

Free - Take One



# Shaqah

“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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## Step Into the Springs!

For the twelfth year, Living Springs Institute has published its daily planning calendar that gives you the Biblical calendar alongside the calendar most of us use every day. Since early 2018 the companion book, titled *Counting The Days*, has also been available. If you are a regular mail subscriber to this publication, you should have received one of the calendars with this issue of *Shaqah*. We would also like to send calendars to all of our e-mail subscribers, but we don't necessarily have your current physical mailing address. Your 2020 calendar is waiting for you, so be sure to contact us, and put in your order today!

As much as we have always felt the planning calendar is a great Biblical education product, even if you do not use the calendar, the calendar's companion book, *Counting The Days*, is still a book you're going to want to read. With a full example calendar in the back, this book is a great way to learn about the Biblical/Jewish calendar all by itself. *Counting The Days* is an overall teaching about the calendar and feasts God gave in the Law, but more specifically, it teaches the how and why God set up a calendar that contains distinct events, all of which prophesy about God's plan for our existence. It covers what each event prophesies about, why there is a Biblical and Jewish calendar, and much more! Of course, many of you have already received a copy of the book, but if you do not have one you will want to receive a copy when you order your 2020 calendar. If you already have a 2020 calendar, it should have come with a pink card inside that you can simply fill in with your name and address, and for only the price of a stamp you can order your copy of *Counting The Days*!

Now, by no means is Living Springs a ministry backed by a lot of money, so it is only by the continuing grace of God we are able to not only offer the 2020 daily planning calendar once again, but it, and a copy of *Counting The Days*, are both

FREE! To order your free copy(s) of the 2020 planning calendar and/or *Counting The Days*, you can simply write, e-mail, or visit us online. For online orders, just go to [www.livingspringsinstitute.org](http://www.livingspringsinstitute.org), click on the "Resource Shop" button, order the 2020 calendar and/or *Counting The Days*, and type your mailing information into the lines provided on that form. To order more copies than the form allows, please use the comment box. If you are using e-mail, send your request to: [resources@shaqah.com](mailto:resources@shaqah.com). If you're using regular mail, write to us at: Living Springs Institute, P.O. Box 271, Loveland, CO 80539. Just tell us you would like the 2020 calendar and/or *Counting The Days*. Be sure to give us your physical mailing address, and your order will be on its way as soon as we can process it!



For those of you who may never have ordered anything from Living Springs, know that ordering will not put you on any mailing list! Living Springs is happy to send people only what they request. Thus, we want to remind everyone that we also offer other teaching products, and all for free! If you would like a free subscription to this publication (*Shaqah*), don't forget to make that request when you write. We also produce a PDF version of the calendar, along with many other materials in PDF, which you can download from our website at anytime.

In closing, I just want to say thank you, and please remember to share Living Springs Institute with others so they too may learn and grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ! May God bless each of you with a new year filled with all God wants to do in your life, and as always, we pray you will be blessed by this issue of *Shaqah*!

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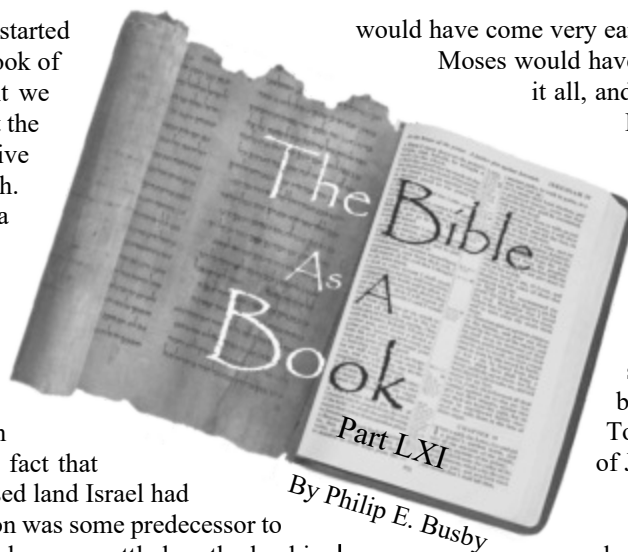
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In our last segment, we started into our more direct look at the Book of Joshua. However, in that segment we did not really cover so much about the book itself as we did the perspective one should approach the book with. That perspective is that Joshua really is a prophet in that all he is doing is leading the people by being the man through whom instructions from God can be relayed. In this we see how much Joshua and the work he was called to do was an extension of Moses' ministry. However, the fact that all along the journey to the promised land Israel had a leader was not because that person was some predecessor to the nation having a king. This is why once settled on the land in a solid way Joshua steps aside, and in the end instructs that each in the nation would have to choose for themselves who they would serve, but as for him and his house they would serve The Lord. (Josh. 24:15)

In looking directly at the book there is another point we really should stop to consider, once again. That point is the fact if the children of Israel had entered the land when God told them to instead of being scared and doubtful, Joshua would not have had to do the work he did after Moses was gone. However, that also means we would not have all that followed from the point Israel did not enter the land to the point they actually did. At the very least, the stories would be totally different. It can be interesting to sit and think about the what if Israel had gone in when God wanted, because we see in their forty year wandering in the wilderness a lot of incidents that caused the Law to be, shall we say, expounded on if not actually expanded. Now, there is a point we don't think about often if ever at all. Israel through their disobedience not only did not get the chance to enter the land when they should have, the incidents along the road showed stipulations God would put in the Law due to them. Now, I don't mean to say the Law was greatly expanded by any means, but there are certain things, if we stop and think about it, God did specifically because Israel acted in certain ways. If they had entered the land when they should have, would they have shown some of these same things in another way or not? If the answer is they would not have, one has to wonder if that is because a people who could willingly obey from the start of things as God had asked them to do, wouldn't make such mistakes which would require this extra instruction?

In any case, the point is they did have to wander the wilderness and go through what they went through which caused God to act on them in exactly the ways He did. All this God knew was going to be true, but let's not dismiss that thought and move on with the idea God sees the future. No, the more important aspect to why God knew they would do what they did is because God knows our nature in ways we don't appreciate. God added certain things to the Law at certain times because in those times it would mean the most for Israel to hear them. Over time the impact of why these things were added could be better felt knowing the "when." However, my real point in talking about this is the simple fact that if the nation had entered the land when they were suppose to, the events of taking the promised land



would have come very early on and in a very different sequence. Moses would have been there to lead the people through it all, and one has to think when it was time for Moses to go, the nation would have been in at least as good a situation as they were by the time Joshua stepped aside. All that means the events of Joshua would not have taken place. Think about it. In many ways the Book of Joshua is simply the story of Israel doing something that should have been done forty years before. That means not only would the Torah have looked different, but the Book of Joshua would not even exist!

If anything shows how much God works in and around the choices man makes and does not simply force us into things, that should! However, Israel did wander for forty years and we do have the Book of Joshua. Thus, we need to cover the basic facts about the book which we have attempted to cover in this study about every book. The first item on our list is the name of the book. Of course, as with other books there is not much to explain about what the name means, but why the book bears that name is what we have already been covering in previous segments, whether one realized it or not. It's easy to just say, well of course it's named Joshua, he was the one leading the nation at that time! One could point out there is no book named Moses, but of course, the five books of the Torah were written almost entirely by him, and we have discussed why they are split into the books they are with the names they have. Thus, no one really questions why there is no Book of Moses. That said, why does there end up being a book named Joshua when it is both the direct continuation of events showed to us in the Torah, as well as much of the same kind of events that should have happened years earlier? It could have easily been named something that indicated the continuance of Israel's journey.

