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Shaqah

*“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!

For the sixth year, Living Springs Institute has published a daily planning calendar that gives you the Biblical calendar alongside the Gregorian calendar we are all familiar with. This planner is a Biblical education as well as useful in organizing a person's daily life. We think this is an exciting teaching product; and by the grace of God, we are continuing to offer these calendars for FREE!

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On that note, I would like to remind everyone that it does save us on postage to send more than one calendar in the same package. So, if you and your spouse and/or a friend would each like one, or you know of others you would like to give one to, please don't hesitate to order the total number of calendars you would like, all at once! Now, if you are a regular mail subscriber to this publication, you should have received one of these calendars with this issue of *Shaqah*; but you may still want others to share. Please, don't hesitate to order more. We would also like to send calendars to all of our e-mail subscribers, but we don't necessarily have your current physical mailing address. Your calendar is waiting for you, so be sure to contact us with your current mailing address, and put in your order today!

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In closing, I just want to say thank you again to all those who have taken part in this ministry! Please remember to share Living Springs Institute with others, so they too may learn and grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ! May God bless you all; and as always, we pray you will be blessed by this issue of *Shaqah*!

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Following the Biblical Stream:

By Philip E. Busby

In our last segment, we talked about how God allows man to do things even on a very large scale that are not in God's perfect will. We discussed how that creates a bit of duality in the Biblical story line, because we see God dealing with man as a human society, which is what man chose to form into; but God's true focus is still on the individual, because only individuals can be saved. What this also means is that we see individuals serving God in their personal lives, and thus, being used of God to deal with mankind as a society. This is where the story takes us next, as we will follow the genealogy of chapter 11, down to a man named Abram, a name God later changed to Abraham.

This genealogy, of course, starts with Noah; but as our focus has shifted to what the three families of his sons did post-flood, our chart on page 12 will start with Noah's son Shem. Now, before we jump completely out of the verses in chapter 10, which tell us of the families, I want to touch on one more subject that may be a question for some, considering Nimrod had been called "Asshur." In Genesis chapter 10 verse 22 we are told Shem had a son named Asshur, and some even believe that when verse 11 says "Out of that land went forth Asshur,..." to build Nineveh, etc. it is talking about Shem's son, not Nimrod. However, this is again an example of not looking at what is there for what is there. We are told in the verses concerning Nimrod that Nimrod became renowned for his abilities and this is why he was given a name or what might be more appropriately labeled a title! In other words, "Asshur" became the world's first rulership title. After the confounding of language, there would be many more, such as Pharaoh, King, Ceaser, and others not as generally familiar, which belong(ed) to various cultures. Today, in more democratic cultures, we even have titles that are not intended to hold such godlike connotations, such as President, Prime Minister, Chancellor, etc. but it all seems to come out the same in people's minds, nonetheless.

As to the point of Shem's son holding the same name, we should see a couple of things. First, Nimrod was Ham's grandson through Cush. Thus, Shem's use of the name Asshur for his son likely comes long before Nimrod was even born. Another point is something we talked about in an earlier segment (along with the reason why), which is that the three sons of Noah are not laid out here according to age. This gives us a way to see the information about Nimrod before we ever read that Shem had a son whom he named Asshur. This is all part of that fact I like to harp on quite a bit, which is that we should take things in context. We should find it striking that the information about Nimrod is given in Ham's family information and not left to be the beginning part of the story about the tower in chapter 11. If we were to understand that the Asshur who built Nineveh was Shem's son moving in king like fashion like Nimrod, it would be very odd for his name to be mentioned so out of context among Ham's family information and before we ever knew Shem had a son by that name!

What we must keep in mind is these stories are at the beginning of things. We may automatically think certain ways about certain subjects, but that is all based on what we have been taught and what we observe in life today. In the days of Nimrod there were no titles for rulers. Thus, the people were not just coming up with one, they were developing the concept as a whole, and defining the concept as being that a ruler should be someone who is more than a "common" man. However, when Shem names his son Asshur, he is just using a word to name his son. While the word would have had the same original meaning as it had in designating a ruler, the context of using it as just a name for a newborn child would be different. Shem likely used this word not to denote or prophesy in any way that his son was going to be great, but that his son was being lifted up to God. For example, today we understand a Greek name such as "Christi," which is a popular name for girls, to mean "Follower of the Anointed One." Since many are familiar with the more Greek derived word of "Christ" in the first place, we likely understand the meaning better if we simply say, "Follower of Christ." Shem did not have a name for The Messiah, but that does not mean he didn't understand the same thing Abraham understood, which was that God would provide Himself as a Lamb. (Gen. 22:8) In any case, Shem was likely meaning much the same thing as the name Christi means, by pointing to the same thing Jesus told us in Luke 21:28 "...look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh."

This would fall in line with what we see as we begin our look at the genealogy that starts in Genesis chapter 11 verse 10. It would be Shem's family through whom Abraham would come. While we know Abraham was called out of his country and people, where there was much false religion, it was not to get him away from false religion altogether. Abraham was called to live among Ham's family, and that family's sin was so great God was going to wipe them off the land, leaving it free to use in establishing God's chosen nation! (Gen. 15:16) Just as with Seth's family before the flood, I'm sure there was a great deal of deterioration in Shem's family over the years. Certainly no group came out of the tower story shining as one which served God, but that does not mean Shem himself did not start out his family with God in mind. Much of his family may have been ones who held on to the truth and been a big part of what God was trying to directly protect in confounding the language. Some might point to the idea Shem's family were the ones who stayed more in the area of the tower, but when you consider the idea that the families separated for the reasons we have discussed in that they wanted to try the tower again without the hindrance of those who did not agree, it makes more sense that the other families, especially Ham's, would want to move - away! We certainly see that Ham's family were the ones who had the most immediate success in rebuilding the tower idea in another place when we consider what they did in Egypt.

Now, the genealogy chart on page 12 is built to approximately the same scale as the one that appeared in Issue #32, which showed us Adam to Noah. If you put these two

What About Tithing?

Part II

From Living Springs' Questions and Answers

"I am a Jewish believer in Messiah Jesus. For years I've given tithes to the church(es) I was attending. I have left the church and withdrew my name on the membership list. Now, about tithing; I was told by another Jewish believer that it is not required in the New testament as it was in the old testament. Can you clarify this with scripture please?"

Simply put, God made tithing a requirement for Israel by making it a commandment in the Law. Therefore, in a way which is not as true for non-Jews (and I will attempt to come back to that thought), it is a direct violation of God's Law for people in God's chosen nation not to tithe into God's work. At first glance, this truth, which affects far more than just the issue of tithing, may seem like a bad thing God did to the Jews. However, Paul talks about this in Romans chapter 7. There Paul talks about the fact Jesus did the work He did to set us free from the laws of sin and death by making sin of no effect. This is another one of those arguments which some people use to say everything in "New Testament times" is different. However, sin and death were made no effect because Jesus' work shows us sin can be wiped away by death, and death can be overcome by God! This is a truth Abraham understood and why he told Isaac, "...God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering:..." Genesis 22:8

Paul points out that even though this truth may make sin seem like something no one needs to care about, especially post the resurrection of Christ (Which some mistakenly and yet whole heartily believe gives them a ticket to live however they choose.), he says looking at the Law is what revived sin and killed him! (Rom. 7:9) He is talking here about the requirement issue. Look at the Law, then look at your life, and you will find what the prophet found, "But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away." Isaiah 64:6 That being true, Paul goes on to point out the Law is holy and the commandments holy; thus, he asks if something holy could be so bad that it causes such trouble? The answer is no! It's not really the Law which is sin. The Law is just the revealer of the sin which already resides in our lives.

