



Shaqah

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"Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ."

Colossians 2:8

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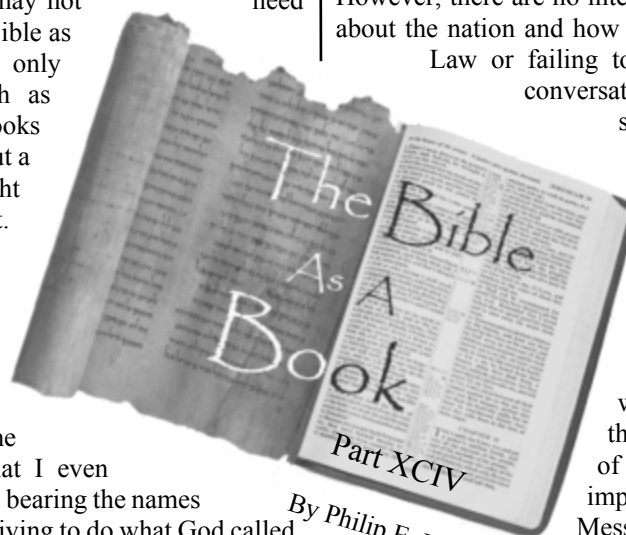
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Our last segment ended our overview of the Book of Ruth and with it our overall look at that book. As I pointed out a couple of times during the overview, we spent far more time on this one because there is just so much in the book that is applicable to our individual lives directly. That is not to say this is not true of the entire Bible, but the Book of Ruth is a very unique book. It's not about the overall way God created us to live and as such God's interactions with us as humanity. It's not so specifically about God's establishment and dealings with the chosen nation or prophecy as so many of the more "stand alone" books are. I know to say stand alone in that last sentence is to make it seem certain books may not need their connection to the rest of the Bible as whole so let me just say, I'm only referring to the fact books such as Genesis are so far reaching and books like Exodus are so specifically about a storyline such as how God brought His chosen nation out of Egypt. Saying that actually brings us to one debate about something I said in our last segment that I also want to clarify for anyone it might have struck, and that's the statement about Ruth being the only book that's totally about the people in the story. In saying that I even pointed out other books of the Bible bearing the names of a person are about that person striving to do what God called them to do. While those books are about the person and maybe some surrounding individuals specific to the story, the real point of the book is to preserve the prophecy as much as the historical events.

That said, one book other than the Book of Ruth that could be argued is just about the story of the people, is the Book of Job. The Book of Job is truly a book about the life of Job and it's true the book is there to show us an amazing story about a man who lived in such great faith he overcame an incredible personal tribulation. However, Job is a book that begins with a short narrative about Job's life and then turns directly to a conversation between God Himself and Satan. While the bulk of the book is by far about how Job was able to handle what Satan was allowed to put on him, the book is just as much about

seeing this conversing of God and Satan. It's like a book that gives a great example of a man of faith while also giving us a small window through which to see the workings of what, for lack of a better term, I'll call heaven. The book also gives us very little in the way of passage of time. The Book of Ruth follows the life of Naomi who has a family, then loses that family and regains a family. As we talked about last time, the book is named for Ruth because without her there would be no story, but the person whose life is followed from beginning to end is Naomi. There is a lot to talk about when it comes to the Law of Moses in the Book of Ruth, and no doubt we did. However, there are no interactions that give us a larger picture about the nation and how they as a whole were following the Law or failing to. There surprisingly are no direct conversations with God and a person in this story. That doesn't mean there were not prayers prayed but we don't see any kind of conversation between God and a human like we clearly see at the end of the Book of Job.

All this is why I say the Book of Ruth is unique in that there was no other motives for including the book than to show how individuals of faith became a part of the all important line through which The Messiah would be born. Some would say included more for the sake of documenting the family line of King David, and while that is likely the reason the Jewish mind saw the book as something to preserve and include in the cannon of Scripture, this is another one of those times God is using man's thinking to accomplish His greater will. I have talked about it many times when discussing the Law of Moses but it bears repeating here. The chosen nation was given so much of the Law, and very specifically the feasts, as a way to remember things that were part of their heritage; their story as a nation. The Law is full of commandments put there to build the kind of habits God wanted to see and use a nation of people to show. The Law was meant to build a specific culture in Israel that would differ from all other cultures of the world, and I'll point out with emphasis here that was to be true even if another nation or large group of



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people chose to watch, listen, learn, and follow what the Law was meant to teach! I say that with emphasis because it is the point people who call themselves Christians but who do not follow the standard catholic doctrine often find themselves tripped up by. The concept that the Christian religion is wrong is often packaged with the thought that the why is due to the religion not following the stipulates given in the Law of Moses.

As a teacher this is an exhausting battle to fight, but here we come to a point that maybe helps it make more sense. In direct light of what we're talking about, the true church should look like what I described above. People who watch, listen, learn, and put in action the truths the Law is meant to show aren't going to look exactly like the Jews. Such people are not going to be a people given a specific land to live on. God might bless a large group of true believers with land to live on but it won't go throughout history as their "promised land," especially enduring generations even when the group might fail to be the people of faith God wants them to be. No matter how large a group of true believers became they were never going to have a temple of their own to sacrifice according to the Law, and even talking about it is silly because that would require a specific commandment of God as to where that temple should be just as it was with the chosen nation and the city of Jerusalem. Now, I'm just trying to hit the high points here but we could walk step by step through the Law and point out all the things people not of the chosen nation were not commanded to follow and, in fact, would be impossible for them to follow correctly. Thus, the Law or odds and ends pieces of it cannot be required in order to be a Christian and/or saved! The counter high point I always hit on in these discussions is that what is called kosher eating is not required but the fact it can be done in some form is why so many who believe the Law is necessary for people outside the chosen nation latch on to it!

The Law illustrates so much and even the chosen nation who was commanded to follow it didn't get that point on so many levels and ways. The fact it's meant to illustrate truths of God and His ways is why God created a chosen nation and commanded them to follow it, but the illustration is not the truth of what it's trying to teach! God used a set of commandments and stipulations to build a culture the chosen nation would (whether in a great way or not so great way) see as their heritage and traditions. This was with the hope they would follow it even if they did not believe in the truths they were showing and prophesying about themselves. Passover is the best illustration for what we're talking about and the only reason it's not a better example than it is, is because the Christian religion has attempted to remove Passover from the minds of Christians and replace it with a "new" holiday they call Easter. If that was not so prominent, Passover would be observed by non-Jewish Christians as a feast that prophesied of the death of The Messiah. Even if they didn't do anything specific for that point they would certainly observe the Feast of Firstfruits as the day to celebrate the resurrection of The Messiah!

As it stands, most people who call themselves Christians don't really know what Passover and Firstfruits are. Why is this true? Again, because the Christian religion chose to turn completely away from the Law God gave us all to see and which we read in our Bibles. Instead, they direct us to a

celebration of the spring equinox which pagans the world over have celebrated since at least the Tower of Babel. They then overlaid that celebration of the creation instead of the Creator with Christian sounding ideas. (Rom. 1:24-25) Because it's traditionally the celebration of new life in the springtime they overlaid it with the story Firstfruits was established in the Law to prophesy about. They also add to it a pseudo version of Passover by always putting Easter on a Sunday and calling the proceeding Friday, "Good Friday." So I say all that to get one to think, what would have happened if there had not be a religion called "Christian" pushing such things and true believers had went straight into the Bible Itself for how and when to celebrate the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ? The logical answer is that the church would have seen very clearly Jesus die on a Friday but the more important point that even the religion doesn't try to totally deny is the fact that Friday was Passover! Further, Christians would see Jesus was in the grave (as the human mind sees it) on the Sabbath and that Sabbath was the first day of The Feast of Unleavened Bread. Lastly, they'd see Jesus did rise on a Sunday but more importantly in that year the day was The Feast of Firstfruits!

