and their armies against Israel and camp in Merom, which is a bit north of the Sea of Chinnereth and not quite halfway from that sea out to the Mediterranean as one goes west.

God would come to Joshua to tell him not to be afraid of this group, which by far would be the largest army Israel had faced. The very next day God would use Israel to disable their horses, slay them all, and burn their chariots! Joshua would gather the army of Israel and attack. Even this massive army did not stand a chance against Israel as they would scatter to get away. Israel would pursue them as they had those in the south. This would cause the army of Israel to go west to the seacoast, quite far north and equally far east in order to destroy all these people as they ran. After slaying all the people, Joshua made sure all their horses were made useless for war and burned their chariots. Joshua would then turn directly to the home city of the king who led all this, Hazor. Israel would kill the king and all the people of that city. Then they burned Hazor to the ground. Joshua continued to lead Israel to all the cities of

the people in this northern area and utterly wipe out the Canaanite population. However, none of these cities would be burned. The cattle and other spoils of war would be taken by Israel, and the cities would remain to be used by Israel as they settled on the land.

After this, Joshua would lead Israel back down to finish the job in the south. There was still those people known as the Anakims living around the area of Hebron along and in that same line of north-south mountains Abraham was so familiar with. These were a people believed to be related to the seafaring people such as the Philistines and Phoenicians, among others. However, these Anakims had gone inland and lived a nomadic life in the mountains. These were the giants Israel was so afraid of when the spies first entered the land forty years earlier, and it was time to deal with them. These giants would be destroyed and driven from the mountains by Israel. However, they would not be utterly destroyed as some would escape to live among the Philistines along the coast. God would list the Philistines as part of the people who were yet to be destroyed according to God's plan, but at this particular time they were left. Thus, after driving out the Anakims, Israel had completed the opening tasks of taking the land as they were suppose to. This would bring Israel to a time of rest, and Joshua could begin the task of dividing the land among the tribes.

Due to this, we are next given a rundown of all the land Israel had taken,

starting with what they took on the east side of the Jordan River. On that east side, about half way down the Dead Sea as you go north to south, there is a river named Arnon which defined the border between the kingdom of Sihon and the Moabites south of them. Going east from the Dead Sea and Jordan River you'll come to the border between Ammon and Sihon. This made the kingdom of Sihon about half as wide as it was long. Israel was not to take the lands of the Moabites and Ammonites since they were descendants from Abraham's nephew Lot. However, they did take all the land of Sihon which stretched north to the river Jabbok, and which is the river Jacob camped at when he wrestled with an angel. (Gen. 32:22-24) Israel also took the plains on the east of Jordan going from the river Jabbok to the south shores of the Sea of Chinnereth, and stretching from the Jordan east to at least as far as the Ammonites land went to the east. Israel also took all of the Kingdom of Og, which is better known as Bashan. This stretched their land further north to the city of Damascus, which in later times is the border between Israel and Syria. Next, we run down the land Israel took after crossing Jordan. This consisted of the Mediterranean Coast as far north and east as a place in modern Lebanon named Baalbek, which is further north than Damascus and all the way down to the land of the Edomites, which stretched Israel's land to the south of the Dead Sea. This included lands belonging to the Hittites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites. It also took out thirty-one specific kings.

Not quite a decade of time passes

after all this and God comes to Joshua to recognize Joshua was getting very old. As Joshua had taken over Moses' ministry in leading this conquest of Canaan on the west of Jordan, we should be able to see that if Israel had not had to wander in the wilderness for forty years all that had been done would have been led by Moses. However, even at the time of Joshua reaching this point in age, God makes it clear the taking of the land was going to be an ongoing process as Israel grew. Thus, God points out to Joshua there was still much of this work to be done through the years. Israel was to eventually take the land of the Philistines, that land held by the related people in the south known as the Phoenicians, as well as Lebanon and even to the east of there a bit more. While Joshua would not live to see and lead all this taking place, he was to divide up the land between the tribes at this time. This would cause all the tribes to know where the borders of their specific lands ran as well as serve as motivation for those tribes owning land not yet taken to eventually do so. Sadly, there were already a couple of groups on the west side Israel had not utterly destroyed who would always live among Israel as an example of how Israel would never really complete this task.

As it was true the tribes of Ruben and Gad had received land to the east of Jordan, they already knew their borders. However, the half tribe of Manasseh was so large they would end up with land on both sides. Therefore, this west side was to be divided between the nine remaining tribes to receive land as well as Manasseh. There would only be eight full tribes and the half tribe of Ephraim left to give land to, as we know

Levi was not to receive a specific portion of the land. God was their inheritance along with His work in the temple, specifically the sacrifices. Now, the divisions can be a bit hard to follow without a map, but we will attempt to cover them. They begin with the divisions Moses took care of on the east of Jordan, and the first explained is that given to the tribe of Reuben. Basically, Reuben was given the southern half of what had been the Kingdom of Sihon. This made their border on the west the Dead Sea for the most part, and the border with Ammon on the east. Their southern border was the river Arnon, and their northern border was just a bit further north than the top of the Dead Sea. Next would be Gad who would get the upper half of Sihon, but they would get land even further north of that as well. Reuben would obviously define Gad's southern border. The west border would be the Jordan River, and the east, again, the border with Ammon. The northern border is a bit harder to explain, as on its west end it was to come close if not touch the bottom of the Sea of Chinnereth. From there it would drop south as it headed east and terminate as it met with the northwest corner of the land of Ammon. This would make the east end of Gad's north at the river Jabbok.

Next would be the half tribe of Manasseh. They, of course, would end up with most everything that had been the Kingdom of Og (Bashan), and due to the angle of Gad's northern border, they would receive half of what is Gilead. Gilead is the land that lays directly east of the Jordan River between the Dead Sea and the Sea of Chinnereth. Thus, Manasseh's southern border was defined by Gad's northern border. Manasseh's northern border would

# Following the Biblical Stream:

By Philip E. Busby

In our last segment, we continued our look at the time God told Abraham to take Isaac to Moriah and sacrifice him. In that segment we talked far more about what was not said between the two men as they walked up the hill than what was said. We also talked about what this silence meant. The fact Isaac says nothing other than to ask his father where the sacrifice was, basically had to do with him submitting to his father's understanding of what God had asked. Abraham was the only one God had instructed. Thus, Isaac was putting his trust in his father's faith in God. In covering that we discussed all the ways this mirrored what Jesus would one day do in giving His life. From there we went on to talk about the fact Abraham was going to the spot he was going to, purely on the instructions of God and not because it was already an established place of worship with an altar he would use. In that spot Abraham would build an altar, and from there we talked about how this spot went on to be largely ignored through the centuries until it finally, by God's direction, became the spot Solomon would build the temple. All this brought us to chapter 22 verse 9 of the Book of Genesis, and we will start in that verse again this time.