There is no way for us to escape death. Romans 3:23 simply tells us, "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." However, this fact is why Ephesians 2:8 tells us it's not our righteousness which saves us anyway. Instead, it's the grace of God. This is a point many people readily take to heart and use as an excuse to ignore God's desire that we still strive to live in righteousness. They fail to read the rest of the verse, and/or they misinterpret faith as meaning something like, blind belief. We must understand that we are saved by

grace, but it is grace which we find through having a relationship with God, which is what the word "faith" actually means. Because of God's grace, faith in God can be accounted to all those who have lived, both before and after the time of Jesus' first coming, in place of the righteousness and purity we all lack. (Rom. 4:1-10) This is why we can all be judged on Judgment Day for every wrong we have ever done, (Rev. 20:12, Rom. 14:11-12) and yet some will still be welcomed into the joy of God's Kingdom! (Matt. 25)

"Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin." James 4:17 Knowledge of wrong reveals sin, which is why Paul talks about the Law killing him. However, without the knowledge we cannot grow in our faith; thus, the Law is a good thing! The knowledge of why and how we should come before God shows us how to fulfill the purpose we were created to fulfill. This is what Abel truly was seeking in bringing his offering to God; Cain, on the other hand, was not! Because our purpose is to commune with God, there is great value in learning how and why God reacts in the way He does as we commune with Him. In learning God's reaction to things, we learn how to be righteous; and through this process of sanctification, we become more and more holy as God is Holy. (Matt. 5:48) In becoming holy, which is to be separated to and for a purpose which we know is God's purpose, we can draw closer and closer to God Himself!

This is the point Cain missed entirely! The prayer of a true believer should be, "I am thy servant; give me understanding, that I may know thy testimonies. It is time for thee, LORD, to work: for they have made void thy law. Therefore I love thy commandments above gold; yea, above fine gold. Therefore I esteem all thy precepts concerning all things to be right; and I hate every false way. PE Thy testimonies are wonderful: therefore doth my soul keep them. The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple. I opened my mouth, and panted: for I longed for thy commandments. Look thou upon me, and be merciful unto me, as thou usest to do unto those that love thy name. Order my steps in thy word: and let not any iniquity have dominion over me. Deliver me from the oppression of man: so will I keep thy precepts." Psalms 119:125-134

Before man's fall from innocence, coming before God was simple; but as we have fallen deeper and deeper into living lives filled with sin, it has become harder and harder to hear God's voice. Thus, all of us are not only in a learning phase, but a struggle to just regain what man has lost about how to come before God with greater access! One of the main overall messages of the Bible is that gaining greater access to God is only done by shedding the sinful practices which

hinder us. God gives us instruction in order to show us how to shed those practices which are counter productive to drawing closer to Him. The downside of this is that while we may have been walking somewhat ignorantly in practices we did not know were hindering us, without a thought in our head about changing them, once God shows us the truth, we have a decision to make. We either have to struggle to end those practices in our lives, or we have to ignore God's instruction about them being wrong. If we choose to struggle with them, we will have to put forth the work to overcome whatever temptation brings forth the sin; and how hard that will be, as well as how long an individual may struggle with any particular issues will vary from person to person. However, just the attempt should draw us closer to God. On the other side, if we simply choose to ignore what God has revealed to us, we find ourselves in direct rebellion to God's instructions for our lives, and this is sin in its purest form!

The truth about tithing is that it was not required by a written law for anyone until it was required of the children of Israel in the Law of Moses. At the same time, the Law is just a revealer of a practice which some people had already learned was the right thing to do. Jesus may not have made it an emphasis of His ministry to teach tithing, but what He did instruct us was simple. "If ye love me, keep my commandments." John 14:15 Here Jesus is simply mirroring the words we find throughout the Old Testament, time and time again. Long before the Law was given, God tells Isaac in Genesis 26:4-5, "And I will make thy seed to multiply as the stars of heaven, and will give unto thy seed all these countries; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; Because that Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws." As the written Law was being given to the children of Israel in the wilderness, God reveals His great desire for them, "O that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children forever!" Deuteronomy 5:29 And long after the Law was given and the nation of Israel had seen the great destruction sin can bring when we do not follow God's instructions, Nehemiah is given the answer to his plea that God, "Remember, I beseech thee, the word that thou commandedst thy servant Moses, saying, If ye transgress, I will scatter you abroad among the nations: But if ye turn unto me, and keep my commandments, and do them; though there were of you cast out unto the uttermost part of the heaven, yet will I gather them from thence, and will bring them unto the place that I have chosen to set my name there." Nehemiah 1:8-9

What this boils down to is the truth that the requirement of tithing is not really a New Testament versus Old Testament thing. It could be said it's more of a Jew versus non-Jew thing because only a law or commandment can create a true legal requirement. At the same time, it's very true that by looking at the actions of those who served God even before there ever was a law, we find tithing is really a believer versus a non-believer thing. This is why all those who claim to be believers in The One True God should be taught to tithe, and follow it all their days!

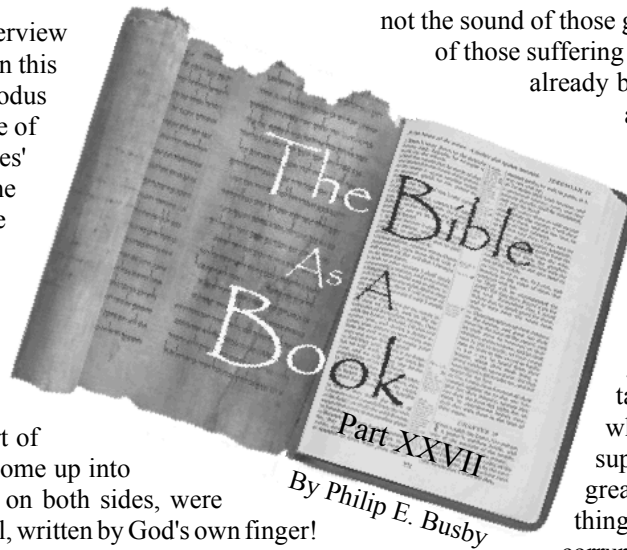
This point is why it's in the New Testament that we find discussions such as the words of Paul who talks about Abraham receiving the covenant which promised God's chosen nation would come through him and the sign of that covenant which was/is circumcision; and Paul simply asks, did Abraham receive the promise being circumcised or uncircumcised? (Rom. 4:8-12) Of course, the answer is simply that Abraham had to make personal choices which showed he cared for the things of God before there was any reason to give him promises concerning the things of God. People like to ask, which came first the chicken or the egg? The Bible clearly answers that question. The chicken came first because God ordered the already existing creation to bring forth live animals. (Gen. 1:20-25) There would be no chicken eggs until there were chickens, and the whole intent of there being eggs is for there to be more chickens. There would be no circumcision until there was a promise to seal with the symbol of circumcision. However, there would be no promise unless there were men like Abraham who had already found God's ways without the promise.