So yes, Christians would get their guidance as to how to celebrate the death, burial, and resurrection of The Messiah directly from the Law. However, the Law says that to partake in Passover a person specifically needed to become part of the chosen nation. (Ex. 12:43-50) This isn't saying the entire world needed to become part of the chosen nation to be in the right and on their way to heaven; this was just to say, if you're going to partake in Passover and thus the rest of the feasts, one needs to be fully committed to the Law in the way the chosen nation promised before God they and their generations to come would be! (Ex. 24:3-8) God has never been about stifling and certainly not erasing the diversity He Himself built into the human race. So again, asking everyone to become part of the chosen nation would make no sense. Simply put, Christians who were non-Jewish would not have observed Passover in the same way Jews do. For starters, Christians, whether Jew or non-Jew, would see Passover more for what it prophesied, meaning the emphasis would be on the fact those events have been fulfilled by Christ. On the other hand, those Jews who did not accept Jesus as The Messiah would still see Passover as purely the historical observance important to their heritage it has always been.

This is the point I'm driving at! Jews would and will always have the historical and cultural reason to follow the Law and observe things like the feasts God put on their calendar. Before Christ, people not of the chosen nation had a chance to see what a lot of these things were prophesying about, and after the first appearing of The Messiah, not a whole lot has changed other than the fact we now know who The Messiah was/is. We now can put all the details the Law was trying to prophesy about in these first three feasts of the year into sharper focus, and in doing so help solidify our belief in the fact Jesus was The Messiah no matter how many Jews do/did or don't/didn't believe it. This fact alone was always going to separate the general world's populations that chose to believe upon Jesus from those of the chosen nation who want to hold strictly to these feasts having as yet, nothing but their historical remembrances to celebrate. As different as various people around the globe might choose to celebrate the gift of The Messiah, we would all still be

Following the Biblical Stream:

By Philip E. Busby

In our last segment we talked about how Isaac went out from the Philistines to live on the promised land as God wanted him too. We specifically got into the fact God blessed Isaac with all the great things pagan thinking tell us people should get if they really are a servant of God. However, we discussed the reason God was able to use Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in this way was due to the fact such things didn't trip them up in the ways it does so many people because they had the mind a true believer should have. God will use true believers to speak to the pagan minds of this world but that does not mean we should interpret the stories of God doing such things as meaning God works the way the pagan mind thinks a god should work. As the segment went on we got to talking about how God was able to make this one family who would begin the chosen nation equal to what passed for a nation of people during that time. God did this by giving Isaac great blessings of possessions, and that brought us to talk about the land itself and the fact God was emphasizing how much this land would be used for the chosen nation and God's purposes overall. All that brought us through Genesis chapter 26 verse 14, and we are ready to begin verse 15 this time.

Verse 15 continues the thought we talked about in verse 14, and that's the fact the Philistines were a nation of people yet they envied the household of Isaac. This is why we spent so much time on this in our last segment. It's another one of those small points we might not stop to consider as much as we should and that has ramifications to how we see things moving forward as well as that pagan mind issue we discussed. The Philistines were not a sizable people like we would think of being a nation today but they were a people; meaning more than just a family. Isaac was truly just a family yet God had blessed him with so much it would seem he had more than all the Philistine people combined. This is why at the end of verse 16 we are told the Philistine king told Isaac to go out from them because Isaac was mightier than they were, and we'll circle back to that in a little bit here. Verse 15 is where another fact in this situation is shown that has to do with the Philistines being jealous of what Isaac had. The Philistines had actually gone to the effort of filling in the wells Abraham's servants had dug. The verse specifies that they had filled the wells with "earth," meaning just dirt. Some might be wondering why the Philistines would use dirt instead of rocks or something more substantial to keep the wells from being easily opened back up and the answer lies in the the jealousy issue.

In truth the answer is twofold. Overall, the Philistines wanted to discourage Isaac from using the pasture land where these wells existed. Abraham and the Philistines had many conflicts between their herdsmen and that finally came to a head when the Philistine king wanted a sit-down meeting directly with Abraham. (Gen. 21:22-32) As we discussed, the general agreement that came out of that meeting was that the two parties should treat each other with respect, but now we see

the Philistines didn't honor that. Abraham was dead and whether we are talking about a new generation of king or not among the Philistines, they decided they were going to do what they could to keep Isaac from using these pastures, once again. Thus, they filled the wells with earth and not something like stones because filling the wells with stones might make it more obvious as to where the wells had been. You'd be amazed at how well people keep details in their minds when they're good at their jobs, especially when that job is what we'd call a trade. True master carpenters just by instinct use tricks of the trade when building something most of us would have no clue how to build. Even if we could build the thing we'd never do it as well and probably not as fast in most cases without making a total mess out of the project. This type of thing can be said of so many tradesmen. When you do a job all the time there are just things you learn and instincts you develop that become second nature to you but to other people can seem amazing.

This would have been the case with Abraham and Isaac's herdsmen. We might think it hard to find these wells even if they were marked with a big sign pointing out where they were but knowing the location of these wells was critical to maintaining the flocks for the herdsman. It would be my guess many of them could have taken you to within close proximity of any one of these wells blindfolded. The Philistines knew this very well and that meant if they filled these wells with stones and covered only the top of the well with dirt, Isaac's herdsmen could easily find the general location of the well and with a little digging around easily identify the exact spot the well had been. While it would be work, all they'd have to do is dig down next to the spot where the well had been and easily hit even a small aquifer or underground stream the original well had tapped. If they had filled the wells with rocks the Philistines would be admitting there had been a well there. By filling the original well with dirt it made it harder to tell the exact spot it was in and while the herdsmen might still not find it too hard to dig a new well and hit water, any such well would seem to be truly a new well that there was no evidence had existed prior to them digging it.

The second reason the Philistines didn't want to fill the wells with stones or the like is because they were not just attempting to discourage Isaac's herdsmen from using the pastures out of vengeance. No, the Philistines wanted Isaac and his household to become so discouraged with the fight Isaac would decide to pull up stakes and move his entire household to a totally new location. The Philistines wanted this to happen because they wanted the land for themselves. If they could accomplish this the Philistines would then desire to dig wells of their own and they didn't want the wells Abraham's herdsmen had dug to be in the way of them using the land for what they wanted. The Philistines would likely use the land mostly for pasture as Abraham and Isaac had done but being a group of people things like housing and farm land were also

considerations. Again, they didn't want all these spots where wells had been unnaturally filled with stones to admit this land had already been used by someone else. This was important because if the Philistines had been a large enough group to use all the land at that time there would have been an even bigger conflict between them and Isaac. The fact they were not large enough by that point meant attempting to get Isaac out of the area was more about making sure his family didn't claim the land and it would be open for the Philistines to use as they pleased as time passed.

