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

Colossians 2:8

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Following the Biblical Stream:

By Philip E. Busby

We ended last time wrapping up those verses in Genesis chapter 11 that speak about the Tower of Babel story. The ending verse of that segment was verse 9, but as I have mentioned many times, we actually skipped over a few verses in chapter 10. The reason for skipping them was so we could tie the story of Nimrod, which is shown us in verses 8 through 12 of chapter 10, with those verses at the start of chapter 11, which tell the Tower of Babel story. Now, Nimrod was part of the third generation of people going forward after the flood. We call it the third generation by counting the sons of Noah as the first post-flood generation. Noah could be counted as the first; but as we already covered in an earlier segment, Noah already had his sons when he got on the ark, and he did not have any more children after the flood. Thus, we count his sons as the first post-flood generation because they were truly the fathers of those who moved things forward in populating the earth after the flood. (Refer to chart on page 8 of Issue #56) In the third generation, meaning Noah's great grandchildren, there was born the man Nimrod, who began a kingdom that culminated in the building of a tower and city we know as Babel. The point of covering that story before looking at the information given about children born to Noah's three sons and where they ended up across the world is simple. If God had not broke up what was going on with the tower idea, the record we see about the three sons of Noah and who their families became would not look as it does in chapter ten's account!

At the same time, one should note that the Bible records the family information in chapter 10 before the story of the tower, so that we are clear on the fact the occurrence of the tower building and the confounding of language consisted of more than just a handful of people. There were many born after the flood who took part in building this tower and city from its inception. After the confounding, the families separated into those places and in those ways that formed the nations recorded in chapter 10. This is an important fact to keep in mind, and it speaks to what we talked about in our last segment. After the confounding of language, the people did not simply go out from the tower as individuals and in the way they might organically have chosen to branch out across the earth. Instead, they went out as family groups, divided along the lines of Noah's three sons. These

groups also did not simply begin to spread as their populations increased, and move out from each other in the directions they chose to, in order to gain more room. These groups packed up and moved far and wide away from each other.

The breakdown in chapter 10 tells us a bit about where this ultimately led so we could understand how the world was populated by people growing and moving outward, not from one location, as it would have been if they had stayed at the tower, but from three very distinct groups, in three geographic locations. The fact the people separated into three distinct groups from the tower brings us to an important point about what we should consider when looking into the historical accounts of various “ancient” civilizations. When we look at many civilizations around the world, it would seem the Bible's account is incorrect. This is where we must meditate on the Word of God, understanding God is truth and everyman a liar! (Rom. 3:1-4) As we read or hear the accounts of many civilizations, it may seem they have a much longer history in the land where you find them than the Biblical flood and tower information would permit. This, in turn, will cause many historians, scientists, and the like to boldly stand up and claim the Bible false, because they say, we know this civilization or that one dates back much further than the Bible says they would if Its story was true!

However, what they are discounting is exactly what the Bible is trying to teach us about man's sinful nature. If we come to God we must believe that He is God, and He will reward those who diligently seek Him. (Heb. 11:6) In doing so, we come to understand something people who believe they can test the Bible's accuracy before they truly take It at Its word will never see! In fact, this same pride we are discussing when it comes to God's Word is the exact same pride that existed at the Tower of Babel. While the confounding of the language caused some individuals to humble themselves in the sight of The Lord, it did not change all of humanity. We must understand the basis of what the story of the tower is showing us. Those who went on to develop nations were not forming something new or natural to the development of men. They were, once again, reforming what was attempted at the tower, which is rooted in the desires Cain

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showed us even before the flood. This is literally the description of serving the gods your fathers served on the other side of the flood! (Josh. 24:15)

All three of these major groups took with them the idea of a capital city from which to rule humanity; and while they knew that concept could not currently work over all mankind, they hoped it could work over their particular family group. At its base, that's why they separated in the way they did. This attitude is why there is a truth in man's history that can not be denied, and which is directly connected to this fact. In history we often see when a conquering group comes into an area and takes over, there is, almost without exception, an attempt made to erase the conquered societies' history and traditions. Vast libraries of information have been lost due to this practice! Even in our modern world, we see prevalent working examples of one of the most pervasive excuses for conquest itself and the attempt to erase the already existing culture. That excuse is religion! This shows us it all goes hand in hand, just as the Bible tells us; because the core and basis of what we call religion was established at the tower for the purposes of holding everyone together. Religion by its very nature seems to have a righteous cause. Thus, it is easy to use the excuse that people of other lands need to know the "truth" and live by it. The seeming righteous thought pattern is, we will conquer other lands and lead them into the paths of what is right! However, true righteousness comes only from the Words of The One True God, and the message of God's Word has never been about force, in spite of the many people who have tried to use even God's Word as the religious excuse. Just as it was at the tower, God's plan is about whosoever will, not whosoever can be forced or coerced. Again, we must understand that only those willing to seek God diligently with a belief God is God will find their way. It simply cannot be forced upon anyone!

Now, religion does not have to be the excuse for conquest and the erasing of history; and often, at the core, the excuse is simply the idea that "we" are a superior people who will teach "you" our ways and/or enslave you, and/or dispose of you. No matter what the excuse, the real answer to the question of why so many people attempt to rewrite history, or at the very least, destroy historical facts, is clearly shown to us in the Bible during the story of Babel. It is done for the purpose of absorbing people into one culture and thought pattern, just as was attempted at the tower. This was continued after the confounding. The one difference in that situation was in the fact it was not about the three groups going out and conquering a new land filled with people who had their own history, but about each of these three groups becoming humanity unto themselves! This is why the families went so far and wide from each other. The people just after the flood had decided they needed to do something before humanity was "scattered" across the earth, because they saw that as a bad thing. (Gen. 11:4) God confounded man's language because what they had chosen to do was in reality a bad thing! What the leaders wanted now was to attempt to overcome the confounding's effects. Thus, they divided far and wide from each other in groups they felt they could hold together. Distance would serve to hold these groups together because it made interaction with people outside each group more difficult to come by. However, the greater effect in the short term, which would have very long-term consequences, was the hope their group could forget any other group existed!

All this was and is an attempt to reverse what I like to simply call, the "Tower of Babel Effect." The Tower of Babel effect is the simple fact we have been discussing when talking about what the confounding of language actually did. The diversity that already existed in humanity, which could originally be shared through common linguistic flow, was incorporated into language itself. This was not done so people would hate each other or fight with each other, but so we would not lose sight of the fact we are all individuals who have a responsibility to live our lives, not as other men tell us we should or must, but as The God who created us all tells us we should! This is the message Satan and evil men throughout the ages have attempted to suppress. The good of the many outweighs the good of the one or the few may sound like a Biblical thought, but it is not. It can be a good thought when considering what you as an individual could do to help others, and in doing so find there are many sacrifices that must be made in order to care about others. However, it is not a good thought pattern overall in how to build a society. Again, the ways of righteousness cannot be forced upon others. Sacrifices made for the good of others must be an individual's choice, not the obligation handed down by a governing authority. This is why we are not told by Jesus to forget one's self in giving our lives for the greater good of humanity. We are told to be humble before The Lord, and sacrifice this life for service to God; but the everyday interaction commandment we are given is - to love our neighbor as ourselves. (II Chron. 7:14, Matt. 10:39, 22:36-40) At any given moment, each individual should employ the same judgment in how to treat those within their reach the way they would if they were caring for themselves! (Matt. 7:12)

In truth, the Bible tells us no matter how much man attempts to destroy the individuality of humanity, man will never be able to overturn the Tower of Babel effect. However, his continual attempt to do so will lead to ultimate war and destruction that will necessitate God's major interaction among mankind once again. This interaction will be the return of Jesus to establish the kingdom He was offering when He came the first time; and even though it will consist of one man being ruler over the world for the true good of all mankind, which is what man claims he has been attempting all along, the world will not be happy to see Jesus come again! (Matt. 24:27-31) Why? Because Jesus will not do what He does in an attempt to reverse the Tower of Babel effect. Jesus will use the concept of government, and even a one world government, to further enforce the rights of individuals to live as individuals and understand they will stand before God for their individual choices!