That conversation brings us to the story which shows us, while he did not have the Law of Moses, Abraham clearly followed the specific practice of tithing. Abraham's example also brings us more into the discussion about where we should give our tithes. After Abraham had a great victory in defeating an army the area kings could not defend against, Abraham paid tithe to the king of Salem out of all the spoil. (Gen. 14) Why did he do this? Because Abraham had faith, which is the same reason Abraham was chosen to receive the promise. By having a relationship with God, Abraham knew there was a reason to support Melchizedek. Melchizedek was a priest who truly served God, and not just a man who was looking to gain the things of this world; thus, it would be to Melchizedek, even the father of God's chosen nation would give his tithe.

The understanding that God uses certain people full time to do His work in this world has specifically to do with why tithing was made a standard practice separate from just offerings. Deuteronomy 12:19 instructs, "Take heed to thyself that thou forsake not the Levite as long as thou livest upon the earth." Among Israel, the tribe of Levi was used by God for His service. This also had to do with giving to God what is His. All first-born of Israel should have belonged to God, but the tribe of Levi was taken by God in their place. Thus, the tribe of Levi would be used for God's service! (Lev. 3:11-13) Now, God did not and does not need anything to be given to Him. In reality, God is the giver of all things. However, tithing has to do with a system among men which works out the physical needs of people who serve God full time, along with giving other people who believe in and serve God, the opportunity to recognize God as being first in their lives and the Giver of all which they have.

Israel was required by the Law to give tithe because being dedicated to the full-time work of God is exactly what God said the Levis' job would be. God said the tribe of Levi would not have an inheritance among Israel because God would be their inheritance. (Num. 18:20-21) This would mean they would not have the things the other tribes had in order to

Continuing our overview of the book of Exodus, we begin this segment with verse 18 of Exodus chapter 31. This is the last verse of the chapter which covers Moses' time in the mount, where he learned how to construct the tabernacle and establish the priesthood that would administer it. Verse 18 tells us, as God ends His time of communion with Moses, God gives him stone tables, the receiving of which was part of the reason Moses was told to come up into the mount. Upon these tables, on both sides, were the Laws God had given to Israel, written by God's own finger!



However, as Moses had been up in the mount, the children of Israel decided Moses had been gone much longer than they believed he should have been. As far as they were concerned Moses had been gone long enough that any number of things might have happened to him, and he was likely never coming back to lead them on. Thus, they desired of Moses' brother Aaron that he establish a religion for them, which would become the basis of their organization as a people and lead them in what to do next. Aaron tells the people to give him the gold they had with them, in order to accomplish this task, and the people willingly comply. With this gold Aaron casts a calf and engraves the details. When this calf was completed, the people were pleased and began to propagate the idea this idol represented the gods responsible for bringing Israel out of the land of Egypt. When Aaron saw this response to the calf and how it appeased the people, he further solidified this religious practice by building an altar for bringing offerings before the calf, and declared the next day would be a feast day to The Lord.

The next morning, the people brought offerings to sacrifice to their new idol, all as part of a very flesh pleasing feast and celebration. Up in the mount, God tells Moses what is going on with the people down below, and the fact they had proven what was in their minds. God instructs Moses to get down away from His presence because God was going to destroy the people; and afterward, He would form His chosen nation starting over again with Moses. This brings to the surface the true qualities that resided in Moses and for which God had chosen him to lead Israel. Moses immediately does a rundown of why God should not do this, going all the way from how it would look to enemies like Egypt to the promise God had made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Of course, this was not truly for God's benefit, but for Moses'. God would turn back from destroying the people, but this would lay the burden on Moses, as he would have to stand in the gap between God's Holiness and the people's sinfulness. Meaning Moses would have to go down and deal with the situation himself!

As Moses and Joshua are returning down out of the mount, it is Joshua's interpretation that the sounds coming from the camp indicate there is a war going on. Moses tells Joshua it's

not the sound of those gaining the victory in battle nor the sound of those suffering defeat, but sounds of celebration. Moses, already being generally aware of what the people are doing, becomes even more angry when he gets close enough to actually see it! Moses was so angry that he throws the tables of stone which God had given him, and breaks them in pieces at the base of the mount. Moses then goes on into the camp and begins breaking down the golden calf by using fire. Moses then takes the metal and grinds it into powder, which he mixes into the camp's water supply. This would serve to illustrate what great loss there is in putting your trust in the things of this earth where moth and rust doth corrupt, (Matt. 6:19-21) as the people would be unable to recover the gold, in spite of the fact that for some time it would be so obviously in front of their faces in something they very much needed and used for common everyday tasks.

Moses questions Aaron as to what the people threatened him with that he would go along with such a thing. Aaron attempts to lean on the excuse used by ministers the world over to this very day. Aaron tells Moses he should know how the people are, and he tries to explain how he was simply trying to appease the people by giving them what they would accept under the circumstances! Moses then points out just how unorganized the camp had become, and how this made Israel an embarrassment among the nations. This was also dangerous in that Israel was not even prepared to protect themselves against their enemies. To make the point of how shameful this is and how ignorant their actions were, Moses goes to the gate of the camp and calls out to all those who might be paying attention and have a desire for God's righteousness. As all the sons of Levi gathered to Moses, he instructs them to go out into the camp and destroy all those who could be caught unaware and unprepared to protect themselves and their people. This action would be a consecration of them unto the righteous service of being God's ministers! Following these instructions, the Levites kill around 3,000 men.

The next day, Moses tells the people he is going back into the mount to beg God to forgive them for their great sinfulness. When he arrives back in the direct presence of The Lord, Moses asks God to forgive the people for their idolatry and iniquity. Moses even offers himself in their place, asking God to blot him out of the Book of Life instead of the people. God informs Moses there are no such deals to be made, as God firmly tells him that it would be those who sin against God whose names would be blotted out. Moses' job was to go back to the people and resume the work God had given in the first place. God would make arrangements to lead and protect them for the purpose of making the journey, but internally Israel would experience personal difficulties they would not have faced had they not sinned in making the calf!

Moses is informed that God would no longer be in the

midst of the people. God would send an angel to drive out the Canaanites from before them and give them the land He had promised to their fathers; but God Himself would not dwell among them, because His Holiness would consume them when they sinned as they had done! God also instructs that the people humble themselves by putting away the coveted things of this earth from off their person, and God would consider what to do with them. In learning of all this, Israel was displeased; but they did make themselves plain before The Lord, putting off their earthly wealth which they wore in the form of jewelry. All this delayed the construction of the tabernacle that God had showed Moses in the mount. Thus, to illustrate the fact God had said He could no longer dwell among them, Moses took a tent and set it up outside the camp a distance off from the people, but still within their view. Moses called this the Tabernacle of the Congregation. Those who truly desired to seek The Lord would go out of the camp to this tent in order to do so. Being anxious as to what their fate would be, the people came out to the door of their tents and watched when Moses went out to this tabernacle. They watched him all the way until he was inside. Once inside, a pillar of cloud descended unto the door of the tabernacle, and God spoke with Moses. When they saw this, all the people stopped what they were doing and began to worship The Lord!