In short, they wanted to erase the fact Abraham and Isaac had lived in the area at all! In some ways this behavior is what today we might call passive aggressive. They didn't want to go to war with Isaac, they just wanted him to see it in his best interest to find a new region to call home. This brings us solidly to verse 16 where we are told the Philistine king tells Isaac to go out from them. The king admits to the reason he wanted Isaac to go and it's based on Isaac being mightier than the Philistines. The Philistines knew they couldn't just directly attack Isaac or Isaac might destroy them completely. There should be little doubt in the reader's mind that God would have given Isaac the victory in such a thing because again, God was showing people like the Philistines that this land now belonged to Abraham's family whether anyone liked it or not. That fact is why we came all the way up to talking about our day and age in our last segment. The ones who have eyes to see and ears to hear what God is saying in His Word will be clear; none of the arguments against God's chosen nation possessing the promised land matter. It didn't matter in the time of Abraham and Isaac. It didn't matter at the time God brought Israel out of Egypt and it certainly does not matter now that God is gathering His nation more fully back to the land! (Amos 9:15)

We can go on all we want about God being a God of love because He most certainly is. However, being a loving God has to do with giving people a chance, not about allowing people to stand in the way of His plan. This is why we talked some in our last segment about how when Israel came out of Egypt if they had entered the promised land at the south end as God originally intended, the people there might not have been happy but it would have been no more than should have been expected! As large a household as Abraham, Isaac and eventually Jacob had, it should have been clear to any inhabitants of the region this family had once possessed this land. While there would have been a gap between the time Jacob's family went down to Egypt and the time God brought Israel back to the land, the memory and information would have easily remained that this was a family of people you don't want to stand in the way of having this land unless you want to get run over. This is clearly what God is showing the all important Philistines at the time we're talking about in this story. The king wanted Isaac to leave the region so they could have it to themselves because he knew they couldn't face Isaac's house in battle. They attempted to discourage Isaac from staying by stopping up wells and causing who knows what other trouble for Isaac but none of it was going to work. Isaac had been told by God to remain on this land and remain is what he would do!

With that we move to verse 17 where we are told Isaac

moved out from the Philistines but not like they hoped. By no means did Isaac leave the area much less the region. Verse 17 tells us Isaac didn't even go away far enough to see a name change. When we start chapter 26 we are told Isaac goes to Gerar because there was a famine in the land and he did this to have access to the trade routes and merchants coming from other places with food to sell. Instead of the Philistines absorbing Isaac's house, they found themselves being in danger of being absorbed by Isaac's. This wasn't the plan of God to have happen, and we know this because if it had been God's plan it would have happened. The fact Isaac did not meld into them and they couldn't find a way to make him do it is why the Philistines wanted Isaac to leave. Isaac would leave Gerar, as in the city or settlement known as Gerar, but only to go into the valley of Gerar! This is an amazing move of defiance on Isaac's part. A king tells him to leave from among his people and Isaac moved directly down into the most lucrative lands for flocks, herds, and farming that there was in the immediate area. I use the word "defiance" to describe Isaac's actions, not because Isaac necessarily had any thoughts of defiance in his mind when he did this, but to point out how it must have looked to the Philistines.

No matter the specifics of Isaac's thoughts or those of any men or women of his household, Isaac was simply doing as God told him to and to be blunt, God had told Isaac to hold his ground. The dispute between his house and the Philistines had existed since the days of Isaac's father, and Isaac going to live in Gerar for a time did nothing to improve that. Thus, standing his ground is really what Isaac was asked to do by God telling him to live on this land. Standing his ground is certainly what Isaac's actions are described as doing in going to the valley of the immediate area, and verse 18 furthers that truth. Verse 18 says in spite of the Philistines' actions to discourage him by filling the wells, Isaac goes out and digs every last one of them again. Not only that, Isaac doesn't call them by names he comes up with. Isaac names the wells what his father had called them. This was not just an act of defiance or a way to anger the Philistines but, again, the truth people in this south end of Canaan should have no question this family was here to stay! If Isaac had named the wells something new it could be said he just went out in the valley and made a life for himself as anyone might do. The Philistines had seemingly erased the fact Abraham had lived there.

Such a thing would have been like a reset to the time period this family had lived in this region. It would have lessened the impact of Abraham's life and accomplishments. Isaac made sure that did not happen. He went right to where each of those wells his father dug had been and opened them up again. He called them by the same names to emphasize how much these were not new wells but the very same wells his father had dug and by doing so had laid claim to this land! To our modern minds of contracts and government control over most everything this might not seem like a big deal, but even pioneers of the American west could clearly see and explain to you just how significant such an action was! Traditionally laying claim to territory was not just about planting your flag and saying this is mine. It was about putting in the work to say, this land is mine by virtue of the fact I'm the one who has changed it from being wild, to a clearly utilized by man space.

What About God's Chosen People?

Part LXVIII

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."

As we continue our look at the history that shows us how the Roman Empire came to be looked at as a Christian empire, we strayed away from our stricter look at the historical timeline of events last time. We did this to talk more about why this subject of the Roman Empire coming to be "Christian" is important to a study about the chosen nation and maybe more generally about God's chosen people. Last segment actually looked a lot at why and how there are God's chosen people on this earth as it discussed the idea people who think they stand in a special place with God can often believe God's power can be harnessed for their purposes. On the surface I think we're all pretty clear on the general idea that's not how God works, but we still find ourselves easily believing certain ideas that have to be based on the concept we can do this on at least some level. These are things like the simple ideas people have that God is obligated to provide different things for them because we are "Christians." It doesn't have to be a full-blown prosperity belief to think such things, and for some people it's not even that clear in their minds. A lot of times such thoughts come out when we feel God has let us down somewhere along the line. Usually at a specific time or in a specific situation. We end up asking, where was God when I was facing this or struggling with that?

We can fill in the blanks with a lot of different things in such questions but it all boils down to the same foundational thought. We believe we live in a special place to receive the blessings we want or that we believe are reasonably expected to be included in serving God if He really is a God of love. This kind of thinking comes from a basic misunderstanding people continue to have no matter what God has done to turn us to the truth that we are saved by faith and faith is a relationship with God. Living in faith means how our lives progress through time is totally about what the God Who created us wants for us but it comes with the exception we don't always allow Him the control in our lives He needs to do His perfect will. In truth, most of us fail to give God the control He needs most of the time! This doesn't mean everything that goes "wrong" is our fault, but if it is God's "fault" it's because the thing we see as being wrong has a point and a purpose for happening. We have trouble with the concept that faith means we can truly walk with God and trust Him in ways we can never trust our fellow humans. He does not leave us, He does not fail us, but we very often fail Him. When God created us in the state we find the first two humans living in, it wasn't so much total innocence, though that is one simplistic way to look at it. However, the correct way to see it is that humans began on the other side of the fence so to speak. Instead of being responsible for most everything, we were responsible for very little.