As discussed last time, Abraham had built this altar he was going to sacrifice Isaac on, and if for no other reason, that was done to ensure this was not an altar used for any other sacrifices both before and likely after. Abraham had brought all the elements for performing this sacrifice. This fact was pointed out by Isaac in his question to his

father. We see it again here in verses 9 and 10 as we are told Abraham laid out “the wood” and took “the knife” in his hand. These were not elements he found or bought in Salem. Even in earlier parts of the story it is made clear Abraham brought all this from home. As Isaac asked where the one thing was which he felt his father had not brought (the sacrifice), there is the point Abraham did bring it. An earlier verse specifically says Abraham rose early the next morning after God had told him to do this and took Isaac, along with the other elements. (Gen. 22:3) All this emphasis on how everything besides the stones for making the altar came the entire journey with them is done for a purpose, of which there could be many. However, one of the most obvious overall points is that, again, it mirrors what Jesus did!

As Jesus came to this earth He came as the only begotten of The Father. (John 3:16) This does not just mean Jesus was the only one sent by The Father, it means He was the only One created by The Father. Right at the start of the Gospel of John we are told Jesus was/is The Word. He was with God and He was/is God. We are also told something very specific, and that is the fact all things were made by Him (The Word) and without Him nothing was made which was made! (John 1:1-14) This rings true particularly when it comes to the description in Genesis of how man was created by God. God uses the word “us” and “our” in saying, let us make man in our image. (Gen. 1:26) All three parts of God were at work in the creation of mankind. When it comes to Jesus, of course, all three

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parts of God had to be in agreement for this to take place. However, it was The Father's plan. This point is made very apparent by Jesus as He speaks about what He came to do. Over and over Jesus makes it clear He did not come to do what He wanted in any other way than the fact He wanted to do The Father's will. There is even the point that as Jesus tells us of The Holy Ghost, He says, The Holy Ghost would speak of Him and remind us of all He had done and said. Since Jesus was doing nothing but The Father's will, we see The Holy Ghost speaking of Jesus is not about Jesus but, again, the will of The Father. The Father used Jesus as an example in much the same way God used/uses the chosen nation to exemplify so many things to the world!

We should consider, when the angel came to announce to Mary she would give birth to The Messiah, he specifically tells her she would "...conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son..." In this, I like to point out that a woman does not conceive a child in her womb. The fertilization takes place before there is any movement to the womb. Only once a new child has been conceived does that child begin its journey up into the womb, where it will attach itself to the lining and continue its process of growing the body needed to survive outside the mother's body. However, Jesus was created and then placed, by The Holy Ghost, in Mary's womb. Jesus was no more a physical part of Mary than He was Joseph. Neither parent was involved in forming Jesus in any way. Jesus' human form was created by The Father. Unlike Adam and Eve who were created as full adults, Jesus was created in the earliest form of human life. If we think about why Adam and Eve were created as adults we understand they had no adults to raise them. However, in the

story of creation we also find the concept humans procreating was not in the original plan. That plan was chosen post Adam and was the reason Eve was created. There simply was no reason for Adam and Eve to be children in a physical way.

However, after God created the process of human procreation, all humans after Adam and Eve would go through the stages of growth which start with conception. Jesus would be no different in that way. He would begin life as a conceived human child. However, this emphasizes the point Jesus' human form was never anything less than that. This means as The Holy Ghost placed Jesus in the womb of Mary He consisted of all the elements a human consists of. He only needed Mary's body as the proper environment to grow in like every human after Adam and Eve has needed for about the first 9 months of life. All this I say to point out, Jesus was given all He needed by The Father. The Father created Jesus and even arranged the right family structure for Him to grow up in by telling Joseph not to be afraid to take Mary as his wife and raise Jesus as his son. (Matt. 1:18-25) Jesus did not have to enter this world and search for anything. That might sound strange to say but it's important because we need to understand Jesus was not a spirit without a body wandering around the universe and/or earth looking for a form to inhabit. It's important to note Jesus was not dependent on Mary's eggs being fertile or anything else of the like. He didn't have to struggle along as an orphan. He also did not have to simply appear one day as a fully grown man whom no one knew anything about or where He came from!

The point is, everything Jesus needed to live His life was directed by The Father,

and everything significant to Him being an actual human came with Him from The Father. Just as all Abraham needed to follow God's directions in this matter was brought with him and Isaac, none of what Jesus needed physically had been part of this earth when He was placed in Mary's womb. Just as Abraham knew where to go to take Isaac to the right spot, The Father placed Jesus in the right circumstances to live his earthly life and do the work He had been asked to do. What was a part of the location Abraham was told to go to, were the elements needed to build the object Isaac was to die upon. This is true of Jesus as well. In the end Jesus would die on a cross made of wood grown here on this planet and formed into an instrument of torturous death by the hands of men. On that cross Jesus would die in order to show us what a small thing it is for God to overcome death, and that point brings us to the words of verse 10.

After Abraham had laid Isaac on the altar, verse 10 gives us the vital point that Abraham stretched out his hand and took the knife, not just to be picking it up and think over what he was about to do, but to actually kill Isaac. As has been the case from the beginning of this, Abraham shows no hesitation. As hard as all this must have been for him, he continues on step by step to accomplish it, never asking God if he could get out of it, delay it for any reason, or drag his feet in any way. It's important as we go through these words to see what happens in verse 11 as being what kept Abraham from going all the way through with it. Verse 10 shows us everything Abraham did was a constant flow of events right up to verse 11 where we are told an angel calls out to

Abraham!

In verse 11 we are not only told an angel called to Abraham but he called out from heaven. This might be another one of those, well of course moments, but it's not if we look at the life of Abraham. Abraham was quite used to talking to God in a very right there with him kind of way. Abraham was very used to walking with angels, being met by them and talking to them. Through the stories it seems clear Abraham was never surprised by any communication from God; he simply spoke to God as if it was as common as speaking to Sarah or any human. What we would see as a once in a lifetime event, where God might come and audibly speak to us or His presence be so strong it is as if He is speaking audibly whether we hear His voice with our physical ears or not, seemed to be common place for Abraham. Thus, what verse 11 is pointing out is that this voice was not an impression Abraham had. It didn't come to him in a dream or an angel in human form who was walking up to him. There would be no doubt in Abraham's or Isaac's mind about if it was right or wrong to halt. These words came not just in a literal hear with your ears way, but from a recognizable direction - heaven.

Only God could have asked such a thing of Abraham, and only God was going to stop him from doing it now. What is also interesting is that the angel did not shout out for Abraham to "stop." I've seen some artist's illustration of the angel grabbing Abraham's arm to stop him, but nothing in the words even indicate that happened. Instead the angel just calls him by name, as if to get Abraham's attention. This too would

emphasize how much this was about Abraham following God. If Abraham had simply heard a shout to stop, he might not have stopped, but once a voice clearly out of heaven addressed him by name, Abraham stopped to answer. What I love is when we see these, or very similar words spoken by people of God when God calls unto them. Maybe it's just me but the simplicity is as beautiful as anything complex. In our day and age when we hear someone call our name, we might not do anything but look in their direction to show we heard them. A very common response in English would be to say, "what?" This is just acknowledging someone has spoken to us. They are said with a very, we are equals, notion in mind. Saying, "what?" is a shortening of, "What do you want?" Looking at someone is much the same. It's as if you are starting a bargaining process. You tell me what you want and I'll tell you if I'll do it or give it. Your willingness to give it or do it might be shown in the fact you just do the action asked of you once you're told or it might start a conversation about specifics. My point is, no matter what follows, no matter our willingness or unwillingness, it's not comparable to what Abraham said.

