

HOPE FOR THE FALLEN

The God of Genesis, not the Genesis of God

Genesis 4-12

In
The Bible Notebook Series

By
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DEDICATION

To

The Pioneers of the
Creation Science Movement

*From Henry Morris and
The Institute for Creation Research*

*To Classroom Teachers and Pastors
Who Are Faithful to the Genesis Account*

NOTE

PLEASE!!!

This hardly qualifies as a first draft, not to speak of a finished product. **This is basically what the title claims - my Bible Notebook.** If the Lord gives me the time and opportunity, I would like to go back at a later date and do some serious work on both Volumes I and II of this study of Genesis 1-12. **I rushed to finish this for the Winter Bible Conference in 2002.**

This is an especially appropriate and timely study in light of the terrorists attacks on 9-11 (September 11, 2001). Since that time the American media has been scrambling to portray Islam in a positive light. This pagan religion is portrayed by the American media as a religion of peace, when it is everything but a religion of peace. Christians have been persecuted, killed, and enslaved by radical Muslims for a long time. The Clinton Administration looked the other way when Christians tried to get their attention with reports of the persecution of Christians by Islamic fundamentalists. Now, the media seems to have adopted Islam as its favored religion, while doing everything within its power to suppress Christianity.

Our response as Christians should be to pray for the salvation of Muslims around the world. We should also pray for the salvation of others caught in a web of false religion. In many cases, Christians need a starting place to witness to those of another faith. The name, "Jesus" is as offensive to many groups as the and the title, "Christ." For that reason, a good starting place in witnessing to an atheist, an agnostic, a New Ager, or to a member of a false religion may well be the Genesis account of Creation. This is exactly what Paul did in his famous sermon on Mars Hill (Acts 17).

Many Christians are going to have a problem with my notes on Creation and the Flood. They have been so thoroughly indoctrinated with the ungodly gospel of evolution, or with some compromise theory about origins that they cannot accept the simple Creation narrative of Genesis. This is sad, because Genesis is the open door to the entire Bible, the foundation Book of the Bible. We must know and accept the Book of Genesis as the perfect revelation of Almighty God if we are to appreciate, and comprehend the rest of the Bible.

If you do not have Genesis 1 you do not need John 1, and if you do not have Genesis 3 you do not need John 3. Not only is the foundation for our redemption found in the Book of Genesis, the foundation for our morality is laid in this Book of beginnings. May our Lord bless your study of this essential part of the Word of God.

INTRODUCTION

This is the second volume in the Bible Notebook Series on Genesis 1-11, prepared for the Winter Bible Conference scheduled for the winter of 2002 in Southern Baptist Churches. Volume I deals with the first three chapters of the Book of Beginnings. The first chapter covers the miraculous, supernatural creation of the world and all that is in it by the Uncaused Cause of all that exists. For years I was exposed to the theory of evolution through public education, the news media, and publications like the Reader's Digest and the National Geographic. Novelists and historians assume that scientists have proved evolution. The host of the very popular the television program, *The Crocodile Hunter*, smiles into the camera and affirms that the turtle, shark or alligator he is showing us has remained unchanged for millions of years.

Evolutionists have done such a good job with their propaganda that hundreds of millions of people in the world are convinced that evolution has been proved scientifically. They have been so successful that even in Bible colleges and theological seminaries professors have been so indoctrinated in evolution that they often teach some compromise theory. After all, they believe in God - they believe God created the world in the beginning, but since scientists have proved that life evolved over a period of millions, or billions of years, each day of creation must have represented millions, or billions of years. The two primary compromise theories are the Day/age theory, just mentioned, and the Gap theory, which holds that God created the heavens and the earth, and then left it "void" to evolve over billions of years before He created living things.

There are certain things the student of the Word of God should remember when approaching Genesis. First, as stated in Volume I, if you spell God with a capital "G" you should have no problem with special creation. If God wanted to create the world in seven twenty-four hour days He could do just that. Those who reject God cannot accept special creation, though some have gone on record as admitting that the evidence supports special creation. Seminary and Bible college professors, and Sunday School teachers who feel that they have vindicated God by saying that He created the heavens and the earth and then created the earliest life forms and then withdrew to watch it evolve over billions of years should consider the implications of imposing such limitations and restraints on God. They subscribe to an incredibly inefficient process.

YAHWEH God, The LORD God of Genesis, is the supernatural Creator of all that exists. This writer assumes that the divinely inspired account recorded by Moses in the early chapters of Genesis is exactly what God wants us to understand. If He had wanted us to believe any other theory He could just as easily inspired Moses to give us a different account.

Before someone assumes that since I am a God called preacher of the Word I am compelled to accept special creation by faith, let me stress that I do not apologize for my faith in God or His Word. However, after some thirty years of study, I am convinced that the available evidence supports special creation rather than evolution. Genesis 4-11 is built on that foundation, just as all the rest of the Bible is built on the foundation of the Book of Genesis. So, we need to get it right here if we are to keep the rest of the Bible in perspective.

III. THE GENESIS OF CIVILIZATION, 4:1-5:32

A Cain and His Descendants, 4:1-24

Chapter 4 records the spread of godless society. Man's early rebellion against God affirms his depravity, and illustrates the effects of the Fall on society. Here we see the record of Cain and his descendants who did not obey and

who destroyed the godly and denied his responsibility and culpability for it. The ungodly here are portrayed as living on in the world (with a protective mark of grace; cf. comments on v. 15) without being saved. Their sense of guilt was eased by their cultural development and their geographical expansion.

Under Moses' leadership Israel would move into a world of cultures. Civilizations with music, art, industry, and enterprise would be on every side. These would be antagonistic to Israel, and would help cause God's people to reject the sacrifices and live as cursed people. Israel needed to be warned against such arrogant opposition.

In the story of Cain and Abel the seed of the woman met the seed of the serpent (3:15). Cain fell to the prey of the crouching evil and eventually went out to form a godless society, rejecting God's way. The "way of Cain" (Jude 11), then, is a lack of faith which shows itself in envy of God's dealings with the righteous, in murderous acts, in denial of responsibility, and in refusal to accept God's punishment [BKC].

4:1 - THE MAN. *"Now the man had relations with his wife Eve, and she conceived and gave birth to Cain, and she said, 'I have gotten a manchild with the help of the LORD.'" Warren Wiersbe sees a connection between God's promise in 3:15 and Adam's faith in 3:20 and that which is revealed in 4:1.*

Eve brought new life into the world, and she thought her child was the promised Seed. "I have gotten a man—the Lord!" is a possible translation. "Cain" means "acquired"—the baby boy was looked upon as a gift from God. Abel means "vanity, vapor"—it suggests the futility of life apart from God, or perhaps Eve's disappointment that Cain was not the promised Seed. From the very beginning, we see a division of work: as Cain is identified with the ground, Abel with the flock. God had already cursed the ground (3:17), so Cain is identified with that curse [WW].

"The man" of course is Adam. "Had relations with" denotes a sexual relationship, which Scripture teaches is God's purpose for man. God's purpose is for sex to be confined to marriage - one man and one woman for life. If all men and women held to that pattern a lot of personal conflicts would be avoided and a lot of the suffering within families could be avoided. Violation of God's will and commandment brings grief, not only to the guilty, but also to innocent victims of their infidelity.

GAVE BIRTH TO CAIN. The name "Cain" (Hebrew, *qayin*) is similar in sound to the verb "I acquired" (*qaniti*), which can also mean "create" (14:19, 22). In The Bible Knowledge Commentary (KBC) the author has observed that:

Cain and **Abel** were played off against each other, reversing the subjects clause after clause. In fact, the entire chapter contrasts them: Cain is mentioned 13 times in verses 1-16. Seven times Abel is mentioned, and three other times “brother” is substituted. Rightly the Apostle John saw murder as a sin against one’s brother (1 John 3:12, 15). The nature of rebellious man unfolds in the person of **Cain** who had an auspicious beginning as the child of hope. But the narrative lines him up with the curse; he **worked the soil** (lit., ground, Gen. 4:2; cf. 3:17) [BKC].

I HAVE GOTTEN...WITH THE HELP OF THE LORD. Eve exclaims that she had “acquired” (or made) a child with the help of the Lord. In fact, every child is made or acquired “with the help of the Lord,” and without Him there would be no life. It is not enough to say that this means that God created Adam and Eve and therefore He is responsible for all their descendants. This states unconditionally that God is responsible for each life. The psalmist was inspired to write:

For You formed my inward parts; You wove me in my mother's womb. I will give thanks to You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Wonderful are Your works, And my soul knows it very well. My frame was not hidden from You, When I was made in secret, And skillfully wrought in the depths of the earth; Your eyes have seen my unformed substance; And in Your book were all written The days that were ordained for me, When as yet there was not one of them. How precious also are Your thoughts to me, O God! How vast is the sum of them! (Ps. 139:13-17).

The word “formed” means to acquire by creation. “My frame” denotes the skeletal structure; and “the depth of the earth” is an allusion to the womb. “Skillfully wrought” carries the idea of weaving (embroidering) together. “My unformed substance” points to the substance formed at conception, from the earliest cells through the development of the and growth until the embryo takes on the form of a human being. And we now understand that the statement, “in Your book were all written The days that were ordained for me, When as yet there was not one of them” points to the DNA.

4:2 - ABEL. “*Again, she gave birth to his brother Abel. And Abel was a keeper of flocks, but Cain was a tiller of the ground.*” This may be translated simply, “And she again bare his brother Abel.” Literally, Clarke points out, it reads, “She added to bear his brother.” Based on this translation, Clarke believes Cain and Abel were twins. He reasons thusly:

From the very face of this account it appears evident that Cain and Abel were twins. In most cases where a subject of this kind is introduced in the Holy Scriptures, and the successive births of children of the same parents are noted, the acts of conceiving and bringing forth are mentioned in reference to each child; here it is not said that she conceived and brought forth Abel, but simply she added to bring forth Abel his brother; that is, as I understand it, Cain was the first-born, Abel, his twin brother, came next [CLARKE].

As is often the case in the Bible, a lot of history is stated very concisely. Abel can either mean “breath” or “vanity.” If had “breath” in mind she may have been recalling that God created Adam and “breathed into him the breath of life.” If she was thinking of “vanity” her thoughts would no doubt have been on the “curse.”

Every word of Scripture is precious, no space is wasted. When we are given the information that Abel kept sheep and Cain tilled the ground, it is not surprising that this introduces something of importance. But before we go on to the next verse, we would do well to observe that in this verse we see the two earliest occupations or professions, farming and animal husbandry. Why did Abel tend sheep while Cain grew produce? Was it that Abel loved sheep (or cattle) and Cain did not. Or is it possible that Cain hated working with livestock but loved tilling the soil, growing fruit and vegetables? Is it not also possible that there was a need for both the livestock and the produce - Cain provided the produce for the family and Abel provided milk and meat? Possibly Cain and Abel bartered with each other. What is obvious is that God gave one an interest in tilling the soil (growing produce) and the other in animals.

2:3 - CAIN BROUGHT AN OFFERING. *“So it came about in the course of time that Cain brought an offering to the LORD of the fruit of the ground.”* Before we deal with the offering, it might be of interest to consider the significance of “in the course of time.” Does this mean that after a period of time it dawned on Cain that he should bring an offering to God, or does this imply that this is something that Adam, Eve, and their sons did at regular intervals? At this point the written account does not tell us that God had ordered such offerings. However, it does not take much imagination to assume that God instructed His creations to worship Him, or that they sensed a need to worship Him.

This earliest family must have known a definite place for worship, for both sons brought offerings to the Lord. It may be that the glory of God tabernacled at the tree of life, with the way guarded by the cherubim (3:24). Hebrews 11:4 indicates that Abel brought his offering by faith; and Rom. 10:17 teaches that “faith comes by hearing, (NKJV).” This means that God must have taught Adam and his family how to approach Him, and 3:21 indicates that sacrifice of blood was involved. Hebrews 9:22 states that there must be the shedding of blood before there can be the remission of sin, but Cain brought a bloodless offering from the cursed earth. His offering may have been sincere, but it was not accepted. He had no faith in God’s Word or dependence on the sacrifice of a substitute. God probably “answered by fire” (Lev. 9:24) and burned up Abel’s offering, but Cain’s offering lay there on the altar [WW].

OF THE FRUIT OF THE GROUND. We are not told that there was anything wrong with bringing to God an offering from the produce of the ground. It is interesting that commentaries agree that “a bloodless offering was not necessarily inappropriate” [RSB]; or that they cite the Mosaic Law (Lev. 2:1, 4, 14, 15; or Ex. 13:2, 12; Lev. 3:16; 22:17-25). However, we must remember that the Levitical Law concerning blood offerings had not been given, and would not be given for centuries.

Cain had a form of godliness and religion, but he denied the power (2 Tim. 3:5). First John 3:12 indicates that Cain was a child of the devil, and this means he practiced a false righteousness of the flesh, not the righteousness of God through faith. Jesus called the self-righteous Pharisees “children of the devil” and blamed their kind for the death of Abel (Luke. 11:37-51). Jude 11 talks about “the way of Cain,” which is the way of religion without blood, religion based on religious good works and self-righteousness. There are only two religions in the world today: (1) that of Abel that depends on the blood of Christ and His finished work on the cross; and (2) that of Cain that depends on good works and man-pleasing religion. One leads to heaven, the other to hell! [WW].

This is a significant event in the history of mankind. It is a shame there were no television reports around to stick a microphone in Cain face and ask, “Mr. Cain, what were you thinking when you brought your offering?” The simple fact is, we can only assume certain things from the context. The New Commentary on the Whole Bible (NCWB) notes that:

Both manifested, by the very act of offering a sacrifice, faith in God and in his claims to their reverence and worship; and had the kind of offering been left to themselves, what more natural than that the one should bring “of the fruits of the ground,” and that the other should bring “of the firstlings of his flock and the fat thereof.” If the sequence of the story is significant, Cain’s preceded his brother’s [NCWB].

4:4 - ABEL...BROUGHT. *“Abel, on his part also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of their fat portions. And the LORD had regard for Abel and for his offering.”* It would be interesting to know if Cain and Abel brought their offerings at the same time, and to the same place, and if they worshiped with Adam and Eve. We are simply not given this information. It would also be interesting to know if they were ordered to come at regular intervals to bring offerings to the Lord. **THE FIRSTLINGS OF HIS FLOCK.** The reader here must infer that, since there was no commandment at this time prohibiting one from offering a bloodless offering, the issue was the heart and mind of the worshiper. Abel brought the best that he had to offer to the Lord. One commentary speculates that Abel

seems to be lined up with man’s original purpose, to have dominion over life (cf. 1:28); he **kept flocks**. These coincidental descriptions are enhanced with their actions in worship. **Abel** went out of his way to please God (which meant he had faith in God, Heb. 11:6), whereas **Cain** was simply discharging a duty. Abel’s actions were righteous, whereas Cain’s were evil (1 John 3:12). These two types of people are still present. Cain’s lack of faith shows up in his response to God’s rejection of his offering of fruit (Gen. 4:5). Rather than being concerned about remedying the situation and pleasing God, he was very angry [BKC].

THEIR FAT PORTIONS. By “their” are we to conclude that Abel brought more than one lamb (or other animal), or that from time to time he brought the “fat portions” of his lambs to offer to

God? What we do know is that Abel brought the best part (fat portions) of his animal to present it to God, and I would like to think that he did this continually.

4:5 - BUT FOR CAIN. *“But for Cain and for his offering He had no regard. So Cain became very angry and his countenance fell.”* Little words tell a big story. For example, the possessive pronoun one uses in referring to God reveals everything about his relationship the Savior. If one can say, “my” God it suggests a personal relationship, but if he must say, “his” or “their” God, one must assume that there is no personal relationship with the Lord. The little word, “but” here tells a powerful story as it contrasts Cain’s offering with that of Abel. Preachers often explain that Abel brought a blood offering and Cain did not. They may have a point, but at this point we are not told that this was the issue. What seems far more likely here is that there was a problem with Cain’s attitude. Whereas Abel habitually brought to God the best he had to offer, Cain manifested an attitude that displeased God.

It is possible that Cain did not really want to go to the trouble bring God his best, or that he resented God’s demanding the best of his produce. It is also possible that he might have considered the whole business an inconvenience or even a nuisance. The one thing we can be sure of is that God rejected Cain’s offering because of the value Cain placed on the worship.

4:6 - THE LORD SAID TO CAIN. *“Then the LORD said to Cain, “Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen?”* Just as Yahweh (transliterated into English, Jehovah) spoke to Adam and Eve when they sinned, he spoke to Cain. If one is listening, God is still speaking, clearly, decisively, and consistently, both through His holy Scriptures and through the Holy Spirit.

Cain's jealousy and anger determined his decision to kill his brother. These sinful emotions erupted when God accepted Abel's sacrifice but did not look with favor upon Cain's. Nothing in the passage would lead one to assume that Cain was in any way coerced into killing his brother. He had to bear responsibility for his sinful jealousy and anger and for the resulting sinful act. He could not blame his parents. No matter how unjust life appears to be or how badly our ancestors handled life, we cannot lay our sin on someone else's shoulders. Each of us must bear responsibility for our own personal sinful actions [DSB].

The Lord asked Cain two questions: “Why are you angry?” “Why has your countenance fallen?” This is not simply a poetic Hebraism in which one line is given and then a second which amplifies it. First, there is anger. If anger is not dealt with in the right manner, it will soon register on one’s face. The root of the word anger in Hebrew has to burn or to be kindled with anger. If indeed, anger is not brought under control as it is kindled, as it begins to burn, the angry person may well be consumed by his anger. One may move from irritation, to anger, to fury, which is what happened here..

The word translated countenance points to the face, denoting the appearance. When anger is kindled others may not notice it at first, but as it begins to burn, if left unchecked, others will soon see

it in the individual's eyes and in his facial expression. In some cases, the angry person wants others to know he is angry: "That really burns me up!" He assumes an expression that shows others that he is angry. My wife Becky has dealt with this for thirty years in elementary school, having taught first and third grades a number of years ago, but for many years sixth grade language arts. She has dealt with anger in the classroom and on the playground.

Becky has dealt with the boy who intimidates playmates, and even his parents with his exhibition of anger. When he becomes angry he wants to intimidate other people. Once when our older son stopped by her classroom it gave her an opportunity to tell some let her boys know that they could not intimidate her. John was almost six feet tall and weighed over two hundred pounds and everyone in highschool was aware of his tremendous strength. She asked her class, "Did you see my son? If I am not afraid of him, I am certainly not afraid of you." Teachers often see this kind of anger in a boy whose father has abandoned him. It can be very difficult for a mother to deal with a rebellious boy when gets taller and stronger than she, if there is no male influence. He may become angry and deliberately try to intimidate his mother. If he gets away with it at home he may well try to do the same thing with teachers at school. In fact, this is often the case if the teacher is too lenient.

Even though an angry boy may try to look tough or talk tough, he is often brought to tears with discipline. But if he feels that the discipline is just, after he gets over his anger, and embarrassment, he usually puts it out of his mind. It is over. However, when the teacher disciplines a girl she is prepared for a season of pouting, eye rolling, whispering to friends, passing notes, and angry, eye rolling conferences on the play ground. "It's unfair. Susie did the same thing last month and she didn't say anything to her. She's picking on me!" The girl is burning with anger and she wants everyone around her to know she is angry. Why waste one's anger if no one knows it.

If anger is not brought under control quickly it opens the door to a whole plethora of sins, from profanity, to name calling, to rage, to violence. If it is not brought under control, the individual may become so consumed by anger that he will strike out at others. We have seen this played out in modern times in riots in Los Angeles, road rage on the highway, mob violence in the Middle East, and in the escalation of terrorism in the world, climaxed - until now - by the attacks of September 11, 2001 on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon.

A Jewish rabbi explained to Tim Wildmon and Marvin Sanders on AFR radio that religious memory is a lot longer than secular memory. He wondered if the radical Islamic fundamentalism behind those terrorists attacks, and the continuous attacks by Palestinians on Jews might indicate that to them the Crusades happened yesterday.

Charles Haddon Spurgeon, *The Quotable Spurgeon*, (Wheaton: Harold Shaw Publishers, Inc, 1990) said:

The Adige at Verona appears to be a river quite broad and deep enough for navigation, but its current is so rapid as to make it quite unserviceable. Many men are so rash and impetuous, and at the same time so suddenly angry and excited, that their

otherwise most valuable abilities are rendered useless for any good purpose [BI].

Peter Johnson, USA TODAY (4-14-88) asks,

Have you ever noticed that sometimes we get angry and remain bitter with people and actually forget why we're so upset? Take, for example, the notorious Hatfield-McCoy feud.

It hit newspaper front pages in the 1880's, when the Hatfield clan feuded with the McCoy clan from across the border in Kentucky. Historians disagree on the cause of the feud -- which captured the imagination of the nation during a 10-year run. Some cite Civil War tensions: McCoys sympathized with the Union, Hatfields with the Confederacy. Others say it began when the McCoys blamed the Hatfields for stealing hogs. As many as 100 men, women and children died.

In May 1976, Jim McCoy and Willis Hatfield -- the last two survivors of the original families -- shook hands at a public ceremony dedicating a monument to six of the victims.