If that sounds odd, just think about the fact the second book of the Bible is named Exodus. If the book which shows us Israel being freed from the land of Egypt can literally bear a name denoting that, why can't Joshua be called something to denote it is about Israel's entrance into the promised land? I know we could debate this for a long time, but what I wish to get at here is simple. We have spent a lot of time talking about how much Joshua was really a prophet. When we talk about books that tell very specifically about the actions and/or words of a prophet, the book often bears the name of that prophet. So too the Book of Joshua bears his name because what we see in it is not just history, but the story about how God used a man named Joshua to guide His nation. In that light, I think we need to understand how much Israel had become a true organized nation during the time they spent in the wilderness. It is clear at the time Israel should have entered the land they were a people loosely connected by ethnicity, and by that point they had been told by God they were a specific nation that would serve Him by following the written Law. However, as organized as the camp might have been, they still did not really see themselves as connected in the way they later would. The Law was meant to bring that connection to the people. If the nation had been on the land as it happened, we would have really seen how much the nation might not have

# Following the Biblical Stream:

By Philip E. Busby

In our last segment, we got more directly into the story of God telling Abraham to sacrifice Isaac. We started out by talking about the fact God calls Isaac Abraham's only son, which might seem strange in light of Abraham already having Ishmael. However, God was emphasizing how much Isaac was the only son who mattered to the plan God ultimately wanted to bring about in using Abraham's life. We also covered some Biblical perspective from the standpoint Isaac was to be sacrificed as a burnt offering, which means Abraham was willingly giving not just his son but in representation, himself. From there we talked more specifically about where God had asked Abraham to take Isaac in order to sacrifice him and the significance of that place to the future of the chosen nation. We also spent some time looking at the journey to that place, which is a part of the story that often gets passed over but which has great representation to the work Jesus would one day perform. We ended by talking about how Abraham tells his servants he and Isaac would go to worship and return to them. However, there is the somber point that at that moment Abraham had no reason to believe Isaac would be returning, it would just be Abraham alone, and that would seem to be something needing an explanation. All this brought us through Genesis chapter 22 verse 5, and we are ready to begin verse 6 this time.

In ending our last segment talking about how Abraham would have to explain the fact he alone was all that came back to the servants, one must really think about, all this that God asked Abraham to do, had great ramifications. It might have been hard for Abraham to think about those points, but if Abraham was the kind of man who after sacrificing his son would have given up on God, I don't think he would have made it this far, much less actually gone through with killing Isaac. This means Abraham would have to go on with life wondering how God was still going to make a way for him to have a promised son; getting through each day without his son, knowing Isaac had died at his own hands; as well as live with what others around him would surely think about him doing this. It's one thing to say we will follow God with all we have, but it's another to actually do it, especially when God asks us to do something that will leave scars for a lifetime! If Abraham had been required in the end to actually take Isaac's life in worship to God, it would not have been about just the short-term pain of doing it, far more so it would be about the living with the fact he had!

You see, this story of what God asked Abraham to do is not just about all we often think of it meaning or being about. This story is also about all the little things we don't think about in the moment. I keep hammering on this because we often pass over certain stories in the Bible like they are some fairy tale we read as a child. Maybe there is even that perspective that comes to some because they are raised in church and hear these stories as children. I am in no way saying that's a bad thing, but the point should emphasize how much we need to take an adult perspective of these stories when we become adults. It's easy to

hear the boiled down version of the story that seems to end with, "...and Abraham did NOT sacrifice Isaac, and so the two of them returned home to live happily ever after." However, as an adult these stories should be about more than just looking at the story the way it turned out. How do we do that? Often we simply need to stop and think about them from the perspective of, what if they had turned out differently? When it comes to stories like the nation of Israel traveling to the promised land, we have to think not just about the fact the nation rebelled by refusing to trust God could bring them into the land and in turn that generation all died wandering forty years in the wilderness without getting to see the land. We need to think about how the plan of God was put off by some forty years for that to happen. It didn't just keep Moses from entering into the land and getting to live his last years on it, it caused Joshua to take up Moses' ministry at a time when the entire nation should have already been on the land and living peacefully. There is so much to that, it's impossible for us to calculate it all, but at the very least we should think about how impossible it is for us to calculate how man's disobedience changes things. We need to stop blaming God for all the wrong and see how it is our actions, not just at the Garden of Eden, but over and over in both major and minor ways throughout time that have taken away the wonders God originally had for man.

Now in the case of Abraham, he would have had reason to blame God for Isaac's death in that God told him to do it. However, that's why we need to think about the point of, what if God had let him go through with it! In life it's not just about getting something we want when it comes to serving God. Many of us understand that, but still forget that fact a lot. That is enough of a problem, but what is really bad is that God might ask us to do something no one else would agree with. One might say that is what God asked Noah to do, so we understand that as well. We get the point of not worrying so much about what others think, but do we really? Do we get it in the depth this story of Abraham and Isaac shows? If Abraham had sacrificed Isaac, he would have been judged by so many people as not just a person who did a terrible thing, but such a terrible thing it was unimaginable! Today we probably would say, "There is NO way that man is a Christian!" I can't emphasize this point enough. All the pain of living with what he had done would be bad enough, but how would Abraham possibly go on to represent The One True God after doing this? By our standards today there would really be no way. I mean, yes we are taught to forgive, so if Abraham was sorry for what he did that would be something we would need to do, but that's the point! Abraham might have been sorry for killing Isaac in that he, as Isaac's father, did not want to do it, but Abraham would never repent of the "sin" and confess he was wrong. He couldn't! Abraham saying he was wrong in killing Isaac in the way, at the place, and for the reason God asked him to, would have been Abraham turning his back on God!

This story, if we take the time to think about what if

P.O. Box 271, Loveland, CO 80539

(970) 593-9468

God had let Abraham go through with it, shows us, greater than any other story in the Bible I can think of, how much following God is not about doing what He tells us to when we agree, but even when we disagree. In the most egregious way Abraham had reason to disagree with what God asked him to do, but he packed up what he needed and took Isaac to that hill anyway. All the personal emotions of pain, grief, and the like aside, thinking only about how wrong what God was asking Abraham to do would seem to us today - would you, could you have done it? One can argue that back in Abraham's day it was common for pagans to sacrifice children to a god or gods. Yes, even their own flesh and blood. This might make it seem different for Abraham than it would for us today, but it's not. To make my point here I want to say Abraham was no different than you and I, but I can't say that because he was different. Abraham served God with his full heart in ways most of us today can't even imagine getting close to! That aside, Abraham living in a different day and age makes no difference. Abraham was a man of God, and like anyone who truly follows God today, he had a good grasp on what was right versus what was wrong in spite of the wrong around him.

