

Step Into the Springs!

Well, it's summer again, and even though that puts us in the middle of the year, we all know how fast time flies. Now, I know, no one wants to think about next year, but it's time to start talking about the 2011 calendar. This means it's my job to remind everyone who received a Living Springs Institute 2010 daily planning calendar that if you have not already done so, now is the time to send back your surveys. Of course, no one has to send back a survey, but if you would like to have your input taken into consideration for the production of the 2011 calendar, we will need to hear from you soon. So, fill those surveys out and send them in today!

On that note, I want to say thank you to all those who have already sent in surveys. Your input has been great, and we have been blessed by the positive response the calendar has received! Now, some of you have made requests and/or suggestions, and we want you to know we have taken everyone of them into consideration. However, this truth may not be obvious just by looking at the next calendar, and so I want to tell everyone that we are working on a "survey response" page which we will be posting on our website. Of course, your survey responses are confidential so we will in no way be telling who made a particular suggestion, but for those who would like to see a response to their suggestion(s); we feel this is a great way to share. For all those who have sent in a survey in which you made a suggestion, plan to do so, or are just wanting to see what is going on with the Calendar Project, you will want to give this new page a visit.

In the meantime, I want to tell you about the one big thing which has come out of looking over your suggestions, and it's based on the simple overall idea of working to help you make the calendar most useful for you! This year we are working to produce a PDF version of the

calendar which you can download from our website. This will be a printer friendly version of the calendar so that you can print out your own calendar if you want. In doing this, you can play with the size the calendar is printed, put it in the folder or binder of your choosing, use just the pages you want, etc. Some of you may simply want to keep it right on the computer for reference. In any case, we hope this will expand the usefulness of the calendar; and we hope to have this available for the 2011 version. We may also make the previous two years available for study and reference purposes. To find all this calendar stuff we have been talking about, just visit www.livingspringsinstitute.org, click on Learning Center, then Calendar Project.

Now, this new PDF version will in no way affect the availability of the hard copy version you can order through the mail; and that brings me to my final point of this news segment, which is, we are beginning to take orders for the 2011 calendar. The 2011 calendar will not be available until the latter part of October 2010, but it's helpful to know how many we will need to produce. So, write, email, or use our online Resource Shop, to order your 2011 Daily Planning Calendar today, and you'll be one of the first to get your copy(s)!

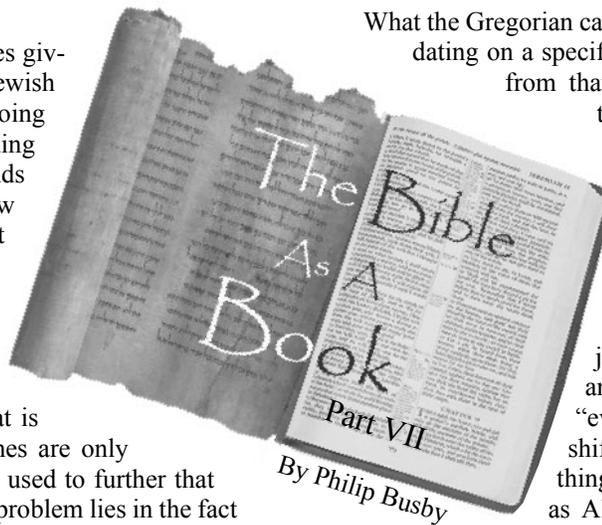
As always, it's our hope and prayer that all things produced by this ministry will be of help as you seek to grow in your walk with the Lord! We hope the calendar project is, and will be, a great teaching tool. We pray the expansion of the project into a PDF version will be of great use to pastors, teachers, and anyone seeking to teach and learn God's Word. In closing, I simply want to say, thank you for being a part of this ministry, and we pray you will enjoy this issue of Shaqah!



Last time, we talked about the names given to the two main divisions most non-Jewish people see the Bible as divided into. In doing that, we talked about the misunderstanding which comes into many people's minds when they think of the Old vs the New Testament. In all this, we have to say that no one person or small group at this point and time is going to change the fact we use the term old and new to describe these divisions. On top of that, is the technical fact, it's really a distortion in thinking which causes us to believe, what is old is replaced by the new; and the names are only language tools which certain people have used to further that distortion, for what's in a name? The true problem lies in the fact there is a perspective which we need to have, and if we have it, we find the truth in spite of the distorted teaching which may surround us. If we do not obtain it, we end up accepting whatever is spoon fed to us.

In an earlier part of this study, we talked about the question of why God waited the time He did to give us a written Word. One of the main points of that discussion was that God was/is following the development of man, and gauging how far removed man's choices took him from that "In the beginning..." Garden of Eden understanding. Also, we should understand, the issue of old and new exists to some degree because after giving Israel the whole of what we call the Old Testament, there was a time period between there and the events covered in what we see as the New Testament. How much? Well, almost none of the individual books in the Bible give us much of an actual date - and I want to come back to that point in a minute - but chronologically from the believed date of the last book of the Old Testament to be written, to the Gospels which chronologically, as well as placement, are the first of the New Testament, there is about 400 years.