Moses would have a very personal conversation with God. Moses starts by pointing out that God had told him he was still to lead Israel into being what God wanted them to be, but if God was not going directly with them, who would show Moses what to do? Since God had already built such a close relationship directly with him, Moses hoped he had truly found grace in God's eyes; and considering Israel was to be God's nation, Moses wanted God to continue to directly lead him, at the very least. God tells Moses, He will, in fact, continue to directly lead Moses with His presence; and Moses asks that if this is ever not going to be the case, Moses would desire they not go forward with this plan at all! Moses believes there is no other way for the world to know that Israel is truly called to be God's chosen nation if God is not the one leading them, and among them. Upon this, God tells Moses because he has found grace and faith, God would go forward with the plan to dwell among the people!

At this point, Moses shows just how hungry he had become to know God, and how much he understood about there being more to knowing God than we can hardly fathom, as Moses takes the opportunity to ask God to show Himself to Moses even more face to face than what Moses had already experienced! God confirms to Moses that He will be with him as he leads Israel, always being out in front of Moses in the way, showing the world He is God. However, Moses is to never forget God will truly be making the ultimate choices in the ways of righteousness! In illustration of why this must be, God then explains to Moses it is not possible in his current state of still being in the flesh to see the true face of God. However, Moses was to, once again, come up into the mount; and there God would put Moses in a cleft of the rock, and God would cover Moses while the full presence of God would pass in front of him. Moses would then be uncovered and experience the presence of God to the greatest extent the flesh was capable of withstanding!

With this, Moses would leave the tent and return to the camp to convey the content of his conversation with God to the people. However, Joshua, who normally stayed right with Moses, would not come with him but remained in this tabernacle before the presence of God, no doubt being prepared for the fact he would one day take over from Moses the very task Moses and God had been discussing. In the morning, Moses was to return to the mount, but before he did, he was to hew two new stone tables like the ones he had broken. God had given him the first ones, but in a reminder that even the smallest missteps have consequences, Moses was to hew new tables himself. God would, once again, carve words into these tables, so Israel could see the Laws of God for themselves! As Moses came up into the mount this time, he was not to bring anyone with him; and so Moses rose early and headed into the mount by himself, carrying the two stone tables he had hewn.

When Moses reached the place where he was to meet God, God came to Moses just as He said He would. As God passed by, He comforted Moses with words about God's mercy and longsuffering nature toward men, but also confirmed God's promise that He will not excuse those who willingly choose sin. Upon this, Moses bows himself and begins to, once again, plead for the people to be forgiven. In response, God tells Moses His covenant with Israel is that He will do great things among them and through them like no other nation on the earth, and everyone around Israel will know God is with them. However, God warns Moses that their downfall will be if they choose to intermingle themselves with the people God intends to drive out from before them. If they take on the religions and become as the people God is using them to judge, God will not be able to bless and use Israel. God explicitly warns Moses again about Israel worshiping false gods and making idols like other people do, because the consequences of such a thing are just too devastating!

God goes on to emphasize that the way to commemorate their liberation from Egypt is to keep the Feast of Unleavened Bread as He has already commanded them to do. God is to be put first in Israel, represented by giving God all the first-born of their domestic animals, the only exception being that donkeys should be replaced with a lamb or put down. First-born sons should also be represented with a lamb, and they should all bring offerings when they come before The Lord. They are to observe the weekly Sabbath and make no excuse not to, even on the basis of activities common to a certain time of year. They are to observe all God's feasts. Firstfruits, Shavuot (Pentecost), and The Feast of Tabernacles are specified, because in all three of these feasts all the males of Israel are to show themselves before The Lord, and God will protect their land and homes as they do. Israel's sacrifices are not to be tainted with leaven of any kind, and the Passover sacrifice is not to be left until morning. The first items of every harvest are to be brought to God's storehouse. Milk from a parent animal should not be used to seath the meat of a slaughtered animal. All these things Moses was to write down, because they reveal fundamentals upon which the entire establishing Law for Israel are based.

Moses would, once again, be in the mount for forty days and forty nights. He would fast this entire time as he was before God. After this, Moses would return to the camp of Israel, bringing with him the two tables of stone upon which God had

written the Ten Commandments. However, when he arrived, the people, including Aaron, were afraid to come near him for a reason Moses was not yet aware existed. The skin of Moses' face was literally shining from being in the direct presence of God. Moses wanted to speak to them, and he was able to speak first with Aaron and the leaders of the congregation. After this, Moses was able to get the rest of the people to come, and he conveyed to them what God had commanded. Moses would continue to receive the Law from God, and as he did, he would come back to the people to tell them. However, in order to speak to the people, Moses had to wear a veil over his face so the people would not see his skin glowing. Moses would then take this veil off when he went in to speak with God.

Finally, the time came for the tabernacle, God had shown Moses in the mount, to be built; and Moses gathered the congregation of Israel together to instruct them in the work. Just as God had finished His instructions to Moses by emphasizing the fact the Sabbath should be observed, to make clear this was true even in doing the work of building the tabernacle, so too, Moses emphasizes the Sabbath as a law to be continually followed in their lives, before he begins with the tabernacle's instructions. Moses then tells them the first thing to be done is to collect an offering unto The Lord, consisting of the various things needed to construct the tabernacle, all its elements, and the priests' garments to be worn by Aaron and his sons. It was important for this to be an offering to The Lord, because Israel was not to think of the tabernacle as a community center payed for by community money and goods. Whoever gave to this work was giving what they had directly to God, and the tabernacle would be built using the things in God's storehouse. Some may not have looked at it just this way, but the truth of what Moses called for them to do is there, nonetheless!

Moses follows this with the fact the construction of all the things the tabernacle consisted of would be done by not just those who had the skills, but those who were "wise hearted." He then gives them a list of the things which need to be built, so they would have an even clearer picture of what needed to be given and who would be best suited to assist in the various work. After hearing this, the people left the assembly, and all those who were willing to hear and respond to The Spirit leading them, began to gather the necessary items and bring them, as well as began to organize for the purpose of doing the work. They gave of the things they carried on them in the form of jewelry. The men gave The Lord's offering of a half shekel of silver for every male 20 years old and older. They gave of the brass which they had among them, and those who had or found shittim wood brought it to be used. The women began to spin the thread needed to make the textiles of the tabernacle, and the rulers of the tribes brought the proper stones needed to make the priests' garments, as well as the precious spices and oil for the incense, anointing oil, and the oil for the lights.

