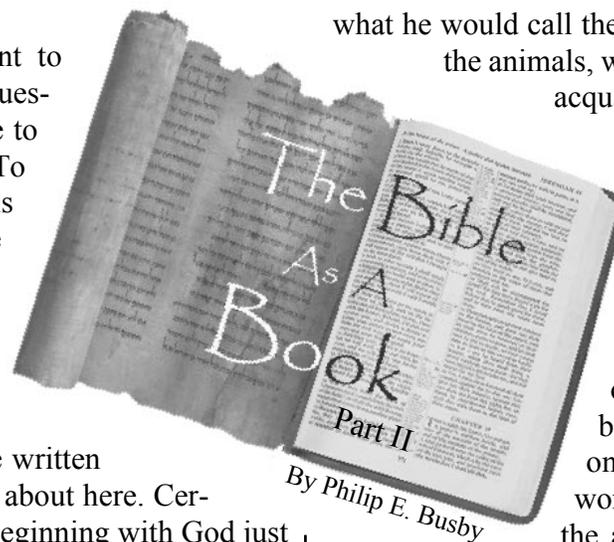


The next issue we want to look at in this study is the question of, why did God choose to give us a written Word? To understand the answer to this question, you must first be clear on the fact that in the beginning it was not so. Man actually lived for more than two millennia before God ever gave a written Word; and of course, the written Word is what we are talking about here. Certainly, the Word was in the beginning with God just as John chapter 1 tells us. However, being able to hold the written Word in our hands as Moses did and as we do today, is something which Adam, Noah, and even Abraham never got to do. This is not to say these men never wrote down some of the things God instructed them, but certainly there was never an official collection of writings given directly by God until much later.

So, "Why did it take so long?" is really at the core of our overall question of why did God give the written Word at all? To understand this, we have to understand the way in which we were created. When God set out to create man on day six, He had made it to that element of creation for which all of creation was set in motion. Man was not just God's pentacle creature in this universe; man was the reason for the universe. This is confirmed in a process which most of us see as one which speaks to why God created Eve; but in truth, it shows us much more. It's always important to remember that God created Adam and only Adam. This has nothing to do with elevating man over woman. The importance of this is that there was only one human; and if God had not given a female to that male, there would never have been more than one. God created one man for an entire universe! Then God specifically takes us through His thought process from there. God says, "...it is not good that the man should be alone;..." Genesis 2:18, but God also tells us what brought about that determination. God did not make this determination directly after making Adam. He did not make Adam and go straight to the making of a female. What happened directly following the creation of Adam is that God brought all the animals to Adam to see



what he would call them. Adam gives names to all the animals, which means he had made the acquaintance of all the different kinds of animals. Then the Bible tells us there was not found, among the animals, a helpmate for Adam. This tells us more than just the fact Adam could not find an equal or even a being which would be of great assistance to him on a level higher than physical work. This confirms to us that the animals were not created to serve the purpose God created man to serve. If the animals could not even be a helpmate to Adam, they certainly were not up to the task of being unto God what God wanted man for!

God created man to commune with. We were also given something which, at the time, caused us to be made a little lower than the angels, (Ps. 8:4-8) but in the end can lead to a nature which is far more than any angel can ever be. (I Cor. 6:1-3) That is our free will and a temporal environment in which to enact it. The reason God did not give man a written Word from the beginning is that God intended to commune with man in a direct, and even daily way. There was no need for a written Word in a world where the Garden of Eden physically existed and man was free to go forth and come back at any time. There was no need for a written Word in a world where The Tree of Life beckoned every man back to the place where God's physical presence came on a regular basis. Even if some men had not desired to commune with God every day in the garden, there would always be times when men would return; and when they did, God would be there waiting to physically talk with them. Never taking of the Tree Of Knowledge of Good and Evil would not have made us slaves, or held us back from being all we could be. That false idea is exactly why Eve chose to take the fruit; and unfortunately, there is far too much in Christian doctrine which feeds this false idea, even to this day.

From the very beginning, God enacted the principles of physical existence; and one of those principles is that if you wish to avoid someone or

something, it often can be as easy as turning to the left instead of the right. There would always have been people who chose to be gone for a great deal of the time and never desired to return any more than they had to. Just as it's true now, this would not have put them outside the view of God, for God can see every man no matter where he or she is. It would, however, mean that when those people needed the Tree of Life or when they simply desired to come "home," they would have to accept that the physical presence of God would be fairly unavoidable in the garden. If man truly desired to never be again in the presence of his Creator, he would have to refuse to return to the garden. In doing so, he would have faced nothing different than he does now: and that is the truth of death!