Abraham responds to the voice by saying, "Here am I." I suppose as with most things it loses something in the translation, but even in English we can see how these words come with a complete humility before God. Again, we are talking about a man who was used to speaking to God very regularly in a conversational manner. In the case of speaking with God about Sodom and Gomorrah Abraham even dares ask for things of God. (Gen. 18:16-33) However, here Abraham is saying, I'm here, I'm listening, I'm waiting. Abraham was already

acting totally outside his own will in being willing to kill Isaac. In that moment, Abraham simply continues that total yielding by saying, I'm yours Lord, everything I am, everything I've got, everything I'm not, do with my body, mind, and spirit what You will. The other striking things about Abraham responding with these words is the fact these are the exact same three words Abraham begins his response to Isaac with when Isaac breaks the silence on their way to this spot. In that incident Abraham adds the words, "my son" in acknowledging Isaac. The "my" is a possessive, and for all intents and purposes the "son" might as well be looked at that way as well. Abraham was saying, I'm here as your father to hear what you have to say. In verse 11 Abraham is nothing. He does not even call himself a servant or anything of the like. He simply says I'm here, as if he is a blank page for God to write upon. How great it could be if more of us in our deepest moments of grief and/or hardship in following God could respond to God with such willingness and yielding. Such simple words, but the thought of Abraham saying them as he did, when he did, brings tears to my eyes. I have to think, how many times has God attempted to speak to me, to tell me something and I missed it because I was so into what I was doing I did not hear or could not hear over the shout of this world and its activity? How many times have we heard the voice of God but failed to respond or maybe even doubted if it really was God speaking to us because we were unprepared to hear from God? How often have we failed to respond because we had our own agenda and did not want to hear what God had to say? So after thinking upon that I ask you, how beautiful is it that a voice from heaven calls out Abraham's name and without hesitation he says, "Here am I"?

# What About God's Chosen People?

## Part XXXIX

From Living Springs' Questions and Answers

*"Is it true that the Jews are God's chosen people? I have a Christian friend who says the Jews were not God's chosen people."*

In our last segment, we talked more about the events of the Bar Kokhba Revolt and the ways in which the Jews had advantages over the Romans which initially helped them gain ground in what they wanted. However, our discussion about this war caused us to take a close look at some words of Jesus as He warned those who believed on Him concerning these events the Jewish nation would face. These were things that would come upon the nation due to the fact Jesus had come to keep the Jews from falling to this state, but without His help they would come to pass. Such things as the destruction of the temple and this war we are talking about now, all of which caused great hardship in Israel. We also talked about how this revolt was led by a man many believed to be The Messiah, and how that meant Christians should not be involved one way or the other. Persecution due to this fact would diminish the number of Jewish Christians centered in Israel, and make it easier for later false teaching on the subject of Christianity's real heart being in Jerusalem and among the Jewish people. Along with all these ramifications, we came back to talking about how the revolt had gone so badly for Rome they eventually gave up on the idea of a quick end and turned to a more long term strategy for retaking Judea.

During this revolt the Jews had

accomplished more than many thought possible in retaking the heart of the promised land and re-establishing or, at least, declaring an independent state of Israel once more. However, all this just served to elevate Bar Kokhba in the eyes of many because the only explanation for this success seemed to be the idea he really was The Messiah. This is why the era of the "Redemption of Israel" was announced. Many believed Israel had finally gained what they had been waiting for from God; something Jesus did not represent in their minds and would not lead the nation into. This all came from the thoughts wrong doctrine had put in the minds of the Jews. They thought God sending The Messiah was all about freeing the nation and making it an independent state once again. False teaching, which was only based on the desires of men who think solely of the here and now instead of the long-term plan of God, had led so many astray. Thus, they now believed they could finally live their lives as they should, and that way was based far more on human thinking than it was anything in the Law of God. The reality is that God does not support what it is we want, He wants righteousness, and only following His plan leads to that!

Of course, today we have the benefit of hindsight which is something God wanted all men to have. That point is why God allowed the Jews to go through all this while not allowing them to disappear as a people. They gave/give all of us a chance to see what happens when we follow God versus go our own way. The Jews of the Bar Kokhba Revolt

cried that peace and safety had finally come, but sudden destruction is all that lay ahead. (I Thes. 5:3) Just looking at the situation it is clear to see why this revolt was not going to be a total win for the Jews. While there was the hope Rome was spread thin enough Bar Kokhba's territory could be expanded, there was no real way to expand far enough not to be surrounded on all sides by Roman controlled territory. On top of that, the land mass Bar Kokhba controlled was by far not big enough to sustain itself internally. It also had no access to the sea. While the Roman navy would likely have made trade with other places impossible, it stands to emphasize how hopeless this fight actually was. Again, this was largely overlooked from the start due to the idea a great man was leading them. Such difficulties would be no problem if he was The Messiah. Whether the goal was expansion or the ability to sustain internally, Bar Kokhba should be able to handle it. The problem was Bar Kokhba was not The Messiah. The real Messiah, Jesus, came to bring real peace, which is why His birth was announced the way it was. (Luke 2:13-14) What the Jewish leadership wanted was control not peace, and there is a difference!

As Rome turned to the more long-term tactics of besieging this new state of Israel, it really did not have to employ the normal mode of surrounding an individual stronghold. All Rome had to do was cut off supplies coming from outside the controlled area. This, it would seem, Rome had plenty of men to do and without exposing them to areas where they would be vulnerable to surprise attack. Bar Kokhba's army would have to go out and fight the Romans more on Roman terms to attempt to stop this. However, even direct assault could not stop Roman pressure on people not to supply the rebels, which no

doubt was applied to those outside the controlled area. This allowed Rome to systematically cut off supply line after supply line, and this would totally shift the war for the Jews. They had started out as the defenders of Israel who would beat back an occupying imperial force, driving it from their land. To the degree of land they now held they had accomplished that, but now that Rome was simply around them, if the Jews were going to survive they would have to find those willing to defy Rome and trade goods with them. Before they could do that they had to punch holes through the empire to the outside world!

Such a thing was not going to happen overnight. It had been hard enough to fight the Romans on their own land, going out into the broader world and facing the Roman army and navy in ways and in places the Jews had only little to no experience in would be no small task. How much of this thought was even in their minds is actually hard to say. What history tells us the Jews did was turn to a defensive stance of storing all they could. The caves and tunnels they used for hideouts would increase this capacity in ways a normal holdout tactic wouldn't have. It would also hide the supplies in case a surprise Roman attack happened to breach any one community. There was no one stash the Romans could hope to hit and bring this to a faster end. Nor did the Romans have much success in finding these hiding places, it would seem. All this is why Bar Kokhba was able to rule for as long as he did. However, all this advantage still meant it was a prolonging of the situation. If it wanted to, Rome could stay with the idea of just starving the Jewish rebels over time and never recognize the "state" Bar Kokhba then "controlled." What were the Jews to do about it?