As the materials came together, Moses tells the people that God has called Bezaleel and, as a direct assistant to him, Aholiab to be the lead craftsmen for the work. They would not just supervise but also specifically train any and all others who helped in the work, so it could be done just the way God had laid it upon their hearts to do it! As these lead men and those who would help them gathered to do the work, Moses turned over to

them all the offerings which had been collected from among Israel. As the work began, the people continued to bring offerings every morning to be used for the tabernacle; and from every area of the work to be done, the men came to Moses to let him know they had more than enough materials to complete the work. Thus, Moses had to send out the word into all Israel that they were to stop their efforts of collecting and creating materials to offer for the construction of the tabernacle.

The workmen made everything Moses had been told to make, starting with the covering of the tabernacle. They began with the inner linen curtains, which they tied together into its two parts, with the loops at the edges. They also made the gold taches that would join the two parts. They made the curtains of goat's hair, tied them together into their two parts, with the loops in the appropriate places, and made the brass taches for it. They put together the covering of ram's skins dyed red and the outermost covering of badgers's skins. They carved the boards for the north, south, and west walls of the tabernacle, along with the two corner posts which would tie the three walls together. They made the silver sockets to stand these boards in, and the bars that were to run horizontally along the walls, including one full-length bar to run along the middle of each side. They covered the boards and the bars with gold, and placed the gold rings they made for the bars to go through. They made the veil for inside the tabernacle, the gold overlaid pillars with their hooks to hang the veil on and silver bases to stand the pillars up in. They completed the tabernacle itself by making the curtain for the door, the hooks to hang it on, the gold overlaid pillars, and brass bases to stand the pillars up in.

Bazaleel made the elements for the tabernacle using the specific dimensions Moses had been given and the design Moses had been shown, using shittim wood and the appropriate metal. He made the ark, overlaid it inside and out with gold, put the crown of gold around the top and the gold rings at its corners in order to carry it with its gold covered staves which he also made. Using pure gold, he made the Mercy Seat, which is the ark's lid, along with a cherub for each end. He made the table for shewbread, overlaid it with gold, put a gold crown around it, and four gold rings on its corners to carry it with its gold covered staves, which he made. He also made all the golden elements to be placed on this table. Next, he made the pure gold menorah with its seven lights, just the way Moses had been shown, and all its gold elements. He then made the altar of incense with its four horns at the corners, overlaid it with gold, put a gold crown around it, and placed two gold rings for carrying it with the gold covered staves he made for it. He also formulated the anointing oil and the incense for the altar of incense in just the way Moses had been instructed.

The outside elements were also made just as God had told and shown Moses. The altar of sacrifice, with its horns at the four top corners, was made and overlaid with brass. The grate work, the rings to carry it with, and all the vessels and tools for this altar are fashioned out of brass. The staves made for it were also covered with brass. Next was made the laver where the priest would wash when going between the altar and the tabernacle. It would be made in two pieces, a top bowl and a basin underneath. This entire laver was made of the kind of high quality brass used to make mirrors. It was also highly polished

so that it was as reflective as a mirror like those used by the women! The curtains for the courtyard itself were made using fine linen, as was the colorful needlework hanging for the door. The courtyard pillars, their brass bases, and silver elements for hanging the curtains were also crafted along with all the brass elements for staking the tabernacle and court structures to the ground.

Moses had given a commandment that the Levites track the metal given and then used for the tabernacle. That job had been done by Aaron's son Ithamar. The gold given and used was 29 talents and 730 shekels (around 2,200 lb.). A half shekel of silver was given by every man numbered in Israel who was 20 years old and up. This brought in 301,775 shekels of silver (around 7,550 lb.). 300,000 shekels is the equivalent of 100 talents, and this amount was used to create 100 sockets for pillars, each socket a talent in weight. The remaining 1775 shekels of silver was used for the other elements of the pillars pertaining to curtain hangings, stability, and adornment. In making the more outside pillar sockets, the ground stakes, the altar of sacrifice and all its elements, there was used 70 talents and 2400 shekels of brass (around 5,300 lb.).

Also made were the garments for the priests. The ephod and matching girdle were made using the colors Moses had been told to use, including the gold which they weaved in using gold wires made by cutting thin stripes from thinly beaten gold plates. They made the ephod's shoulder pieces with the onyx stones engraved with the names of the children of Israel, set in gold. The breastplate was made with matching material to the ephod and girdle. Set in it were the twelve precious stones - none alike, and all bearing one of the names of the tribes of Israel. The gold rings and chain work to attach the breastplate to the priest were fashioned, and the blue ribbon was used just as Moses had been shown. They made the blue slipover robe the priest was to wear under all this, with the pomegranate design work and golden bells at its hemline. They also made all the other garments both Aaron and his sons were to wear, the linen coats, the head coverings, under garments, and girdles.

One of the finishing items to be crafted was the golden crown to be tied with blue ribbon on Aaron's mitre with the words "HOLINESS TO THE LORD" engraved on it! With this, the tabernacle, all its elements, and the priestly garments had been completed, and they brought all these elements to Moses to present them to him. Moses looks over all these items and confirms they were all made just the way Moses had been shown by God in the mount. Thus, Moses blesses them for their work!

God speaks to Moses and tells him that on the very first day of the new year they are to set up the tabernacle for the first time. First, they were to put up the tabernacle structure itself. The Ark of the Covenant would be the first thing to be put inside, and the vail was then to be hung in front of it. Next, the table of shewbread was to be put in place with all the elements which belonged to it. Then the menorah was to be brought in and the lamps lit. Lastly, the altar of incense was to be placed inside, just outside the vail from where the ark had been placed. The hanging for the door of the tabernacle was then to be hung. Outside, the

first thing to be placed would be the altar of sacrifice directly out from the door of the tabernacle. Then the laver was to be placed between the altar and the door and filled with water. After this, the courtyard was to be set up all the way around with the gate and its hangings.

Once everything was in place, they were to start the process of anointing all these elements with the anointing oil, which had been made in order to set these things apart for the service of God. They were to start with the tabernacle structure itself and all the items inside it. After that, they were to go outside and anoint the altar of sacrifice and all its elements. Next would be the anointing of both pieces of the laver. Finally, it would be time to bring Aaron and his sons to the door of the tabernacle and begin the process of consecrating them to serve as priests before God. They were to be washed with water, then Aaron was to be dressed in the holy garments and anointed as God had instructed. Aaron's sons then were to be dressed in their holy garments and anointed as their father was so they may carry on with the priesthood throughout their generations.

As the second year of Israel's deliverance from Egypt dawned, on that very first day of the new year, Moses began the process. He put in place the boards in their sockets; ran the bars through the rings; and spread the coverings over the structure. He put the stone tables God had written on inside the ark, put its staves in place and closed the ark with the mercy seat. He brought the ark inside the tabernacle and hung the vail in front of it. Outside the vail, he placed the table of shewbread on the north side and put its elements in order on it. Across from that, on the south side, he placed the menorah and lit the lamps. He brought in the altar of incense, putting it directly opposite the ark on the outside of the vail, and began the burning of incense on it in accordance to how God had told him. He then hung the door of the tabernacle. After this, he placed the altar of sacrifice out from the door of the tabernacle, and that day offered the burnt offerings and meat offerings he was instructed of God to offer on it. He then set up the laver and put water in it so it could be used by the priests to wash at as God had said for them to do. Lastly, Moses set up the pillars and curtains which formed the courtyard; and as this finished the setting up of the tabernacle, Moses finished the work by following God's instructions for anointing all the elements.