Decisions, decisions, decisions, that is what our life before God is and always has been intended to be. It would have been much more comfortable for future generations if man had never taken of the fruit they were told not to; but the basic dynamics of where our choices lead have not really changed as much as many people believe they have. Once man took of the fruit God told us not to take of, we simply moved to the other side of things. We lost access to the Tree of Life. We lost access to the main point of having such a place as the Garden of Eden. We lost the kind of physical access we originally had to life, health, and God Himself! The physical access to God we once had is no more; and in this universe, it will never be again in the way it was before taking of the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. Because man chose to disobey the voice of God, God can no longer walk so directly with man, or the Holiness of God will kill man. We truly see this illustrated later as God gives The Word to the children of Israel. God tells Moses to set bounds around the mount and not let the people or any of their animals come closer than those boundaries. God was going to come down on that mountain in a very physical way and talk directly to the people in an audible voice. If they came too close to the presence of God, they would be consumed! (Ex. 19)

There is a very short list of things God cannot do, but everything on that list is there because He is perfect. The first item on that list is: God cannot

tolerate sin. It would take a whole study on holiness to fully understand this issue, but the shorthand is that to be holy is to be set apart. God is set apart and perfect. He has never sinned or been unjust in any way. This makes Him not only able to judge our sins but obligated! Our fleshly existence gives us a freedom that even angels do not have. It gives us a place which can be set apart from God if it needs to be; and after man disobeyed God, it needed to be. Essentially, God allows man to live out his physical life by not coming down and communing with man in the way He originally desired. This is why Moses had to set boundaries around mount Sinai. God wanted to speak to the people directly, but the children of Israel could not approach too close to the physical presence of God, or they would die. When the day came, the people stood outside the boundary and God did speak to them The Ten Commandments. (Ex. 20) After the people experienced this, they were scared out of their wits. Thus, the people came to Moses and asked him to go and speak to God for them. They said whatever God told Moses, they would do. The people knew they were in no condition to stand before God's presence, and surely further encounters would lead to their death! (Ex. 20:18-19)

What is important to our study about this story though, is the point that Moses was able to go up! Why did he not die? He went even closer to the presence of God than the people! What made Moses special? The answer is in the fact that Moses cared about sanctifying his life continually before God. You do not come before the presence of God in the way Moses did without being invited by God; but God would only extend such an invitation to a man to whom it was continually important to walk in holiness, and had significant success in sanctifying his walk! The children of Israel could have stood at that mountain and heard the voice of God, and anyone could have been invited to go up to the mount, if they had been desirous and willing to prepare their heart and life! The problem was not that the people would die because no one can stand before God in the way He had come to that mountain. The problem was, they did not feel they could be or they did not want to put forth the effort to be, set apart (holy) from the things of this world enough to even continue to stand as close as they were. They



did not want to sanctify their lives continually and be prepared to stand that close. God said they had spoken well, because that fear could be used to the advantage of causing the people to at least walk in the statutes God was about to give! So, Moses went up and talked with God to receive the covenant the people said they would follow. (Deut. 5:23-31)

What this story shows us is, not only is it hard to stand in the presence of a perfect God, but also that it's still possible. It's possible to draw closer and closer to God. Moses did; and if we jump back in time, we find that Abraham did as well. In a lot of the stories we see in the Bible, it's kind of vague as to just how the person in the story is hearing God's voice. Is God actually speaking to them? Is it more of an inner voice they are hearing? We don't always know. However, in the story of Sodom and Gomorrah, (Gen. 18:1-19:3) it tells us three men came by Abraham's tent. What is amazing is that even at a distance, Abraham seems to know these men were no ordinary travelers just passing by. These men were on a mission, but Abraham ran to them and begged them to stop and stay for awhile. Abraham not only wanted them to stop, but he killed a calf for them and set all the wheels in motion for having quite a banquet set before them. This only happened, even in Abraham's day, even with Abraham's wealth, for very special guests; and one of these guests was special indeed! Abraham had found it so important to have these men stay because he knew one of them was God Himself! How do we know one of the men was God Himself? Simply because the story tells us it was so. Genesis 18:1 says, "And the Lord appeared unto him in the plains of Mamre:..." If you read the entire account, you find that two of the men went on to the cities, and Abraham talked with God. If three men came to Abraham's tent and only two went on to the cities, where did that third man go? The answer is, He stayed with Abraham and is the reason the story tells us, "...but Abraham stood yet before the Lord." Genesis 18:22