So, one could ask, why did it take so long for God to give us the New Testament after giving us the Old? Well, part of the answer to that is intermixed with the point I mentioned about the books not giving us specific dates. One of the first things we need to understand about dating is that there has not been, until modern times, a more cohesive calendar in which to point out a date in writing which would solidly connect to a date much earlier or later. Some would even argue there still is not because they disagree with the Gregorian calendar, or for one reason or another, simply do not use it. However, putting that argument aside, the Gregorian calendar most of us are familiar with is one of the first, at least widely and continuously used calendars which attempts to give dates for more than just where it is. What I mean by this is that most calendars of the past are based on an event which is note worthy in the minds of those who adhere to the calendar, if you want to say they are following a calendar at all. Writings will refer to facts such as, "It was three years into the reign of..." this king or that king. Sometimes, there may even be a reference to an event like a major battle, shift in political power, or geological event such as an earthquake. These writings are not even talking about a calendar, per se, as much as just giving an historical marker, which those of the day, and a bit into the future, could understand in at least some vague way.



What the Gregorian calendar attempted to do was set its dating on a specific event, but not just go forward from that event marking the passage of time as it happened. The calendar was setup with a system to go backward in time as well, and assign dates to past events. It did/does so without worrying about how far someone may want to go back. Evolutionists love this because they just keep adding zeros to the years and then stating their theorized "events" such as the destruction, shifting, or evolution of certain things, as if they are as sure an event as Alexander the Great's march into

lon, or the year World War II ended. Also, the further people try to go back, the more mistakes they make. This is why Egypt's history makes it appear their civilization goes back much further than the Bible tells us human history goes. The problem lies mostly in that people put time periods end to end when they should be overlapping. Now, I don't have space here to go more specifically into that argument; but as a student of the Word, one should understand that according to the genealogy given in the Bible, nothing existed beyond roughly six thousand years back from where we are now.

The truth all the way around is, not many past dates on our calendar, even those just a thousand or so years ago, are set in stone. Not many are known beyond a shadow of doubt to be exactly right, and some don't even reach beyond reasonable doubt. In fact, man would not have as good a grasp on time as he does if it were not for the Bible itself. This is because the calculations for our calendar were made based on facts gleaned from different writings and information which did not often base their dating on common events. Numbers of years were added together until they met up with more known facts which do, or seem to, correlate. Then numerical years were assigned, counting up as you went back in time, and counting up as you come forward in time from one pivotal event. Much of the past writing the calendar is based on is the Bible - and the pivotal event? The birth of Christ! However, even the original calculations for that were later believed to be off by about five years. Today, many do not believe Jesus was born in the year 1 A.D., as it was all supposed to be anchored to, but rather 5 B.C. Still, others believe it was another year.

All this, means much of the numbers we give for the chronology of the books in the Bible are not certain, but on that fact, I wish to make two main points. First, for those books which do give us at least some information as to their exact time period, there is no reason to believe we are not fairly close. Of course, by close I mean we may be off by a few decades, even as much as a century in certain cases, but when you are dealing with what is about six thousand years of human history, that is still close. If you don't agree with that, then please allow me to move to my second point, which is the fact that being exact doesn't really matter a whole lot! If it did, God would have laid out the chronology very clearly in His Word. However, the Bible's story is not one which is dependant on counting days and years from where you are right now; it's about - for lack of a better term - the

Following the Biblical Stream:

By Philip Busby

We ended last time by talking about the very beginning of verse 21 of chapter 8, and the fact God smelled a “...sweet savour...” when Noah sacrificed unto Him. However, before we go on and talk about the fact God made determinations which are recorded here for us, I want to step back to verse 20 and touch on one thing. In verse 20, we are told Noah “...took of every clean beast, and of every clean fowl, and offered burnt offerings...” Of course, we remember that Noah had more than two of every “clean” beast and fowl. Of these, he was allowed seven. When this originally was covered, we talked about the fact these were domestic animals which man had bred, and seven would give a good base for continuing these animals. Just last time, we talked about the diversity issue and the fact the animal kingdom has diversity even within a species, which caused Noah not to have to take every stripe and color with him in pairs of two in order for the diversity of a species to survive. An exception to that rule would have been the domestic species, because when it comes to domestic animals, diversity is specifically what is bred out. The desire to have certain traits in generation after generation of animals means you want those traits and nothing else. If you want horses for riding then you will look for a balance between such things as strength and a sleek light body, but if you want horses to pull plows and wagons you will look for sheer muscle no matter the weight or sleekness. To do this, you will only allow those animals which carry the traits you want to breed with each other. What’s important to understand in this is that you never really get rid of the other traits completely. Much of the diversity of the species still resides in even what we call a “purebred” animal. What we really have done is not bred out the traits we want, but made the traits we desire the dominate traits, by continually pairing together just those animals which exhibit those traits. This has to be maintained, by continuing to breed only animals with the right traits, and that is why we develop “breeds” which, if you want to continue claiming your animals are, you must be producing offspring using pairs which already carry the title.