When it was complete, The Lord's presence covered the tabernacle in the form of a cloud, and the glory of God filled it so greatly that Moses was unable to enter the structure. From that time forward, Israel knew when to pack up and travel forward by when the cloud lifted from off the tabernacle, but they stayed when it stayed. In just the way God had led them in traveling thus far, so it was upon the tabernacle as they camped. Throughout Israel's journey, God was a cloud upon the tabernacle by day and a fire upon it by night!

Let's stay in God's Word!

What About Tithing? continued from pg. 4

work and create an increase for themselves. Their work would be the work of the tabernacle/temple and all the things of God, which brings an increase, all of which belongs directly to God! The catch is, living in this manner does not provide for the physical needs of those doing the work. Thus, those who can and do live their lives working by the sweat of their brow to eat bread and generate whatever physical gains may be made in this universe, were commanded to follow the practice which had already been established by God and those who followed Him before there was a written Law. Those doing the secular work in Israel should give a portion of their increase to provide at least the basic physical needs of those who are in the service of The Lord. While it may not be a commandment outside of the nation of Israel, the truth the commandment is based on is the same!

Why a tenth? Well, for starters, a tenth makes for a very even and clean cut calculation. A tenth is also a reasonable portion to give for the purpose. It's a small enough amount that it doesn't take too big a chunk out of any given personal increase, yet a large enough amount that it respects God in that it's more than just a drop in the bucket - as the old saying goes. It's also a large enough amount that if only a small number of people give to a particular minister, (I use the term minister not to denote anything specific, but for lack of a more generic term.) that minister will have the same level of income as the average population which is supporting him. The simple example being that if ten people with the same level of income give to support one minister of God, he will have the exact income of all the others. If the ten have varying levels of income, the minister will receive an average of those who support him. He, in turn, can generally afford to have the things those supporting him can afford, as well as dedicate a tenth of his income directly to the physical needs of the ministry itself - and believe me there are needs!

This is exactly why it's good that it only takes ten people tithing to support the minister himself. If there are many more than ten giving into the storehouse, there is an increasing amount of resources which can be used directly for the ministry work. It can pay for things such as the fact more than ten people, or especially ten family groups involved in a particular ministry, may warrant the need for more physical space than just what a particular minister or one of the people in the group may be able to give to the ministry's needs. If we can understand that the standard ministry many would call a traditional church, where there is a "pastor" at the head, is not a law of God and therefore not the only ministry with ministers doing the full-time work of God, we can see there are many other needs besides the idea of having and maintaining a place for meetings. Further, we should understand there is not a requirement that we give only to a traditional church. We can and should give our tithe to those who are called to full-time ministry, who are doing the true work of God. We should do this whether we attend a specific "church" or not!

This is really the intent behind tithing - without

putting to fine a point on it. All ministries and/or ministers will not divide the income in exactly the same way. That being said, all ministers should learn to rightly divide the tithe based on the simple principles we have discussed, in order to accomplish God's work. (Num. 18:25-28) Unfortunately, some do not want to, and a negative example would be that some ministers believe all the tithe which comes into a ministry should go to the minister or ministers in that group, and they expect the people to give offerings for the physical work of the ministry to go forward. This is, at best, a misinterpretation of what tithing is all about; and at the worse end, it's the kind of greed shown by men such as the sons of Eli! (I Sam. 2:12-17)

These facts bring us back to what I was saying earlier when I said it's a get what you pay for world. The principle of tithing combined with the giving of offerings will dictate the ability of any particular ministry. If many people believe in a particular work and give to it, that work will thrive and have great resources to work with. If very few people believe in the work and/or are willing to tithe and give offerings to it, there will be little to work with, right down to the simple fact that any particular minister may have to leave off the work of the ministry in order to work, at least a certain amount of his time, creating an increase of his own to live in this world. This means much ministry work is dictated by the choices of men, and whether a minister is or is not supported by the ministry work they do is not an essay on whether or not they are attempting to do a true work. Jesus warned us not to go off chasing after those who would claim to be what Jesus truly was, because there is a propensity for people to do such things. (Matt. 24:23-28) Paul tells Timothy to make full proof of his ministry, because Paul explains there is coming a time when people will heap to themselves teachers, having itchy ears! (II Tim. 4:1-5) As that happens more and more, less and less of the true ministry can find support, and more and more false teaching is what becomes supported and thus, predominant.

In a time period or in a place where people are more interested in hearing what makes them feel good instead of what is right, there can be any number of false ministers being supported beyond belief while those teaching the truth are working at the local grocery store stocking shelves instead of preaching The Word full time. All this is not to say that if God desires to place a minister in a particular place and time with the resources to do a tremendous, or at least ongoing work, without the support of those around them, God can do just that! However, it is only on specific occasions and for specific reasons God moves in this way. The fact God, in general, simply provides the opportunity and allows the desire of those on this earth to take or not take that opportunity is shown in many ways through both the Old and New Testaments!

In the time period covered by the Old Testament, we see times when even the temple of God was in both good repair and very poor repair due to the care or neglect of those who were to support and care for it. (II Kin. 12:4-12) Jesus speaks about the fact many of God's prophets and messengers have been killed in Jerusalem and throughout the land in general, instead of being accepted and supported. (Matt.

23:29-37) These happenings came about in no small part because the people were supporting and listening to false teachers and practicing downright false religions. In the New Testament itself as well as the history of the time periods following its direct words, we see this kind of thing as well. Especially when it comes to the acceptance or non-acceptance of ministers God sent to preach the gospel. (Acts 7:54-60, 14:19-22, II Cor. 11:30-33, Rev. 1:9) In the book of Revelation, we are even given a visualization of an entire false church system which is not truly of God! "And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon." Revelation 13:11

We can not afford to just give to whatever ministry seems to be having success. In the Old Testament, Abraham had someone he gave tithes to because the man was doing God's work, not because he was necessarily popular. When the Laws of Moses were written down, the children of Israel were required to tithe to a specific people and place through which God said He would do His work among Israel. (Mal. 3:10) In the New Testament, we are told when Jesus ascended He gave gifts among men. (Eph. 4:1-16) These gifts were/are ministers called by God, not just out of the Jewish nation, but out of all nations, who would be called to one of five different full-time ministry focuses! They are not forced upon men with the authority to tell us all what to do. They are not rulers of a new organization which should take the place of God's chosen nation and/or which all men must become a part of in order to see God. These full-time ministers are "gifts." People can choose to utilize and support them, or they can ignore them!