This state allowed humans the freedom to live and explore and grow in marvelous ways. We can't even grasp all the benefits of that state because humans post taking the knowledge of good and evil never got the chance to live in it. However, the bottom line is that there was very little Adam and Eve could do to be in the way of God doing the things needed to guide their lives. Taking of the fruit He told them not to turned all that around! Now we have a constant struggle to stay out of the way so God can guide and grow our lives, and that's just speaking of those of us who even care to make that choice to begin with. That's another complication and it's a lot of what we've been talking about in this series. A great many people don't even desire to try to walk in faith! This adds to us getting in the way of God's work in and for our lives. We live in a world filled with people who choose, yes choose, not to seek God and His ways. The difficulty of this is not just in the ways such people make a walk in faith cumbersome for those who do try, it's in the way we as believers allow them to affect us. How often do we get swept up in the way the world says we should live and never even seek God in how we should be living? This goes for both major and minor ways we choose to go about things. At the core of it all we don't really believe God has the power to make a way where there seems to be no way. Thus, we grab back control most of the time; that is, if we ever let go of it to begin with.

This basic idea directly relates to why this series goes into all it goes into. You see, it's not just how we allow the everyday people around us to affect us but the way they (we to be more exact) have allowed history to dictate our total way of life and we don't even see it! When we talk about something like the Greek Empire, we're not just talking about historical events of long, long ago. We're talking about the way the resuscitation of the beast shown to us in Revelation came to enough power to guide our religious thoughts. No, we are not all Greek but Greek philosophy, as we call it, is woven through the fabric of what holds our world, our societies, together. Some would say that might be true of Western culture but it's not true of the entire world, but that's when we have to realize how close the Tower of Babel brought us all to believing the same things in the first place. In any given culture there are what might most appropriately be called "purists" who would be glad to lay out for you the way "Western thought" has "corrupted" the more pure beliefs of the culture. They will tell you how the old ways are being lost or have already been lost, especially in the younger generation. This has a lot to do with the fact our world increasingly becomes more interconnected and the more interconnected it becomes the easier it is for a common philosophy to take hold of every corner of our world.

Again, I'll stress this has nothing to do with judging whether the effect is for the good or for the worse in each culture but it does show the truth about how attractive Greek

thinking was and why it came to drive the cultures it touched. It also shows how much the concept of the Tower of Babel was and is loved. If we all pull together then happy we'll be! In a nutshell that's what we're constantly talking about. To fight against such a thought or even say what I'm saying here can easily be looked down on because it seems cold and uncaring. More than one great culture in the world has built its existence on the basic thought that their system can work if everyone would just get on board and help push it forward! The reason what we call "political correctness" has any power is because you can say almost anything is right or wrong no matter what the truth is and if enough people will at least go along with it, it can push almost everyone into submission because one man can't stand against a tide that large. If enough people hold the line instead of speaking up, it only takes a generation or two before the idea things were any other way begins to be totally lost. Newer generations just see it as, this is always how it's been no matter what has actually shifted or changed due to it.

This is the entire reason Christianity could so easily be grabbed hold of by the religious forces Satan loves to wield and man so desires for the ease it seems to bring and totally redefine what it means to be Christian! An unshakable truth gets lost behind the noise of a more popular belief system, and the more people latch onto that more popular system the more the truth begins to feel like the lie even for the handful who still are able to find it! This is the system true believers find themselves in. A world where the truth has been so lost it feels like there is no longer any examples of it to follow, and in many ways/times this can literally be true. This is just another item on the list of why faith has to be the only mode of salvation; why it's always been true and always will be truth. Pure faith is what got Noah to build an ark that to everyone else made no sense to build. Pure faith is why he gathered the animals and supplies and got on that ark before a drop of water ever fell from the sky or any evidence of any kind of coming catastrophe existed! The more we live in a world that believes in things contrary to the ways of God the more this is true for any and all true believers. Being able to hear God say, do this instead of that in spite of what we see around us, is the only way we're going to get anything right.

This amazingly stands true even in a world where God has placed His Written Word for us to find; a world where there was established a chosen nation of people to be sure that Word never got lost. The tools God has given us and the things God has established in this world to help us see the truth even without faith are getting harder to find and/or understand because Satan, along with evil men, work every day to obscure and redefine in our minds what they know they cannot totally destroy. The result ends up being the same as what happened in the days of Noah. People lose what it is to have the truth guiding their lives, and this happens most easily on a society level of living. This is why yes, the Greek Empire and what it was is important to use today as believers in God. It's why seeing what the Romans gave us is important to us today. The Bible, largely the Hebrew Bible that Christians call the Old Testament, tells us the tale of how God took a specific group of people and created with them a specific culture using His Own Words. It tells how even that nation had trouble believing in the system God gave them and they struggled to uphold that culture in light of worldly things that were more appealing to the flesh. We are

told how by the time The Messiah appeared among them, they had skewed the truth so badly the very leaders of the system they held and which was suppose to be the system God gave them, were the most vocal and demanding The Messiah be disposed of.

How does such a thing happen? When we study what happened in history we find the clues to answering that question. How do we come to the conclusion history can be helpful? Because God's Word shows us how a people with a specifically from God designed system almost never saw the benefits of that system to the point the end of the Hebrew Bible is about as far away from, "...and they lived happily ever after." as you can get! The same dynamics that were at work in the chosen nation are the same dynamics that are at work in the world at large. The Bible isn't hard to understand, we just need to see It in that light; from that perspective. We start at the beginning and read to the end, and when we raise our noses out of the pages we see the same things happening right in front of us. People believing they, not God, should define our way of life; even if they claim to be people who follow God. This is why it's so important we understand what we're seeing when we get to what is called the New Testament. The religious leaders had so bought into the idea man, not God, should define how even a nation established for the purposes of God should live, they killed God in the flesh. A man who was the perfect example of what the Law was trying to make every individual of the nation was deemed to be so in violation of what they had defined the Law of God to mean, that Man was condemned to death!

If that doesn't stand as the example of how the society we live in pushes us and buffets us and affects us to the point we don't even recognize the true ways of God, I don't know what could! Thus, stepping out and living in faith will put you in harms way. To believe you can live as God asks us to live, not as the religion that calls itself Christian tells us to live, but the actual way faith guides you to live and not have bad things come at you is to be stupendously ignorant of how this world works and what the Bible is telling us. What we are studying is exactly why that's true and growing truer every day. It is exactly the why and the how we are marching our way back to it being as it was in the days of Noah in spite of all God has put in man's way to keep it from happening again. God can and will protect us in the ways and at the times He deems beneficial to our lives and the lives of those we touch, but He won't force us to need that protection nor will He keep us from choosing to step out from it when we decide to. That in and of itself is enough to get us killed, one would think, but then that's the reason God does not want true believers to have to tolerate this forever. It's why He took, not just believers in Him, but all humans away from the Tree of Life. It's why He's allowed things to degrade as they have in this world.

As we've discussed at other times, God already said He wouldn't continue to destroy this world for man's sake as He did when He sent the flood of Noah's day. That option is off the table. God has and will step in and do things to correct our course, but this all will end one day. God won't completely wipe the world clean over and over. Once was enough and the next time it becomes absolutely necessary will be the end of all of

this for eternity! All of man's foolishness, pride, and determination to have his own way will be brought to an end. This is what made the question the Sadducees asked Jesus so ridiculous. (Mark 12:18-27) In the Resurrection (in other words among those God chooses to save of this creation we all live in now) there will be no marriage and giving in marriage. There will be no need for it because there will no longer be children born. There will be no family structure needed among a people who raise no children and have no reason to worry about people choosing to be contrary to each other in any way. This means there will be no need for a government structure that God will allow to carry the sword. (Rom. 13:1-8) From the small to the great, no more will one man have any reason to rule in any way over another, and the fact each individual there is living first and foremost before the God Who created them will be as clear as clear can be.