In truth, this is a big way in which Abraham was different! Abraham had an even greater grasp of right and wrong than any of us. It's why without knowing a portion of the Law of Moses or the prophecies that followed, in spite of not knowing the name of Jesus or anything about how He died and rose from the dead, Abraham knew the answer to his son's question of, "Father, where is the sacrifice?" (Gen. 22:7-8) In truth, people of Abraham's day were not as accustomed to sacrificing their children to god(s) as many people who lived in centuries that followed. That aside, when one can do such a thing and feel it's right, it's due to one of two things or a combination of the two. One, it can be done out of fear. This is why people no doubt found themselves willing to sacrifice a child to a false god they just "learned" of whom they feel is telling them to kill their child. However, when we say Abraham lived in a day when people commonly did such things, we are really pointing to the truth of the second reason people could do it, which is, they are religiously conditioned to do such a thing! Thus, when we talk about the idea of this being easier for Abraham to do because so many others around him at the time already did it, that's what we are pointing to. However, Abraham was not religiously conditioned to do it. He would have been conditioned to see such things as abominations!

Unlike so many who call themselves Christians today, who claim to follow God but base what they believe accomplishes that, or is necessary to doing that, on what the world around them is like, Abraham conformed his life to what God wanted with no care for that. You can say the point is moot then because we were talking about reputation, and as long as Abraham had people around him who commonly did it they would think nothing of Abraham doing it. However, there it is! When I was a teen I went to church with a girl who would often get into the question of, if we're saved why does God not just take us right now? Why do we have to continue to walk this life until we die? I could go on and on and on answering that question, but one major aspect of it is that God wishes to use those who live for Him as a light and a witness. That alone should speak to how much none of us should base what we think

it takes to live for God on what the world is like around us, but if nothing else it shows my point in Abraham's situation. It might seem it did not matter to Abraham's reputation to do this if those around him did it all the time, from the standpoint of them looking down on him for killing his son, but that's missing the point that Abraham was a man who would have commonly condemned such actions!

How would he have gone forward being the representative of God, teaching against such things, if he had done it himself? How do you go out and say to a pagan he is totally in the wrong, even to the point of needing to be put to death for doing it, but it's alright if it is to The One True God? The answer would seem to be you don't, but then how does Abraham end up being what God wanted him to be then, which is a generation after generation example of a righteous man? We can't just pass this off. The only out would seem to be that God didn't let Abraham do it in the end. That is what most will simply apply to the issue and move on, but that's living the fairy tale happy ending while forgetting God told Abraham to do it. Abraham would not have truly been tempted, as we discussed the word as meaning when talking about verse 1 of this chapter, if the point of the story was that Abraham wasn't going to actually go through with it. Abraham could not climb that hill with Isaac, having the thought God was going to change His mind. He couldn't lift the knife to plunge it into his son's body believing God would stop him. Abraham had to do this, in spite of knowing all we just discussed better than any of us probably will, that what God was asking him to do was wrong, yet he showed he was totally willing to do it!

I'll admit, if Abraham had needed to go through with killing his son, it would be for us whatever is just one small step down from impossible for him to go on to be the example of the righteous man he was. However, it would not have been because he was wrong in doing it. No, that's why it would not have been impossible. It's hard for us to imagine God could accomplish what He wants in the lives of true believers using a man to look back to who had killed his son. The pagan mind might say, it was alright, but what about the Christian mind? Sure, Christians would still be around, but how different would it look or better yet, feel? What if this story in chapter 22 of Genesis had ended with, "So Abraham plunged the knife into his son and offered Isaac's blood to God."? You see it's easy for the pagan mind to say, it was alright because God told him to do it, but look at all the other things pagans believe are alright to do on a day by day basis. Perhaps I'm only speaking to a select few here in that many who call themselves Christians do so many things of the world without regard to true righteousness, that simple excuse would be good enough for them too. The problem is, that's both the right and the wrong way to look at it!

It's easy for the pagan to say, if god(s) want me to do something I'll do it, because they believe it will spare their own life or well-being in doing it. Pagans all follow a religion made by man and for man, which means it's totally self-serving. One of the big reasons the pagan activities of sacrificing children to a god are not as predominant today is because that's not something people actually like. Pagans will do it if they feel they really have to because the pagan religion is totally self-serving. If that were not true it would not have happened in the

# What About God's Chosen People?

## Part XXXV

From Living Springs' Questions and Answers

*"Is it true that the Jews are God's chosen people? I have a Christian friend who says the Jews were not God's chosen people."*

In our last segment, we wrapped up our look at the Roman-Jewish War that ended with the fall of Masada. However, as I said in that segment, that was just the first of three distinct wars all of which are considered the Roman-Jewish Wars. Thus, in that segment we took some time to again gain a perspective on how that war affected thought patterns and the way the nation would move forward. We took the time to talk about what the ramifications were of being without the temple and in particular how that affected both Judaism and Christianity. This, of course, took us into looking at how those two religions affected each other at this point and the fact that would grow through the coming centuries to be what we simply take as fact today. As we begin this segment, we want to move forward to see the next major conflict the Jews had, but in doing so we must keep in mind that their attitude was greatly affected by the loss of the temple, not just in that they now have to find ways to once again continue in their religious practices without the temple, but they became just that much more worried about how to maintain their distinction as a nation!

As we move forward in our study of how the Jewish people are, in fact, still the chosen nation of God, we see in the historical facts themselves that the destruction of the temple and the ending of this first war was only the beginning of a downward slide for the chosen nation. However, the events should not be interpreted as those caused by God as punishment for the sin of a nation that did not receive The Messiah but as the result of the actions of men. This must be seen because when we fail to see it in the Jewish nation we fail to see it in ourselves, in our nation, and in our world as a whole. Just as things can be used for good when people serve God and are drawn to live their lives according to His purposes, so too we should understand the dynamics are the same when we do not serve God. Man and man alone is creating the misery in this world and the events that keep taking us further and further down. Our downward slide as humanity is, for the most part, the consequences of our actions not some direct action of God. Is it the punishment of God? Yes, but only in that He allows it, and even that will only be for now.

Thus, following this first war with Rome, we see that Jews would for the time continue to live on the land in great numbers, but the rebellion was over, the temple was no more, Jerusalem was in Roman control, and any sovereignty the Jews had enjoyed under the Roman rule was all but gone. For the Romans, the Jews were no longer a special people with special rights and privileges to practice their religion in the way and in the place it was meant to be done. They were now just one of many groups of people living in the empire whom the Romans had to deal with. However, we know the Jews will never be just another people in any part of the world at any time. They are

God's chosen nation, and due to that, attempts at persecution and hatred toward them in and by this world will follow them everywhere they go. However, this loss of protection brought about by not following God's Laws with all their hearts, is something Moses warned the children of Israel about over and over again!

The biggest problem was that the Jews still did not focus on serving God and crying out to Him for guidance and help in these times. This is why we talk so much about the effects of religion, because man-made religion causes man to believe there are automatic responses to certain things happening. Instead of being compelled to cry out to God, the nation mostly thought about how much they had lost, and no bigger item had been lost than the temple. Thus, understand there were many Jews who believed at this point, that fact would bring about the coming of The Messiah. This makes perfect sense when one stops to think about all we have discussed in that the Jews believed The Messiah would be a conquering hero. Many in the Jewish religious establishment did not want Jesus to be The Messiah no matter what, due to the fact Jesus did not appear to them to be anything close to a conqueror! They did not understand that under the Romans at that time was a great opportunity for the nation to stand in safety and turn their focus to God. Because Jesus was rejected by the leadership and many in the nation at large, the events Jesus' work would have prevented came to pass, this includes the destruction of the temple!

