

NINETEENTH ANNUAL
"LABOURERS TOGETHER WITH GOD"
LECTURESHIP, 2011

EPOCHAL EVENTS OF SACRED HISTORY

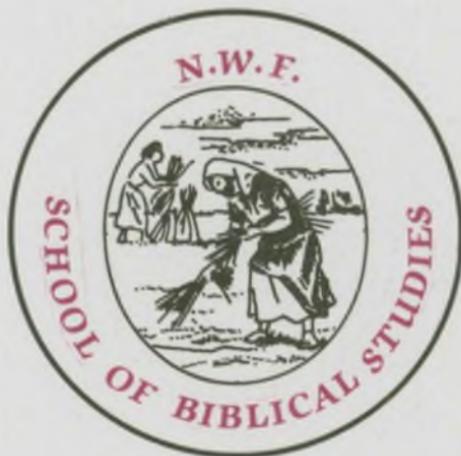
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THE HARVEST

"Therefore said he unto them, The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth laborers into his harvest."

(Luke 10:2)



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**NINETEENTH ANNUAL
"LABOURERS TOGETHER WITH GOD"
LECTURESHIP**

February 20-24, 2011

THEME:

**EPOCHAL EVENTS OF
SACRED HISTORY**

Editor:
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FORWARD

To the unenlightened, history is a chronology of events affecting nations and institutions. It is by the “word of the truth, the gospel” (Ephesians 1:13) that the “eyes of [our] heart [are] enlightened” (v.18); and, the enlightened know that history was not—is not—left to the caprices of men. Allowing for and accommodating man’s will and folly, the Almighty led Bible history “unto a dispensation of the fulness of the times, to sum up all things in Christ, the things in the heavens, and the things upon the earth” (v.10). “When the fulness of the time came”—not a minute sooner or later—“God sent forth his son, born of a woman, born under the law” (Galatians 4:4).

Bible history is sacred history. It can be quantified in terms of epochs; that is, “times and events marked by an event that begins a new period or development.” These epochal events include all of those from the “beginning” and up to the birth of Jesus. They include events surrounding the life and work of Jesus, as well as events related to the gospel being “preached in all creation under heaven” (Colossians 1:23). For that matter, they even include foretold events like the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 and the Fall of Rome.

For our nineteenth annual *Labourers Together with God* lectureship, we will have twenty-eight lectures, each dealing with an epochal event in sacred history. We are looking for, not merely a narration of each event, but special focus on how God used each in accomplishing “the fulness of the times.” May each lesson fill us with awe at the thought that He truly has the whole world in His hands; and that none but He “knowest...the ordinances of the heavens [or can] establish the dominion thereof in the earth” (Job 38:33).

—Alan Adams, Director
February 2011

Printed by:

Bates Printing & Binding

Hwy 6 North / P.O. Box 97

Nettleton, MS 38858

(662) 963-3671

Email: orders@oldpathspublishing.com

Online bookstore: www.oldpathspublishing.com

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“A CHANGE...OF THE LAW”

— Abrogation Of The Law Of Moses —
Hebrews 7:12

Cade K. Somers

1. The saying, “All good things must come to an end,” is not always correct. Goodness perpetually follows the faithful (Psa. 23:6). It is God’s everlasting essence (Psa. 106:1).
2. However, some good things that God once provided mankind no longer exist: e.g. Noah’s ark (Gen. 8:4), the brazen serpent (Num. 21:9), miracles (Heb. 2:3,4; Mark 16:20), spiritual gifts (Luke 12:11-12; 1 Cor. 13: 8-13).
3. Bibles are universally composed of two testaments, biblically identified as “old” and “new,” respectively (Heb. 8:13).
4. Even though Bible publishers uniformly designate the testaments, many people do not see their differences. It is because of this ignorance that when one truthfully proclaims that Christ’s law—His testament—is the singular “perfect law of liberty” (James 1:25), others treat the person as if he or she has committed treason.
5. The Law of Moses was *good*. Such befits a law that was the example and shadow of heavenly things—*good* things—to come (Heb. 8:5; 10:1).
6. Those who truly deny Good are the ones who fail to recognize “a...change of the Law” (Heb. 7:12), and instead indistinguishably blend the covenants together. The Law of Moses was a good thing that came to an end, but not without giving way to something even “better” (Heb. 8:6).

DISCUSSION:

I. PLAN AND PROPHECY.

- A. Jesus once reprimanded the Jews for being ignorant of the fact that the Old Testament scriptures spoke of Him (John 5:38ff).
- B. The Old Testament foresaw Christ and previewed the change of the law.
 1. Jer. 31:31-34; Heb. 8:6-13
 2. A covenant and a system of law correspond with one another (cf. Psa. 78:10).
 3. The change of the covenant included the change of the law (Isa. 2:2-4).
 4. Christ’s covenant is certainly law (Gal. 6:2; Rom. 4:15; 1 John 3:4; Rom. 3:23).
- C. It isn’t that people lacked intelligence or that God’s Word was deficient of clarity. They foolishly rejected the One sent

- in God's name but unhesitatingly welcomed others to lead because they did not carefully read, believe, and apply Moses' words (John 5:43,45-47; Matt. 24:5; cf. Deut. 18:18).
- D. Paul was given the opportunity to "make all men see the fellowship of the mystery" that had been hidden in God from the beginning (Eph. 3:9).
1. God's "intent" (Eph. 3:10), or purpose, was to execute the components of His "eternal purpose" (Eph. 3:11), including the Savior Jesus Christ, the church, and God's manifold wisdom being made known by the church (Eph. 3:9-11).
 2. God's eternal plan finally came to fruition through Christ and His church, but the church, consisting of Jews and Gentiles under a system which offers mercy and forgiveness through Christ's blood, could not have existed under the former system of law (Rom. 8:3; Gal. 3:21-22).
 3. It is much easier to comprehend Paul's message about God's eternal purpose knowing that the Law of Moses served as a "schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ" (Gal. 3:24-25; cf. Rom. 10:4).
 - a. The *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* states: "'Schoolmaster' is a translation of *paidagogos*, literally, 'child-leader.' This *paidagogos* was not a teacher but a slave, to whom in wealthy families the general oversight of a boy was committed. It was his duty to accompany his charge to and from school, never to lose sight of him in public, to prevent association with objectionable companions, to inculcate moral lessons at every opportunity, etc." (ISBE, eSword version).
 - b. The Old Testament as a schoolmaster, then, was a transport. Once Christ came and fulfilled his mission and "the faith" (New Testament) was established, the Old Testament was no longer needed. All its preparatory parts became inferior; for example:
 - 1) Its priesthood (Heb. 7:11,12)
 - 2) Its temple (Heb. 9:11)
 - 3) Its sacrifices (Heb. 10:1-2)
 - 4) Its scope (Isa. 2:2; 1 Cor. 12:13)
 - 5) Its kingdom (Matt. 18:36; Heb. 12:12)
 - 6) Its citizenship (Eph. 2:19; 1 Peter 1:23)
 - c. From all perspectives, the purview of the Old Testament was to foreshadow the law of Christ.

II. PROCESS.

- A. God gave prophets to reveal His Will (Matt. 10:26; Isa. 28:13; Heb. 1:1; Acts 3:14ff).

- B. John the baptizer served as a forerunner to Christ and the New Covenant (Mal. 3:1; Matt. 3:2; 11:12-14).
- C. The incarnate Son of God came to “fulfill all righteousness” (Matt. 3:15; cf. John 5:30).
- D. Nearing His death, He affirmed the completion of His earthly efforts (John 19:30).
- E. The old law was effectually nailed to the cross on which Jesus died (Eph. 2:14), taking it “out of the way” (Col. 2:14).
- F. Peter, James, and John learn the superiority of Christ over Moses and Elijah on the mount of transfiguration (Mark 9:2-7).
- G. The apostles collectively awaited and announced the new covenant at the kingdom’s inauguration on Pentecost A.D. 33 (Mark 9:1; Acts 1,2).
- H. After having about 40 years of opportunity, the Jews who still had not heeded the Christ were warned of Jerusalem’s impending destruction. This sent a profound message throughout the world that Jesus Christ had authored salvation and that Moses’ system was obsolete (Heb. 5:9; cf. Matt. 24:1-35).

III. PRESENTATION.

- A. Circumstances were not always easy for one to decide to subscribe to the new system (cf. Acts 8:1; 9:21; 26:28; Gal. 2:12).
- B. Paul used figures to help convey the message.
 - 1. “[B]roken down the middle wall of partition” (Eph. 2:14) referred to a wall on the temple’s grounds that designated the court of the Gentiles beyond which they could not pass.
 - 2. “...Present your bodies a living sacrifice” (Rom. 12:1).
 - 3. “For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ” (2 Cor. 2:15).
 - 4. “For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit” (Phil. 3:3; cf. Rom. 2:25-29).
- C. Early churches struggled with false teachers imposing parts of the Old Testament on the church (cf. Acts 15; Heb. 6:6; Gal. 6:15; Titus 1:10-11).
- D. The reality for those who faithfully followed Christ was liberty (James 1:25; 8:2; Rom. 14:15).

IV. PEDAGOGY (TEACHING).

- A. Christians must be careful how they teach the abrogation of Moses’ law.
- B. First, remember that the nature of the law was that it must have entirely been kept. If not, then another was necessary.

1. If someone today justifies religious acts by the Law of Moses, he or she must keep the law entirely or else they do so in vain (Gal. 5:4).
 2. This includes anything from justifying the use of mechanical instruments of music by referencing David in Psalms, to propagating the Sabbath as a day Christians should observe.
- C. There are several ways a change of law can take place. For example:
1. Amendment (cf. Matt. 5:18).
 2. Usurpation.
 3. Government overthrow (cf. Matt. 2:2-3; Matt. 27:11,42; Luke 23:2; 20:22-24).
 4. Subsidence (cf. Matt. 5:17,18).
 5. Fulfillment (the only acceptable means to progress beyond the Law of Moses).
- D. Jesus Christ fulfilled (filled fully) the Law of Moses (Matt. 5:18).
1. He was not above the law, nor exempt from it (Matt. 3:5; Gal. 4:4).
 2. Preparing His disciples for life in the church, He taught early in His ministry that if anyone would break the law or taught others to break it, they would be called the "least" (Matt. 5:19). By the way He lived under the old law, Jesus set a pattern for how all should live, whether they served under Moses' law or under Christ's.
 3. Only He lived perfectly under it (Heb. 4:15; 1 Peter 2:22), and by His perfection, ably offered redemption for those under its penalty (2 Cor. 5:21; 1 John 3:5; Gal. 4:4-5; Col. 2:14).
 4. He never contradicted the system He was under or disserved His fellow Jews. He was, in fact, "a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God" (Rom. 15:8; cf. Acts 3:25-26; Luke 24:47).
 5. He taught others to respect and follow the Law (Luke 10:25-28).
 6. As the first covenant had been dedicated with blood, so also was the second as it was instituted (Heb. 9:14-15).
 7. God never intended the Law of Moses to be permanent.
- E. Those under the Law of Moses were married to it (Rom. 7:1-4). God applies His marriage law to this relationship:
1. "If her husband be dead, she is free."
 2. "Ye...are become dead to the law by the body of Christ, that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead."

3. The scriptures demonstrate one cannot live under both the Law of Moses and the Law of Christ. The old law is dead; God's people are now married to Christ (Eph. 5:23).

CONCLUSION:

1. "A...change of the law"—what an epochal event.
2. No such change will ever again be necessary.
3. The old law was good, but it ended long ago.
4. Today, what is past is able to help us (Heb. 5:12; Rom. 15:4; 1 Cor. 10:11).
5. If you love Christ, keep His words (John 14:15,23).

"YOUR HOUSE IS LEFT UNTO YOU DESOLATE"

—The Destruction of Jerusalem, A.D. 70 —
Matt. 23:3

Victor M. Eskew

1. When Jesus first cleansed the temple in Jerusalem, He referred to it as "my Father's house." John 2:17
2. The words that title our lesson fall at the conclusion of Jesus' ministry. Jesus now refers to the temple as "your house," referring to the Jews. Matt. 23:37-38
 - a. In Jesus' words, we find a prophecy of the destruction of the temple.
 - b. The temple was the center of the nation's life.
 - 1) It was the dwelling place of God.
 - 2) It was the visible symbol of the covenant between God and His people.
 - 3) It was a place of sacrifice.
 - 4) It was a place of worship.
 - c. To destroy the temple would mean a full end of Judaism.

DISCUSSION:

- I. **PROPHECIES OF THE DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM**
 - A. Old Testament
 1. Daniel's prophecy of seventy weeks (Dan. 9:24-27).
 2. Malachi 3:1-2

B. New Testament

1. Jesus' words recorded by the Synoptic writers (Matt. 23:3-35; Mark 13:3-31; Luke 21:7-19).
 - a. Many believe that Jesus is referring to the Second Coming of Christ. This is especially true of the Premillennialists.
 - b. Numerous verses from Jesus' prophecy cannot be applied to the Second Coming of Christ and make sense. Matt. 24:16,19,20,22,34; Luke 21:20,24
2. There are passages found in various New Testament books, especially the book of Hebrews, that many believe refer to the fall of Jerusalem (Heb. 2:3; 8:13; 10:25-31; 12:27).
3. Some believe the entire book of Revelation involves the destruction of Jerusalem.
 - a. They believe the temple was still standing at the time of the book's writing (Rev. 11:1-2).
 - b. Brother Foy E. Wallace, Jr. was the main proponent of the early date of Revelation.
- C. With all of these prophecies set forth, the preachers of the first century often proclaimed the temple's destruction (Stephen, Acts 6:13-14).

II. PRECURSOR TO THE DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM.

- A. The fall of Jerusalem had been predicted, but it was not commanded. The Lord did not personally appear to Titus and tell him to take the city of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. What, then, caused Rome to come against Jerusalem?
- B. There were always tensions between the Jews and Rome.
 1. The rise of the Zealots.
 - a. This group of Jews believed that subjugation to Rome was an insult (John 8:33).
 - b. "Their most basic belief was that all means were justified to attain political and religious liberty" (www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org, "The Great Revolt").
 2. Rome was a constant thorn in the side of the Jews.
 - a. Heavy taxation
 - b. The appointment of the high priest was by Rome.
 - c. In the year 39 A.D., Caligula declared himself to be deity. He ordered his statue to be put in every temple in the empire. The Jews rebelled against this. Only Caligula's death stopped confrontation.
 - d. The temple was a "hot-spot" as well.
 - 1) The Roman soldiers would expose themselves in the temple.
 - 2) They would burn the Torah scrolls.

- 3) In 66 A.D., Florus, the last Roman procurator, stole large sums of silver from the temple.
3. The Great Revolt
 - a. The Jewish masses revolted and wiped out the small Roman garrison in Jerusalem.
 - b. When Cestius Gallus, the Roman ruler in Syria sent forces to deal with the situation, the Jewish insurgents routed them as well.
 - c. "Many Jews suddenly became convinced that they could defeat Rome, and the Zealots' ranks grew geometrically. Never again, however, did the Jews achieve so decisive a victory" (Ibid.).
 4. The march on Jerusalem.
 - a. The Romans returned to Galilee with 60,000 heavily armed and highly professional troops.
 - b. In the summer of 70 A.D., under the command of the Roman commander Titus, the walls of Jerusalem were breached.
 - c. Soon after the Romans entered the city, the temple was destroyed.

III. THE PICTURE OF THE DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM.

- A. Two verses from the prophecy of Jesus. Matt. 24:2,21
- B. A list of some of the historical facts about the destruction of Jerusalem.
 1. It was a siege of 143 days.
 2. Six hundred thousand to one million people were killed.
 - a. The soldiers slew everything in sight, men, women and children.
 - b. Dead bodies were ripped open in search of gold.
 - c. The soldiers grew weary of killing and would neglect their orders.
 3. Ninety thousand people were taken captive.
 4. Prior to the Romans entering into the city, there was starvation in the city. The people would chew on leather and their shoes in search of nourishment. The people resorted to cannibalism to feed themselves.
 5. If anyone were found outside the city, the Romans would crucify him.
 6. The destruction of the temple.
 - a. The temple furnishings were taken to Rome.
 - b. The temple was set on fire.
 - c. The stones of the temple were torn apart by the Roman soldiers so they could retrieve any melted gold.

- d. The only thing left standing was the outer retaining wall of the Temple Mount platform. This is the "Wailing Wall" of today.
7. Roman ensigns were set up and sacrifices to the Roman gods were made at the eastern gate of the city.
8. A temple to Jupiter was erected at the temple site.
9. Idols of Roman gods were erected throughout the city.
10. Ultimately the name of the city was changed to Aelia Capitolina. It honored the emperor Hadrian and the Roman trinity, Jupiter, Juno, and Minerva.
11. A varied population was brought into the city, while nearly all of the Jews were forbidden to enter.

IV. PRACTICAL APPLICATION OF THE DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM.

- A. The fall of Jerusalem brought a full end to Judaism.
 1. From a purely doctrinal standpoint, Judaism came to a conclusion at the cross of Calvary.
 - a. The Law of Moses was nailed to the cross (Col. 2:14).
 - b. The once forever sacrifice of Jesus was completed (Heb. 10:10).
 - c. The priesthood of Melchizedek began to function (Heb. 7:13-14).
 - d. Jesus entered into the holy of holies (Heb. 10:19-21).
 - e. In like manner, the holy place, the church, was established (Acts 2:38-47).
 2. From a practical standpoint, however, Judaism continued to function. The destruction of Jerusalem, however, brought a crushing blow to Judaism.
 - a. The temple was destroyed.
 - b. The genealogies were destroyed, putting an end to the priesthood.
 - c. The sacrifices could no longer be made.
 - d. The Jews were scattered throughout the empire.
- B. We come to appreciate the trustworthiness of the Word of God.
 1. The prophets, the Christ, and the New Testament writers foretold the coming destruction of Jerusalem.
 2. Years passed before the promise was brought to fruition. It did, however, come to pass.

Psalm 93:5, "*Thy testimonies are very sure...*"

Psalm 119:89, "*For ever...thy word is settled in heaven.*"

2 Peter 3:8-9, "*not slack concerning his promise*"
- C. God has promised final destruction of this earth and of the wicked.
 1. The world. 2 Peter 3:10
 2. The wicked. Rom. 1:18; 2 Thess. 1:7-9

CONCLUSION:

1. The destruction of the city of Jerusalem is a word of warning to the world.
2. Those of us who are Christians, who believe and respect God's Word, should take special interest in the event. Peter put things into proper perspective for us in 2 Peter 3:11-12.

"SAMARIA WAS TAKEN"

— **The Fall of Samaria** —

2 Kings 18:10

Jacob Campbell

1. When we think about places that had a major historical impact on God's efforts to save humanity through His Son, our minds might race to Jerusalem, Egypt, Bethlehem, Galilee, or Ephesus.
2. But, how does Samaria rate a spot in a discussion of important influences on world history and the eternal salvation of souls?
3. There is, in fact, a significant Samaria-connection to God's eternal scheme of redemption. We can observe it in both Testaments of the Bible.
4. In our lesson, we want to focus on the fall of Samaria — the end of the Northern Kingdom of Israel. And, to make any sense of their fall in light of Redemption, it requires that we begin with a study of the history of Israel.
5. Let us learn from the fall of Samaria (Rom. 15:4).

DISCUSSION:**I. HISTORICAL SUMMARIZATION:****A. Biblical history: the story of redemption.**

1. From Genesis to the Apocalypse, all written and spoken revelation has centered upon God's provisions for remedying man's problem first encountered in Eden.
2. From the initial fall of man (Gen. 3:6-15) to the prophets (Acts 3:24) to the arrival of the Savior and his kingdom (Luke 2:11) to man's final glimpse into the mind of God (Rev. 5:9), the Bible is the progressive unveiling of God's plan to save humankind through Christ (cf. Eph. 1:3-12; 3:1-11).
3. God's plan for providing redemption in Christ required the selection of a proper medium for the arrival of this

- "seed of woman," our Savior (cf. Gen. 3:15; John 1:1-3, 14; Phil. 2:5-7; Heb. 2:5-17; Gal. 4:4).
- a. Bible students know that the nation of Israel served as the providential vehicle through which the Messiah came (Rom. 9:4-5).
 - b. However, God's selection of Israel was on the basis of the faith of an individual, Abraham, not on the merits of a nation (Deut. 4:37; 7:6-8; Gen. 22:18; Gal. 3:16).
 - c. The first scriptural indications of Israel's prominent role in God's purpose are recorded in Genesis 12:1ff.
- B. The promises to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob: the foundation of Old Testament history and the scheme of redemption.
1. The "seed of Abraham" clarified the promised "seed of woman" (Gen. 3:15; Gen. 22:18) — the Savior would be a descendant of Abraham.
 2. More specifically, the chosen nation would descend from Abraham's son, Isaac (Gen. 17:19).
 - a. Abraham's first son (with his handmaid rather than his wife Sarah), Ishmael, would father a "great nation," as well (Gen. 17:20).
 - b. The promises of covenant, Canaan, and lineage to Christ, however, were exclusively Isaac's.
 3. Isaac had two sons, but only one could receive the covenant and serve as the conduit for the "seed of woman."
 - a. Esau became father to the Edomites (Gen. 36).
 - b. The covenant, land, and seed-Savior promises were renewed in Jacob (Gen. 28:4,14).
 - c. Jehovah changed Jacob's name to Israel, "Prince with God" (Gen. 32:28).
 4. "Israel," then, is derived from Jacob's God-appointed name. The children of Israel are the descendants of Jacob.
- C. The establishment of the nation of Israel.
1. The children of Israel grew in number and strength while in Egypt (Exodus 1:7).
 2. They became a sovereign nation upon being liberated from Egyptian dominance, receiving their own law, and establishing their own territorial rule (Exodus-Joshua).
 3. The children of Israel were organized along the lines of tribal inheritance—twelve tribes derived their identity according to descent from Jacob's twelve sons (and grandsons; cf. Gen. 48-49).
 4. For the next 350 years or so, the descendants of Jacob, the twelve tribes which made up the nation of "Israel," dwelt together in Canaan, bound by a common ancestry, language, and law, but without a central human govern-

ment or sovereign. (The “judges” exercised only a limited amount of legislative and military control over their respective tribes or regions).

D. The United Kingdom.

1. The Israelites grew discontent with that arrangement and demanded of the prophet Samuel a king (1 Sam. 8).
 2. Saul, a Benjamite, was the first monarch in Israel.
 - a. His kingdom was loosely organized and his actual territory in constant flux and not well defined.
 - b. His rule never extended over all of the tribal land taken in Joshua’s conquest; he fought constantly with the Philistines and other rival states/tribes, winning sometimes and losing often.
 3. David, from the tribe of Judah, was the second king in Israel.
 - a. After Saul’s death, only the tribe of Judah recognized David as Saul’s divinely-appointed successor; the rest of the tribes served Saul’s son, Ishbosheth (2 Sam. 2:8-10).
 - b. There ensued “a long war between the house of Saul and the house of David. But David grew stronger and stronger, and the house of Saul grew weaker and weaker” (2 Sam. 3:1).
 - c. Ishobosheth ruled for two years then was murdered; five years later “all the tribes of Israel” joined themselves to David and Judah (2 Sam. 2:10; 5:1-4).
 - d. In all, David reigned for 7 years over the tribe of Judah, and 33 years over all Israel and Judah (2 Sam. 5:5).
 - e. He also subdued kingdoms north, south, and east of Israel (2 Sam. 8-11).
 - f. David established Jerusalem as the seat of his united kingdom (2 Sam. 5:6ff).
 4. Solomon, David’s son, was the last king over the twelve tribes of Israel.
 - a. His empire extended even beyond David’s, encompassing not only the twelve tribes, but “all the kingdoms from the river [Euphrates] to the land of the Philistines, and to the border of Egypt” (1 Kings 4:21).
 - b. A prophet foresaw the division of Solomon’s kingdom, predicting that ten tribes would be torn from his family’s possession (1 Kings 11:29-40).
- E. The division of the Kingdom.
1. Upon Solomon’s death, his son Rehoboam retained power only in the southern tribes, Judah and Benjamin.

- a. This new little nation took its name, "Judah," from the larger tribe.
 - b. Rehoboam and his successors kept Jerusalem for their capital.
 - c. In addition to "Judah," the Southern Kingdom is sometimes called "Jerusalem" or "Jacob."
2. Jeroboam, an Ephraimite, wrestled the ten remaining tribes from David's descendants.
 - a. The ten northern tribes kept for themselves the name "Israel."
 - b. Shechem (1 Kings 12:25) and Tirzah (15:33; 16:15, 23) were early political centers.
 - c. Omri, fifth king of the Northern Kingdom, established Samaria in Manasseh for his capital city (1 Kings 16:24, 29). Samaria remained the capital in the Israel until the nation was conquered by the Assyrians.
 - d. The northern tribes are referred to as "Israel," "Ephraim" (after its prominent tribe), "Samaria," and "Joseph" throughout the Old Testament.
- F. The Northern Kingdom (Israel).
1. In Judah, David's seed reigned continuously until the southern kingdom was conquered by the Babylonians (586 B.C.). Several righteous kings were among them.
 2. In Israel, nineteen kings from eight dynasties ruled from c. 930 B.C. to 721 B.C. All were wicked.
 3. The northern tribes rarely enjoyed economic prosperity or political rest during that period.
 4. Thousands of faithful Israelites fled to Judah for refuge.
 - a. This occurred as early as the reign of Rehoboam (2 Chron. 11:16-17).
 - b. Later, in the days of Asa (2 Chron. 15:9) and Hezekiah (2 Chron. 30:1, 10-11, 18; 31:1).
 - c. After the collapse of Israel, many more came from the northern tribes during Josiah's reign (2 Chron. 34:8-9).
- G. The decline and fall of Samaria.
1. Around 735 B. C., in the days of Pekah, next-to-last king in Samaria, Tiglath-Pileser III, king of Assyria, invaded the northern-most parts of Israel.
 - a. Several northern cities were brought under Assyrian rule, including the regions of Galilee and Gilead, and all the tribal territory of Naphtali (2 Kings 15:29).
 - b. An unknown (but apparently large) number from those regions were deported to other parts of the Assyrian Empire.