After the confounding, the leaders at the tower accepted the fact there was no plan that would work in the near future which would hold everyone together, and the new plan clearly was that humans would separate into the groups they thought they could obligate to stay together. In doing this, they believed they could build something "great" with a smaller group, which could someday bring everyone back together. Their attempt to save the original plan, for at least a segment of the population at the time, ensured, on many levels, diversity would never be forgotten again! Thus, those leaving the Tower of Babel shows us a contradiction among men that existed in man's heart even then. We say we want one world, one peace, but our actions do not follow this truth. We see in history, as well as today, the idea of attempting to erase the history/culture of a people who have been conquered, but those leaving the tower would simply attempt to

What About Death And Hell?

Part II

From Living Springs' Questions and Answers

"I have been studying the Bible recently regarding death. A lot of questions arose due to me losing my son last year. One particular one is the idea of "heaven" and "hell". What is Hades, Sheol...etc. and I don't believe that my son is in heaven - I believe he is asleep. What does the Bible say about hell? Is it different from the lake of fire? Was it meant for Satan and his angels? What have you learned in studying God's word?"

In our last segment we began our discussion by talking mostly about terminology and the difficulties it brings to understanding the truth, especially when people do not want the truth. That brought us to a discussion about how badly our thoughts have been distorted and how far back it goes. A continuation of that discussion is where we start this segment of "What About Death And Hell?"

The basic rundown is this: God created man and put him in a garden. Man was in innocence, but he had the choice of staying in innocence or taking of the knowledge of good and evil for himself by eating from the tree which bore that very name. Man chose to take of that fruit. Just as God had warned him, man was not capable of being responsible for this knowledge without failing to be righteous. This forced God to place the judgment of death on man. Now, man could still call on the name of The Lord because God will never leave nor forsake those who seek Him. (Heb. 13:5) Because it is the will of God that none perish but all come to Him, (II Pet. 3:9) God gave His only Son to create a way out of the mess we are in. (John 3:16) However, just as Adam and Eve chose to turn from God and do what He told them not to, many people through the ages have also chosen to reject God in their lives.

Now, it's important to understand that what man received by taking of the fruit was not wisdom or knowledge about everything; what man received was only the knowledge of good and evil. Adam and Eve had enough problems with just that, anything more may have literally killed them. Man had not even given himself enough time to learn anything about living before he thought he knew enough to take of the tree God told them not to, he certainly was not ready to understand the full dynamics of what it meant to die! So, man brought the judgment of death upon himself before he was even capable of having knowledge which would explain to him what happened to a man after death. To obtain that knowledge, they would have to do what they failed to do in the first place, and that was humble themselves by admitting they did not know and ask God to teach them. (James 4:7-10) Understand that even after man's fall into sin, people were perfectly free to seek God on the matter, but very few have ever chosen to do so. Instead, man has chosen to lean on his own understanding for the answers even when the answers are clearly out of his reach without God.

(Prov. 3:5) How does this relate to our subject at hand? It shows us the path which has led man to think in the way he does about death!

Putting aside for just a second the ideas of heaven and hell, try to grasp where man began. Man did not understand death at all. In the beginning man was not intended to face death, so he was in no way built with an understanding of it. Animals and plants live and die all the time, but that is just a natural cycle of the creation. It really is no different from things like the fact day is followed by night and night is followed by day. Ever repeating cycles are the basis of creation, but man was the free-willed being. Man could effect changes, be fruitful; but after the judgment of death came upon us, things changed. From then on, man would not live forever here on this planet; (Gen. 3:22-24) but a fact man did understand, at least at first, is that men do not cycle like the plants and animals. (Job 14:7-10) When a man dies, everything he is does not return to the earth and come back as something else. So, for a very long time the question has been, what happens after the death of the part of us which does return to the ground?

Since many men have not wanted to seek the answer from God, there is a philosophy of men about death which is not the full truth. Some of the story is created by hints of the truth man did see; some of the story was created by guess work; some of the story was and is created by wishful thinking; and of course, we can't discount the devil's involvement in telling us lies! However, one of the best things you can understand about words such as Hades and Sheol is that both these words have their roots in the idea of things "unseen." Remember what I said earlier about using the words we have? Well, before the Tower of Babel, man was all of one language. This was a great convenience which man abused for evil purposes; and thus, it had to be taken from us. However, it was in this unified language that man developed basic concepts. It was easy to use the rules in this original language to come up with new words and terms which all men would understand. When it came to the concept of what happens to a man after death, men had no clue. So, at first he simply used a word to describe where people went as "unseen." Whatever that original word was, it eventually evolved from that original concept of man simply saying he did not know, to being the description of what man did not know. It became a name, and the word took on a life of its own!

If that doesn't make sense, let's look at an example of this kind of metamorphosis. Again, in older languages there were rules for developing a word which carried a meaning. This is best seen in the idea of human names. Today we see many names, and people will talk about what their name means.

Why? Because names are often a description of something packed into one word! For example, my name is Philip. Now, it's not clear how old this name may be, but the form we are familiar with today comes from Greek. Philip means "Lover of Horses." This is the basis of calling individuals by name. Adam started us off by calling his wife Eve. Why? Because she was the mother of all living. (Gen. 3:20) The Bible shows us this in many cases. People, because they were in a certain situation or place, or because they felt the child had a specific task ahead, would use a word to denote certain things and name their child that word.

Names are also a good example of how weak English is. When English speaking Europeans came over to the Americas, attempts were made to translate native American languages into English. In the day and age of weak languages, we often find ourselves with no words to translate words with compound meanings, like names. This is why my name is Greek. There is no English word, nor are there rules to create an English word which simply means "Lover of Horses." So, the Greek was simply maintained. This works fine in English because many European languages have their roots, at least in part, in Greek; but when the Europeans came to what was for them a "New World," the languages were quite different. Many people found it hard to pronounce native names, so instead of carrying the names over into English and trying to pronounce them, they often took the lazy route and simply called the person what the name meant. Ironically, this to many Europeans made native people seem dumb. They thought it was funny that native people, instead of having names, were called things like Sitting Bull and Flying Eagle. This same translation problem showed up when native people tried to speak English. The sluggishness caused by trying to translate what they wanted to say into such a weak and unexpressive English, caused many to believe natives were dull minded. When in fact, it was the childishness of the European's language which caused the problem!