All points aside about how Jesus could have prevented the lose of the temple and other things the nation gained by being under Roman rule, the simple fact many Jews looked for The Messiah now more than ever, opened the door wide for false messiahs to rise and make the claim they could turn it all around. Jesus had warned about this threat because it was not just a bad thing for anyone to go off at anytime claiming to be The Messiah, but also because the people's desperation caused them to long even more for what they hoped was true! (Matt. 24:23-28) When Jesus came, the Jews were in a relatively comfortable time with no real reason to feel so desperate but still with a desire to see their nation freed from Rome. Thus, in some people's minds, when Jesus came might seem to be the wrong time for God to send The Messiah, because after the first Jewish-Roman war more Jews expected The Messiah. However, God sent The Messiah at a time man still had hope to hold onto something good, most of which man did not understand was good, and so Jesus gave a chance at real improvement. By the time it might have seemed right in man's mind to believe it would have made more sense to send The Messiah, restoring the nation to what it needed to be was going to take massive bloodshed and turmoil in the world at large.

This was not what God wanted The Messiah to look like, to either the Jews or the world! Taking such actions is not in God's desire until it is absolutely necessary in order to reach in

and affect the events man chose/chooses for himself. When God is ready to allow the final chapter of humans living in this universe to be written, which is a chapter that would not exist if not for God, Jesus will return to drastically affect and change the course of human events through force. It will be a time when, if Jesus was not to return, there would be no more chapters written in human history, for man would finally destroy himself in such entirety all would come to an end. In this, we see how much waiting until after the loss of the temple to send The Messiah would have made no sense in God's thinking no matter how much we might think otherwise. (Prov. 16:25) However, the fact man thinks the way he thinks, led far too many Jews to look for The Messiah more than ever, which made them vulnerable to those who believed taking such a title might be a way of leading the Jews to do what many believed with enough motivation they should have been able to do in the first war.

There is just no end to man trying to formulate plans which makes sense to him as to how to get back what he has lost without humbling themselves before God for the answer. (James 4:10) At this point in history it would seem the best way to get back what they had lost was to, again, fight for their freedom. However, this was not going to gain strength overnight because the Jews had just went through a war that had failed to gain them freedom and resulted in disaster. Many people immediately following this war would be in no mood to try again anytime soon, and thus it would be some time down the road before we would see the rise of what history would come to call the Kitos War. The first war would end in 73 possibly bleeding a bit into 74 A.D. The Kitos War would not begin in an official way until 115 A.D. This would put a little over forty years between these wars, but in looking at that, one can see how short a time it really took for things to flare up again! The first war is greatly blamed by historians on the fact there was the Sicarii, and their attitude of rebellion spread like wildfire through the nation, leading to a rebellion. However, that is putting the blame on one of the results not on the true cause, and that true cause would be what the Kitos War was all about!

The true cause of the first war was Jews being persecuted, not in a large official way as in the Romans encouraged it, but in the Jews' everyday lives! Irritation of Jewish communities by their non-Jewish neighbors brought great anger and is/was that anger that brought about more aggressive groups like the Sicarii. In considering the Kitos War it is important that one remember the first war was centered and mostly stayed in the region of Judea, but the irritation that brought about its support was not exclusively there in any way. In many ways it was places like Caesarea and Alexandria where much of the beginning trouble took place prior to the true war. Thus, when the Jews in Judea begin to rise up, it was very satisfying to those Jews outside of Judea due to the fact they now had reason to hope that maybe the land of Israel could be freed and they could move there, or that the fact it was free would give them clout in the places they lived which they did not currently have in bettering their situations. Not only did freedom fail to be gained, the first war ending the way it did, did not bring much hope such a plan was going to work or was viable in the future. Thus, when the Kitos War broke out, we see many of its events clearly taking place outside of Judea.

These are important things to keep in mind as we think

about these events in light of what history teaches us; for if you are even vaguely familiar with the Kitos War, you probably have a lot of thoughts that boil down to the simple thinking the Jews of the day just went crazy and started killing everyone around them! One simple point on this is that history is written by the victors, and no people other than the Jews are going to have more politics come into play against them when others write the history. You see, the Roman government was greatly embarrassed by how easy it was for the Jews to rise up and not only take Jerusalem during the first war, but then to pursue and destroy the first Roman army which was sent to quell the uprising. Once the Romans realized how serious it was, they threw a great deal more into the next effort to retake Judea and then took pride in their ability to put down such a great rebellion. Having the Jews rise up again in any major way would really be a great embarrassment to the Roman Empire, and so any stories told after the events as to how it got started and what happened were, of course, going to be greatly colored by anti-Semitism!

If one remembers how the first war started, you will recall great irritation coming to the Jews in Caesarea by the Greeks. The same is true in Alexandria. In both places the simple fact Jews lived there was enough to cause many Greeks not just to shun them but actively try to make their lives hard. This was not just in the ways of try to shut Jews out from resources or refuse to do business with them. As much as those things no doubt happened on an everyday basis, Roman law did not technically permit such discrimination. Thus, what we see most predominantly is the Greeks doing things such as accusing the Jews to the Romans of being bad or unfaithful citizens of the empire. They also took a lot of actions which were nothing short of irritation on a religious level for the Jews. All things combined is what caused Jews to be angry, and revolts and the like to break out in different places at times. However, following this first war Jews had not only lost the war but their non-Jewish neighbors saw greater opportunity to further such activities. They knew the Romans were keeping a closer eye on the Jewish communities for any sign of rebellion, and that meant non-Jews could irritate and hinder Jews in all sorts of ways without fear of reprisal. If the Jews did anything in retaliation, the Romans would be down on them in a second to crush individual Jewish communities throughout the empire.

Thus, persecution rose for the Jews following the first war, and this was especially true for those Jews outside Judea. There was still a certain strength in numbers and in feeling they were on their own land, which helped Jews in Judea in ways it did not throughout the rest of the empire. This means when we read "facts" about the Kitos War and how Jewish communities outside of Judea rose up to start "slaughtering" their neighbors, we should understand this was not the unprovoked thing history makes it sound like. The Kitos War was not just about Jews wanting their freedom from Rome; it was more about taking an opportunity to rise up and take action against those who were persecuting them and which the Roman government would do nothing about! The Kitos War can be looked at in history as a sudden event seemingly with no real catalyst. It can be looked at as the Jews simply going out and killing innocent civilians with no just cause or purpose, but none of those views are the truth. The Jews had cause, a cause many would not have held out for as long as the Jews did to take action on. It had purpose, which would not be so much the freedom of the Jewish homeland but

the defense of Jewish homes and communities.

So what was the setting for the Kitos War? Why did the Jews choose to take action when they did? The answer of timing is simple. As we just covered, Jews and non-Jews alike understood there was disinterest in the Roman government when it came to protecting Jews, but when it came to crushing even the slightest sign of rebellion by the Jews - that the Romans took great interest in. Thus, the forty some years between the first war and the events of the Kitos War happening anywhere in the empire is explained by simply looking at when they did happen, as well as why it happened in more than one place. To understand that, we might want to catch up quickly with our Roman history so we understand where they were in events. In covering the first war, we talked about how Emperor Nero was the man in charge as that war got heated, but we did not mention the events of the Roman throne following that. Because this is not a study to look at Roman history, I will not spend time here talking about the details, but in the summer of the year 68 A.D. Nero committed suicide. Since the war did not end until 73/74 A.D., we see Nero took his life before settling the war with the Jews and even a while before the defeat of Jerusalem.