McCoy died Feb. 11, 1984, at age 99. He bore no grudges -- and had his burial handled by the Hatfield Funeral Home in Toler, KY [BI].

Is it a sin to become angry? Let us see what Paul was inspired to write: "BE ANGRY, AND YET DO NOT SIN; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and do not give the devil an opportunity" (Eph. 4:6-27). Solomon offered inspired counsel:

A fool's anger is known at once, But a prudent man conceals dishonor (Pro. 12:16).

He who is slow to anger has great understanding, But he who is quick-tempered exalts folly (Pro. 14:29).

I do not remember details from my childhood as clearly as some people do, but one thing I remember was a plaque my mother kept on her wall when I was a child. It read: "A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger" (Pro. 15:1).

It never dawned on me that my mother may have sensed that I needed to be reminded of that proverb from time to time. As a matter of fact, she expressed concern about my anger when the Lord Called me to preach the Gospel. Would I be able to control my anger? Over the years, I have had less problem with anger than many other temptations. In my case, anger was brought under the control of the Holy Spirit. When it comes to anger there is great wisdom in the Barny Fife school of thought: "Nip it. Nip it in the bud!" This is a lesson Cain had not learned.

As we see in James 1:15, sin can begin in a small way, or in small things, but if left to grow it can lead to death. Such was the case with Cain. He moves from disappointment, to anger, to jealousy, and finally to murder.

The hatred in his heart led to murder with his hand (Matt. 5:21-26). God saw Cain's faithless heart and fallen countenance and warned him that sin was crouching like a wild beast, waiting to destroy him. God said, "Its desire is for you, but you should rule over it." Alas, Cain fed the wild beast of temptation, then opened the door and invited him in! Cain invited his brother to talk with him, then killed him in cold blood. A child of the devil (1 John 3:12), Cain, like his father, was a liar and a murderer (John 8:44). In chapter 3, we have man sinning against God by disobeying His Word; in chapter 4, we have man sinning against man [WW].

4:7 - IF YOU DO WELL. *"If you do well, will not your countenance be lifted up? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door; and its desire is for you, but you must master it."* A better rendering is, "will you not be exalted?" The translation of this verse has long been a problem for scholars. The Septuagint, which KJV closely follows, suggests that if Cain did the right thing, then he would retain his priority over his younger brother.

SIN CROUCHING AT THE DOOR. The word translated "crouching" might mean that as a wild animal lies in wait, ready to pounce on its prey, which is exactly what sin would do to Cain. Abel's offering was accompanied by faith (Heb. 11:4). "And its desire is for you" should not be separated from the previous verse. The idea is that "sin" is "like a crouching beast hungering for you.' The word 'desire' has negative implications here" [NCWB].

This is theology here, not psychology, but if this principle were widely applied today it might put a lot of psychologists out of business. If you bring your anger under control you will do well and avoid the consequences of out of control temper.

IF YOU DO NOT WELL. The picture of "sin crouching at the door" is a vivid one, and an accurate one. A man shared with me his own story which illustrates this point. He has been to a movie with friends and was walking home several blocks away. They walked by a "record shop" - long before music was bought on CD's - when someone suggested that they break into the shop. This young man stood on the street, waiting for his friends. He did not participate in the break-in or in a theft, but his curiosity got the best of him and he stepped inside to see what they were doing. When his friends were arrested one of them "turned him in" and he was arrested. Seething in anger, he waited for the next opportunity to get even with his former friend. The next time he saw the young man who had turned him in, he walked straight up to him and hit him so hard he knocked his eye out. Then he faced serious problems. He told me that he tried to pray from his cell and discovered that he did not "have a God to pray to." It was at that time that he asked the Lord to forgive him and save him.

YOU MUST MASTER IT. "Cain is promised restored fellowship if he does well; but, if not, the effects of sin are ready to pounce (is crouching) on him. Sin is pictured as a demon ready to pounce on Cain to enslave him" [RSB]. Sadly, Cain made no effort to bring his anger under control.

Cain had to be acceptable according to God's condition. "Sin" (the term *hattah*, Heb.,

appearing here for the first time in the O.T.; see Rom. 7:13, note) is personified as a wild animal, lurking at the door of Cain's life, desiring to enslave him. The Lord urges Cain to overpower and master sin (cf. 1 Cor. 10:13; James 1:14, 15) [BSB].

An angry person may bring his anger under control through self-discipline, through counseling, or through the ministry of the Holy Spirit. Out of control anger is still an invitation to demons. While demons cannot possess a Christian they can certainly influence him and make his life unfruitful, if not downright miserable.

4:8 - CAIN TOLD ABEL HIS BROTHER. *“Cain told Abel his brother. And it came about when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother and killed him.”* The NAS is a literal, word for word translation, but here it needs to be smoothed out a little. The NIV is a phrase for phrase translation, and while it is not as literal, it smooths out the reading here: “Now Cain said to his brother Abel, “Let’s go out to the field.” And while they were in the field, Cain attacked his brother Abel and killed him.”

CAIN ROSE UP AGAINST ABEL. Rejecting the counsel of God, seething in anger, Cain persuaded Abel his brother to go out into the field with him where he killed him. The first murder was a cold, calculated act, a premeditated murder. Why did Cain kill Abel? We find some insight from the Scripture:

For this is the message which you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another; **not as Cain, who was of the evil one and slew his brother.** And for what reason did he slay him? Because his deeds were evil, and his brother's were righteous (1 John 3:11-12, emphasis added).

Cain killed his brother, not just because he was angry, but because he was evil. Why do terrorist indiscriminately kill people they do not know, including women and children? Because they are evil and they are controlled by evil people. President George W. Bush, a born-again Christian, understands that terrorist are evil people and he continually calls them evil. Asked if America would cease bombing the Taliban in Afghanistan during Ramadan, he replied, “Evil men have no holy days.” Here is a dangerous combination, anger and evil. A godly person may become angry “and sin not,” but when an evil person becomes angry there is a strong temptation to act out his anger.

4:9 - WHERE IS ABEL YOUR BROTHER? *“Then the LORD said to Cain, “Where is Abel your brother?” And he said, “I do not know. Am I my brother's keeper?”* This is the second question asked in the Bible; the first was, “Adam, where are you?” Man may sin and then lie about it, but sooner or later he is going to have to answer the God of judgment. The Lord knew where Abel was. Make no mistake about that. He also knew the answers to all those questions he asked Job. But, just as it was important for Job to answer those questions, it was important for Cain to answer God, confess his sin, and receive forgiveness.

Can murderers be forgiven? In Rev. 21:8, we read, “But for the cowardly and unbelieving and

abominable and **murderers** and immoral persons and sorcerers and idolaters and **all liars**, their part will be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death” (emphasis added). This verse not only says that murderers are going to hell, it says that “all” liars are going to hell. Is it any wonder why God hate a lie so much, or why it is he devil’s nature to lie? But, who among us has not lied? Unrepentant liars and murderers will be cast into the lake of fire.

I had just preached in camp for of the Mississippi State Penitentiary in 1959, and the inmates were filing past me as they left the dining hall to go back to their barracks. A young man, not much older than I, paused with a smile on his face and said, “Johnny, when I get out of here I want to serve God.” He was serving a life sentence for murder. When the news broke that Tommy, a carnival worker who was in Jackson, Mississippi for the state fair, had brutally beaten a young woman to death, I felt that I might have an opportunity to witness to him. I took a group of BSU (Baptist Student Union) students from Mississippi College to the Hinds County jail every Thursday afternoon to witness to inmates. I saw the Lord miraculously save Tommy. His comments at the state prison affirmed his commitment to the Lord. I simply reminded him that he did not have to wait until he got out of prison to serve the Lord.

Chaplain Roscoe Hicks at the Mississippi State Penitentiary told me about William Wetzel who was serving a life sentence for murder. Another inmate crossed him and he killed him. This time he was sentenced to death. Before his execution he sent for the chaplain and during their visit he was saved. Wetzel had “the highest IQ of anyone who has ever set foot on the grounds at Parchman,” the chaplain affirmed. He began studying his Bible and amazed the chaplain and others at his comprehension of theology. He asked that his sentence be commuted to life without parole so that he could minister to other prisoners, but the request died on the Lieutenant Governor’s desk (the Governor had been a judge in the case) just before Wetzel died in the gas chamber.

On witness to the execution of William Wetzel told me he had witnessed a number of executions, but he would never witness another one. The chaplain told me about the tears he saw in the eyes of the executioner, the first time he had seen that. Other witnesses were convinced that this man should have been spared to work with other prisoners. There was no doubt in the chaplain’s mind that William Wetzel went to heaven. I remember thinking what shame it was that Wetzel’s life could not have been spared so that he could reach out to other inmates, and at the same time I absolutely support the death penalty. The same Bible that teaches, “You shall do no murder,” also demands that the organized government, the state, execute those who commit premeditated murder. But I certainly take no pleasure in it.

4:10 - THE VOICE OF YOUR BROTHER’S BLOOD. *“He said, ‘What have you done? The voice of your brother’s blood is crying to Me from the ground.’”* One might speculate about the possibility that Cain, “to lull suspicion, was probably engaging in the rituals of religion when he was challenged directly by God himself” [NCWB]. There is no speculation about the fact that there is in the first murder a cry for vengeance and justice. The first murder was a fratricide - a brother killing a brother, and even though Abel was the only one around to kill, other than their parents, it was a particularly heinous sin. The Lord knew exactly what Cain had done, but asked, “What have you

done?" This is not idle chatter. In 1 John 1:9 we are counseled to confess our sins - "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." The word for "confess" (Gr., *homologos*) means of one mind; to speak the same, to agree; to acknowledge. That is what the Lord is inviting Cain to do. But there was no remorse in him.

4:11 - YOU ARE CURSED. *"Now you are cursed from the ground, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand."* This curse adds to the original curse following Adam's sin. Man under sin is a man under a curse. We live in a day in which many people have lost their sense of justice. No matter how horrendous the crime, these people lose sight of the heinous nature of the crime and the suffering of the victim, embrace some theme or slogan from pop-psychology and excuse the criminal on the basis of some problem which they may trace back to his childhood.

Within days of the terrorists' attacks in New York and Washington D. C., there were peace demonstrations in various places protesting President Bush's war on terrorism. The cries went out, "Give peace a chance." Never mind the fact that evidence proves that the people behind the terrorists had planned similar attacks in Boston, Houston, Dallas and other cities. Forget the evidence that reveals plans to release deadly smallpox or anthrax germs in heavily populated areas, deadly chemicals in the water supply of major cities, and various other acts of mass murder.

The holiness of God demands justice: "But let justice roll down like waters And righteousness like an ever-flowing stream" (Amos 5:25). In Amos 6:12, the Lord charged, "Yet you have turned justice into poison and the fruit of righteousness into wormwood..." Divine justice demands punishment for sin - in fact, the Bible teaches that "the wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6:23). It is only by the grace of God that anyone will escape the justice of God.

Cain suffered less than he deserved for his murder of Abel. God had warned Cain earlier about his attitude (4:6-7). No human witnessed and punished Cain's crime. God noted it as He does all crime. Eventually all criminals must face God's judgment no matter how well they escape human punishment [DSB].

4:12 - WHEN YOU CULTIVATE THE GROUND. "When you cultivate the ground, it will no longer yield its strength to you; you will be a vagrant and a wanderer on the earth." The curse involves two things:

- (1) Cain would have difficulty extracting the fruit of the soil; and
- (2) he would become a "fugitive" from God, living a nomadic life [BSB].

The curse pronounced against Cain "was in some sense retributive, as it sprang from the soil which had received his brother's blood. The particulars of it are the withdrawal of the full strength or fruitfulness of the soil from him, and the degradation from the state of a settled dweller in the presence of God to that of a vagabond in the earth" [BARNES]. He was to be banished to a less

productive part of the earth, “removed from the presence of God and the society of his father and mother, and abandoned to a life of wandering and uncertainty. The sentence of death had been already pronounced upon man” [BARNES].

4:13 - TOO MUCH TO BEAR. *“Cain said to the LORD, “My punishment is too great to bear!”* Is it not interesting that Cain’s response was not, “Father, forgive me for I have sinned”? There is no remorse for Abel and no repentance before God, only self-pity. He is only concerned for himself. His is an overwhelming sense of misery! Yet he shows no sign of penitence, and makes no request for pardon. “He is only concerned about his punishment. But in reality the sentence was a light one. Why was his life not taken? Apparently because no specific prohibition against murder with an appropriate sentence had been given. That would come later (Gen. 9:6)” [NCWB].

4:14 - YOU HAVE DRIVEN ME. *“Behold, You have driven me this day from the face of the ground; and from Your face I will be hidden, and I will be a vagrant and a wanderer on the earth, and whoever finds me will kill me.”* Cain at least understood that it was God who was driving him out from where he had settled into a land where he would wander as a nomad. He also understood that his unconfessed sin had cut him off from God’s presence and to a degree from His protection.

A WANDERER AND VAGRANT. It would be interesting to know what Cain knew about a nomadic lifestyle. He had never seen a “vagrant,” but he knew that he was cursed with that lifestyle for the rest of his life.

WHOEVER FINDS ME WILL KILL ME. This is especially interesting. First, there are only three people on the face of the earth now that he has killed his brother Abel. Only he and his parents remain. Was he worried that they would kill him? No, but he understood that Adam and Eve would have other children and that there would be marriages and children would be born to those marriages. The one who might try to kill him would be a brother or a nephew.

In the second place, why would Cain assume that anyone he encountered might try to kill him? The logical answer is that he knew what was in his own heart. He understood the heart of a murderer.

To summarize Cain’s speech, we may look to Clarke, who ties verses 11-12 to Cain’s response in verses 13-14. In verses 11, 12, God states two parts of Cain’s punishment:

1. The ground was cursed, so that it was not to yield any adequate recompense for his most careful tillage.
2. He was to be a fugitive and a vagabond having no place in which he could dwell with comfort or security.

To these Cain himself adds others.

1. His being hidden from the face of God; which appears to signify his being expelled from that particular place where God had manifested his presence in or contiguous to Paradise, whither our first parents resorted as to an oracle, and where they offered their daily adorations. So in Genesis 4:16, it is said, Cain went out from the presence

of the Lord, and was not permitted any more to associate with the family in acts of religious worship.

2. The continual apprehension of being slain, as all the inhabitants of the earth were at that time of the same family, the parents themselves still alive, and each having a right to kill this murderer of his relative. Add to all this,

3. The terrors of a guilty conscience; his awful apprehension of God's judgments, and of being everlastingly banished from the beatific vision. To this part of the punishment of Cain St. Paul probably alludes, 2 Thessalonians 1:9: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power. The words are so similar that we can scarcely doubt of the allusion [CLARKE].

4:15 - WHOEVER KILLS CAIN. *"So the LORD said to him, "Therefore whoever kills Cain, vengeance will be taken on him sevenfold." And the LORD appointed a sign for Cain, so that no one finding him would slay him."* Even in God's judgment there is mercy. "Cain's complaint is not only that he would be hidden from the face of God, but also that as a fugitive from the justice and wrath of God, he would be more susceptible to the wrath of the population at large" [BSB].

A SIGN. Scholars disagree on the "sign" which "the Lord appointed for Cain." For example, the Believer's Study Bible Notes states that "God put a mark on Cain to identify him: (1) to show that vengeance belongs to God, and (2) to prove the faithfulness of God's grace and mercy to sinful man" [BSB]. Leupold takes issue with that position:

Now when the question is raised, "wherein did this 'sign' consist?" it is usually regarded as a "mark" set upon him... But this assumption overlooks the fact that the text does not say that 'God set a mark *in* or *on* Cain (Hebrew, *be*) but *for* Cain (Hebrew *le*), marking a dative or interest or advantage. Consequently, we are rather to think of some sign that God allowed to appear for Cain's reassurance, "a sign of guaranty" or a pledge or token [HCL: 211].

This would not be the only time God would use a sign to guarantee some unusual promise to an individual. Compare this with (1) Gideon, Judges 6:36-40; and (2) Elisha, 2 Kings 2:9-12. God gave a sign to reassure Cain. Leupold states that there is no reason that Cain went about as a marked man for the rest of his life [HCL: 211]. Anyway, the Hebrew word does not mean "mark."

One other point seems especially relevant here, and that is the simple fact that no mention is made of execution as punishment for Cain. The OT clearly demands the execution of murderers, yet the first murderer is not condemned to death. Various reasons have been proposed, including the suggestion that banishment was a fate worse than death. Space will not be taken up with conjecture here, but it seems sufficient to note that God is Sovereign and He can do exactly what He chooses to do. Perhaps the fact that Cain was a part of the second generation on earth and his banishment and the wandering to which he was condemned would be a stronger warning. It may also be significant that Cain's sin came a long time before the giving of the commandment, "Thou shalt not kill."

The author of the notes in the Disciple's Study Bible comments on this passage:

History according to secular definitions is limited to description of human activities and interpretation of human causes and motivations. Biblical history centers on divine motivation by focusing on promises God gives people and fulfills for them. The promise to Cain led to geographic and cultural expansion of the human race. It also led to history carried out without concern for God's presence. History thus has two types of subjects--those who move away from God and those who call on God. The interaction of the two form the basis for divine deliverance of His people [DSB].

4:16 - CAIN WENT OUT. *Then Cain went out from the presence of the LORD, and settled in the land of Nod, east of Eden.* The expressions, "Went out from the presence of the Lord" (here); "driven forth from the ground" (vs. 11); and "You have driven me this day from the face of the ground; and from Your face I will be hidden" (vs. 14) all speak of the same thing.

NOD. No "land of Nod" has ever been identified. Some suggested that it was located somewhere in Mesopotamia. Leupold, on the other hand, says Nod signifies "the land of wandering or straying." He holds that because of the nature of the curse upon him Cain was simply condemned to ceaseless wanderings" [HCL: 213].

4:17 - CAIN HAD RELATIONS. *"Cain had relations with his wife and she conceived, and gave birth to Enoch; and he built a city, and called the name of the city Enoch, after the name of his son."* It is interesting to note how various translators deal with the issue of sexual relations here. The NKJV follow the Authorized Version (AV, or KJV): "And Cain knew his wife, and she conceived and bore Enoch." The NIV renders it, "Cain lay with his wife, and she became pregnant and gave birth to Enoch." Many people were surprised, and some not a little shocked when the word "pregnant" first appeared in a translation of the Bible. As a matter of fact, when I was in high school I do not recall hearing the word used in a mixed group.

HIS WIFE. Where did Cain get his wife? I have often been amazed at the ignorance displayed by someone who hears this question and cannot wait for an opportunity to "stump" someone who tries to witness to him. It is as though he is in position of new information that will blow the preacher out of the saddle and forever cast doubt on Scripture. Little does he realize how many times that question has been recycled, and how time-worn it really is. Someone asked the late R. G. Lee that question once, "Dr. Lee, do you know where Cain got his wife?" In his rich southern drawl that held so many audiences spellbound, this brilliant and most articulate preacher of the Word responded, "No, but if she suited Cain she suits me." Someone else responded to the same question, "You would do well to look after your own wife and leave Cain's to him."

The answer to the question is very obvious: Cain married his sister, a daughter of Adam and Eve (5:4), even though some have suggested that she "may have been Cain's sister, niece, or even grandniece" [RSB], based on the fact that Adam lived nine hundred, thirty years, eight hundred years after the birth of Seth. He and Eve had many sons and daughters after the birth of Seth. I personally

believe he married his sister. To answer another objection, there was nothing wrong with the marriage of a brother and sister during the second generation of human beings on earth. They inherited a perfect genetic system, with no mutant genes - there would have been no DNA problem at the time. This was not an incestuous relationship, forbidden by any law, certainly not the divine law.

ENOCH. The name “Enoch” means “consecration” or “initiation,” and here it denotes a new beginning for Cain. However, it was a new beginning without God.

CITY. The city was named “Enoch” after Cain’s son. This, of course, was not a major city in the modern sense of the word, but a permanent settlement, a town or village. It is possible that Cain had forgotten that he was under a curse to be a wanderer or nomad for the rest of his life. Is it possible that he sought to cancel or neutralize God’s curse on him (v. 12)?

We need to pay close attention to the genealogy of Cain. Man was not the product of millions of years of evolution, only to find himself beginning to stand upright on two legs, with arms swinging down by his knees, wondering how he would invent fire. While Solomon was blessed with mind-boggling wisdom many centuries later, it is my personal opinion that Adam may well have ranked among the most brilliant people ever to inhabit the planet. As a matter of fact, in some ways he may have been the most brilliant. For one thing, his Teacher was infallible, inerrant, and omniscient. Adam was never taught errors, he never learned biases. That is not to say that he never needed to be de-programmed because of faulty reasoning - remember the fig leaves?

In this passage, verses 17-24, we find a record of Cain’s descendants. We will see that they were not worshipers of Yahweh. Far from being cave men, many of them were blessed with incredible skills (vv. 21, 22), but their sins rapidly proliferated. “The first evidence of polygamy appeared with Lamech (v. 19), who also not only committed murder but was boastful and arrogant about it (vv. 23, 24)” [BSB]. Some students of Genesis focus, not on the sins of Cain’s descendants, but on their accomplishments.