Now, getting back to our subject at hand, this was the way a word for the afterlife developed. Man said, "We do not know what lies beyond this life"; therefore, to the living death is "The Unseen." A word was created to express this, but man did not leave it at that. No, man had to develop a theology to explain the unseen, and since man is very fleshly minded, he thought in terms of time and space. This meant man had to "go" to a "place." The word for the unseen would become the name for that "place" man would "go." How would they determine where this place was. Well, the answer is really quite juvenile. Not to be morbid, but when a person dies, their physical body does go through the same thing animal and plant bodies go through. This is what God told man would happen, "...for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." Genesis 3:19 No one in their right mind wants to watch this process. (John 11:39-40) So, the simplest answer for what to do is to put the body in the ground. "Out of sight, out of mind!" This tradition of putting bodies in the ground brought most cultures to see the place where we go after death as under the earth or inside the earth. This is where we get the concept of an "underworld." From there, many elaborate thoughts and ideas arose across the world about the going and about the place.

In another clear sign that we are very fleshly minded, many

cultures believed the preservation of the body was critical to a happy afterlife. The Egyptians probably show us this to the highest degree. This is why they mummified their dead, particularly people who were considered important in life. In many cultures, servants and even pets of rulers, would be killed at the same time as the ruler's death so the ruler could take them with him. Then all of them were often put in an elaborate tomb of some form. This kind of false beliefs have infected Christian doctrine as well. Many Christians believe preserving the body after death or, at the very least, allowing the body to take a more natural course of deterioration is somehow crucial to the resurrection of Christians. This is where the mixing of man's ideas and Biblical truth confuse people.

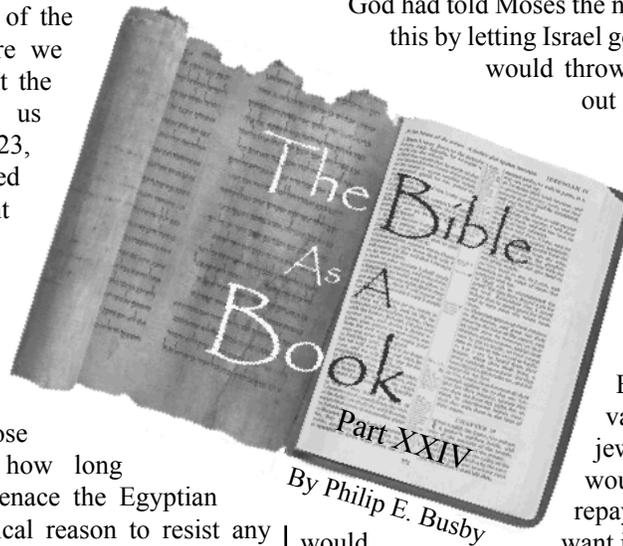
You see, the bottom line is that man believes there is a place where the dead must go. Some believe there is a separation between those who are "good" and those who are "bad." Some believe we all go to the same place; but the crucial element that trips up those who attempt to understand the truth is that the Bible makes it clear we will, both good and bad, all stand before God. By mixing man's stories with the truth, people get very confused. The pagan thought tells us we have to go somewhere where we can walk the same physical time line the living are going through. Because the Bible does not teach this philosophy, we lean on the false ideas of man to explain a "Christian" version of this place. Through this, Satan often becomes like the Greek god Hades and he is viewed as the ruler in/of the underworld we often call hell, where the wicked "go." Many then wonder where hell is or simply believe it's like the pagan stories - under or inside the earth. Then when we take our story back to the Bible truth of Judgment Day, we find ourselves asking the question, "Is hell the same place as the Lake of Fire?" The truth is, you will get nowhere trying to congeal all these ideas, and why should you? The truth is the truth, and the rest are all stories of men which were originally designed to lead us away from the truth! (Rom. 8:5-9)

Again, the Bible uses words and terms because language can be very limiting; but the first clue that the Bible is not telling the same story as man's false religion is the fact the Bible does not tend to use the same term or word in all cases. Jesus did not use the same words all the time when He spoke in the original language; and because the translators of the King James Bible were led of The Holy Spirit in their work, they did not even use the word "hell" in all the places they could have. This was not a translation miscue, this was led of God, and it shows us there is a truth God is attempting to explain to us which is not the thoughts of man. This is why we see the words "grave" and "outer darkness." These words are trying to bring us back to the truth that man does not understand what happens to a person when they die! These words carry into English, in the best way possible, the fact there is an unseen or unknown aspect to death. The problem is what we do not understand we tend to fear greatly, but that was the point God was/is trying to make. We only have to fear the unknown part if we enter it without a relationship with God or what the Bible calls "faith!" Over and over I repeat in my writings that faith is simply the description of a relationship with God. However, the churches' insistence that faith is blind belief has corrupted the meaning of the word "faith." Thus, we see another terminology problem.

As we continue our overview of the book of Exodus, we pick up where we ended our last segment talking about the plague of darkness. This brought us through Exodus chapter 10 verse 23, where for three days the Egyptians lived in deep darkness with no working light source, while Israel had light in their dwellings. Now, because the plague of darkness was given with a set time period, its end was not dependent on Pharaoh calling for Moses and asking that it be lifted. However, Pharaoh had already had those advisers around him questioning how long Pharaoh was going to let Moses menace the Egyptian people. Thus, Pharaoh had no political reason to resist any further. It was only Pharaoh's great pride that was holding him back from setting Israel free; and in yet another act of pride, Pharaoh would call for Moses and Aaron to inform them of his conditions.

At one point just before this, Pharaoh had asked Moses what and who all would be going if Israel left Egypt. Pharaoh was still determined Israel would return after going into the wilderness to worship God. He did not trust Moses to bring the people back, so he set the condition that only the men could go; and as if he could make the rules, he simply threw Moses and Aaron out from before him. In that situation, of course Pharaoh's approach did not stop the plagues from coming, but Pharaoh thought he'd try it again. After the plague of darkness, Pharaoh tells Moses the people can go - all the people, not just the men. However, what Pharaoh would not let go was their animals. Moses explains to Pharaoh why this is unacceptable in that Israel needed the animals to perform sacrifices unto God, and they would not know what this would require until they were in the wilderness communing with God. Moses tells Pharaoh, Israel will take all their animals with them. This angers Pharaoh, and he decides he has had all he will take from Moses; but instead of agreeing to let Israel go, Pharaoh tells Moses he simply will not see Moses any more. Pharaoh even adds the warning that if Moses comes before him ever again, Pharaoh would kill Moses!

This is what we would call breaking diplomatic relations - and with a vengeance. However, this does not shake Moses in any way, because Moses knows Pharaoh's attempt to simply call an end to the entire "negotiation" is no way out for Pharaoh. Moses tells him that he had spoken well, because God knew that is what Pharaoh would ultimately attempt in his handling of the situation. In many ways, this left no choice but to deal with Pharaoh in a way that did not require him to call for Moses again. God was already way ahead of how to deal with the fact Pharaoh would want no more conversations with Moses; but in his arrogance, I suppose it never occurred to Pharaoh that all this meant was what was to come next would be something it would do no good for Pharaoh to call on Moses about!



God had told Moses the next plague would not only end all this by letting Israel go into the wilderness, but Pharaoh would throw Israel and everything they had out of his land. This would fulfill what God had told Moses would happen in the end of it all, and be a much greater blessing than what they had originally asked Pharaoh for.