In what God has prepared for eternal survival faith will be what we take with us from the here and now. This is why I constantly point out, we seek the way of salvation way too much! We make salvation our god instead of God Himself. Most all of us want to be part of what goes on to a "better place," but we don't want to live the why God is preparing a place for us to live. We all want heaven of some kind but many of us don't want the purpose heaven exists to provide. God and learning the purity of His ways is what we must desire and seek or there simply is no reason for us to go into an eternity where that's all that remains. That's the truth that is hidden behind what calls itself Christian. That's the reality religion doesn't want to tell you. Why? Because men know why the man went away sad from Jesus in Luke chapter 18. They also know why it scared the children of Israel to stand at the base of Mount Sinai and hear God's voice directly. (Ex. 20:18-21) Religion is based on the same reason the people told Moses, "You go up and talk to God for us!" As for standing in the direct presence of God, they were convinced that was something they couldn't do in any kind of long-term way or they'd all end up dead! When Moses took this to God, God said they had spoken correctly. In spite of being the people specifically chosen to be God's nation and hold His oracles, there was few to none of who wanted to actually stand before the presence of God.

Think about it; chew on it and see what it tells you! Many are called but few are chosen because few want what God is really offering. (Matt. 22:14) If it was so obviously true of the people God specifically chose to be His nation, set apart for His purposes, how much is it true of the average individual living in this world? Of course, the only real question is, how true is it for you? The pagan religion that calls itself Christian tries to teach people how to appease an angry god which is really just a way to deny The One True God is Who we will all have to directly stand before for judgment one day. Don't be fooled, appeasing an angry god doesn't have to be some arduous and hard thing. This is what makes what calls itself Christian so appealing. Say a sinner's prayer and you're saved. God is obligated to save you because acknowledging Him, specifically Jesus as God, is what He asks for. We do that and He is obligated to take us to heaven. Maybe it's not that simple but as much as the religion can make it seem true, they're going to! There is no doubt, God is merciful beyond comprehension but that doesn't change the fact standing before Him directly, living with Him for eternity is what we

have to be willing and wanting to do, and most of us just don't want that at all!

Living here as a man Jesus had many disciples and countless thousands received their healing or other miracle they wanted, but what then? They just walked away. People were drawn to Jesus for what He could give them but there should have been so many drawn to Him just because He was Who He was that the religious leaders wouldn't have been just afraid of the people in arresting Jesus, it simply shouldn't have been possible, especially without the Roman army itself backing them. If we as humans wanted to stand in the presence of God, Jesus was the opportunity of more than a lifetime! The crowds that followed Jesus daily should have just grown and grown to the point it could easily be said Jesus was the King of at least a small nation. From there it should have continued to grow until Jesus was undeniably the King of a very large nation! This is where the anti-semitism of talking about the Jews being responsible for Jesus' death turns to be the four fingers pointing back at you. If that had happened the Romans wouldn't have needed the Jewish religious leaders to arrest Jesus and accuse Him of leading an insurrection. The Romans would have seen it as being that all on their own.

Now, the fact Jesus will take this world by force is why we will see this kind of gathering to Him when He returns to this earth! Many of the chosen nation will join Him because He will come like the Jews have been looking for The Messiah to come since the days of the Babylonian captivity, if not before. Some will come to Jesus simply because they fear Him and want it to be clear they are willing to yield. I say that not just of the Jews but of the non-Jewish populations as well. Many will come to Jesus for many reasons, but the fact He will need a large group of people sold out to being before Him and totally with Him is why the first Resurrection will take place at the time of His return. All those who have ever truly desired to stand before God, to walk with Him in faith, who have ever lived from creation up to that very moment He comes will be given the eternal form Jesus demonstrated God is capable of granting us. They will never face death again and for as long as God deems it valuable to maintain His kingdom on this earth, these will never fail to be with Him and on His side. Without the resurrection, having a large group backing Jesus continually would not be possible in any and all generations until the end of this world. Jesus' first appearing proves humans, even those slated with the task of looking specifically for His coming, will recognize Him and follow Him as God in any great numbers but only as fair weather friends. This is one of the most important and saddest facts the Bible shows us and most never even grasp it! Without forcing people to serve Him, God simply cannot depend on a great enough number of people following Him in the sold-out way He will need to govern this earth as a perfect man living on this earth. This is why there will be a first Resurrection!

Fact after fact in what the Word of God tells us has happened and will happen screams how few of us want faith no matter how many show they want heaven. History confirms this fact and shows the lengths men will go to in their attempt to hide from the truth God is what we need. History shows us the lengths men go to in an attempt to keep others from seeing their

need for God. This is not just the current world we live in, it's the world we as humans have been building for so very long. We believe what was believed at the Tower of Babel. We believe if enough of us are determined to have what we want and fight for what we want, God will have no choice but to give it to us. This was the real reason the religious leaders of Jesus' day did what they did. I've said it before, I'll say it again, it's not that they didn't recognize Jesus as The Messiah, it's that He wasn't The Messiah they wanted! It seems downright ridiculous to think people could believe they'd get away with killing The Messiah they were sent, but that's how much humans believe they can force God to give them what they want instead of what He's offering.

As unimaginable as it is, they really did believe if they deposed of Jesus God would see what they were and were not willing to accept, and in seeing that God would be forced to give them what they would accept. That is how we as humans live our lives. Every day people die and leave this life. When it's an individual we know and/or is special to us in some way, we weep and cry and mourn but we refuse to see the bigger picture. We as humans aren't waiting for anything! We live, we die, and the next generation does the same. All our kicking and screaming against the ways of God has gained us nothing. All our plotting and planning and working to build a society that doesn't need God and His ways has gotten us nowhere! God is still on the same track, the same plan He's been on since day one. This is why I emphasize so much that dispensationalism is never as dangerous as when we don't see it as that. The basic idea that through the generations God has taken on different modes and accepted different routes to salvation gives us the false impression we might have a chance to accomplish something with our kicking and screaming and scheming. We believe creating us in innocence didn't work so God would have to save us another way. Living according to our conscience didn't bring us in masses to God so He would have to save us another way. Giving us a Law to follow wouldn't save even the specific nation of people it was given to so God would have to save us another way. Do you see what I'm saying here? These are not often clear thoughts in our minds but as dangerous as they are, they're there!

If we continue to believe such things we believe we can and even have already forced God down a different path than He originally wanted us to go. This is the power of man-made delusions, and it's the delusion Satan fell to. He would be like the Most High God. (Isa. 14:12-15) He would control his fate and his destiny. He could rule instead like God and God would have to accept it. You see, humans don't have to believe we can live without God to easily believe God will have to bend to our will, at least in certain ways. The history the Bible shows us of the chosen nation demonstrates this arrogance in a very blatant way but it does it to show us all how much we want the same thing. The history the Bible shows us should be good enough to see that if God's chosen nation couldn't get away with it, we as the world at large certainly won't be able to, but instead we created a beast that looks like a lamb and speaks the same stupidity. (Rev. 13:11) We think, maybe the chosen nation couldn't do it but as special people saved by the Blood of Jesus

that doesn't mean we can't. It moves ahead on a mass scale because we as individuals won't yield to the truth we as "the church" stand in no more special a place with God than the chosen nation did/does.