With Nero's death we see the close of the Julio-Claudian dynasty and the beginning of the Flavian dynasty. This dynasty's first emperor, Galba, would not last even a year before he would be murdered by his own Roman bodyguards who would then appoint his replacement, a man named Otho. This man would rule for only around three months before he would commit suicide after losing a major battle. At that point a man named Vitellius would seize power with the help of German Legions, but he too would not last long. Only about eight months would pass before he would be murdered by Vespasian's troops. If that name sounds familiar it should. Vespasian was the general appointed by Nero and the Senate to retake Judea and crush the Jewish rebellion. With his son still in charge of the war with the Jews, Vespasian would seize power and be the emperor by the time the temple was destroyed and through the remainder of the war. He would rule for nine and a half years before dying of natural causes, and his son Titus would take the throne. He would only reign for a couple months over two years before a sickness would take his life and another son of Vespasian would take the throne, named Domitian. This son would rule for fifteen years, which brings us to the year 96 A.D., before he would be assassinated by court officials.

The Senate would then appoint the next emperor, a man named Nerva, and this would begin what is known as the Nerva-Antonine dynasty. This man would fail to live a year and a half past his appointment before dying of natural causes and leaving the throne to his adopted son Trajan. This would finally bring us to the year 98 A.D., and since this man would remain in power for nineteen and a half years, he would be the emperor at the time of the Kitos War. All this shows us how much in just the short space of forty years things had shifted for the Roman empire. Between the beginning of the first Jewish war and the Ketos War, Rome saw not just the end of the Julio-Claudian dynasty but the coming and going of a whole other dynasty consisting of six emperors. While all this did not take pressure off the Jews, for the knowledge of what "needed" to be done in handling them did not pass with this changing of emperors, events for the empire itself changed.

With the Flavian dynasty would come a trend toward making the whole of the empire ruled by districts. This would take away the more "self rule" arrangements of territories or kingdoms within the empire and replace them with solid Roman rulership that answered only to Rome. In the year 106 A.D. Trajan would complete this trend by annexing Nabataea, which is the area directly south of Judea. This would take the Roman empire officially down into the north of what we now know as Saudi Arabia. For the next seven years there would be a time of peace where the emperor would simply rule a seemingly solid empire, firmly under the Roman government's full control without any self rule or merely military occupied parts to worry about. This was good for the empire but did not make life any easier for the Jews. Christians would also continue to be persecuted at this time but not really by any Jewish leadership. The empire would continue in this "peaceful" state until the year 113 A.D., when Rome would again come in conflict with their old enemies the Parthians.

Parthia is a territory in the Northeast of what today we know as Iran. These people were made part of the Medes and Persian Empire, and at least part of the region was under the Greek rule after them. Greek rulership would basically end as the Parthians rebelled against the Seleucids and ended up taking Mesopotamia from them. The Parthians would eventually expand west as far as what is today the eastern-central portion of Turkey, putting them right next door to the Roman Empire. The Romans and Parthians would have their share of conflict as for obvious reasons the Romans would stop their western expansion, and in turn the Parthians stood in the way of the Romans going further east into places like Mesopotamia. By the time of Trajan the two powers had been settled for some time without any major conflicts. Each letting the other deal with their own affairs while, since the time of Nero, the two shared hegemony over Armenia which touched the boarders of both powers just to the north of Parthia's extreme western finger. In times past Armenia was a great dispute between Rome and Parthia, but by this time they let the kingdom exist as its own entity while the two powers shared the real political control. However, during the time of Trajan the Parthians put a king on the throne of Armenia which the Romans did not like, and that opened the wound between the two powers, once again.

Trajan could not let this move by Parthia go unanswered, and especially considering the nature of the Roman Empire at this point being solidly Roman, Trajan decided it was time to not just do something about Armenia but settle this question of Rome going east in spite of the Parthians once and for all. We could go into a long study here about this Roman-Parthian war, but the important detail to our study of the chosen nation is that the Romans put all their force into invading Parthian territory in order to expand the Roman Empire east. From the start, the Romans had the upper hand, but that did not mean it did not take almost all Rome's resources to fight this war. By the year 115 A.D. this left only small garrisons of Roman soldiers to defend the homeland from conflicts whether coming from the outside or the inside of the empire. It was in this time the Kitos War would take place, and the details of exactly what happened could not be more skewed by anti-Semitism, it would seem.

As we began this segment talking about, Rome was

probably very embarrassed by this incident. That was not just because they had once put the Jews back under their thumb and were now suppose to be keeping a good eye on them, there is also the point that this move by Trajan to head so drastically eastward in expanding the empire was brought on by arrogance. Trajan had accomplished what had not been done in the empire for some time; he had brought relative stability and peace to it. There was no one or group looking to assassinate him due to something stupid he had done or other issues he had let slip. Now Trajan was on a grand march across the East taking down an advisory that had stood in Rome's way for a very long time. He was taking possession of places renown for their accomplishments belonging to empires of the past. He was erecting statues of himself and monuments along the way; generally having success on all fronts, and in so doing expanding the Roman Empire to the greatest size it would ever be. The last thing he, his son, or any later people who revered the Roman Empire and its accomplishments wanted, was to have a great stain on all this due to the foolishness of not really having things at home as secure and settled as it seemed on the surface. No one wanted that misstep to be the reason some of the greatest and bloodiest internal violence Rome ever saw took place.

There's another reason it's easy for history to record this event as if Jewish communities all over the empire just went crazy and started killing their neighbors, taking advantage of the fact the Romans were busy elsewhere. You see, one of the greatest sentiments to come to our modern time from the Romans is the grand idea of citizenship! Along with that there is nothing more noble than being a good citizen! This brings the idea that those who resist the state, no matter how wrong the state is, are not just going against the government but against all the people who share their country. This, in truth, can lead to great oppression of certain groups, especially groups like the Jews who were already looked at as different and strange. We see this even in the modern example of horrific anti-Semitism called the Holocaust. It simply did not matter that Jews were some of the most successful people contributing more than their fair share to society at large, their differences, uniqueness, and, in many people's minds, strangeness, made them an easy target to turn against, even using the excuse they are not playing well with others and only caring for themselves, not the greater whole of society!

Incidents like the Kitos War and how it is portrayed in history also seem to build the legitimacy of that argument as time goes on. Looking back through history, it was easy for groups like the Nazis to point at such things and claim the Jews have been a rebellious, troublesome, menace to society for a long time. That's why it was easy for them to sell the idea God's chosen nation should be exterminated. At the time of the Kitos War it was not to that point, but the fact that only some forty years earlier the Jews had rose up in an attempt to gain their independence from Rome made it easy to blame them for all that happened in this event. So what is the truth? The truth is Jews in many places across the empire had been persecuted on a daily basis since before the first war with Rome. After the loss of that war it had become even easier to oppress Jews and irritate them on a daily basis if nothing else. It might be true the Jews "took advantage" of the fact the Roman garrisons were undermanned at

this point, but all that means is a conflict that was already ripe for taking place took an advantage when it came about.