On top of this, Moses was to tell the children of Israel to begin borrowing from the Egyptians those things which had value - such as gold, silver, and jewels. In the end, the Egyptians would not want those things back or repayment for them, because all they want is for Israel to have whatever they needed to get out of Egypt and leave them alone! Israel would also find great success in asking of the Egyptians, because unlike the arrogance of Pharaoh, the people of the land, including Pharaoh's servants, had come to see Moses as something very great. This transfer of wealth would not only provide the final blow to the Egyptian economy - which it would never truly recover from - but it would put in the hands of Israel some of the value they had worked so hard to build in Egypt by their labors there. This was not so much retribution for wrong Egypt had done, but true payment for the work Israel had done. Israel was very responsible for the wealth of Egypt at that time, going all the way back to Joseph's presence in the Egyptian government, which brought Egypt and the fledgling nation of Israel through the seven years of famine, which could have killed them all!

Before Moses leaves Pharaoh that last time, he lays out to him what is coming next. In times before this, Pharaoh may have believed there really was nothing left of value God could devastate, but if he still thought that - he was dead wrong! The next plague would take from Egypt not just its present, but its future in a very tangible way. Pharaoh is told God would go out across his land about midnight and all the first-born in Egypt would die! It would not just be Pharaoh or the poor people, but all the people great and small, along with the first-born of animals. The only ones given a way around this plague's devastation would, once again, be the children of Israel. In fact, Pharaoh is even told this plague would send up such a cry among the Egyptians, if there was any thought of coming against Israel for this plague, Pharaoh should not count on it, for not even the lowest of those in Egypt would dare make a move against Israel for fear of them. There would be no more thoughts of any kind that Israel was part of Egypt in any way, or belonged to Egypt. God would show He put separation between the nation of Israel and the Egyptians like never before.

In the end of this, Moses would not even need Pharaoh, for it would be a very democratic decision. The people of Egypt would come to Moses and Israel demanding Israel and everything they have leave their land. Upon informing Pharaoh

of these coming events, Moses left very angry. This anger was in no small part because Moses was righteous, and was very angry at Pharaoh it had come to this when there was no reason for it! God had offered Pharaoh and Egypt the chance of a lifetime by putting Israel in their midst, and they had not just squandered that opportunity, but chose devastation of their very lives over yielding to God in the slightest. However, God, once again, confirms to Moses that all this has worked for the good in that it gave God the opportunity to show among men, there is no power that can resist God's will when He chooses to act. This should be a warning to all nations and people, even to this very day!

This last plague would not only bring separation between Israel and Egypt in the ways that would be noticed by Egypt and the world, but also specifically for Israel. This plague would have special implications for Israel and be the beginning of them seeing themselves as a nation. It would be a story which they would recognize every year as the day the nation was truly established! They were to tell their children about this event throughout their generations. Centuries would pass and much would happen to Israel, but this would continue to be a special event to all those who are part of this nation, no matter where they may roam. This would be "Passover," and Moses would give Israel the instructions for how they should recognize it. First off, the month this event took place would be designated the first month in Israel's calendar. They would no longer care about how Egypt chose to mark the passage of time - or any other nation for that matter - they would be given their own calendar by God Himself.

On the tenth day of this first month, each family in Israel or group of neighboring families (if a single family unit was too small), were to choose a special lamb to be sacrificed. This lamb was to be from the sheep or the goats, a male of the first year, and it was to be a perfect specimen. In no way were you to pick an animal you might want to get rid of anyway. Only a lamb with no known defect or flaw could represent The Messiah, which is what this lamb was to do in being the main symbolic element of their deliverance from Egypt! This lamb was to be kept with the family, not simply left out among the flock, from the tenth until the fourteenth day of the month. Then in the evening, the lamb was to be killed, and its blood collected. This blood would then be used to splatter on the framework of the door where the lamb's meat would later be eaten by each family or group. By striking the blood on both sides of the door frame and the header, the blood would not only be on those posts, but it would splatter onto the door itself. This would tell the death angel not to enter or effect that household(s), or its animals, but to pass over them that night!

After collecting the blood, the lamb's meat would be cooked by specifically roasting it over fire; and unlike a normal sacrifice by fire, it was not to be consumed by the fire itself. Instead, it was to be eaten by the group, along with bread, to which no leaven had been added or allowed to develop, and bitter herbs, which also represent The Messiah and His work. We see Jesus explaining this to His disciples as they observed one last Passover before Jesus died on the cross. Jesus said of the unleavened Passover bread, "This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me." Luke 22:19 In

representation of the fact Jesus would be off the very public cross and in the grave by the morning of the fifteenth, the Passover lamb was to have nothing left by the morning. There was to be an effort made to eat all its flesh, and what they just couldn't eat was to be burned up in the fire. None of it was to be taken out from the house, and they were to handle the process with care, breaking none of the lamb's bones! (John 19:31-42)

The further instructions were that the people were to do all this dressed and packed up as if they were ready to step out the door to go on a journey. The meal was to be eaten not with leisure, but with the hast of people who had somewhere they needed to get on to. This was because it was going to be true! Throughout the land, those outside Israel, and any in Israel who did not follow these instructions were going to see the death of their first-born; and the Egyptians would throw Israel out of their land for it. Israel needed to be ready to leave Egypt the very next day. There would be no time to waste. This fact would even affect their eating of bread over the next several days, as they would be uprooted and on the move with such haste, there would be no time to let bread rise or for yeast to be formed that would make the bread rise. They would eat unleavened bread, and so God commanded that as the years passed they also commemorate this fact by directly following the Passover ordinances of the fourteenth, in which they were to eat no leaven, with a seven day feast of unleavened bread. From sundown on the fourteenth, which is to Israel the beginning of the fifteenth day, to sundown on the twenty-first day, all of Israel are to eat no leaven or even have leaven or foods that contain leaven in their houses. This is such an important observance to being a part of God's chosen nation, everyone who is part of the nation, working for someone in the nation, or simply visiting the nation of Israel is to observe this. Those who do not follow this ordinance are no longer to be considered a part of Israel!

Also, the fifteenth and the twenty-first days of the Feast of Unleavened Bread are to be observed as a Sabbath day is to be remembered, and no work is to be done, save that everyone is allowed to eat food on those days. All these ordinances would have both historical meaning to the nation of Israel, as well as prophetic meaning to Israel and the world! After Moses and Aaron finished laying out these instructions to Israel, the people went back to their homes and did as they had been instructed. No matter who did or who did not believe it to be true, the sun set on the fourteenth day, and at midnight the death angel went through the land of Egypt. Pharaoh and the people of Egypt rose up that very night and found in every household, from Pharaoh himself to the poorest of the poor, there was at least one dead! As it was with people, so to it was among the cattle. The Egyptians would send up a cry of mourning like never before, and Pharaoh would immediately send word to Moses and Aaron that they were to get up and get themselves out of his land, taking everything they owned with them!