The rebellious line of Cain is portrayed as making great advances in various areas of civilization. Rather than being an indication of the evil nature of civilization, testimony is made of the great potential of all humans. Human accomplishment is not necessarily to be measured by the spirituality of a person. On the other hand, many great accomplishments are prostituted by those who lack the spiritual character to use them properly and who turn them to evil purposes [DSB].

4:18 - TO ENOCH WAS BORN. “*Now to Enoch was born Irad, and Irad became the father of Mehujael, and Mehujael became the father of Methushael, and Methushael became the father of Lamech.*” In this verse we are introduced to the first of many lists of “begets” (KJV) in the Bible. It is interesting that the name Mehujael means “smitten of God,” while Methushael means “man of God.” Given the significance of the meaning of names in the OT, one wonders if Irad was remembering the curse when he gave Mehujael his name, or if Mehujael was committing his son to the Lord when he named him Methushael.

4:19 - LAMECH. *“Lamech took to himself two wives: the name of the one was Adah, and the name of the other, Zillah.”* Bigamy, introduced here for the first time, was a clearly a violation of God’s plan for the family.

Leonard Sweet (*Soul Care*, Broadman and Holman, Nashville, 1998, pp. 180), caught my attention with the statement, “In typical postmodern fashion, where opposite things happen at the same time without being contradictory, Christians today need to build stronger family life while at the same time not make family into a new idolatry” [SWEET: 28]. When I read that statement I could not help agreeing, and at the same time wondering where Sweet has spent the last twenty-five years. The family is coming apart at the seems in America. Americans have not made the family the latest idol on the scene, but that is not to say that the author does not make a valid a point, for there have always been people who put their family ahead of God. It seems to me that Sweet was taking a cut at James Dopson - in fact he says that “the church needs to ‘focus on the family’ (as one organization puts it)” SWEET: 28]. He goes on to quote theologian Janet Fishburn with regards to out “elevating an idealized version of the family over and above God.” Continuing, Fishburn concludes, “Yet the Bible is clear: Nothing must come between God and us or before our faith in God” [SWEET: 29].

So far, I am following Sweet, but wondering where he is going with this. Then I read the following sentence: “In his must-read book *Sacred Cows Make Gourmet Burgers*, Bill Easum writes, ‘Family is never a priority issue in the Scripture. It is mentioned only six times in the New Testament and never in relation to a congregation’ [SWEET: 29]. I began writing notes in the margin! Instead of saying that the family is mentioned “only six times in the New Testament,” I would say, “Family is mentioned six times in the New Testament, but there are many other allusions to the family in the NT.” Furthermore, the book of Genesis lays a foundation for the family, and the rest of the Bible is built on that foundation. I have another “must-read” book for Sweet - try Proverbs!

4:20 - THE FATHER OF THOSE. *“Adah gave birth to Jabal; he was the father of those who dwell in tents and have livestock.”* Little commentary is needed as far as the genealogy is concerned, but we should not overlook the importance of statement that Jabal introduced tent dwelling to mankind, and that he lifted animal husbandry to a new level. Abel had tended livestock, but the mention of it here might suggest new discoveries in breeding, care, and use of livestock.

4:21 - JUBAL. *“His brother's name was Jubal; he was the father of all those who play the lyre and pipe.”* Jubal, like Jabal, was the son of Lamech and Adah. Jubal invented both string and wind instruments - if he did not invent them, he advanced the use of them so that they are identified with him.

4:22 - TUBAL-CAIN. *“As for Zillah, she also gave birth to Tubal-cain, the forger of all implements of bronze and iron; and the sister of Tubal-cain was Naamah.”* Many first time readers may be surprised to discover how early in civilization man began to forge instruments of bronze and iron. For Tubal-cain to have invented the method by which he could forge bronze and iron, he had to have been a brilliant and gifted man. He was certainly no typical cave man!

4:23 - I HAVE KILLED A MAN. *“Lamech said to his wives, “Adah and Zillah, Listen to my voice, You wives of Lamech, Give heed to my speech, For I have killed a man for wounding me; And a boy for striking me.”* First, a bigamist and then a murderer. Not only is he a murderer, he boasts of his vengeance. *“This passage is not clear, and not all Bible students interpret it the same way. Lamech was the seventh from Adam on Cain’s side and was a man who displeased God, while Enoch was the seventh from Adam on Seth’s side (5:3-27) and walked with God and pleased God (Heb. 11:5)”* [WW]. It is interesting that the Cainite line even copied the names of the true believers in Seth’s line (Enoch—Enos; Irad—Jared; Mehujael—Mahalaleel; Lamech—Lamech).

Had Lamech killed both a man for wounding him, and a boy for striking him, or had he killed one young man who had wounded him by striking him? On the surface, it seems that he and killed two different people, a man and a boy, but the reference might well have been to one young man. The poetic expression in Hebrew in which parallelism is commonly used, may well point to only one young man.

Some suggest that Lamech had been wounded by a young man, so had killed his attacker in self-defense. Some reason however, that if God had poured out wrath without mercy on Cain, who was guilty of gross murder, surely He would not have condemned Lamech who had killed in self-defense.

Another suggestion is that Tubal-Cain had devised the first weapons of brass and iron and that Lamech had proudly demonstrated them to his wives. The Hebrew verbs can be translated in the future tense: *“I will slay anyone who wounds me and will not need God’s protection, for with these weapons I can avenge myself seventy-seven fold!”* Seen in this light, it is the first expression of arrogant defiance and warfare in the Bible [WW].

4:24 - IF CAIN. *“If Cain is avenged sevenfold, Then Lamech seventy-sevenfold.”* He knows something of his family’s history, but his understanding of it is distorted. Sin is proliferating in the human race. Lamech boasts that he killed a young man who had simply injured him. He was *“boasting that if anyone should try to avenge the murder he would take care of himself seventy-sevenfold without any help from God such as Cain received”* [RSB].

The poetic form of the text indicated the depravity of Lamech's character as he bragged about his sinful act. Similarly, we are often tempted to demand more justice than we are due. Both divine and civil law attempt to restrain our sinful impulses and dispense a balanced judgment. Sin is never a cause for bragging. It causes only God's wrath and judgment [DSB].

B. Seth and His Descendants, 4:25-26.

4:25 - SETH. *“Adam had relations with his wife again; and she gave birth to a son, and named him Seth, for, she said, ‘God has appointed me another offspring in place of Abel, for Cain killed*

him.” Eve named her son Seth, meaning the “appointed one,” because she understood that this child was “appointed” by God to take the place of Abel who had been slain by Cain. From the moment God first promised that her “seed” would crush the head of the serpent (Satan), she must have anticipated the birth of her first born. When Cain was born she must have considered the possibility that he was the one through whom God would honor his promise.

When Abel was born Eve might well have considered the possibility that God would fulfill His promise through Abel. My very close friend, the late Luther Hall, was a gifted humorist. Once while entertaining a group of our young people at banquet, he said, “Eve said to Adam, ‘As soon as we get Able we are going to raise Cain!’” Whatever her thoughts, her world came crushing down on her when Cain slew Able. Able could not be the one through whom God would send the “seed” (descendant). He was dead. Cain could not be the one because he was under a curse. “No further allusions to Cain appear in the Genesis narrative because, in his willful sin, he had cut himself off from God’s blessings” [BSB].

SUMMARY OF HISTORY OF CAIN’ AND HIS FAMILY

Looking at strictly from a human perspective, Cain’s descendants accomplished some rather amazing things. For example, Jabal (“wanderer”) founded the science of agriculture (v. 20); Jubal founded “culture”(music); and Tubal-Cain founded the metal industries. At first look, one might be impressed with the fact that Cain built a “city.” We may be impressed but clearly, God was not impressed.

In v. 25, God gave Adam and Eve another seed—Seth—which means “the appointed, the substitute” (taking Abel’s place). God did not try to reform the Cainites. He rejected them and ultimately would condemn them in the flood. As the Cainites were gradually wandering away from the true worship of God, the Sethites were returning to Him (v. 26) and establishing again their worship of the Lord. Civilization today is Cainite in origin. It has such elements as agriculture, industry, arts, great cities, and religion without faith in the blood of Christ. Also, like Cain’s civilization of old, it will be destroyed. We still have boasting murderers like Lamech, and we still have people (like Lamech) who violate the sacred vows of marriage. “As the days of Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of man be” (Matt. 24:37, NKJV). Men still reject divine revelation and depend on their own human resources. The true Christian does not belong to this “world system” that is passing away (1 John 2:15-17), and should not get involved with it (Rom. 12:1-2; 2 Cor. 6:14-7:1) [WW].

Satan’s War Against the Appointed One

Cain has slain Abel. Abel is dead and Cain is under a curse. Where is the Seed going to come

from now? Surely, Satan must have thought, he had thwarted God's plan, and saved himself. Both of the sons of Eve were now out of the picture. Then there was Seth, "the appointed one." Satan must have thought he was winning the war against God. The first son born to Eve was a murderer, the second the victim. The descendants of Cain, though brilliant and gifted, manifested their fallen nature in serving Satan rather than God. But Yahweh was not the One Whose plans were foiled. Satan received a major set-back in his war against God when Seth was born, but he was back on track now. He knew where to focus his attention.

A brief overview of Satan's war against God will reveal that the heart of his attack has always been against the "Seed" God promised in Genesis 3:15. He has had such success in controlling the lives and the destiny of masses created in the image of God that he must have been confident that he could thwart God's Messianic Covenant as well. Throughout the centuries he has used the nations of the world to try to destroy Israel. He has had enough cooperation from within Israel through the centuries to make him confident of ultimate victory.

In your review of the history of Satan's war against God, consider the 430 years in Egypt. How could anyone have expected God to deliver them and return them to the Land of Canaan? Look next to the wilderness. Even while Moses was on the mountain receiving the Law, Satan reigned in the hearts of the people below. He must have felt so close to final victory, only to be defeated once again.

Then came Amalek (Exodus 17). Surely the Amalakites (descendants of Esau) would defeat the Israelites and destroy them in the wilderness. And make no mistake, they knew exactly what they were doing! They knew where the Israelites were going and why. How do I know this? Because Rahab told the Hebrew spies that the people of Jericho knew it, and if they knew it the Amalakites were even more likely to know it. So when they attacked Israel, they were deliberately moving to prevent God from fulfilling his covenant with Abraham. They would have slain the men and either killed or enslaved the women and children. Satan's purpose was the complete annihilation of the Children of Israel. God gave them the victory under Joshua. Joshua was their commander but the victory was God's.

God promised at that time there would be war with Amalek from generation to generation (Es. 17:16). To briefly review that war, look to Saul's disobedience centuries later when he might have defeated Amalek once and for all. Then, there is the plot by Haman to have all the Jews killed during the reign of Ahasuerus, king of Persia (Greek name, Xerxes I. He reigned as king over Persia 486-465 B.C.). Haman was an Amalekite! Now move ahead to a command from Herod the Great to have all the male babies in Bethlehem killed. Herod was half Idumean, a kinsman if not a descendant of Amalek.

Now, fast-forward to the Twentieth century. Adolph Hitler was not an Amalekite, but he was certainly doing the work of Satan when he aggressively, even, maniacally pursued the total annihilation of the Jewish race. The Nazis killed fifteen million people, including six million Jews. They sought the death of all Jews, and found confederates among other nations in their war against

the Children of Israel - which continued Satan's war against God. I would recommend a study of the history of the Twentieth Century, but for those who do not enjoy history, I would recommend the historical fiction by Brock and Bodie Thoene (*The Zion Covenant, The Zion Chronicles, and the Zion Legacy*).

When I first heard the news of the attacks by terrorists on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, I had just finished one *The Zion Chronicle Series*, and I am not reading the *Zion Legacy Series*. The news about the Taliban, Osama Bin Laden, the Jihad (holy war) being waged today against the United States and Israel reads like another volume in a Thoene series.

The primary enemy of Satan today is Jesus Christ and all who belong to Him. Islam is a tool of Satan, and the radical Islamic people of the world are committing their resources and energy to a "holy war" (Jihad) against Christianity today, and against America today, in part because of our support for Israel, and but also because of their hatred for Christianity. The following paragraphs are a part of an e-mail letter sent out by Steve Hagerman, US Director of Turkish World Outreach in November, 2001:

On September 11th, Americans awoke to horrifying television scenes of passenger planes being deliberately crashed into the twin towers of the World Trade Center in New York City and the Pentagon in Washington, DC. We were stunned and bewildered, and wondered who could plan such merciless slaughter and what could motivate men to sacrifice their own lives and the lives of thousands of total strangers in such a heartless manner. Iran's Ayatollah Khomeini once said, "The purest joy in Islam is to kill and be killed for Allah." Since the days of Mohammed, Muslims have practiced jihad, which means "struggle" or "holy war." It is their belief that dying in a jihad is the one sure way of gaining Paradise, and that sacrificing one's life to kill non-Muslims will bring the highest reward. Sadly, Islam is responsible for much of the terrorism in today's world. America is called "the Great Satan" by Islamic leaders worldwide, and Israel is called "the Little Satan." Thus, the horrendous strike at our nation is viewed as a victory for Allah against his chief enemy. This is why many Muslims danced in the streets and shouted for joy when they heard the news of our calamity. On radio and TV, government officials, Muslim leaders, and others have repeatedly told us that we must be careful not to blame Islam for what a few fanatics have done -- that Islam stands against such violence and always has. But, what is it aside from Islam that unites the otherwise divided Muslim nations in hatred for our country and Israel? And is it true that Islam is a religion of peace? While the majority of Muslims love peace and are opposed to terrorism, Islam itself is a religion of bloodshed and death. While nominal Muslims reject the idea, Islamic scholars agree that it is the religious duty of every Muslim to use violence whenever this will advance the cause of Islam. The terrorists who have brought us such great harm have been staunch Muslims. The Qur'an, the book holy to all Muslims, has more than 100 verses advocating the use of violence to spread Islam. We read: "When you encounter the unbelievers (non-Muslims), strike off their heads until you have made a great

slaughter among them..." "Fight those who believe not... even if they be People of the Book (Christians and Jews) until they have willingly agreed to pay the Jizra tribute in recognition of their submissive state." "O prophet! Strive against the disbelievers and hypocrites? Be harsh with them. Their ultimate abode is hell..." "Believers, take neither Jews nor Christians for your friends... Do not seek the friendship of infidels and those who were given the Book (the Bible) before you" [STEVE HAGERMAN].

President Bush has rightly labeled as evil the attacks by the terrorists and those behind them. It is evil because it is satanic. These Muslims Fundamentalists seek the death of all Jews and they want to kill as many Americans as they can, destroy our economy, break our will, and force us to forsake Israel. They came Amalek! They may not be their descendants (some may be), but they have come in the same spirit as Amalek.

There has been another war raging in America, and that has been the war against Jesus Christ and His church. America was founded on Christian principles. There is no mistake at all about this, regardless of what liberal revisionists would have you believe. The Founding Fathers are not easily misunderstood, so they must be written out of the history books, dismissed for one reason or another in order to deny their wisdom to students in classrooms today. This one was a deist, that one a racist, another a religious fanatic. Read the Founding Fathers and you will see how they interpreted the U. S. Constitution. They sought the influence of Christianity on the government. They recognized our dependence on God. All this has been denied for seventy- five years. America slipped into the post-Christian period in our history without the church even knowing it was happening until it was too late to prevent it. Through a media strongly influenced by liberalism, Socialism, and even Marxism, Americans have been deceived. Christian ethics have given way to Humanistic ethics, and now to Post-modern, New Age ethics. The Humanists said there is no God, the Post-modernists say there surely is a God, gods, or a god-like force. Before his retirement, Walter Cronkite was from year to year named among the most trusted men in America. Walter Cronkite is an atheist and a one world order New Ager. The war has raged, without most Christians even understanding what is happening. Prayer and Bible reading were taken out of Schools, and the Ten Commandments were taken down from the walls of the schools. George Washington's picture was taken down from the classroom wall and replaced by some more modern activist of one persuasion or another.

Even in the aftermath of the terrorists' attack on America, ABC stopped on-camera news people from wearing or displaying the American flag, lest someone they offended. We are under attack by a fanatical enemy and we are afraid the American flag will offend someone?!?!?! A number of business have told employees they cannot display the flag or wear a flag to work. However, more flags are flying today than I have ever seen.

The religion of choice, it seems, with the media is Islam, portrayed by them as a religion of peace. Islam may be many things, but one thing they are not is a religion of peace. Islam is a religion of the sword, even though there are moderate Muslims who do want peace and millions of Muslims who are opposed to the kind of terrorism we witnessed September 11, 2001. They speak of their god, Allah, continually, but their god is not a god of peace. The one thing one Arab Christian and former Muslim stressed above everything else is that the Muslims see their god as a god of judgment,

but never a god of love.

Now flash forward one more time. There is a solution. There will be a victory. There is One who is not frustrated by bin Laden, nor intimidated by the Jihad being waged by the radical Palestinians, the Taliban, or any of the other soldiers in Satan's army. That person is the "Anointed One," the Messiah, Who is coming again to receive his Church and to wage a war that has already been one. When He died on the Cross, he crushed the head of the serpent, Satan. The serpent is still writhing, striking, and injecting venom, but his defeat is set, as his eternal destiny.

God was not taken by surprised when Adam and Eve sinned. He had foreknowledge of their sin. He did not have to scramble around to come up with an alternate plan. He had a plan from the foundation of the world. Even before Adam and Eve were created, God had planned to give his Son to die for the redemption of all who would trust Him. Jesus is the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. Christians may debate the details, but the outcome has never been in doubt. The final judgment against Satan was revealed to John on Patmos: "And the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are also; and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever" (Rev. 20:10).

But that is not the end of the story:

Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it, from whose presence earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them. And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one of them according to their deeds. Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire (Rev. 20:11-15).

4:26 - ENOSH. "To Seth, to him also a son was born; and he called his name Enosh. Then men began to call upon the name of the LORD." When Seth, who had a godly spirit, has a son he gives him the name "Enosh," which carries the basic idea of "frailty." Some scholars have preferred the definition, "to be intimate with," meaning to be social, but Leupold makes a strong case for frailty, with the emphasis on man's mortality. Enosh is a reminder of man's mortality. In essence, it means "man" (as does Adam), but "implies weakness and dependency. This recognition of need in the naming of Enosh opens the history of prayer in the Bible. Later, Abram (12:8; 13:4) and Elijah (1 Ki 18:24) would call on the name of the Lord. The Lord promises to be near to all who call on Him (Ps 145:18)" [DSB].

The word "Enosh" seems to appears to focus on man's mortality (Ps. 90:3).

It anticipates, then, Seth's genealogy with the recurring phrase "he died" (5:5, 8, etc.).

Personal redemption became primary in God's dealing with men. Therefore, this verse records when men began to worship and proclaim the name of Yahweh. Those in the lineage of Seth are contrasted with the wicked lineage of Cain [BSB].

It would be interesting to run this by a postmodern psychologist - shall we say pop-psychologist? It would be interesting to see how he would psycho-analyze Seth. There is no reason to assign to Seth a pessimistic view of man and his frailty. This is simply a statement of the facts, the pure, unvarnished truth.

THEN MEN BEGAN TO CALL UPON THE NAME OF THE LORD. This is too important to pass over it. This statement verse reveals the time when mankind began to worship and proclaim the name of Yahweh. This verse also draws a sharp contrast between those in the lineage of Seth and those in the ungodly lineage of Cain.

But there is more. Why is this statement made at this precise point in the Scripture. Seth called his son “Enosh,” denoting his frailty and mortality, and then in the next sentence we find that “men began to call upon the name of Yahweh.” Should we make a connection between the name “Enosh” and the statement that man began to worship Yahweh publically? You bet we should! Seth was so impressed with the weakness of mortals that he not only gave his son a name which declared that fact, he also taught his family this fact so effectively that “the turned all the more eagerly to their ‘god and sought Him, making a regular and public practice of it in worship” [HCL: 227].

The very expression, “to call upon the name of Yahweh,” means to call on His name in worship. “The preposition *be* before Yahweh expresses a kind of means: to call out by use of the name.... The adverb *'as*, “at that time,”

distinctly binds such public worship back to the time when Seth called his son Enosh. The “name” here, as usual, means the whole truth that god had revealed about Himself. Since the name “Yahweh” is attached to “name,” this means that from the days of old God was known in the capacity of *Yahweh*, or in the character of *Yahweh*, whether that word as such was known at this early date or not. The thing that the name stood for is known. Men do not first in the age of Abraham or Moses begin to comprehend God's faithfulness, unchangeableness, and mercy. Since this calling out by use of the name definitely implies public worship, we have here the first record of *regular public* worship. Private worship is presupposed as preceding” [HCL: 227].

C. The Generations of Adam, 5:1-32.

The generations of Adam (the book of the genealogy of Adam, NKJV) is a heading for the next section, which includes:

(1) the identity and continuity of the worshipers of Yahweh (5:1-31); (2) the

cohabitation of "the sons of God" and "the daughters of men," which corrupted the race (5:32-6:4); and (3) the resolution of Yahweh to annihilate the earth's inhabitants by flood, except Noah and his family (6:5-8) [BSB].