The point here is that Noah had to take more than just two of the domestic animals in order to keep the “breeds” alive. In these animals, the diversity contained in them was their enemy, not their friend. In order to produce more of these animals there had to be several in existence, or the entire process would basically have to be started over again. That would have been a long journey; because post-flood, you would have to wait for the pairs of two to produce enough offspring that you could even see the diversity and pick those which exhibited just the traits you wanted.

Now, I may have strayed from the core issue here, but I wanted to talk again about the issue of allowing seven instead of the limit of two, and also to point out again something we touched on earlier when we talked about this issue, because here is where it came into play. Seven is not an even number. What God allowed Noah to take of these animals was three

pairs of male and female plus one more. Now, because many animals are not monogamous, as humans are supposed to be, this is not technically a problem, but God does things with order. What this seven relates to is the same idea which God put in place concerning the days of the week. Time was created for man to live in. Although we do not truly understand what it means to say this, God does not live in time. Time, as we know it, was created for us and belongs to us as a freewilled being. However, what God told us was that the seventh day was created for the purpose of “rest,” and when the Ten Commandments were given, God asked His people to remember this fact. Six days we may do all our “labor,” which is to take care of man’s business, but the seventh is to be kept “holy,” which means set apart for God’s purposes. (Ex. 20:8-11) Like so many other laws, we can choose to follow this commandment, or we can ignore it. However, the main reason we can even choose to ignore such a commandment is, again, because we have a free will and time belongs to us.

This is the issue when talking about Noah leaving the ark. All the animals were to be let out of the ark so they could breed abundantly upon the earth. However, the domestic animals were Noah’s to use or lose. God never tells Noah he must preserve all the domestic breeds, but He never tells him he can’t. The base needed to preserve them was there for the using, and there was even one extra beyond what was needed to make up three pairs. Noah didn’t have to build an altar unto God, nor did he have to sacrifice in any way. That is why verse 20 calls what Noah did “...burnt offerings...” This was not required tithing ordered by a law, this was Noah’s freewilled offering. Now, Noah could not have afforded to take very much out of the wild animals without totally destroying some species. This, even in light of the fact some would have had offspring while on the ark. God commanded Noah to allow the animals to breed for the purpose of multiplying, and unlike the domestic animals which would need to be cared for in order to maintain, the wild animals would need to be truly free. Noah followed the commandment of God first, then took time out of his life to worship God. Which means, the wild animals were already gone. Noah had cared for these animals while on the ark, and as a man, Noah had dominion over them. (Gen. 1:26) However, they were not truly his. They did not truly represent the work of Noah’s hand. What Noah had which did represent the increase of man’s labor was the domestic animals, which were most precious, because if destroyed, they would take generations to rebuild. They were truly man’s possession and work. Some of these animals may not have had offspring while on the ark, but God had allowed seven of them to be preserved. Six may have been needed to rebuild the stock, but the seventh, as far as Noah was concerned, should be given back to God! Noah took from every last one of the domestic groups in order to say to God, all the world, including what more specifically “belonged” to man, was once again dedicated unto Him.

As we move back to verse 21, I mention again the power of praise. The power of praise is not just in that God hears us, but also in that we are allowing God and asking God to be a part of our lives. Because God has limited Himself in this creation in order to allow us to be truly freewilled, it means a lot for us to take of our time and resources to allow God free access. Unlike the devil, God is also not just looking for a way in so He can take over and control us. God is righteous, and He leaves us with a continual choice. It's constantly up to us to allow or not allow God's presence, and work in and through our lives. It's also up to us to cleanse our lives of unrighteousness, and keep them clean in order to create a place God is willing to inhabit and work through. (I Cor. 6:15-20)

Noah had been the man through all this who stood in a place where God could use him. Now, as the flood was over, Noah made it clear that as far as he was concerned, it all belonged to God once again. Unspotted by man, even if just for that moment, much like it was on that original seventh day of God's rest. God was pleased with Noah's actions and made a determination which we are told was not verbalized to Noah, at least at that moment. In fact, God would speak many words directly to Noah before He would finally set a token in the sky to seal and remember the covenant He was making with man and every living thing. It was at that moment God told Noah that man did not have to fear the rain, because God would never again allow the waters to become a flood great enough to destroy all flesh! However, here in verse 21 is where we are told God's full determination on the issue. This is a special thing to know, but we are told God specifically said this, "...in his heart,..." Noah likely never was told this specific information we are given in verse 21. Noah would be told what was prevalent to Him at the time; but later, as God gave man the written Word, it was revealed that God made a more extensive determination in Himself, even at that time. Now, some people misinterpret this part of the verse by melding it with the last statement of "...as I have done." They also go off the later statement which was spoken directly to Noah about waters never again becoming a flood like this one. In doing this, they believe and teach that God specifically will not use a flood again, but not that He won't bring destruction on the planet. However, this is wrong, and as we go along one should see why.