As foretold, the Egyptian people also hastened this event as they wanted Israel out from among them for fear they would all die if Israel's departure was not as soon as possible! Thus, Israel had to pick up their belongings, and get out of Egypt as quickly as they could. Israel also followed Moses' instruction about borrowing things of value from the Egyptians; and at this point

the Egyptians certainly gave them everything they could, just to get Israel out of the land as fast as possible. Right around 600,000 men, likely counting only those who were twenty years old or older, left Israel with their families, animals, and other possessions that day. If you consider reasonable population averages of agricultural societies - even throwing out the fact the men compared to women ratio would have been somewhat lopsided due to Pharaoh's decree about killing male children at the time of Moses' birth - the number of women and children this number of men would indicate existed, tells us the total number of those belonging to Israel may have consisted of nearly two and a half million people! It had been 430 years since their forefather Abraham left the Mesopotamian Valley in following God's instructions to sojourn as a stranger in the land of Canaan, and finally the promise of a chosen nation culminating from that action was coming to pass!

Israel would now travel from their gathering point in Egypt to a place out in the wilderness to the east of Egypt, where they would build temporary structures called "booths," until they could get more organized and move on. God would emphasize to Moses again just how much the ordinances and observance of the Passover was and would continue to be the separation of His chosen nation from the greater world, as only those truly a part of the nation of Israel could take part in the Passover meal. It does not matter if you are blood born or come from outside of Israel, the rules are the same. Those not blood born can not eat until they have made a full commitment to being a part of Israel, and those blood born are not a true part of Israel if they do not observe Passover. That's how it started, and that's how it was to remain throughout the generations!

The first-born had been killed among the Egyptians, and had been spared by the striking of the blood on the door-posts of Israel. God would now instruct Moses that all the first-born of Israel would belong to God, and this would be true of people as well as animals. Moses would instruct the people about how to recognize this fact, and remember it by giving to God the proper sacrifices for each first-born among man and beast. Moses would also waste no time in making sure Israel followed God's instructions, as he goes out to the people of Israel to make sure they understand the ordinance of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. He reminded them of the importance of what they were currently going through and the fact this would be remembered and observed by that seven day feast even after they arrived in their permanent land. From generation to generation all these things would be done to bring each new generation the knowledge of how Israel became a nation by the mighty hand of God.

God would not lead Israel up to the land of promise by the shortest and most direct route, because that would take them through the land of the Philistines, who were a strong people well acquainted with war. God wanted Israel to have a chance to absorb what they had seen God do for them in Egypt and begin to trust Him for what still lay ahead before they seen such a foe. Thus, Israel went out of Egypt equipped for a longer journey, and God would lead Israel by the path not traveled, where He would care for the people in spite of the lack of natural provisions along that path. Moses had also taken the bones of Joseph with them as they left, for this was the event

Joseph knew would come about by God's hand, and he wanted anything which remained of himself to remain with his people, especially as they left Egypt to go home! (Gen. 50:24-26)

Israel would pick up from their temporary camp and continue on their journey to a place called Etham. This put Israel just on the edge of entering the Sinai Peninsula and the desert which lay beyond. God was truly leading Israel south away from the coast of the Mediterranean and the territory of the Philistines, in order to use the journey itself to show Israel they were a people all about following God wherever He might lead them. God would physically show Himself leading them, as before them would appear a pillar of cloud by day and of fire by night. They would continually know God was with them through this, and God would light their journey through the darkness of night.

In a final show of just how much there is a separation between those who put their trust in God and those who do not, God would specifically call Israel to encamp and rest in a spot so far out of the expected path others might think Israel should have taken, that it would, once again, draw Pharaoh's attention. Moses was told Pharaoh would think, in spite of everything God had done, He was now unable to lead Israel across the land. Pharaoh would hear about where Israel had gone and believe they were lost in the wilderness, making them vulnerable. This is exactly what happened; and as Pharaoh received the news, his pride once again got the better of him. Pharaoh began to ask why they would let such a people go from being their servants? Then he gathered what was basically the entire army of Egypt to pursue Israel. He would come upon them as Israel camped with the sea directly behind them. When Israel saw the Egyptian army, they, also in spite of what God had already done, were afraid, and they asked Moses why he did not listen to them in Egypt. They claimed they had warned Moses to leave them alone, and that their attitude was that it was better to stay in Egypt as servants than die under these circumstances!

Moses attempts to calm the people by informing them God was going to fight for them, and afterward they will see the Egyptians no more. However, after taking the time to do even this, God points out they were wasting time arguing when they should have already been trusting Him and moving forward. God simply wanted Moses to lift up his rod and hand over the sea in front of them and the waters would divide so Israel could travel through on dry ground. On the other hand, this would also be used as the way to destroy the Egyptians they feared. In his arrogance, Pharaoh would send his army after Israel, even into the sea. To ensure Israel had time to gain the lead, God would move the pillar of cloud in between Israel and the army of Egypt in order to block the Egyptians. This pillar continued to give light to Israel during that night, but specifically caused darkness for the Egyptians. Moses did as God commanded him, and God sent a great wind to part the sea. Israel would move through the seabed just as they would any dry area of land, but with a wall of water on both sides.

When the time was right, the Egyptians were finally allowed to move, and they pursued Israel right down into this open path through the sea. However, they were only allowed to get in deep enough so as to be too far to turn back, and then God

acted against them! Their equipment, specifically their chariots, began to break down, and as this happened, they realized what should have been obvious the entire time. God was fighting against them and for Israel! The Egyptians would attempt to turn back, but God commanded Moses to stretch forth his hand once again, and the sea returned to its former state. This would drown the entire army of Egypt, and not a one of them escaped with their life! In proof of the point that the Egyptians had truly been defeated and were dead, their bodies washed up on the shores of the sea, in full view of Israel. This caused Israel to fear God like they had not yet done. It also caused them to believe in the plan of God and the leadership of Moses!

Israel was so inspired by this event, they did something that use to be very common among men when a great victory had been won or a great event had taken place. Israel developed and sang a song to commemorate what God had done. In this song they even mention the fact they now believed God was more than able to defeat those people who Israel knew stood between them and the promised land. Those people being the very Philistines God had specifically led them away from at the start, and the Edomites who were known to own the routes leading through the desert, because they controlled the little water available along the way. Moses' sister would also lead the women in song and dance to celebrate this great showing of God's power. However, the celebrating would not last long, and their fleshly fears would soon get the better of them once again, just as the pride of Pharaoh continually plagued him!

With Egypt and all its worries behind them, Israel would go three days journey into the wilderness that lay in front of them. During these three days they would see just how little natural resources there were in this area, for they would find no water source the whole time. Finally they would arrive at a place called Marah, which had water, but had been named such because the waters there were not drinkable. After going three days seeing no water to refill their dwindling supplies, the people did not ask Moses what God wanted them to do. Instead, they began to complain that Moses had failed them again. Moses would take the matter to God and God would instruct Moses to use a certain tree to cast into the water, and upon doing so the water went from being undrinkable to good water! In putting Israel in this situation, God had shown them how their fleshly instincts were to doubt God even in the little things and even after everything He had done. Thus, it was explained to Israel all they needed to do was follow God's instructions for how to live their lives in righteousness, and in order to hear those instructions they needed only to put their time and efforts into seeking to hear the voice of God. If they could only bring themselves to do this, none of the things that had happened to a nation such as the Egyptians would happen to Israel. Instead, God would continually heal their weaknesses and failings!