5:1 - THE BOOK. *"This is the book of the generations of Adam. In the day when God created man, He made him in the likeness of God."* In reality, Moses was inspired to give us the title to this section: The Book of the Generations of Adam. That title has given rise to claims in some quarters that this was one of the extra-biblical sources on which Moses drew in "composing" the Torah. If you deny Inspiration of Scripture, you can get bogged down in such arguments. However, the Holy Spirit did not need these sources to produce a perfect Bible. At the same time, within that framework, it interesting to speculate about "the book of the generations of Adam." The Lord often told Moses to write something in a book. Was that Scripture, or sources from which the Pentateuch was written? In either case, God told him what to write. Hebrew word (*sepher*) which is usually translated book, signifies a register, an account, any kind of writing, even a letter, such as the bill of divorce. "Here It means the account or register of the generations of Adam or his descendants to the five hundredth year of the life of Noah" [CLARKE].

In verses 1-2 we have "a reiteration of the creation of man **in** (or, "as") **the likeness** ("resemblance," a synonym of "image"; cf. 1:26-27) **of God**. One cannot miss the emphasis on the blessing of the image (**He blessed them**) at Creation. But with that in mind the chapter then traces the result of sin, death" [BKC].

IN THE LIKENESS OF GOD. This can only be said of man, not of any other created thing. But what exactly does that mean. I have a distinct picture of hearing one of the two or three greatest philosopher/theologians of the Twentieth Century, Carl F. H. Henry, who was a guest speaker at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. (The other two, in my opinion, were C. S. Lewis and Francis Shaeffer.) Henry was invited by president H. Leo Eddleman, but his presence on the campus was not welcomed by all. As Dr. Henry began a lecture before combined Systematic Theology classes, one professor who was sitting in the front row, raised his hand and when he was recognized he opened up with a barrage of questions. In extreme agitation and in an animated manner, he angrily pointed to his nose, and asked, "Do you mean to tell me God has a nose like this?" Pointing to his ear, he angrily demanded, "Do you mean God has an ear like this?" When he ended his salvo, Dr. Henry calmly replied, "I don't think that's relevant," and continued his lecture. The professor was still raging so that night that his wife had to call one of his students to come over and help settle him down. She said, "He is cursing that man every breath." That professor ended up teaching psychology in a secular institution.

How would you answer that professor's questions? The Scripture says that we are created in God's image; literally, *"In the day when God created man, He made him in the likeness of God."* Since God is the One acting and man is the recipient of this special blessing, it would seem to make more sense the see how we are created in God's image instead of trying to re-create God in our image. When man creates a god in his image we call that idolatry.

If we are created in God's image we must first remember that God is Spirit. Jesus explained

this to the woman at the well “God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth” (John 4:24). Paul wrote to the church at Thessalonica, “Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely; and may your **spirit** and **soul** and **body** be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Thes. 5:3, emphasis added). Man possess a body and he posses a soul, but he is a spirit. More often, man is presented as a dichotomous being, body and soul, but this verse reveals something very special about man - he is trichotomous. We know what the body is and when we say someone is the “spitting image of his father” we are talking about his physical appearance. We cannot see the soul and we cannot see the spirit. When we refer to the soul of man we must remind ourselves of the distinction between the soul and the spirit. The soul refers to the soulish part of man, the intellect, the emotions, and the volition (mind, feelings, and will). Lost people have a soul that is not only alive, it is often much more in-tuned with the world than that of the Christian. In computer terminology, the world is “user friendly” to those of the world. We send unsaved students to school and expect them to excel (they have intellect), we seek to motivate them to do their best (volition), and we want them to be happy (emotions). A person can do all of that and still be dead spiritually.

If God is outside the spirit, he may function physically, emotionally, and volitionally, but his is still dead. He is dead in sin, and he can do absolutely nothing to bring himself to life. When by the grace of God he believes in Jesus Christ, his sins are pardoned, his spirit is regenerated, and God moves into his life. There is a new command center for his life. There is also a new Commander Who indwells his spirit. The Holy Spirit indwells the believer’s spirit (we usually say we have Him our heart).

How then are we created in the image of God? It is not in physical appearance. It cannot be limited to the soulish part of man, even though both God and man have intellect, emotions, and volition. We are created in God’s image in that He is Spirit, and we are a spiritual being. This applies only to human beings, but to no animals at all.

You mean there will be no pets in Heaven? I love Bear, my English Shepherd, but there is no place for Bear in Heaven. He is some ninety pounds of power and speed, who loves people in the day time, but draws the line on who is allowed in our yard and night. My wife talks about how he sits and watches me when I am working in the yard. He does not help me, he just watches! Bear loves me, but he is rather put out with me when I tell him to go into the back yard with Beau, the Border Collie - Bear has always been into people, his people, not dogs. He loves his people (he has emotions). When I walk out the door Bear looks up and takes a read on me. If I have on work clothes and start toward my golf cart, Bear springs up and heads out with me. If I have on a dress or casual clothes and head for my car, Bear takes one look and lays his head back down. But if I have on a suit when I step out into the carport, Bear gets up, and reluctantly heads for the back yard (he has intellect). He knows I lock him in the back yard or the utility room to keep him from visiting people as they come to church. If Bear’s has no business in church he certainly has no business in Heaven. He is not a spiritual being.

5:2 - CREATED MALE AND FEMALE. *“He created them male and female, and He blessed*

them and named them Man in the day when they were created.” God created male and female, and He created them with both physical and psychological differences. While God loves both males and females equally, He gave them specific roles. A few years ago we read reports that an organization for Christian men claimed that the modern feminist movement had feminized men, and indeed there is some basis for that claim in this generation. However, one critic of that organization pointed out that this movement itself, even while criticizing the influence of the feminist movement on many men in America, has contributed to the feminization of many men by encouraging men to engage in activities traditionally associated with women.

BLESSED THEM. What exactly does that mean? Obviously, God blessed them with the things they needed to sustain life, and the ability to glean from the Garden of Eden the food required for life. He also blessed them with the provisions and opportunity to find happiness in the Garden. However, it seems on the basis of this verse that God pronounced a blessing upon Adam and Eve.

NAMED THEM MAN. Modern feminists have called the Bible a sexist book. Is God discriminating here? Not at all. He is using “man” in the generic sense of mankind (or humankind). The distinction God makes is not in value or worth, but in the role each plays in His eternal plan.

5:3 - IN HIS OWN LIKENESS. *“When Adam had lived one hundred and thirty years, he became the father of a son in his own likeness, according to his image, and named him Seth.”* What we have here is not another fragment of the Creation story Moses happened to find, or another “tradition” handed down through the centuries account of Creation. This is exactly what it says in verse: “the book of the generations of Adam.” “In his own likeness” is consistent with God’s plan in creating each species to propagate according to its own kind” (Gen. 1). Adam’s son Seth was born in the likeness of his father, but in contrast to Gen. 1:26, man is now sinful.

ACCORDING TO HIS IMAGE. Once again, this is consistent with God’s plan set down in Gen. 1. There has always been adaptation within a species, but no evolution from one “kind” to another. The second generation of humans was in the likeness of, and in the image of the first, evolutionists’ charts notwithstanding. One point that stands out here is that the repetition is there for a purpose. If Moses had simply edited traditions and fragmented accounts of the early history of man one might expect this kind of repetition: “In his own likeness,” “according to image,” “after its own kind.” But since this is a unit handed down by Yahweh, the only One Who was there, the only eye witness to it all, the only one whose memory is never darkened by time, the account is consistent, united, and purposeful. Repetition is for emphasis. Sadly, those who do not find it totally trustworthy continually test Scripture by inferior standards, rather than testing that which is constantly changing by that which is changeless.

How do you know when a book on science is out of date? Answer: when it has been published. Who wants to read Sunday mornings predictions on NFL football games after he has read the scores on Monday morning? When I bought the World Book Encyclopedia for my son when he was in elementary school, the company updated it with a Year Book each year for several years until we discontinued the supplements. When a history is published it deals with a certain period of time

and things that happened during that time and in certain places. However, we have discovered that even history is not safe from revisionists. The Bible stands alone as the one reliable account of what has happened in the past, and remarkably, as an infallible guide to many future events. For that reason we know we can trust it when it addresses Eschatology (the study of last things).

NOTES ON THE PATRIARCHS

Each reference to a patriarch gives four details:

- (1) his name,
- (2) his age at the birth of his first son,
- (3) the length of his remaining life, and
- (4) his age at death.

However, you will find variations in the cases of Adam (v. 3), Enoch (vv. 22, 24), and Lamech (vv. 28-29). The longevity of the patriarchs (averaging 912 years, not including Enoch, who did not die) should not be a problem to the student of the Word. Creation scientists have studied this for many years and it is the conviction of most of them that there was a water (vapor) canopy surrounding the earth up until the time of the Flood, which effectively protected people from the ultraviolet rays of the sun. That is combined with the fact that the earliest human beings came from an incredibly good gene pool. There is also the possibility that man's life span was shortened because of the effects of sin.

Another consideration in studying the genealogy of Adam is whether or not there are gaps in the written record. Neither my theology, nor my faith in the Word of God stands on whether or not there are gaps in the genealogical records. I am at least cognizant of the fact that many creation scientists believe the earth to be between 6,000 and 10,000 years old. The variation hinges in part on whether or not there are gaps in the record. If there are gaps in the record, it means that the main purpose was not to list every individuals, but to list key individuals in the direct line from Adam to Noah. Ryrie explains:

If there are no gaps in this chronology, then 1,656 years elapsed between creation and the Flood. It is likely, however, that the genealogy is selective, resulting in gaps in the list and pushing the date of creation farther back [RSB].

THE AGES OF THE PATRIARCHS

<u>NAME</u>	<u>YEARS</u>	<u>NAME</u>	<u>YEARS</u>
Adam	930	Jared	362
Seth	912	Enoch	365
Enosh	905	Methuselah	969
Kenan	910	Lamech	777

5:4 - THE DAYS OF ADAM. *“Then the days of Adam after he became the father of Seth were eight hundred years, and he had other sons and daughters.”* The Scripture does not answer all our questions about Adam, Eve, and their children and grandchildren, but it provides us with the basic information and we can draw conclusions that are evidence based rather than subscribing to the type of myths associated with various ancient religions. Adam lived eight hundred years after the birth of Seth and he had many sons and daughters, who could only marry each other. There were no other people for them to marry. This intermarriage was not sinful - the Law had not been given, for one thing. For another, there were not defects in the gene pool.

5:5 - HE DIED. *“So all the days that Adam lived were nine hundred and thirty years, and he died.”* If one were in doubt whether the wages of sin is death (Rom. 6:23), he need only look at the history of the human race (vv. 5, 8, 11, 14, 17, 20, 27, 31). Adam lived an incredibly long life and then he died. God had warned him that if he sinned he would die. His physical death was determined the moment of the Fall. This is the first of many times we read in the Scripture that a certain person lived “so many” years and he died. Of various kings of Israel, we read that the king reigned “so many” years and he died, or he slept with his fathers. Often, the note was added that he did that which was good, or that which was evil. In some cases the Bible tells us that a certain king did that which was good, but not as his father David. Of Hezekiah, the Scripture tells us that he did that which was good all the days of his life, just as his father David. But whether good or bad, their life ended in death.

In all the history of mankind there have been but two well known exceptions. Enoch and Elijah were righteous men whom God elected to take to Heaven without their having to taste physical death. I stood near the door the dining room at Camp Four at the Mississippi State Penitentiary a Parchman many years ago and watched as the men filed past me following a service. I preached at one camp or another every Sunday morning at 8:00 before going to the church where I was a student pastor. There were several prisoners I have never forgotten.

Three men who paused to speak with me following services at various times were men I was given the privilege of leading to accept Jesus Christ as Savior at the Hinds County jail in Jackson several months earlier. One man had killed his wife for the insurance money - ten thousand dollars. I have a very clear memory of the day this man paused to ask, “Were you in Jackson last May?” When I told him I was, he asked, “Did you come to the Hinds County jail?” When I answered in the affirmative, he held up a New Testament and showed me where I had written a note in it before giving it to him. He then said, “I didn’t see your face, but I remember your voice.” He had been forgiven, but he still had a price to pay for his crime. Jesus paid the price for his sin.

The second man, Tommy, paused long enough to greet me. A second man had beaten and strangled a young woman he had allowed to move into his motel room while he was staying in Jackson for the Mississippi State Fair. She was pregnant and abandoned by the father of the baby. She had no place to go, so Tommy took her in, but then in a drunken rage killed her - and her baby.

He remembered me and I remembered him. When I visited the first man I had to look through a wire mesh in the outer door, through two sets of bars to see the man. I could see him and we could hear each other. I had interrupted a local reporter who was taunting Tommy, but the jailer had told me his time was up and I walked through the door, into the outer room where the reporter was looking through two sets of bars at Tommy. As I walked in, he said, "You must think you're pretty tough, beating up a woman, don't you?" To which Tommy said, "You come behind these bars and you'll see how tough I am!"

As I walked up to the reporter he turned and asked, "Who are you." I gave him my name and stood there. He asked, "Where are you from?" Not wanting to see reports of some bleeding heart liberal ministerial student from Mississippi College in the *Clarion Ledger*, I answered, "Home." I stood there looking him in the eye for a moment, and then he left. I still have the letter Tommy wrote to me after the first visit. He assured me he was "trying to find God." On the next visit he did receive Jesus Christ as Savior. The man in the next cell had counseled Tommy not to talk with the reporter, but to pay attention to me when I returned.

I will never forget the day I saw Tommy for the last time. He paused, holding up the line of men moving back to their barracks long enough to speak to me. He added, "Johnny, when I get out of here I want to serve God." I replied, "Tommy, you are never going to find a better place to serve God than right here."

The third man, whose name I still remember, had broken into a number of homes in the Brookhaven, Mississippi area, assaulting women and terrorizing the area. We followed his crime spree in the Jackson Clarion Ledger for some time. As much as I detested his crimes, when I came face to face with him, I shared the Gospel of Jesus Christ with him and he was saved. He had a serious debt to pay to society, but he had received eternal life.

There were two more I have never forgotten, though I only remember seeing them one time. One day, as I was speaking to the men as they filed by, I noticed a man who was walking straight toward me, just like those in front of him who paused to speak and shake my hand. Only this man made a point of walking straight toward me and just as I expected him to reach our his hand, he made a deliberate move to turn his right side away from me and jerk his left shoulder forward, breaking eye contact and walking by me. In his mind he obviously thought he had made a statement. Whatever it was, it was wasted on me, except for the burden I had for his soul.

As to the other man, I do not remember a conversation - I am sure there would have been no more than a greeting and a handshake at the most. But as he walked by me I saw a tattoo on his left arm that read, "Born to go to hell." I had seen tattoos that proclaimed, "Born to raise hell," but this one said, "Born to go to hell." How I wanted to tell him that no one was born to go to hell. We are born to die, but God never created any person with the express purpose of populating hell.

5:6 - SETH. "*Seth lived one hundred and five years, and became the father of Enosh.*" This written account does not answer all our questions about Seth - we are talking about the second

generation to inhabit this planet. Archaeologists, geologists, and palaeontologists spend a life-time trying to dig up a few facts that will shed a little light on some minuscule person or village that dates back to the time of Christ, and here we are given more information about the third man to be born on Planet Earth than I know about my own family before some of them came here from England, Ireland, and Germany. I know even less about those who were already here to greet the first settlers. What we have preserved in Genesis is nothing short of amazing, compared with all other records from antiquity.

5:7 - THEN SETH LIVED. *“Then Seth lived eight hundred and seven years after he became the father of Enosh, and he had other sons and daughters.”* Seth, son of Adam, lived an incredibly long life, during which time he became the father of many sons and daughters. We can only speculate as to the generations, or the descendant he saw before his death. During this time, Adam and Eve had become parents to many sons and daughters, as had Cain.

5:8 - AND HE DIED. *“So all the days of Seth were nine hundred and twelve years, and he died.”* There is one thing the early patriarchs all had in common. They all died. Seth lived 912 years and then he died, just as Adam had died.

5:9 - ENOSH. *“Enosh lived ninety years, and became the father of Kenan.”* Enosh means “man,” though it is not the word previously used for “man” (Adam). We are not given much information about these early patriarchs, but we must remember how amazing it is that we are provided with any information at all about them.

5:10 - THEN ENOSH. *“Then Enosh lived eight hundred and fifteen years after he became the father of Kenan, and he had other sons and daughters.”* By now we see the pattern in the genealogical record. There is no effort to record the names and ages of all the descendants of the various patriarchs, only those involved in the covenant God had made in the Garden. Our attention is focused on the line from which the Seed would come.

5:11 - ALL THE DAYS OF ENOSH. *“So all the days of Enosh were nine hundred and five years, and he died.”* This may not seem like very much information about a man who lived 905 years, but in reality it is absolutely amazing that we are given so much information. One thing we must remember is that the lives of many of these early patriarchs overlapped each other. How many of these people did Adam know personally?

5:12 - KENAN. *“Kenan lived seventy years, and became the father of Mahalalel.”* The root word for this name means “spear.” The same information is given about each patriarch. What we are not told is whether or not Mahalalel was his first child. The Scripture is following the line of the Seed. We will never lose sight of God’s faithfulness to His Covenant.

5:13 - THEN KENAN. *“Then Kenan lived eight hundred and forty years after he became the father of Mahalalel, and he had other sons and daughters.”* Again, the same pattern is seen in the record, but that is common with genealogical records. This information should be of immeasurable

value to anthropologists if they accept this as the absolute truth and use it as a standard by which all else is tested.

5:14 - ALL THE DAYS. *“So all the days of Kenan were nine hundred and ten years, and he died.”* The life span had not been shortened as generations passed. This was before the Flood, and the presumed water canopy which many believe surrounded the earth, protecting it from the ultra violet rays of the sun. The gene pool was still almost perfect, so genetic defects were not being passed on from father to son or daughter. Today, if you are a male, if there is a history of heart problems in your family, and if your work has involved any stress, you are a prime candidate for a heart attack. I should know - I only wish I had been paying attention before the heart attack.

5:15 - MAHALALEL. *“Mahalalel lived sixty-five years, and became the father of Jared.”* The name given the great-grandson of Seth, Mahalalel, means “praise of God.” The one thing that intrigues me is whether or not these patriarchs had children before the one listed in record. Did they have children earlier in life, as they did after the birth of the one mentioned in this account, or did all of them marry this late? Of course, this would not be late in life for one who lived over nine hundred years, but it is doubtful that they waited this long to reach sexual maturity.

5:16 - LIVED. *“Then Mahalalel lived eight hundred and thirty years after he became the father of Jared, and he had other sons and daughters.”* Like the other patriarchs of this period, Mahalalel lived a long and fruitful life, at least in terms of his children. It would be interesting to know how many children each patriarch had, and how many generations they witnessed before their death - and if that information would do anything other than satisfy our curiosity the Lord may well have provided it. This is given for a purpose, and whether or not a genealogical record in the Bible interests every student of the Word or not, each word of Scripture is there for a reason. It serves the divine Author’s purpose, and it tells us we are dealing with history here, not myth. Remember that there was a lot of overlapping of generations at this time in the early history of man.

It is also obvious that man did not evolve from a glob of amino acids that happened to come together in the right formula and somehow get energized by some unknown force, and then over many millions of years climb the evolutionists ladder to become man. Which reminds me, to what are we now evolving? Why are evolutionists more concerned about what we evolved from than where we are going from here?

5:17 - HE DIED. *“So all the days of Mahalalel were eight hundred and ninety-five years, and he died.”* Not only did these patriarchs live for hundreds of years, they all died, according to the sentence handed down by Yahweh following the Fall. King David, who had a way with words if anyone ever did, expressed it so well: “I am going the way of all the earth.

As David's time to die drew near, he charged Solomon his son, saying, “I am going the way of all the earth. Be strong, therefore, and show yourself a man. Keep the charge of the LORD your God, to walk in His ways, to keep His statutes, His commandments, His ordinances, and His testimonies, according to what is written in

the Law of Moses, that you may succeed in all that you do and wherever you turn, so that the LORD may carry out His promise which He spoke concerning me, saying, 'If your sons are careful of their way, to walk before Me in truth with all their heart and with all their soul, you shall not lack a man on the throne of Israel' (1 Kings 2:1-4).

David knew he was dying, and he also knew the significance of his death. He knew that any influence he had over the life of Solomon and his descendants, and whatever contribution he could make to the Davidic Covenant, he would have to make it before he died. After that it would be in God's hands. We pray our instructions, counsel, and discipline help shape our children and grandchildren, but there will be no communication between the living and the dead.

5:18 - JARED. *"Jared lived one hundred and sixty-two years, and became the father of Enoch."* The name "Jared" comes from a word which means "to go down," or "to descend." Jared was the son of (or descendant of) Mahalalel.

5:19 - HE BECAME THE FATHER OF. *"Then Jared lived eight hundred years after he became the father of Enoch, and he had other sons and daughters."* Throughout these early generations the patriarch we follow in this record has "sons and daughters" who are having "sons and daughters." While there is no population problem, the number was increasing, probably more rapidly than we can imagine.

5:20 - ALL THE DAYS. *"So all the days of Jared were nine hundred and sixty-two years, and he died."* The long life span continues, as does the propagation of the human race, according to the command God gave Adam. Man was to multiply and populate the earth. We are not given any information about how long the children of these patriarchs lived, but if they lived as long, and were as productive as their fathers, it must have seemed that they were filling their little corner of the earth.