That's what a study such as this one is trying to get us to see. It's trying to get us to see the raging river we have created as humans and how quickly it sweeps us along with it right to our graves never having put real thought and effort into finding and walking in faith. We believe there is safety in numbers in spite of the fact individuals that are part of that number have to be replaced by a new generation all the time. This raging river is made up of people, individuals who will all die. There is no getting out of that, but we've convinced ourselves that's not a problem because God is obligated to save us in the end. We distort the Gospel (Good News) into a harnessing of God's power which gives us a free pass on death but even if it were true there would be no point in it! Each breath we take is an opportunity to repent of all this false philosophy and determine we want to stand before God; we will stand before God because God is what we want! God has created us for a purpose and as much as we are tempted to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season, the far better thing to put our efforts into is humbly standing before God even if it kills us! (Heb. 11:25) That kind of broken and contrite heart God will not despise! (Ps. 51:17)

God isn't obligated to save us but He wants to. Everything we've seen and will see God do revolves around God's desire to save us. Why can't standing in His presence, living in a relationship with Him, living our lives for Him be what we put our effort into? I know there are so many who say I want to and I'm trying but I just don't know how! The how is right in front of you, you just have to be willing to put your foot on the true path no matter what this world has to say about it. You have to be willing to walk that path no matter how much the world throws at you. You have to put your head down and let God carry you through the times you can't find your footing to walk it on your own. You must never give up, even if it costs you this life because this life, or any life, without God just isn't worth living, and it certainly isn't worth living for eternity! Today is the day to have what God wants for your life because today is the day you can open the door and start walking with God instead of trying to force Him to walk with you. Today is the day the reason to live for eternity has value by getting out of your own way and meaning it when you say, "God make me what you want me to be!" There is still effort to be put in on your part but that's in the rising above the noise of this world. If we'll desire to put in that effort we will find a life with God doesn't need things or things to go "our way" to be the very best life we could have. It's a life where standing in the presence of God is enough to live for all by itself!

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.***

FBS continued from pg. 4

Isaac didn't just want that to be a declaration he was making or remaking after his father's death. Isaac wanted to say, this is what my father before me did and you have not erased that claim in anyway by your aggressive actions against my house!

When you read the Law God gave the chosen nation you will find God clearly tells them they are not to be in the business of removing old landmarks. (Deut. 19:14, 27:17) The reason for this command is multifaceted, but one of the major points for why God said this directly relates to what we're talking about in these verses here in Genesis. This is where we need to see again the importance of putting the Bible together as a cohesive whole and not some divided up thing like Christians so often are taught now. We get away today with saying God is different or deals with us as humans differently on so many levels with the simple excuse there is an Old Testament and a New Testament. Christians love to feel they are getting out of something or that something God said isn't important to us today because it was "an Old Testament thing." What we actually see is that these first five books of the Bible, which are the Torah, show us God's intent on most every issue and level. From there we're just seeing God going forward with His plan and giving us grace for not being clear on it, but again, never allowing us to stand in its way to the point He has to change His plan or ways.

Removing the old landmarks is what the Philistines were attempting to do in filling these wells. They were trying to say, Abraham didn't exist or at least not in the way of being a man whose household was so large just the territory his flocks needed was large enough to require the digging of well after well throughout the region. We don't know who said it first or what the exact quote is but it's a truth that those who forget history are destined to repeat it. Well, a large part of forgetting a lot of history in this world is not due to the fact we can't remember everything and/or so many things just aren't documented because no one had the time. A lot of forgetting is done because there are those who intentionally and actively attempt to erase the memory of events from the minds of men by doing things like the Philistines were doing here. This is done in no greater way than it is done against the chosen nation of God because man's entire way of living is designed to say, we don't need God. As we've talked about over and over, this is nothing but a facade that attempts to hide the truth and reality we will all one day face, but in the here and now it helps men believe what they choose to do is correct or at least allowed because we don't answer to anything higher than ourselves.

About the last thing the world at large wants is a nation of people holding the oracles of the very God we are trying to hide from. They don't want that nation to be any more visible than possible, and they certainly don't want that nation demonstrating the oracles and representing the truth of God's ways through their ceremonies and everyday lives. Thus, when we look back on the Philistine's actions in this so early on beginnings of the chosen nation it's not just a fight or disagreement the Philistines were having with Isaac alone. This was the beginnings of a fight that would continue throughout the ages, and we still see today. This is part of what I was saying when I talk about Christians thinking God or His ways

of dealing with us have changed even if that change is just to say, we live under the New Testament not the Old. It's this same struggle staring us in the face. It's the same motivation and aggression against what God was and has established by developing a chosen nation to begin with. The flip side of this issue is that so many people who do come to see this in at least some form are quickly swallowed up by yet another facet of this fight, and that's the concept of saying every believer has to follow the Law in the same way God told the chosen nation to follow the Law or you're sinning in some form. Again, this speaks to us not knowing the Bible as a cohesive work. Not knowing the struggle that began right off in the book of Acts where the apostles had to deal with false teachers going out from among the Jews and disrupting the non-Jewish believer's lives with this same idea.

It was incorrect then not because we now live under grace not the Law or that we are under the New Testament not the Old Testament. It was wrong because it's not what the Bible tells us in the first place! This struggle is so hard because it's so easy to stop up a well it takes so much work to dig back open. People in our modern day don't even have to get on their feet and go from church to church to teach such lies. It's so easy to put good sounding snippets in social media posts or the like, but that is the epitome of what I am constantly hammering on. Fractionalizing things into small bits can make a lot of things seem true that are not true because you're not taking a look at the entire picture. Isolated into small pieces or only seeing an event from one angle can make things easily seem one way, but it becomes obvious that is not right the minute you step back and see the whole thing or get to see the same thing from a different angle. We as true believers should not be in the habit of accepting small snippets of God's Word as a way to build the doctrine we live our lives by. Believers need a firm grasp of the entire Scripture. Only then can you step back and see the whole of what God was doing and why He has done what He has done. Why He will do what He will do also becomes much clearer. The problem is, this takes time and most people are simply looking for a religion that makes them feel good. One that validates the kind of life they want to live. They just aren't looking to know the truth and allow that truth to guide their lives and actions.

I have so often said in materials about this ministry that if you're looking for the feel good message that gets you on your way then this ministry is not for you. That sounds so harsh to some people, and believe me I've been told that is the reason some people don't want to listen to what I say or read what I write. To be clear on what I just said, understand I'm talking about people who aren't arguing whether the statement is true or untrue. They couldn't care less about that. They judge just on the basis of the idea the statement sounds harsh and because it sounds harsh they are validated in not listening, reading or taking part in any way. They say, anyone who could say such things obviously doesn't serve the "loving god" they serve, and they're right! It's the reason I didn't capitalize the use of "god" in that sentence. Our God is not just A God of love, He is THE God of love. He loves this world enough to tell us the truth of what He is willing to save and what He is not willing to save. He loves us enough to let those who do not want to be a part of what He will save to live their lives with the freedom we have

in the here and now. He does not step in to stop a multitude of actions other men choose to take that might limit your personal freedom because that's all just the cause and effect of God allowing us the freedom to make our own choices and world. Man may not have built the world he wanted but he has built the world he has chosen to build!