As a Jew, it's true that the Law tells you to tithe into the temple of God, and that Law has not ceased. However, this is much like the laws of sacrifice which many people teach the same false philosophy about God ending the practice with Jesus. The truth is, there are no sacrifices currently for the same reason there were no sacrifices after the temple was destroyed by the Babylonians long before the time of Christ. Because there is no temple to appropriately follow the Law, there is no ability to sacrifice according to the Law. Now, when it comes to the law of sacrifice, it should be easily understood that it's a ceremony meant to represent a truth. If a ceremony which has no real power to save you, but only to teach you, is not done properly, then it has no power or can even have a negative effect. Jesus did not remove the sacrifices, nor is He to be blamed for the unavailability of the temple. As He walked this earth, Jesus wept that the temple and Jerusalem in general would suffer destruction. He did so as He rode triumphantly to Jerusalem from that very mount He will return to someday in order to ultimately defend Jerusalem and His chosen nation from utter destruction! (Luke 19:37-44) Part of His weeping was purely for the people and their suffering. However, part of His weeping was for the fact that because of the choices of men, the world would be without Israel on the land God had promised them. This would mean, for at least a time, there would no longer be a nation teaching the world through the precepts God had given them, in full

operation. This would be a big blow to the work of God being carried out by the nation of Israel and thus, in this world!

Fortunately, tithing is not exactly like sacrificing which must be done at the temple in order to have the proper effect. Tithing is not a precept which can not be held rightly simply because it can not be done in the right place. While tithing for a Jew is ideally something you bind in your hand, and give at the temple in Jerusalem to those ordered in the Law to collect and appropriately distribute it, tithing can still serve the basic purpose it was always intended to serve, even during times when this ability was unavailable. If the temple existed in Jerusalem, I would instruct Jews to give their tithe there without question. To do otherwise would be teaching people to sin. As a part of God's chosen nation, the temple is where your tithe belongs, because when the temple and its service is running, there is no question that is what a Jew should be supporting. This, in reality, is an example of what a great blessing the Law can be in bringing simplicity to a Jewish life. This is a simplicity which those outside the nation of Israel have never had so clear cut. However, without a temple, Jews are left in the same place Abraham and all those before the Law were in, along with all those who have always been outside the Law's direct commandment. I suppose one could argue that without the temple, Jews are not "required" to tithe; but any true believer should have the faith to see tithing as a blessed opportunity to support the true work of God in the world! The direction as to where that means we should give our tithe will come down to the same thing which caused others of the past to make their choices. We must turn to our faith. Even if we currently do not know where to give, we must put our tithe aside, and with prayer, even fasting, we must seek The Lord as to where He wants it to go!

Tithing, as well as the giving of offerings, is an opportunity for us to cultivate God's work in this world; and one of the most telling incidences in the Bible which shows God is primarily working to provide opportunities which we must choose to take advantage of is found in Matthew chapter 10. There Jesus sends His disciples out to preach and do miracles in His name. As Jesus sends them out, He instructs that in any place where they are not welcomed and cared for by at least someone, they are to shake off even the remnant of dirt left on their shoes from that place, for Sodom and Gomorrah will fair better in the judgment than that place will!

Of course, the greatest example of this concept is seen by looking at what Jesus Himself did. The Messiah had come to the earth to offer Himself to the world as the answer to all our problems! Jesus would be spared as a child from being killed by Herod. (Matt. 2:7-23) Jesus would be spared at other points as well. (John 10:22-40) However, when the time came for Jesus to do what He had come to do, He rode triumphantly into Jerusalem being hailed as just what the wise men had come to see so many years before! (John 12:12-16)

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charts together, probably the first thing you will notice is how drastic the life span drop happens after the flood. This is emphasized by no other fact better than to see just how long into world events Noah lived (350 years), which is one of the things that makes such charts of great interest! As one can see, Noah lived long enough that it is likely Abraham knew him. At the very least, we see that Abraham certainly could have met Noah sometime before he left Mesopotamia and been old enough to remember. Certainly, Abraham's father Terah should have known Noah, and it is likely Noah generally stayed in better contact with Shem's family since they remained close to the original settlement area. Another fascinating point we can see on this chart is that Abraham, who is the last person on the chart, did not even outlive Shem, who is the first person on the chart. In fact, Shem's grandson Salah, and his great great grandson Eber, also out lived Abraham!

Doing as we have before, we also need to look again at calendars and calculations here. Thinking back to an earlier part of this study where we talked about Genesis chapter 5 verse 32, which tells us Noah was 500 years old and begat Shem, Ham, and Japheth, one might remember talking about how this was a simple way of saying Noah had these three sons at the time he was 500. Now, not everyone agrees with that interpretation, which is just fine. In fact, when you look at chapter 11 verse 10, it tells us Shem was 100 years old when he begat his son Arphaxad, and Arphaxad's birth was two years after the flood. This would seem not to line up with the 500 years old interpretation. It is true, if you look at it just by math, it's easy to say Noah was 601 when they left the ark, making Shem at least 101. Two years after that Shem would be 103, which does not mesh with verse 10 of chapter 11. However, this is an example of how we can't get real technical with years, because years have not, and still are not, all the same in everyone's eyes. Real life differs from what hard math facts might at first make it seem. You can come closer to putting these verses together if you clarify by saying Noah had his three sons before he left his five hundredth year of life. If Shem was born late in Noah's five hundredth year, it looks like this. When they boarded the ark, and Noah was just in his second month of being 600, Shem would still have been 99. It was the first day of the first month of Noah's six hundredth and first year they opened the ark, (Gen. 8:13-16) which means Shem would have turned 100 just before this. If Shem was almost 101 before Arphaxad was born, you're almost a year from the time they left the ark to the time of Arphaxad's birth. This does not give you two years, but verse 10 is talking about the flood not the aftermath. Thus, it is talking about the actual 40 day and night event, and not the day they left the ark. This means you pretty much have two years. It also gives time for what might be the most important fact, which is to say Arphaxad was certainly not conceived until after they left the ark.

Now, we are not discussing this because it affects anything for there to be a year or two of time on Noah's age from the 500 year mark, pointed out in chapter 5 verse 32, before he had all three sons. Japheth is referred to in chapter 10 verse 21 as being the elder to Shem; and Ham is said in chapter 9 verse 24 to be Noah's "younger," meaning Noah could have been even older before he had Ham. However, we don't know

if any of them were twins or possibly all three triplets. We simply aren't told! In truth, it really wouldn't hurt anything to say Noah's age is approximate, or that Noah was around 500 years old by the time all three of his sons were born. However, we do not have to accept the idea that the Bible's record is being inaccurate just because it is not as technical as some would like. Again, we should always appreciate that things such as time have not always been looked at in the technical ways we do today. There are facts we can and should look at when thinking about these numbers.