5:21 - ENOCH. *"Enoch lived sixty-five years, and became the father of Methuselah."* The name "Enoch" comes from a word that may be translated "mouth," or "roof of the mouth," which may have denoted speech. Far more important than the meaning of his name is his character. In Enoch, we find a man whose love for God must have exceeded that of his ancestors, as well as that of his peers.

5:22 - WALKED WITH GOD. *"Then Enoch walked with God three hundred years after he became the father of Methuselah, and he had other sons and daughters."* This is the first time this information is given about any of the early patriarchs. While others might have acknowledged Him, and lived before Him in fear and reverence, Enoch stands out as the one whose life is totally committed to his Lord. Such a man has an opportunity to influence generations of descendants.

Incredibly, Enoch prophesied concerning the Second Coming of Jesus Christ:

And it was also about these men that Enoch, in the seventh generation from Adam, prophesied, saying, "Behold, the Lord came with many thousands of His holy ones, to execute judgment upon all, and to convict all the ungodly of all their ungodly deeds

which they have done in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him” (Jude 14-15).

5:23 - ALL THE DAYS. *“So all the days of Enoch were three hundred and sixty-five years.”* Enoch is the first in the line to live fewer than eight hundred years. The “days” of his life may not have been as many as those of his ancestors, but there is no question that the quality of his life is the thing that the Lord recognized.

5:24 - WALKED WITH GOD. *“Enoch walked with God; and he was not, for God took him.”* I remember a Bible quiz my mother found when I was a child. One of the questions was, “Blank’ was the oldest man who ever lived, yet he died before his father.” The answer of course was Methuselah, whose father never died. Another question she asked us - she constantly asked questions about the Bible - was, “Who were the only two people who never died physically?” Of course the answer is Enoch and Elijah. Is it possible that no one else ever loved the Lord as much as these two men? Or, that no one else ever lived who was as godly? What about John the Baptist, of whom Jesus said there was none greater who ever lived? Why did John the Baptist have to be killed instead of being translated like Enoch and Elijah?

The only answer we can give to those questions is that God acted according to His sovereign will and purpose. We might think of other people whom we might choose if we were doing the choosing: Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, Isaiah, Paul, John. We are given but one reason why Enoch was translated, or taken to Heaven without having to die to get there. He “walked with God; and he was not, for God took him.” The Hebrew word for “walk” also denotes obedience to God’s laws (Gen. 17:1), as well as fellowship with God. “This could mean that God not only instructed Enoch, but that Enoch obeyed God” [NCWB].

In Hebrews 11:5, we are informed that he was translated to heaven “a mighty miracle, designed to give proof to people in an age of unbelief that the doctrines which Enoch had taught (Jude 1:14, 15) were true and that his devotedness to the cause of God and righteousness in the midst of opposition was highly pleasing to God” [NCWB].

5:25 - METHUSELAH. *“Methuselah lived one hundred and eighty-seven years, and became the father of Lamech.”* The name “Methuselah” comes from two words, one meaning “male” and a second word which may be translated “missile” (weapon). The one reason his name stands out in human history is that he lived longer than any other person who has ever lived on earth. That was not anything like as long as he has already been in Heaven, not does it compare with eternity.

5:26 - SONS AND DAUGHTERS. *“Then Methuselah lived seven hundred and eighty-two years after he became the father of Lamech, and he had other sons and daughters.”* Like his fathers before him, he was the father of many sons and daughters. This a different person from the one mentioned in the preceding chapter.

5:27 - NINE HUNDRED AND SIXTY-NINE YEARS. “So all the days of Methuselah were nine hundred and sixty-nine years, and he died.” I once heard someone speak disparagingly of Methuselah, pointing out that the only thing he is remember for is living longer than anyone else. Some well-meaning people really say some dumb things! We are not given enough information about this man to make such a judgment. He might well have been a very godly man- in addition to qualifying for the famous *Guinness’ Book of World Records*.

5:28 - LAMECH. “*Lamech lived one hundred and eighty-two years, and became the father of a son.*” The name “Lamech” is of uncertain origin or meaning. However, at this point there is a change in the genealogical record. Instead of naming the son as in the earlier cases the Scripture simply says that he became the father of a son.

He spoke on the occasion of Noah’s birth, i.e., “rest” or “comfort,” as if “the cursed ground had become too difficult to work and hoping that Noah could help with the problem (Cassuto). Alternatively, Lamech may have been anticipating relief from the general, prevailing conditions of the cursed earth; simply put, hoping that the pervading evil would be remedied [NCWB].

5:29 - NOAH. “*Now he called his name Noah, saying, "This one will give us rest from our work and from the toil of our hands arising from the ground which the LORD has cursed."* The name “Noah” means “rest,” and it is similar in sound to the Hebrew word meaning “to comfort.” The author of the Bible Knowledge Commentary observes that,

“Comfort” is not the meaning of “Noah,” but the words sound the same. Lamech had no idea how God would turn these words around and fulfill the wish in His own way (cf. comments on 6:5-8), but he did have high hopes for his boy. Thus a second glimmer of hope appears in this chapter of death. Enoch escaped the curse of death, and Noah would comfort those under the curse [BKC].

Every serious student of the Word is aware of the fact that there are certain pivotal characters in the Bible whom God used to preserve His covenant people, to bless His people, or to maintain His Messianic promise. Such a man was Noah. Others include Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Joshua, Samuel, David, and various other judges and prophets.

THIS ONE WILL GIVE US REST. The rest to which the Lord refers has something to do with the curse. How would Noah give this rest? “By preserving a remnant in the ark. Christ would eventually come and give ultimate victory over the curse” [RSB]. Whatever Lamech had in mind when he gave Noah his name, it seems that it was an expression of hope. “As a sign of their painful separation from God, humans continually seek comfort from other human sources. Future generations may offer new hope to the world. They cannot solve our sin problem. Bringing children into the world does not relieve sin’s curse and make life easier” [DSB].

5:30 - THEN LAMECH LIVED. “*Then Lamech lived five hundred and ninety-five years after he became the father of Noah, and he had other sons and daughters.*” Lamech’s life overlapped that of Noah nearly six hundred years, during which time he became the father of many other children, all

of whom either died before the Flood or perished in it.

5:31 - AND HE DIED. *“So all the days of Lamech were seven hundred and seventy-seven years, and he died.”* Lamech lived to see Noah’s three sons born after Noah was five hundred years old, The oldest of the sons of Noah would have been ninety-five years old when Lamech died. He died five years before the Flood, which means that he witnessed the corruption of humanity of which the Lord speaks in chapter 6. He witnessed the work on the Ark, but died before the Flood.

5:32 - NOAH LIVED. *“Noah was five hundred years old, and Noah became the father of Shem, Ham, and Japheth.”* No mention is made of any children being born to Noah and his wife before the birth of Shem, Ham, and Jepheth, whom we will meet in the following chapters. Assuming no gap in the record, the following chart notes the date of birth and death of the early patriarchs [HM: 154]

PATRIARCH	Yr/Birth	Age/b. Of Next Patr.	Yr/Death
Adam	1	130	930
Seth	130	105	1042
Enos	235	90	1140
Cainan	325	70	1235
Mahalaleel	395	65	1290
Zared	460	162	1422
Enoch	622	65	987*
Methuselah	687	187	1656**
Lamech	874	182	1651
Noah	1056	500	2006

* Did not die

** Methuselah died in the year of the flood (according to this chart).

Taking the recorded ages at face value, it is interesting to note that Adam lived until Lamech, the father of Noah, was fifty-six years old, and Noah was born fourteen years after the death of Seth.

Most likely, the oldest of the living patriarchs maintained the primary responsibility for preserving and promulgating God’s Word to his contemporaries. Since both Enoch and Lamech were outlived by their fathers, there were only seven men in the line before Noah who had this responsibility. This probably explains why, in II Peter 2:5, Noah is called “eighth preacher of righteousness” in the “old World [HM: 54].

In the interest of fairness and balance, it is only appropriate the note that many students of the Word do not subscribe to such a literal record, preferring instead a view that holds that there are gaps in the record. If that is the case, there is no way we can accurately date the flood, or the dates of the birth of the early antediluvian patriarchs. We do know, however, that the patriarchs who lived before the Flood had an average life span of about 900 years (Gen 5). “The ages of post-Flood patriarchs dropped rapidly and gradually leveled off (Gen 11). Some suggest that this is due to major environmental changes brought about by the Flood” [BSB]. Another problem with accurately dating the Flood is that we are not given the information we need to calculate the number of years between the Flood and the call of Abraham (about 2000 B. C. - and that still means “Before Christ”).

IV. NOAH AND THE FLOOD, 6:1-9:29

A The Causes of the Flood, 6:1-13

Little could I have imagined what I was about to discover about the Flood when I entered that classroom for my first class in Archaeology. I had grown up on church, participated in both the Junior Memory work and Intermediate Sword Drill through the Training Union program in our church and the Mississippi Baptist Convention, and sat under two of the most outstanding preachers of the Gospel I have ever known, M. C. Waldrup and Henning Andrews. My freshman advisor at Mississippi College was the late Dr. E. R. Pinson, for many years a kind, gracious, but no nonsense professor of Bible. I am glad they still had a Bible Department instead of a “Religion” department when I was at Mississippi College. The world is filled with religion, but Christianity is not one of them. Christianity is a relationship based on the supernatural revelation of God’s redemptive love. Religion has to do with man’s pursuit of God, a god, or gods. Christianity is all about God’s effort to reach man. “God commended His love toward us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (Rom. 5:8).

When I went to see him before registering for my first semester, he asked what I was planning to major in, and I told him I wanted to major in Bible studies. Dr. Pinson asked, “Are you planning to go to seminary?” My answer was an uncertain, “I hope so.” I was amazed that I was at Mississippi College and did not know how I was going to pay for my education at Mississippi College, let alone seminary. Dr. Pinson looked me in the eye and said, “If God has called you, you can go.” I never said, “I hope so” again. I knew from that point on that I would be going to New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary - I did not know how, but I knew I was going.

Dr. Pinson then told me that my Bible classes in seminary would be on a much deeper level than college classes. He recommended majoring in something else in college. Two Bible courses were required of all students at Mississippi College, an Old Testament survey and a New Testament survey. I could also take some electives in Bible, but I went on to include Bible in a double major and I have never regretted it.

On my second day in my first New Testament class in seminary someone protested that we were not expecting a “pop-test.” To which the professor exclaimed, “You are not in college now!” Then I remembered Dr. Pinson’s words. Then I took my first class in Archaeology and discovered a

whole new field that I had given very little thought. After a few days in Dr. Roy Beaman's class I knew I would be taking all the Archaeology classes I could schedule. After an introduction to the archaeological study of Noah's Flood, I knew I would try to schedule an intensive class in the study of the Flood. I have spelled "Flood" with a capital "F" ever since. More importantly, I began to understand that the Flood was more than a story of God's judgment and a display of His power.

While I had accepted a world-wide flood, I had never imagined the scope, the catastrophic force of the world's greatest cataclysm. I began to understand that a misunderstanding of the Flood evidence fuels evolution. A number of years after I finished my degree in seminary, I went back and earned a Doctor of Ministry degree from Luther Rice Seminary. I spend three years learning what to study and how to study at New Orleans Seminary. The 98 hour Masters program in the six Southern Baptist seminaries is one of the most demanding degrees in the world. I left feeling ignorant, but motivated to establish a personal study program in which I would apply what I had learned. The Doctor Of Ministry degree was pioneered by Luther Rice Seminary and at the time it was believed to have been the most demanding of any D. Min. program.

Once again, I was motivated to intensify my own Bible study program. I read all of Francis Shaeffer's works, some of them three or four times - a few more times and I may begin to understand them. Then there was the day when Andy and Jan Mercer visited our church. I was Jan's mother's pastor at Forest Baptist Church, Forest, Louisiana. Jan introduced me to the whole field of Creation Science. She had taught Biology on the college level for many years and soon after I met the Mercers, Jan took a Sabbatical to study the dinosaur, with special emphasis on the young earth theory. Dr. Mercer introduced me to numerous volumes on the subject of Creation. I spent the next twenty years studying the books and watching video taped presentations by people like Dr. Henry Morris, Dr. Duane Gish, Dr. Stephen Austin, Ken Ham, and many others. Later, I was honored to be asked by Dr. Gene Jeffries, Founder and President of Cambridge Graduate School, to join their faculty, and at that time I became a colleague of Dr. Jan Mercer.

I am not a scientist, but after many years of study I am convinced that the all the available evidence today supports special creation more than evolution - should I say, instead of evolution. I once invited Dr. David Skinner, Professor of Old Testament and Hebrew at Mid-America Seminary, to deliver his Flood Lecture Series to our church. David and I had gone through Mississippi College and New Orleans Seminary together and I knew him to be a solid student of the Word of God. What really impressed me was his literal approach to the Scripture, staying with what the Hebrew spells out clearly. He also shared evidence for the Flood that I had not known before. For example, I had never read in a local paper or seen a program on television about the lady who dropped a piece of coal she was about to put in into her heater, and picking it up she found that it has broken into two pieces. The lower piece swung below the piece she held in her hand, suspended from a gold chain! Then there is the hammer handle that and partially turned to coal, and then there was the petrified hat. Then I discovered that geological layers have been discovered in which layers assigned to an earlier age are on top of layers assigned a younger age.

The more I studied this subject, the more convinced I became that you have to have a lot of

faith to believe in evolution. I am also keenly aware of the problem facing a godless, atheistic evolutionist if he rejects evolution in favor of special creation. If you have special creation, you must have a Creator; if there is a design, there must be a Designer. Noah's Flood story is one of the most amazing accounts in the world today. There is evidence that will fit no other model but the Flood. As a matter of fact, an understanding of the biblical account of the Flood will clear up a lot of mysteries that have long confounded scientists. That is the reason that many of today's Creation scientists used to be evolutionists.

6:1 - MEN BEGAN TO MULTIPLY. *“Now it came about, when men began to multiply on the face of the land, and daughters were born to them.”* This is interesting! What have we just read in chapter five? All these patriarchs lived nine hundred years and became the father of many sons and daughters. We have to assume that their children lived long lives and continued to reproduce until the world - at least their little corner of it - must have seemed rather crowded.

6:2 -THE SONS OF GOD. *“That the sons of God saw that the daughters of men were beautiful; and they took wives for themselves, whomever they chose.”* At this point things really start picking up in the commentaries, and understandably so. The focus of the commentaries is the identity of the “sons of God.” Some hold this to be a reference to supernatural beings, fallen angels, followers of Satan who, because of this unique sin, incurred the wrath of God. The phrase “sons of God” is used elsewhere in the Old Testament almost exclusively of angels (Job 1:6; 2:1; 38:7). However, Angels do not procreate after their kind (Mark 12:25). Then, how could this be a reference to angels? Some believe that on this unique occasion they did cohabit with human women to produce human offspring. It has been suggested that these fallen angels inhabited human beings (demon possession?) and in that manner “took wives for themselves.”

A second possibility, subscribed to by some scholars, is that this is a reference to the descendants of Seth, “who were professedly religious; by the latter, the descendants of apostate Cain (Stigers). Mixed marriages between parties of opposite principles and practice led to moral corruption” [NCWB]. Though commentaries may never agree on the identity of either group, we can all agree that this union between good and evil forces angered God.

A third possibility is that the “sons of God” were pagan kings, “often viewed in the ancient Near East as the offspring and representatives of the gods. According to this interpretation, these kings produced large harems and introduced unprecedented decadence. Whatever the nature or agents of the sin, it was sufficient to grieve the Lord so much (v. 6) that He sent the Flood” [DSB].

THE DAUGHTERS OF MEN. Our interpretation of “the daughters of men” will be influenced by the identity of “the sons of God.” If “the sons of God” are fallen angels, then women would simply be human beings. In this case, the fallen angels found the women of the earth to be beautiful and “they took them for themselves, whomsoever they chose.”

If the “sons of God” were descendants of the godly line of Seth, then “the daughters of men would denote the descendants of Cain, and their sin was the intermarriage between the godly and the

ungodly. “The Cainites were characterized by cleverness, culture, civilization, selfishness, sensuality and ungodliness (4:16-24). On the other hand, the Sethites were devoted to God (4:25), consecrated to God (4:26), enjoyed fellowship with God (5:22), testified for God (Heb. 11:5), served God (5:29), and received grace from God (v. 8)” [DSB].

John MacArthur (MacArthur Study Bible, MSB) subscribes to the view that the “sons of God” are fallen angels, noting as we have already, that the term is used almost exclusively in the Old Testament of angels. This passage, he holds, “places strong emphasis on the angelic vs. human contrast. The NT places this event in sequence with other Genesis events and identifies it as involving **fallen angels who indwelt men** (emphasis added). Matthew 22:30 does not necessarily negate the possibility that angels are capable of procreation, but just that they do not marry. To procreate physically, they had to possess human, male bodies” [MSB].

WHOM THEY CHOSE. This could mean anything from a forced relationship, in which a king or some other powerful man took whatever woman appealed to him, whether young maiden or married woman. Some see this as meaning that these “sons of God” were irresistible to women, especially to women who did not know or follow God.

6:3 - THE LORD SAID. “*Then the LORD said, ‘My Spirit shall not strive with man forever, because he also is flesh; nevertheless his days shall be one hundred and twenty years.’*” When Yahweh saw this sin, He issued His judgment. Are we to assume that no one had committed adultery up to this point? Hardly. The sin here is of a particularly offensive nature and the Lord responds with a pronouncement of judgment. Once again, the meaning is disputed. Two interpretations have been suggested: “(1) the reference is to the Holy Spirit striving in the sense of judging or executing judgment on mankind for its sinfulness; (2) the human spirit that God placed in human beings would not always abide (i.e., mankind was doomed to death)” [RSB]. Evangelical Christians often make another application of this. They believe that the Holy Spirit, Who according to John 16, continually convicts lost people of sin, judgment, and the need to repent and trust Jesus Christ for salvation, will not always strive with those who close the eyes and ears of their spirit to Him.

ONE HUNDRED AND TWENTY YEARS. Once again, there are two possibilities. First, it may mean that God would give man 120 years before the judgment of the Flood would fall. Secondly, it may simply point to man’s shortened life expectancy after the flood. There might be little sense of urgency in an announcement that these people would face judgment in 120 years if they did not repent. For that matter, there might not have been much incentive to repent of the messages was that their descendants would have their life expectancy shortened. We are not given enough details here to be second guessing God, but it is probable that “the corruption of the world, which had now reached its height, had been long and *gradually* increasing, and this idea receives support from the long respite granted (1 Pet. 3:20). During this period, Noah, in word and deed, was a “herald of righteousness” (2 Pet. 2:5)” [NCWB].

The Lord had been long-suffering and merciful. We do not expect a knee-jerk reaction from God. He knows not only what He is going to do in the future, He also knows what we are going to

do before we do it. They had been given ample time to repent, but rather than repenting they had grown steadily more evil. His mercy is about to be replaced by His judgment. Adam Clarke writes:

It is only by the influence of the Spirit of God that the carnal mind can be subdued and destroyed; but those who wilfully resist and grieve that Spirit must be ultimately left to the hardness and blindness of their own hearts, if they do not repent and turn to God. God delights in mercy, and therefore a gracious warning is given. Even at this time the earth was ripe for destruction; but God promised them one hundred and twenty years' respite: if they repented in that interim, well; if not, they should be destroyed by a flood [CLARKE].

6:4 - THE NEPHILIM. *“The Nephilim were on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of men, and they bore children to them. Those were the mighty men who were of old, men of renown.”* The Nephilim is a name given to two peoples, one before the Flood and the other after (Num. 13:33). The name means “to fall,” implying not a weakness in themselves, but strength; i.e., to fall upon others because they were men of great strength. “Evidently they were in the earth before the marriages of Gen. 6:2 and were not the offspring of those marriages from which came the mighty men (military men) and men of renown (of wealth or power)” [RSB]. The traditional rendering is “giants” (from the Greek translation).

The etymology of the term (nephilim, Heb.) is uncertain. Two derivations are suggested: (1) the "separate ones," from the Hebrew verb palah, meaning "to be separated," "to be distinct"; or (2) the "fallen ones," from the verb naphal (Heb.), meaning "to fall." People of enormous size existed in ancient Israel (Num. 13:31-33, note; Deut. 2:20, note). "And also afterward" indicates that the "giants" existed both before and after the sin of the "sons of God" and, therefore, were not their offspring. [BSB].

MIGHTY MEN. The Nephilim were men “of old,” “mighty men,” and they men of “renown.” No further information is given about these mighty men here, but if there is one thing we should glean from this, it is that whoever these “men of renown” were, they were not to be feared by those who place their faith in the Lord. Two classes of men are here described, both of strong mind and body.