Love means we have what we have here and we do what we do here but none of that freedom God allows us can or will change what God has been looking for since Genesis chapter 1 verse 1. This means telling people they need to sit down and put in the effort to learn what it is God will actually save in order to be a part of what He will save isn't harsh, it's just the truth! It doesn't mean you have to get everything from this ministry, it's just to point out this ministry is designed to be a part of that in whatever way it can be. There are literally thousands of churches and organizations which call themselves Christians who will give you the feel good message if that's what you're looking for. There simply is no reason for this ministry to be a part of that. The reality is, when we look at the action the Philistines took in filling the wells of Abraham, we are looking at the kind of persecution the world is always going to bring to people used of God. When we talk about those wells we are not just talking about wells, we are talking about an entire life of a great man of faith. That's why I like to emphasize how much none of us know what our lives will mean! People worry all the time that they're not doing anything for God, but if you're open to be used of God then we should leave that up to God to decide. We are too small to know how our lives might be used in ways that will far outlast us or hand to the next generations valuable wells of living water!

Abraham was a man who was told by God he would be a great man! It was the entire promise to him and reason God called him out of his home to this strange land of Canaan. It's the entire reason he sojourned in this land for year after year, and while he was a man of great wealth, what did he really have to show for his life in serving God? He died a man who had sent one son to the south because God said that son was not to be the son of promise. He sent six more sons away to the east because he knew they would not be the sons of promise. While they might contribute to Abraham being the father of many nations, and they certainly have in ways we can't even trace, Abraham died leaving one son and his wife for the development of the chosen nation which was the high value promise of God to Abraham. We forget how discouraging it must have been for him and Sarah to wander around this land not even able to have a child for so many years. For all the blessing Isaac was when he was born we almost never consider how heartbreaking it probably was to know he'd be the only son they, as a couple, would ever have. They were so at the end of their natural lives that if God hadn't blessed them with longer life they wouldn't have even lived to bring Isaac into this world much less see any large part of his life. Sarah did not even get to see Isaac marry and Abraham didn't live long enough to see them have children.

Living a day by day life is something we understand

we are doing but we often forget how much that's all the people in the history we're studying were doing. We read just the main events of their lives and forget how many long years there are between some of those great events. We see what came of their lives and marvel at how God used them but don't think about how little of those accomplishments they got to see during their lives. They were just like each of us. Getting out of bed, going through their day, and going back to bed but that's what made them special! They didn't do it the way the rest of the world does it. They lived their day by day, dedicated to God and His ways; allowing Him to guide their path and in the end it was not just for their good, it was for much larger earth shaking works of God they couldn't even imagine in their day and time. This kind of righteous thinking and correct perspective is what made Isaac go out into the fields across the region and with the hot sun on their faces, sweat pouring down, he and his men dug and they dug and they dug some more until every last well his father had dug was restored to operation. Was it glamorous? No! Did it feel like they were really winning lives for the Kingdom of God? No! So what drove Isaac to do this arduous work? He knew his father had been called to this land for a purpose God was working through their lives! He knew he was now to carry forward that work, not by letting go of what his father had already accomplished but by being the guardian of it; the restorer of it where and when necessary.

Isaac understood what so few of us understand today as we walk in this world striving to be the people God wants us to be, and that's the fact we do the work for the work's sake! This is what drove Isaac not to name the wells what he thought they should be named on the basis of the events and reasons each of these wells were dug again. Isaac would name them what his father Abraham named them as a way to say, the people who do not believe in what God is doing might not want us here but we are not going anywhere! Archaeologists of our modern day can say what they want about if the Israel the Bible describes ever really existed but the Bible tells us the truth the world would never want to maintain. They can say God's chosen nation is only an offshoot of some group of Canaanites or a mixture of Canaanites and a handful of outsiders, but we know the truth because God has preserved the truth. They can tell us the Jews who now live are some made up group that has no relationship to people who for ages have lived on the promised land, but we know better because we've seen it all before. The world has worked tirelessly to remove all the old landmarks just as soon as they got/get the chance, but the fact the Jews are treated as they are by so much of this world shows they are the true descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. You see, the world fears it, tries to stop it, but their presence on the land is once again digging the wells the world has stopped. Little by little it's restoring the old landmarks that the world has removed and it all confirms the truth of God's Word more and more!

Until next time, Shalom!

The Bible As A Book continued from pg. 2

pointing back to the Law for our guidance. I can only imagine how that might have changed the relationship between non-Christian Jews and the true Christian church!

This is the point I was making about the Book of Ruth. The non-Christian Jew will easily hold onto the value of the book on the basis it has historical meaning to Ruth being in the family line of King David but the Christian, again no matter Jew or non-Jew, will see it's real meaning and value for inclusion in the Bible as being that Ruth is in the family line of Jesus Christ! This is another one of those times I can only pray what we're talking about will be something believers will meditate on. The ramifications for how close this would make the church and the chosen nation is astronomical (as the saying goes)! Instead of two religions seeing themselves miles and miles apart from each other to the point it seems to bring almost nothing but conflict, we'd have (what appeared to the world at least) two religions so close together the connection would be too obvious to ignore. It would be clear as day the only real theological daylight between the two groups is that one says the Man Jesus was The Messiah and the other says we don't believe He was and thus still await The Messiah's coming. Now think about what the prophecy and Jesus Himself tells/told us about what the next major event of God's interaction with mankind will be. It's the return of The Messiah! Why does that matter? Because it would bring even less daylight between the two groups. Both would simply be looking for what? The coming of The Messiah!

I know, due to all the messed up ways Christians have been taught many would argue it's not the same thing, but it really is! If you believe as the Jewish religion teaches that Jesus was not The Messiah, then you're waiting for The Messiah's first appearing. When that happens the entire world will see if the Jewish religion's teaching is right or if those who accept Jesus as The Messiah are right. How cool is that! I know, I'm using a lot of exclamation points but that's because this is all the root teaching most of what I talk about comes down to. Don't you see it? Those who wish to work along Satan's side, for whatever reason they choose to do so (be it with good intentions or bad), to create the Christian religion saw this truth early on! The entire reason there are people reading this (if they've made it this far that is) who are screaming at the page right now about how I'm leaving out the idea those following the Jewish religion will be fooled by the antichrist is because those early creators of the religion saw the very truth we are talking about here! They had to take the handful of references to "antichrist(s)" found in the Bible and skew it into this entire teaching that has to do with why it's so bad for people not to accept Jesus as The Messiah. This is a huge issue I only have space to delve into a little here, but think about it! The religion tries to emphasize formulated salvation and down play what faith is and means. Since faith is the path by which God's grace saves us and Jesus' sacrifice was to show us that, the religion had to come up with ways to put that out of the minds of believers as much as possible.