However, the war would move into a third phase sometime in late 133 or early 134 A.D. It serves to remember, Hadrian was an emperor who wanted to Hellenize his empire and make it a glorious example of what humanity could be. Now these Jews were giving him a black eye in more ways than just keeping him from building his false temple in Jerusalem. While he could have simply starved the Jews out in the long-run, he was determined to bring this to an end. He would call the general Sextus Julius Severus into the fight. This was now pulling Roman resources not just from around the region in trouble but from far away northwestern territories of the Roman Empire, as this was the Roman general from Britain! If one knows their history concerning the Roman Empire it will likely come to your mind that the wild and barbaric North countries were the eventual demise of the Roman Empire. While it's true it would be a very long time in the future that Rome would suffer this fate, one has to wonder how actions by previous emperors, such as this one, effected Rome's ultimate success, or lack there of, in taking the North. It is often the demise of an empire to overreach, and in that we see what I like to call the Tower of Babel effect. One can search the world over, especially within man's religions, and see the commonality of humanity. It's also obvious that all men who desire power, or what many would call peace, all seek the same thing. That thing is the unity they had at the Tower of Babel, and they want it because to control all men through the belief we are doing what is in the good of the collective is to hold the ultimate prize!

As I have gone over and over in my writings, the tower idea was never about literally building a tall tower to touch the sky

but a monument to man's achievements and a center from which all human thought could flow. It was what today we would call centralized government. Man believes if he can accomplish this, he can accomplish total peace. However, peace among men would only be valuable if it included God, but that was the main reason man wanted "peace." Man wanted to prove he could live his life without submitting to God, and in that basic thought is the entire story of man's trouble. Again, we go back to the idea of the religious leadership of the Jews did not reject Jesus as The Messiah because they flat believed He was not. No, they rejected Him because He did not offer what they wanted. This was the basic trouble at the Garden of Eden as Eve considered the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. Satan insinuated that God was holding out on man. He said God simply did not want man to be like Him in knowing what God knows. (Gen. 3:4-5) Truer words have never been spoken, but that's the point! Man could not and still can not handle the knowledge. Having it makes us responsible in ways we are not able to handle, especially without God's help. Thus, for all the ways man cannot exist without God there is the simple truth any peace we could contrive without God in our lives would still be founded on an unrighteous world full of injustices so vast I'm not sure we can comprehend it all!

What would get the Roman Empire in the end is the same thing that got every empire before them and which has/will stop every empire after them – The Tower of Babel Effect. Man may want the same ultimate goal but who gets to be the rulers, or as I like to put it, the oppressors, in that situation and who has to be the oppressed is

something worth fighting over. At the tower man learned what it was like to not be just one big lump of rulers and subservient due to God confounding our language. That act alone caused us to exercise the diversity that was in humanity from the start. The fact we fight over that diversity and hate each other in ways and at times due to it, only serves to show how much we truly cannot handle the knowledge of good and evil on our own. We need God to constantly step in and show us where we are wrong and who is being wrong in what ways. Only The One True God can/could do that. Before the confounding of our language man might have accomplished what would be looked at as a peaceful society, but man would have no freedom to be what God created us each to be, not just in the fact we would not commune with Him but in that we would not be allowed to exercise the diverse nature we all have within us, while God kept us from harming others. (Matt. 7:12)

Of course, we all know, whether Hadrian's move to pull armies from the far North had anything to do with future failures or not, Rome did not and never would have achieved true world power. However, the truth the strong or large, almost without exception, takes the opportunity to rule the weak or small is why Israel never had a real chance against Rome as long as Rome was determined to hold the power over them. To achieve that Israel would have needed a true supernatural person leading them, someone who could have overcome most any obstacle all on his own. There was only one man Who ever demonstrated that and His name was Jesus! However, His purpose was not to use His power to overcome the world through force but to offer Himself as the solution all men needed to live in true peace. If we reject

Him in our world the world will know no peace. If we reject Him in our nation our nation will know no peace, and if we reject Him in our personal life we as individuals will know no peace!

The nation of Israel had rejected The True Prince of Peace and were now following nothing more than a highly flawed man known as the "Prince of Israel." Can there be any wonder as to how badly this was going to end? There should not have been, but on all levels man easily ignores this obvious truth during those times things seem to be going the way he wants it. At the time of Bar Kokhba things were going the way Israel wanted it; the way they had rejected the real Messiah in order to obtain. For the Roman Empire things were not going the way Hadrian wanted it at all. God's nation, in spite of not being in the ways God wanted them to go, was still serving to disrupt the plan of man and exemplify the plan of God. This Jewish revolt had kept the mighty power of Rome from building a temple to its greatest gods in the place the emperor most wanted to demonstrate he had the power to do so and which his Hellenistic ideas, in his mind, should have been accepted, if not gladly sought for. This is where Anti-Semitism truly comes from. The Jews are no different from any other people save that point God is always using them as His people, and that makes their actions a thorn in the side of this world's plans every step of the way. This is a point Hitler saw in history and why in the midst of fighting a war against the entire rest of the world, he drained resource after resource to continue his attempt at genocide against the Jewish people.

At the time of Bar Kokhba it was Hadrian's turn to drain his resources in an

attempt to be sure he kept the Jews under his thumb. Thus, he calls for a general and his armies away from the front lines of defending the empire's frontiers in order to put down a revolt in a place that almost could not be more "interior" to the empire. Hadrian's plan would look a lot like the plan of Emperor Nero during the first Jewish-Roman War. That plan was to simply send an overwhelming force into Judea with a leader who now could act like any conqueror of a new land. It was no time for Rome to claim the land of Judea as a Province of Rome. (This fact is one reason to recognize what the Bar Kokhba Revolt accomplished as true, if not temporary, independence. That said I don't believe Rome would ever have admitted they "lost" this territory.) It was Rome's time to simply look at Judea as a land that needed systematically put under Roman control. Who better to accomplish this task than a general fighting on the frontier of the Roman Empire, experienced in facing some of the most "barbaric" and unorthodox (in the way they fought) people on the planet!

When Sextus came to Judea around the end of 133 or beginning of 134 A.D., he brought with him 3 legions of Roman troops from Europe. He also brought divisions out of other legions as well as some 30 to 50 auxiliary units. It's said the number of men he brought almost doubled the size of the Roman army the Jews were facing at the time. If there was any doubt in the minds of the Jews that Rome was still serious about winning this war, this move should have erased all doubt! Sextus also took the title of Provincial Governor of Judea. This made him the man who would call all the shots from that point on. He was the lead general in charge of taking back Judea, and the governor of the "province." This also left him responsible for

any failure that might come out of this serious move by the emperor. Thus, he was not just asked to do this, his reputation was on the line. Sextus was a man as determined to take back Judea as anyone in the empire, and he would begin a systematic campaign to do just that.