Barnes discusses these mighty men:

“The giants,” the well-known men of great stature, physical force, and violent will, who were enabled by these qualities to claim and secure the supremacy over their fellow-men. “Had been in the land in those days.” In the days when those intermarriages were beginning to take place, the warriors were asserting the claim of might. Violence and rapine were becoming rampant in the land. “And after that.” The progeny of the mixed marriages were the second and subsequent class of leading men. “The sons of God” are here contradistinguished from the “nephilim, or giants,” who appear therefore to have belonged to the Cainites. The offspring of these unhallowed

unions were the heroes, the gallants, the mighty men, the men of renown. They were probably more refined in manners and exalted in thought than their predecessors of pure Cainite descent. "Men of name," whose names are often in men's mouths, because they either deserved or required to be named frequently on account of their influential or representative character. Being distinguished from the common herd by prominent qualities or memorable exploits, they were also frequently marked out by a special name or surname, derived from such trait of character or deed of notoriety [BARNES].

Ten of the twelve spies Moses sent into the land of Canaan brought back the negative report: "There also we saw the Nephilim (the sons of Anak are part of the Nephilim); and we became like grasshoppers in our own sight, and so we were in their sight" (Num.13:33). God's people should understand that even in the Land of Promise they can expect to meet some giants, some problems that seem to dwarf them, and indeed, in the flesh those trials will totally dwarf them. But when one's faith is in Jesus Christ he will go forward with the faith Joshua and Caleb, assured that God will grant them the victory. I recently caught part of a sermon by Adrian Rodgers on American Family Radio. He said in that message, "Jesus did not come to earth to get you out of trouble, He came to get in to trouble with you" (to help you out of it).

6:5 - THE LORD SAW. *"Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually."* We are only a few chapters from the passage that tells us that God created certain things and the he saw that it was good. Now, He looks at the earth and sees "that the wickedness of man was great." Francis Shaeffer stressed that we should never be surprised at how low fallen man will stoop - probably not his exact words, but the thought is close. There is no stronger statement of the depth of man's depravity than this. Sadly, the Flood did not alter man's sinful nature. For a fuller discussion of the sinful nature of man, see the catalog of sins in Romans 1:24-32 and the clear presentation of the doctrine of sin in the doctrinal section of Romans (Romans 1:18-3:20) . The universal corruption of man is discussed in Romans 3:10-18. Consider the highlighted words or phrases and parenthetical notes in the following passage from Romans 1:26-32:

For this reason **God gave them over to degrading passions;** for their women exchanged the natural function for that which is unnatural, and in the same way also the men abandoned the natural function of the woman and burned in their desire toward one another, men with men committing indecent acts and receiving in their own persons the due penalty of their error (homosexuality). And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer, **God gave them over to a depraved mind,** to do those things which are not proper, **being filled with all unrighteousness,** wickedness, greed, evil; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malice; they are gossips, slanderers, haters of God, insolent, arrogant, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, without understanding, untrustworthy, unloving, unmerciful; and although **they know** the ordinance of God, that those who practice such things are worthy of death, **they not only do the same, but also give hearty approval to those who**

practice them.

It is interesting that in this particular passage Paul stresses the wickedness of homosexuality without mentioning immorality in general. Is it possible that the reason was that when a society reaches the point that homosexuality is accepted as normal other forms of immorality are probably rampant?

Two things stand out in this passage. First, left to his own devices, man will grow more and more sinful, not more and more righteous. Left to his own nature man will progressively grow more wicked until he reaches the point that he not only commits those sins mentioned in this passage, he also takes pleasure in seeing others participate in those same sins. Secondly, the cause of man's rebellion against God is not ignorance, but iniquity.

6:6 - THE LORD WAS SORRY. *“The LORD was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart.”* The expression, “the Lord was Sorry” does not imply repentance, or a need for repentance (KJV, “And it repented the LORD that he had made man”). “The description ‘was sorry’ expresses God’s change of action (v. 7) in terms understandable to man. God would no longer be long-suffering with such widespread wickedness. Sin impacts the work which the Spirit does (Eph. 4:30)” [BSB].

God’s character and nature cannot change (Mal. 3:6; James 1:17); but, by this anthropomorphic language, he is described as about to alter his visible procedure toward mankind—from being merciful and longsuffering, he was about to show himself as a God of judgment; and, since mankind had become wicked, he was about to introduce a terrible display of his justice (Eccles. 8:11) [NCWB].

HE WAS GRIEVED. There is grief in Heaven? How can God be grieved? You mean when we place our trust in God He does not deliver us from grief? If he cannot deliver Himself from grief, how can He deliver us? We need to give some thought to the significance of how our sin affects God. Somewhere in this term we must see both the holiness of God which demands punishment for sin, and also the grace (unmerited love) of God which offers forgiveness and hope. “Grieve” is a human term, given to help us understand how God looks upon the sins of mankind. But not only is there grief in Heaven over the sins of the world, there is also rejoicing when sins are forgiven. Jesus said, “I tell you that in the same way, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance” (Luke 15:7).

6:7 - THE LORD SAID. *“The LORD said, ‘I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land, from man to animals to creeping things and to birds of the sky; for I am sorry that I have made them.’* Yahweh God is never at a loss for words! “The LORD said” should never be seen as words to fill the space or simply to identify the source of a proclamation. It does that, but it does a lot more. In chapter one, He spoke and the world came into existence. Now, He speaks and both His holiness and His power are seen in judgment.

If the Lord had a message concerning the sins of the people in Noah's day, He certainly has a message for us today. All we have to do is read His Word, meditate on it, and apply it daily. To recall the themes of two books by Francis Schaeffer, *He Is There*, and *He Is Not Silent*. He exists, the great I Am, Who was, Who Is, Who is to be, the changeless God of eternity, the self-existent One Whose existence accounts for our existence, but precludes the existence of any other god.

He is the one Sovereign God, Creator, Sustainer, Redeemer. He is Elohim, Who spoke and fifty billion solar systems came into existence and began to function as designed, created by the power of His word, sustained by His power of His presence. Now, He speaks and life on the earth will be blotted out, with the exception of those He protects.

We live in a day when the church is in the wilderness. You can hardly tell many church members from lost people. The church has embraced moral relativism. We have made a religion of ferreting out racism in our society without understanding that racism is a symptom of underlying sin. "Love one another" covers racism once and for all time! We are never going to wipe out racism as long as those carrying on the crusade hate racists. They should hate racism, but love even a racist.

Why bring up racism? That is really simple. What else are liberals in America passionate about? What else is the liberal Christian in America passionate about? It is certainly not gambling, lust, homosexuality, or the murder of forty million unborn human beings. Since the terrorists' attacks of September 11, 2001, millions of church members have wept over 6,000 killed in an unspeakably evil act of terrorism, but many in that number will fight you for the right to kill babies. There has been a revival of patriotism, which is good. But I am convinced that predictions of a genuine spiritual revival in America today are very optimistic. How can Christians make a slogan of "God Bless America" without repenting of sin?

If for one evening we could see what God sees every moment as He looks at His church, we would never be the same again. If we could for one moment look over the shoulder of every person in America who professes to be a Christian and see that to which his/her eyes are affixed on the television screen and the computer monitor, we might appreciate what we are about to read in this passage. How many church members sit down each evening in front of a television to be entertained with filth, obscenity, profanity, nudity or near nudity, and violence? How many professing Christians sit staring at pornography on the Internet each week? Children take the language of the TV and their homes with them to school, and do not understand why many teachers find it unacceptable. Crude references to body parts and body functions are common among even younger children, including many from Christian homes.

A holy God must, to be consistent with His nature, must condemn sin. And that is the last thing the church in the wilderness of sin wants to hear. The thing most despised by the church in America today is when one is judgmental. My wife and I were in a restaurant when the waitress came over and asked where we had been. "I have seen you in a couple of weeks!"

I had been in Glorieta, New Mexico for the meeting of the Board of Trustees for LifeWay

Christian Resources and then I came back and a week or so later I attended the Executive Board meeting of the Louisiana Baptist Convention. I had not been in for two or three weeks. I asked the young lady a couple of questions and she told me where she went to church and then added, "But I don't like Southern Baptists! They are too judgmental." I thought that was a judgmental statement but I did not say that. For one thing, it is hard to concentrate when your wife is kicking your shin under the table. For another, I wanted to know where the lady was going with this. It was far more important to know that she knew the Lord than to change her mind about Southern Baptists.

I recently listened to an interview, possibly on a Focus on the Family program, or one hosted by Tim Wildmon and Marvin Sanders (American Family Radio). The speaker explained that on many of the more liberal college campuses in America, dating and going steady are out. Now, they just "hook up." They take up with someone they like, live promiscuously, and defy anyone to judge them. Intolerance is the one thing they condemn. Tolerance "covers a multitude of sins." After a few weeks, if the young man finds someone else with whom he wants to "hook up," the girl may be devastated, but what can she say about it? To condemn her former lover (how do they distinguish love from lust?) would be intolerant and judgmental.

Following the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon by terrorists, September 11, 2001, millions of Americans were highly offended when a well-known pastor suggested that God might use this attack to judge America. He was called intolerant, judgmental. Everywhere signs, billboards, bumper stickers, and yard signs appeared with the petition, "God Bless America." To a people who make filth their family entertainment, that may be no more than a slogan.

Is God judging America? The terrorists sought to kill "innocent" people, civilians who were not threat to them in any way. God knew they were going to do it, He could have prevented it, He did not stop it. However, there are numerous reports of why many people were late for work that day, and reports of people leaving the second building even though they were told they were safe. Thousands were killed, thousands more spared. Was God involved in saving those who were delayed by traffic problems? If so, why did He not spare all the people? Is it a simple matter of His sovereignty in sparing those He chose to save, or should we look a little deeper?

Terrorists have sent anthrax spores in letters to top political officials and those in the news media. Americans feel much less secure today. President Bush has announced an all out war against terrorism, at home and abroad. We have bombed Afghanistan, the Taliban has been driven into hiding, and the president assures us this war will continue, wherever it leads. We sing, "God Bless America," but there is no indication that Americans as a whole have met the requirements for His blessings:

And (if) My people who are called by My name humble themselves and pray and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, will forgive their sin and will heal their land (2 Chron. 7:14).

Do Americans seriously expect God's blessings without humbling themselves before Him and seeking

His forgiveness?

Make no mistake about it, the attacks were evil. They serve only Satan and his evil forces. Those who spread terrorism through biological weapons are evil people in the service of the devil. They seek to spread fear, break the spirit of Americans, paralyze the economy, and destroy the will to fight these radical elements of Islam. Where is God? Where He has always been. What is God doing? He knows and He is acting according to His character and nature. The question Americans need to ask is not so much why something has happened in the past, but where does God want us to go from here?

Many Americans are in love with fluffy, syrupy devotional material, shallow commentaries, and touchy, feely Bible studies that let them share their feelings. The one thing that seems to be missing is repentance, and a commitment that reflects the results of that repentance. I once observed that there are no more tears in church. People once walked the aisles with tears streaming down their face, confessing sin, and seeking forgiveness. Well, the tears are back, not necessarily the tears of guilt associated with conviction, or the tears of joy that follow repentance, but tears that come to some when another shares some emotional experience.

A study of Genesis 6 may be just what is needed by Americans in general, and in the church in particular. This passage presents a sharp contrast between the holiness of God and the sinfulness of man. It also reveals that God is never at a loss as to what to do. When Adam and Eve sinned, they did not catch God by surprise. When the world was filled with wickedness, God did not respond with hand wringing. He knew exactly what to do: “I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land.” And He did.

6:8 - BUT NOAH. *“But Noah found favor in the eyes of the LORD.”* The Bible is filled with contrasts. In fact, a characteristic of Hebrew poetry was parallelism, in which the second line is often set in contrast to the first line. What we see here is a monumental contrast between Noah and those around him. Remember that the life of Noah overlapped the lives of many of his ancestors, his siblings, and their families.

Ad God looks at man, who was created in His Own image, His words concerning the human race are filled with pathos. Man’s wickedness was great, and every inclination (or, “plan,”) of their minds and hearts was evil continually (cf. 8:21, “every indication of his heart is evil from childhood”). On the other hand, God had made man by design (the word translated “made” in verse 7 means “to form by design”), but man had taken that capacity given to him and produced evil alone. “There is hardly a stronger statement in the Bible about the sin of mankind. This passage gives insight into Jesus’ explanation that “before the Flood people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage” (Matt. 24:38)—seemingly a harmless statement until its context is studied” [BKC]. In addition man was “corrupt” and “full of violence” (Gen. 6:11, 13).

The word-plays in verses 5-8 are interesting. For example, we read that God was sorry (“repented,” KJV) that He had made man because the sin of the race filled Him with pain.

The words “repented,” “pain,” and “made” go back to chapters 3 and 5. Lamech longed for comfort...from the *painful* toil under the curse (5:29). Now God “repented” (was grieved, NIV) that He had made man because human sin *pained* Him (6:6). This is why pain was brought into the world—God was grieved with sin. But now God, rather than comforting man, “repented” after making him. This gave an ironic twist to Lamech’s words. God determined to destroy them all. (“Repented” does not suggest that God changed His mind, for He is changeless [Mal. 3:6]. Instead, it means that God was sorrowful.) Even though swift judgment would fall because God’s Spirit would not always shield (“shield” is better than NIV’s “contend with,” Gen. 6:3) mankind, the judgment would be delayed 120 years (v. 3). During this time Noah was “a preacher of righteousness” (2 Peter 2:5) [BKC].

Noah was a recipient of God’s grace, therefore he was spared from the judgment (in contrast with those who aspired to immortality). In the time of Moses, Israel would know they were chosen of God and should walk in righteousness. They had been miraculously delivered from Egypt and brought into a covenant relationship with Him and Sinai. They, as God’s people, would meet the Nephilim, the Anakites (Num. 13:33), and the Rephaites (Deut. 2:11; 3:13; Josh. 12:4) when they entered the land. But Israel should not fear them. God would judge the world because of its corruption, which was continually manifested in idolatry and fornication. “And in the latter day the wicked will suddenly be swept away by judgment when God will establish His theocratic kingdom of blessing (Matt. 24:36-39)” [BKC].

6:9 - THE RECORDS. *“These are the records of the generations of Noah. Noah was a righteous man, blameless in his time; Noah walked with God.”* This account is a part of the history of early man. Secular anthropologists may speak of pre-historic man, but there is not pre-historic man where God is concerned. Here we have a record of “the generations of Noah.” This is linear history, an account of the created world and its early generations. In 2:4, the author uses the word “account” for this historical record. The account gives

the literary and theological pattern to Genesis (5:1; 6:9; 10:1; 11:10,27; 25:12,19; 36:1,9; 37:2). Toledoth means both an account of a people's history and the generations of people who participate in the history. The Bible focuses upon earthly activities rather than heavenly ones as did many of Israel's neighbors. The Bible points to God's new acts to relate to new generations of people, whereas other religions focused on repeated acts in the divine world which determined the fate of the human world. Thus creation is not a mythical fight among the gods but an earthly action by the one God to prepare a place for the human creatures with whom He wished to relate in freedom and love [DSB].

NOAH WALKED WITH GOD. Like Enoch Gen. 5:22-24), Noah walked with God. The Scripture states that “Noah was a righteous man, blameless in his time.” This is a fitting description of any one who walks with God. This does not mean that Noah was not perfect or sinless. He was a

man who consistently walked with the Lord in righteousness. When he sinned he repented and found forgiveness and restoration.

By saying that Noah walked with God, it indicates that he lived a life of obedience and faithfulness to God and it explains the statements about his moral character. Since the fall of Adam no man has been free from sin except Jesus Christ. But in living by faith he was just (Gal. 3:2; Heb. 11:7) and perfect, or “blameless” (RSV, NASB, NEB, NIV)—i.e., sincere in his desire to do God’s will [NCWB].

6:10 - THREE SONS. “*Noah became the father of three sons: Shem, Ham, and Japheth.*” Every person in the world today is descended from one of these three men. The Semitic people are descended from Shem, Caucasians from Japheth, and others from Ham. This is a good starting place for anthropologists and historians. Every person can trace his lineage back to Noah through one of these three sons.

6:11 - THE EARTH WAS CORRUPT. “*Now the earth was corrupt in the sight of God, and the earth was filled with violence.*” This is not a subjective appraisal of the moral conditions of mankind, but the assessment of the only One Who is unequivocally qualified to judge. In Yahweh lies both the truth to know and render such judgment, but also the sovereign right to make the judgment. The Lord had looked at His creation in chapter one and proclaimed to be good, even very good. Now, He looks at Fallen man finds it evil. In the absence of any organized government it is easy to imagine what evils might arise. Men did what was right in their own eyes, and, having no fear of God, ignored his moral law. That is anarchy.

FILLED WITH VIOLENCE. The terrorism to which America has been subjected since early in the morning of September 11, 2001 has been a shock to people around the world. What we have witnessed is unparalleled in scope and nature in the history of America, but it is certainly not unique in the history of the world. Hitler and his henchmen killed fifteen million people, and had they been successful they would have continued the reign of death until every Jew - and every evangelical Christian was dead. The Japanese showed no mercy to prisoners during WW II. But all the Japanese and Nazis did pales in comparison to the blood spilled by the Communists, driven by their commitment to world wide revolution.

In one of the Brock and Bodie Thoene novels about Zion, and American flier and his co-pilot were captured by Arabs in Palestine, in 1948. The Arabs were trying to kill all the Jews and they hated America because of her support, as late as it was in coming. The prisoners were sure they would be killed after they were beaten mercilessly. The interesting thing was that the officer who led this group of Arabs was British. When the British officer finished his interrogation, the pilot asked if he might ask him a question. The question he asked the WW II veteran who had spent years fighting the Nazis was, “How does it feel to be doing the work of the Nazis?” Israel was filled with Arabs who were there to kill all Jews. Fast forward to the present generation: Palestinian snipers set up shop in a school, hospital, or nursery and fire at Israeli citizens, men, women, or children. They just want to kill Jews. Arab evangelist Anis Shirosh, whose father was killed by Jews, has testified that in

his youth he lived to become old enough to start killing Jews. That was before he was saved and called to preach the Gospel. Anis and I were friends at Mississippi College and I was inspired, but not surprised to hear him say, “When I stand on a street in Jerusalem and look at a Jew and love him, it is a miracle from God.”

The world is still filled with violence, and we can be sure that it will be filled with violence until Jesus puts a stop to it. Our Lord reveals in the Book of Amos that He is keenly aware of violence and injustice in the world, and that He not only holds individuals accountable, He holds nations accountable.

6:12 - ALL FLESH. *“God looked on the earth, and behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted their way upon the earth.”* This verse not only repeats the statement in the previous verse that the earth was corrupt in the sight of God, it affirms and strengthens that statement: “for all flesh had corrupted their way upon the earth.” To see what happens when God removes all restraints, read again the catalog of sins in the first chapter of Romans and see the progression in sin when God gives man up to his own devices and permits him to follow his own reprobate mind.

6:13 - THEN GOD SAID. *“Then God said to Noah, “The end of all flesh has come before Me; for the earth is filled with violence because of them; and behold, I am about to destroy them with the earth.”* The Lord God saw, and now He speaks. He spoke to the one righteous man who followed Him in reverent obedience. God is both omniscient and sovereign: “The end of all flesh has come before Me.” The grounds are set for judgment: “the earth was filled with violence.”

I AM ABOUT TO DESTROY THEM. Judgment was imminent, and it would be catastrophic in nature. He had the power to create the earth and He has the power and right to destroy it. We must see the sovereignty of God in all this. His sovereignty is based in His nature and He is justified in whatever action He takes because He had created the earth and all that existed on the planet.

How startling must have been the announcement of the threatened destruction! There was no outward indication of it. The course of nature and experience seemed against the probability of its occurrence. The public opinion of mankind would ridicule it. Yet, persuaded that the message was from God, through faith (Heb. 11:7), he set about preparing the means for preserving himself and his family from the impending calamity [NCWB].

B. The Historical Account of the Flood, 6:14-8:19

6:14 - MAKE...AN ARK. *“Make for yourself an ark of gopher wood; you shall make the ark with rooms, and shall cover it inside and out with pitch.”* The term “ark” (*tevah*) probably referred to a chest or box. In Ex. 2:3, 5 this word was used for the basket of bulrushes in which baby Moses was hidden.

There is one other point that we must not miss here. The ark was a type, portraying the rescue of believers by Christ (1 Pet. 3:20, 21). Old Testament scholars often speak of “types” of Christ, possibly without considering the fact that the person in the pew may be confused because the word “type” denotes kind to him. I have a tin-type of my great grandfather. A tin-type is a picture, predating the modern photograph. From this tin type I can see what this ancestor looked like. The ark is a picture of what Jesus Christ did for us.

GOPHER WOOD. Since we have no wood today which is identified as “gopherwood,” we cannot be certain as to the identity of the material used in building the ark. However, most students of the Word believe the reference is to cypress, or possibly cedar.

PITCH. The word “pitch” denotes the tar-like resin with which the ark was to be sealed inside and out to prevent leaks. Some suggest that it was bitumen or asphalt.

6:15 - HOW YOU WILL MAKE IT. *“This is how you shall make it: the length of the ark three hundred cubits, its breadth fifty cubits, and its height thirty cubits.”* Who better than the Architect of the universe to design the ark? No one had ever built a ship before this time, and no one would have dreamed of building one on dry ground, far from an ocean.

CUBITS. We cannot be sure of the a cubit in Noah’s day, but if it later in history we know it was 18 inches. This means that the ark was 450 feet long, 75 feet wide, and 45 feet high.