Abraham never asked these men who they were, nor are there any introductions. Why? Because Abraham knew he was in the presence of God, in a very special way. Abraham was one of God's sheep; and he not only knew God's voice, he recognized Him from a distance! Abraham had such a special

relationship with God that God actually talked with Abraham in a form which resembled a man. Now most people readily accept that an angel can do this but not that God does! However, this is not unlike what Adam and Eve experienced in the garden. Genesis tells us, even after they had taken of the fruit, "...they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day:..." Genesis 3:8 Now, I know there are many people who would disagree God ever walked on the planet in this way, especially after that Genesis story; but Abraham's story begs to differ. Of course, God was not in the flesh in the way Jesus came to this earth, and that difference is certainly part of the point I am driving at here. Unfortunately, I don't have the space to go too deep into that, but suffice it to say that when Jesus came to this earth, He did not just come in the form of a man. Jesus came in actual human flesh just as we are in flesh. This is part of the reason why He was born as a baby as opposed to just appearing as a man like the three men did in Abraham's day. Jesus came this way because it was another way for God to come directly to us without His holiness consuming every man who was not prepared to stand before a perfect God. Flesh is temporal; and therefore, we say "mortal." The Tree of Life could have sustained this flesh indefinitely; but as we talked about earlier, even from the beginning, we find it did not have to. Jesus coming in the flesh gave man a chance to touch God in the most physical way possible and not be killed. This dynamic is so powerful, it even gave God the opportunity to be tempted in the way we are tempted by sin. (Heb. 4:14-15) This is why Satan came to Jesus, after Jesus had fasted for forty days and nights, to take his best shot at getting Jesus to sin. This would have been an amazing victory for Satan, but it did not work. (Matt. 4:1-11)

The real proof that God coming in the flesh was God putting Himself on more of an equal footing with us is the simple fact a cross and nails were able to take Jesus' life. Sure, we could have been easily stopped from killing Jesus' body, but God utilizing His power to overcome us or judge our actions was not the point of Jesus being born in the flesh. Being vulnerable to the same kind of things we are vulnerable to was the point. Jesus was here to stand among us just as any of us stand; but being God Himself, He was offering us something very special! God was

offering Himself to physically be our King and Lord in a way which was more tangible than even what Abraham experienced that day. Jesus was powerful but still mortal. Jesus was not going to force Himself on anyone, but the opportunity He presented was astonishing! This is why when the time was right, Jesus rode triumphantly into Jerusalem being proclaimed as the Son of David and, therefore, the rightful King of the Jewish nation. That was on the tenth day of the first month of the Biblical calendar. However, by the evening of the fourteenth - which is Passover - He had willingly given His life on the cross instead. From there, what we need to understand is the truth of Hebrews 9, where we are told in the twenty-seventh verse, "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment..." Because Jesus lived this life in the flesh as a man, and did it in perfection, the judgment part was no problem. Jesus simply got up and walked away from the tomb they had laid Him in; and they did not even know it until the morning of the sixteenth - which is Firstfruits. This process is why we say Jesus has defeated death, hell and the grave. In doing what He did, He has proven the ultimate point: and that is the fact death is no problem for God! This is true even when death is presented to God Himself! He has gone through what He allows us to go through by taking us away from The Tree of Life; and He, in doing so, has proven we cannot only live again, but ultimately, God can use death as a way to lift the veil from our inability to stand before His presence and not fear death!

This should change our perspective on how we walk this life, even though, for now, it remains true that we physically walk this world in sinful flesh which will have to be shed someday. As we do, we must do what every human has done. We must use this time to choose if God is what we want in our lives. The question is still the same as it was in the garden, but the time is much shorter than it would have been. Do we want to have access to the presence of God in the way pre-fall man did? Do we want to utilize that access to live for the purpose we were created to live? If the answer is yes, God has shown us the way. If our answer is no, there is no reason for us to go anywhere after this life besides a place where we will never be able to stand in the presence of God again!