- c. To reduce the threat of organized uprisings throughout their sprawling empire, the Assyrians deported conquered locals and replaced them with other subjugated enemy populations.
 - d. With the settlement of these Gentile populations, Galilee became “Galilee of the Gentiles” (Isa. 9:1).
 2. Hoshea assassinated Pekah and became Israel’s last king. He promptly became a servant to Shalmaneser V, Tiglath-Pileser’s successor.
 - a. Israel was thus reduced to vassalage and forced to pay annual tribute to Assyria (2 Kings 17:3).
 - b. Hoshea conspired with Egypt to overthrow Assyrian rule, but was quickly discovered, removed, and imprisoned (2 Kings 17:4).
 3. Shalmaneser V marched on Samaria and besieged it for three years (2 Kings 17:6). [Shalmaneser died at the end of the siege and was replaced by Sargon II.]
 4. Samaria fell in 721 B.C., signaling the end of the Northern Kingdom.
- H. Captivity and resettlement.
 1. As Tiglath-Pileser had done with Galilee and Naphtali, Sargon II deported large numbers from Samaria and its surrounding cities, and replaced them with people from other nations (2 Kings 17:6, 26).
 - a. According to inscriptions discovered in Sargon’s palace, 27,230 Israelites were deported from Samaria.
 - b. Strangers from other lands were placed in Samaria “instead of the children of Israel; and they took possession of Samaria and dwelt in its cities” (2 Kings 17:24).
 2. While thousands from the Northern Kingdom were scattered throughout the Assyrian Empire, many still remained in (what was) Israel.
 - a. The northern tribes were not wholly “lost,” as some claim.
 - 1) One hundred years after the fall of Samaria, Josiah received contributions from “Manasseh and Ephraim, from all the remnant of Israel” (2 Chron. 34:9).
 - 2) Anna, a first-century (A.D.) prophetess, is positively identified as a member of the tribe of Asher, one of the northern tribes (Luke 2:36).
 - 3) According to Paul, the “twelve tribes” were alive and active in his generation, nearly eight-hundred years after the Northern Kingdom had fallen (Acts 26:7).

- b. Remember that substantial numbers from the northern tribes had long pledged their allegiance to the House of David and so were already living in the South (2 Chron. 11:3,16-17; 15:9; 30:1,10-11,18; 31:1).
- 3. Samaria became predominantly Gentile.
 - a. The city and surrounding areas were settled by Babylonians, Persians, Elamites, and others. (A more extensive list of nations is found in 2 Kings 17:24 and Ezra 4:8-10).
 - b. These foreigners who settled Samaria, as well as native Israelites who intermarried with them, became the "Samaritans" (2 Kings 17:29).
 - c. Their religion at first combined elements of paganism and Judaism (2 Kings 17:33-34; cf. Ezra 4:9-10,2).
 - d. Samaritans led the opposition against the Jewish captives who returned to rebuild Jerusalem after it fell in 586 B.C. (Ezra 4:1-10; Neh. 4:1-2).
 - e. For these and other reasons, John observed that "Jews have no dealings with Samaritans" (John 4:9).

II. SPIRITUAL OBSERVATIONS:

- A. The fall of Samaria was an act of divine punishment for Israel's sin (2 Kings 17:7-23).
 - 1. Most notably, they served other gods (17:7,10,12,15,16, 17); and behaved "like the nations" whom Jehovah had driven out before them (17:11; cf. 17:8; 1 Sam. 8:4-5).
 - 2. Israel's dismal fate is to be shared by any society which "changes the glory of God into an image made like corruptible man," fails to "glorify Him as God," and allows "their foolish heart to be darkened." God allows such nations to be destroyed by their own foolishness (Rom. 1:18-32). cf. Prov. 14:34
- B. God's sovereignty has always been demonstrated by his power to "remove and raise up kings" (Dan. 2:21). He rules in the kingdom of men, giving and taking it at will (4:17).
- C. The fall of Samaria confirms God as a promise-keeper, while instructing us in the nature of divine covenants.
 - 1. The covenant made at Sinai was conditional (Lev. 18:24-30; Deut. 28:15-68).
 - 2. All the prophets had warned of the fate of God's people should they turn away from Him.
 - a. "Jehovah testified against Israel and against Judah, by all of his prophets, every seer, saying, turn from your evil ways" (2 Kings 17:13).
 - b. "As He had said by all His servants the prophets...so Israel was carried away from their own land to Assyria" (2 Kings 17:23).

D. God's own people were cast off.

1. The Lord "removed Israel out his sight" (2 Kings 17:18, 23).
2. He "rejected all the descendants of Israel...until he had cast them from his sight" (2 Kings 17:20).
3. cf. 2 Chron. 15:2; Heb. 10:30

III. ETERNAL IMPLICATIONS:

A. "To the unenlightened, history is a chronology of events affecting nations and institutions. It is by the 'word of the truth, the gospel' (Ephesians 1:13) that the 'eyes of [our] heart [are] enlightened' (18); and, the enlightened know that history was not—is not—left to the caprices of men. Allowing for and accommodating man's will and folly, the Almighty led Bible history...unto a dispensation of the fullness of the times, to sum up all things in Christ, the things in the heavens, and the things upon the earth' (10)."

1. Consider, for example, Esther 4:14.

- a. Mordecai could not affirm that God placed Esther in that situation "for a reason" (cf. "who knows if...").
- b. Still, he knew that God would preserve the Messianic seed one way or another — "if you remain completely silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place."

2. Again, compare Acts 4:27-28 with 1 Corinthians 2:8.

- a. In crucifying Christ, Romans and Jews were simply doing "whatever Your hand and Your purpose determined before to be done."
- b. Yet, "had they known" this was God's eternal plan, "they would not have crucified the Lord of glory."

B. So, how did God use the fall of Samaria to accomplish the fullness of times? Or, how has the fall of Samaria contributed to His "summing up all things in Christ?"

1. The fall of Samaria built anticipation for the Messiah and his kingdom.

a. Conditions in Israel from their fall to the arrival of the Christ had Israelites longing for "the Consolation of Israel" (Luke 2:25).

1) After Samaria fell, they never had real independence, being under the dominance of the Persians, Greeks, and Romans.

2) The establishment of the Messiah's kingdom presupposed the fall of Israel (Hosea 1:4-11).

b. Their anticipation and desperation are captured in Matt. 11:12 and Luke 16:16.

2. The fall of Samaria created an environment suitable for the nature and work of the Messiah.

- a. The Christ did not appeal to materialists: the only fanfare announcing his arrival came from a strange wilderness-dweller (Matt. 3:1-4); he was not born into a wealthy home, but rather to a couple who could not even afford to present a lamb for sacrifice (Luke 2:22-24; Lev. 12:2-8); he was a carpenter (Mark 6:3), without formal education (John 7:15); as an adult he had no permanent residence (Luke 9:58); he was at the mercy of rich sympathizers for a decent burial (Luke 23:50-53).
 - b. But, this was exactly the portrait painted by the prophets (Isa. 53:1-4,9). This is just what God wanted the Messiah to be!
 - c. How fitting, then, that Jesus should spend most of his earthly years in impoverished, unimpressive Galilee (John 7:52) and claim despised Nazareth for his home (John 1:45-46; cf. Matt. 2:23).
 - d. This region also provided Jesus relative safety and obscurity from the powers in Judea; it was a natural home base for his work (cf. Matt. 2:22-23; John 11:7-8; Acts 10:37; Matt. 16:21).
3. The fall of Samaria constructed a stage for the full display of the brilliance and power of the Gospel.
- a. The lands of the northern tribes, more than Judah, were "heavily oppressed," "gloomy," "in darkness," "lands of the shadow of death" (Isa. 9:1-2) after the fall of the kingdom.
 - b. The animosity between Jews and Samaritans is in the foreground of some of the greatest teaching moments in Christ's recorded life (John 4:3ff; Luke 10:25-37; 17:11-19).
 - c. In Christ, "light dawned in the region and the shadow of death" (Matt. 4:12-17); broken hearts were healed and captives freed (Luke 4:16-18).
 - d. The Gospel never shined brighter or provided deeper healing than it did among the outcasts and rejects of northern Israel (cf. Luke 7:41-43).
4. The fall of Samaria facilitated the spread of Christianity.
- a. The fall of Israel (and later Jerusalem) was followed by their dispersion among the nations.
 - b. Israelites and Jews who were scattered by the Assyrians, Babylonians, and later, to a lesser extent, the Egyptians, Syrians, and others, became known simply as "the Dispersion" (John 7:35).
 - c. By the first century, Jews could be found in essentially "every nation" (Acts 2:5; Note: some of the nations represented at Pentecost — Parthia, Media,

- Mesopotamia, Cappadocia — correspond to the Assyrian provinces where the children of Israel were deported — Halah, Habor, Hara, and the cities of the Medes; 1 Chron. 5:26; 2 Kings 17:6).
- d. But, how did the scattering of Israel and Judah promote the spread of Christianity?
 - 1) First, the Jews were better suited/prepared for the initial reception of the Gospel (cf. Acts 1:8; 10:46; Rom. 3:1-2).
 - a) Christianity had its beginnings in Jerusalem and Judea.
 - b) When it came time for the Gospel to go to “the uttermost parts of the earth,” there were always Jewish communities awaiting the apostles (cf. Acts 13:4-5,13-14; 14:1; 17:1-2,10; 18:1-5; 19:8; etc.).
 - 2) Second, the influence of the Dispersion prepared the Gentiles for conversion.
 - a) “Devout” Jews resided among the nations (Acts 2:5).
 - b) Gentiles were exposed to monotheism, prophecies of the Redeemer, man’s true origins, and, in the law of Moses, “the finest system of civil polity and equity in the world.”
 - c) Wherever Israel went, Moses was read — even among the Gentiles (Acts 15:19-21).
 - d) The first Gentiles to receive the Gospel in each city were typically those who were already sympathetic to Judaism (cf. Acts 13:42-49; 14:1; 17:1-4,10-12; 18:4).
 - e. The emergence of the Samaritans provided the first (Jewish) Christians a stepping stone to the Gentiles.
 - 1) First-century Samaritans, though “dogs” to the Jews, were at least racially “mixed;” i.e., their descent was partially of Israel.
 - 2) They revered the patriarch Jacob (John 4:12) and acknowledged the authority of Moses. Their worship resembled the Jews’ in some respects (cf. John 4:20).
 - 3) God’s plan for the early church called for conversion of the Jews first, then the Samaritans, and then the Gentiles (Acts 1:8; cf. Acts 2:5; 8:1-5; 10:1-11:18).
 - 4) The conversion of the Samaritans (Acts 8:5ff) surely helped acclimate Jewish Christians to the prospect of a fully-integrated spiritual kingdom.

- f. "I say then, have [Israel] stumbled that they should fall? Certainly not! But through their fall, to provoke them to jealousy, salvation has come to the Gentiles. Now...their fall is riches for the world, and their failure riches for the Gentiles..." (Rom. 11:11-12).
5. The fall of Samaria and its attendant prophecies established God's greater purpose in Christ.
 - a. National Israel (including the southern Jews) never fully recovered from the Assyrian and Babylonian invasions.
 - b. Israel and Judah, when they fell, were confirmed as means to an end — God's eternal purpose in Christ. There was always something "better" in view (cf. book of Hebrews).
 - c. The collapse of the kingdom forced the noble-minded Jew to look beyond the material and find salvation and peace in a spiritual kingdom united under one Good Shepherd (Hosea 1:4-11; 2:21-23; Ezek. 37:15-28; Rom. 9:6-33; 1 Peter 2:4-10).

CONCLUSION:

1. A consideration of the role of Samaria in the Old Testament era, the significance of its fall, and its relationship to Jehovah's eternal scheme is a worthwhile undertaking.
 2. In our study we have sought to emphasize the historical background of Samaria, lessons from its fall, and the far-reaching impact that events connected with it have had on the plan to redeem humans through the Christ, His gospel, and His body (Eph. 3:6).
 3. Who can forget Jesus' work in Samaria that began with a conversation with a woman that came to draw water from a well? (John 4)
 4. Later, long after the Messiah was seated at the Father's right hand, there were growing churches in that region (Acts 9:31), and we anticipate seeing great folks from Samaria in heaven!
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“THE DAYS WHEN THE JUDGES RULED”

— The Period Of The Judges —

Ruth 1:1

Kenneth Burlison

1. The period of the judges is covered by the books of Judges, Ruth and 1 Sam. 1-8.
2. This period covers the time between the leadership of Moses and Joshua to that of the kings.
3. The life of the Israelites was like a broken phonograph record.
 - a. Serve God a while.
 - b. Then did evil and served false gods.
4. The history of Israel is very important because of the role she played in revealing God's plan or scheme of redemption.
 - a. The Messiah would come through Israel.
 - b. The promise made to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.
 - 1) To Abraham in Gen. 12:1-3 and renewed in Gen. 22:18.
 - 2) To Isaac. Gen. 26:4
 - 3) To Jacob. Gen. 28:14
 - c. Christ the seed. Gal. 3:16
5. The period of the judges played a part in continuing God's scheme of redemption.
6. God's plan to redeem man runs like a thread through the Old Testament into the New Testament. Beginning in Gen. 3:15.
7. The period of the judges served its part toward the fulness of time. Gal. 4:4

DISCUSSION:

I. DURING THE JUDGE'S RULE.

- A. This period covers a part of the history of the Israelite people.
- B. This period stretches from the end of the life of Joshua to the appointment of the first king, Saul.
- C. Much more is to be gained from this period than just from a historical standpoint.

II. THE HISTORY OF THE ISRAELITE PEOPLE IS VERY IMPORTANT IN GOD'S SCHEME OF REDEMPTION.

- A. In the Bible, the term “judge” usually meant an interpreter of the law, but in our study a “judge” is a deliverer. Judges 2:16.
- B. This time period fills in a part of God's plan for mankind.
- C. God ruled His people through the judges. Their work, primarily, was to lead God's people out of their sins and oppression by other nations.

- D. When Israel obeyed God, He blessed them.
- E. When they disobeyed God, they received punishment. The consequence of their sins was terrible. Reminds us of Rom. 1.
- F. The reason the history of God's people, Israel, is so important is because:
 - 1. The Savior of the world would come through Abraham and David.
 - 2. The Mosaical law covered this time period, also.
- G. The conduct of God's people and their leaders during this time, is very different from that expected of God's children today.
 - 1. The use of evil individuals and nations was to accomplish God's purpose with His people.
 - 2. However, God did not allow these evil people go unpunished.
 - 3. There was deceit and murder in accomplishing what needed to be done.
- H. God used, the efforts of evil men and evil nations to discipline His people.
- I. We cannot today, under the Christian dispensation, deal with evil people as they did then.
- J. The civil government has been given power by God to protect the people. Rom. 13:1-8
- K. There were preparatory years in the overall plan in redeeming man which was fulfilled in Christ.

III. THE JUDGES.

- A. The book of Judges can be summarized in Judges 2:11-13.
 - 1. This gives the picture of the condition of Israel during this period.
 - 2. Also, for most of the history of the people of Israel.
- B. The Judges and their contributions.
 - 1. *Othniel* — Israel had fallen under the control of the leader Chushanrishathaim, of Mesopotamia Judges 3:8. Israel is delivered. Judges 3:9,10
 - 2. *Ehud* — God had strengthened the hand of Eglon, the King of Moab, against Israel because they had done evil in the sight of the Lord. Deception was used. 3:12-30
 - 3. *Shamgar* — He fought against the Philistines and slew six hundred with an ox goad. 3:31
 - 4. *Deborah* — God allowed Jabin, King of Canaan to control Israel. The people cried to the Lord. Jabin had oppressed them for 20 years. Barak destroyed Sisera's army. Sisera and the Canaanites were defeated. Israel prospered as they served the Lord. 4:4-5:31

5. *Gideon* — Israel did evil again. Midian controlled Israel. Gideon did not begin with the same attitude he ended with in his service to God. The Midianites were defeated. 6:11-8:35
6. *Abimelech* — He was not appointed by God to be judge. He manipulated the conditions to become ruler. He dealt treacherously with the sons of Jerrubbaal (Gideon). A certain woman cast a millstone on Abimelech's head, he had his armour bearer to slay him so it could not be said that a woman slew him. 9:1-57
7. *Tola* — judged Israel 23 years. Judges 10:1-2
8. *Jair* — judged Israel 22 years. Judges 10:3
 - a. The children of Israel did evil again. 10:6
 - b. The cycle begins again.
 - c. They usually turned their backs from God to go after gods like Baalim, Ashtareth, etc.
 - d. God sold them into the hands of the Philistines and children of Ammon. 10:7
 - e. The Israelites did as always when oppressed by other people, they cried out to God for help. 10:10
 - f. God told them to go and cry unto the gods they had chosen. 10:14
9. *Jephthah* — chosen as the next judge.
 - a. The people had driven him out before they wanted him as their leader. Chapter 11
 - b. The Spirit of the Lord came upon Jephthah.
 - c. Jephthah vowed a vow unto the Lord. 11:30
 - d. God was with Jephthah when he went into battle and he was victorious.
 - e. Ephraim was upset with Jephthah because he did not ask them to fight against Ammon. 12:1
 - f. Jephthah judged Israel 6 years. 12:7
10. *Ibzan* — judged Israel 7 years.
11. *Elon* — judged Israel 10 years.
12. *Abdon* — judged Israel 8 years.
 - a. Abdon died.
 - b. The children of Israel did evil again.
13. *Samson* — The next judge was born. Chapter 13
 - a. Manoah was his mother.
 - b. The Spirit of the Lord began to lead him to the work God planned for him.
 - c. Samson married a woman of the Philistines, Delilah.
 - d. The decision Samson made was not approved of God, but God used it to advance his cause.
 - e. It came to be an advantage for Israel.
 - f. Samson fought against the Philistines.
 - g. The period of Samson is covered in chapters 13-16.

14. *Eli* — is priest and judge. 1 Sam. 1
 - a. The sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, took the ark of the covenant into battle and the Philistines took it.
 - b. When Eli heard the news about the ark, he fell from his seat backward and he died.
 - c. He judged Israel for 40 years.
15. *Samuel* — is judge, priest and prophet. 1 Samuel
 - a. God's message to Samuel. 1 Sam. 3:10-18
 - b. He is called the prophet of God. 1 Sam. 3:19-21
 - c. The Philistines were defeated. 1 Sam. 7:11-14
 - d. Samuel judged Israel. 1 Sam. 7:15
 - e. Israel demands a king. 1 Sam. 8:1
 - f. Samuel warns the people about choosing a king. 1 Sam. 8:10-18
 - g. Israel repeats their demand for a king. 8:19-22
 - h. Saul is chosen as king. 1 Sam. 9

IV. THE BOOK OF RUTH DURING THE PERIOD OF THE JUDGES.

- A. "Days when the judges ruled." Ruth 1:1
 1. During this time there was a great famine in the land. Ruth 1:1
 2. The book begins with Elimelech, Naomi, his wife, and their sons leaving their own country, Judah, and moving to Moab.
 3. Their sons married women of Moab, Orpah and Ruth.
- B. Elimelech and his sons died.
 1. Naomi plans to return to Judah.
 2. Orpah remains in Moab.
 3. Ruth goes with Naomi to Judah.
- C. After a period of time Ruth marries Boaz.
 1. They followed the Levirate Law to effect their complete union.
 2. Obed was born to the couple, the lineal descendant of Judah.
 3. The generations to David: Pharez, Hezron, Ram, Amminadab, Nahshon, Salmon, Boaz, Obed, Jesse and David.

V. THE RELATIONSHIP OF THE PERIOD OF THE JUDGES TO THE FULNESS OF TIME.

- A. Gal. 4:4, "But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law."
- B. The period of the judges was the time between the leadership of Moses and Joshua to the kings.
 1. The Mosaic law was governing God's people during this time.
 2. The providence of God ruled through the judges.

- C. God uses this period in the continuing effort to bring about the fulness of time. The “fulness of time” was God’s “right time.”
- D. The promise to Abraham that through his seed all nations would be blessed. Gen. 12:1-3; 22:18. Renewed to Isaac in Gen. 26:4. Renewed to Jacob in Gen. 28:14.
- E. Through the seed of Abraham and David. Gen. 12:1-3
 - 1. The book of Ruth gives a list of the ancestors of Christ through David.
 - 2. Ruth and Boaz are very important in the ancestry of the Lord.
- F. This period continued the process of the Mosaical Law to bring the Jews to Christ, for God was dealing with His people at that time. Gal. 3:24
- G. The seed-line is so important. Gal. 3:16
- H. The period of the judges helped in bringing about the fulness of time.

CONCLUSION:

- 1. The history of Israel is so important.
 - a. All the history, including the period of the judges is important because it played a big part in God revealing His scheme of redemption.
 - b. Christ would come through Israel as a descendent of Abraham and David.
 - 1) Ruth and Boaz begat Obed and Obed begat Jesse and Jesse begat David.
 - 2) Israel was the chosen nation.
- 2. All the people, events, law of Moses and God’s dealing with mankind, can be seen over and over through a study of the history of Israel.
- 3. Names of several of the judges are mentioned in Hebrews 11. This chapter is often referred to as the “Hall of faith”.
- 4. The morals of the Israelite people do not compare with the high standard of morality expected of those in Christ.
- 5. God used these people to bring about salvation to all nations, though they had a mixture of good and bad qualities.
- 6. We must understand Israel’s place in God’s plan.
- 7. We need to learn from Israel that God does not tolerate sin and does not let it go unpunished.
- 8. God blesses those who obey Him and punishes those that disobey.
- 9. We should not be as they. They were repeat offenders. Their actions remind us of the old 45 and 78 phonograph records. The records would get a crack or scratch and when the needle reached that defect it would go back and play it over and over.

10. We must use all the Old Testament as God intended as stated in Rom. 15:4.
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THE FLOOD UPON THE WORLD OF THE UNGODLY

— The Flood —
2 Peter 2:5

Steven Holt

1. Many of the events in our Old Testament are considered to be nothing more than a VBS story for our kids.
 - a. When we think of Adam and Eve, Noah, David, Jonah and many others, the images from our days as a youth in VBS come to mind.
 - b. This should not be the case.
2. The events in the Old Testament are as important to us today as those in the New Testament.
3. We must consider how these events fall into the line that is the "Scheme of Redemption" and what they mean for us today.
4. Our goal is to study "The Flood upon the World of the Ungodly."

DISCUSSION:

1. WHAT REALLY HAPPENED IN THE FLOOD?

- A. The Duration of The Flood (Gen. 7:11-24).
 1. 40 days of rain
 2. 110 additional days of "water prevailing on the earth"
 3. 74 days until mountains were viewed
 4. 7 days before a raven sent out
 5. 7 days before a dove sent for first time
 6. 7 days before a dove sent for second time
 7. 7 days before a dove sent for the final time
 8. 29 days correlates with date of 601st year, 1st month, 1st day
 9. 57 days before Noah and the animals disembark
 10. 371 total days from beginning of rain until leaving the ark
- B. The Depth of The Flood.
 1. The world says it was a local flood.

- a. A web search of “Genesis Flood” will fill the screen with local flood theories.
- b. Why doesn't a local flood make sense?
 - 1) Why build the ark?
 - 2) Why build it so big?
 - 3) Why so many animals?
 - 4) Why didn't people simply head for dry ground when the water began rising?
 - 5) If local, God has repeatedly broken his promise.
- 2. The Bible says it was a global flood.
 - a. High hills under Heaven covered (Gen. 7:19).
 - b. 15 Cubits above mountains covered (Gen. 7:20).
 - c. “And all flesh died” (Gen. 7:21-23).
 - d. Waters prevailed 150 days (Gen. 7:24).
 - e. The TOPS of the mountains were seen (Gen. 8:5).

II. WHAT IS SIGNIFICANT ABOUT THE ARK?

- A. Its size is significant.
 - 1. Length 300 cubits; Width 50 cubits; Height 30 cubits.
 - 2. If a cubit is equal to 18” the ark would have been 450'x75'x45'.
 - 3. Six times longer than wide and 10 times longer than tall.
 - 4. The size of approximately 520 standard railroad boxcars.
- B. Its contents are significant.
 - 1. Noah and his family
 - a. Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord (Gen. 6:8; 7:1).
 - b. He and his descendants were given the task of replenishing the earth. (Gen. 8:17)
 - c. Noah was the “conduit” for the seed promise.
 - 1) Consider Genesis 3:17-19
 - 2) Lamech gave his son the name “Noah” saying he would be a comfort because of the cursed ground.
 - 3) Gen. 8:21, after the offering, God said He would “Never again curse the ground for man's sake.”
 - 4) Noah, not only gave the human race a 2nd chance, but he also continued the seed promise that would have been lost.
 - 2. The animals on the ark.
 - a. If the animals had not been placed on the ark, there would be none today.
 - b. Just as the human population needed to be replenished, the animal population did also.

III. WHERE IS THE FLOOD IN THE NEW TESTAMENT?

- A. An example in our lives.
 - 1. An example of obedience (Heb. 11:7)

2. An example of salvation (1 Peter 3:18-22).
3. An example of judgment (2 Peter 2:4-11).
- B. A type of Christ's 2nd coming.
 1. Warning given
 - a. Flood — Gen. 6:17, 2 Peter 2:5
 - b. 2nd Coming — Rev. 1:7
 2. Unexpected
 - a. Flood — Matt. 24:38-39
 - b. 2nd Coming — 1 Thess. 5:2-3
 3. Sudden
 - a. Flood — Gen. 7:11,12
 - b. 2nd Coming — 1 Thess. 5:3
 4. Total & Final
 - a. Flood — Gen. 7:21-27
 - b. 2nd Coming — 2 Peter 3:10

IV. THE FLOOD AND THE FULLNESS OF TIMES.

- A. Noah is in the family lineage of Christ (Luke 3:23,36).
 1. Why do we need to know the family lineage?
 - a. Isn't this important to know concerning any leader?
 - b. If we know where they came from, we can know more about their values and leadership.
 2. What does Jesus' family line say about Him?
 - a. He is from a line of leaders, rulers, and men of God.
 - b. He is from a line of humans that made mistakes.
- B. Noah was the mouth of Christ (1 Peter 3:18-20).
 1. Christ was preaching on the Earth long before His miraculous birth.
 2. He was preaching to the "spirits in prison" through Noah as the ark was being built.