The words in verse 21 are special information, and we want to be careful to receive every word! The first word in the determination is "I." Seems unimportant to some, but we have already covered its importance more than once in this study. What is it? When we see destruction to this planet, and/or when we read what we believe is coming planetary destruction in prophesy, it's not God who is doing it. God may allow us to destroy our planet, but He has specifically said He would no longer curse the ground because of man; and what curse to this planet do you think God would do if it were not for man's sake? Over and over God said, during the creation cycle, what He had made was good! (Gen. 1) So, if it's not for man's sake, there is no reason for God to change anything, and He has promised He will no longer curse the ground based on our actions.

The next word is "will." We all have a "will," which is a noun, but even as a verb, it is talking about the same thing.

Now, it's a truth that no human can truly promise something is going to happen a certain way and know that he can ensure it does. However, in spite of this truth people still promise things, and even things they know they have no power over in the first place. They often do this just because it makes someone feel better at the time, and that person(s) has to be desirous or willing for one reason or another to believe them for it to be effective. This is why it's most often done to children who do not know an older person does not really have the power to assure or even affect a particular situation. Then, when the circumstances turn out bad, the person who was lied to often loses confidence, not just in the person who promised them something, but in people in general. This, in turn, spills over many times to people's confidence in God Himself. This is why Paul said in Romans 3:4, "...let God be true, but every man a liar;..."

We need to understand that even when someone thinks they have the power to affect change, man never even knows if he will be alive in the next moment, much less be able to do what he says he will do! (Matt. 5:33-37) However, when God says something, it is so. (Heb. 6:13) There is nothing such as death or some higher power which can thwart God's promises and determinations. He will be there and do what He said. If you believe there has ever been a time when this has not been true, you need to go back and evaluate what you thought the promise or determination was, and the truth of whether it was a promise God made or just an expectation on your part. We must also be careful to separate desire from determination, which in the English language can be a little difficult. II Peter 3:9 says, God is, "...not willing that any should perish,..." but we know some will perish. However, God didn't say He "will not let any perish," He said it's not because of His will that anyone does so. Having a will or desire and making the determination to execute that will or desire are two different things. God will not take from us our free will, and that is why in any case of destruction such as the flood of Noah's day, the end of this world as a whole, or even just the temptation to do wrong, God always gives us a way to escape. (I Cor. 10:13) The key is that it's up to us to take it!

The bottom line is that when God says He will or He won't do something or allow something to happen, it's going to go just that way, no matter what other forces exist. That's why it's important to see the next word in the statement is the word "not!" The next word in the statement is "again." This is a word of interest to our discussion about misunderstanding this statement to mean just a flood of water. The word "again" is not meant to make the statement narrow but broad. If we look back on the history proceeding the flood, we find certain things which all fall into the category described by the next word which is "curse." When man took of the fruit of the tree God told them not to, man became guilty of the sentence of death, exactly as God had told them from the start. God in His mercy did not bring that sentence on them that day, but instead simply removed them from the source of indefinite physical life which was The Tree Of Life. Before He did, He placed curses on them. (Gen. 3) What is important to see is that these curses were not intended to affect anything but that part of them which was already headed for death at that point. We misunderstand the word "curse" in the same way we misunderstand what punish-

ment is. It's not something meant to harm us for the sake of revenge or even what we might call justice, it's about teaching us to walk in the right ways. The statement about death even clarifies the point. We are told, "...for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." Genesis 3:19 This is talking about our physical part only, because our mental and spiritual parts did not come from the dust. (Gen. 2:7)

The first curse went to the serpent. This is an animal. This curse was not truly about the animal being bad, but about the representative ramifications for us. However, the animal itself was affected. This curse was a curse of the ground because the earth was commanded to produce the animals. The second curse was on the woman. It involved child birth, and while I believe the curse was more about the sorrow of watching children suffer the physical turmoil of living in this sin-filled world, I will agree there was a physical part of the curse which caused the actual act of giving birth to be uncomfortable, at best. This too has to do with our physical existence and even how it comes about, which is, once again, a curse of the ground which we were made from. The third curse was directed at the man. In the woman's curse is the fact that her desire would be for her husband's position; but with sin in the world, not only would she not have more of an equal stance, but be ruled over. This has ramifications for the man as well as the woman. While a woman may not like being ruled over, this means it is even more so upon the man that the responsibility for his family is laid. Paul said in I Corinthians 7:32-33 that one of the reasons it is better for a man to be single is because the man who is married must take the time to fulfill what his wife wants, and not just what God wants. In the next two verses he also reiterates this is a problem for the woman as well. All this has to do with time and energy for the most part, and the curse God laid on man at the garden is part of this package. The fact of the matter is that the more we attempt to have the things of this life the harder life will be for us because man has sorrow all his life just trying to make ends meet. The ground from which his food comes from would, from then on, want to grow thistles and plants which are hard to work with if not useless altogether. Man was told he could eat the herb of the field, but that in order to have more than just the few things which still grew wild, he would have to work by the sweat of his brow. This is directly related to family life because as the one responsible for making sure the family is cared for, you can not just rely on what grows naturally in your backyard. That is, if you even have a backyard. Having more of a guarantee your children and wife will eat tonight and tomorrow brings the need for bread, and that, more often than not, involves hard work and/or stress!