From the time Sextus landed and began his work it seems stronghold after stronghold fell to the Romans. Their numbers were simply too large at this point. While Jews had many places across their newly declared state to protect, the Romans were free to move in mass to sweep the land. Bar Kokhba had declared Herodium, that amazing fortress Herod had built and which was a part of the end of the first war, as his secondary headquarters. One would think this might be the ending place for this war, but leaving such strongholds to the end was not Sextus' strategy. He understood he was not fighting a group of rebels who could simply be eradicated by dwindling them down to their last stronghold and men. Sextus must have understood he was fighting a nation, but whether he understood it clearly or not doesn't matter, he went about his campaign as if he understood. Herodium would fall by the end of the year 134 or early in the beginning of 135 A.D. This was just one year from the time Sextus landed in the promised land with his massive army, and if not in spirit, in reality he was bringing the independent state of Israel to an end.

Many would continue to follow Bar Kokhba, but by this point there really was not much use in surrender. As I mentioned early on, this was a fight to the death. At first it looked hopeful the Jews would gain their independent state, but by the end of 134 A.D. it seemed clear the Romans had the upper

hand. With the man who was most likely Bar Kokhba's second in command killed with the fall of Herodium, we enter what is considered the fourth stage of the war. Most of the strongholds, especially any of real significance, had fallen back into Rome's hands. Bar Kokhba would gather what remained of his army and retreat to the fortress of Betar. This was a fortress/village in the highlands of Judea southwest of Jerusalem. This village had survived all the years since the fall of the temple relatively unharmed by the events that took place between then and this war. Perhaps it was Bar Kokhba's thought the Romans would leave it be for some unknown reason, or that it had some divine protection other places destroyed in previous wars didn't have. It's hard to say, but it was a fortress that still stood, and at this point that may be all that mattered.

The Romans would siege the fortress in the summer of 135A.D. Two legions of Roman troops would take a major role in this siege, but it seemed clear this would be where the war would end for the most part. With Betar surrounded and Bar Kokhba inside, the remainder of the Roman army was free to do the more detailed work of seeking out and eradicating smaller strongholds and hiding places throughout the land. This was not something the Romans did with care. They simply sweep across the land wiping out towns and villages and killing all suspected rebels in order to accomplish this task. More and more there was no distinction made between civilian and fighter. Rome no longer cared to rule over the Jews, they simply wanted the control of the region, and if killing all the Jews was the way to do that, that's what they would do. According to Jewish tradition Betar fell on the 9th of Av. If true, it

would mean this last stronghold was destroyed on a day that was already a day of mourning for the Jews, as the 9th of Av is the same day it is believed both the first and second temples were destroyed. As Betar fell, the Romans would not spare anyone on the basis of who they were or if they surrendered. The Roman troops simply killed and killed and kept on killing men, women, and children, it made no difference to them. It is even said the killing was so massive at Betar that they "...went on killing until their horses were submerged in blood to their nostrils." This, of course, comes in line with what John wrote about in the Book of Revelation concerning what many believe is "The Battle of Armageddon." (Rev. 14:20)

This type of thing again brings up the question of, did the events many believe are slated for the very end actually already take place? As we talked about last time, the answer is no. The simple truth is the Jews went through these types of terrible times during events that were very specific to the Jews, and it only serves as a warning that this same fate awaits the world at large as people continue to reject God and His plan. We can debate for hours the specifics of Bible prophecy when it comes to what Jesus said, what John saw, etc., but in looking for specifics we miss the point. Just as Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection was not specified in detail, such is the nature of prophecy. When we read what Isaiah wrote about The Messiah being led to the slaughter like a lamb, we look back at what Jesus did and how He did it to see what an amazingly accurate metaphor Isaiah's words were. (Isa. 53:4-7) The truth is, if God specified the details of what the future would look like we'd get it just as wrong as we do now. That

along with the fact times change, and what makes perfect sense to one generation might not make any sense to another.

If prophecy had talked about The Messiah dying on a cross or being crucified, how long would it have been into the future before anyone who knew that prophecy also knew what a crucifixion was or what it was used for? Once people did know how would they interpret the idea of The Messiah being executed by the state as a criminal? How might that have shaped Jewish, as well as non-Jewish, theology/philosophy about The Messiah? These and more are all good questions. While we cannot know the answers to them, many of the possible answers I can think of are very bad! There is also the point those who study nature have come to understand, and that is, what you study you also change. This refers to the idea that when you go to study something like animals in their natural habitat it is impossible to really know how just your presence in the vicinity changes the animals' behavior. Maybe it's not direct, but in some way you most likely affect something that causes a ripple in the ecosystem that does affect what you came to study.

If God had been so specific about prophecy to tell us more details about how things came and would come about, how would that change the way we would approach every situation, much less the actual event as we saw it unfold? Going back to Jesus' life, the Jews did not even need to know the specifics like death by crucifixion to believe handing The Messiah over to the secular authorities for capital punishment was something they could do, but on the other hand, maybe the Jews would have been more guarded about how they handled Jesus

in that light. Instead of wanting Him killed they might have worked to exile Him or imprison Him. Who knows, but the point is we can't know too much detail about the future. Writers of science fiction have explored over and over the dangers of how badly we would mess things up if we could go back in time and change what we thought needed changed or simply changed what did happen whether intentional or not. God knows what the future holds because He knows human nature. He knew what He was going to offer in sending The Messiah and why He was going to do it. He also knew that by the time it was right to send The Messiah the chosen nation would by and large reject Him for the very reasons The Messiah was needed.

Thus, God warns those who have ears to hear His words what it is we should be careful not to be involved in and what is the right way to think. He gives us the chance to be led by Him step by step so we end up doing the right things even when what makes sense to the human mind is to do otherwise. He gives us enough prophecy so we can look back and be assured He knew what He was doing all along. We may not understand all of what God is doing and how it all works together for the good of those who love and serve Him, but that does not matter. (Rom. 8:28) What we do see is that God knew enough to be prepared for our actions long before we ever took them or even came to the state which would cause us to think about taking them. The fact some can still see all this and doubt God is working for our good is why we are told in Hebrews 11:6 "But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." Does our faith (our

relationship with God) cause us to understand His loving and caring nature in spite of what events might make us think? If the answer is yes, we can trust He knows what He's doing. If the answer is no, we will likely find we have no interest in walking with God no matter how detailed prophecy is.

Now, when it comes to the issue of seeing these specific words describing an event of the past which was so similar to words we understand to be prophecy of future events, we need to realize a couple of main things. First, there is that point I keep pounding on which has to do with Israel experiencing the consequences of their wrong actions and then serving as an example of where the entire world is headed ultimately. The fact a battle so massive in its death took place that its events were described in a very similar way as something in prophecy, should come as no surprise to anyone who reads and really understands what the Bible is showing us. Second, we need to understand God speaks to us in language we can understand. If describing massive killing was understood by using a phrase common to the time and which has very understandable metaphorical or literal meaning even to future individuals who do not see the phrase as "common," it only stands to reason God might use such a phrase or term in prophecy. In fact, filling the representative parts of the Law with recognizable symbolism was done for the purpose of giving us a reference to help us understand the very things the Bible is trying to tell us. The more we immerse ourselves in that representation of the Law, the more of what God says to us makes sense and is something we can interpret no matter how far removed in both time and culture we are from

when the words were written.