You see, it had been long enough in time since the first war that not only had Jews who were children at the time of the first war grown up by then, they knew the older generation's pain from the event. They not only grew up under the persecution that followed that war, they had also heard all the stories of how brutal the Romans were in bringing that war to an end. The generation of Jewish men who were now fighting age had not just suffered the irritation of their non-Jewish neighbors and watched it be ignored by the Roman government, they were clear on the fact such activities were exactly what started the first war and caused the Jews to attempt to regain their homeland as a place they could control. Control over a homeland or something so organized was probably not so much in the minds of those Jews who fought in the Kitos War, but to be certain they had plenty of reason to be angry at the fact their religion and things like their synagogues had been disrespected. Their very ability to make a living in Roman society was made difficult, and there is no people in the world, at least of those who have the resources to do it, who would not rise up at some point in revolt, and yes, even revenge!

So did the Jews start the Kitos War? That would be a matter of debate. At the time Trajan marches off for great victory in the East I'm sure the fact the Roman garrisons were low on manpower did not affect the daily mindset of non-Jews who had gotten used to looking down on Jews. I'm sure it did not stop or even slow any mockery or irritation non-Jews were doing to their Jewish neighbors, and so you tell me who started it. It's easy to lay the blame on those Jews who said enough is enough, and whether right or wrong begin to violently take vengeance against their oppressors. However, history not only leaves out the point of why Jews had reason to be angry, even specifically at those in their individual communities, it makes it sound as if the Jews simply went through the streets killing innocent civilians who had no defenses of their own. In short, thousands of lives were lost during this war not because Jews simply slaughtered that many people before Rome could act to stop them, but because within the individual communities this was a true war!

That is probably the most important fact to remember about the Kitos War. It was not simply an uprising of angry Jews whom Rome had to put down. No, this war was a war between people within individual communities. The empire was falling apart from within with the kind of unrest that so often goes unnoticed by government until it's too late. After acting to put down this unrest the Romans would need a good excuse as to why it happened. An excuse that did not mar so badly their glorious history of the time, and the Jews were the perfect ones to blame.

Until next time, may we each continually choose to be the people God wants us to be!

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



## FBS continued from pg. 4

past. However, the idea of Christianity spread, and today, Christian or not, very few believe in doing such a thing. Not doing such things is part of what makes Christianity so popular, but for centuries before there were "Christians," the chosen nation had a Law that said it should not be done - so what's different? One great difference is that Judaism is understood to not be for just everyone as a religion. That being true we can understand why the religion itself did not spread like Christianity, but what about its principles?

Maybe I'm mostly alone in this, and if so it has a great deal to do with believing there is so little difference on this side of the cross. However, I find the question interesting, to say the least! Why would it be so hard for the principles of what the Law taught to be picked up by others outside the chosen nation and put into practice by any large number of people other than the nation itself? I'm not talking about the having a temple and sacrificing of animals, but the principles of basic things like the idea one should not sacrifice their children to a god. The righteousness it teaches just on a moral level could have affected all parts of life for people outside the nation, but we don't see it happen, why? The answer lays in the fact righteousness is not generally appealing to people, especially if it is dictated by God! So why do we have so many of those moral principles in our society today? A study of history might lead one to believe it's because Christianity swept the world, and to a great deal that had a lot to do with it, but not as much as many think it did. You see, at first, Christianity had no greater success than the Law. Now there's a statement many would vehemently disagree with!

People will point to the idea the Gospel spread so quickly, and that's true. It's also true it started to transform many lives, and they affected their societies greatly. However, this is what brought great persecution to the church, even from those not part of the Jewish religious establishment. Much like religious Jews, others saw Christianity as a direct threat to their current belief system, and people don't like change. For many of the same reasons the religious leaders of Israel rejected Jesus and His message, so too was it rejected by the religious establishment of the pagans. We see examples of this by simply reading the Book of Acts, and those are just small beginning incidents that happened to a church that was not that large yet. Of course, the Gospel resonated with many individuals, and many did turn their hearts to God! This fact caused the church to grow, but the more it grew the greater threat it was to other established religions, and those people responded with force. It was not long after the Gospel began to go out that even the Roman government began to persecute Christians. You see it's because the Gospel is so outwardly evangelistic and the Law of Moses is not that it may seem Christians suffered more than Jews, but remember it was the principles of the Law that got Daniel thrown into the lion's den and his friends at another point into a fiery furnace! (Dan. 6:1-24, 3:1-30)

There is no difference on all the levels that count. Christians are persecuted for the same reason any such stories are shown to us in the Bible where Jews went through things both as individuals as well as a nation! Jesus told His disciples

to remember they hated Him before they hated us. (Matt. 5:17-21) At the same time it can be said, on a physical level, they hated the Jews before they specifically hated Jesus. Since this is all about hatred of the things of God, it really all boils down to people of the world hating the ways of God and that's what Jesus really meant, but in a timeline perspective you see the point I'm making? So how did the morals, that to so many seem to be Christianity, manage to somewhere along the line change the world? The answer is that eventually there were enough people who believed in Christ it formed a larger group, and with size comes power. Thus, what a proper study of history and Christianity shows is that the effect did not greatly come until Christianity became a religion. Now if you're staying with me here your first thought might be that the Jews had such power almost from day one, and that's so true. However, the difference is twofold.

First, the Jews because they were to focus on those with the right bloodline did not go out, as a group or religion, to gain allies in all sorts of places and people. Even those who fully believed Jews were God's chosen nation could not be a Jew unless they wanted to give up what they were and fully become a Jew in every way they could. Even for those who did such a thing, we see how this took them out of the influence they might have had outside the nation as then they too would simply be looked at as a Jew. Second, as we touched on, the Law is not as evangelistic as Christianity. God had granted the world the opportunity to have Him in their lives, and man so greatly rejected God and His ways God had to destroy the world with a flood. (Gen. 6:9-13) Man repopulated and headed down the same path, so God confounded our language. (Gen. 11:1-9) Man would continue to insist, and this would lessen God's truth in this world, so God created a nation to whom He would commit His oracles. (Gen. 12:1-3, Rom. 3:1-2) Eventually even having this opportunity to learn was failing to have enough success in keeping God's ways in this world, so God would send The Messiah! In all this we see how proactive God has been all along, because in each iteration we see God's words and presence being more physical as well as more dynamic in inserting itself into the world at large.

However, as Christianity was turned into a religion we see it gets more and more influence, and that caused a lot of pagan ways to fall by the wayside in a lot more places than just the truth alone would have. We also see that as the religion spread it often did so aggressively. So much so that it changed from being the persecuted to becoming the persecutor. What might be the greatest irony in history is that eventually the religion of Christianity began persecuting believers who disagreed with its doctrine, and that means in truth it became the persecutor of the real Christians! It is not my intent to make it sound as if the Gospel did not have a lot to do with changing the world, but understand God is working with what we are willing to give. In giving the world a nation that held His oracles, we see about the biggest struggle with that nation was getting the people in the nation to be what He needed them to be. The nation of Israel did not fail to greatly affect the world, we just don't have a good enough view to really see how, in the way we do when looking at more modern times with Christianity. That said, as the people of Israel did not follow God's plan, it did not have the impact it should have been able to have. That impact

became less and less as the nation got further and further away from the true Law. Thus, God making the Gospel, or what we call Christianity, more evangelistic had to do with taking His Word out so it might better reach the world regardless of by whom it was carried!