After this, they traveled to a place called Elim, where there was plenty of water, and a true oasis! After camping there, they set out into the desert region of the peninsula where the conditions were even harsher than they had been. It had taken them right at a month from the day they left Egypt to get to this

point, and it was becoming apparent God was truly leading Israel into a place where He could isolate Israel from all others, and in so doing give them the focus they needed to receive His Words. However, all Israel could see was the fact they were far out into the desert on a path where there was no places or ways to obtain supplies. They again began to accuse Moses and Aaron of making bad choices for the nation. They claimed they would rather have stayed in Egypt, dying by whatever means God would have them, than to have followed Moses out into this place. In spite of all the hardships in Egypt they complained about when there, all they could think of now was the fact there was food to eat there, and out here they were convinced they would all die of starvation.

Of course, God heard their grumblings about all this, and He tells Moses to inform the people they will not go hungry, because in feeding them God was going to show forth His glory, and that He is The God Who brought them out of Egypt, every day. Every evening there was to be meat to eat and in the morning there would be plenty of bread. As Moses tells the people this, he points out God can hear them speak in spite of the fact their complaint was aimed at Moses and Aaron. On top of that, Moses and Aaron were just administrators of God's will, and when the people complained about the situation, they were not really complaining about a man but God Himself! To affirm what Moses and Aaron were saying was true, God shows forth His glory to the people directly through the pillar of cloud. Then, just as they had been told, there was food to eat that evening - in that quail came upon the camp in abundance - and in the morning as the dew diminished the people found small round things, which they called manna. Moses explained to them this was the bread God had provided for them to eat.

God had said all this would be a way of teaching the people to trust in Him day by day, and this truth would be shown greatly in the instructions for how to deal with the manna. Moses told the people it would appear six days a week. Every day they were only to collect what they could eat that day. This was because they were to trust God that the bread would be there the next morning. Storing up a supply of it, even for just the next day was not only unnecessary, but a bad idea. This truth hit home as some of the people did not believe or at least listen to this instruction, and when they kept some manna until the next day, it turned into something quite rotten and foul! The only day this one day's supply rule was not to be followed was on the sixth day, for God had specifically told them to gather enough on day six for two days. This was so they did not have to gather manna on the Sabbath day. Some of the people also did not follow this instruction, and when they went out on the Sabbath day to collect manna, there was none to be had!

Let's stay in God's Word!

What About Death And Hell? continued from pg. 4

Sure, there are things we do not understand or know. There are things we will never understand or know, but that does not mean God does not desire for us to understand and know! It simply means we have not come to a place in our relationship where we do understand or know. I remember as a child knowing that multiplication and division were part of the mathematics I would have to learn, but I did not understand them until I was taught. I did not even understand them after the very first time I had them explained to me, but in time, I grasped the concept. When I did, a whole new door was opened for me to move forward and understand more complicated mathematics. This is how life works, and this is why God started us in innocence with a free will. What we choose to learn, and when we choose to learn it, is a big part of our ability to freely be who we choose to be! However, it also means we can all be at different places in our understanding of things. So, when God talks about death, as well as new life, He uses terms and stories we can relate to. Such an example exists in the story where we get the term “born again.”

In John chapter 3, Nicodemus was seeking answers from Jesus about life and death. Jesus said we must be born again. Nicodemus concludes the obvious fleshly idea, and asks how a person can re-enter their mother’s womb and be born again. However, that was not what Jesus was saying. Jesus was attempting to explain the resurrection in terms we might be able to relate to, but He was not talking about being born from our mother once again. He used the term because we understand what it is to be born of our mother. Today, we see the whole process as very scientific, from conception all the way through to that first breath. Nicodemus may not have had such a scientific view on the matter, but he still understood the simplicity of how our physical form enters the world! So, from Nicodemus right up to this very day, Jesus’ term has a chance of registering in our minds. However, instead of going with that simple understanding of talking about our physical form, the church has distorted what Jesus was trying to explain by making it some mystical spiritual concept about accepting Christ and becoming a “Born Again Christian” in the here and now. Making things about the here and now is a very pagan mindset which many in the church will not let go of!

Jesus was using a physical term to help us understand our physical need. He was trying to explain that after these bodies are gone, we will need a new body to be whole again. Nicodemus could not understand how the process of physical rebirth could take place because he was only thinking in terms of man's choices and abilities. Jesus was not amazed, as many teachers teach, that Nicodemus was thinking about the flesh, but that Nicodemus was not thinking about the power of God, especially considering Nicodemus was supposed to be a teacher in Israel. This earthly mindset meant Nicodemus was not going to grasp a very deep explanation of the dynamics of rebirth that night. So, instead of a very deep and insightful conversation about the resurrection, Jesus has to go back to basics (Heb. 5:10-14) and simply tell Nicodemus that God can do things which we do not yet understand. When we are born in this flesh, it is the choice of man; but if we are born again, it will be by the direct hand of The God who created man in the

first place. Simply put, if God could form a physical body for us to walk this world, it's no great task for God to form a new and incorruptible body for the next. (Phili. 3:20-21) This is what Jesus meant when He said “Marvel not...”

Now, why was Nicodemus concerned with death? Because he understood that fact we talked about before. Man is not like the plants and animals. His body may go back into the ground, but man is more than flesh! This is where we need to lay to rest the issue about our bodies. Some Christians like to say the part you see is not really them but only a shell. This is untrue. The flesh is very much a part of you. In fact, you cannot be complete without that part of you. However, this flesh which is part of us right now, is where sin resides. Why? Because everything I can do to harm you, or God, is done through the flesh. My mind may want to hurt you and my spirit may desire to harm you in some way, but they will have to go through my body to do it. I cannot touch you except by using my body. I cannot talk to you unless I use my body. I can't even glare at you without using my body. This means every sin that exists in this life can be solved by allowing the body to die!

Adam and Eve could not have taken of the fruit God told them not to if they had not had hands to reach out with. It is our actions which fail to be righteous. Now, God is not tempted with evil, neither tempteth He any man. (James 1:13) God is out of our reach when it comes to our unrighteousness. The real problem is that God's creation is not. As long as I live in this universe I can harm you with my physical touch, my words, and your ability to see my actions. This is why I John 2:16 says the common things of man are the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life. There are those things our flesh wants because it wants it. There are things our flesh wants because we are affected by the world around us, which very much has to do with the actions of others (both good and bad); and we are affected by the fact we have life itself. That is to say, we have freedom of motion. The plants and animals, sun, moon, planets, and stars all do what they do according to the design God put into motion, but humans do what they choose in all things!

Once the body is gone, we lose all this. The flesh does not - nor can it - want anything, anymore! This is one of the reasons God allows us to experience sickness. When we get sick we often lose things like our desire to eat, and enjoyment of any number of activities we usually desire. If we get sick enough, we often lose the will to even get out of bed! This is just a small glimpse into death, and it's a simple fact we need to understand because it's better for us to understand the temporalness of this life and turn from it, than it is to simply enjoy this life and go out into eternity having focused only on this life! (Matt. 5:29-30)

Once we lose these physical forms, not only do we lose the ability to take actions which affect others, we lose the ability to be tempted by the actions of others. We no longer have to worry about the fact everyone else is doing it! Death also takes from us the pride of life. Without a physical form, we do not have the ability to do anything. This is why Jesus used the term “outer darkness” and said, “...there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” Matthew 25:30 Again, we do not have eyes to weep or teeth to gnash. Jesus was simply attempting to speak

to carnal minded people using fleshly illustrations to show the emotional state of being without a body!