Abraham knew God was walking by. Moses was able to go into the mountain and meet with the presence of God. Disciples recognized Jesus for who He was and gave up everything to follow after Him. These men had tremendous opportunities to walk with God; but since there is no longer a Garden of Eden, what if God never walks by our tent? What if God never comes to a mountain during our lifetime? How do we know God? How do we hear His voice? There, of course, is the fact that in some cases, men in the Bible were listening to a prophet. These men of God often were the source of kings hearing God's direction. However, this comes with a danger. There is a story in I Kings 13 which tells of a time, after the kingdom of Israel was split into North and South, when God sent a prophet from the Southern Kingdom of Judah to the Northern Kingdom of Israel. This prophet was to tell the king of Israel that his ways were evil. Now, God had instructed the prophet not to eat bread or even drink water while he was in Israel. The prophet was to go up by one path and take another path back home to Judah. This prophet did what he was supposed to do in that he went, delivered his message, and turned to go back by a different way, not eating or drinking the whole time. However, there was another prophet which already lived in the place where the first prophet had been sent. When this other prophet heard that a man of God had come from Judah, he had his sons saddle his ass; and he found the prophet from Judah as he was returning home. Then he told the prophet from Judah that God had spoken to him by an angel and told him to bring the prophet from Judah back to his house. Unfortunately, the prophet from Judah believed this prophet and returned and ate a meal with him. As they were eating that meal, the lying prophet stood up and prophesied against the prophet from Judah about his disobedience: in that he had eaten and drank in Israel. He prophesied that the prophet from Judah would not be laid with his fathers when he died because of this disobedience. After the meal, the prophet from Judah left the house to return home and a lion met him in the way, slew him, and his body was buried in Israel by the prophet who had lied to him!

The bottom line of all these stories, and many more in the Bible, is that each individual must have a personal relationship with God in order to know

what they are hearing is from God. This fact is one of the things which would have been different if we had never fallen into sin. When Eve met Satan in the garden, she did not mistake him for God, or think he was speaking in the authority of God. This is - in no small part - due to the fact, it would have made no sense for Satan to have attempted to fool her in that way. If there was one thing Eve knew, it was the presence of God. She did not listen to God very well, and she ultimately did not obey God's instructions; but it was in no way because she thought she was somehow doing something God wanted or had changed His mind about! Today, the devil gets away with a great deal of things, including getting people to think he is speaking in the name of the Lord. If a prophet of Israel lied and got a prophet of Judah to believe such a thing, you know the devil must be good at it. Our true line of defense against this is the fact that if we call on the name of the Lord, He is there, (Rom. 10:12-13) and if we draw close unto Him, He will draw close unto us! (Jam. 4:7-10) The truth is that God has not left us nor forsaken us just because we may not be able to walk physically with Him anytime we want! (Heb. 13:5) This is why Jesus told us God's sheep know His voice! (John 10:27-28)

What is true of every person who has ever known right off it was God speaking to them is, they had built a relationship. Doing that takes effort on our part, and that has not changed from the day God created Adam to the very day you are reading these words. The more we are willing to sanctify our lives before God, the closer and more sure we can be that what we are doing and what we are following is the true Words of God! In fact, a relationship with God is so important that the Bible even uses a special word for it, and that word is "Faith." The Bible tells us, without faith it is impossible to please God. (Heb. 11:6) Nothing takes us back to the basics of creation more than that; but how does faith come? "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." Romans 10:17

The only way to build a relationship with God is by hearing the Words of God. This is what Adam and Eve had the chance to do in a very physical way; but even after the fall, we see men coming to a place where God speaks to them in a very physical way.

How did they do this? By knowing the lesson Elijah was given. One day Elijah went off to those same mountains where God spoke to the children of Israel and gave Moses the law. God asked him what he was doing there? Elijah's answer was that he greatly desired the things of God, but the children of Israel had destroyed the things of God. They had torn down God's alters; they had killed all the prophets until Elijah felt he was the only one left; and to top it all off, they even desired to kill Elijah! Elijah couldn't see how anyone would ever know God again with all this seeming to be true! So, God instructed Elijah to go out of the cave where he was hiding. Suddenly, there was a great wind that "...rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks..." but the Lord was not in the wind. Immediately following that, there was an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake. After that there was a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire! Then Elijah heard something. It was still and it was small. It was a voice! It was God's voice! (I Kings 19:1-18)

If He wants to, God can break rocks with the wind, If He wants to, He can send earthquakes and fire. God can do anything, but He chooses to commune with those who love and desire Him. It does not matter how alone you may feel at times. It does not matter how hopeless life's circumstances may seem. Nothing is the way it is because the God we serve is too small to change it all in the blink of an eye. However, His thoughts are not our thoughts. His ways are not our ways. (Isa. 55:9) God's intentions for our existence are much higher than anything of this life, but we have to seek it. Don't get frustrated as you study God's Word, no matter how much you may believe you just aren't getting it. God gave us a written Word so that no matter the events of our lives, we can always hear His voice and receive the still calmness it can bring!

Let's stay in God's Word!