CONCLUSION:

1. The historical events of Genesis 6-9 are more than a simple children's story and should not be treated as such.
 2. It is important for us to realize how events such as this one shaped the rest of History.
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THEY PASSED THROUGH THE RED SEA

— The Crossing Of The Red Sea —

Hebrews 11:29

Jimmy W. Bates

1. The Bible is God's revelation of His plan to save lost man through the Savior—Jesus Christ!
 - a. The Old and New Testaments are interwoven in this redemptive theme.
 - 1) The Old Testament is the historical background of the New Testament.
 - 2) The types and shadows of the old helps us understand the new.
 - b. The Old Testament records several centuries of God's providence in working out and bringing to fruition His plan beginning with the promise of the Savior in Gen. 3:15 unto the coming of that Savior in the "fullness of time" (Gal. 4:4).
2. A large part of the historical period covered in the Old Testament is the record of the physical and spiritual experiences of a nation of people – descendants of Abraham – the Israelites!
 - a. This nation of people was the result of God fulfilling His promise to Abraham (Gen. 12:1-3).
 - b. These were God's chosen people—chosen as a line of descent through which the Messiah, the Savior, would come.
3. Our lesson deals with one of the major events in the history of the Israelites that began a forty-year journey to the promised land of Canaan which God had promised to Abraham's seed (Gen. 12:7).
 - a. **"The Crossing of the Red Sea"** is recorded in Exodus 14 and is mentioned numerous times throughout the Bible.
 - b. God delivering the Israelites from Egypt was a significant event in the development of His plan of redemption for man.
 - 1) Foretold in Gen. 15:12-16 – They would come out in the 4th generation: Levi—Kohath—Amram—Moses (Exod. 6:16-20; 7:7).
 - 2) There was no power on earth that could keep the Israelites in Egypt!
 - c. The purpose of our study will be to look at the historical facts of this great event and emphasize some of the redemptive principles and contributions to God's ultimate plan of redemption for both Jew and Gentile in the Gospel of Jesus Christ (Rom. 1:16,17).

DISCUSSION:**1. THE PASSOVER — Preparing For The Exodus (Exodus 12:1-28).**

- A. God would redeem the Israelites and take them for His people (Exod. 6:6-7).
1. They would be brought out from under the burdens of the Egyptians – separated from them.
 2. They must rid themselves of any inward influence of the heathen nature of the idolatrous Egyptians.
 3. They would need physical and spiritual strength for the journey ahead of them.
 4. God wanted a perpetual memorial to remind the Israelites of how He redeemed and delivered them from Egyptian bondage.
 5. There would be a divinely ordained means of educating the Israelites, of instructing their children, of bringing the people together once every year to hear again the story of their deliverance from bondage.
 6. God would provide a type of Christ, our Passover Lamb (1 Cor. 5:7; Isa 53:7; John 1:29), to help us better understand His plan of redemption through His Son—Jesus Christ.
 7. All the above things and more are accomplished in the Passover.
- B. The specified time (12:1-4) – "...shall be first month of the year to you" (12:2).
- C. The preparation of the Passover Lamb (12:5-13).
1. A certain kind of Lamb (12:5,6)– Without blemish; a male; 1 year old; a sheep or goat.
 2. Sprinkle blood on the two side posts and the upper doorpost of the houses (12:7).
 3. Roast and eat with unleavened bread and bitter herbs (12:8).
 - a. "unleavened bread" – often signified purity, without corruption of sin. The Israelites must rid themselves of Egyptian influence.
 - b. "bitter herbs" – possibly signifies the bitterness of Egyptian bondage.
 4. Not to eat the flesh raw, nor boiled with water, but roast it whole (12:9).
 5. Eat with clothes and shoes on and staff in hand and in haste – be prepared and ready to go (12:11).
 6. That night, the first born of man and beast among the Egyptians would be killed (12:12). God would execute judgment against all the gods of Egypt.
 7. The blood was a token to the Israelites (12:13). The Egyptians were not under the blood!

- D. A memorial for perpetual remembrance (12:14-28).
1. To keep forever (12:14). Throughout your generations.
 2. The Feast of unleavened bread is connected with the Passover (12:15).
 - a. Lev. 23:4-8; Deut. 16:1-8; Exod. 13:6,7; 23:15
 - b. Eat unleavened bread for 7 days – no leaven to be found in houses.
 3. (12:17-20) – Observe this day in your generations by an ordinance forever. By God's command, the Passover becomes an annual feast of the Jews.
 4. The second Passover was observed on the 14th day of Abib – 1 year after the Exodus (Num. 9:1-5).
 5. The third Passover was not observed until they reached Canaan (Josh. 5:4-6).
- E. The Sanctification and Redemption of the Firstborn (13:1-16).
1. This was closely related to the Passover. Because the Lord had delivered the firstborn of Israel from the sentence of death passed upon the Egyptians – every firstborn male (man or beast) belonged to the Lord (13:1,2).
 - a. In Exod. 4:22, the Lord called Israel “my son, even my firstborn.”
 - b. Sanctify – to set apart or consecrate to holy use or service to God. (John 17:17; 1 Peter 3:15; Heb. 13:12).
 2. Admonition to remember the day of their departure (13:3-7).
 3. Instructions to devote firstborn to the Lord (13:11-13). Later the whole tribe of Levi was substituted for the firstborn sons of Israel (Num. 3:40-51).
 4. This whole transaction taught the Israelites that one life was redeemed by another life.
 - a. In Egypt, the life of their firstborn sons was saved by sacrificing the life of a lamb and sprinkling its blood on the doorposts and lintels.
 - b. So the Israelites were a redeemed people.
 - c. All of this prefigured the ultimate redemption by the blood of our Passover Lamb – Jesus Christ!

II. THE EXODUS — Crossing The Red Sea (Exod. 12:29-51; 13:17-14:31).

- A. The tenth plague and the departure from Egypt (12:29-51).
1. The death of the Egyptian firstborn (12:29,30). Pharaoh now effected directly.
 2. Pharaoh sends Israelites out of Egypt in haste (12:31-36). God had said they will “thrust you out” of Egypt (11:1; 12:39).

- B. From Rameses (in Goshen) to Succoth (12:37,38).
1. About 600,000 men, along with a "mixed multitude" – women, children, servants, etc.
 2. Estimated that the total numbered between 2-3 million people.
- C. The length of the sojourn (12:40-42); How long did Israel dwell in Egypt?
1. Mention is made of 400 years (round numbers) in Gen. 15:13; Acts 7:6, and more specifically 430 years in Exod. 12:40,41.
 - a. It is obvious that the 430 years ends with the exodus out of Egypt;
 - b. But, when did it begin? With the "call of Abraham"? Or, with Jacob's migration into Egypt?
 2. It seems evident that the 430 years is from the "call of Abraham" to the exodus out of Egypt. Consider the following:
 - a. The Septuagint says, "...in the land of Egypt, and the land of Canaan...four hundred and thirty years" (Exod. 12:40,41).
 - b. Paul, in Gal. 3:16,17 dates the 430 years "from the promises made" (Gen. 12:3).
 - c. From "the promises made" (Gen. 12:3) to the migration of Jacob and family into Egypt was about 215 years, leaving about 215 years for the time in Egypt.
 - 1) Abram was 75 when he came into Canaan (Gen. 12:4).
 - 2) He was in Canaan 25 years when Isaac was born (Gen. 21:4,5).
 - 3) Isaac was 60 when Jacob was born (Gen. 25:26), and Jacob was 130 when he went to Egypt (Gen. 47:9). $25 + 60 + 130 = 215$ years
 - 4) The actual bondage probably covered a period of about 100 years.
 3. This would be a night "to be much observed" or remembered (12:42). "Remember this day" (13:3). Deut. 5:15; 7:18; 15:15; 16:3; 24:18 – "Remember"
- D. The direction of their Journey (13:17-20).
1. Did not take the direct and nearest route along the Mediterranean Sea coast to Gaza, then into Canaan (13:17).
 - a. God didn't want them to go through the land of the Philistines – "lest they repent (turn back) when they see war."
 - b. No doubt, God had in mind the events of Mt. Sinai: (Deut. 8:1-3).

2. God led the people by the way of the wilderness of the Red Sea (13:18).
 - a. An eastern direction – “wilderness of Shur” (15:22).
 - b. “Went up harnessed (armed, ASV) out of the land of Egypt.”
 - 1) “In an orderly or well arranged manner.” – Dehoff
 - 2) Hebrew *chamash* – “to arrange, array, or set in order.” – Clarke
 - c. They left Succoth and encamped at Etham (13:20; Num. 33:3,5ff).
- E. The exact place of the crossing of the Red Sea is not known.
 1. From the numerous Biblical references to the Red Sea, it was evidently in the northern area of the northwestern arm of the Red Sea – the Gulf of Suez (now the Suez Canal).
 2. In spite of all the modernistic theories that seek to explain away the miraculous elements of the crossing of the Red Sea, here’s what we know according to the Bible:
 - a. A place that required the mighty hand (miraculous power) of God for Israel to cross.
 - b. A strong east wind parted the water all night (Exod. 14:21).
 - c. There was a wall of water on each side (Exod. 14:22). Paul called it a “baptism” (1 Cor. 10:1,2).
 - d. The water was deep enough that it engulfed and drowned an army which included 600 chariots (Exod. 14:23-31).
- F. The guidance of God (13:21,22).
 1. Day – “pillar of cloud”; Night – “pillar of fire: These were symbols of divine presence – leading the children of Israel.
 - a. The pillar of fire provided light for the camp and gave light by which to journey.
 - b. Later, after the Tabernacle was built, the pillar of cloud overshadowed it by day and the pillar of fire was above it by night – when it moved, they moved (Num. 9:15-23).
 2. This was God’s way of leading and guiding the people.
- G. The pursuit of Pharaoh’s army (14:1-9).
 1. The Israelites encamped by the sea (14:1,2).
 2. Pharaoh will think he has them trapped (14:3).
 - a. But it is God who has Pharaoh and his army trapped.
 - b. God will be honored upon Pharaoh and his army so that the Egyptians will know who is the true God (14:4)!

- c. It seems that God purposely planned, or at least used this event to test Israel's faith and to demonstrate to the Egyptians and Israelites that He is God!
3. Pharaoh's change of mind (14:5-9).
 - a. Pharaoh and his counselors have concluded that they have done a foolish thing in letting Israel go (14:5).
 - 1) Why have we done this?
 - 2) The Plagues – 10 good reasons!!
 - b. Pharaoh and his weapons of war including 600 chosen chariots went after the Israelites and overtook them by the sea (14:6-9).
- H. The fear of the Israelites, the courage of Moses (14:10-14).
 1. Israelites were "sore afraid" – blamed Moses; Egyptian bondage looked better to them than death (14:10-12).
 - a. Fear displays a lack of faith (Mark 4:35-41).
 - b. Faith dispels fear: (2 Tim. 1:5-8; Dan. 3:17 – "Our God whom we serve is able to deliver us.")
 2. The faith and courage of Moses (14:13,14).
 - a. "Fear not..." – Moses didn't know how; but he knew God would deliver them.
 - b. "Stand still..." – Stop and wait for God's instructions! Four destructive moves in time of Crisis:
 - 1) *Despair* – will cast you down and keep you from standing..
 - 2) *Fear* – will tell you to retreat.
 - 3) *Impatience* – will tell you to do something now (hastily) even if wrong.
 - 4) *Presumption* – will tell you to jump into the Red Sea; don't wait on God! (We must always seek for and follow God's instructions).
 - c. "...See the salvation of the Lord"
 - 1) Moses knew their hope of salvation was in the Lord.
 - 2) He knew their enemies would be defeated because, "the Lord will fight for you"; "...ye shall see them again no more for ever."
 - d. The principles of this scene will be played out numerous times over the next 40 years of wilderness wandering. (The despair, fear, impatience, and presumption of the people and the faith and courage of Moses).
 - I. God's instructions to Moses (14:15-18).
 1. "Wherefore criest thou unto me" – implies that Moses prayed unto God.
 - a. Prayer is always right and necessary (Luke 18:1).

- b. But, prayer must be accompanied by action on our part. It was time for Moses and the children of Israel to act.
 2. Tell the children of Israel to “go forward” (14:15). To be saved, they must do their part – obey! The denominational concept that one is to pray for salvation is false!
 3. Moses – lift up rod, stretch out hand and God will miraculously divide the water and Israel will go through the sea on dry land (14:16),
 4. God will get honor upon Pharaoh (14:17,18).
 - a. God will finish answering Pharaoh’s question from Exod. 5:2, *“Who is the Lord, that I should obey His voice to let Israel go?”*
 - b. Here is a great lesson for the Egyptians, the Israelites, and all who read this Bible account!
- J. Israel passed through the Red Sea (14:19-22).
 1. The angel of God and the pillar of cloud moved behind the Israelites and was between them and the Egyptians (14:19-20).
 - a. God protected Israel from Egyptian attack until preparations were made to cross the Red Sea.
 - b. The pillar of cloud was a source of darkness to the Egyptians, but a source of light to Israel.
 - c. The Israelites were hid from the Egyptians “so that the one came not near the other all the night.”
 2. The parting of the water (14:21,22).
 - a. God sent a “strong east wind” that blew all night while the Israelites passed through on dry land. A wall of water on each side.
 - b. It was the miraculous working of God to deliver His people.
- K. The defeat of Pharaoh and the Egyptians (14:23-31).
 1. The folly of the Egyptians (14:23,24).
 - a. They should have recognized the miraculous power of God and pulled back before it was too late! But Pharaoh was driven by greed and revenge.
 - b. Instead, God “discomfited” – means “to put in commotion – to disturb, drive, destroy, break, consume, crush, trouble, vex.” – (Strong)
 - c. “Morning watch” – According to Jewish reckoning would be from 2:00 a.m. to sunrise.
 2. Defeat and punishment of Pharaoh and Egyptians (14:25-28).
 - a. When Moses raised his hand over the waters of the Red Sea, God caused the waters to come thundering down upon the Egyptians.

- b. The final retribution upon Pharaoh for enslaving His people and casting their infant sons into the Nile River.
 - c. "...The Lord over-threw the Egyptians in the midst of the sea." – Israel watched as God won a great victory for them that day!!
3. The fear and faith of Israel (14:29-31).
- a. "The Lord saved Israel that day..." (14:30).
 - 1) After being baptized in the cloud and in the sea (1 Cor. 10:1,2).
 - 2) Our salvation *after* baptism (Mark 16:16; Rom. 6:17,18).
 - b. This deliverance caused Israel to fear God in faith and to respect the leadership of Moses (14:31).

III. PRINCIPLES OF REDEMPTION — Pre-figured in the Exodus (Types and Antitypes).

- A. Egyptian Bondage – type of man's bondage in Sin:
- 1. Israelites were slaves to Egyptians (Exod. 1:11-14). Sinners are slaves to Sin (Rom. 3:23; 6:16).
 - 2. Israelites in bondage were in danger of death (Exod. 14:8-12). Those lost in sin are in danger of hell fire (Matt. 25:41; Luke 16:19-31).
- B. Pharaoh – type of Satan:
- 1. Egypt type of world (Satan's Kingdom).
 - 2. As Pharaoh was determined to hold the Israelites in bondage (Exod. 3:19); Satan is determined to hold every sinner in his service (1 Peter 5:8).
- C. Moses – type of Christ:
- 1. Moses was the deliverer, lawgiver, and prophet to Israelites (Exod. 3:7-10; Deut. 18:15-18; John 1:17). Christ our deliverer, lawgiver, and prophet (Isa. 33:22; Acts 3:22,23; John 3:17; Luke 19:10; Gal. 4:1-7).
 - 2. God preserved Moses from Pharaoh – fled from Egypt (Exod. 2:11-15); God preserved Jesus from Herod – fled to Egypt (Matt. 2:13-15).
 - 3. Moses performed miracles in confirmation of his mission (Exod. 4:1-9); Jesus performed miracles in confirmation of His mission (John 20:30,31).
- D. Deliverance (salvation) of Israelites – type of our salvation from sin:
- 1. Moses through Aaron made known God's plan for their deliverance (Exod. 4:10-16); Jesus through the Apostles made known God's plan of salvation for man (Acts 1:8; 2:1-5, 37-41; Rom. 1:14-17; 6:17-18; 1 Cor. 15:1-4).

2. Israelites believed and obeyed Moses' message (Exod. 4:19-31); We must believe and obey Christ's message (John 1:11,12; 8:24; Mk. 16:16; Acts 2:41; Rom. 6:16-18).
 3. Israelites were required to quit serving Egyptians (Exod. 12:31-36); We must repent of (quit serving) sin (Luke 13:3; Acts 2:38; 17:30,31).
 4. Israelites baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea (Exod. 14:21,22; 1 Cor. 10:1-4); We must be baptized into Christ (Acts 8:38,39; Gal. 3:26,27; Rom. 6:1-5).
 5. Israelites rejoiced in their deliverance (Exod. 15); We rejoice in (salvation) deliverance (Acts 8:39; 16:33,34).
- E. The Paschal Lamb – type of Christ our Passover (1 Cor. 5:7)
1. The Paschal Lamb was to be without blemish (Exod. 12:5); Christ without blemish (1 Peter 1:19; Heb. 4:15).
 2. Passover lamb killed in the evening (Exod. 12:6); Christ killed about ninth hour (darkness from 6th to 9th hour – Matt. 27:45-50).
 3. Lamb's blood procured salvation and deliverance; Christ's blood procured salvation (redemption) for lost man (1 Peter 1:18-20).
 4. Not a bone was broken (Exod. 12:46); Not a bone of Christ was broken (John 19:36).
 5. Was eaten without leaven; We are to partake of Christ without the leaven of malice and hypocrisy (1 Cor. 5:7,8).
- F. Israel in the Wilderness – type of the Church (1 Cor. 10:1-10) and the promised Land of Canaan – type of Heaven:
1. Having been brought under the authority of Moses through the act of baptism, the Israelites became the "church in the wilderness" (Acts 7:38); Upon baptism into Christ, one is added to the church (Acts 2:47).
 2. Only through loyalty to their leader Moses, could the Israelites enjoy unbroken fellowship with God and enter Canaan the promised land; and only through faithfulness and loyalty to Christ, can the Christian have unbroken fellowship with God and enter heaven (1 John 1:7-9; Rev. 2:10; 2 Peter 1:5-11).
 3. With most of the Israelites, God was not pleased and they died in the wilderness (Heb. 3:17-19). They lusted after evil things (1 Cor. 10:5-10). Those who do the same in the church will not enter Heaven!
 4. *Summary:* in the church, we have been delivered out of the bondage of sin as a result of the sacrificial death of Christ. We have all been baptized into Him, and are subject to His authority and leadership every day of our lives. Just as the Israelites' physical needs were provided, we are sustained by the spiritual blessings which are daily provided for us (Eph. 1:3; Heb. 4:14-16).

Even material necessities are provided if we are faithful to Him (Matt. 6:24-34; Phil. 4:19). But, as the Israelites fell, so can we! Only the faithful will reach heaven!

CONCLUSION:

1. "Crossing the Red Sea" was one of the greatest events in the history of the Hebrew Nation and in God's development of His scheme of redemption for lost man!
2. This event was recorded for our learning (Rom. 15:4; 1 Cor. 10:1-10).
3. May we learn and appreciate the great and eternal lessons taught in the Biblical account of the Israelites' "Crossing the Red Sea"!!!!

"FROM HIS RIGHT HAND WENT A FIERY LAW FOR THEM"

— The Giving Of The Law —
Deuteronomy 33:2

Jeff Bates

1. The theme for this Bible lectureship, Epochal Events of Sacred History, is a very needed study.
 - a. Indeed, the Bible reveals to us God's hand in the history of man, and thus God's love and concern for each of us.
 - b. It is the responsibility of the church to make known to the world "the manifold wisdom of God." Eph. 3:7-12
 - c. The lessons presented in this lectureship are intended to present major events in the fulfillment of God's plan for man.
2. One of the epochal events of sacred history is the giving of God's law through Moses.
3. Deuteronomy 33:1-4. Notice particularly the phrase in verse two, "from his right hand went a fiery law for them."

DISCUSSION:

1. LET US FIRST DEFINE OUR TERMS.

- A. "His" refers to "the Lord" from verse two. The Lord gave this law through Moses. 3:4; Isa. 33:22
- B. The phrase "from his right hand" indicates the power/authority of the Lord.

1. Exodus 15:6-13; Psalms 20:5-9
 2. The Lord, our Creator has the power, the authority, the right to give a law and to expect every man to abide by that law.
- C. The phrase “a fiery law” comes from the Hebrew word *eshdath* which means literally “a fire-law” (Strong’s definition).
1. Perhaps this is a reference to the majesty of the giving of this law.
 2. With the Israelites camped at the base of Mount Sinai, God called Moses up to the top of the mountain and gave the law. Exodus 19:1,2,17,20; Deut. 33:2
 3. God came to Moses in a thick cloud. Exodus 19:9
 4. There were thunders and lightnings on the mountain, the “voice of an exceeding loud trumpet” could be heard by the people, the Lord descended upon the mountain in fire so that the smoke arose from the mountain as from a furnace, and the whole mountain quaked greatly. Exodus 19:16-18
- D. “For them” refers to the nation of Israel, the descendants of Jacob. 33:1,10; 2 Kings 17:34-39

II. WHAT WAS THE PURPOSE FOR THE GIVING OF THIS LAW?

- A. God gave this law to cause the Israelites to understand the consequences of their sin and their need for the Savior Jesus Christ, who would be born through their lineage. Rom. 5:20,21; 7:7; Gal. 3:19-24
- B. God gave the law of Moses to foreshadow the coming of Jesus Christ and the establishment of the law of Christ and the new covenant with all of mankind. Heb. 10:1
- C. The law given by God through Moses was not intended to be a permanent law.
1. Jeremiah prophesied of a new law from God. Jer. 31:31-34
 2. This law of God would be first given from Jerusalem. Isa. 2:3; Micah 4:1,2
 3. John began preaching that the kingdom of God was “at hand,” which involved the establishment of this new law. Luke 16:16
- D. God did not intend for the law of Moses to be permanent because the sacrifices offered under that law could not bring forgiveness to the worshiper. Heb. 9:22-28; 10:1-4
- E. The law of Moses brought a knowledge of sin to the hearer, but there could be no forgiveness of sins, no justification until the death of Jesus Christ. Rom. 3:20; 7:5-7; Acts 13:38,39; Gal. 2:16; 3:19; Heb. 7:18,19

- F. Jesus fulfilled God's intentions for the law of Moses in his death on the cross. Matt. 5:17,18
- G. The law of Moses being fulfilled at the death of Jesus Christ, thus ended at that time. Rom. 7:4; Eph. 2:13-15; Heb. 7:12; 8:7-13
- H. Children of God who return to Judaism and attempt to be justified by the law of Moses are "fallen from grace." Gal. 5:4

III. WHAT MUST WE LEARN FROM THE GIVING OF THIS LAW OF GOD THROUGH MOSES TO THE ISRAELITES?

- A. God's law is for the sinner, to make us see that the consequences of sin is not worth the pleasure of sin. 1 Tim. 1:9,10; Heb. 10:26-31
- B. God's law applies equally to every individual. Exodus 12:49; Lev. 24:22; Num. 15:15,16
- C. We are to seek to know the law of the Lord, obey it, and teach it to others. Ezra 7:10; Psalms 1:1,2; Rom. 2:13
- D. We cannot know God's law without spending ample time reading and studying the Bible. Josh. 1:8; Psalms 1:1,2; 1 Tim. 4:15,16; 2 Tim. 2:15
- E. We must not attempt to add to God's law, to delete from God's law, nor to compromise the laws of God. Deut. 4:1-14; Rev. 22:18,19
- F. Parents who truly love their children will teach God's law to them, first by example, and also by daily instruction. Exodus 24:12; Deut. 4:9; 32:46,47
- G. Every individual should be motivated to abide by God's law.
 - 1. Obeying the law of God will lead one to prosperity and success. Josh. 1:7,8; 1 Kings 2:3; 2 Chron. 31:20,21
 - 2. The blessings from God are innumerable for those who keep his law. Exodus 13:3-10; Deut. 28:11-14
 - 3. The consequences of disobeying God's law will be insufferable. Lev. 18:24-30; Deut. 4:1-8; 27:26; 28:15-24
- H. Ultimately, to choose to obey God's law or not, is to choose between life and death. Deut. 30:8-20; Ezek. 18:20-29
- I. The "doer" of the law is justified, not the one who hears, but does not obey. James 1:22-25
 - 1. Obeying one part of God's law does not excuse me in disobeying another part. James 2:8-12
 - 2. One who transgresses God's law is a sinner. 1 John 3:4

CONCLUSION:

- 1. There is a saying, "Those who do not learn from history are destined to repeat it."
- 2. The majority of the Israelites suffered great consequences for their refusal to abide by the laws of God. The majority of those

of our day are repeating that history, many even among the children of God.

3. Why cannot the consequences suffered by the Israelites make us determined to abide by God's law for us given through Jesus Christ?
4. Are you a hearer of God's law, a hearer only, or a doer of God's law?

"THEY CRUCIFIED HIM"

— **The Crucifixion of Jesus** —

Matthew 27:35

Cliff Goodwin

1. Christ and His cross are to form the centerpiece of our preaching (1 Cor. 1:18; 2:2).
2. It is because of His death on the cross that the entirety of the New Testament has been dedicated (i.e. ratified, sealed) by His blood and, therefore, is binding on all men today (Heb. 9:15-20; 13:20; cf. Matt. 26:28; 28:18-20).
3. Truly, the crucifixion of Jesus was a momentous event in human history, forever altering the future course of this planet. However, the effects resulting from the cross not only looked forward into the future, but there were also present and even retroactive effects as well.

DISCUSSION:

I. RETROACTIVE EFFECTS OF THE CRUCIFIXION (OR, EFFECTS LOOKING BACKWARD).

- A. Prophecies of old were fulfilled (Acts 3:14-18; 13:27-29).
 1. The serpent succeeded in bruising the heel of the Seed of woman (Gen. 3:15).
 2. The Messiah was pierced, in both hands and feet (Psa. 22:16; Zech. 12:10).
 3. Christ suffered greatly, as the Vicar of mankind (Isa. 53:4-5, 8).
- B. Sins of old were forgiven (Rom. 3:25; Heb. 9:15).
 1. Before the cross of Christ, sins could only be forgiven in prospect. That is, in prospect of, or with a view toward, the coming sacrifice of Christ (cf. Heb. 10:4).

2. Obviously, the saving effects of His blood "flowed backward" only to cover the sins of those who were faithful under Patriarchy and Judaism (cf. Heb. 11:39-40).

II. IMMEDIATE EFFECTS OF THE CRUCIFIXION.

- A. The Stone was set at nought (i.e. rejected) by the builders (Acts 4:10-11; 1 Peter 2:4).
 1. The "builders" were the Jews — especially the Jewish leaders — who should have recognized and accepted their Messiah (cf. Matt. 21:45).
 2. The crucifixion, however, culminated their complete and total rejection of their own Messiah (cf. John 19:15).
- B. The gates of Hades were opened for a temporary Visitor.
 1. David had prophesied that the Messiah would be in Sheol or Hades (i.e. the realm of departed spirits), for only a limited time (Psa. 16:8-11, NKJV). Peter applied this prophecy to Jesus and attested to its accuracy (Acts 2:29-32, NKJV).
 2. Jesus had made it clear that He was going to have to die in order to build His church, but that the gates of Hades would not prevail against Him (Matt. 16:18, NKJV). In other words, Jesus would die, but He would not stay dead (cf. Acts 2:24)!