God was not joking when He said, "for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." Genesis 3:19 This body is of this earth. It's a vital part of who you are, but it will not last. There is nothing you can do to change that fact. Even receiving Christ as your personal Lord and Saviour will not change that fact, and that is a good thing! Many do not understand this, but death is a release from sin. Because of the facts we just talked about, one could say that if every human died, human sin would cease, and the problems people like to ask about would be solved. People ask why does God allow sickness, war, hunger, and general suffering? The answer is, He only allows it for a season! If it had been God's intent to force Himself on our choices so much that He could stop all our suffering, He would not have made us a free-willed being in the first place. He would not have given us the opportunity to take of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. We would be no different than the animals. Our actions would be pre-designed, and we would not truly be individuals.

This shows another difference between man's philosophies and the truth. A Buddhist "master" once visited a waterfall and was struck by the fact the water was all one stream until it came to the cliff. As the water came over the edge, it broke into millions of individual droplets as it fell. Once those droplets reached the bottom, they all became part of one stream again. The Buddhist said this is life. He said we are all one, then for just a moment in this universe, we become individuals just like those water droplets; but upon death, we all become one again. Ahhh! Isn't that nice? Well it's not the truth, but it is Hades. The idea, once again, that we are all collected into some place after death (a common place), that all life is the same, that God doesn't send good people to hell, are all things which rise in our minds because we do not want to face the truth that this life will pass by leaving behind the part of us which is flesh. This flesh must eternally be left behind in order for us to even have the opportunity to be "born again," and though we have all come from God, we will not congeal into one stream again. We will all stand before God as individuals responsible for the choices we have made. How's that for the pride of life?

In the book of Revelation, John tells us this heaven and earth passes away. (Rev. 21:1) Jesus told us this as well. (Matt. 24:35) This physical form which is made from the dust of this world will pass away with it. Think about it. Everything physical - which is mostly what we understand - will simply cease to exist, and all that will be left of this creation will be the parts of us which were not part of the heavens and earth which God created "In the beginning..." In this beginning, God created the heavens and the earth, but in the end, all of that will pass away! When that happens, John tells us, humans will stand before God for judgment! (Rev. 20-21) Even this is explained to us in terms we can understand, for the judgment is called a "day." (Matt. 12:36) However, time as we know it will not exist at that point. There will be no sun, no moon, no earth rotating on its axis. The universe will not just be void and without form,

the light God created for it will not be separated from the dark, our universe and all its elements will simply be gone. That is why death is such an unknown thing for us. Existing outside of this created time and space is not something we truly grasp, but it is the answer to your question!

When in ministry you work with teens, they love to come up with questions they can have fun with. One of the questions kids like to ask is, "If God has always existed why didn't He create us sooner?" The problem is, this is not a relevant question. God does not live in time like we know it. God does not just know the future of our existence because He is a good guesser. He knows because He can see it all. This is something we do not understand because, as we see it, the future does not exist until we do it. However, there is a part of us which does see beyond; and this is why science fiction writers - as they are called - like to write stories about time travel. The idea that there is a time line of events which can be exited and re-entered at another point has often been the dream of man. Now, I do not personally believe we can ever build a machine which could time travel, but the truth that we live in a fishbowl of time - so to speak - is true. Our universe is about physical space which God created. It exists because God said so. It will cease to exist when God says so. Genesis tells us, in the beginning the earth was void and without form. This is to say the world and the universe were not organized as yet. So, one of the first things God does is speak light into existence, then God divides the light from the darkness. This creates a repeating cycle of day and night. It is this cycle of day and night which creates the basis of time as we know it. God does not live in this cycle, He created it; and it is, for lack of a better way of saying it, a physical thing!

Now, where did our flesh come from? The dust of this earth. Our physical form is part of the materials which will pass away someday. If there are no humans living in this universe, there is no need for its further existence. I cannot stress that point enough because it tells us that even if there were an underworld, it would not be an eternal place; and that brings us to the point! Our bodies do not go to a hell or a comfortable place to await resurrection. Our bodies will not be thrown into the Lake of Fire. Our bodies go to the grave: which is to say they are reabsorbed by the earth. Which means our bodies are not awaiting anything! Our bodies are made from dust and to it they will return!

In our next segment we will look at what is left once we have lost these physical forms, and what happens to us from there. Until then, I pray you will learn to continually trust in The Lord with all your heart; and lean not unto your own understanding!

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

FBS continued from pg. 2

erase the fact there was and would now be other cultures outside their own. They wanted to make it seem as if they built a culture that was the only true civilization or, at the very least, the only one that mattered!

The separation following the confounding, in the way man chose to do it, precipitated the historical fact we see in that developing cultures and nations knew very little about each other across the world. Distance, before the age of our modern transportation abilities, was a very good insulator between peoples, and it still is very effective today. The distance the groups put between each other was a far greater deterrent to man's re-conglomeration into one big group than the language barrier ever was. This is interesting, considering the thing the leaders at the Tower of Babel were most concerned with was the idea that if they did not come up with a plan, people would be scattered. After the confounding, they intentionally separated into places that isolated their development one from another. This caused there to develop not just the concept of nationalities, which would have to be stripped away in order to bring all mankind back under one roof, but the genetic isolation to make it true that certain physical traits were pretty well confined to certain parts of the world. This fact would make it appear more true that people really did belong to different groups, even on a physical level. However, the Bible believer should never be thrown by this.

The fact people in different parts of the world developed differing physical traits is again only part of that diversity God built into all of humanity. It is only our perspective that makes it seem anything but what it is. People who work with genetics today will tell you that human DNA is very similar to all the animals on the planet. As complex as DNA is, it is only a low percentage of DNA that causes one species of animal to be different from another and from humans themselves. This is in no way evidence that something such as evolution is true; because if we know our Bible, we know even the human physical form was made from this earth in like manner as the earth was commanded by God to bring forth the animals. What truly sets humans apart is not that our flesh is so very different from all other physical things, but that we are made of more than just flesh. We are mind and spirit as well. Thus, when looking just at the physical, we should consider the point that when you want to create a new line or what some would call a new "breed" of animal, you very often cannot, in spite of the little difference in DNA between all creatures, combine species to form a new breed. Most animals simply are not compatible for breeding across what we define as species, just as God commanded it to be in saying things would produce after their own kind. (Gen. 1:24-25) The amazing part of all this is that there is still a great amount of diversity within each kind God created. This makes it possible for humans to selectively breed together, within a kind, only the animals with the desired trait for a new breed. If this is done with care and consideration, you can end up with enough domination of the traits you want in a big enough pool of individual animals, you will truly have a new breed that can then be bred only with each other, and truly have what we call purebred animals that continually consist only of those traits you originally wanted.

This, in many ways, is what unintentionally happened to humans. Again, we are not animals, but our flesh runs on the same principles. When the families divided into different parts of

the world, removed from each other enough so as to not see any further or at least limited intermarrying between the families, what we call "race" began to develop. Now, many things like color of skin, which many people oddly consider the biggest factor, can be affected by the foods we consume and general environment we live in. However, a whole host of differences exist within humans that, just like animals, if the breeding pool is isolated there will be dominate features and characteristics emerge that will cause whole segments of populations to look very different from one another.