Now I've made another statement that would make many Christians gasp! However, it is true. Even as a religion Christianity has had a positive impact in causing many people to change the basic ways they feel they need to live in order to please their god. This is why Jesus tells the parable of the wedding of the king's son. The king sends out his servants to invite those who would expect to be invited but they will not come. The king sends his servants again to make sure those invited understand the wedding is ready and the time is now! However, those servants get mocked and abused for the most part. So the king sends out armies to destroy those people and sends his servants to the highways, fields, and just everywhere you might find people going about their daily tasks to invite them. This fills the wedding with guests, but when the king comes in he finds one of them did not bother to change from his regular clothes into appropriate apparel for a wedding. The man has no answer as to why, so the king has him bound and thrown into outer darkness. That parable ends with the statement, "For many are called, but few are chosen." Matthew 22:14

People take this parable as meaning the chosen nation was invited and when they refused to come God goes outside the nation to win lost souls. However, what it really illustrates is how much God invited man as a whole to come to Him, but even as a much smaller group man mostly ignored the invitation. As the world's population grew, God gave a specific nation to show the way, and not even those nations more in direct daily contact with that nation accepted what God was offering. Not only that, they persecuted the chosen nation. Thus, God makes the message more evangelistic - to use our term - and goes more outward. If you see what I'm saying, we are not talking about just geographies but time as well. This is the changing events of the way God has reached to man. In the parable what we are shown is that going far and wide would finally fill the wedding, and that's a way of simply saying, not those who are religious and not those who think they are good people, but those who truly desired to come to God take up the invitation. They are not a cohesive group but people from all over the world and throughout time who have a heart for God and His ways.

Even at that there is the illustration of the man who bothers to come but does not bother to dress correctly. This man is not rewarded simply because he bothered to show up! By no means is God about taking those who want heaven because it sounds more comfortable than hell. No, God wants those who want faith in Him to transform them into what He desires and created us to be. (James 2:17-24) That's the whole point in coming to the wedding! This is a point many people do not understand, and the religion of Christianity has seen great success at putting itself on a lot of the world because it does not really teach it as well. It teaches what the man who does not bother dressing correctly represents. It is a teaching that we get

them into the church with the hope they learn something. It is the teaching that says we bend and flex with time in order to seem the most appealing because people coming to church each week is better than them not coming. I agree people coming to church can be a good thing, but not if you are not going to teach them something. To that the Christian religion will say, "Oh we teach them something. We teach these pagans all kinds of morality they would not otherwise have, and a step in the right direction is better than nothing." Is it really? No, it's not! We can make those who do not want to bother truly yielding their lives to God part of our churches. We can make them comfortable and give them the feeling of security, but when the king comes in to judge the guests He will cast out all of them!

So I ask, did we do those people a favor? Again, and profoundly, I say NO! We gave them false hope, and if we had been willing to step up and teach them what being at this wedding is truly about, it's true they might have walked out the door and never came back. However, at least then we can help those who will, whether at the time or in coming back later, do what is right. We can also clean the church, not in an angry religious way, but in a simple these are the facts way of getting people to make their choice. We should let the Holy Ghost do His job. Speak the words, let God bring the conviction, and if that drives people from the pews then they were never going to be allowed at the wedding in the end, so it does not matter! This brings us back to that point of whether Abraham could or could not be the representative of a Godly man or not if he had been allowed to kill his son. It all pivots on what I said earlier was, and was not, the right response; that being, it's alright because God said so. We can say that in a religious way, but that's not the reason to do it. The reason to do it is because we don't know what God wants, only He does!

Being fully aware I have not gotten to the subject of abortions in this segment, I will say today it would seem it's clear if God told us to sacrifice our child we would see it as the wrong thing to do. However, is that religious conditioning or is it a truth in our heart due to our faith in God? You see, that's so very important. If anything we think we should do or not do is only followed because of religious conditioning, then we might have a form of Godliness but we are denying the power thereof! (II Tim. 3:1-5) A form of Godliness is not good enough! We have to be convinced as individuals we are walking each day the way God wants us to walk, and the only way to do that is to have a constant relationship with God, which is what the word faith should mean to us. The point I have been driving at here is not about wanting anyone to go off and sacrifice their child, even with the excuse God told me to do it. My point is that we need the same thing in our life Abraham had in him which got him to that mount and through this temptation! We need not just the willingness to do whatever God wants us to do, but such a strong relationship with God that, like Abraham, if God asked of us even something that seemed completely out of the possibility of being right, something we felt would cause others to judge us as, "They are clearly NOT a Christian!," something that defied all religious conditioning, we would know the instructions came from God, and we would do as He told us to!

## The Bible As A Book continued from pg. 2

developed so solidly as being the people who came out of Egypt, as much as it would have been only the people out of that group who truly chose to follow the Law!

Since that is not how it happened, the ordinances of the Law and service of the tabernacle had been solidified in the minds of the people as the group they were by traveling together. One can see this as a better way for the nation to congeal, but that is because we just can't see how it would have looked otherwise. God's ways are always the best ways. Everything else is a work around for the fact people get in the way of God's plan. The Torah should have contained the story of history that started with the creation of the world and wrapped up with the completion of Israel settled on the promised land. It's even possible that under those circumstances the more permanent temple might have been built. That's not likely, in that God wanted to interact with the nation and that would guide the placement of the temple, but we know God can do amazing things. We also know the time it took to get from the dedication of the tabernacle to the building of a more permanent structure we would know as the temple, took way too many years; all of them dictated by man's failure to follow God with his whole heart! In truth, the nation of Israel had gotten comfortable with the tabernacle. I would suppose there was not really any thought in the time of Joshua, at least not in too many people's minds, that it was necessary to replace it with something more permanent. Thus, when I say the nation had really spent their time congealing into a true people while wandering the wilderness instead of doing it in the promised land, I mean the nation entered the promised land as a nation who was what they were, and in ways both good and bad, set in their ways.

That might not make total sense to some, but I simply hope you can get the point the nation was far more organized and solidified by this time. They knew what they wanted as a people. As a nation they had formed an identity, and what that means is that, in more ways than we think, Joshua was a prophet doing what a prophet did all throughout Israel's history. It's true he did a continuation of Moses' ministry, but he led a very different kind of group into battle as he crossed the Jordan than Moses led at the time they were suppose to enter the land. This has more impact to our thinking if one considers the idea God did not design the nation to have a king. This would mean every action of the nation would have simply taken place by individuals making their choice to serve what God has asked of them as a people. That is what we see with Joshua leading the nation into the land; a group of people ready to take the next step in establishing themselves in a region they had already started to settle in. Joshua would be the man of God who would show them the way, and it really illustrates how much a prophet is not always about showing us future events or laying down judgment for wrong. Joshua may be about the most pure form of a prophet we will ever see in large detail when it comes to what a prophets true job is!