III. FUTURE EFFECTS OF THE CRUCIFIXION (OR, EFFECTS LOOKING FORWARD).

- A. The Holy Spirit would soon descend upon the apostles, ushering in the New Testament age (Luke 24:46-49; Acts 1:8; 2:1-47).
 1. In dying on the cross, Christ essentially "nailed closed" the Old Testament law and "nailed open" the New Testament law (Col. 2:14; Heb. 9:15-17).
 2. The Gospel is God's only power to save men's souls (Rom. 1:16), and is the means whereby God calls men to salvation (2 Thess. 2:14). Therefore, all men and women — everywhere — are amenable to this New Testament Gospel (Mark 16:15-16).
- B. With the Mosaic Law taken out of the way, in due time the Gentiles would become fellow citizens in the Messianic kingdom — the church of Christ (Eph. 2:11-22).
 1. According to the Biblical record, Cornelius and his household were the first Gentiles converted to New Testament Christianity (Acts 10; cf. 15:7-9).
 2. The Gospel of Christ would eventually spread through the known Gentile world of the first century (cf. Col. 1:6, 23), forever altering the course of human and world history.

CONCLUSION:

1. Without a doubt, the crucifixion of Christ was a pivotal event in the history of this world. However, its effects are not only broad and sweeping, but also specific and individual.
 2. By dying on the cross as the Lamb of God (John 1:29; Heb. 9:26b), Jesus Christ has provided the ultimate motivation for YOU to love and follow Him (John 12:32; Gal. 6:14).
 3. What do you say? Will the crucifixion of Christ impact your life as it ought? Or will the message of the ages fall on a deaf and hardened heart?
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“I WILL POUR OUT OF MY SPIRIT UPON ALL FLESH”

— **The Outpouring of the Holy Spirit** —

Acts 2:17

Tom House

1. The event, which is described in the text, is certainly one of the pivotal events in human history.
 - a. It was pivotal in that the tide of human history was turned by virtue of the events which transpired at the Pentecost of 30 A.D.
 - b. Luke’s account in Acts 2 is the record of the fulfillment of prophecy and the fulfilling of the Lord’s personal promise which ushered in a series of events that clearly identify the culmination of God’s scheme of redemption.
 - c. From the outpouring of the Holy Spirit came:
 - 1) The beginning of the “last days,” which incorporated two periods of man’s history: the Christian age, and the last days of the Jewish system.
 - 2) The establishment of the kingdom, or church.
 - 3) The beginning of the preaching of the gospel of Christ.
 - 4) And the initiation of the miraculous endowments.
2. The importance of the events of Acts chapters 1 & 2, may be identified in a couple of ways:
 - a. First of all, these chapters provide an inspired outline of the work of the Holy Spirit, an understanding, without which, no one can properly interpret scripture.

- b. Second, since the outpouring of the Spirit is noted in these texts, its importance may be also perceived by the number of occasions which it is explicitly or implicitly noted in prophecy and promise.
3. It will be the purpose of this lesson to examine the occasions of its reference, and to note the significance of the event which is recorded in Acts 2.

DISCUSSION:

I. WORDS OR PHRASES VITAL TO THE STUDY.

- A. There are terms found in this text which are instrumental to understanding the significance of the event and the timeline in which the event occurs.
- B. The four phrases which need to be examined are:
 1. "The last days"
 - a. It is generally assumed by many that the phrase "the last days" is referring to a time just prior to the Lord's second advent, thereby signaling the end of the world.
 - b. This assumption has no merit for several reasons:
 - 1) To draw such a conclusion would presume that there would be "signs" to evidence the impending end; to which the Lord stated such would not occur. Matt. 24:36ff
 - 2) Although there are a few occasions when the period of the fall of Jerusalem would be signified as a "day," Jesus would refer to His second advent as "the last day," or "the last hour;" whereas "the last days" is generally identifying the final period of the Jewish system which would come some 40 years later.
 - a) Comparatively, the apostle Paul stated that the time period involved in the Lord's second coming would be described as in "a twinkling of an eye." 1 Cor. 15:52
 - b) Since nearly 2,000 years have passed since Peter uttered the phrase; and since Joel includes in his prophecy matters regarding the destruction of Jerusalem, in addition to the fact that Peter states that the outpouring indicated the initiation of the "last days," one should be able to conclude that the phrase is in reference to the period of the last days of the Jewish system.

2. "Pour out"

- a. It was not uncommon for inspiration to use the imagery of a "pouring out" to illustrate the administration of an act of God in His relationship to man.
 - 1) In Proverbs 1:23, God, or the Holy Spirit, is personified in the term "wisdom," as that which would be "poured out;" thereby illustrating how God would reveal His mind to man.
 - 2) David prayed for the Lord's indignation and wrath be "poured out" on his enemies. *Psa. 69:24*
 - 3) Both David and Jeremiah prayed that God's wrath be "poured out" on those who defiled the temple, desecrated Jerusalem, and persecuted His people. *Psa. 79; Jer. 10:24-25*
 - 4) God reveals to Ezekiel several times He will "pour out" His fury on an impenitent Israel. *Ezek. 7:8*
- b. There are several prophetic references to the outpouring of the Spirit as well.
 - 1) As God would send the blessing of rain to a parched ground for His people Israel, He would also send the Spirit in blessing man with spiritual direction; from which, at the time of the Spirit's coming, there would have been a "drought" in His direct intervention with man (*Isa. 44:3*). (There would be approximately 400 years from the last of the prophets until the time of John the Baptist).
 - 2) Ezekiel also prophesied of the "pouring out" of the Spirit; in which his prophecy alludes to the Spirit's involvement in the deliverance of the Gospel message. *Ezek. 11:10*
 - 3) The prophet Zechariah records God's promise to "pour out" upon the house of David the "spirit of grace and supplications." *Zech. 12:10*
- c. The Lord would use similar language in regard to the outpouring in *John 7:38-39*.
- d. The apostle Peter will refer to the circumstances with the Gentiles (Cornelius) receiving the "outpouring" in *Acts 10:45*.
 - 1) It is in reference to this event that some clarification be examined.
 - 2) The terminology regarding the "outpouring of the Spirit" should not be equated exclusively with the baptism of the Spirit.
 - 3) *The Scriptures do not indicate that "all flesh" would be "immersed" in the Spirit's power, as such was promised only to the apostles. Luke 24:19; Acts 1:5*

- 4) If the "outpouring" is exclusive to the "baptism," and Cornelius was also a recipient of the baptism, then only the apostles and the house of Cornelius would be the extent of the "all flesh" unto which the promise was made.
 - 5) However, there are examples of those who demonstrated the power of the Spirit as set forth in Joel's prophecy. Joel 2:28-29
 - a) The example of Philip's daughters. Acts 21:8-9
 - b) Also, note that Stephen was a man "full of the Holy Ghost" (Acts 6:5), but had not been baptized with the Holy Spirit; and hence implies that he received his outpouring by the laying on of an apostle's hands.
 - c) Samaritans were of a different ethnicity than Jews, and had to have an apostle's hand to impart the spiritual gifts to them. Acts 8
 - 6) The "baptism" was an immersion of power which Cornelius did not receive, for it was not promised to him.
 - 7) The "outpouring" is that which was a dispersion of the Spirit's power to all races or ethnic groups who would have obeyed the Gospel and had the hands of an apostle laid on them to bestow the power; which means that the "outpouring" must involve the "baptism" of the Spirit which came on the apostles; for without it, the "outpouring" to "all flesh" would not occur without the administration of an apostle's hands.
 - 8) The administration of the gift on Cornelius was exceptional, for it was bestowed by God and not by the hands of an apostle.
 - e. This "outpouring" initiated the period of miraculous endowments which would be used to empower the early Christians to confirm an unwritten word. Mark 16:20
3. "My Spirit"
- a. The term "Spirit" (*pneuma*) is a reference to the Holy Spirit, the third of the Godhead.
 - b. When Peter quotes Joel's prophecy, there is the addition of the preposition "of" to indicate that what was being bestowed was from the Holy Spirit.
 - c. A "pouring out" of the Spirit's power would first be provided for the apostles, through whom the power would be administered to baptized believers by the apostle's hands. Acts 8

- d. It was the same power which Simon the Sorcerer attempted to purchase that he might be able to pass on the Holy Spirit by his hands. Acts 8:18-20
 - e. From the same context in Acts 8, the power was referenced by Peter as “the gift of God.”
4. “All flesh”
- a. This phrase is a simple reference to human kind; and is not distinguishable by ethnic group or gender.
 - b. Hence, Joel is stating that the Spirit would be “poured out” on Jews and Gentiles, as well as men and women. (Acts 10 – Cornelius; Acts 21 – Philip’s daughters)

II. THE PROPHETICAL BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT.

- A. The prophet Joel was the source of the prophecy which was quoted by Peter.
1. Virtually nothing is known of Joel except that he was the son of Pethuel. Joel 1:1
 2. It seems likely that he was from Judah and did his prophetic work during the days of Jehoash who reigned from 835 to 796 B.C.
- B. The land also plays a role in the prophecy.
1. Locusts had devastated the crops, and had created a severe famine which had so weakened the nation that it made it ripe for invasion.
 2. Syria and Assyria were poised to lay siege on the land.
 3. Joel beseeches the people to penitence, fasting, and weeping. Joel 2:13
 4. It is of some interest to note that the impending siege was called the “day of the Lord.” 2:11
 - a. This is language used by the Lord in Matthew 24:29 and Mark 13:24-25.
 - b. No Bible student disputes that the Lord was speaking of the fall of Jerusalem.
 - c. Therefore, it should be clear that Jesus is providing an interpretation of Joel’s prophecy.
 - d. Since such is the case, it should settle the issue as to the time period in relation to Joel’s prophecy — “the last days” was the reference to close of the Jewish system and indicates the time-frame of the out-pouring’s duration.
 - e. Remembering also, that when Jesus makes the reference, He notes that the events regarding Jerusalem’s fall, would occur before the passing of that “generation.” Matt. 24:34

C. Peter quotes Joel's prophecy for two reasons:

1. To place in perspective for those present at Pentecost, the truth regarding the events which they had witnessed that day.
 - a. Some thought what they had witnessed was nothing more than the evidence of some under the influence of alcohol. Acts 2:12-13
 - b. Peter denies this presumption with two formidable arguments:
 - 1) One, was that the time of day, (the third hour – our 9 a.m.), was not the time normally given to drinking, much less being drunk;
 - 2) And secondly, he notes that what they had witnessed was the fulfillment of Joel's prophecy, the beginning effect of the Spirit's outpouring.
 - c. The second of those arguments was also to establish a time-line of events.
 - 1) Joel prophesied the Spirit's outpouring would come in "the last days."
 - 2) Peter says "this is that;" hence, "the last days," had begun.
 - 3) Joel also states there would be a "remnant out of Zion;" which indicates those who saw the "signs" of impending destruction, and heeded the warnings, would flee and be spared. Joel 2:31; Acts 2:21
 - 4) All of these events (in context) provide a time-line of duration for the period of the effects of the outpouring; namely, the period of the miraculous endowments.
 - 5) For corresponding confirmation of this time-line, note the prophecy of Micah. Micah 7:15
 - 6) Note also the terms of cessation mentioned by Paul in 1 Cor. 13:8-10.

III. THE LORD'S PROMISE TO THE APOSTLES.

- A. Every Bible student is aware of the mighty works which the Lord did while He walked on earth during His ministry.
 1. Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews, recognized the Lord's power was attributed to the divine. John 3:2
 2. The debate among the Pharisees regarding the healing of the blind man, opened the plausibility of the Lord's divine power. John 9:16,33
- B. The miraculous works of the Lord would confirm His deity.
- C. However, Jesus would return to the Father, and His disciples would need a means to confirm the teaching of the Gospel message.

- D. The Lord promised to send the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, to achieve that very purpose. John 14:26; John 16:13; Mark 16:17-18,20
- E. Just prior to His ascension, the Lord told His chosen ones to remain in Jerusalem until they be “endued with power from on high.” Luke 24:49
- F. In Acts 1, the Lord will tell these same men they would shortly be “baptized” with the Holy Spirit (1:5), and thereby, provide the means by which “power” would come upon them. 1:8
- G. The account of Acts 2 provides the record of:
 - 1. The fulfilling of the Lord’s promise.
 - 2. The fulfilling of Joel’s prophecy.
 - 3. The beginning of the miraculous endowments, which was the effectual evidence of the outpouring of the Spirit.
 - 4. The beginning of the preaching of the Gospel, the truth of which would have been confirmed by the outpouring.
 - 5. And, the beginning of the church.

CONCLUSION:

- 1. The outpouring of the Holy Spirit was instrumental in the fulfilling of God’s plan to redeem man.
 - 2. Without the outpouring, the truth of the Gospel could not have been sustained.
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“HE DROVE OUT THE MAN”

— The Fall —

Genesis 3:24

Tom Snyder

- 1. The first three chapters of the Bible consist of God, man and sin.
 - a. In the beginning God, ch 1
 - b. God created man in His image, ch 2
 - c. Man sinned, ch 3
- 2. That chapter three is an epochal event should be evident.
 - a. When we consider that the rest of the Bible consists of resolving what sin did and does.
 - b. In that the Bible opens with paradise of God is lost to man and the close of the Bible shows the paradise restored.

3. If we want to understand John 3:16, the cross of Christ, the church, baptism, heaven and in fact most of the Bible, we must understand Genesis chapter three.
4. Let us consider Genesis three as a great epochal event God would have us to know and understand.

DISCUSSION:

I. THE BRIEF WORK OF SATAN, Gen 3:1-5.

- A. We are to understand that behind this serpent is Satan himself, Rev 12:9.
- B. There are only three things Satan said:
 1. He asked a question: v.1, "Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?"
 2. He lied: v.4, "Ye shall not surely die."
 3. He gave reason: v.5, "For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil."
- C. There was no force, no coercion, no compulsion, no "the devil made me do it."
- D. He was not their creator nor their benefactor and yet in the end, man gave more heed to Satan than unto God, cf. 2 Cor. 4:4.
- E. Satan only used the mind of man. The mind is a powerful thing.
 1. Mere sight, mere suggestion can produce lust that leads to sin.
 2. Knowing this, we control what we see and who our friends are.
 3. Satan used sight and suggestion Eve's lust did the rest. James 1:14-15

II. OPEN EYES, Gen. 3:6-7.

- A. What the woman saw in the forbidden fruit.
 1. What she saw was not what God intended her to see from this fruit.
 2. The mind transformed this fruit from the untouchable and undesirable to desirable, shareable and soon touchable.
 3. Not only for her but for others as well, sin often creates an open door policy.
- B. She saw more than she wanted to see:
 1. She saw guilt
 2. She saw shame
 3. She saw a need to hide and flee

III. WHITHER SHALL I FLEE FROM THY PRESENCE?

Gen. 3:8-13.

- A. God did not move, it was man that moved away from God.
- B. You can run but you cannot hide, is a lesson that must be learned.
- C. There is tragic irony in verse 8 in that when a serpent (one of God's creatures) spoke, they listened, but when the Lord spoke, they hid themselves from his presence.
- D. Some things Satan did not tell them:
 - 1. They would be trying to hide from their God.
 - 2. They would have to stand before God in judgment.
 - 3. They would experience fear and guilt.
 - 4. They would turn against one another.
 - 5. They would make feeble excuses for their actions.

IV. THE WAGES OF SIN, Gen. 3:14-21.

- A. Three parties are involved in transgression:
 - 1. Serpent — the tempter.
 - 2. Eve — the deceived.
 - 3. Adam — the servant of Eve. v.17
- B. Three parties were to experience the wrath of God:
 - 1. The serpent — Satan. vs.14-15
 - a. While it seems that the wrath of God was simply upon the snake, from verse 15 it shows that this curse is expanded to beyond just the serpent.
 - 1) v15 has reference not to the serpent, but to Satan.
 - 2) I take this curse upon the serpent to be a type of Satan in that it is a curse upon Satan that puts him lower than man and while not all men fears Satan, they should. As they don't see Satan as an enemy, they should. As they do not see the victory, they should.
 - 3) While the serpent receives the blow from mankind, the true victory is in the true seed of woman — Jesus the Christ.
 - 2. Eve — women. v.16
 - a. Pertaining to children — "I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children."
 - b. Pertaining to husband — "thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee."
 - 3. Adam — man. vs.17-19
 - a. The charge: "thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife."
 - b. The sin: "hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying thou shalt not eat of it."

c. Consequences

- 1) Cursed is the ground for thy sake.
- 2) Death: "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it west thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return."

V. SO HE DROVE OUT THE MAN, Gen. 3:22-24.

A. We learn of power:

1. Power of knowledge. v.22
2. Power of the tree of life. v.22
3. Power of God. v.23
4. Powerless man. v.24

B. The driving out was:

1. *Physical*

- a. We are speaking of consequences for sin.
- b. Gen. 3:24ff list some serious consequences for sin.
- c. What of death?
- d. Job knew of a life full of trouble. Job 6:5-6
- e. Every smashed finger, every cold, every disease, every cancer, every hurricane, every death of a child, or a mother, a father is a consequence of sin.

2. *Spiritual*3. *Historical*

- a. There is an echo of this "driving out" down through the epochs of time in which God has driven out man from his protection and blessings even to the point of death. Isa. 59:1ff
 - 1) Genesis 5 is a record of genealogies or life, but it is also a record of the reality of death.
 - 2) We have the record of Adam's death. "Ye shall surely die" is shown to be a reality.
 - 3) Eight more times "and he died" is applied to each man and his son. "For as in Adam all die" (1 Cor. 15:22).
- b. There is a hopeful exception in 5:24, "*And Enoch walked with God; and he was not; for God took him.*"
- c. Rom. 1:18-21, early man knew God, that He was creator and benefactor, they rejected Him and "God also gave them up." vs.24,26,28
- d. Genesis 3 is the book of the law of Moses, the children of Israel was to know of the creation and also that man sinned.
- e. Flood, Jerusalem. Matt. 23:38; Luke 13:27-29

4. *Futuristic*

- a. Jesus speaks of God at judgment driving man away from his presence. Matt. 7:21-23; Matt. 25:41

- b. Yet there is access to the tree of life. Rev. 2:7; 22:1-2; 22:14
- 5. *Typical*. Rom 5:14
 - a. Where did sin and death come from?
 - b. Where does justification and life come from?
 - c. Paul answers this in Romans 5:12-21 and 1 Cor. 15:20-26
 - d. First Adam — first sin and death and death passed on to man. The judgment was by one to condemnation
 - e. Second Adam — Brought life through his death, the resurrection of the dead. Abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness.

CONCLUSION:

1. He drove them out was a reality that is still very much relevant.
 2. The story of redemption is that a change is available.
 3. From driving out to “come unto me” is the great change through obedience to the Gospel of Jesus Christ.
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“IN HIS DAYS WAS THE EARTH DIVIDED”

— The Division Of The Earth —

Genesis 10:25

Marlin Kilpatrick

1. Since Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden of Eden, God has had a plan to redeem man. His plan was to eventually gather all men in Christ wherein is salvation (Gal. 4:4).
 - a. It was sin which made God’s plan to redeem man necessary.
 - b. The earliest prediction of God’s plan is revealed (Gen. 3:15).
2. The sinfulness of mankind, before the flood, prompted God to choose Noah to accomplish his determination to give man one last chance for his redemption (Gen. 6:5-8).
 - a. Noah built the Ark according to God’s specifications and it became the means of his salvation. Every living thing upon the earth perished in the flood.
 - b. Following the flood, God told Noah and his family to “...be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth” (Gen. 9:1).
3. Noah had three sons: Shem, Ham, Japheth. In our text (Gen. 10:25), we are concerned with the descendents of Shem.

- a. Shem had five sons: Elam, Asshur, Arphaxad, Lud, and Aram. Arphaxad is the son with whom we are primarily concerned. Arphaxad begat Salah and Salah begat Eber and Eber begat Peleg and Joktan (cf. Gen. 10:22-25).
- b. The name Peleg means division. Hence, "...for in his days was the earth divided..." (Gen. 10:25).
4. This "dividing of the earth" occurred with the destruction of the tower of Babel, and it speaks of how God confused the languages of the people and scattered them upon the face of the earth (cf. Gen. 11:7-9).
 - a. A basic feature of any society is its language; it makes communication possible.
 - b. The scattering of the people brought about the formation of numerous nations.
5. Now we are ready to see how this epoch event (i.e., the dividing of the earth) set into motion various situations that helped bring about "the fullness of time." cf. Gal. 4:4
6. How did God use this epochal event to bring about the fulfillment of his plan to, "in the fullness of time," bring Jesus Christ into this world?

DISCUSSION:

I. GOD USED FOUR WORLD EMPIRES TO ACCOMPLISH HIS PURPOSE.

- A. The 1st world empire was the *Babylonian Empire*. (626 B.C. – 539 B.C.)
 1. God's people (Kingdom of Judah) were carried into captivity by King Nebuchadnezzar; there were three "carryings away" into captivity.
 - a. Daniel was in the first carrying away into captivity ca. 606-605 B.C.
 - b. The second carrying into captivity, ca. 598-597 B.C.
 - c. The third carrying away into captivity, ca. 586 B.C.
 2. Nebuchadnezzar had a dream which no one but Daniel could interpret.
 3. Daniel declares the dream and interprets it (Dan. 2:31-44).
 - a. The "head of gold" represented Nebuchadnezzar or the Babylonian Empire.
 - b. The "breast and arms of silver" represented the Medo-Persian Empire.
 - c. The "belly and thighs of brass" represented the Grecian Empire.
 - d. The "legs of iron" with feet "part iron and part clay" represented the Roman Empire.
 - 1) During the days of the Roman kings (Emperors), Daniel 2:44 finds its fulfillment.

- 2) The Roman Empire is the last world empire mentioned in the Bible.
4. The Babylonian Captivity contributed to bringing in the “fullness of time” in at least three ways.
 - a. Monotheism was instilled in Jewish hearts — no more idol worship.
 - b. The Jews were convinced that God rules in the kingdoms of men. Daniel 4:17
 - c. Synagogue worship began during this period of time.
- B. The 2nd world empire was *Medo-Persian Empire*. (539 B.C.–332 B.C.)
 1. With the overthrow of Belshazzar by Darius the Mede, the Babylonian Empire came to an end (cf. Dan. 6,7).
 2. Darius was eventually succeeded by Cyrus, king of Persia, which is present day Iran.
 3. In 536 B.C., Cyrus granted a decree which allowed God’s people to return to Jerusalem, so they might rebuild the temple and resettle in their homeland.
 4. The Medo-Persian Empire contributed to bring in “the fullness of the time” by providing the opportunity for the Jews to return to Palestine and rebuild the temple, set up their religious worship, prepare for the coming of the Messiah, and possess a commitment to the principle of law and order. To Illustrate: “the law of the Medes and Persians altereth not.”
- C. The 3rd world empire was the *Grecian Empire* with Alexander the Great as head. (332 B.C.–167 B.C.)
 1. “The Greeks excelled in many areas: Intellectual centers such as Athens were world renowned; they were unsurpassed in art, language, philosophy, literature, and sculpture; their architecture and such are still admired and treasured” (Jackie Stearsman, Daniel and Ezekiel Historical Background, Class Notes, 1987). Thus, we have an appeal to man’s intellect.
 2. The Greek language was a tremendous contribution to the spread of New Testament Christianity due to its universality and ease of translation.
 3. There were five great philosophers.
 - a. *Epicurus* taught man’s greatest need was pleasure — the “eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die” philosophy. cf. Luke 12:16-21
 - b. *Zeno* taught the wise man should follow virtue alone, remaining indifferent to the external world. His followers were the Stoics.
 - c. *Socrates* taught man ought to think for himself.
 - d. *Plato* held man ought to think on a spiritual level.

- e. *Aristotle* taught man ought to think logically. He once said, "Plato is dear to me, but dearer still is truth."
- 4. Every sermon in the book of Acts is built upon the fact that man should think for himself, think on a spiritual level, and think logically.
- D. Hebrew Independence (167 B.C.–63 B.C.).
 - 1. Judas Maccabees and his brothers defeated the Syrian army and the temple was rededicated. (See feast of dedication in John 10:22).
 - 2. Through military conquest, much of Palestine was retaken and the surrounding people such as the Philistines, Idumeans, Ammonites, and the Samaritans on Mt. Gerizim, were subjected.
 - 3. At the time of Christ, the Sadducees were the controlling *political party*, they also had control of the High Priesthood. The Pharisees were the leading *religious party* in the time of Christ and his apostles.
- E. The 4th world empire was the *Roman Empire* (63 B.C., throughout the N.T. era).
 - 1. The Roman Empire made several major contributions to the time when "the fullness of the time" would be fulfilled.
 - a. The world was given a sense of individual citizenship and certain rights.
 - b. The Romans had the world's best system of roads.
 - c. Pompey had cleared the Mediterranean Sea and inland waterways of pirates, making travel over water safer.
 - d. There was virtual freedom of religion given to the Roman citizens.
 - e. The Romans enjoyed a sense of justice, along with the best system of laws the world had ever known.

II. THE RELIGIOUS CONTRIBUTION OF THE JEWS.

- A. Unlike the Greeks, the Jews did not seek to find God by rationalistic means; they accepted his existence by faith, i.e., faith built upon evidence which is God's word.
- B. Their geographical location was most useful due to being situated on the crossroads of Asia, Africa and Europe, to which a Savior would come.
- C. The Jews had a monotheistic religion, as compared with the polytheism of the Romans and Greeks.
- D. The Messianic hope was a sharp contrast from the hope of a Roman ruler being born as a son of Augustus Caesar.
- E. An ethical system, the 10 commandments, offered to the world a sense of sin — the violation of God's law.

- F. Old Testament scriptures provided a basis to begin the message of the Gospel for the whole world.
- G. Their philosophy of history insisted history had meaning.
- H. The synagogue was a place where the Jews and many Gentiles were made aware of a higher approach to life. The synagogue became the earliest place for the preaching of the Gospel.

CONCLUSION:

1. At no time B.C. was such a large region (i.e. Mediterranean world) under one law and government.
2. The Mediterranean world had one culture which was centered in Rome.
3. One universal language made it possible to give the Gospel to most of the people which was common to them and the speaker.
4. Palestine, the birthplace of Christianity, had a strategic place in the world.
5. With the contributions of each of the four world empires, along with the contributions of the Jews, the world was ripe for the “fullness of the time” and Christ came to redeem man from sin.
6. All of the foregoing was made a reality due to the division of the world.