What they wished to put in the minds of men is the idea that appears to be the core of Christianity, which is the belief that without Jesus it's impossible to please God. Believe me, I understand how much I'm stepping on toes right and left here but sometimes the truth hurts! The Bible doesn't say it's

impossible to please God without Jesus, and why would it? Even by the beliefs of the Christian religion that's only been true for roughly the last two thousand years. What the Bible consistently shows us from start to finish is what's said 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." That's the choice Adam and Eve were making when they took of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. Do we believe God is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him or do we take this fruit in the hopes it gives us something God doesn't want us to have but we want? It's the choice the message of Jesus Christ and Him crucified is still calling to us today! God has always held life and death in His hands; how can we believe otherwise? Sadly many Christians don't believe it because they're taught to believe that God had to sacrifice Himself on the cross to "earn it." That's unbelievable! The truth is, God loved this world so much that in spite of it not being necessary, God would come down here in human flesh to prove He held the power already!

Jesus went through what He went through to prove once and for all faith has value! To prove God has the power to be a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him in spite of Adam and Eve's choice! In spite of all the evidence God showed in and through His chosen nation, many people didn't believe God held this power so Jesus let man's sin kill Him to prove He could just get up and walk away from death untouchable by death or sin ever again! God proved what man just wouldn't believe and the teaching the Christian religion now teaches is designed to fool as many people as possible into believing even with God's great sacrifice salvation comes by some means other than God's grace coupled with the desire believers have for a relationship with God which is what the word "faith" describes! (Eph. 2:8-10) Christ came not to destroy the Law but to fulfill what it was ultimately trying to show us all. (Matt. 5:17) He did it to give us yet another weapon against the enemy who is always trying to tell us the truth is not the truth! The Christian religion teaches a message that seems like an angel of light but points us away from what the Scripture shows us from beginning to end. (II Cor. 11:13-15) It was for this reason John warned us, antichrists and a spirit that was antichrist would come and be known in this world but the believers in Jesus were to hold onto what they had been taught from the start and what the Bible actually says! (I Jn. 2:18-29)

You see, antichrist isn't about people who don't accept Jesus was The Messiah they were/are to be looking for. The warning against antichrist was/is about people who do believe Jesus was The Messiah - The Anointed One - The Christ! Those who do not believe Jesus was The Messiah simply do not have the assurance His first appearing brings. This is one of the saddest things in all the world but it is what it is and God is still reaching to each of us in the ways we might hear. Thus, the warning about false teaching and teachers attempting to skew what Jesus taught us as a way to change the very fabric of how we understand the Scripture God has blessed us with is important to those who have come to faith through the acceptance that Jesus was and is The Christ! The fact so many who call themselves Christians can't see that fact is another one of the saddest things in all the world! Satan has designed it all very well to turn conversations like this one to questions about

how the Bible tells us we only come to The Father through Jesus? How do you explain the fact we are told only in Jesus is there true salvation? On the surface these sound like logical questions but that's how Satan and evil men want it. The truth is actually simple. Those things are told to us to be clear we are walking the same path the Law was attempting to get people to walk!

It's never been true a person can be saved by good works, even if those works are what the Law teaches us! No matter how you came to the understanding God is looking for you to have faith in Him, also come to understand Jesus is an inescapable part of that! It's a message to those such as the Jew who does not accept Jesus was/is The Messiah that you're missing out and making mistakes that hurt your faith. This is what Saul (who became Paul) was told! "And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?..." Acts 9:4-6 How is it Christians have such a hard time seeing what we're talking about here when one of the most revered Christians of all time faced this exact thing! Much later on Paul would write an entire book of how the dynamics of faith work and in it he poses the question, how was Abraham's faith acknowledged by God? (Rom. 4) Did Abraham become the man God chose to be the father of the chosen nation because he was circumcised or was circumcision given as a seal of the promise God had chosen him for that great blessing? You see, it's a question of which came first, the chicken or the egg? In the human mind this seems like a good question but to the one who knows the Bible there is no question. God created animals and gave them the ability to reproduce. Without chickens there would be no eggs and certainly not eggs fertile and able to hatch chicks!

Abraham was a man of faith; a man of deep faith. It was that unwavering relationship with God that made Abraham not just the right man for God to give the blessing to, as if he "deserved" it. No, Abraham had to have that unwavering relationship with God in order to work alongside God and be the tool God could use to create a chosen nation. Someone not as far along in their faith as Abraham wouldn't have been able to hear God clear enough to accomplish what God wanted to accomplish through the man He chose. Growing in faith isn't about being in a place more deserving of blessings, but it does open up the possibilities of what God can do with your life! Now, there's a teaching many don't have clear but that's the point of needing to know the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth to really make gains in being a believer. Some may make it to God through the teachings of the Christian religion because they find true faith in spite of that not being the emphasis of the teaching, but false teachings like the idea antichrist is an actual specific man who Satan will rise on this earth is just one of many obstacles Satan has used the religion to throw in our path. Teaching that when this antichrist shows up the chosen nation will be fooled by him because they are still awaiting the first appearing of The Messiah is a way to drive the wedge as deep as Satan possibly can between the chosen nation

and those who believe Jesus was/is The Messiah. (It also has huge ramifications for how Christians see the Second Coming of Christ all of which are bad!) Such teachings are more than just a way to get people who should easily be motivated to work together from working together. This wedge is the best way Satan has found to make Jews as determined as they can be to look away from what Paul had to be blinded in order to see!

Satan is pulling every lever he can to take as many as possible with him into the pit of hell. He loves those living in the world ignoring the ways of God altogether and he will help as many as he can (yes, there are severe limits to his power) find wealth, fame, and whatever works to keep them from ever giving God a second thought. However, those who hold the truth in the palm of their hand deeply worry him! The more they know the real truth the more impossible it becomes for him to keep and/or bring them to his side. The more sold out to faith in God they are, the more value they have to be used of God to turn others to the truth! These are the people Satan must find all kinds of clever ways to lead astray. Satan has always hated God's chosen nation because they fit into this category. That's why the Bible tells us he will fight them to the bitter end. At any moment one of them who does not believe in Jesus might choose to. This is Satan's worst nightmare and it's equally true of all those who call themselves Christians whether they really are living Christ-like at the moment or not! We have the knowledge we need to walk in faith but Satan would rather we lose it and he definitely doesn't want to see us go deeper in it. He doesn't want you to sit down without the fog of all the distortions he can possibly put in the way and read the Bible with clarity as if you're hearing it all for the very first time! There's power in knowledge and no greater power than in the true knowledge of God's Word! We need to be on guard against all the noise that calls itself of God and gain the knowledge that allows us to try every spirit and know whether it is of God or not!

In the end, I know I haven't used this segment to finish Ruth or start a look at the next book but there's a reason that maybe only God knows why this needed to be the case. That's what faith is; following God's direction no matter what human logic or general thinking says you should do. Faith is having the ears to hear and the eyes to see what God wants you to do; right now in this moment and every moment. That kind of pure faith has to be worked for. It's a process only God can further in your life because only He is The One you have faith with. Man can help point you in the right direction but only God can bring the meaning to seeing the real truth. Man can help you see through the clouds and get a glimpse of what faith can bring but only God can truly grant you faith's rewards. Stop looking to man for your direction and start reading God's Word for yourself; really reading for what's there! Maybe the better way to say that is to stop depending on men and start asking God for the wisdom you need. When you depend on men, they can fail, they can give up, they can disappear, they can die, but God will do none of those things and Jesus came in the flesh to prove it. Believe God's Word and receive the faith God is offering, not as a platitude but as a reality you live your life by and in!

Let's stay in God's Word!