What we see in the end of the Bar Kokhba Revolt is something emphasized that we have been leading up to, concerning how bad these events played out for the Jewish nation. This behavior by Rome at Betar did not end with Betar. While Roman troops were already making little distinction between rebel or civilian in their attempt to find and destroy all remaining pockets of Jewish resistance, after the fall of Betar Roman troops would go on an all-out killing spree. Any and all those considered possible rebels against the Roman Empire were to be killed. This basically meant if you were living in a village or town where a known group of resistance fighters had held up, kept a stash of supplies, you were a potential rebel. If you lived in a place that was simply known to be in favor of this revolt and supported or simply accepted the idea Israel was an independent state under Bar Kokhba, you were a potential rebel. In the end it would almost seem that all you had to be was Jewish and you were a potential rebel. All such individuals were to be put to death. This turned Sextus' campaign of regaining control over Judea into a campaign of annihilation, and all this came about, not as a specific punishment from God, but as a consequence of the nations' refusal to look to God for what they really needed.

Until next time, may we each continually choose to be the people God wants us to be!

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

In verse 12 we find the instructions from God that Abraham is not to harm his son in any way. This is where just when you think the representation of the story ends, it adds another important point. In making it clear it was not just that Abraham was not to kill Isaac but he was not to harm or do anything to him at all, God is confirming Isaac had done nothing to deserve this. If there was any thought in anyone's mind that Isaac was a perfect choice for this because he had done something to anger God, this should put that thought to rest. If there is any thought Isaac had disobeyed God in some way and needed punished but at the last moment God decided He would punish Isaac in some lesser way than death, this too should be put aside. Isaac was as innocent and undeserving of this death as any of us ever are, and that's where the representation is! Of course, there is no way for any man to be fully pure from sin as Jesus was/is, but that's why we call it representation. In being completely undeserving to die at the hands of his father, Isaac represents how unjust it was for Jesus to be killed by men. By the Jewish religious leaders Jesus was accused of being a blasphemes man. Did they really believe He had blasphemed? Maybe some did and others did not, but it matters not because that is what they put on record as Jesus' crime. We can say Pilate, being the one making the choice for the Roman government, never really believed Jesus was a criminal, but again it makes no difference. Jesus was led up that hill after being beaten and mocked by the soldiers as if He was a common criminal worthy of nothing less. He was nailed to a cross and lifted up before the world as a criminal worthy of death, and there Jesus would die being looked at as a

guilty man. We know these were just the excuses of men with no truth in any of them. Jesus was spotless and without sin. Isaac represents this in being, at the very least, totally undeserving of the penalty of death, but also in that he had done nothing worthy of punishment at all!

Now, verse twelve's words go on to tell us this test had proven Abraham feared God. The word "fear" is translated just fine. The only other English word we might use alongside fear in order to get more depth is to use the word, "revere." However, there is no big word study here about what the original stems back to in order to get the meaning. The word used here is only one small inflection away from being the prime root which means fear with the connotation of reverence more so than the word which would just basically mean to be afraid of something. If we are simply afraid we might need to build up the courage to do something to defeat our fear. If the fear is of an enemy it may be due to the fact we know we have to fight them, but once/if the enemy is destroyed there is no longer need for fear. Thus, the best way to look at this word is to see it as meaning, because I have reverence for something or someone I fear it/them. Some might take this too far into believing we are talking about something more along the lines of high respect, but that would be incorrect. Make no mistake about it, the word is about fear! That said, it should also be noted it is a good thing to be fearful in this way. Abraham was aware God and God alone holds the power of not just life and death in this world, but life and the utter destruction of everything we are, in His hand. (Matt. 10:28) As we started out this story we talked about the idea Abraham did this without hesitation in spite of knowing it

was not a normal thing for The One True God to ask for a human sacrifice. We see now that fact simply did not matter to Abraham because he feared The Lord. It didn't matter what others thought, they could do nothing compared to what God could if Abraham disobeyed. This all boiled down to the basic truth, if God said it, Abraham believed it, and he was going to do it!

Another point we need to get out of all this is the fact this was more about Abraham's faith than it was about God learning anything, yet let's keep both in mind for a minute here. First, it is so vital we understand this was a tremendous step for Abraham's faith. It is one thing to say we would do anything God asked of us but it's another thing to do it, especially when the thing seems like a violation of everything we know to be right. This situation has the addition of being one where Abraham had been asked to give something hardest for him to give. Then there is the point I have at least attempted to make before, which is, in being asked to do something seeming to be against righteousness Abraham had to be crystal clear it was God Who was asking this of him! That point I can't stress enough because most of us would never even be close to being able to go through this trial, not because we believe we would or wouldn't be able to do it, but because we would have trouble knowing for sure it was God asking it of us. We should all stop to consider how much that says about our daily walk with God and where it needs to go. When people act as if it's a light thing to serve God because salvation is freely given, they should consider what it really means to set your feet on the path of attempting to walk and grow in faith. It leaves no real room for all the

things people point to and say, God never said thou shalt not do this or that. We need to see how childish such arguments are and how outside the scope of what it means to walk in faith they are. We need clarity when God asks things of us, and we don't get it by trying to do the minimum it takes to get to heaven!

Second, I want to go back to the point this was about God getting something from it. As much as we never want to lose sight of the fact God is omniscient and knew Abraham would follow His instructions, we should also consider why God gave us a free will. This was done so we each could make our choices in a very, for lack of a better term, organic way. As we take each step in life, do the things we do, and turn in the direction we do, it's because we chose to do so. God is not forcing us along in any way. Yes, if given the permission by us, God can certainly carry us through things, but we must yield to Him at every point in the process for this to happen. In many ways this is where the speaking in tongues comes in when we talk about the baptism in The Holy Ghost. True tongues is not something you learn, and believe me I've heard of churches who try to "teach" it. No, speaking in tongues is something that happens as the Spirit gives utterance. This is why those who were there for the outpouring of The Holy Ghost after Jesus' ascension spoke and glorified God in languages they did not know for themselves. Those who spoke some of those languages confirmed such a thing was happening. (Acts 2:1-21) As some people attempt to wiggle out of the idea speaking in tongues is still for us today, some will claim there has to be someone who needs speaking to in their language before it will happen or

be right for it to happen. However, this is missing the real point of how much our lives, lived before God, are always first and foremost about our faith; not the ways we can serve God among other humans.