“JACOB WENT DOWN INTO EGYPT”

— The Descent Of Jacob Into Egypt —

Acts 7:15

Barry O'dell

1. The topic of discussion cannot be separated from the promise of God to Abram (Gen. 12:1-3).
 - a. The Lord promised Abram that He would give him a land, make him a great nation, and bless all families of the earth through his seed.
 - b. Abram's journey would take him from Haran (Gen. 12:4) to Shechem (Gen. 12:6) where he worshiped God.
 - c. He would next “pitch his tent” between the cities of Bethel and Ai (Gen. 12:8).
 - d. The Biblical text reveals there was a “grievous famine in the land” which led Abram and his family to Egypt (Gen. 12:10).

2. As Abram, his wife, and all that he had come up out of Egypt, he returns to the site between Bethel and Ai (Gen. 13:1-4).
 - a. Because of the great amount of flocks, herds, and tents, Abram and Lot must separate because of a lack of space (Gen. 13:5-13).
 - 1) Moses records that from between Bethel and Ai, Lot chose the cities of the plain of Jordan and traveled east (Gen. 13:11).
 - 2) He also wrote, "Abram dwelt in the land of Canaan" (Gen. 13:12).
 - b. It is at this point that God again spoke to Abram about the land (Gen. 13:14-17).
 - c. In the midst of the promise of the great land inheritance, the Lord also promised Abram that his seed would become as the dust of the earth (Gen. 13:16).
 - 1) Genesis 15:4-5 reveals that Abram would have his own son and that his descendants would be in number as the stars of heaven.
 - 2) That same night, the Lord spoke to Abram in a dream (Gen. 15:13-21).
3. How do all these events change the course of history?
 - a. What do these sacred, historical events have to do with the fullness of the time (Gal. 4:4), and how would the Lord fulfill all these promises to His friend, Abraham?
 - b. In time, Abraham and Sarah have their own son, Isaac (Gen. 21:1-4. Note especially verse 2).
 - c. Genesis 25:19-23 contains the promise of God being extended to Isaac, through Jacob.
 - d. In time, Jacob's seed increased through the birth of his sons (Gen. 29:31-30:24).
 - e. From this point on, in the book of Genesis, Moses recorded by inspiration of the Holy Spirit (2 Peter 1:20-21) the life and events of the family of Jacob.
 - f. The significant event upon which we will focus is recorded in Genesis 46:5-7.

DISCUSSION:

1. **IN GOING TO EGYPT, JACOB WOULD SEE PROPHECY FULFILLED.**
 - A. The event of Jacob going down to Egypt is inseparable from the narrative of Genesis 37:1-4.
 1. As the text reveals, Joseph had a dream of sheaves in a field (Gen. 37:5-8).
 2. He also had a dream of the sun, moon, and eleven stars bowing down before him (Gen. 37:9-11).

- B. Because of their hatred for Joseph, his brothers sold him for twenty pieces of silver to a company of Ishmaelites and he was taken to Egypt (Gen. 37:28).
- C. The Bible reveals the character of Joseph while he was living in Egypt (Gen. 39:2-3,5, 21-23; 41:37-38).
- D. The Biblical “test” of a prophet is found in Deuteronomy 18:22 and Jeremiah 28:5-9.
 - 1. As one reads the text of Genesis 42-45, the fact that Joseph was a prophet of God is abundantly clear.
 - a. Genesis 42:1-9
 - b. Genesis 42 reveals Reuben recalling what he and his brothers had done to Joseph.
 - 2. Imagine what was going through the mind of Israel when he saw his son for the first time in years (Gen. 46:28-30)!

II. IN GOING TO EGYPT, THE FAMILY OF JACOB WOULD BE PRESERVED.

- A. The promise to Abram is directly connected to these events.
 - 1. There was a famine that was “severe in all the lands” (Gen. 41:57) when Jacob first sent his sons to Egypt.
 - 2. Joseph has been placed over all things in Egypt at this time (Gen. 41:39-41).
- B. Joseph was sold into Egypt because of the hatred his brothers had for him (Gen. 37:4).
 - 1. The Holy Spirit, however, reveals that there was a greater purpose being served while these events were taking place.
 - 2. Gen. 45:5-8; Gen. 50:15-21

III. IN GOING TO EGYPT, THE FAMILY OF JACOB MULTIPLIED.

- A. It is beyond any doubt that God was active in the life of Joseph!
- B. Even though he had been betrayed by his own family and dead in the mind of his father, God was accomplishing His purpose through the life of Joseph.
 - 1. The Lord had said to Abram, “*And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing*” (Gen. 12:2).
 - 2. God brought Israel and his family to live in Goshen and even uses Pharaoh to bless them. Gen. 47:3-6
- C. It is during their stay in Egypt that we read of the “great nation” promise being fulfilled (Exodus 1:1-7).

IV. IN GOING TO EGYPT, JACOB PRESERVED THE LINEAGE OF CHRIST.

- A. In the days of Isaac there came a famine and he was instructed not to go to Egypt, but to stay in Gerar, which is in the southern part of Israel.
- B. The significance of this command is seen in Genesis 26:2-5.
- C. God was going to keep His promise to Abraham and it is now extended to Isaac.
- D. Later, as Jacob sees a ladder extending into heaven, the promise is repeated to him (Gen. 28:13-15).
- E. In Egypt, as Jacob was speaking to his sons before his death, he makes a very significant promise to Judah (Gen. 49:9-10).
 - 1. Judah would be a strong people, like a young lion, and none would rouse him (1 Chron. 5:2).
 - 2. But then Jacob refers to a "scepter" that would not depart from Judah. Gen. 49:10
 - a. A scepter was a ruler's staff, thus signifying kingly power or authority.
 - b. This is clearly a reference to Jesus Christ (Heb. 7:14; Rev. 5:5).
- F. If Jacob had not gone down into Egypt his family could have died in the famine.
 - 1. If his family had died in the famine, the nation of Israel could not have existed.
 - 2. If the nation of Israel did not exist, the Christ could not have come!

CONCLUSION:

- 1. In bringing this all together, the significance of Stephen's statement in Acts 7:15 is clear!
 - 2. God, in accomplishing the fullness of the time, was working His plan through the lives of Jacob and Joseph.
 - 3. Because Jacob went down into Egypt, Christ came to earth.
 - 4. Because Jacob went down into Egypt, salvation is made possible to all men through Jesus Christ, and it all began with the promise God made to Abraham.
 - 5. Gal. 3:26-29
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“GOD ALSO TO THE GENTILES GRANTED REPENTANCE UNTO LIFE”

— The Conversion of Cornelius and His House —

Acts 11:18

Windell R. Fikes

1. Old Testament glimpses of God's concern for Gentiles.
2. God loved and cared for Gentiles.
3. God promises salvation to Gentiles.
4. God grants salvation to Gentiles.

KEY VERSE — “And when they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then to the Gentiles also hath God granted repentance unto life.” (Acts 11:18, ASV)

DISCUSSION:

I. OLD TESTAMENT GLIMPSES OF GOD'S CONCERN FOR GENTILES IDENTIFIED AS NATIONS/HEATHEN.

- A. Noah offered sacrifices to God (Gen. 8:20-21).
- B. Melchizedek was priest of God Most High (Gen. 14:18).
- C. All people were one language and one speech (cf. Gen. 11).
- D. Abraham, first to be called a Hebrew (Gen. 14:13).
 1. The Hebrews [descendants of Abraham] became a distinct people when the Law of Moses was given (Exodus 19:5-6; Duet. 4:1-14, 5:1-3; cf. Eph. 2:11-22)
 2. All Jews are Hebrews but not all Hebrews are Jews.

II. GOD LOVED AND CARED FOR GENTILES.

- A. Gentiles designated as strangers or sojourners by Moses' Law must be treated right (Exodus 22:21; Lev. 19:33-34; Deut. 10:17-19).
- B. Strangers or sojourners (Gentiles), could become Proselytes and join the Hebrew family of God by:
 1. Rejecting heathenism (cf. Ruth 1:6-19; Ezra 6:21).
 2. Being circumcised (Exodus 12:47-50).
 3. By embracing Judaism (keeping the Law of Moses) (Duet. 29:10-14).
- C. God sent Jonah to preach to the Ninevites (Gentiles) (Jonah 3:1-3).
- D. Four Gentile women, Tamar, Rahab, Ruth and Bathsheba — from the legal and biological reckoning were in the lineage of Jesus the Messiah (Matt. 1:3-6; Luke 3:31-33).

III. GOD PROMISES SALVATION TO GENTILES.

- A. Gentiles (heathen, KJV; nations, ASV) were a part of "all the families of the earth" in God's Promised blessing to Abraham (Gen. 12:1-4; 17:1-5; 22:15-18; Psa. 2:8; Isa. 42:1,6; 49:5-6; Acts 2:39; Rom. 11:1-32; Gal. 3:15-29; Eph. 2:11-22).
- B. Isaiah prophesied "all flesh" (includes Gentiles) will come to worship Jehovah (Isa. 66:22-24).
- C. Joel prophesied that God would pour out His Spirit upon "all flesh." All flesh includes the Gentiles (Joel 2:28-29). Peter quotes Joel's prophesy (Acts 2:17).
- D. Gentile's salvation would come at the giving of the new name, Christian (Isa. 56:5; 62:2; Acts 10:1-48; 11:26).

IV. GOD GRANTS SALVATION TO GENTILES.

- A. Gentiles were promised salvation under Christ's new covenant (Joel 2:28; Acts 2:17).
- B. The promise was repeated on Pentecost (Acts 2:39).
- C. Cornelius (Gentile) and his house converted (Acts 10:1-48).
- D. Gentiles granted repentance unto life (Acts 11:1,14-18).

CONCLUSION:

1. The Old Testament reveals glimpses of God's concern, love, and care for the Gentiles even to weaving of Gentile flesh into the lineage of the promised Messiah. God spoke to Abraham and the prophets concerning the blessings all men (both Jews and Gentiles) would receive through Jesus Christ and the New Covenant.
2. Luke discusses the salvation of Gentiles, their obedience to the Gospel, and the necessity for Jews to accept all Gentile converts without distinction in Acts chapters 10, 11, 13 and 15.
3. Paul writes the Roman brethren that Gentiles will be saved in the same manner as Jews, without partiality.
4. Truly, God has granted the Gentiles repentance unto life!

Suggested more detail study material

Commentary on Isaiah by Wayne Jackson

www.christiancourier.com articles about Gentiles

“GOD...PUT NO DIFFERENCE BETWEEN US AND THEM”

— The Jerusalem Conference —

Acts 15:8,9

Ben F. Vick, Jr.

1. There has never been a time when the church was free from troubles, trials, controversies and corruptions, whether from without or within.
 - a. Prior to the establishment of the church, Judas was among the apostles.
 - b. Ananias and Sapphira troubled the church in her early days (Acts 5:1-11). These are “proofs of the power which moral evil possesses to combine itself with the holiest of works.”¹
 - c. There was murmuring because the Grecian widows had been neglected in daily needs (Acts 6).
 - d. There was persecution that arose at the time of Stephen’s death (Acts 7-8).
 - e. The disciples were suspicious of Paul when he returned from Damascus (Acts 9).
 - f. John Mark departed from Paul and Barnabas at Perga in Pamphylia (Acts 13:13).
2. The Jerusalem Conference was a watershed event:
 - a. Barnes states: The account which follows is a record of the first internal dissension which occurred in the Christian church. Hitherto the church had been struggling against external foes. Violent persecutions had raged, and had fully occupied the attention of Christians. But now the churches were at peace. They enjoyed great external prosperity in Antioch, and the great enemy of souls took occasion then, as he has often done in similar circumstances since, to excite contentions in the church itself, so that when external violence could not destroy it, an effort was made to secure the same object by internal dissension and strife. This history, therefore, is particularly important, as it is the record of the first unhappy debate which arose in the bosom of the church. It is further important, as it shows the manner in which such controversies were settled in apostolic times, and as it established some very important principles respecting the perpetuity of the religious rites of the Jews.²
 - b. Acts 15 contains “A troubled controversy, which involved the most momentous consequences to all future ages of the church; and led to that visit to Jerusalem which, next after

his conversion, is perhaps the most important passage in St. Paul's life."³

3. The Jerusalem Conference, which took place sometime about A.D. 48-50, was to determine whether Gentiles were bound to the Law of Moses, and in particular, circumcision. Let us consider briefly:
 - a. The Law of Moses was the middle wall of partition between Jew and Gentiles.
 - b. The middle wall of partition was broken down at the cross.
 - c. The Jerusalem Conference.
 - d. The significance of the Jerusalem Conference.

DISCUSSION:

I. THE MIDDLE WALL OF PARTITION (Eph. 2:11-17).

- A. The Law of Moses had been given at smoking, shaking Sinai about 1500 years before the coming of Christ (Exodus 20; Deut. 33:2).
- B. The Law was like a privacy fence, and the land of promise was Israel's physical boundaries; however, due to her disobedience, Israel was scattered beyond the limits of her land and dispersed over every part of the Babylonian, Medo-Persian, Grecian and Roman Empires. James said, "*Moses had of old time in every city, them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every Sabbath day*" (Acts 15:21).
 1. Christ's ministry was to the Jews (Rom. 15:8).
 2. Jesus sent his disciples to the lost sheep of the house of Israel only. (Matt. 10:5-6)
 3. In every prominent city — from east to west — were these sacred people located who had a written law from God. It was read every week and each year.
 4. The Jews were united around the world to that once sacred city where alone religious sacrifices had been offered.
 5. Their lives were abhorrent to the idolatrous practices of their Gentile neighbors with their immoral and licentious practices connected to Greek and Roman worship.
 6. By the same token, the teachings of Plato, Aristotle, Zeno and Epicurus were inculcated in the Greek and Roman hearts in cities around the world.
 7. Thus, the wall of partition (the law of Moses) was the line of demarcation between Jew and Gentile. In a sense, it was supported inwardly by the Jews and outwardly by the Gentiles. The Samaritan woman said to Jesus, "... *the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans*" (John 4:9).

- C. The separation between the Jew and Gentile was both religious and social.
1. "The Jews had a divine law, which sanctioned the principle, and enforced the practice, of national isolation."⁴
 2. The separation of the two might be compared to the caste system in India.
 3. Just as it was an abomination for the Egyptians to eat with the Hebrews (Gen. 43:32), so it was for the Jew to eat with Gentiles (Acts 10:28; 11:3).
 4. Later, Paul rebuked Peter for his hypocrisy in withdrawing from the Gentiles when his Jewish brethren appeared (Gal. 2:12).

II. THE MIDDLE WALL BROKEN DOWN.

- A. Jesus' death on the cross legally nullified the Law of Moses, though the Jews continued to observe some of its ordinances and days (Col. 2:14; Matt. 5:17-18; Eph. 2:11-17).
- B. The church was established on the first Pentecost following the Lord's resurrection (Acts 2).
1. About 3000 Jews obeyed the Gospel on that day (Acts 2:38-41). The year was about A.D. 33.
 2. The promise of salvation was also for them who were afar off; i.e., the Gentiles (Acts 2:39).
- C. Saul was converted in about A.D. 34-35 (Acts 9).
- D. The conversion of Cornelius and his household was 8-10 years after Pentecost. (Acts 10)
- E. The Gospel was preached to Jews and then to Grecians (Acts 11:19-20).
- F. Paul and Barnabas preached the Gospel to Jews and Gentiles. After the Jews at Antioch of Pisidia put the Gospel from them, Paul said, "Lo, we turn to the Gentiles" (Acts 13-14). When they returned to Antioch of Syria, they rehearsed all that God had done with them and how he had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles. (Acts 14; 26-28)

III. THE JERUSALEM CONFERENCE.

- A. Paul and Barnabas stayed a long time at Antioch of Syria (Acts 14:26). While they were there, certain ones came down from Jerusalem, having claimed to have been sent by the apostles. These "false brethren" taught that except the Gentiles be circumcised, they could not be saved.
1. Their manner of coming was depicted by Paul (Gal. 2:4).
 2. Paul and Barnabas opposed them. Notice the words "dissension" and "disputation" (or "questioning" as ASV) in 15:2. "Dissension" here denotes earnest and warm

- discussion, but does not imply improper heat or attitudes in the discussion.
3. The word "disputing" in 15:7 is "questioning" in the ASV. The Greek word (*dzeiteisis*) means "mutual questioning." It is the same word used in 15:2.
 4. Paul had no intention of giving way to the false teachers, even for an hour (Gal. 2:4-5).
- B. It was determined that Paul and Barnabas should go up to Jerusalem concerning this matter. Titus, who was a test case, also travelled with them (Gal. 2:1). Paul and Barnabas were not sent because they needed the truth on the matter for they had returned from a successful missionary trip in which Gentiles were converted. Circumcision was not bound on those Gentiles. Paul was authorized by God to go up to Jerusalem (Gal. 2:1). The church paid for their trip (Acts 15:3). They traveled through Phenice and Samaria and declared the conversion of the Gentiles. This caused great joy unto all (Acts 15:3).
- C. When Paul, Barnabas and Titus, as well as other brethren who had accompanied them, arrived at Jerusalem, they were received by the church, apostles and elders. Paul and Barnabas declared all things that God had done with them (Acts 15:4).
- D. Then arose in the assembly "*certain of the sect of the Pharisees which believed, saying that it was needful to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the law of Moses.*"
- E. The apostles and elders came together in order to consider this matter. Evidently, the whole church was present (Acts 15:12,22). This meeting was perhaps as a school board has a public meeting in which it considers a matter before all, or a public debate in which disputants would argue their views before others.
- F. The speeches given:
1. Peter speaks first (Acts 15:7-11).
 2. Barnabas and Paul declared the miracles and wonders God had done among the Gentiles (Acts 15:12).
 3. James, the brother of the Lord, then spoke (Acts 15:13-21).
- G. It was determined that letters should be sent to the churches, informing them that the Gentiles were not to be troubled with the law of Moses; but that they were to abstain from idols, fornication and from things strangled and from blood. Also, certain brethren were to be sent to tell these churches by word of mouth the same things (Acts 15:27).

IV. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE JERUSALEM CONFERENCE.

- A. This was a pivotal moment in the history of the church. Was Christianity simply to be a perfecting or completing of Judaism? Would a new cloth be sewn to an old garment, or new wine put into old bottles (Matt. 9:16-17)? Christianity was not a sect of Judaism.
- B. The law of Moses could not justify (Gal. 2:16). It was a schoolmaster to bring the Jews to Christ (Gal. 3:23-25). It is the Gospel that saves both the Jews and Gentiles (Rom. 1:16-17).
- C. Peter said, "God put no difference between us [Jews] and them [Gentiles], purifying their hearts by faith."
 1. Some have argued that the plan of salvation is different for the Jew than for the Gentile. However, Peter, by inspiration, debunks that false notion. Both are purified or cleansed by faith.
 2. First Peter 1:22 states that our souls are purified by obedience to the truth.
 3. Saul of Tarsus was told to arise and be baptized and wash away his sins (Acts 22:16).
 4. Thus, God purifies our hearts when our faith leads us to be obedient to the truth. Our sins are washed away by being baptized (Rev. 1:5; Rom. 6:3-4; 1 Cor. 6:11).
- D. Though legally the Law of Moses ended at the cross, some of the Jewish brethren were still trying to make it binding. President Ronald Reagan on June 12, 1987 at the Brandenburg Gate, Berlin, Germany, said, "Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall!" In essence, that is what the Jerusalem Conference was about: "Tear down this wall." Jesus had nullified the old law by his death on the cross. Therefore, it should not have been a partition, dividing Jew and Gentile. No longer were there two men (Jew and Gentile), but one new man (Christianity).
- E. Some Secondary lessons connected with the Jerusalem Conference.
 1. Those who make laws where God has not made them, have the proclivity to proselytize others to their views (Acts 15:1,4-5; Matt. 23:15).
 2. False doctrine will trouble the church (Gal. 1:6-9).
 3. It is necessary for Gospel preachers to defend the faith. The fact that these false brethren were making it a salvation issue, attempting to rob the Gentiles of liberty in Christ, made it necessary for Paul and Barnabas to defend the faith (Acts 15:1-2; Gal. 2:4-5). The truth of the Gospel was at stake (Jude 3; Phil. 1:17).

4. Paul was wise as a serpent, lest his labor would have been in vain (Gal. 2:1-2).
5. Truth has nothing to fear. The Jerusalem Conference was a debate on the issue of whether the law of Moses, which included circumcision, was to be bound on the Gentiles.
6. At the mouth of two or three witnesses every word is to be established (Deut. 17:6; Matt. 18:16; 2 Cor. 13:1). Note: 1) Peter, an inspired apostle spoke; 2) Barnabas and Paul declared the miracles which were done among the Gentiles; 3) James refers to the Old Testament prophets; in particular, Amos.

CONCLUSION:

1. The significance of the Jerusalem Conference was to show that the Gentiles were not bound to the law of Moses. Both Jew and Gentile will be saved by the same means, the Gospel (Rom.1:16).
2. When trouble arises in the church, the Jerusalem meeting shows how to resolve differences, i.e., by the Gospel.
3. We must be set for the defense of the Gospel (Phil.1:17; Jude3).

ENDNOTES:

¹Conybeare, W. J. and Howson, J. S., *The Life and Epistles of St. Paul*, (Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1989), p.160.

²Barnes' Notes, Electronic Database Copyright 1997, 2003 by BibleSoft, Inc. All rights reserved

³Conybeare, W. J. and Howson, J. S., op. cite., p. 824.

⁴Ibid, p. 161.

"THE CREATION OF THE WORLD"

— The Creation —

Romans 1:20

Ronnie Whittemore

1. The theme of this lectureship centers upon epochal events.
 - a. The word epoch literally means "a point in time."
 - b. Epoch also means "a particular period of history, especially one considered remarkable or noteworthy; a notable event that marks the beginning of such a period."

2. Genesis is the “book of beginnings” or the “book of firsts.”
 - a. Creation, therefore, is the first epoch event.
 - b. Besides the common application of epoch, the creation is an epoch event because it cannot be duplicated or repeated in any classroom or laboratory.
3. Genesis 1:1 contains the five basic facts of science.
 - a. Time — “In the *beginning*...”
 - b. Force — “In the beginning *God*...”
 - c. Action — “In the beginning God *created*...”
 - d. Space — “In the beginning God created the *heaven*...”
 - e. Matter — “...God created the heaven and the *earth*.”
4. Let us learn together how the first epoch event ties to the last epoch event.

DISCUSSION:

- I. **THE PHRASE, “IN THE BEGINNING,” DOES NOT REFER TO GOD; IT REFERS TO THE EARTH.**
 - A. God is self-existent, eternal and infinite.
 1. He was not created; He does not depend on anyone or anything (Exodus 3:14).
 2. He is infinite in all of His characteristics: knowledge, wisdom, power, love (John 3:16; Matt. 28:18; John 17:2).
 3. He is eternal (Heb. 9:14) without beginning or ending.
 - B. The earth is not eternal; it had a beginning.
 1. The earth was without form and void (included all physical elements of the universe in its rough and unorganized form).
 2. The earth was created (*bara*) out of nothing by Deity (Psalm 33:9; Heb. 11:3).
 - C. The creation was given a specific description of time-line.
 1. Each day of creation was numbered one through six (Num. 7:12).
 2. Each day is defined as “the evening and the morning.”
 3. The text does not even hint or insinuate that the creation days are anything other than 24-hour periods.
- II. **THE FORCE OF THE CREATION IS GOD.**
 - A. The Hebrew word *Elohim* is used in Genesis 1:1. It indicates the power and implies the concept of the Godhead.
 1. Gen. 1:26, “*And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness...*”
 2. When God punished Adam and Eve for their sin in the Garden of Eden, the text reads, “*And the Lord God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us...*” (Gen. 3:22).
 3. When God confounded the language of the people at Babel, the scriptures state, “*Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language...*” (Gen. 11:7).

- B. The Godhead consists of the First Person (God), Second Person (Word/Son) and Third Person (Holy Spirit).
1. God the Father served as the designer of creation and redemption.
 2. God the Word/Son served as the executor of creation and redemption.
 3. God the Holy Spirit served as the garnisher and organizer of creation and redemption.
- C. The degree of God as the force of creation is recognized and appreciated through His characteristics. We noted His self-existent, infinite and eternal nature earlier.
1. He is also *omniscient* or all-knowing.
 - a. He knows the past, present and future (Job 24:1; Psalm 33:13-15).
 - b. He knows the physical needs of mankind (Gen. 1:28; Psalm 8).
 - c. He knows the spiritual needs of mankind and planned his redemption from the "foundation of the world" (Eph. 3:10-11; 1 Peter 1:17-20).
 2. He is *omnijust* or perfect in justice.
 - a. God hates sin and every false way (Psalm 119:128).
 - b. God loves righteousness (Psalm 119:47).
 - c. God's love for man cannot be equaled (John 3:16; Rom. 5:8).
 3. He is *omnibenevolent* or infinite in goodness, mercy and grace.
 - a. God's grace, mercy and peace are often included in the salutation or benediction of New Testament epistles (Eph. 1:2; 1 Tim. 1:1).
 - b. God is described as One who "abundantly pardons" or forgives (Heb. 8:12; Isa.55:7).
 - c. God balances His goodness with His justice.
 - 1) If God were all mercy, then He could not be just.
 - 2) If God were all justice, then He could not show mercy.
 4. He is *omnipresent* or He is everywhere (Acts 17:24-27; Jer. 23:23-24).
 5. He is *immutable* or He does not change.
 - a. One of the greatest injustices of man is to think that God is like man.
 - 1) Jehovah said, "...For I am God and not man..." (Hosea 11:9).
 - 2) God does not think or act like man; His thoughts and ways surpass man's thoughts and ways (Isa. 55:8-10).
 - b. God's word is completely reliable; He is not fickle; He means what He says (Rom. 3:4).

6. He is the *Creator* and *Ruler* of all things.
 - a. Through the Word, God created everything (John 1:1-4; Col. 1:16).
 - b. God created everything other than Himself.
 - c. God has power over all things (John 17:2; 1 Peter 3:22).

III. THE RESULTS OF CREATION WERE REALIZED IN SIX DAYS.

- A. On Day One (Gen. 1:1-5), God created the universe (heaven and earth) as an original mass without form and empty (no organization, no natural laws).
 1. And God said, "*Let there be light: and there was light.*"
 2. God and His Word are so powerful that He spoke things into existence—beginning with light.
 3. This light is different from the sun, moon and stars. It was a temporary source of light or illumination that marked the days until the sun was made on the fourth day (2 Cor. 4:4).
- B. On Day Two (Gen. 1:6-8), God made a firmament or expanse to separate two levels of water.
 1. There is some speculation about expanse or firmament.
 2. Some believe that it refers to the atmosphere where we get rain, snow, etc.
 3. Others believe that it refers to a "vapor canopy" that surrounded the earth prior to the Great Flood.
- C. On Day Three (Gen. 1:9-13), God created grass, herbs yielding seed, and fruit trees.
 1. God created the law of genetics.
 2. Kind produces after its own kind.
- D. On Day Four (Gen. 1:14-19), God created the sun, moon and stars to rule the day and night.
 1. God established more natural laws as He set the times and seasons.
 2. He created the sun to rule the day and the moon to rule the night.
- E. On Day Five (Gen. 1:20-23), God created marine life and fowl life.
 1. It is so interesting that in recent months, as man explores deeper into the seas that he is discovering marine species. Some of the photographs are fascinating.
 2. God made those newly discovered water and air creatures on the fifth day of creation.
- F. On Day Six (Gen. 1:24-31), God created animals and man.
 1. He created cattle, beasts and every creeping thing on the earth.