The man's curse is the most obvious of the three that it is a ground curse, but all three are, if for no other reason than they affect our physical existence. Then there is Cain's story. After Cain killed his brother Abel, all he wanted to do was go out on his own, without God in his life or man being allowed to punish him for what he had done. Again, in God's mercy, He allowed both of these things for Cain. However, Cain was given a direct curse, which was: the thing he liked the most would no longer be a viable activity. Cain liked working with the ground to grow plants, and God told him the ground would no longer yield unto him its strength. Even though this may only have affected Cain, there is no doubt it fits the pattern of being a ground curse. After

this story, there is a time period when there was separation between those who served God and those who did not. Eventually that separation began to break down until, finally, all "flesh" was corrupt before God. God makes it very clear in talking to Noah that it is flesh He intends the flood to destroy. (Gen. 6:12-13) So, yes, again it's the ground which is cursed because of man's sin.

Going back to verse 21 of chapter 8, the next words are, "...the ground any more..." What God determined he would no longer do was something He had been doing as - for lack of a more respectful English term - a policy of sorts. As man chose the ways of sin, God's mercy was to postpone man's death sentence in lieu of punishment which might bring man back to the ways of righteousness. This almost always had to do with cursing what God had physically created in order to turn man's eyes away from fleshly desire. Here in verse 21 of the eighth chapter of Genesis is where we see the policy change. For man's sake, God had done this time and again, and if it kept up, man would not have a viable place to live. God was not going to take this any further and continue to harm His creation. God's Word instructs us not to oppress the poor. (Deut. 24:14-15, Zech. 7:9-10) What this means is not that all people should be at the same level when it comes to goods and services, but that all people should have at least a path of opportunity to obtain the goods and services they need. This is not an obligation on government, or the like, to take from those who have and give to those who do not, but an obligation to leave everyone with a fair and equal route to success. Not oppressing the poor is about not establishing systems or protocols which make it extra difficult or impossible for even those willing to work to pull themselves up once they are down. It's about not allowing those who have things, to freeze out those who do not. One of the main reasons we are told not to do this is because it will force those who are without, to do things which are illegal in order to obtain the basic needs of life. (Prov. 6:30-31, 22:20-23) No man, woman, or child should be put in the situation of having to scrape the bottom of the barrel all the time, or break the law in order to care for themselves!

If God tells us not to do this sort of thing, He certainly is not going to. God was not going to continue a policy of cursing the ground until it was literally out of man's hands to survive. The next statement, in verse 21, makes it clear that God did not come to this determination because He had already crossed that line in some way or got close to it. God made the determination because if He continued the policy, there was no doubt it would come to that. This, because man's heart does not just become evil when he reaches adulthood and sees the opportunity to climb the ladder of success. If that were the case, there might be hope that continually cursing the ground would work once it reached a certain level. You could curse it to the point there would be no reason for man to be blinded by ambition because there would be nothing to be ambitious for. However, evil does not just come in the actions of man. Before people get old enough to even be taking actions which are truly of their own, even while they are young and still being cared for by their parents, what man imagines in his heart, is evil. This is a warning about how people at a very young age start their migration away from God, the knowledge of who He really is, His plan for their lives, and the righteousness we all need!

Adam and Eve were never youths in the sense they had to physically grow up. Cain did not kill his brother until they apparently were old enough to be carrying on chosen professions. The problem before the flood with the people of God intermingling with those who did not serve God, came because the men who served God started marrying women from the other side and giving their daughters to be married to those men. The circumstances of adult action being the cause of sin's proliferation among all men, was not really the cause as much as the effect. A policy of affecting the reality of man's ability to survive, was a way of changing man's adult mind and bring him back to the understanding he was born with - man needs to serve God, not the desires of his flesh. However, as man drew further and further from having an automatic view from his youth about who God truly is, the more man would misunderstand the nature of God's mercy and simply blame God for all which goes wrong in his life. Man does enough of that as it is! In a post-flood world there was going to be continued intermixing of those who served God and those who did not, meaning even fewer people would have a chance at a more untainted childhood. In mercy, God would turn from a policy of viewing man as unlearned and take remedial action against unrighteous behavior, to a policy which views man as crippled and/or corrupted by sin and seeks to protect and bespeak those who long for righteousness. This is why God would not allow the Tower of Babel, and later gave His Word which could be taught and learned even from a very young age. Eventually, God even sent His only begotten Son to this earth to die on a cross, and the message He came preaching resonated more with children because of their lack of preconceived notions. So much so, that Jesus even instructed that if we were going to get it right, we needed to approach it the way a child would! (Mark 10:13-16) Even the end events of this world, where Jesus comes back and righteously rules this entire planet, is following this policy. For over a thousand years, people from their youth forward will live in a world of perfect peace. A heart may imagine evil, but there will be no doubt that if your actions intend evil, you will not get away with it! (Rev. 19:11-20:6)