I am really troubled by the excuses people use in their attempt to explain away the fact The Holy Ghost can fill you and cause you to speak in another tongue as the evidence. The baptism itself is not about who else is around, and it should go without saying we should not hold back or be embarrassed in front of others. Yes, God uses tongues at times to speak to others. However, the real point of allowing yourself to be Baptized in The Holy Ghost, which comes with the evidence of speaking in tongues, is to see for yourself that you are capable of yielding a very unruly part of your body to God. (James 3:1-12) This is why it's pointless to be "taught" to speak in tongues. It's not about something you do for yourself. Others can give you advice about the subject which may or may not help you yield but only you can seek the in-filling and only you can allow The Spirit to speak through you. You may fool others into believing you can speak in tongues by "learning" to do it, but that makes it pointless. God wants you to yield, and once you do you will have a small taste of what it's like to allow God full control in your life. This is also why it's not just a one time event, but something that can stay with you throughout your life. If you continue to be willing to yield The Spirit can and will use your tongue and life as God wills, but if you ever choose to squelch it, it won't happen because God won't force you.

We should understand that like this story for Abraham, speaking in tongues allows both you and God to experience what

God truly wants for our existence. I often say the description of what God wants is to commune with us, but try to understand what that means. Speaking in tongues helps us see a major part of that desire on God's part. He doesn't want us to be forced to serve Him, speak to Him, or even have Him around, which is why hell is a place He will not be. All these are things we must desire because God wants us to work in tandem with Him. This, Jesus exemplified in His life and explained when He talked about how if the disciples had seen Him they had seen The Father. Jesus goes on to speak of how The Father was in The Son and The Son in The Father. (John 14:8-29) This free working interwoven relationship which goes beyond anything we could experience with another human is a hard concept to grasp, but when we allow The Holy Ghost to speak through us we literally get a taste of what it's like. This situation for Abraham was a similar thing. Abraham, in the most difficult way possible, yielded his will to God's and became the instrument of God's plan. By doing so he left us this amazing example of faith. He also gave us this representational event to study both before and after it was accomplished in truth by Christ. However, Abraham now knew how far he was willing to go in allowing God to use his life, and God got to be there with him through the experience.

There is no way for me to describe how much this moment should show us what God really wants from us at its core. You either get it or you don't! The bottom line is God got a lot out of this in spite of the fact He knew all along Abraham would go through with it. It is what some religious minded people would call, "a transcendent moment." In thinking about that, indulge me one more

trip back to the fact God asked Abraham to do something that would seem to be against all righteousness as we continue on through the words of verse 12. God said He now knew Abraham feared Him because he was willing to give his only son. We so often take this as meaning Abraham was willing to give the thing most dear to him and we move on, but Abraham was putting his life in God's hands in a way I don't think we can really appreciate. As a man who believed in righteousness Abraham knew killing an innocent human was wrong, to put it mildly. If God had allowed Abraham to plunge that knife into Isaac, Abraham would literally have his son's blood on his hands. When Cain killed his brother Abel, God told Cain Abel's blood cried to Him from the ground! (Gen. 4:9-15) What might be more striking is the fact Cain knew God had the right to kill him for what he had done. Not only that, when he found God was not going to take his life right then and there, Cain knew any man who found him would have the right to kill him!

One would have to be a fool not to understand how well Abraham knew these same facts. From the moment he took the life of his son on, Abraham would have known any other man on earth would have had the right to kill him. So what does this mean? It means a lot more than the simple idea Abraham was willing to give to God the thing he held most dear! Abraham was saying an amazing thing I only know how to really put one way. Abraham was saying God came first in his life, even above righteousness itself! This fact is something to gasp at when you really come to understand it. Some might take this as a light thing, but the wise will not. True believers

serve God in large part because we believe in His purity and righteousness. We serve Him because we believe to serve God is to yield to His righteous ability to judge us. For those who do not think this way, you are likely serving God just in an attempt to harness or gain something from the power God represents, or in your mind simply is. However, to serve God, believing He is pure righteousness to the extent Abraham shows us in this story takes a totally sold out relationship!

In the end, we should connect this thought to the fact when the angel calls to Abraham he simply says, "Here am I." Whatever God wanted to use him for or do to him, Abraham was there and ready. A thought I would say many have not considered is that God could have been ready to kill Abraham for his willingness to take the life of his son. The moral of this story could have been that God was/is righteous, and to be righteous Abraham should follow what he knew to be right in spite of what even God told him to do. Some may blindly follow something they think is a god of some sort told them to do, and there are those who would blindly follow The One True God, making this not seem such a large point. However, in no way does blindness describe Abraham. Through serving God in and with his life Abraham was more mature in righteousness than most of us will ever come remotely close to, and that's a part of what makes this story so impactful to those walking in faith and not blind belief. Abraham was putting God first in ways many just can't see!

Until next time, Shalom!

stretch up to as far north as Israel had taken on the east of Jordan, which took it almost as far as Damascus. On the west side Manasseh's border would be the Sea of Chinnereth, the part of the Jordan that ran between there and the Lake of Huleh, and the river, again, for a little further before it met with where the northern border would begin its angle up to its highest point. The east border is very hard to define, as the land which is to the north of Ammon just bleeds out as it goes east into land no one really cared to have. Thus, Manasseh's east border is basically the furthest eastern cities and undefined from there. This is all the land taken during Moses' lifetime, and it would be divided between these three tribes. However, it serves to remember that all of Israel lived on this land before most of the tribes and all the fighting men crossed Jordan.

Next, we are reminded that the tribe of Levi would get no land but only cities throughout the land. Joshua and the High Priest Eleazar, along with the heads of the tribes, would cast lots for the nine tribes and Manasseh in order to place the tribes' land segments on the west of Jordan. However, Caleb, along with the tribe of Judah, would come to Joshua, and Caleb would recount how he was a spy sent into the land forty years earlier. Caleb and Joshua were the only two to come back with a positive report about how they could take the land as God had said. The other ten spies were the ones who caused the people to fear the giants and all who were in the land. When this took place, Moses promised Caleb he would get the land he had spied out, and as Caleb reminds Joshua and the elders of this

promise, we see how Judah received most all this southern land where Abraham mostly sojourned. Specifically, we are told Joshua gives Caleb the very familiar city of Hebron, but that was just a way of specifying a very important city in the heart of the land Judah would receive.

Judah's southern border would touch the land of Edom at the south end of the Dead Sea. From there it would drop further south following Edom's border and take in the wilderness of Zin, which Israel had lived in and passed through on their journey to the promised land. It would turn more west when it got down to the south of another place Israel had camped during their journey, which was Kadesh-barnea. (Deut. 1:19-21) After falling this far south the border basically began to follow a river that angles back up northward until it reaches the Mediterranean. This it does quite a bit south still into what most would consider the Sinai Peninsula. From there the west border of Judah would be defined by the Mediterranean Coast. While there is no clear and easy way to describe all the jogs the northern border would take, we can say that its west end began at the coastline a bit north of where you'd end up if you drew a line from the top of the Dead Sea out to the coast. From there it dipped down to about that imaginary line and then rose up again not reaching as far north as it began on the coast. It then goes up and down as it meanders its way to the top of the Dead Sea, passing just a little south of Jerusalem. This would, of course, make the eastern border the Dead Sea itself.