2. He created man first, in His own image, but declared that it was not good for man to be alone.
 3. So God also created woman from the side of man.
 4. God declared His creation to be very good!
- G. On Day Seven (Gen. 2-2-3), God rested.

IV. THE EPOCH MIRACLE OF CREATION CAN BE COMPARED TO THE MIRACLES OF CHRIST.

- A. We have spent a considerable amount of time outlining the great creation of God performed by the power of His Word (Gen. 1:3,6,9,11,14,20,24,26,29; John 1:1-4; Heb. 1:3).
- B. Now let us consider the power of Jesus' miracles over disease, nature and even death.
1. John 5:1-18, Jesus healed a man who had been lame for 38 years. The text reads that the man was immediately made whole (John 5:9).
 - a. There is no mention of physical therapy.
 - b. There is no description of pain.
 - c. The muscles, tendons, etc. were of full use to this healed man without medication or therapy.
 2. John 9, Jesus healed a man who was blind from birth.
 - a. His healing was also immediate (John 9:7).
 - b. There is no mention of delay.
 - c. There is no medication or therapy for eye muscles.
 3. So why could not God create everything in 6 days?
 - a. Why could not God create things with age?
 - b. Why must the theistic evolutionist who admits some belief in God feel it necessary to attempt a compromise between creation and evolution?
 - c. If one has the faith that Jesus performed healings immediately, then why would the same person doubt the power of God to create something in one day?

V. FAITH IN THE CREATION OF THE WORLD SHOULD LEAD ONE TO APPRECIATE JESUS' PROMISE TO PREPARE A HEAVENLY PLACE FOR THE FAITHFUL.

- A. Genesis 1:28, "...subdue it: and have dominion over..."
1. God intended that man rule over the earth.
 2. Some modern-day religionists have made man subject to the earth. This is not God's intention. God crowned man with glory and honor (Psalm 8:5-8).
 3. What a wonderful and awesome creation! God created all of those things and then watched His natural laws and creation work in those six days!

- B. John 14:1-3, Jesus said, “...*I go to prepare a place for you...*”
1. Our finite minds cannot comprehend what heaven will be like. We are given certain descriptive phrases, but can we really appreciate its beauty and meaning?
 2. Look at the beauties of this country—the autumn leaves in the Smokey Mountains, the snow and ice of Alaska, the deep caverns of the Midwest, the tall Redwood trees of California, the beautiful waters off the Hawaiian islands, or the Grand Canyon.
 3. Peer into space and try to count the stars or count the sand on the sea shore.
 4. Consider all of the beauties that this world holds—now think about heaven! What must it be like?

CONCLUSION:

1. Let us conclude with these thoughts about the beginning.
 - a. God created the world in six days.
 - b. He created it for man’s dominion.
 - c. But one day He will destroy it with fire.
2. God did not intend for this earth to be permanent; it is a temporary place and Christians are strangers and pilgrims.
 - a. Let us concentrate on the city whose builder and maker is God.
 - b. Let us appreciate what Jesus has prepared for His faithful followers.
3. There is a final epoch event still to come! Lord come quickly!

“THE LAND WAS SUBDUED BEFORE THEM”

— The Conquest of Canaan —

Joshua 18:1

Guyton Montgomery

1. “History cannot give us a program for the future, but it can give us a fuller understanding of ourselves, and of our common humanity, so that we can better face the future.” (Robert Penn Warren)
 - a. If man understands history, then he should have a greater appreciation and understanding of life.

- b. If man understands Epochal Events of Sacred History, then he should have a greater appreciation and understanding of God.
 - c. With a greater appreciation and understanding of God, man can then be better prepared to face God on Judgment Day.
2. "...If God be for us, who can be against us?" (Rom. 8:31)
- a. Consider all that God has done.
 - 1) Creating the world (Gen. 1).
 - 2) The flood (Gen. 6-8).
 - 3) The destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen. 18 & 19).
 - 4) The Plagues in Egypt (Exodus 7-12).
 - 5) The parting of the Red Sea and Jordan River (Exodus 13:17-14:29; Joshua 3).
 - 6) Made an iron axe head float (2 Kings 6:4-6).
 - b. God's people, when faithful, will always be victorious (Rom. 11:22; Matt. 6:33).
3. One can truly see that no one stood a chance against the Israelite's conquering the land of Canaan as long as God was with them.
- a. The conquest of Canaan was an important event to Joshua and the Israelites.
 - b. However, what made this event an "Epochal Event of Sacred History?"

DISCUSSION:

I. THE CONQUEST OF CANAAN PROMISED.

- A. The promise made to Abraham (Gen. 12:1-3).
 - 1. "...*Unto a land that I will shew thee*" (v.1b cf. vs. 6, 7) — Land Promise.
 - a. The Land Promise was made to Abraham and recorded in the Scriptures numerous times (Gen. 13:15; 15:7,21; 17:8; 22:17,18; 24:7; 26:3,4; 28:4; 28:13; 35:12; 48:4; Exodus 6:4,8; 12:25; 13:5; 23:31; 32:13; 33:1; Deut. 30:5).
 - b. It served as a hope, motivation, encouragement and a battle cry.
 - 2. "*I will make of thee a great nation...*" (v.2) — Nation Promise.
 - 3. "...*In thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.*" (v.3) — Seed Promise.
- B. The land promise was critical to fulfilling the promise of a great nation.
 - 1. There are three things essential to a kingdom (people, leader, land).
 - a. Israel had a nation of people that grew to a large number while in Egypt.

- b. God was to be the leader of his kingdom (Exodus 6:7), hence he gave them a law to follow (Law of Moses).
2. The only thing the people of Israel lacked, was a land which had been promised unto Abraham.

II. THE CONQUEST OF CANAAN FULFILLED.

- A. Battles in the conquest of Canaan.
 1. Jericho (Josh. 6:12-27).
 2. Ai (Josh. 7:2-6).
 3. Ai & Bethel (Josh. 8:1-29).
 4. Amorites United [Jerusalem, Hebron, Jarmuth, Lachish, Eglon] (Josh. 10:1-27).
 5. Makkedah (Josh. 10:28).
 6. Libnah (Josh. 10:29, 30).
 7. Lachish (Josh. 10:31, 32).
 8. Gezer (Josh. 10:33).
 9. Eglon (Josh. 10:34, 35).
 10. Hebron (Josh. 10:36, 37).
 11. Debir (Josh. 10:38, 39).
 12. Northern Confederation (Josh. 11:1-9).
 13. Hazor (Josh. 11:12-17).
- B. The land was conquered by the Israelites through the power of God (Josh. 11:23-12:1).
 1. The land was divided and distributed to each tribe (Josh. 13-18).
 2. Caleb received Hebron (Josh. 14).
 - a. Fulfillment of the promise made by Moses.
 - b. 45 years later, God provided for Caleb.
- C. The Lord would bless the Israelites when faithful to God, but curse them when unfaithful [Mount Gerizim & Mount Ebal] (Josh. 8:30-35).

III. THE CONQUEST OF CANAAN APPLIED.

- A. The Lord's Kingdom is a Spiritual Kingdom.
 1. We have a people [Christians] (Phil. 3:20).
 2. We have a law [Law of Christ] (Gal. 6:2; James 1:25; 2:12).
 3. We look for a land [Heaven] (Heb. 4:9; 11:16).
- B. Man is a sojourner in this land.
 1. This world is not my home!
 2. The Christian is looking for a land, a home with God (Heb. 11:16; 1 John 2:15-17; Col. 3:1; Phil. 3:14).
- C. Man is under bondage.
 1. Not unto Egypt, but to sin (Rom. 6:16-23; Matt. 6:24).
 2. Through the blood of Christ, man can be free from this bondage (Gal. 5:1).

- D. The Spiritual Canaan awaits those who are faithful.
 - 1. Christ has gone to prepare us a home (John 14:1-4).
 - 2. Man should make his calling and election sure (2 Peter 1:10; Heb. 2:1; 2 Peter 1:10).
- E. Our battle cry, hope and aspiration is a home eternally with God.

CONCLUSION:

1. God promised a land for the nation of Israel and God fulfilled his promise.
 2. God has promised a land of rest for those who do his will and he will fulfill his promise (2 Peter 3:9).
 - a. Each one should live every day prepared to enter into the land (Matt. 24:36).
 - b. Man does not want to miss entering the "promised land" the way many Israelites did because of unbelief (Heb. 3:12-19).
 3. "...If God be for us, who can be against us?" (Rom. 8:31)
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"A FAMINE...OF HEARING THE WORDS OF JEHOVAH"

— The Period Of Silence —

Amos 8:11

Alan Adams

1. Can one die of famine when the cupboard is full of bread?
A famine is an extreme scarcity of food.
 - a. Ninety verses of Scripture speak of "famine," some explicitly citing God as the cause.
 - b. Elisha told a woman to find a place to "sojourn," for "Jehovah hath called for a famine" (2 Kings 8:1).
 - c. The famous famine in Egypt in Joseph's day happened because God "called for a famine upon the land" (Psalms 105:16).
 - d. Warning of retribution against impenitent Judah, God bluntly said, "I will consume them by the sword, and by the famine" (Jer. 14:12).
2. Two famines mentioned in Book of Amos, each caused by God.
 - a. Trying to turn Israel around, God said, "I also have given you cleanness of teeth and want of bread" (Amos 4:6).

- b. God cleaned their teeth by taking food away from them. This is a metonymy of the effect given for the cause.
 - c. This terrible famine, however, served as a type of one much worse: “Behold, the days come, saith the Lord Jehovah, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of Jehovah” (8:11).
 - d. Just as with God’s cleaning their teeth by taking away food, this “hearing famine” would be caused by God’s taking away “his words”; that is, He would stop sending “his servants the prophets” (3:7).
3. It is the worst of all conditions when God does not talk to man.
- a. He showed man then, the consequences of His silence.
 - b. He used that silence to prepare men to receive “that prophet” (Acts 3:23; cf. Heb. 1:2).
 - c. Divine silence exists today; but, not because God is silent (cf. Job 33:14).

DISCUSSION:

I. THE FAMINE AND THE FULNESS OF THE TIMES.

- A. Consider our cornerstone passage, Galatians 4:4.
- 1. God sent Jesus “when the fullness of the time came.”
 - 2. Time relates to history, sacred history; fullness relates to epochal events.
 - a. Fulness is from a form of *pleiroma* which has the basic idea of that which fills up — bread pieces filling a basket (Mark 6:43); patch filling a hole (Mark 2:21); and so on.
 - b. Here it is the idea of a “period of time when all intended within it has been accomplished” (*Friberg*, digital); as in, “unto a dispensation of the fullness of the times” (Eph. 1:10).
- B. God’s thoughts and ways are not ours (cf. Isa. 55:8); and, so with His preparing for and ushering in the “fullness of the times.”
- 1. He planned for the greatest of all events to happen “in the days of these kings” (cf. Dan. 2:44; cf. Luke 2:1).
 - 2. From the human perspective, this was not the most propitious time for “David’s son” (Luke 20:41) to be “coming in his kingdom” (cf. Matt. 16:28).
- C. Neither would men think of a word-hearing famine being conducive to ushering in the fulness of the times; but, God caused this silence both to punish His rebellious people, and at the same time to show them how they cannot function without “revelation” (Eph. 3:3).
- 1. God finally destroyed and dispersed the remainder of the northern kingdom into exile where they would subsist without the “hearing of the words of Jehovah.”

2. After the Book of Malachi, God took away His words for some four hundred years.
3. The consequence of this was: "they shall wander from sea to sea, and from the north even to the east; they shall run to and fro to seek the word of Jehovah, and shall not find it" (Amos 8:12).
4. Just think of all the horrible things that happened during those days of famine: Pharisees, Sadducees, so-called "rabbinical teaching," et al.
5. Thus, was the plight of men, when "at the end of these days [He] spoke" again (cf. Heb. 1:2). unto us in his Son" (Heb. 1:2); when "God raise[d] up" the prophet like Moses (Acts 3:22).
6. This terrible famine ended when "the word became flesh and dwelt among us" (John 1:14); when "the bread of life" (John 6:48) came "down from Heaven" (v.38).
7. In "words which the Spirit teacheth" (1 Cor. 2:13), "the faith was once for all delivered unto the saints" (Jude 1:3).

II. FAMINE AND ITS PRESENT CAUSES.

- A. In a larger sense, God never stops talking to men (Job 33:14; Psa. 19:1; Rom. 1:19-21; Acts 14:16,17).
- B. People, though, continue to be plagued by starvation and famine. Why?
 1. The simple cause of starvation is lack of food; but that lack of food can be due to many reasons.
 - a. Perhaps indolence — "The fool foldeth his hands together, and eateth his own flesh" (Eccl. 4:5).
 - b. Corruption
 - 1) The USA sent forces into Somalia several years ago because the media kept showing pictures of starving children with bloated bellies.
 - 2) People were starving with tons of grain within sight.
 - 3) cf. Matt. 9:36
 - c. Ignorance (cf. Eph. 3:4)
 - d. Hardness (Matt. 13:19ff)
 - e. Worldliness (v.22)
 2. This assuredly is the plight of most of the world.
 3. It is sadder spectacle still that brothers and sisters in Christ, who, though periodic pew occupants and Bible owners, are starving when bread is plenty.

III. FAMINE AND ITS CURE.

- A. The "word of Christ" can and must "dwell richly" in God's children and all men (Col. 3:16).

- B. From the perspective of the individual, we simply must find a way into the hearts and minds of people to inculcate in them a burning sense of duty and desire to personally read and understand God's word (cf. Eph. 3:3).
- C. From the perspective of the local church, we simply must take seriously our obligation to be the "pillar and ground of the truth" (1 Tim. 3:15). We suffer from—
 - 1. Too few willing teachers (cf. 2 Tim. 1:11).
 - 2. Too few qualified teachers (cf. James 3:1).
 - 3. Lack of a systematic, comprehensive curriculum (cf. Gal. 3:24; Acts 13:20; 3:24; Luke 24:27, 44).
 - 4. Lack of a means to measure and assess a person's growth in the knowledge of God's word (cf. 2 Peter 3:18).
 - 5. "Social promotion" of our brethren from childhood on up (cf. Luke 6:40).
- D. We simply must have people devoted to working in local churches where they spend their lives and time "teaching the word of God among them" (cf. Acts 18:11).
 - 1. The church at Antioch, from the outset, took this matter of teaching seriously.
 - 2. Through teaching, the church was born in that great city leading to Barnabas' being sent there, who in turn went and fetched Saul from Tarsus and "brought him unto Antioch" (Acts 11:20-22).
 - 3. For a "whole year," they "gathered together with the church, and taught much people" (v.26).
 - 4. In time, they added to their faculty: "In the church... there, [there were] prophets and teachers, Barnabas, and Symeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen the foster-brother of Herod the tetrarch, and Saul" (Acts 13:1).

CONCLUSION:

- 1. Whether there is silence between God and man because God stops talking, as per the prophecy in Amos, or the silence occurs because man will not listen, the outcome is the same, famine and disaster.
 - 2. Whereas it is true that God induced a "famine of the hearing of the words of Jehovah," with view toward preparing starving mankind to be more than ready for the "bread of life" (John 6:48); it is not true that that famine was good for the human race in the meantime.
 - 3. Let us not suffer and starve when the cupboards are full.
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"THE LAW AND THE PROPHETS WERE UNTIL JOHN"

— John The Harbinger —

Luke 16:16

Joel Wheeler

1. In God's scheme of redemption, important events and individuals often play a profound role in the bringing about of salvation.
2. Some individuals have seemingly minor roles and others are on the forefront of the battle.
3. One individual who was chosen to herald the message of God was John the baptizer.
 - a. John was more honored of God than any other prophet including Old and New Testament.
 - b. John is recognized among Biblical scholars as one who was chosen for a very honorable task.

DISCUSSION:

I. JOHN'S CALLING TO BE THE FORERUNNER OF THE MESSIAH.

- A. Prophesied by Isaiah 700 years before, as God's messenger.
 1. "The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God" (Isa. 40:3).
 2. In Biblical Times, runners were sent ahead to remove rocks, fill in the holes and level the path for the coming king.
 3. According to Coffman, the geographical features symbolize the condition of the people in the days of John the Baptist. (Coffman 376.)
 4. All four of the Gospel writers quotes Isaiah 40:3. (Matt. 3:1-3; Mark 1:3; Luke 3:4; John 1:23)
- B. The prophecy of Malachi was 400 years before Christ.
 1. "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD" (Malachi 4:5).
 2. The prophecy of Malachi is more specific in identifying the one that will "turn the people from their sins" (v.6).
 3. Elijah was the "great reformer" of Israel as he faced Ahab's prophets on Mt. Carmel (1 Kings 18:22-40).
- C. Chosen by God and prophesied to be the forerunner of the Messiah.
 1. He lived a life of sacrifice just as Elijah.

2. His home was in the wilderness leading others to believe he was insane.

II. JOHN'S CHARACTER AND LIFE AS A PROPHET.

- A. John's birth was foretold to his parents by Gabriel.
 1. Zechariah (a priest) and Elizabeth (of the tribe of Aaron) were righteous and walking before God (Luke 1:6).
 2. Aged and barren, Elizabeth would be the mother of the prophet.
 3. What we know of his younger life. "And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, and was in the deserts till the day of his shewing unto Israel" (Luke 1:80).
- B. A prophet of God who took the vow of the Nazarite and dedicated to God's service. (Num. 6:2ff)
 1. He would be great in the sight of the Lord, drink no strong drink, and be filled with the Holy Spirit (Luke 1:15).
 2. He ate only what the land would provide, locust and honey and dressed as the prophet Elijah.
 3. Some commentators accuse John of being an Essene but there is no foundation for the statement. (ISBE, Vol. III. p.1709)
- C. One of John's personality characteristics, would be as bold as Elijah.
 1. Elijah confronted Ahab, challenged the prophets of Baal and called for Israel's repentance (1 Kings 18).
 2. John's statements to Jewish leaders (Matt. 3:7-9).
 3. "And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord" (Luke 1:17).
 4. How can you escape God's judgment if you are not fleeing from your (our) sins?

III. JOHN'S MESSAGE OF REPENTANCE.

- A. John never performed a miracle and never wrote a book. He was not a scholar from the temple in Jerusalem.
 1. He was called by God. (John 1:6)
 2. He was inspired by the Holy Spirit (Luke 1:15).
- B. John was not the Christ.
 1. "...The people were in expectation, and all men mused in their hearts of John, whether he were the Christ, or not" (Luke 3:15).
 2. "The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe. He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light" (John 1:7-8).

C. His message was to turn the hearts of the people back to God.

1. "Then said he to the multitude that came forth to be baptized of him, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance, and begin not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, That God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham" (Luke 3:7-8).
2. John's baptism was to prepare the people for the coming of the Christ.
3. "John answered, saying unto them all, I indeed baptize you with water; but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire" (Luke 3:16).

D. He pointed to the Christ.

1. John identified Jesus as the Christ, the Lamb of God. (John 1:29)
2. "And I knew him not: but that he should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with water" (John 1:31).
3. John was not greater than Christ.
4. "He that hath the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled" (John 3:29).

IV. JOHN'S MISSION WAS FULFILLED AND DECREASE.

A. When Jesus was baptized to "fulfill all righteous", John's work as a prophet was done.

1. "He must increase, but I must decrease" (John 3:30).
2. John preached the coming of the kingdom, but was never in the kingdom.
3. "Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he" (Matt. 11:11).

B. He was thrown into prison and suffered a martyr's death.

1. "But Herod the tetrarch, being reproved by him for Herodias his brother Philip's wife, and for all the evils which Herod had done" (Luke 3:19).
2. Mark 1:16-28

CONCLUSION:

1. God prepared the coming of the Christ with a prophet such as Elijah.

2. John turned the hearts of Israel back to God and pointed directly to Christ.
3. John was the burning and shining light in which some were willing to rejoice. (John 5:35)

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“WHEN THE DAY OF PENTECOST WAS FULLY COME”

— **The Day Of Pentecost** —

Acts 2:1

Jared Knoll

1. What is the greatest moment of significance or even the most infamous day of history?
 - a. The answers will vary based on the individual, often depending on the generation to which they belong.
 - b. One generation may say September 11 while another may say December 7 or June 6.
 - c. One bored college student actually set out to find the most boring day of history. His research and data input to his computer can up with a day in 1957 in which he claimed “nothing happened.”
2. To the Christian, the list of days is narrowed greatly. There are many significant days in human history but only a few that are significant to your salvation.
3. The day for our consideration is the *Day of Pentecost* following the crucifixion resurrection and ascension of Jesus.
 - a. It is not the most significant day because for its significance other epochal events had to take place.
 - b. It is however a *culmination of many significant events* (Gal. 4:4).
 - c. *The promises, prophecies and preparation would now come to fruition.*

- d. Our goal is to view this event in three perspectives:
- 1) Observations — the day from the law's perspective.
 - 2) Observations — the centrality of the day's place in history.
 - 3) Observations — the paradoxical nature of the day.

DISCUSSION:

I. THE DAY OF PENTECOST—THE LAW'S PERSPECTIVE.

- A. Pentecost was one of the annual feasts which God, through the law, prescribed. It was also called the "Feast of Harvest," "Feast of Weeks" and "Feast of the First Fruits" (Exodus 23:16; 31:22; Lev. 23:17; Num. 28:26; Deut. 16:10).
1. It occurred 50 days after the Passover Sabbath (Lev. 23:15-16), thus it was always on a Sunday and called "Pentecost" which to the Greek was "50."
 2. It was the largest of the three "required" feasts.
 3. It was an agricultural celebration of thanksgiving, offering the first fruits of harvest to God (Exodus 23:16; Num. 28:26).
 4. It was a time to commemorate deliverance (Deut. 16:11-12).
 5. It was the day on which the law of Moses had been given, thus a time to commemorate the law.
- B. This being the day the church began, let us note the typical nature pertaining to the law.
1. It was an ingathering of the first fruits, the initial souls to be added with the promise of more to come (Acts 2:41).
 2. It was now that the law of Christ would go forth (Isa. 2:2,3; Luke 24:47-49). In order for the law to go forth, this was also the day the Holy Spirit began His revelatory work to empower the apostles in the revelation and confirmation of the word (John 7:37,39; John 16:8; Acts 1:8; Acts 2:1-4).
 3. On this day 3000 were the first to be delivered from the bondage of sin and the wrath of God (Acts 2:37,38; Eph. 2:1-5; Col. 1:13; Heb. 2:14-15).

II. THE DAY OF PENTECOST — THE DAY'S CENTRALITY TO HISTORY.

- A. The second chapter of Acts is often called the "Hub" of the Bible. Everything either looks forward towards it or points backward at it.
- B. Consider some promises and prophecies pointing toward this moment.
1. The call of Abraham (Gen. 12:1-3) — Blessed in the Seed (Gal. 3:16) but where are those blessings acquired to our salvation (Eph. 1:3).

2. The promise to David, his seed and the kingdom (2 Sam. 7:12-17).
 3. The second Psalm regarding the Lord and His anointed (Psalm 2)
 4. The interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's dream and the vision of Daniel (Daniel 2; 7:13,14).
 5. The typical nature of the Tabernacle and other Old Testament persons, events and institutions.
- C. Consider in the New Testament that throughout the Gospel records the writers speak of the kingdom/church being at hand (Matt. 3:2; 4:17; 10:7)
1. Jesus promising to build His church (Matt. 16:18).
 2. Jesus said that the Kingdom was going to come with power (Mark 9:1) and that the power was to come when the Holy Spirit came (Acts 1:8).
- D. Consider that after Acts 2, the Scriptures point back to the events of that day with the kingdom/church now in existence (for example: Col. 1:18; Heb. 12:28).
- E. Consider that it is the Kingdom that would "break in pieces and consume" all others even the Great Roman Empire of its day. It began on the Day of Pentecost, just days after the death, resurrection and accession of Christ our Lord.

II. THE DAY OF PENTECOST — A DAY OF PARADOXES.

- A. A paradox presents a statement that seems false but is yet true, a coupling of things which seem to be in conflict or non-related. When you consider Acts 2 as an Epochal Event you will observe that there are some aspects which do not typically correspond to world changing events.
 - B. The Day involved "small men" — men considered unlearned and ignorant Galileans (Acts 2:7; 4:13). Yet, as we read of Peter, they spoke with great boldness and authority. They were ably qualified ambassadors.
 - C. The Days events involved a message regarding a rejected and condemned man not a beloved prince (Acts 2:22-23).
 - D. The Days events did not involve a clashing of swords typical of the beginning and advancement of a Kingdom, but rather the "foolishness of preaching" (1 Cor. 1:18-31).
 - E. The Days events comprise a small beginning (3,000 converted, contrasted to the millions that would have been assembled in Jerusalem on this day), yet as we sit in worship today, many of us are numbered with the "small men" and modest 3,000 though 2,000 years removed.
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THEN BEGAN MEN TO CALL UPON THE NAME OF THE LORD

— Calling On The Name Of The Lord —

Genesis 4:26

Garland M. Robinson

1. Very early in man's history, sin entered into the world.
 - a. Eve yielded to temptation, ate of the forbidden fruit and was banished from the garden of Eden along with her husband Adam. Gen. 3:6,23
 - b. Cain, their first born son, killed his brother Abel and became a fugitive and a vagabond (wanderer). Gen. 4:8,12-15
2. Such scenes of sin and evil have been repeated multiplied millions and billions of times throughout history.
3. From the beginning, we find two great convictions, ideologies, courses or pursuits of life:
 - a. There are those who *choose to serve themselves (satan)* and do evil. (This number is great)
 - b. There are those who *choose to obey God* and do good. (This number is few)
 - c. Let's explore these two approaches to life in this world.