It was shaped like a huge box, probably with a flat bottom. The Hebrew word translated “window” occurs only here in the O.T., and its precise meaning is unknown. Some translate it “roof” and interpret it as the roof of the vessel, which was 18 inches (one cubit) above the walls. The term traditionally has been interpreted as the window mentioned later (8:6). The ark had three levels or “decks” [BSB].

Critics, mostly evolutions who would like to shoot down the whole idea of a world-wide flood, have claimed that the dimensions of the Ark would have rendered it inefficient. However, Creation scientists, after years of study, have concluded that the size and proportions of the ark were exactly what the use demanded. The proportions are similar to those used in building great ships today, but the shape has led critics to insist that it could not have been easily controlled, or piloted. My response is, Where was it going? All it had to do was float. The dimensions were right for buoyancy, and that is what was needed. Some have suggested that there might have been a square hole in the middle of the boat which would have permitted water to seek its outside level within the walled center of the boat, which would have prevented it from rolling over.

Furthermore, the capacity of the ark would have accommodated Noah and his family (eight people), all the animals plus, and food enough for all of them. The volume of space within the ark was approximately 1.4 million square feet, or roughly the equivalent of 522 boxcars, railroad people know would accommodate 125,000 sheep. There might have been 72,000 animals on the ark, and while there were elephants, zebras, and other large animals on board, the average size might well have been that of sheep. There would have been mice, rabbits, and moles on the ark, as well as birds of

various sizes. The ark was adequate for its commissioned task. If that size had not been adequate, it would have been bigger.

6:16 -A WINDOW. *“You shall make a window for the ark, and finish it to a cubit from the top; and set the door of the ark in the side of it; you shall make it with lower, second, and third decks.”* The divine designer gave Noah plans specific plans by which the ark would be built, including a window. This window was an 18 inch space for light and air which ran around the top edge of the ark.

DOOR. There was one door in the side of the ark. As most Sunday School pictures show it, the door would let down to become a loading ramp for Noah and his family as well as the animals which they would load onto the ark. It had to be a large door.

DECKS. There were three decks in the ark of 33,750 square feet each, for a total of 101,250 square feet. The ark was adequate, especially when we remember that the larger animals did not have to be adult animals.

6:17 - I, EVEN I, AM BRINGING THE FLOOD. *“Behold, I, even I am bringing the flood of water upon the earth, to destroy all flesh in which is the breath of life, from under heaven; everything that is on the earth shall perish.”* Any time you see an expression like this one: “I, even I” - especially when God is speaking - think, “this is emphatic!” The Creator of the universe is acting according to His sovereignty. Calvinists often refer to “the sovereignty of grace.” I place great value and emphasis on the sovereignty of God. The Flood was God’s answer to the sinful rebellion of man. Someone may ask, “Was not a world-wide flood that destroyed the entire human race, with the exception of eight people, a very severe action on God’s part?” My answer: “You bet it was!” But while there is much to learn about God in considering the severity of the punishment, there is far more to be learned when we consider just how serious a matter sin is in the eyes of God. And even in this age of moral relativism, it is still God’s eyes that matter.

We live in an age when people commit horrible act of immorality, infidelity, or violence and dismiss it with a shrug: “Hey, I did something stupid. But we all do stupid things.” Stupid it may be, but the Bible teaches that it is not stupidity behind our actions, but sin; it not ignorance but iniquity.

The Flood was no accident, it was intentional! It was supernatural, from beginning to en. God Himself tells us, “I, even I” caused it. The Flood, spelled with a capital “F” by students of the Old Testament, was one of the most significant events in the history of the world, having the most cataclysmic effect of any thing that has ever happened on earth.

TO DESTROY ALL FLESH. This pronouncement of judgment affirms both the sovereignty of God and the holiness of God. His holiness demands a response to sin because sin is rebellion against Him. Sin is an “in your face” affront to the One who is absolutely holy. His announcement of the destruction of “all flesh” should be a warning to everyone in the world today, but it is obvious that modern man, for the most part, has chosen to neglect, or reject that warning.

God reveals the scope of His judgment: “All flesh in which is the breath of life, from under heaven; everything that is on the earth shall perish.” All flesh, man higher and lower animals, and the birds of the air (“that is on the earth”) would be destroyed. This verse answers the critics of the Word of God who reject a world-wide flood in favor of local floods in various places at various times. In 2001, there was a television program dealing with mysteries of the world. In this program the host explained that they found where Noah’s flood took place. The proof was the discovery of an ancient sea coast (it may have been the Caspian Sea) with evidence that the area had been inhabited by human beings at some time in the past.

Amazingly, many scientists are quick to adopt any theory that permits them to use science to judge the Bible rather than the other way around. Some time in the middle of the Twentieth Century someone published a list that had been drawn up a century earlier by a group of scientists. The title of the list was “One Hundred Facts That Disprove the Bible.” It was pointed out at that time that every one of those “scientific facts” published a century earlier had been disproved within one hundred years! And the Bible still stand as the Book by which everything else will be judged - correct, infallible, and inerrant in every area to which it speaks.

This was a world-wide flood. The fact that every major ancient civilization had flood story does not negate the fact of a world-wide flood. One must really want to reject a world-wide flood in order to claim that the evidence points to local floods. Every civilization, great or small, can be traced back to three men whom God saved from the Flood, Shem, Ham, and Japheth. Can any one be so naive as to believe that these men did not tell their children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren about the Flood? By the same token, I have a question for those who insist that Moses borrowed from the Code of Hammurabi when he was writing the Mosaic Law. Where did Hammurabi get his law? Noah taught his sons, who taught their sons, who taught their sons, and one of those descendants of Noah retained enough of the teachings God had given Noah to teach them to Hammurabi.

Assuming the validity of the water canopy theory, the climate of the pre-deluge earth was far different from that which exists today. It is believed that plant life flourished in a terrarium-like atmosphere, allowing for plants to grow to phenomenal sizes. The milder climate, perfect light, water, and fertile soil would have produced an abundance of gigantic plants. Animals may have lived longer, healthy lives before the Flood. Much of the fossil fuel that people are so dependant on today can be traced back to the destruction of the plants and animals at the time of the Flood.

This does not say that all fish would be destroyed. However, when people mine soil from the side of a mile-high mountain in the Rockies, they uncover fossils of fish that were, in the opinion of most creation scientists, “destroyed” in the Flood.

6:18 - MY COVENANT. *“But I will establish My covenant with you; and you shall enter the ark--you and your sons and your wife, and your sons' wives with you.”* The word “covenant” is used here for the first time in the Bible. The word is used 313 times in the Bible, but there are many other

allusions to it. This covenant with Noah is a continuation of the promise God made to Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden (Gen. 3), and it is also related to the Abrahamic Covenant and the Davidic Covenant. These various covenants provide us with a progressive revelation of the redemptive purpose and activity of God in maintaining the Messianic Covenant. “God’s covenant promise first came as God announced devastating judgment. As God’s covenant people, we owe our existence to God’s mercy. In His mercy He seeks to purify and redeem us” [DSB].

6:19 - TWO OF EVERY KIND. *“And of every living thing of all flesh, you shall bring two of every kind into the ark, to keep them alive with you; they shall be male and female.”* I remember making a mental note of a statement I heard creation scientist Kent Hovind say in a video presentation. Hovind asked, “Has it ever occurred to you that nothing ever just occurred to God?” You can be sure that the Flood, the Ark, and the covenant did not “just occur” to God. You can be equally sure that God was not wringing His hands in helpless confusion over the sins of the inhabitants of the earth when the idea of the Flood suddenly came to Him. This is not an emotional reaction to man’s rebellion, but deliberate action taken to judge sin, to mercifully protect the righteous, and to preserve the promise He had made in Gen. 3:15.

The Lord commanded Noah, “of every living thing of all flesh, you shall bring two of every kind into the ark.” He did not tell him to take two of every variety within a “kind” onto the ark. For example, Noah took two dogs onto the ark, and all the various dogs, from the smallest to the largest, came from that single pair of dogs. As John Morris, president of the Institute for Creation Science and son of founder Henry Morris, has often said, “Variety happens, evolution does not.”

6:20 - AFTER ITS KIND. *“Of the birds after their kind, and of the animals after their kind, of every creeping thing of the ground after its kind, two of every kind will come to you to keep them alive.”* The Lord would start over with at least one pair of every “kind” of animal on earth. God did not provide for every variation within a species, only for two of each species, with the exception God made for seven of the clean animals, the domestic animals upon which the descendants of Noah would be dependant.

There have been countless objections to a world wide Flood and about as many to the ark. Protests include focus on the size of the ark, the shape of the ark, the provisions made for the animals, reproduction of animals on the ark, and the collection of one pair of all the animals in one place at one time. These questions, by the way, have been answered time and again, yet those who ask them anew often do so with the same sense of arrogance and condescension as those of the previous generation.

In the first volume in the study of the Book of Genesis in The Bible Note Series, I stressed that neither Creation nor evolution can be proved scientifically. Both are accepted and defended according to their respective faith systems. However, I am persuaded that the available scientific evidence supports Creation far more than evolution. Creation is a very efficient method of bringing the universe into existence and populating the earth; evolution is a ludicrously inefficient method. Creationism is also far more consistent in its claims. Nothing in the theory of evolution has evolved

more than the theory of evolution. For example there is pre-Darwinian Pantheistic evolution, which gave way to Darwinian evolutionary Humanism (modernism, atheism), which then yielded to pre-Darwinian (New Age or postmodern) Pantheistic evolution (or monism - one is all and all is one).

When it comes to the Flood, the evidence for a world wide deluge is overwhelming, both from the standpoint of history and from science (both Geology and Paleontology, the study of fossils). Evolutionists have spent a lot of their time over the past century and a half reinventing evolution, or altering their view to try to make it fit the evidence. Geologists are hard-pressed to explain how a one hundred million year old layer found its way underneath a five hundred million year old layer (as the Institute for Creation Research (ICR) scholars have demonstrated time and time again. Paleontologists are still trying to find the first transitional fossil. Out of the millions of fossils that have been discovered there is no intermediate fossil - not one.

Now, back to the matter of gathering all those “kinds” of birds and animals in one place at one time. How could that ever happen? If we accept the fact that it did happen, was this the first migration of animals, or had antediluvian animals always migrated? Perhaps there is a better explanation. Creation scientists believe the earth was basically a smooth sphere before the Flood, with no great mountain ranges and deep gorges, which may well have produced a moderate climate around the world. This would have enabled plants to grow prolifically, not only in terms of the number of plants, but also in their size. The earth was filled with animals and with plants.

According to this model, the various “kinds” (species) would have intermingled to a great extent and would not have had to be gathered from all over the world. That, however, would have been no challenge for the Creator.

6:21 - FOOD. *“As for you, take for yourself some of all food which is edible, and gather it to yourself; and it shall be for food for you and for them.”* Critics demand to know not only how Noah got all those animals on the ark, but also how he stored enough food to feed them. I am glad they ask! There was room for 125,000 sheep sized animals and there were probably 72,000 animals aboard. The rest of the space was used to store food for eight people and feed for the animals. There are two other relevant possibilities that seem to have merit. First, if all the animals were young enough reproduction would not have been a problem on the ark. Also, they were kept in nests or cages so that they were isolated, and unless they were caged together in pairs (according to their “kind”) there would have been no opportunity for reproduction. This would have helped to assure that the food supply would last.

There is a second possibility that has definite merit. Under certain conditions (primarily cold temperatures) many animals will hibernate, and in many others the metabolism slows down, thus saving the food supply, and at the same time controlling reproduction. But how do we know it was cold? If, as many creationists believe, there were volcanic eruptions, earth quakes, and tidal waves around the earth, and if (as believed by many) volcanic ash was blown into the atmosphere in great volumes, then the sun’s rays would not have provided normal warmth for the earth.

When we get to Heaven these are some of the questions we can ask Noah. Perhaps you heard the joke about the man who had survived the Jamestown Flood, but never forgot it. Everywhere he went he told people about how he had survived the Jamestown Flood. After a while home folks tried to avoid him because they dreaded hearing any more about his experience with the flood. But visitors were entertained with his stories and when he traveled he treated strangers to his stories. Then the day came when the survivor of the Jamestown Flood died and went to Heaven. Immediately, he began regale everyone he met with the story that had long been his obsession. Finally, he stopped a man and asked, “Did I ever tell you about the Jamestown Flood?” His new acquaintance replied, “No. But before you begin, maybe I should introduce myself. My name is Noah.”

6:22 - THUS NOAH DID. *“Thus Noah did; according to all that God had commanded him, so he did.”* That which God demands of every believer was exactly what Noah offered: obedience. Noah had been chosen because he was a righteous man, one who walked with the Lord as had his ancestor, Enoch. He had obeyed God immediately when the Lord told him to build an ark. He had been obedient for 120 years while he was working one - 120 silent years. Then, when God spoke to him again, he was ready to do all the Lord commanded.

This reminds me of Joshua, who declared, “Everything Moses wrote in the Book, we did.” In his little commentary on Jonah, Dr. J. Hardee Kennedy made a profound statement: “Obedience to God is man’s most sacred obligation” [J. HARDEE KENNEDY].

7:1 - ENTER THE ARK. *“Then the LORD said to Noah, ‘Enter the ark, you and all your household, for you alone I have seen to be righteous before Me in this time.’”* The NKJV has, “‘Come into the ark,” which I prefer to the NIV: “Go into the ark.” God commanded Noah to build the ark and supply it. Now, rather than sending Noah into the ark (“go”), He invites him to “come” into the ark. God was in the ark (though certainly not confined to it) and He invited Noah to join Him. As we study the New Testament we discover that the ark was a type of Christ - it gives us a picture of salvation in Christ. The righteous were saved by means of the ark, as we are saved by Christ. They were secure in the ark as we are secure in Jesus.

7:2 - CLEAN...NOT CLEAN. *“You shall take with you of every clean animal by sevens, a male and his female; and of the animals that are not clean two, a male and his female.”* Some believe the distinction here “had to do with sacrifice (cf. 8:20), later with eating (Lev. 11; Deut. 14)” [RSB]. Not only did the Lord’s plan call for provisions for the eight people and all the animals, it included provisions for worship.

There is another consideration. Two animals, one male and one female, were saved for the propagation of the species. However, seven clean animals were saved on the ark, both for the propagation of their species and for worship. It is possible that they were instructed to take seven clean animals so that when they disembarked from the ark Shem, Ham, and Japheth would each take one pair of domestic animals to begin their post-flood life with these basic provisions, and there would be one left over to sacrifice to the Lord.

Is this not an interesting revelation? Yahweh God demanded a sacrifice. Where would they get the sacrifice? He provided it. How do we know He demanded a sacrifice before He gave Moses the sacrificial system which would be in effect until Jesus died on the Cross, the once-for-all sacrifice for our sins? Cain and Abel had offered sacrifices ages before this. Furthermore, if the Lord made the provisions, He expected it. If there is anything we should glean from this it is that what God expects from us, He provides for us. We are expected to worship the Lord with our tithes and offerings, but what He expects from us He provides for us. He gives us the means from which the tithe is taken; He gives us the gifts with which we serve Him; and He has given us His Spirit to empower us to accomplish His purpose. He even gives us the faith with which we believe in Him for salvation (Eph. 2:8-9).

What God expects He provides. Those who hold back the tithe from God both rob Him (Mal. 3:10) and distrust Him. The more time we spend in the Word of God the more we understand that failure to use what He has provided for His glory is an affront to Him. Failure to worship the Lord with tithes and offerings is a clear demonstration of a lack of faith in Him on one hand, and greed and covetousness on the other hand. Failure to use our gifts and talents for Him shows insensitivity to the Holy Spirit and rebellion against the Lord.

7:3 - BIRDS. *“Also of the birds of the sky, by sevens, male and female, to keep offspring alive on the face of all the earth.”* The purpose in saving the birds by pairs was so that they could repopulate the earth: “to keep offspring alive on the face of the earth.” Again, the seventh implies sacrifice.

7:4 - AFTER SEVEN MORE DAYS. *“For after seven more days, I will send rain on the earth forty days and forty nights; and I will blot out from the face of the land every living thing that I have made.”* There would be seven more days, time for final preparations, before God would send the rain upon the earth that would destroy all life, except for fish and other certain amphibian animals. Someone called this “seven days of grace.” In reality, the world had seen 120 years of grace, during which time Noah had preached to the people while building the ark. If they had not repented in 120 years, would they repent because Noah was loading the ark? They may well have concluded that he had finally confirmed what they had believed all along - he was some kind of religious fanatic.

7:5 - NOAH DID...ALL. *“Noah did according to all that the LORD had commanded him.”* Noah had followed God’s blueprint in building the ark. He had done all Yahweh commanded with respect to food for himself, his family, and for the animals. Now, he does everything God commands him to do. Note that the term used for God here is LORD (YAHWEH - I AM), the title which reminds us that even in judgment He shows mercy. The self-existent One is the source of our existence and the only hope for eternal salvation.

7:6 - NOAH WAS SIX HUNDRED YEARS OLD. *“Now Noah was six hundred years old when the flood of water came upon the earth.”* Why should we be given Noah’s age here? No word of Scripture is there without a reason. First, it would have been natural for the chronicler to include this. There has always been an interest in the age of certain individuals when they were involved in things of interest or importance. Noah’s sons may have made it a point to record this information, as

some have suggested. However, the Holy Spirit is the divine Author and He had His purpose. For one thing, it is a part of the story. For another, when we read this account we are reading history, not myths. The Lord preserved an accurate record of the Deluge, false religions fostered myths and fables.

7:7 - THE NOAH. *“Then Noah and his sons and his wife and his sons' wives with him entered the ark because of the water of the flood.”* The time had finally come after 120 years. Our Lord truly is a long-suffering, merciful God. While some may be tempted to accuse God of being merciless and severe in the world-wide destruction of life on the earth, the truth is that He had done everything that is necessary to persuade people to repent. Noah had preached to the people but they refused to listen. We must remember that the closer he and his family came to completing the work on the ark, the greater the witness to coming judgment, the greater the visual effects of the message Noah proclaimed.

There were many people on earth and few were saved. Jesus' words are certainly relevant: “For many are called, but few are chosen” (Matt. 22:14). And so it will be when Jesus returns. I believe it is highly optimistic to accept the often published statistics showing that one of two people we see on the street are lost and on their way to hell. This, by deduction, would imply that half the people we see every day is going to be Heaven. Don't you believe it! If it were true we should praise the Lord for it. However, the words of Jesus would call the polls into question. He said:

Not everyone who says to Me, “Lord, Lord,” will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter. Many will say to Me on that day, “Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?” And then I will declare to them, “I never knew you; DEPART FROM ME, YOU WHO PRACTICE LAWLESSNESS” (Matt. 7:21-23).

7:8 - EVERYTHING. *“Of clean animals and animals that are not clean and birds and everything that creeps on the ground.”* The repetition in this account is not easily missed. The Scripture is very specific and no believer should have a problem with it. This a good place to pause and remind ourselves that the Bible is the standard by which everything else should be judged, not the other way around. Ultimately, everything will be judged according to the truth.

7:9 - INTO THE ARK. *“There went into the ark to Noah by twos, male and female, as God had commanded Noah.”* This is the key: “As God commanded Noah.” The Scripture tells us that Noah was a righteous man. A righteous person will place great importance on obedience to God. God was absolutely in control. The Flood was not a knee-jerk reaction to man's rebellion. He acted according to His holiness rather than reacting to the evil of man.

Before God unleashed His wrath on a world corrupted by sin, He first secured His followers in the ark. There is a coming judgment when God's wrath will be poured out on sinners. At that time He will not send rain, but fire. That judgment will not be the over-reaction of some pouting, puffed up god who is striking back at those who have offended him. The plan for that judgment was made ages

ago, and it is being played out today. Paul wrote:

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them (Rom, 1:18-19).

Just as Noah and his family were saved from God's wrath by means of the ark, so shall people be protected in the final judgment if they are in Jesus Christ. The holiness of God demands judgment, the love of God holds out mercy and grace to all who trust in Him.

7:10 - THE FLOOD. *"It came about after the seven days, that the water of the flood came upon the earth."* God commanded Noah to load the pairs of animals He brought to him at the ark. Then He gave Noah, his wife, his three sons and their wives seven days for preparation. The Flood began on the day "after the seven days," or on the eighth day after the command.

It must have seemed to Noah that the day would never arrive. There must also have been a certain amount of anxiety as he anticipated the coming Flood. He obviously recognized the severity of the judgment and the comprehensive, all encompassing nature of the coming judgment, but at the same time he must have been keenly aware of the fact that it was the prerogative of the Creator to do whatever he desired with his creation. God was acting according to His sovereignty.

7:11 - THE SIX HUNDREDTH YEAR. *"In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, on the seventeenth day of the month, on the same day all the fountains of the great deep burst open, and the floodgates of the sky were opened."* The reference to the age of Noah when the Flood came is another testimony to the historicity of the great world wide Deluge. The date is also fixed more specifically in this verse than in previous passages about the ancient patriarchs: "On the seventeenth day of the month."

Commentaries may discuss whether the year here is refers to the civil or agricultural year which began in the fall (associated with the harvest), or the ecclesiastical year which began in April. "From Exod. 12:2; 13:4 it appears that this ecclesiastical year first came into being with the Exodus" {HCL: 295}.