In the next statement of verse 21, God makes it very clear He is not just talking about never again destroying with a flood, by using the word "neither." You can argue that if what I said so far is correct then this statement is not needed, because I said even the flood was a ground curse. However, if you think that, you're not seeing clearly what God is saying in this statement. God never mentions the flood here. Yes, later as He is talking to Noah, the specific promise given is that water will never again prevail over the entire world as it had done. However, here God is making a wider more sweeping determination about how He will interact with man and life in general on this planet. What He says here is that no matter what the weapon or mode of action, He will never "...again smite..." "...every thing living..." as He had done at the garden and certainly during the flood cycle. Never again, will God take such overall action against the entire planet and all its living things, and this statement is not conditioned by a clause such as "...for man's sake;..." God determined He would never again smite everything living - period! This is where we really see the fact God's wrath in Revelation is not His action but inaction. The more we under-

stand about our planet, the more we understand how much everything is interconnected. Like ripples on a pond, you may only touch a small point on the water, but the ripples will go far out from that point. The heavier the contact, the further the ripples go. In Revelation we see the description of a pretty big hit, as more than one thing is destroyed in thirds!

As this article is being written, there is an oil well in the Gulf of Mexico which is spewing oil uncontrollably. Even the "experts" cannot tell us for sure just how much oil is now in the water, nor can they tell us when it will end. However, it does not really matter because the truth is, there is oil going everywhere in the Gulf, and it's killing life everywhere it goes. From the ocean floor to many miles inland, life is being strangled by oil and dying at an alarming rate! This is one of those moments when people in government and big business hope we are little people, unable to grasp the magnitude of the situation, as they just keep promising us it will be "all right." Statements are being made such as, it will take two or three years for things to return to order, but we will clean this up. The proof that this is incorrect is already in the oily pudding. Oil is rarely cleaned up to a level of returning things anywhere close to normal, and never is it cleaned up completely. People are worried that the oil will go out of the gulf and up the east coast of North America; but again, as bad as that sounds, it is ignorant to believe that is all it will do. This oil is in the water because of man's ignorance and greed. It's not going away, it is going far and away. This is a big hit, and the ripple is going to go around the world, in more than one way!

There is no way to believe God could be responsible for the destruction of a third of any widespread life or element on this planet, and not be in violation of His determination recorded here in verse 21. For God does not just determine that He will not kill every living thing, but the word "smite" is used. God did not kill every living thing during the flood, but He did smite it. Even plants which live at the bottom of the ocean were affected in some way by the flood. God tells us here, He will never again take action which touches all life. However, what we see almost daily in our world is that man has no such "will" or prohibition. This takes us with a clear view into the words of verse 22, and makes those words of great comfort. There, God continues to explain that as long as the earth remains at all, He will not just refuse to "smite" every living thing, but He will make sure the seasons, right down to the basic cycle of day and night, will continue to cycle. This by no means, means that man will continue in any way to do the kind of commercial agricultural activities he does now. It does not mean individuals will be able to continue in the profession of their choosing. What it does mean is that just as God would not allow evil men to take over all people by instilling one religious thought pattern as he tried to at the Tower of Babel, so too, evil men will not be allowed to make this planet completely uninhabitable for all. God's inaction, is His wrath; God's actions, are His mercy!

Until next time, Shalom!

Bible As A Book continued from pg. 2

organic unfolding of events regardless of how long it took/takes those events to unfold!

In fact, as Jesus walked this earth just before His ascension, He was specifically asked about restoring again the kingdom of Israel. His response to that was, no one but God The Father knows the times and seasons. Why? Because of just what Jesus said in that same conversation - it's not for us to know. (Acts 1:6-7) People need to live their lives on the basis Jesus is going to return and complete the plan of God on this planet and for this creation. We are not intended to live our lives on the basis of knowing things like the idea Jesus is coming back in two years or four months. Just as The Father made the determination as to when to give us a written Word in the first place, He will continue to make those same kinds of choices as it comes to the fulfillment of His plan as a whole. God The Son has been made a direct part of the events on this planet. He is even referred to as "...the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." Revelation 13:8 We can fixate on the fact He did not come to this planet for about four thousand years into our history, but the fact remains that His direct physical involvement or at least the possibility that it would be necessary, (I speak as a man) has been part of the plan since literally day one.

We should also note that it was God The Spirit Whom Jesus prayed The Father would send after His ascension, and which the church should return to wait for in Jerusalem before heeding the great commission. (Mark 16:15, Acts 1:4-5) Taking into consideration the organic unfolding of events, while still blamelessly allowing them to be just that, only God The Father can make the determination that it's the right time for things such as the giving of the Word and Jesus' return. If we knew exactly when certain things were going to happen, it would specifically affect the unfolding of the events which God is using to make His determinations. If God allowed this, it would create what we call a "paradox!"