DISCUSSION:

- I. **CAIN KILLED HIS BROTHER ABEL, DEPARTED FROM GOD, WANDERING UPON THE EARTH. Gen. 4**
 - A. He settled in the land of Nod, had children, built a city.
 1. Perhaps he wanted to create for his family a point of habitation, unity, a home.
 2. He lost the fellowship he enjoyed with God. Maybe building this city would help his feelings of this loss.
 - a. Was this city to be a connection with the "things of this world?"
 - b. "Worldly mindedness" focuses on the things of this world, not the things of God.
 - c. This may have been the first foundation of the kingdoms of this world.
 3. Cain was sowing the seeds of "ungodliness" among his descendants — the Cainites.
 - B. Many sons and daughters have repeated this same course.
 1. Ahab — 1 Kings 16:30-31, "*did evil...*"
 2. Prodigal son — Luke 15:13, "*wasted his substance with riotous living.*"

II. THE LEGACY OF CAIN POINTED IN THE WRONG DIRECTION (Gen. 4:16-24).

- A. The fifth descendant from Cain was Lamech. v.18
1. This is the first record of a man having two wives. v.19
 - a. Was this a result of his lust of the eyes and flesh?
 - b. The names of his wives remind us of sensual attractions:
 - 1) Adah — the adorned.
 - 2) Zillah — the shady or tinkling.
 2. Lamech's three sons became known for being industrious and inventors.
 - a. Those who dwell in tents, have cattle, those who handle the harp, organ, artificers of brass and iron.
 - b. Their mind and work was directed towards things of the world, to beautify and perfect the worldly life.
- B. The character of ungodliness was well defined in the descendants of Cain, especially Lamech.

III. THE LEGACY OF SETH (ON THE OTHER HAND) WAS TO SEEK AFTER THE LORD (Gen. 4:25-26).

- A. Seth, another son of Adam and Eve, had a son named Enos.
1. His name meant to be *weak, faint, frail*. It speaks of man's frail and mortal condition.
 2. His name was the opposite of the *pride* and *arrogance* displayed by the ungodly.
Matt. 5:3, "*Blessed [are] the poor in spirit...*"
 3. His family (name) led to God, it was a *commencement of the devotion and worship of God* — the *acknowledgment and help of God*.
- B. There's a vast difference between having *the spirit of men* and having *the spirit of God*.
1. One's emphasis in life either points to the world (earthly) or to God (heavenly).
 - a. Cain's descendants pursued the wrong direction (the things of the world).
 - b. WHEREAS Enos' descendants turned to God.
 2. It is said of Seth, Enos and their families, "*...then began men to call upon the name of the LORD.*" Gen. 4:26
 - a. To call upon the name of the Lord denotes all the appropriate acts and exercises of the will and worship of God.
 - b. It means to *say* and *do* and *act* in accordance to God's Word.
- C. Numerous expressions are found in the Bible to express calling upon the name of the Lord. (too many to list)
1. Abraham, Gen. 12:8 called upon the name of the Lord
 2. Elijah, 1 Kings 18:24 called on the name of the Lord

3. David, 1 Chron. 16:8 called upon his name
4. 1 Cor. 1:2, call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord
5. Saul of Tarsus, Acts 22:16, called upon the name....
6. Rom. 10:13, whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

IV. TO CALL UPON THE NAME OF THE LORD IS A MATTER OF AUTHORITY.

- A. Matt. 21:23, Jesus was asked, "...By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority?"
 1. Jesus made clear that authority either comes from heaven or from men.
 - a. Authority from heaven stands approved of God.
 - b. Authority from men stands condemned of God.
 2. The principle of authority is essential in obeying God.
- B. People act as though they have never heard of authority.
 1. Ask a simple question as to why men do what they do religiously and they act like you're crazy.
 2. The only standard most men have is what they think themselves.
Judges 17:6, "*In those days there was no king in Israel, but every man did that which was right in his own eyes.*"

V. GOD DEMANDS AUTHORITY FOR ALL WE SAY/DO.

- A. Col. 3:17, "*And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, [do] all in the name of the Lord Jesus....*"
 1. "In the name of the Lord" means by the authority of the Lord — as the Lord has authorized.
 2. If the police come to your door and say, "Open in the name of the law," we would understand it to mean "by the authority of the law."
- B. Acts 4:7-10, When Peter and John healed the lame man in "his name," they did so by the Lord's authority.
 1. Acts 4:12, It is in the Lord's name we will be saved.
 2. John 12:48, It is in the Lord's name we will be judged.
- C. The Lord does not accept just any authority.
 1. Many look to a pope, church, pastor, creed, council, synod, conference, etc. for authority.
 2. It's not enough to say, "I like it," "I want it," "It makes me feel good," "It does a lot of good."
 3. Our concern must be what "God likes," "what God wants," "what pleases God."
- D. Do you want to be approved or condemned by God?
 1. The answer is simple. We desire to be approved of God.
 2. The answer is so obvious that even a child can understand it.

VI. THE BIBLE FILLED WITH EXAMPLES OF AUTHORITY.

A. **Cain & Abel.** Heb. 11:4, *“By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous...”*

1. For Abel to offer “by faith,” he had to have offered according to the instructions of God.
2. Rom. 10:17, faith comes by hearing the Word of God.
3. For Cain’s offering to be rejected, he offered that which was not according to faith, i.e., not authorized.

B. **Noah & the ark.** Gen. 6:14-16

1. Certain requirements: gopher wood, length, height, breadth, window, door.
2. Had Noah changed or ignored any of God’s instructions, he would have done so without God’s authority.
3. Heb. 11:7 By faith, Noah acted upon God’s authority.

C. **Nadab & Abihu.** Lev. 10:1-2

1. They *“...offered **strange fire** before the LORD, which he commanded them not...”*
 - a. It was fire from a different source.
 - b. They had no authority to offer fire that did not come from the altar. cf. Lev. 6:12-13; 16:12
2. They were disobedient to God’s command.

II. GOD EXPRESSES HIS AUTHORITY IN THREE WAYS.

A. **DIRECT STATEMENT.**

1. Acts 2:38, *“Repent and be baptized...”*
2. 2 Thess. 3:6, *“Now we command you brethren...”*

B. **APPROVED ACTION or EXAMPLE.**

1. There are instances in which God does not expressly tell us to do a thing, but gives instances of Christians doing that thing with his approval.
2. Acts 20:7, *“And upon the first day...”* Valid because of the underlying command to eat the Lord’s supper.
3. 1 Cor. 16:1-2, *“...Upon the first day of the week, let every one of you lay by him in store...”*

C. **IMPLICATION or LOGICAL CONCLUSION.**

1. A certain truth may not be expressly stated, but it logically follows from what is stated. It is implied!
2. We teach the truth when we say that Lot went down into Egypt, even though the Bible does not expressly say he did. It does say he came up out of Egypt (Gen. 13:1).
3. Matt. 19:9 implies that one who puts away their mate because of fornication can remarry with God’s approval.
4. Mark 16:16, believe + baptized = saved. Babies cannot believe, therefore they cannot be baptized.

D. If God has not authorized an action by one or more of these three ways, then we have no authority to say or do (act).

1. Every act of worship must be authorized by God.
 - a. Singing, Eph. 5:19 — playing not authorized
 - b. Praying, Acts 12:5 — to dead saints no authorized
 - c. Giving, 1 Cor. 16:1-2 — first day of the week
 - d. Lord's supper, Acts 20:7 — every first day
 - e. Preaching, Acts 20:7 — thus saith the Lord
2. There must be authority for a building, pews, song books, etc. Literally everything we say or do. Col. 3:17
 - a. Where's authority for instrumental music in worship? None
 - b. Where's authority for fellowshiping denominations? None
 - c. Where's authority to use gimmicks, gadgets and entertainment to attract people? None
 - d. Where's authority to preach all positive lessons and leave off the negative ones? None
3. God always demands respect to His word.

CONCLUSION:

1. When men and women call upon the name of the Lord, things are well with their soul.
 - a. Joel 2:32, Acts 2:21, It was prophesied that those who call upon the name of the Lord would be saved.
 - b. Saul of Tarsus called upon the name of the Lord by being baptized. Acts 22:16
2. It's not enough to simply speak the Lord's name, invoking his help. To call upon his name means to DO HIS WILL.
3. Are YOU calling upon the name of the Lord by obeying His commands?

"HE HATH RAISED HIM FROM THE DEAD"

— **The Resurrection Of Jesus** —

Acts 17:31

Elliott C. Glasgow

1. Christianity is unique in its claims.
2. Other religions are believed in despite of unprovable claims.
3. The Resurrection of Jesus is the foundation of Christianity.

4. Evidences from history as to reliability of claims of Christianity.
5. Matt. 28:1-15; Mark 16:1-11; Luke 24:1-12; John 20:1-18; 1 Cor. 15:1-19

DISCUSSION:

- I. **CONSIDER THE STRENGTH OF THE EVIDENCE.**
 - A. Moving of the stone.
 - B. The empty tomb.
 - C. The burial wrappings.
 - D. The witnesses to the appearances of Jesus.
 - E. The New Testament accounts circulated at the time.
 - F. The followers of Jesus Christ were persecuted and killed for preaching the Resurrection.

- II. **CONSIDER THE WEAKNESSES OF THE THEORIES GIVEN TO DENY THE RESURRECTION.**
 - A. The women went to the wrong tomb.
 - B. Possible hallucination.
 - C. The swoon theory.
 - D. The stolen body.

- III. **PAUL'S REASONINGS. (1 Cor. 15:14-19)**
If Christ was not raised . . .
 - A. Gospel preaching in vain. (1 Cor. 15:14)
 - B. Our faith is vain. (1 Cor. 15:14)
 - C. Apostles false witnesses. (1 Cor. 15:15)

- IV. **IF CHRIST HAS BEEN RAISED . . .**
 - A. It verifies our justification. (Rom. 4:24-25)
 - B. Power available at our conversion. (Col. 2:11-12; 1 Peter 3:21)
 - C. Power available to live the Christian life. (Rom. 8; Phil. 2; Eph. 3:20; 6:10)
 - D. Hope o four own resurrection. (1 Peter 1:3)
 - E. We have a living hope. (1 Peter 1:21)

CONCLUSION:

1. Our response to the Resurrection.
 - a. Faith in Christ. (Acts 4:12)
 - b. Obedience to Christ. (Mark 16:15-16; Matt. 28:18-20; Acts 2:36-41; Acts 8:12; Acts 22:6-16)
 - c. Commitment to Christ. (Rom. 12:1; 2 Tim. 2:8; 1 Kings 18:21)
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"THE BIRTH OF JESUS CHRIST WAS ON THIS WISE"

— The Birth of Jesus —
Matthew 1:18

Robert Meredith

1. The birth of Jesus Christ is a key event in the fullness of time (Gal. 4:4; Eph. 3:10-11; 1 Peter 1:20).
2. We can see the birth of Jesus in promise, prospect, and now in reality (Gen. 3:15; Gal. 4:4; Isa. 7:14).
3. Let us consider:
 - a. Attacks made on the virgin birth of Jesus.
 - b. The event of His birth.
 - c. The role of His birth in the fulfillment of time.

DISCUSSION:

I. THERE HAVE BEEN MANY ATTACKS MADE AGAINST THE VIRGIN BIRTH OF JESUS.

- A. Modernists have tried to deny that His birth was miraculous, and put forth the idea that Jesus was just a "special" or "unique" individual.
 1. Accusations have been made that a Roman soldier fathered Jesus.
 2. Still others believe and teach that Joseph was the actual father of Jesus, saying that he and Mary had sexual relations before they were married.
 3. Some modernists have taught that Mary had sexual relations with some stranger and became pregnant.
- B. There are some modern versions of the Bible that teach against the virgin birth of Christ.
 1. The **King James Version** (KJV), Matt. 1:25 reads, "*And knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son: and he called his name Jesus.*"
 - a. The **New International Version** (NIV) Matt. 1:25 has, "*But he had no union with her until she gave birth to a son.*"
 - b. This is a subtle change that opens the possibility of Mary having had a previous child.
 2. Luke 2:33, in the KJV, reads, "*And Joseph and His mother marveled at those things which were spoken of Him.*"
 - a. This same verse in the NIV reads, "*The child's parents marveled.*"

- b. There are times in the KJV that Joseph is referred to as a parent; however, in the original language in this particular verse, he is listed separately from Mary. Why the change in the NIV?
- C. In an article by J. E. Choate, he says that Andre Resner portrays the virgin Mary as being in a long line of “loose” women and even a prostitute (“The Bitter Harvest of the Tares in the Mixture”; Yokefellow; Vol. 20, No. 2).
 - 1. In this same article, Resner is quoted as writing, “We gather that the righteous Joseph learned with mixed feelings of horror and disbelief that Mary was pregnant. He has a ‘Freudian dream’ in which the Lord comes to Joseph assuring him that the child is of the Holy Spirit. Joseph’s wish to believe in the virginity of Mary causes him to accept the message in the dream, that Mary might be exonerated. Mary comes up with her own ‘cock and bull’ story which re-enforces the message in the dream of Joseph.”
 - 2. Again, Resner pictures Joseph marrying Mary in the face of this outlandish excuse.
 - 3. Another comment which Resner makes is, “But there’s Joseph crawling into bed with her every night the rest of his life, relying on a dream, believing in her word, that she had not really slept with another man and used him to cover her shame.”

II. WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT THE EVENT OF HIS BIRTH?

- A. Genesis 3:15 speaks of the birth of Jesus when it states, *“And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise His heel.”*
 - 1. The phrase, “her seed,” is an indirect reference to the virgin birth of Christ.
- B. Gal. 4:4, *“But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law.”*
 - 1. Once again, this verse has an indirect reference to Christ’s virgin birth when it says, “made of a woman.”
- C. Isaiah 7:14 states conclusively that Jesus would be born of a virgin.
 - 1. *“...Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel.”*
 - 2. Some argue that the Hebrew word *almah* means *young woman*; however, the context demands it be translated *virgin*.
 - a. It would not be a “sign” for a young woman to become pregnant unless she was a virgin.

3. The word *almah* is used seven times in the Old Testament, always referring to an unmarried maiden.
4. The word *Immanuel* means "God with us."
 - a. If Jesus' birth were not miraculous, then He would not be the true Son of God.
5. Matt. 1:22-23 is the fulfillment of this prophecy: "*Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call His name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.*"
- D. Matt. 1:18-25 shows us that before their marriage, Joseph thought she was guilty of adultery. This action in and of itself shows that he was not the father.
 1. The angel's message to Joseph showed that Jesus' birth was of Divine origin.
 2. We can see that Matthew's account verifies the virginity of Mary and the Deity of Christ.
- E. Luke 1:26-35 tells us of the angel, Gabriel's visit to Mary.
 1. He tells her that she is highly favored among women.
 - a. If she had been immoral, God would not view her as such.
 2. Her response to him in verse 34, "*How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?*" shows us her purity.
 3. Gabriel informs her that the child she would conceive would be the Son of God.
 4. Luke was inspired in his writing, and tells us of this in Luke 1:3.
- F. John does not mention the birth of Christ, but begins with the pre-fleshly existence of the "Word."
 1. In John 1:14 and 18, Jesus is referred to as the "Only begotten Son of God."
- G. If one rejects the virgin birth of Jesus:
 1. Joseph is either a seducer, or a fool.
 2. Mary is an immoral woman.
 3. Jesus was an illegitimate child.
 - a. Deut. 23:2 tells us that, "*A bastard shall not enter into a congregation of the Lord.*"
 - b. Therefore, Jesus would have sinned when He entered the Temple.

III. THE BIRTH OF JESUS' ROLE IN THE FULFILLMENT OF TIME.

- A. This epic event helped make Jesus' statement of John 19:30 "It is finished" possible.

- B. We have referred to numerous passages foretelling of and revealing the virgin birth of Jesus (Gen. 3:15; Gal. 4:4; Isa. 7:14; Matt. 1:18-25; Luke 1:26-35; John 1:1-3,14,18).
- C. Also, Isaiah 9:6 and Micah 5:2 are verses which prophesy of the birth of Christ, and His birth place.
- D. In 1 Peter 1:20 one learns that Jesus was foreordained to come into the world before this world was even formed.
 - 1. Eph. 1:10 tells us, “...*in the dispensation of the fullness of times He might gather together in one all things in Christ...even in Him.*”
 - 2. Eph. 3:10-11 points out that it was God’s eternal purpose to send Jesus to earth so that He might die for our sins.
 - 3. Jesus’ birth enabled this to come to pass.
- E. The reason Jesus came to earth can be seen in Luke 19:10 and Matthew 20:28.

CONCLUSION:

- 1. God patiently brought about events until the time was right to send forth the Incarnated Word, Jesus Christ, to redeem man from sin.
- 2. His birth is a key epochal event in the history of mankind.
- 3. Because of His birth, we not only have the benefits of His atoning death, but we have His perfect example of how to live (1 Peter 2:21-24).

“DIVIDED INTO TWO KINGDOMS”

— The Rending Of The Kingdom —

Ezekiel 37:22

Ed White

- 1. The text assigned for this lesson is in the context of Ezekiel’s vision of dry bones.
- 2. Ezekiel was one of God’s prophets who had been taken into Babylonian captivity.
 - a. The name Ezekiel means “God strengthens.”
 - b. Ezekiel was a captive, an exile living among other exiles, prophesying to other captives.
 - c. He has a message from God to God’s people in captivity.

3. Ezekiel's message was a message of hope.
 - a. There were lying prophets who were giving the people false hope by saying the yoke of Babylon would be broken in two years, cf. Jer. 28:1-4.
 - b. These false prophets were proven liars when Jerusalem was destroyed by the Babylonians.
 - c. Thus, God was using Ezekiel to show He has not given up on them and there was hope for a return to their homeland.
4. This is also a prophecy of the coming of the Messiah, in "the fullness of time" (Gal. 4:4), when He shall reign and rule over His spiritual kingdom.

DISCUSSION:

I. BACKGROUND.

- A. The Hebrew children were in captivity because of sin — rebellion against God.
- B. Following the death of Solomon, the kingdom of Israel was divided in two kingdoms: *northern* (10 tribes) and *southern* (2 tribes) — Israel and Judah (1 Kings 12 & 13).
 1. Rehoboam was king over Judah — southern two tribes.
 2. Jeroboam was king over Israel — northern ten tribes.
 3. Both eventually carried into captivity because of sins.
- C. God had warned them over and over that if they did not remain faithful to Him, punishment would follow. cf. Deut. 11:26-28.
 1. Their sins and their iniquities had eaten at their lives like cancer.
 2. "They bought and bribed; they schemed and lied; they fought and fumed; they cried and sighed and yet, they died; they raised up armies and gathered up tribute; they sacrificed and slaughtered; and sometimes, when they could think of nothing else to do, they worshiped Jehovah. None of it worked." (Jim McGuigan).

II. THE CAPTIVITY AND WORK OF EZEKIEL:

- A. Ezekiel, along with some 10,000 others, was taken into captivity in 597 B.C.
 1. Ezekiel one of God's prophets among the Hebrew exiles.
 2. Ezekiel actually received his prophetic call about 592 B.C., some five years prior to being taken into Babylonian captivity.
 3. "To his people he was the voice of conscience; he was the voice of realism; he was the voice of exhortation and admonition; he was the voice of hope and solace." (Robert Taylor)

4. It was the work of Ezekiel to assure the Jews that the captivity would not be a short duration as some of the lying prophets had predicted, cf. Jer. 28:1-4.
- B. To appreciate and understand the work of Ezekiel and the prophecy of chapter 37, we need to understand three things:
 1. The captivity was the result of apostasy on the part of the Jews.
 2. Ezekiel was working with people who had been forewarned, cf. Deut. 28:15ff; Lev. 26:14-16.
 3. The captivity was necessary to cleanse the Jews of the sin of idolatry and to prepare them for the coming of the Messiah, the eternal king, cf. Gal. 4:4; Eph. 1:10.

III. THE VISION OF DRY BONES, Ezekiel 37:1-14:

- A. Ezekiel was to prophesy to the valley of dry bones.
 1. There were many bones dried up, v.2. This indicates no hope for the Jews from a human stand point.
 2. "...I will cause breath to enter into you, and ye shall live," v.5. This indicates a promise of life ahead by the power and Spirit of the Lord, cf. v.6.
 3. What could appear more hopeless than a valley full of dry bones?
- B. This vision was God's way of assuring His people that their captivity would end and that they would finally return to their homeland, cf. vs.11,12.
- C. This prophecy began to be fulfilled in 536 B.C., when Cyrus permitted the Jews to return to the land of Palestine, cf. Ezra 1:1-4.
- D. Not only would the scattered and lifeless Jews return home, they would return as one nation, and not two.
- E. The theme of the two sticks (Ezek. 37:16-22) indicates that the two kingdoms, Israel and Judah, will be united.
- F. However, this is pointing to something greater.
- G. The old distinction between the nations would be gone along with their kings.

IV. APPLICATION OF EZEKIEL'S VISION:

- A. "...And one king shall be king to them all..." v.22.
 1. Politically speaking, they never had another earthly king.
 2. This could not have been Nehemiah, Ezra or Zerubbabel, men who helped in leading the captives back home as none of these ever served as king.
 3. The union of Judah and Ephraim under one king is a reference to the union of Jews and Gentiles under Christ as king, cf. Eph. 2:11-22.

- B. "And David my servant shall be king over them..." v.24.
1. This obviously refers to Christ, as stated in Luke 1:33, "*and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.*"
 2. Christ is here called "David," because he was of the seed of David, Matt. 1:1, "*The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.*"
 - a. "Son of David" was a term used by many in referring to Christ in N.T. times. cf. Matt. 22:42; 9:27; 12:23; 15:22
 - b. Problem was that the generation of Jews of Jesus' day rejected and had him crucified because he was not the kind of king they wanted.
 - c. Burton Coffman stated: "The Jewish leaders of that period in Jewish history passionately wanted, more than anything else in heaven or upon earth, a successful general, sitting on a white horse leading an army, who would chase the Romans out of their land and restore to them that dirty old Solomonic empire, which, when they had it, became the scandal of forty generations!"
- C. Hundreds of years after the death of king David, various Old Testament prophets spoke of David as being king in the future over Israel, cf. Jer. 30:9; Hosea 3:5; Ezek. 34:23; and also Jer. 23:5-6.
- D. "David shall be their prince for ever," v.25. "Prince" was a word Ezekiel used for king, cf. Ezek. 34:24; 37:25.
- E. God would make an "everlasting covenant..." v.26.
1. This refers to the new covenant of Jer. 31:31-34 which has been fulfilled, cf. Heb. 8:10-13.
 2. This new covenant would be a covenant of peace, Eph. 2:13-16; Col. 1:20-21; 2:14.
 3. indicates the peaceful character of the church contrasted with the former need for bloodshed by God's people.
 4. Christ's kingdom is not to be advanced by the carnal sword but by "the sword of the Spirit," Eph. 6:17.
- F. Not only would this David (Messiah) be their king, he would also be their one shepherd, Ezek. 34:23; cf. also John 10:16.

CONCLUSION:

1. The phrase "neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all" has reference to the doing away with the two separate Old Testament kingdoms, namely Judah and Israel.
2. There will be a new kingdom established unlike the two Old Testament national kingdoms.

3. This new kingdom would be established on the first Pentecost following the resurrection of Christ, with Christ, the seed of David, as king, in Jerusalem, cf. Isa. 2:2-4.
 4. Christ is now ruling and reigning on His throne, cf. Col. 1:13.
 5. Christians are citizens of that kingdom making up that “royal priesthood,” cf. 1 Peter 2:9.
-

“BY THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD EXALTED”

— **The Ascension and Coronation of Jesus** —
Ephesians 4:8

Rick Knoll

1. We are strengthened and encouraged by learning.
 - a. *“So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”* Rom. 10:17
 - b. *“For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.”* Rom. 15:4
 - c. Nothing encourages us more than to see the working of God’s plan in prophecy and fulfillment.
2. God, from the very beginning, set his plan in motion.
 - a. Year by year, event after event, His plan to redeem man would come closer until the King of Kings was placed on His throne.
 - b. Nothing would stop or cause the plan to fail.
3. In our text, Paul quotes from Psalm 68:18 and foretells of the victorious ascension to His throne.
 - a. *“Thou hast ascended on high...”* — Jesus ascended in order to take his rightful place on the throne of David.
 - b. *“...Thou hast led captivity captive...”* — He has freed us from the captivity of Satan and being led into captivity by Jesus is for our captivity to Satan’s power to cease.
 - c. *“...Thou hast received gifts for men...”* — Jesus began to distribute his gifts, on his way to his Father’s house; and, especially after he entered the heaven of heavens, did he shower down gifts unto men, as a mighty conqueror loaded with treasures with which to enrich and adorn his followers and people.

4. What a joy it is to know our Savior rules from on high, sitting beside the Father just as it was foretold.
5. In our study we will look at:
 - a. The prophecies of Jesus' ascension.
 - b. The fulfillment of Jesus' ascension.
 - c. The coronation of the King.
 - d. Jesus by the right hand of God exalted.

DISCUSSION:

I. THE PROPHECY OF JESUS' ASCENSION.

A. His ascension in Old Testament prophecy.

1. 2 Samuel 7:12-17

- a. Was an immediate reference to Solomon, but in such a way that it would terminate in Christ.
- b. V.16, *"And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever."*

2. Psalms 110:1-7

- a. Could not refer to any person in history except Jesus.
- b. Written 1,000 years before Jesus was born.
- c. Quoted by Jesus in Matt. 22:42-44; Mark 12:35-37

3. Daniel 7:13,14

- a. Notice one "like the Son of man" is going to the Ancient of days. v.13
 - 1) Speaks of Jesus ascending to God.
 - 2) He came with the clouds of heaven.
- b. And there was given him... his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed. v.14

4. Psalms 68:18

- a. When Jesus ascended to heaven victory would be his.
- b. Those captives of Satan would belong to Christ.
- c. Gifts would be given; salvation and all things pertaining to it.

B. Ascension in New Testament prophecy.

1. As foretold by Jesus.

a. In the form of a parable. Luke 19:11-27

- 1) Jesus, represented by the nobleman, would be going to a far country (ascending to heaven) to receive his kingdom.
- 2) Talents (gifts) would be given to be used to expand the kingdom.
 - a) Those faithful in using the talents, were rewarded. vs.17,19
 - b) Those unfaithful in using talents, received death. v.27

- b. In numerous passages his ascension would be in the future.

- 1) John 3:13; 6:62; 7:33; 14:2-4; 16:5-7; 20:17
- 2) Also implied in Matt 24:30; 26:34
- 3) How could he return except he first ascended?

I. THE FULFILLMENT OF JESUS' ASCENSION.

A. As revealed by:

1. Mark ...he was received up into heaven. Mark 16:19
2. Luke ...he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven. Luke 24:51
3. Luke at the Mount of Olives. Acts 1:9-11
 - a. ...while they beheld, he was taken up. v.9
 - b. ...they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up. v.10
 - c. ...shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven. v.11

B. As confirmed by:

1. Peter on the day of Pentecost. Acts 2:29-32
 - a. ...God had sworn with an oath...he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne. v.30
 - b. This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. v.32
2. Paul in his epistles.
 - a. Rom. 8:34 — Christ...is risen...at right hand of God.
 - b. Eph. 1:20-23 — raised Him...set Him as His own right hand in the heavenly places.
 - c. Eph. 4:8-11 — When he ascended up on high...Now that he ascended...ascended up far above all heavens.