Distance wasn't the only factor which ensured diversity would never go away. To keep the groups they now were left with together, they had to do more than just make a break from each other, they also had to tell stories that would support their goal. This brings us back to the interesting issue of it seeming history and time lines don't add up when going by what the Bible tells us compared to humans' stories. You see, anytime you attempt to erase a people's history, you create a vacuum, and nature abhors a vacuum! Children are going to ask, where did we come from, or where did it all begin? God clearly dealt with this in establishing the nation of Israel, by making how they became a nation part of their yearly rituals, which would also prophesy of later events God would fulfill. Telling the stories to their children of where they come from is what has connected the Jewish people together, and kept the truth alive that they were/are a people, even through centuries of being spread across the earth and without their homeland!

Now, when you desire in your nation to copy in some form the ideas propagated at the tower, as it was for these groups we are discussing here, the last thing you want to do is tell the children the truth! The truth tells us God acted to put a stop to the very way of life you are trying to promote, and the other people your children may become aware exist out across the earth are examples of The God given freedom individuals have to go out and make a life for themselves. Thus, the lies begin, not only to be told, but be incorporated into the very fabric of the way a society operates. In places all over the world you can look into the ancient stories and find the teaching. It doesn't seem to matter where that culture is, or how new it actually is, the history gives that particular culture a direct link back to how humanity got its start. Now that is not wrong at its base, because the fact we are all the sons and daughters of one set of parents is true. However, many of these cultures' stories tell of the beginning as if it happened in their land, which is not true. In fact, one of the beauties of the flood is that as much as we may surmise where the Garden of Eden may have been, the truth is, all evidence that might prove where it actually was has been wiped from the earth!

No one can tell us for sure they live in the place where it all began. No one has the right to claim they are some original - uncorrupted if you will - culture that dates back to the very first human family! However, this did not stop those who left the Tower of Babel; and thus, many of their stories only attempt to make the connection back to the ark, and make it seem as if that was the beginning of the world in many ways. Some of the world's stories do appear to go back to the creation, and almost all cultures have a major flood story in them. However, Noah stepping off the ark into a post-flood world where everything had to start anew is very often irreparably intertwined with the story of creation. Thus, most of the information is skewed to fit the culture and avoid the truth of what and why God did what He did.

This is shown in the fact many of the flood stories are told in terms which make them seem as if they are a very local event, or at least only covered the world as they knew it. This is a point we hear repeated over and over to this very day as another supposed fact that shows the Bible to be inaccurate. However, we should consider most ancient people, for the very reasons we are discussing, talked in terms of the world being a very small place. To them the world often consisted only of the land area they were familiar with. What lay beyond their “boundaries,” and even history itself, was often seen as irrelevant, and/or some menacing evil or empty darkness.

When thinking about this, we should consider, even to this very day, many history books, in many parts of the world, talk about how a man named Columbus “discovered” America. This is not totally wrong, but the perspective many people, especially in Europe and America, have trouble keeping in their minds is that he only “discovered” the existence of America for those who did not already know it was there. To the people already living in America, it was not the New World! Not only did they know this part of the world existed, but to them, it was as much the “world” as any place was to anyone in any other part of the world. This truth is seen in the fact Native Americans had stories about the fountain of youth and the like being in their part of the world. These stories are at least somewhat familiar to us because certain Europeans were eager to find these life-giving places. However, the truth of the matter is simply that these stories are the story of the Tree of Life from the Garden of Eden, and that is why in the end, just as no one has ever been able to get back to the true Tree of Life, no one has ever discovered a fountain of youth. The point is, Columbus may have brought knowledge to the Europeans of America's existence, but so too it could be said he brought knowledge of Europe's existence to the Americans. It is all a matter of perspective based on what group and location you considered to be the world!

Many cultural flood stories and/or creation stories boil down to the idea only a select group of people were spared or created for one reason or another, and the stories' message is often that their culture or nation was/is the direct descendants of those “special” people and/or ideas. This is done intentionally to bring about the thought that everything and everyone who may or may not exist outside your world is not part of who you are, and what you were intended to be. This is also why you often find in these ancient stories a tendency to tell the creation story as if our history only goes back to the flood. It is convenient to lean on the truth only eight people stepped off the ark. However, while it is true only eight people survived the flood, the Bible teaches us that fact is not because those eight were superior to the rest of humanity in any way. It was because they followed the instructions of The One True God Who created us all, and the others refused or did not see it as important to do so. In spite of the impression any cultural story gives, it is a biological fact we are all descendants of those eight people.

Now, as to the fact these stories often indicate time even further back than the Bible tells us the true creation happened, we must understand that sometimes this is done simply for dramatic effect. If your story is that you are very special, it often helps to make it seem as if your history goes very far back. This is part of

what you are attempting to erase from other cultures. It is to say, no one else knows what they are talking about because they are something newer and/or less evolved in some way. You don't want their story to make more sense to anyone than your story, so the best thing to do is get rid of their story altogether if you can. Another part of the time issue has to do with the fact the ark story is equated with creation. Just after the confounding, they were not many years removed from the flood. To cover up the fact these families were not ancient in any way, which meant they were not the highly evolved descendants of a long line of wisdom building culture, but very young societies who had already been reprimanded by God, it was useful to distort in the minds of the newer generations just how little time had passed. This worked quite well, especially when you consider that in some ways the very long time ago idea comes simply by the fact people live very much in the moment, and people often are not even that aware of any notion other than the beginnings of it all happened a very long time ago! One should consider, it is true the flood caused a historical barrier of sorts; and why not, part of its whole intent was to bring a clean slate from a time where the thoughts of men's hearts were only evil continuously. (Gen. 6:5) Because of this, time did, in fact, seem to be much further back than it actually was, and how far back it went was to most people simply unknown.

Even to those first couple of generations just on this side of the flood, those things on the other side of the flood must have seemed a great mystery. In truth, it likely seemed more so to them than to us today, because it is all ancient history to us! This brings us to another important fact in why they wanted it to seem much longer ago than it actually was. The intermingling of the flood and creation stories is also directly connected to the fact most of the creation stories among men tell of physical life coming from already existing physical life of some sort. In some cases an egg hatched and all the diverse living things came out, which is clearly a tale talking about the ark of Noah; but if true, where did the egg come from? In some cases - life simply fell from the sky, or came to be because things already in existence unexplainably formed life. All these stories are also pretty much what the popular theory of evolution teaches people today; and our “science” tells us if life came from already existing physical life or substance, the process would take a considerable amount of time!

The overall point we are driving at here is the simple fact: people in all kinds of groups, which formed in all kinds of different places around the globe, in all different time periods, have gone on to utilize again and again these same techniques. Telling your children the way they live and often the place where they live was/is the way life has always been and/or was meant to be, makes it seem as if many cultures around the world have all somehow existed for at least the time period the Bible tells us this creation has existed, or even longer. The Bible shows us, it is all rooted in these first attempts to reverse the Tower of Babel effect. Instead of taking to heart the reason God confounded their language, man continued to strive for what he has wanted instead of what God designed us to be!

Until next time, Shalom!