We are all part of the unfolding event cycle, and each of us as individuals are what matter to God, not what man accomplishes or fails to accomplish as a whole. However, where man takes his world and overall existence is the primary decision points for God's determination of when and how to interact. This is because of just the kind of thing which was most notably witnessed at the Tower of Babel. Individuals can be greatly affected by the whole of what man chooses to do, and since the individual is what God is looking at, those things which threaten and affect each person are of utmost importance. This is why God gave us a written Word, and why it's so important that we allow it to craft our perspective in life instead of thinking just as the world thinks! (Rom. 8:6)

This is also why it does not matter that we know exactly when each of the books of the Bible were written. The perspective which the Bible from start to finish is attempting to give us is the same. Just as those who lived before the first parts of the written Word were ever given did not need it in order to have the right perspective, so too, today we have everything we need to gain the right perspective. We may not know exactly how far away Jonah's story about being swallowed by a big fish is from where we are, but we can see it in its place among the event cycle

of re-arising Tower of Babel or what we might call "imperialistic thinking." Jonah was sent to the capital city, of the next great attempt at an empire, in the line of imperialistic thinking started at the tower. If we understand and follow this train of thought, we see Jonah's story as the same kind of interaction with this larger issue as the dream which Daniel would later interpret for Nebuchadnezzar. (Dan. 2) This, in turn, takes us right down to the understanding needed to see what is going on in the book of Revelation when John sees a beast with seven heads! (Rev. 13) Again, I emphasize that it's more about understanding how the events have unfolded than the exact time periods which they took to do so.

Now, this might make you ask, why are we talking about it at all then? The best answer to that is the fact events have unfolded for us, and today we have a calendar which we go by very heavily. The calendar has caused us, as I said earlier, not to know exactly when each event in history took place beyond a shadow of a doubt, but we live in a world where especially more scholarly minded people would like to know, and cause many to believe they do know. This is why the debate rages on among certain people about when certain events took place, and that is not going to change anytime soon. All this means is, even if we are not one of those people who care so specifically, our education and conversations with others require us and cause us to have a consciousness of dates and specific time periods. While it can actually be damaging to get too hung up on knowing exact dates, it is crucial that we do not allow the world we live in to shake our confidence in the Bible. Thus, it's important to our thought patterns that we attempt, at least to some degree, to grasp where in the calendar of events the Bible comes.

Also, you will encounter people who will tell you the Bible is all or mostly newer. That its words were written long after the facts they are portraying. While it did take a long time for some words to be written in a more official form and added to the cannon of Scripture, it's not true that the words themselves were not preserved in writing until centuries after the fact. Therefore, it's also untrue that the words come to us from later teachers and people who simply desired to make-up a story which politically and religiously accomplished what they wanted. In fact, there is far more evidence that attempts along those lines are happening in our modern times, through the use of newer "translations," more than it ever happened in the past.

It's important we as believers in the Word know and keep in our mindset, that the Bible is not just a collection of fairy tales or moral stories. The Bible, far too often, even in our churches, is used and portrayed as just a collection of moral lessons, but it's not. It is human history, and the facts about the interaction The One Who created it all has had with it. It tells us the truth of where we came from, and how it will all end. It's the most valuable information available to man as individuals, as well as an entire race. "History" museums the world over, school text books, and even everyday media is filled with stories touted as facts which have only the most contrived scientific evidence to back it up, and yet many people believe it without even a thought. The Bible is evidenced in our everyday events, and is literally unfolding in our news daily. Don't believe me? Then you don't know your Bible as well as you should!

Let's stay in God's Word!

On the morning of December 7, 1941, waves of planes appeared over the U.S. naval base at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. These planes belonged to a nation whose excuse for attacking was that they believed it was in their best interest to attack the United States before its mere influence could change their lives. The idea was to strike first and cripple the nation so it could ultimately be defeated. However, it would be an alleged quote from one of the attacking nation's admirals which defined the fact, just the opposite had taken place. He said, "I fear all we have done is to awaken a great sleeping giant, and fill him with a terrible resolve." and indeed they had!

This story is the usual objective of war. The idea that there is an enemy, whether perceived or real, which you desire to destroy. You attack with the force you deem necessary to overtake your enemy, while the attacked hope they can mount a defense which will defeat what comes at them. If the attacked can gain the upper hand, they often become determined to be the ones who go on the offensive and gain some ground themselves. Thus, some wars end because those attacking have success in defeating their "enemies," and obtaining their objective. In other cases, those on the defense are able to repeal the attacker. Sometimes it doesn't end until those who initially defend, achieve an offensive objective of their own. At other times, the battle wears on and on until both sides find themselves ready to give up on the fight. In these cases there is often some kind of treaty or agreement bound between the parties which lays out a settlement both parties see as more desirable than continued conflict, even if it means the overall result of the war was a loss compared to where they started. These are the basics of war. This is the simplicity of truth and consequences, and though many conflicts which do not end with the defeat or total destruction of one side or the other may not seem to end with as clean a resolution as some would like, they always come to some kind of end when both parties agree it's in their best interest to stop fighting.