I. THE CORONATION OF JESUS THE KING.

A. Jesus' coronation set Him apart from all other Kings.

1. He reigned after His death.
 - a. Matt. 16:28; Mark 9:1
 - b. In fact Jesus died to become king.
2. He reigns from heaven.
 - a. He will continue to reign until the Father sends Him to deliver up the kingdom (church). 1 Cor. 15:22-26
 - b. He is set apart from all other Kings.
3. In the mean time, He reigns over a spiritual kingdom.
 - a. He is able to do this because His kingdom is not of this world. John 18:36-37
 - b. The kingdom of God is within you. Luke 17:20-21
4. He reigns over all that is in heaven and on earth.
 - a. God has highly exalted Him. Phil. 2:9
 - b. Every knee shall bow, every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. Phil. 2:10,11

- B. Notice the difference in the status of Jesus.
1. While on earth he was crowned with thorns. Matt. 27:29
 2. But in heaven on high He is crowned with gold. Rev. 14:14
 3. In the book of Hebrews He is described as:
 - a. Sitting down on the right hand of the Majesty on high. 1:3
 - b. Setting on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven. 8:1
 - c. After he offered one sacrifice (Himself) sat down on the right hand of God. 10:12
 - d. Endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. 12:2

IV. JESUS AT THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD EXALTED.

- A. There are so many examples of Jesus sitting at God's right hand.
1. Luke 24:50-51; John 13:1; 16:28 Acts 2:33, Eph. 1:20-22; 4:8-11; Heb. 1:3; 4:14; 6:20; 7:26; 8:1; 9:24; 10:12-13, 19-22; 12:2; 1 Peter 3:22; Rev. 3:21
 - a. All of the above references demonstrate the many evidences as well.
 - b. Jesus stating such in Matt. 26:64; Mark 14:61,62.
 2. Christ is exalted far above all principality, power, might, and dominion. Eph. 3:10; 6:12.
 3. Christ let it be known all power (authority) had been given to him in heaven and on earth. Matt. 28:18
 4. Christ now reigns as sovereign as foretold in Psalm 110.
 5. In the midst of His enemies as prophesied. vs.1,2
 6. By the voluntary service of His people (the church). vs.3,4
 7. By exercising judgment among the nations of the world.
- B. Jesus is exalted as the head over all things.
1. He exercises His authority over all things pertaining to the church and his ruling is for the benefit of the church.
 2. Because Jesus is Lord, all things work together for our benefit. Rom. 8:28
 - a. Does not mean hardship, temptation, persecution, etc. will be kept from us.
 - b. However, these things can be used for our benefit. James 1:2-4
 - c. One day the glory of heaven will be ours. Rom. 8:35-39
- C. Jesus is exalted and we are blessed because of the knowledge:
1. He is head over all things. Eph. 1:21, 22

2. He is the head over the church, His body, which He loves and cherishes. Eph. 5:25, 29
- D. With all of the above evidences, how could one ever declare that Christ does not reign in Heaven and on earth?

CONCLUSION:

1. Our faith should be strengthened in the knowledge of all that went into our redemption.
2. Our Savior and King is exalted on the right hand of God continually showering great blessings upon us.
3. Are you as grateful as you should be for all that has been done for us by the Lord of lords and King of kings?
4. Remember, Jesus did all of this for us that we might be with Him. John 14:3
5. As the song suggests let us:
 - All hail the power of Jesus' name!
 - Hail Him who saves you by His grace.
 - To Him all majesty ascribe,
 - And crown Him Lord of all.

"A REMNANT SHALL RETURN"

— The Return And Rebuilding —

Isaiah 10:21

Paul Curless

"The remnant shall return, even the remnant of Jacob, unto the mighty God."

1. Remnant:
 - a. Hailey: "what is left over, residue, indicating a very few in number."
 - b. God's people have always been designated as a Remnant.
2. Long ago, Moses made the condition crystal clear on which Israel should abide in the land that Jehovah was giving them (Deut. 28:1-15).
3. On the other hand, should they rebel and not hearken unto God's commands, curses from God would fall upon them (Deut. 28:15-68). Yes, God is a God of love (1 John 4:8); but also a God of vengeance (2 Thess. 1:8; Rom. 11:22).
4. Because of their disobedience to God's commands, Moses clarifies. *"And ye shall be left few in number, whereas ye were as*

the stars of heaven for multitude; because thou wouldest not obey the voice of the Lord thy God" (Deut. 28:62).

5. It is interesting to note that from the beginning of time, until today, the faithful people of God have always been a remnant (a small number) Matt. 7:13-14.

DISCUSSION:

I. WHAT CAUSED ISRAEL TO FALL?

- A. The Jews had committed evil before God (Jer. 2:1-3:5). Their ingratitude is condemned.
- B. The sins of Judah and Jerusalem are similar to modern day society.
1. Idolatry (Jer. 2:13).
 2. Adultery (Jer. 3:1?9).
 3. Forgotten God (Jer. 3:21).
 4. Wickedness ruled (Jer. 4:14-18).
 5. Foolish. Jer. 4:22, "*For my people is foolish*"
 - a. Hosea had it correct when he said, "*My people are destroyed for a lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee...*" (Hosea 4:6). Sad to say, but multitudes are in the same spiritual condition today.
 - b. John points out that all sins could be categorized under three designations.
 1. Lust of the flesh — what one does with his body (1 John 2:16).
 2. Lust of the eyes — what one does with his mind. The eyes being the gateway to the mind (1 John 2:16).
 3. Pride of life — what one does with his will, since pride is a sin of the will (1 John 2:16).
 6. Covetousness (Jer. 6:13).
 7. Not ashamed, nor could they blush (Jer. 6:15; 8:12). Many do not blush over the filth on television today.
- C. Jer. 6:16, "*...stand ye in the ways and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, we will not walk therein.*"
1. God gave them every opportunity to repent and do right, but they refused.
 2. Many sincere religious people today are in the same situation; we can only hope and pray that they will turn from their evil doctrines of men and obey God's commands (Matt. 15:8-9).
 3. When Israel disobeyed God, exile would be the punishment (Jer. 7:1-20:18). Jerusalem fell and was destroyed

in 586 B.C. and her people were carried off to Babylonian captivity for some 70 years (Jer. 29:10).

4. It is interesting to note how God used events in history to accomplish his purpose. He uses nations to bring down other nations; He removeth kings and setteth up kings (Daniel 2:21).
5. The unity of the Scripture is clearly seen in every dispensation of time to bring God's plan into being.
6. H. I. Hester wrote of the prophet Ezekiel saying: "He preached the doctrine of individualism with great force. The individual is morally responsible to God. He also helped the Jews to realize that Jehovah was their God, not only while in Palestine, but also in Babylon."

II. THE RETURN AND REBUILDING.

- A. Isaiah chapters 44-48, the reason is given for their return. Jehovah is superior to all pagan gods and is able to deliver his remnant.
- B. After 50 years (586-536), Babylon fell to the mighty empire of the Persians under the great king Cyrus, king of Persia, who conquered Babylon in about 539 B.C.
 1. Seemingly, the first Jews could return to their homeland after 50 years of Babylonian captivity, but about 140 years before the final return under Nehemiah.
 2. King Cyrus changed the policy of the Babylonian kings, which was to keep tight control over the captives in order to prevent them from becoming a strong national power, by moving them from place to place.
- C. King Cyrus allowed all the nations to return to their native lands.
 1. Some 140 years before Cyrus was born, Isaiah had prophesied this would happen. "That saith of Cyrus, He is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure: even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid" (Isa. 44:28). Also, Ezra 1:1-3 speaks of similar matters. Seemingly Cyrus was the agent of Jehovah to accomplish his purpose for Israel.
 2. God had long before made it clear whom He would accept as the remnant. The remnant would be those faithful to him; and great blessings would be poured on those who return, only IF they obey the voice of Jehovah thy God and keep his commandments.
 - a. Isn't the same true today?
 - b. If we obey the teaching of the New Testament, we will be blessed (Eph. 1:3; Heb. 5:8-9; James 1:25). If

we don't obey, God's wrath will be upon us (John 3:36, ASV).

3. Let us not forget the whole nation of Israel did not return, only a remnant.
 4. Ezra 9:8, *"And now for a little space grace hath been showed from the Lord our God, to leave us a remnant to escape..."*
 - a. Ezra feared that even the remnant might not be spared if they joined themselves in any kind of alliance with the idolatrous peoples around them (Ezra 9:14,15).
 - b. What about the faithful few today?
 - 1) Rom. 16:17; Eph. 5:11; 1 Thess. 5:22
 - 2) 2 Thess. 3:6; 1 Tim. 6:5; 2 John 9-11
- D. Nehemiah was a prayerful man of God, who spent four months in prayer before he made his request to the King (Neh. 1:1-4; 2:1). He was cupbearer to the king of Persia (465-425 B.C.); who just happened to be the stepson of Queen Esther the Jewess.
1. Esther became Queen of Persia about 60 years after the Jews had returned to Jerusalem. She no doubt was a great help to the Jews and was probably still alive when Ezra and Nehemiah went to Jerusalem.
 2. Perhaps she had a great influence on the King who allowed the remnant to return to Jerusalem and rebuild the wall. Of course one must keep in mind who really was in control and still is, Our Heavenly Father (Daniel 2:21).
- E. Some of the Jews' old enemies tried every way they could to prevent the Jerusalem wall from being rebuilt.
1. They mocked the Jews and said, "...if a fox go up, he shall even break down their stone wall" (Neh. 4:3).
 2. Nehemiah and the remnant prayed to God and, "...the people had a mind to work" (Neh. 4:6).
 3. They organized their workforce with weapons in one hand and the other hand working on the wall, pressing on day and night in spite of all obstacles.
 - a. The wall was finished in 52 days.
 - b. Jerusalem was again a fortified city, some 142 years after its destruction in 586 B.C.
- F. What can we learn from this?
1. Whatever it takes to remain faithful, do it.
 2. Whatever it takes to enlarge the borders of the kingdom, do it.
 3. Whatever it takes to convince the erring member to repent; do it.

4. Whatever it takes to encourage more men to become Gospel preachers, do it.
 5. The bottom line is, we can do all things through Christ, which strengtheneth us (Phil. 4:13).
- G. After the wall was completed, the people gathered themselves together to hear the Law of Moses (Neh. 8:1).
1. Ezra the priest and perhaps others read in the Law of God from the early morning till midday for seven days, which resulted in many of the Jews repenting (Neh. 9:2).
 2. "...For all the people wept, when they heard the words of the Law" (Neh. 8:9).
 - a. They cried over God's word and they were heart-broken; but there was also tears of joy (vs.9,10).
 - b. They understood the words of God and obeyed the teachings found therein (vs.12,13).
 3. What can we learn from this?
 - a. Psalm 119:11, "*Thy word have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against thee.*"
 - b. Psalm 119:105, "*Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.*"
 - c. John 8:31-32, "*...If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.*"
 - d. 2 Tim. 4:2 we are told to, "Preach the word..."
 - e. James 1:21 we are told to, "*...receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls.*"
 - f. 1 Peter 1:22,23 informs us that we are born again by obeying the truth of God's word.
 - 1) The bottom line is the pure Word of God must be preached or taught.
 - 2) When God's Word is preached or taught and lands on honest, sincere hearts, they will obey, as the Jews of old did after hearing the Word of God.
 - 3) When people hear the Word and obey the Gospel truth, there will be great joy (Luke 15:10).
 - 4) There is also great joy when just one erring Christian returns to God in repentance (Acts 8:22).

II. THE OLD LAW, THE NEW COVENANT, AND THE SPIRITUAL REMNANT.

- A. Paul informs us the Old Law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ (Gal. 3:24).
1. The prophet Isaiah foretold the coming of Christ's kingdom from the city of Jerusalem (Isa. 2:2,3).
 2. Daniel chapter 2, King Nebuchadnezzar's dream.

- a. Daniel, at the appointed time interprets the dream after revealing that the God of heaven reveals secrets of what shall be in the latter days; perhaps 600 years later (Daniel 2:28).
- b. Daniel described the great image.
 - 1) Head of fine gold, referring to *Babylonian Empire* (Daniel 2:32).
 - 2) Breast and his arms of silver, referring to *Medo-Persian Empire* (Daniel 2:32).
 - 3) Belly and his thighs of brass, referring to the *Greek Empire* (Daniel 2:33).
 - 4) Legs of iron and his feet of part iron and clay, referring to the *Roman Empire* (Daniel 2:33).
3. History records that from the days of Daniel to the coming of Christ, the world was ruled by these four empires — exactly as Daniel predicted.
 - a. Daniel makes crystal clear that during the Roman Kings (the fourth empire) the God of heaven shall set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed (Daniel 2:40-44).
 - b. God's eternal kingdom or church will be established in Jerusalem (Isaiah 2:3).
- B. As Paul states in Galatians 4:4, "*But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, born of a woman, born under the law.*"
 1. So, Christ lived and died under the Old Law.
 2. At Christ's death the Old Law was done away (Col. 2:14).
 - a. Why? Because it could not remove the guilt of sin.
 - b. Heb. 10:3,4 "*it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins*"
 - c. The blood of Christ flowed backward as well as forward to cleanse the obedient from sins (Heb. 9:15-17).
 3. The New Covenant (Testament) is far better than the Old Covenant (Heb. 8:6-13).
- C. Homer Hailey wrote: "Isaiah says, 'And it shall come to pass in that day (the day of Isaiah 11:1-9), that the root of Jesse, that standeth for an ensign of the peoples, unto him shall the nations seek; and his resting place shall be glorious' (v.10). This is quoted by Paul and applied to Christ and the right of the Gentiles to come to God through Him (Romans 5:12). Isaiah then says, 'And it shall come to pass in that day' — the day of v.10, that the reign of the root of Jesse, the present dispensation—'that the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people that shall remain (from numerous nations) from the four corners of the earth' (Isaiah 11:10). The first gathering of a remnant was under Zerubbabel and Joshua the high priest

in the return from the Babylonian captivity. This second time is under the Messiah of verse 10. The highway over which the remnant returns (v.16) is the highway of holiness (Isaiah 35:8). Paul testifies to the existence of this remnant when he said, 'Even so then at this present time there is a remnant according to the election of grace' (Romans 11:5). Paul makes clear that there is a remnant of Israel left that had accepted God's saving grace through obedience to Jesus Christ (Ephesians 2:8). 'Oh that the salvation of Israel were come out of Zion! When God bringeth back the captivity of his people, Jacob shall rejoice, and Israel shall be glad' (Psalm 53:6)."

CONCLUSION:

1. There has always been a remnant of God's people and there will continue to be so until Christ comes again.
2. God had a plan to save mankind before the foundation of the world (Matt. 25:34; 1 Peter 1:20) through Christ and man's obedience.
3. Through all kinds of difficult events, God accomplished his purpose utilizing the remnant, the faithful few. That principle continues today.
4. James 1:17, *"Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights..."*
5. Remember, *"Jesus...said unto them, With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible"* (Matt. 19:26).

"THE MANNER OF THE KINGDOM"

— The Establishment Of The Monarchy —

1 Samuel 10:25

Sidney White

1. Man's history has proven to be rebellion against God's will and leadership.
 - a. Consider the events of the Garden of Eden (Gen.3).
 - b. Remember the people of Noah's day (Gen. 6).
 - c. Think back to the building of the tower of Babel (Gen.11).
 - d. Jer.6:16; 10:23; Rom.15:4. Have we learned the needed lessons?

2. The establishment of the monarchy is just another such instance (1 Sam. 8:1-5).

DISCUSSION:

I. A PERIOD OF TRANSITION.

- A. Yet, all of these events are involved in God's big picture ("the fullness of time," Gal. 4:4).
- B. Israel is coming out of the period of judges and into the period of kings.
- C. God, through Moses, had forewarned of this (Deut. 17:14-15).
- D. Israel had desired to make Gideon king earlier (Judges 8:22-23).
- E. It has now come to pass.
 1. God is obviously displeased with their request (1 Sam. 8:7-8).
 2. They are rejecting the King they already had (God).
 3. Compare Hosea 8:4.
 4. Yet, God's love for them is seen in that He wanted the best king for them.

II. SAUL CHOSEN AS FIRST KING.

- A. Saul is described in 1 Samuel 9:2.
- B. The events that led to the meeting of Samuel and Saul are mentioned in 1 Samuel 9:3-17.
- C. Note some of the statements of interest in this context:
 1. "Thou shalt anoint him..." (1 Sam. 9:16).
 2. "Is it not on thee..." (1 Sam. 9:20).
 3. Saul's answer (v.21) — modesty and humility at this point in his life.
 4. "Stand still" (1 Sam. 9:27).
 5. "The Lord hath anointed thee" (1 Sam. 10:1).

III. THE MANNER OF THE KING.

- A. 1 Sam. 8:11.
- B. They wanted a king, and they are now told how he would rule (1 Sam. 8:11-17).
- C. They give their response to this description (1 Sam. 8:18a).
- D. They are told how God will respond to their cry because of such a king (1 Sam. 8:18b).
- E. They then give a response to Samuel's warning (1 Sam. 8:19-20) and God's response to them (v.22).

IV. THE MANNER OF THE KINGDOM.

- A. 1 Samuel 10:25
- B. "Manner" — rules and regulations by which the government was to be managed.

1. The king is not to be ambitious, not occupied in military preparations and aggressive wars.
 2. He was not to be given to sensual indulgence, forming a large harem and luxurious court.
 3. He was not to accumulate wealth, taxing and oppressing the people to that purpose.
 4. He was to make himself familiar with the law and humbly obey it.
 5. He was to constantly bear in mind that above him abides another King (God).
- C. This king was to be different from the one described in 1 Sam. 8:11-17 because he would follow the law of God.

V. REGULATIONS FOR THIS NEW MONARCHY (Pulpit Comm., #4, p.193).

- A. Founded upon the law of God (Deut. 17:14-20).
- B. Expounded in the hearing of the people.
- C. Recorded and carefully preserved for future reference.

VI. KEY LESSONS FROM THIS TRANSITION PERIOD.

- A. The thinking of the people was undergoing change.
 1. If they were displeased with the leadership of Samuel's sons, why did they not ask for a better judge, instead of asking for a king?
 2. The reaction of people is the result of their thinking (Prov. 4:23; 23:7).
 3. If one's thinking is away from God's order, the outcome will be a departure from God's will (Isa. 55:8-9).
- B. The word of God is all we need to guide us.
 1. 2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:1-3
 2. Note how many brethren are imitating "the nations around us" (denominational churches) in conducting their affairs.
- C. The law of sowing and reaping is clearly seen during this period of Israel's history.
 1. Gal. 6:7-8; Prov. 22:8; Hosea 8:7; 13:9-11
 2. When people are determined to have their way, God permits it. But He makes plain the consequences they must suffer.
 3. Ezek. 14:1-5; 2 Thess. 2:8-12

CONCLUSION:

1. While we view the mistakes of this generation, and the consequences they endured, we must also never lose sight of the "big picture" of God's plan for man down the road ("in the fullness of time").

2. Regardless of man's planning and departures from God's will, God's will will be done.
3. Now that the fullness of time is come, and we are the recipients of its benefits, let us learn from the past history of God's people and conform our lives to His will (Rom. 12:1-2; 2 Cor. 6:14ff).

"ABRAHAM... WAS CALLED"

— The Call of Abraham —

Hebrews 11:8

Charles Blair

An epoch is the beginning of a new and important period in the history of anything.

1. This week, we have considered numerous events which signaled the beginning of a new and important period in history.
2. There are those who write and speak about "pre-historic man." There is no such history. Man was created on the sixth day of creation. We know of that day and the five before it because it was recorded for our consideration.
3. The great epochs of history have been determined by God. His desire to save man was an eternal purpose worked out by the Godhead before Adam was ever created. Titus 1:2; Eph. 3:9-11
4. Before Adam was ever created, God was moving toward a hill outside of Jerusalem where His Son would die for the sins of mankind and thereby satisfy the justice and mercy of God. Isa. 53:11; Eph. 1:7
5. My subject for this hour is Abraham.
 - a. We will consider his call and his faithfulness toward God as he journeyed on earth looking for a city whose builder and maker was God.
 - b. We will strive to learn those vital lessons necessary to build our faith for that same journey.
 - c. May God bless our study together.

DISCUSSION:

I. GOD CALLED ABRAM.

AT THE VERY BEGINNING, ABRAM WAS REQUIRED TO LEAVE WHERE HE HAD BEEN LIVING:

A. Genesis 12:1

1. He was to leave his country, kindred and his father's house.
 2. He was to go to a land which God would show him.
 3. What we find in the ensuing verses is an obedient man doing the will of God.
 4. God called and said "go" and Abram obeyed by going. Such action is the definition of belief.
- B. Let us take a moment to understand that if one is obedient to God, that God's plans moved right along. However if one did not obey God's call, God then would have found someone else to have started the Jewish race.
1. Esther 4:14, *"For if thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, then shall there enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place..."*
 2. We know the history here that Queen Esther did indeed step forth to be God's instrument for saving the Jews.
 3. Abram was a man whom God could use and did use.

II. THE CHARACTER OF ABRAM IS REVEALED IN AS MUCH AS NOT ONLY WAS HE LISTENING TO THE VOICE OF GOD, BUT HE INFLUENCED HIS FAMILY TO GO WITH HIM:

- A. Genesis 12:5
1. He takes his wife Sarai, and Lot, his brother's son and their substance.
 2. Our relationship with God not only affects us but it should also affect those with whom we come in contact.
 - a. 1 Cor. 7:12, A Christian husband who has a wife that does not believe.
 - b. 1 Peter 3:1, A Christian wife who has a husband that does not believe.
 - c. From the standpoint of leadership in the home, it is enjoined upon the Christian husband to lead his family to knowledge, deeper faith and create within them a desire to go to heaven.
 - d. Abraham is an excellent example of such thinking. Gen. 18:19; 1 Peter 3:5,6
- B. In order for the plan to come about, Abram and Sarai would have to have a child.
1. Ten years pass from the time God promised Abram that he would be a father of many nations.
 2. Through One of his descendants all nations of the earth would be blessed, Gen. 12:3.
 3. God speaks to Abram in a vision in the night and brings up the issue about he and Sarai having a child.
 - a. Gen. 15:1

- b. Abram is told to not fear because God was his shield and exceeding great reward.
 - c. Faithful men throughout all the generations have come to accept this great truth.
 - d. Those who walk with God are blessed by God and used by God.
 - e. Eph. 2:10
4. God then reveals that a son, which would come from his own bowels would take place. Gen. 15:4

III. GOD AGAIN SPEAKS TO ABRAM BEGINNING IN GENESIS 17.

- A. When Abraham was 99 years of age, God appears to him and tells him He is the almighty God.
- 1. Those in the Bible who heard God's voice knew in time who it was that spoke to them.
 - 2. God identifies Himself here as the almighty God, the one who has all power.
 - 3. What God said that He would do, God did.
 - a. Rom. 4:19-21
 - b. This example by Paul is about this very situation found in chapter 17.
 - c. God is able.
- B. God calls upon Abram to walk before Him and be perfect. Gen. 17:1
- 1. Do we not see that this is what God always does. He gives stipulations to those who chose to be faithful to Him.
 - 2. Eccl. 12:13; Micah 6:8
- C. God now changes his name from Abram to Abraham. Gen. 17:5-7
- 1. God makes a covenant with Abraham and his descendants after him.
 - 2. The plan of God was not just the Jewish people, but people from every race, who would come to be in submission to God, through the Son of God, Jesus the Christ. Gal. 3:16; Eph. 3:5,6
 - 3. God has now made a covenant with every faithful child of His, that the child of God would love and serve Him all the days of their lives. Jer. 31:31; Heb. 8:10

IV. GOD SPOKE TO ABRAHAM AND REQUIRED HIM TO WALK WITH GOD; A BLESSING OF SUCH A JOURNEY WAS THAT ABRAHAM COULD CALL ON GOD:

- A. The events leading up to the destruction of Sodom, Gomorrah and cities around them.
- 1. Faithful Abraham pleaded with God to spare the cities

- a. Gen. 18: 24-32
 - b. He began with the number of 50 and finished with a number of 10.
 - c. He had the right to ask, but the situation was such that God could not grant his request.
2. How do we react when God says, “no”.
 3. This faithful man asked God for the lives of those people but God could not do what Abraham asked.
 4. Abraham continues to walk with God even when the answer is “no”.
- B. Do we find ourselves asking God for things, believing He will do it, or do we just give up on prayer? Acts 12:5; 3 John 2

V. WE NOW MOVE TO ONE OF THE GREATEST TESTS THIS MAN EVER FACED; GOD CALLED UPON HIM TO SACRIFICE HIS ONLY SON, ISAAC:

- A. God speaks and Abraham replies, “Here I am,” Gen. 22:1
1. If one is faithful to God, one then “listens” to God.
 2. We are not like Abraham who heard the verbal Word of God, but we hear God today through His written Word.
 3. What if God asked something of us that we could not give? Is not the measure of faith, our willingness to obey regardless of the consequence of that obedience? Matt. 19:21
- B. God commands Abraham to sacrifice Isaac. Gen. 22:2
1. He is to go to the land of Moriah to carry out his obedience.
 2. It was to be on a mountain selected by God.
- C. We see now the “urgency” of moving on God’s command.
1. Gen. 22:3
 2. He starts early the next morning and travels for three days to come to the mountain in the land of Moriah.
 3. What did some men say to Jesus? Luke 14:17-20
 - a. It is in parable form, to be sure, but the excuses are as real as they can be.
 - b. When God commands, if we delay, we do so at the risk of our own souls.
 - c. 2 Cor. 6:2
- D. Isaac speaks to his father and ask about where is the sacrifice. Gen. 22:7
1. Now watch the reply of Abraham to his son. Verse 8
 2. God will provide.
- E. When our children are so filled with fear about the times we are living in, how many of us as fathers, grandfathers, or father-in-laws, say, God will provide.

CONCLUSION:

1. God's eternal purpose was carried out by the coming of His Son, Jesus the Christ into our world.
 2. His life, death, resurrection and final journey to be on the right hand of God put everything into place.
 3. After He was sitting on the right hand of God for ten days, His will came into effect on the day of Pentecost. That kingdom (church) has been here for over 2,000 years.
 4. May we learn from Abraham and become obedient to the will of Christ.
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