Now, this is the portion of land given to Judah, but Joshua would also give Caleb

a possession which consisted of several specific cities. Caleb had pointed out to Joshua that for all his age he was still strong, and that appears to be correct as we see Caleb was instrumental in taking some of the places Israel had fought against. Caleb had specifically driven out the main family of the Anakims, and when it came to the city named Kirjath-sepher, Caleb offered his daughter Achsah to whomever could take the city. It turned out someone from his own direct family line took the city, and Achsah would be given to him. As she comes to her new husband she asks him to request her father give them adjoining land to what they had been given because their current land was dry and they needed water to make it bloom. It would seem her husband was not willing to do this or she did not give him time to do it, as Achsah would get down off the donkey she was riding and go to her father. Caleb understood she did this because she wanted to ask something of him, so he asks her what it was. She explains how she wants land with water, and from the description it would seem her father gives her more than just what she had hoped for. This story shows how Achsah knew Caleb was a man with a good heart who knew how to give good things unto his children. This kind of action is something Jesus speaks about when emphasizing how our Heavenly Father knows how to give us what we really need far better than earthly fathers could. (Matt. 7:7-11)

Next, we are given a very long list of the cities Judah's land contained, and it is made clear the surrounding settlements, which were likely under the protection of these main cities, came with them as a

possession. Lists like this one are not just about giving information so we can trace borders, but to emphasize how empty the land was now that Israel had truly destroyed most of the inhabitants. All these cities, the farms, and other houses around them were fulfilling what God had told Israel about being able to live in places they had not built and eat from orchards and vineyards they didn't plant. Israel simply inherited all that the Canaanites had worked to establish in this land. It is further shown that's what is being emphasized here by the fact Jerusalem is pointed out as a city from which Israel did not drive out the Jebusites. In very interesting wording we are told Judah was unable to drive these Jebusites out. When we consider the ease with which others were defeated, it seems very odd these Jebusites could be so hard to do anything with. It's almost as if Jerusalem was being preserved for that later time when David would take the city to make it his capital, and Solomon would build the temple on the mount Abraham had taken Isaac to! (Gen. 22:1-2, II Sam. 5:4-10, II Chron. 3:1)

The next lot would fall to the children of Joseph. The fact it is listed this way shows why Manasseh and Ephraim are considered half tribes. There was no tribe of Joseph, but the southern border of his family would begin at the Jordan River and head west in line with where the nation had entered the promised land around Jericho. From there it would angle north until you get to another familiar city, Bethel. After Bethel the border would drop southward again until it came mostly in the same line with Jericho. It would go west until it got to

Gezer, which is a city spoken of earlier as the king of Gezer came to attack Israel in an attempt to help their fellow Canaanites. (Josh. 10:33) From there it would continue on that same basic path out to the Mediterranean. Now, what this southern border did was define for us that there would be land between the north border of the tribe of Judah and south border of Joseph's two half tribes. From there, the definitions basically start over in order to show us where the borders were for each half tribe.

It starts with the half tribe of Ephraim. Their border on the south was this same border described above. The eastern border was the Jordan River, but here we are given some city names to help us understand where it starts on the north end and where it ends on the south, which was, again, by Jericho. The northern border is hard to define without seeing on a map, with the major cities sighted for the border wandering up and down on its way to the Mediterranean. However, if we want to be blunt about it, the southern border of Ephraim's land begins just slightly north of the southern border for Gad across the river, and Ephraim's land is not even half as wide north to south as Gad's. On the west side, the Mediterranean was the border. This land turned out not to be big enough for the tribe of Ephraim, so they were also given cities that technically would be in Manasseh's portion as well. This trouble of not being big enough was also made worse by the fact Ephraim failed to drive out all the remaining Canaanites. Major cities might have been destroyed in this area but other areas were not. Ephraim made these Canaanites servants through taxation instead of destroying them, and this is the first real

violation we see of God's directive to drive out all the inhabitants of the land.

As we turn to the land given to Manasseh, we are given names to define some of the families within the tribe. This has to do with the fact Manasseh would own land on both sides of the Jordan. This was a very large tribe, but their massive possession is why there was plenty of room for Ephraim to take some of their cities to live in. This made sense as well from the standpoint Manasseh represented the older of Joseph's two sons. There is also the interesting fact in this tribe that there was one man who had no sons, but his daughters were allowed to carry on his house and name. These women would come to Joshua and Eleazar to be sure they did not get left out in receiving a portion of Manasseh's land, and it was given to them. Now Manasseh would, of course, have its southern border defined by the northern border of Ephraim's land. Manasseh's western border would be the Mediterranean Coast. The eastern border would be the Jordan. The northern border is the most interesting because it was mostly defined by what land to the north of Manasseh was given to the tribe of Asher at its west end and to the tribe of Issachar on its east end.

Manasseh as well had some trouble driving out a few Canaanites, and this was likely due to the fact they did not trust God when the time came for them to handle this remnant of Canaanites left in the territory they received. Eventually these Canaanites became servants through taxation, but they remained in the land against God's instructions. We are also told that the children of Joseph were not happy about the

fact Ephraim did not get enough land for their population, and they come to Joshua to complain. Joshua explains to them the real trouble was not the fact they were not given enough land, they only thought that because the land already conquered of their portion was not big enough. Joshua reveals this by telling them to get into the wooded mountains and clear the land to build more places to live. To this the complaint is made that the Canaanites who still lived there were too strong and were too well armed for them to do so. Joshua reminds them they started this complaint by talking about what a big tribe they were and tells them to use that power to go up into the hills and drive out the Canaanites to take what was rightfully theirs.

After settling all this, the nation would gather at a place along the north-south mountain ridge of this east side. They would gather at a specific place called Shiloh, which was in the land given to Ephraim as well as being the area Israel mostly resided in as a group before heading out to settle their various portions of the land. There at Shiloh they would set up the tabernacle, and this would be the first time the tabernacle is recorded as being set up without being at the center of Israel camping in the altogether organized way they had been while traveling the wilderness. The setting up of the tabernacle was also done because the time of major war had passed and it was time Israel start living as a nation in possession of land, not just as a traveling group. At this time Joshua points out that there were still seven tribes who had yet to receive land. The problem was that the nation was pretty familiar with this more central and southern

area of the promised land, and in receiving their portions, the tribes of Judah and the two half tribes took up most all this land. What remained was that northern area they had taken by the fact a king in the north called all the others in that area together to attack Israel in mass. Israel, of course, came up to meet them and ended up destroying them. However, this meant, unlike they had done in much of the central and southern areas, Israel did not take the north city by city or even chunk by chunk.

This left the north unexplored - so to speak. It had not been part of what they had spied originally some forty years earlier, at least not in detail, nor had it been seen in battle. This point is why Manasseh's northern border was not really defined at the time of their lot coming up. Defining a north border was something they needed reference points to do, and at the time there was none. Thus, Joshua scolds these seven tribes for not being proactive in doing the work needed to divide up this land. He tells them it is time to do that work, and orders them to choose three men out of each of their tribes who would go up and scout the land. These men could then come back with a description of what was up there so borders could be drawn and lots could be cast for these seven tribes to finally figure out who would get which piece. This would allow Israel to be truly settled in the land before Joshua went home to be with The Lord!

Let's stay in God's Word!