On the morning of September 11, 2001, again, Americans came under the shadow of attacking planes, but this time the planes did not belong to an aggressive foreign nation nor were the targets strictly military ones. Just as these facts are different, so too, was the purpose and goal of the attackers. Was their purpose to ultimately destroy what they saw as the enemy? In a way, but unlike the Pearl Harbor attack there was no true belief that this attack was the beginning of a solid military effort to defeat the enemy. They never believed that killing innocent civilians was going to give them the upper hand in the proceeding battles or be the strike which brought America to its knees. They also were not deluded into thinking they would get away with the attack and there would be no response.

That's because, this time, America suffered a terrorist attack; and the intent of terrorism is not to defeat the enemy and obtain an objective, but to intentionally create the wearing on and on scenario. By instilling fear and creating fatigue, they begin to compromise others' lifestyles and choices. True terrorist don't ever agree to an end, they begin the conflict with the intent of holding the threat of continual conflict over their enemies' heads. They desire to change people's minds to fit their beliefs, and often it is slowly, but it is surly, that the terrorist accomplishes his objective by making you live in their world, whether you like it or not. They leave you with only two choices, a life of actions dictated by their thoughts instead of your own, or a life of constant turmoil which they are willing to create.

On the morning of May 31, 2010, Israel was attacked by a ship, running under the guise of being on a humanitarian mission. By the time it became clear that was not what the ships intention was, Israeli soldiers who boarded the ship armed primarily with paintball guns, were forced to defend their lives against a mob of organized terrorists. At its most, this attack on a physical level could only have killed a few Israeli

When Eagles Gather

By Philip Busby

soldiers, but on a mental level, this attack delivered a serious blow because it was terrorists not soldiers which were killed. This is what Israel lives with everyday. There was a time when surrounding nations believed they could simply

destroy Israel in war, but they found that does not work. Thus, terrorism has been employed, and the point of this terrorism was to make the lives of Israelis so miserable that they would choose to do what the terrorist want - and that is for the Jews to go away.

However, the Jews have already suffered more than one attempt in this world to wipe them from the face of the planet. Prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, may have put it best when he said, "There are those who say that if the Holocaust had not occurred, the State of Israel would never have been established. But I say that if the State of Israel had been established earlier, the Holocaust would not have occurred." Jews have no reason to believe that abandoning their nation will result in a more positive outcome no matter how bad surrounding nations and/or people attempt to make their lives. Everyday, Israel's enemies understand this more clearly than her questionable friends ever have or care to. What this most recent attack on Israel has shown, is the insistence of Israel's enemies to take advantage of every opportunity they can to capitalize on that truth. Thus, they do things that not only make Israel miserable, but affect the international thought pattern. They will continue to attempt to change the minds of all the world, because the bottom line is that if they cannot wear down Israel itself, they will do all they can to bring the world against Israel and/or get the world to take her down for them. They will do this by convincing the world that supporting Israel is more trouble than it's worth.

For years preachers have had many theories about what the verses in Revelation meant when it talked about all the armies of the world being gathered to that valley outside Jerusalem, but today the picture is becoming very clear all on its own. Many people may seriously hold to the truth that Israel has a right to exist and even be a Jewish state; but the truth her enemies are attempting to create and have done a good job at, is the simple fact that, if Israel exists, there will be constant conflict. We see this strategy is winning because the objective the world is wrongly focused on is not justice in the face of criminal behavior, but the end of conflict. This may seem like a noble objective, and the arguments for it can be made to seem very intellectual. In fact, even a former U.S. President of The United States has sold many books in doing just that. However, the more one fixates on finding an end to the conflict, the less one stands for what is just. Every option is put on the table; and since the terrorist creates the conflict for the sake of getting rid of Israel, the obvious answer to ending the conflict is to give the terrorist exactly what he has tailored his terrorism to get!

In a world which claims it has overcome many racial prejudices, we see in this conflict that the true objective of the world is not the presence of justice, but peace at any cost. (I Thess. 5:1-3) This gives evil a true upper hand, because all it needs to do is disturb the peace and it will get what it wants. Righteousness, whether in our world or in our personal lives, must be maintained, (Deut. 6:24-25, Ps. 106:3, Prov. 15:9, Isa. 5:22-23) and in a world of sin, this does not bring peace. The Bible makes it clear that as long as there is righteous men there will be those who desire to destroy them. (Rev. 20:7-9) In its lust for peace, what the world is having trouble seeing is that giving evil exactly what it wants just because it acts evil, is never the wise choice! The fact even "good people" are ever moving in the direction of simply being tired of the fight, is indicative of the fact evil is winning. People like being on the winning side; but we must not be deceived, God is not mocked, what man sows, that he will also reap. (Gal. 6:7) Be careful not to go with them, because when the kings of this world decide the acceptable price of peace in the middle east is the absence of justice, it will be for their flesh the eagles gather together! (Isa. 5:20, Luke 17:30-37, Rev. 19:11-18)