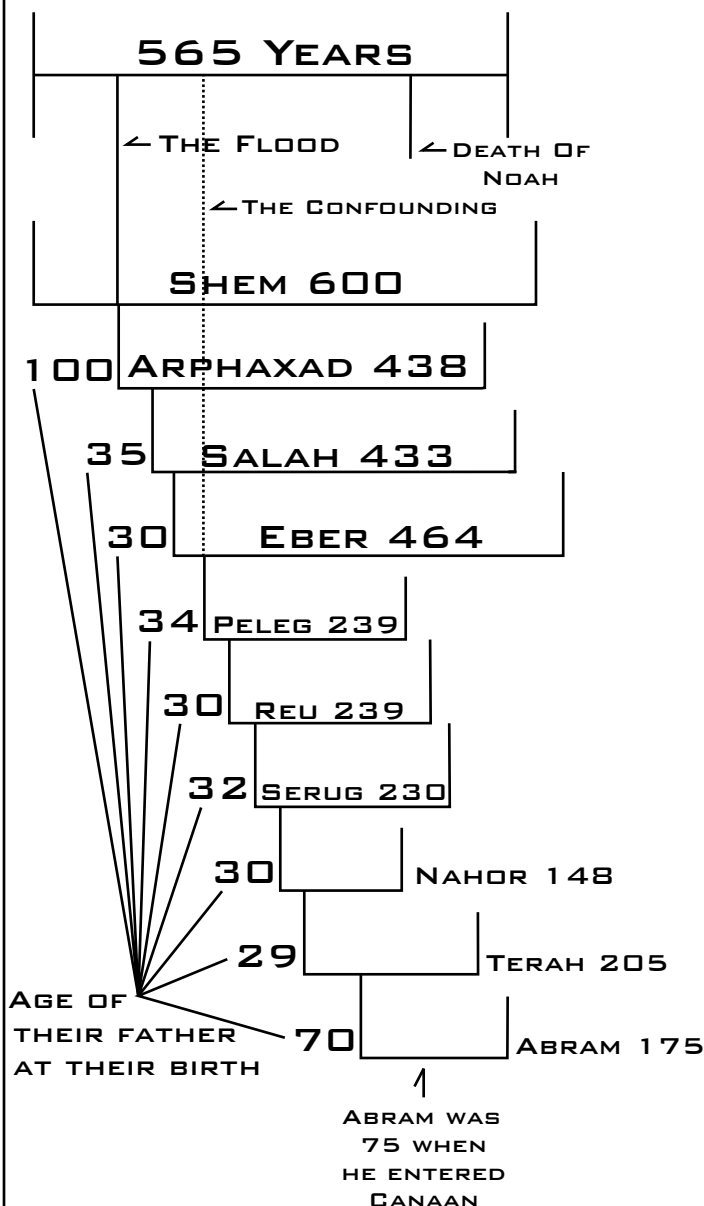
One such issue is the issue we discussed when putting together the events of the flood which are technical right down to numbering of days. One of the reasons this is done is because day and night is the most technical thing we can count, and months are traditionally counted by the moon cycle. However, years are calculated by seasonal passage, which could not be observed while in the ark and the flood waters were covering the planet. Because growing food is everything to physical existence, the calendar in ancient days was more about the seedtime and harvest than about the marking of time with a clock and set calendar. The calendar given to Israel in the Law does not even specify a year end. You really only know when it ends by coming once again to the beginning of a year, which is cued by the harvest of the earliest grains, so the first sheaves can be brought to the temple for Firstfruits! Celebrating things such as birthdays is something we do today, but there is little evidence this was predominately done until the time of the Romans. Thus, we should see the wording here in Genesis about events taking place within certain years as being very organic to the circumstances of the day, much the way many ancient records have been found to refer to the years of some ruler's reign.

The confounding of language has certainly kept all mankind from looking at calendars the same, right to this very day, and there is nothing wrong with that. However, we should appreciate that the Bible was written for us all. What God promises us post-flood is that seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, will not cease as long as He allows the earth to remain; (Gen. 8:21-22) but the seasons laying out just as we know them or even as they knew them before the flood, would not have been their reality coming off the ark. Even knowing how to depend on the seasons after the flood likely took some time. As we have discussed before, it was a brave new world these eight people were walking into! Thus, God made a simple promise so they would not fear they couldn't survive just because things were different. The truth of the matter is that these eight people, by their knowledge, had rode in the ark for about the time of one seasonal rotation, and this is what the Bible tells us is true. However, by no calculation should we believe one can say Arphaxad being born 2 years after the flood means there has to be exactly 24 months, especially as we know them, from any point in the flood's sequence to the day Arphaxad was born. If God wanted us to know such specific information, He would have given it, just as He did in laying out the flood itself! The important information is that Arphaxad was born after the flood. He was born in that next true seasonal rotation after they left the ark, showing us life, once again, moved on in a very natural way!

Going down to the end of the chart, you will notice that it puts Abraham's father's age at 70 years old when he had Abraham. This is simple when looking at Genesis chapter 11 verse 26, but when put with some other facts given in other places, it seems more complex, if not just dead wrong. Some will say Terah was 130 years old when Abraham was born; but this, like most of what we have covered in this segment, is again being constrained by mathematics or other facts we believe we "know," and not looking at all the facts the Word is trying to show us by putting things the way it does. Thus, we will begin our next segment by looking at this very debated issue and the significant information it actually shows us about Abraham becoming the father of God's chosen people!

Until next time, Shalom!

GENESIS CHAPTER 11



What About Tithing? continued from pg. 10

Not many days after this, Jesus would be arrested as if He were a criminal. On the night Jesus was arrested, it was not because they tracked Him down in a city outside of Jerusalem. That night, Jesus stayed and prayed out in the open, in the Garden of Gethsemane. (Matt. 26:36-39) Those who sought Him also knew where to find Him because one of His own disciples betrayed Him. (John 18:1-3) After Jesus was arrested and questioned by the religious authorities of the day, the secular authority was given a chance to choose what they would do with Him! (John 18:12-32) In the end, all these powers refused to support Jesus, or even protect an innocent man's life. When given a choice, the great crowds in Jerusalem that day democratically elected that Jesus be crucified! (Matt. 27:15-26) Even after so much love and miracle working power had been shown by Him, there was much anger able to be turned against Him. Thus, Jesus died on a cross, on a hill just outside the city of Jerusalem, and even the plaque which told the crime for which He was being crucified said it was because He was a king of and for those who were known to be the people of God!

No, this is not as some claim: a stain on the nation of Israel. It's a stain on sinful men everywhere across this world whether Jew or non-Jew! The world was given an opportunity like never before, and not only did they refuse to take it, they did what they could to destroy it. Yes, there were those who, if they had had their way, would have fought to the last man to see this not happen to Jesus! However, they were told that was not the way this was going to go down; (John 18:10-11) and Jesus instructs us all to take up our cross to follow after Him. (Matt. 16:24-27) Jesus was not just here to offer Himself for those who would support Him, but to the entire world. What the world as a whole chose to do would be His fate because God is not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance. Jesus did exactly what Abraham so many centuries ago understood and told his son Isaac God would do. Jesus willingly gave His life as the ultimate offering and sacrifice which we cannot afford to give! (Isa. 53, Rom. 8:1-4)

As we each think about the question of what tithing and offering is, whether it is required of us or not, and where we should give it, we should keep in mind the simplest things. If you are blessed enough to be dealing with honest people, this world is, at best, a get what you pay for place; but in spite of the fact we did not deserve it, God was willing to give it all to show us there is a plan and a place where sin will never be able to touch us again! This is why the words we find in the New Testament about what we should understand when it comes to true giving are, once more, those of Paul, and we find them in Romans 12:1, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service."

May we each seek to give of ourselves to those around us as God gives us the opportunity!

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