Now, our next question to answer about the Book of Joshua is who wrote the book? For this there can be some debate, but over what book isn't there. Probably the most important point to keep in mind is that as leaders or prophets did their work they often wrote a record of it for later reference by others. This is the most likely source for most all we read in the Book of Joshua. As the events took place Joshua took the time to write them down. There is a lot of evidence to this fact, in that many things like names of cities and other geographical references in the book

indicate that, at the very least, the book was written in the time period. Meaning the book was not written by someone else a considerable time later. If the Book of Joshua can be credited to anyone else writing it, that fact is hard to tell for sure. If someone other than Joshua wrote the bulk of the book, it was because they were a person slated with the job of doing the writing. This would mean Joshua directed what was and was not recorded as someone else chronicled Israel's entrance into the promised land. It also seems impossible to believe that in any way this book was written by anyone else, especially long after Joshua was dead, due to some words being spoken in narrative as if it was Joshua himself telling the story or, at least, someone who was part of Israel as these events happened. There is, of course, the understanding some small portions of the book were written by someone else in that Joshua's death is recorded. However, like the end of Deuteronomy where Moses' death is recorded, this is a technical detail that is simply part of the closing words and the story the book tells. We can feel confident Joshua wrote this book and preserved the details of Israel's progress in much the same way Moses was directed by God to record what had taken place up to this book.

So now the question is strictly about the information in the book, and that leads us to ask how much time there is between the book before it and the beginning of Joshua? That item is actually very easy. Since Deuteronomy is the last book in the Torah and it describes Moses' death, there is no time practically speaking! God told Joshua he would take over after Moses. Moses was told to ordain Joshua and turn things over to him before Moses climbed the hill where God would end his earthly existence. That was all done at the end of Deuteronomy, so the Book of Joshua opens with the words where God is telling Joshua Moses is dead and it's time he take the people over Jordan. No delay, no sitting around any longer. There was nothing more to be added instruction wise. Moses had spent time going over the Law with the people before his death, and we see the importance of it all being written down. So now it was time for action, and that action would be taking up what should have happened many years earlier; that being, going directly into the heart of the land God wanted the people to live on.

This brings us to our next question, which is how much time does the book cover? The only thing that doesn't make this question a totally easy open and shut number of years from Moses' death to Joshua's death is we need to understand that point I made before. Joshua did not serve in the leadership role right up to the end of his life. As discussed, this was a good thing not just in that neither he nor his sons were an issue of possibly starting a dynasty like a king's line, but it also makes it more clear to us today such a thing was not God's intent for the nation. What this means is the Book of Joshua is in this aspect a history book, because like any good history lesson it finishes the point of going to Joshua's death without just ending when he stepped aside. That said, it really is no different than many other books we consider solid prophecy books, because many of them contain a certain amount of history. This is the mix we see in many other books that makes us choose whether to call them prophecy or not. If the book seems to be mostly the account of what a prophet said, with only fill details about some of the setting it was said in, that we will consider a prophecy book. If it contains mostly a story of history, in spite of some segments having tremendous input of prophets, we consider those history.

In doing this for classification purposes none of this matters, but to have a deeper understanding of what we are really reading in the book, it is good we recognize Joshua is a book of prophecy in spite of it looking so much like just a story of how events of a certain time looked. Thus, when we look at the years the book covers, it is important we understand, just like later times, prophets overlapped in time. I think so often we read the Bible and find ourselves thinking God sent this prophet to work at this specific time, and then sent this other prophet later when Israel had different or more trouble that needed spoken about. However, that is not the case. There were many of the prophets we have books in the Bible from that overlapped each other in time. Aside from that, there is the truth, at any particular time there could be any number of prophets doing work in Israel! God is constantly attempting to speak to men, and especially to His chosen nation, because through them God was greatly speaking to the world! So what we see in having books we look at as history, like Kings and Chronicles, is that prophets who did not get a book named after them (at least that were preserved) shows up from time to time.

Does the fact they did not get a book named after them mean they are truly the minor of minor prophets? Not at all! Some of these prophets did who knows how much instructing of the king and/or others, but those words just are not necessary to be recorded for future reference. One of the things I've always said about putting out surveys or comment cards for a business or ministry is that people will often put in complaints. However, for everyone who bothers to put in a complaint about something you are doing wrong, there are probably many who experienced the same problem and did not bother to tell you about it. Along with that, there is the further point that what you see so little of is people taking time to put in good comments when things are going smoothly or for the things you do right and well! In many businesses, when things are going smooth people simply get what they want and are on their way as they would expect to be. All this shows us the human nature that caused God to have prophets constantly at work in Israel.

The people of Israel were often unhappy about something they thought was wrong, and God had to send a prophet to tell them they were, in fact, on course and should stay the way they were. There were many other times the nation believed they were on the right path because they were comfortable and God had to send prophets to tell them they were not. Of course, there are also those times people called upon the name of The Lord because they knew things were not right, and God would send a prophet to guide them. One or more of these reasons is what we mostly find spurring God sending the prophets we see books about or who are recorded in other books as doing a work. As much as there are many other prophets who came for the same reason(s) that we are not told about, much less have a whole book of their words and actions, there is another reason prophets came. There were those times the nation did not have much of anything off course and things were going smoothly. A majority of people had the correct thoughts about where God wanted them to be as a nation, and the nation was in that path. These are the quiet times that when we read the Bible we simply skip over and don't think much about the gap, or maybe we never are told anything about, because Israel was simply doing as they

should.

By no means does the Bible give us a year by year account of the nation, but even with all this being true that does not mean God did not have prophets at work. In fact, the work of those prophets often had to do with why the nation was on track. Prophets were there to actively keep things moving smoothly by teaching the people and making minor corrections to their day by day way of living their lives as the chosen nation. So the end point of all this is simply that just like the ministry today, there were many prophets at work throughout Israel at any given time. Their work was not glamorous, it would not get recorded in any detail for the future, but it was just as important as any prophet that was recorded. Those prophets that were recorded were told to us because it had bearing on our overall understanding of why a chosen nation of God that should have looked a certain way through all the centuries did/does not look that way. We needed to see their failures so we could see our own. Why? Because while God created a specific chosen nation, we are all God's chosen people. The simple question is, do we want to serve The God Who created us?

So why do I bring all that up in talking about how much time the Book of Joshua covers? It's because in relative terms Israel was a small and very compact nation at its beginnings. Sure it was a lot of people, but during the days of Moses they were traveling as a group. Moses was the prophet they needed and was close to all that was necessary at the time. That said, there was a time Moses' father-in-law showed him how he was taking on too much, and for secular matters of judgment other men were chosen to help. (Ex. 18:13-26) There was also the time Moses himself said it was all too much, and God actually put a portion of Moses' job on a specific number of other men in Israel. (Num. 11:10-30) Now, when Joshua took over he took the position Moses had filled, so he too mostly stood in that same circumstance. This makes him and Moses look a lot like true kings of the nation for the time. However, what we see in the later years of Joshua is that he was not the only one who did even the job it seemed he held. This became especially true as the nation got more and more settled on the land and the people started living more normal lives. Thus, during the later part of the Book of Joshua there is actually overlap with some of the judges, the stories of which are not told until we get to the Book of Judges!

All this, I say just to give some perspective because we can make the time span of the book simple by looking at Joshua's death. In doing that, what we see for the Book of Joshua is about fifty years between when he takes over to when he dies. Joshua's death is recorded in the last chapter of the book, so that is the bulk of time the book covers. However, the last chapter attempts to include a bit more finishing details, like the death of Aaron's son Eleazar. These are those obvious facts that were written by someone else besides Joshua, but what this means is the last chapter of Joshua all by itself covers about ten years. This simply shows us if we go from chapter 1 verse 1 to chapter 24 verse 33 the Book of Joshua covers a span of sixty years.

Let's stay in God's Word!