Every ancient civilization had their flood stories, all including a God who was judging the world, an ark in which a few people were saved.

This account of the beginning, the continuation, and the termination of the Flood has several repetitions, but the connections and continuity appear to be artistically arranged, and hardly any one of them could be omitted without leaving a literary gap. The construction of the ark occurred immediately after the end of the period of grace (6:3). The Flood cannot be precisely dated, but its duration is given (v. 11; 8:14) as one year and eleven days. This specific dating emphasizes the reality of the event

[BSB].

THE FOUNTAINS OF THE GREAT DEEP. Scientists who study evidence left by the Flood fall into two categories, **Uniformitarians**, who believe that everything has evolved from the beginning of the universe until the present just as they are today, constantly changing, but so slowly that their changes are unobservable. **Catastrophists** believe there was a catastrophic Flood in which the surface of the earth was permanently changed, from a rather smooth earth with moderate climate, to an earth that was radically changed by continental shifts, formation of rugged mountains and deep gorges brought about by great upheavals of the earth's surface, and severe climatic variations. The "fountains of the great deep" refers to great subterranean springs where vast amounts of water were stored. There are still vast springs of water under the surface of the earth, but unlike the uniformitarians, catastrophists believe the earth is far different today than it was before the great catastrophe we call the Flood. For example, some of those great springs may have become repositories for fossil fuels.

The word for "deep" is the same word as the vast and almost infinite "deep" at creation (1:2). There may have been unfathomable cavernous springs deep within the earth that contained a vast amount of water at the time.

BURST OPEN. The word translated "burst open" ("broken up" in NKJV) could also be translated "split," or "**ripped open.**" That is exactly what happened. The earth was ripped apart and water erupted from deep within the earth. Creation scientists believe that even as, or before the rain began to fall, there were violent volcanic eruptions around the world that spewed volcanic ash into the atmosphere in such a volume that the light of the sun was darkened to the extent that temperatures would have dropped radically.

The earth was also ripped apart by earthquakes, some of which would have sent gigantic tidal waves over vast areas of ocean, sweeping over land masses with enough force to destroy everything in their path. Continental shifts would have followed. The floor of the ocean was suddenly pushed upward, sometimes radically, so as to become great mountains.

This was a cataclysmic event which changed the earth's surface for all time. It would never be the same. Critics of the world wide Flood who insist that the earth, as it is today, could never have been completely covered by forty days of rain, no matter how heavy it was. The smooth earth was inundated even as it was being ripped apart by volcanoes, earthquakes, and continental shifts. It has been suggested that icy winds may have reached northern latitudes with such a force that giant mammoths were flash-frozen. Regardless of the explanation, giant mammoths were indeed flash-frozen (at least to a certain depth they were flash frozen, and very quickly they were frozen all the way through). Some have been discovered in ice banks with green grass in their stomachs, and in one case green grass in one's mouth. Dillow claims that in order for a mammoth to be flash-frozen, wind must have hit them at up to two hundred miles an hour, with the temperature around two hundred degrees below zero [DILLOW:].

THE FLOODGATES OF THE SKY. The NKJV has “windows of heaven,” possibly an allusion to a water canopy which surrounded the earth. There were three sources of the water that flooded the earth: the subterranean caverns or springs, rain, and the collapse of the vapor canopy. Water from these three sources brought on indescribably topographical upheavals in which the earth’s surface was inalterably changed. Older commentaries may claim that there were two sources of the water that inundated the earth, “the fountains of the great deep” and heavy rainfall [HCL: 295]. Leopold believed that heavy rainfall from above was the chief source and that the water gushing up from the subterranean springs was an “auxiliary source” [HCL:]. Leopold, however, was working without the benefit of research by men like Henry Morris, a hydrologist who founded the Institute for Christian Research, and other creation scientists who believe there was a water canopy which was emptied upon the earth at this specific time. Morris stresses the waters that covered the entire earth to a great depth could not have come from rainfall alone. All three sources were required - and if more had been required, God would have provided it. Furthermore, God provided the water without having to create more elements.

The First Law of Thermodynamics, accepted by scientists on both sides of the creation/evolution issue, recognizes the preservation of all elements. The Second Law of Thermodynamics, also accepted by all scientists, recognizes the continuous breakdown in the order and complexity of all things on the earth. Evolutionists, however apply the Second Law of Thermodynamics in a different manner when it comes to the subject of Creation. There is a good reason for that. The Second Law of Thermodynamics precludes evolution, which teaches that life has continually evolved into a higher, more complex forms. When it comes to origins, evolutionists throw the Second Law of Thermodynamics out the window - actually, they re-interpret it.

7:12 - RAIN FELL. *“The rain fell upon the earth for forty days and forty nights.”* I had just driven over an area in which seven inches had fallen in one afternoon. I spoke by phone with a man in Albuquerque, NM, and mentioned the heavy rain. He remarked that they get about that amount in a year. Houston and other coastal cities occasionally get fifteen to twenty inches of rain in one thunderstorm. There is some local flooding when this happens. At times the floods are very destructive, as in the case of some of the floods that hit the upper Mississippi River Valley, destroying homes, and even towns, as well as crops.

These local floods are destructive, but are not to be compared with the Noahic Flood. The rains of the Flood may well have been the heaviest ever to hit the earth, but they alone did not account for all the water.

7:13 - ON THE SAME DAY. *“On the very same day Noah and Shem and Ham and Japheth, the sons of Noah, and Noah's wife and the three wives of his sons with them, entered the ark.”* Does this mean on the seventh day, or on the day “after the seven days” of preparation (vs. 10)? The construction “points to the time when their entering had become an accomplished fact” [HCL: 298]. When the waters burst forth from the underground springs, and the water from the great water canopy surrounding the earth fell, and the rain came down in torrents, the eight people of faith were safely secured on the ark.

All believers were saved. There were no unbelievers on the ark. So it will be in Heaven. There will be not unbelievers in Heaven. But for that matter, there will be no unbelievers in hell, either. Those who perished had been given ample time and opportunity to repent, but they had other priorities. In the final judgment when the wrath of God is poured out on sinners, all unbelievers will be cast into the lake of fire. Only those who are in Christ Jesus will be saved.

7:14 - THEY AND EVERY BEAST. *“They and every beast after its kind, and all the cattle after their kind, and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth after its kind, and every bird after its kind, all sorts of birds.”* The repetition is not without significance here. Leopold writes:

With a solemn repetition, characteristic of all epic poetry of days of old, this solemn epic aims to produce upon the reader’s imagination the effect of the tremendous numbers that had to be housed in the ark and what a scene it presented as they were being brought in during the course of that last fateful week [HCL: 298].

7:15 - SO THEY WENT IN. *“So they went into the ark to Noah, by twos of all flesh in which was the breath of life.”* The author was inspired to record the detail of the Flood and the ark, and the repetition of events emphasizes the historicity of the events. “To Noah” reminds us that Noah and his family had already entered the ark. Noah did not have to round up the animals and drive them into the ark; God brought them to the ark, and they entered him.

God loved His creation; but when it defied His moral standards, He knew He must vindicate His holiness by sending punishment. Because creation was good, however, He wished to preserve it. He established propagation as His method of perpetuating His creation. Even as He punished sinners, He made provision for propagation of the species to continue. We can be certain God's world will go on today until He wills to consummate history with Christ's return. The world is so constituted that it adjusts to any shock or tragedy. God controls creation's destiny [DSB].

7:16 - THOSE THAT ENTERED. *“Those that entered, male and female of all flesh, entered as God had commanded him; and the LORD closed it behind him.”* At least one pair of all animals entered the ark, seven of all clean animals entered the ark. When they had all entered, Yahweh Himself closed the door.

Since the ark is so obviously a type (figure, portrait) of Christ, we are reminded the only God can place us in Christ Jesus. You do not choose God, He chooses you. You do not reach up and take hold of God, He reaches down for you. And no one goes to the Father unless the son draws him to Him: “And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me” (John 12:32). We must also remember that the day is coming when the opportunity for salvation will be closed, never to be opened again to anyone. For each individual, there is a time of grace, but death closes the door and after that there will be no more opportunity for that person than there was for the rich man in the story of the rich man and Lazarus.

7:17 - THEN THE FLOOD CAME. *“Then the flood came upon the earth for forty days, and the water increased and lifted up the ark, so that it rose above the earth.”* What we see here is not a matter of repetition, but an emphasis upon the sovereignty of God. He had announced the coming Flood, commanded Noah to build the ark and provided a time of grace. Then the day came when God commanded Noah to enter the ark and make preparations for the Flood. He led the animals to the ark and when they had entered, He closed the door and then He sent the Flood. Every detail played out according to His plan, not one thing caught Him by surprise. His prescience has not diminished in our day.

FORTY DAYS. The water continued to rise for forty days, as it continued to rain, and as water gushed up from the subterranean springs, and water fell from the water canopy (the “waters above the firmament,” Gen. 1:7). Hydrologist, Dr. Henry Morris, opines that, “A worldwide rain lasting forty days would be quite impossible under present atmospheric conditions; so this phenomenon required an utterly different source of atmospheric waters than now obtains” [HM: 191]. This source would be the “waters above the firmament,” the “vast thermal blanket of invisible water vapor that maintained the greenhouse effect in the antediluvian world. These waters somehow were to condense and fall on the earth” [HM: 191].

ABOVE THE EARTH. There is no common position on the meaning of this. The Scripture implies that the highest waters covered the Ararat mountain range, the height of which is approximately 17,000 ft. (8:4).

Surely a flood more than 3 miles in depth could not be confined to any portion of the earth. The Hebrew word *kol*, used twice in the verse (translated “all” and “the whole”) adds to the impression that the Flood was a universal phenomenon. No one could have escaped the catastrophe except those in the ark. The amount of repetition in vv. 17-24 marks these verses as the climax of the flood account [BSB].

7:18 - THE WATER PREVAILED. *“The water prevailed and increased greatly upon the earth, and the ark floated on the surface of the water.”* God sent the water to destroy all life that was not secured inside the ark. The water prevailed in that it accomplished the purpose for which it was sent. That “the ark floated on the surface of the water” proves that just as the water accomplished its purpose, so the ark accomplished God’s purpose in saving all the life on board.

7:19 - ALL THE HIGH MOUNTAINS. *“The water prevailed more and more upon the earth, so that all the high mountains everywhere under the heavens were covered.”* The Scripture stresses that “all the high mountains” were covered. “The inclusive language “all”/ “every” occurs eight times (in Hebrew) in vv. 19-23, leaving no doubt about the all-encompassing nature of the destructive of the floods and death left behind” [NAC: 380].

Some writers stumble a little when it comes to “all the high mountains.” Since Mt. Ararat rises to a height of 17,000 feet, and Mt. Everest rises to 29,000 feet, how can the Scripture mean that

the water covered the whole earth if they only cover Mt. Ararat to a depth of some 22.5 feet? First of all, this proves that this was a worldwide Flood. If it only covered Mt. Ararat, it would have been three miles deep! There is no way that could have been a local flood, regardless of the 270 or so flood stories handed down or recorded by different civilizations.

But what about the Himalayas? Sadly, there are some, especially older commentaries, that have struggled with this. Leopold attempted to explain this problem: “We hold that the solution lies in this that those few peaks that rise above Mt. Ararat were unknown both to the people of the days of the Flood as well as to the contemporaries of Moses. All the mountains they knew of were covered” [HCL: 302].

There is a better explanation. During the time the earth was being ripped apart by volcanoes and earthquakes. Ocean floors were pushed up to form mountains. The topography of the earth would have been very different before the Flood than it is today. A company called U. S. Soils mined dirt from the side of the Rocky Mountains and sold it during the seventies and eighties. Jack Witcher of Forest, Louisiana, was dealer who invited me to sit in on a presentation a company representative made to farmers. Jack gave me some of the natural fertilizer which contained twenty eight to thirty trace minerals. They explained that most commercial fertilizers feed the plant, whereas their product feeds the soil and the soil feeds the plants. Not only did grass grow better, cattle that grazed on that grass put on weight faster and had fewer health problems. When used without strong commercial fertilizers, one of the first advantages was the return of earthworms to that soil. I tried it in our back yard and within two years we had an abundance of earthworms aerating the soil.

What was the secret of the product? That soil had once been the ocean floor and it will rich in mineral deposits, laid down when fish and other sea creatures died. It is possible that the Himalayas were indeed covered with water, but later the mountains were pushed up to their present heights. Whether this would account for it or not, there is one thing for sure: neither Moses, nor his contemporaries had to know about Mt. Everest. The Holy Spirit is the divine Author. We read more than once in Deuteronomy that God told Moses to write something in the book. Moses wrote the plan by which Joshua led in the conquest and Joshua carried out the plan in every detail: “Just as the LORD had commanded Moses his servant, so Moses commanded Joshua, and so Joshua did; he left nothing undone of all that the LORD had commanded Moses” (Josh. 11:15).

UNDER THE HEAVENS. Or, under all the heavens. “The phrase indicates a universal flood rather than a local one. The promise of 9:11, 15 confirms this. There are more than 270 flood stories from all parts of the world (see also 2 Peter 2:5; 3:6; Matt. 24:37-39)” [RSB].

7:20 - FIFTEEN CUBITS HIGHER. “*The water prevailed fifteen cubits higher, and the mountains were covered.*” The water was 22.5 feet above the highest mountain peak. This is a remarkable record. Unfortunately, there are many scientists who reject the best record available on the great Flood, and settle for human speculations. While there are many flood stories, no other stories will stand up to the scrutiny of science like this one.

7:21 - ALL FLESH. “*All flesh that moved on the earth perished, birds and cattle and beasts and*

every swarming thing that swarms upon the earth, and all mankind.” Again, we find the all-encompassing “all,” stressing the universality of the flood. Henry Morris presents 26 different arguments as to why the Scripture demands a worldwide Flood and rules out a local flood. The second argument is illustrative: “Expressions involving universality of the Flood and its effects occur more than thirty times in Genesis 6-9” [HM: 199].

7:22 - ALL...ALL. *“Of all that was on the dry land, all in whose nostrils was the breath of the spirit of life, died.”* No local flood could have killed “all that was on dry land.” How can anyone read this carefully and doubt that the judgment was world-wide? The world was filled with sin, and God, exercising His prerogative as Creator, destroyed all life and made a new start with the survivors whom He saved from the Flood.

7:23 - HE BLOTTED OUT. *“Thus He blotted out every living thing that was upon the face of the land, from man to animals to creeping things and to birds of the sky, and they were blotted out from the earth; and only Noah was left, together with those that were with him in the ark.”* Only a worldwide flood would have blotted out every living thing. Morris points out that “In a local flood, most of the fauna can escape death by fleeing the rising waters or by swimming to dry ground if necessary (or by flying away, in the case of birds); but this would be impossible in a universal Flood” [HM: 201]. The terminology is all inclusive and specific. “Thus He blotted out” tells us that God is directly responsible for the destruction of all life on earth, and method He used - the Flood.

7:24 - THE WATERS PREVAILED. *“The water prevailed upon the earth one hundred and fifty days.”* This is the third time the word “prevailed” is used (see vv. 18, 20). The waters prevailed, or mightily overwhelmed the earth. Job 12:15 says, in the KJV, that the waters “overturned the earth” (The NKJV has “overwhelmed the earth”).

The waters reached the greatest depth after 150 days, which included 40 days of constant rain. This means that after the rain ceased the waters continued to rise for another 110 days. What

was the source of the additional water? Could the water from the subterranean springs have continued, or did the change in the earth's surface somehow contribute to it?

8:1- GOD REMEMBERED NOAH. *“But God remembered Noah and all the beasts and all the cattle that were with him in the ark; and God caused a wind to pass over the earth, and the water subsided.”* That “God remembered” Noah does not mean that He simply recalled him, but that God was faithful to His promises to Noah, and creation in general (9:15, 16).

God faithfully kept His promise to Noah that he and his family would be saved during the flood that destroyed all the rest of mankind. God always remembers His promises and is faithful to His people. His faithfulness is the outgrowth of two of the basic attributes of God: love and righteousness [DSB].

After the Flood had “prevailed” for 150 days, completely destroying all life that was on the face of the earth, God began to bring His judgment to a close. Dead organisms were now either buried in sediments or still floating in the water. At this time God “remembered” Noah, meaning that He began to act in his behalf.

Three specific actions are taken by the Lord. First, He caused a wind to pass over the earth; second, He stopped the fountains of the deep from further eruption; and third, He closed the windows of heaven (8:2). This closed down all sources of new water. Further attention should probably be given to the wind God caused to pass over the earth. The Hebrew word may be translated either wind or spirit, depending on the context. If “spirit” is intended, it would mean that the Spirit of God moved over the earth just as He moved over the earth, analogous to His brooding over the earth on the first day of creation (Gen. 1:2).

Most students of the Word believe that the context implies an actual wind. However, when we consider how a wind moving over the earth it is obvious that neither a gentle breeze, nor a strong wind, combined with the sun, would cause that much water to evaporate enough to lower the water significantly. “Somehow there must also be a drastic rearrangement of terrestrial topography, with continental land masses rising from the waters, and ocean basins deepening and widening to receive the waters draining off the land” [HM: 206]. This is what actually happened, according to Psalm 104:6-9:

You covered it with the deep as with a garment; **The waters were standing above the mountains.** At Your rebuke they fled, At the sound of Your thunder they hurried away. **The mountains rose; the valleys sank down** To the place which You established for them. You set a boundary that they may not pass over, So that they will not return to cover the earth (emphasis added).

8:2 - FOUNTAINS OF THE DEEP. *“Also the fountains of the deep and the floodgates of the sky were closed, and the rain from the sky was restrained.”* As mentioned in the notes on verse 1, God took three actions to begin a termination of the Flood. He sent the wind, which He chose to use to accomplish His purpose; then he closed the subterranean springs and the “floodgates of the sky” (the water canopy), both of which were possibly almost empty by now anyway.

8:3 - THE WATER RECEDED. *“And the water receded steadily from the earth, and at the end of one hundred and fifty days the water decreased.”* The word “receded” is the same word used of the waters at the Red Sea and the Jordan River when they returned after God, by His mighty hand had parted those bodies of water for His people to cross on dry land, and then let the waters run back together after they had crossed (Ex. 14:26; Josh. 4:18).

The 150 days is the same time mentioned in 7:24. The great emphasis placed on dates, time, and numbers cannot be insignificant. It is important for us to understand that we are talking about history here - real people, real events, and real places. This is not some pagan fable.

8:4 - THE ARK RESTED. *“In the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, the ark rested upon the mountains of Ararat.”* Again, the Scripture is specific as to the date. This is history - and it should be sufficient for modern students. That is not to say that Geologists, Paleontologists, and Anthropologists should not ask questions or search for answers not given in the Scripture. What

it means is the Bible is an infallible record in any area to which it speaks. For those who accept this fact, it is a guide that will save a tremendous amount of time and keep them from error.

A number of years ago I was flying with someone who had flown a man to a hospital in another part of the state and was returning to Bastrop, Louisiana when he suddenly exclaimed, "I forgot to turn on the radio." When I asked for an explanation, he told me that he had an instrument that would lock onto the radio signal in Bastrop and lead us directly to Bastrop. Without we could fly by sight and arrive at our destination, but a side wind would cause us to drift so that we would fly a number of extra miles and consume extra fuel. Students of ancient history will do well to stay focused on the Bible in order to avoid drifting, and when they find a conflict they should not assume that it is the Bible that is in error.

The precise reckoning of the date when the ark "rested" on the mountains of Ararat is consistent with the care of the writer in chronology. The word "rested" is from a word similar in sound to Noah's name).

God was speeding up the reversal of the processes which had precipitated the Flood. Modern Ararat is neither excluded nor necessarily identified as the resting place of the ark. The phrase locates it in the range of mountains in which Ararat is located. Efforts to discover a portion of the ark are not wrong in intent, but the truth of the Noahic flood does not depend upon the successful location of the ark [BSB].

THE MOUNTAINS OF ARARAT. For years I have read books and articles on the Flood, and watched video tape presentations on the search for Noah's ark. There have been too many reports from people who claim to have sited a large barge-like structure high up on one of the mountains of Ararat not to have created a lot of interest. John Morris, now president of the Institute for Creation Research, is among a host of people who have been to the area in search of the ark. I have seen pictures of whatever the structure was and read about pieces of wood salvaged from the site and studied. I have read testimonies of those who received permission to search for the ark, only to be attacked by robbers or turned back by armed bandits.

The proximity to the border of the old USSR meant that any flight over that area was under the surveillance of USSR radar and the scrutiny of their air force. Another problem was the fact that the area is controlled by Muslims who have a major problem with Christians searching for anything that might affirm Christianity. However, the testimonies of witnesses to what might well be the remains of the ark seem credible. If searchers can arrive when the weather will permit a climb there is a possibility that they will find the ark encrusted in ice. Since an earlier siting it is now believed that an avalanche or landslide has broken off and end and plunged it to a lower ledge.

Henry Morris is not only one of the most brilliant scientists in the world, he has been associated with the top creation scientists in the world for over fifty years, and he and Duane Gish have debated the leading evolutionists in world, usually on their own turf. Morris writes:

One of the vast volcanic mountains formed in an earlier period of the Flood is Mount Ararat, along with other similar mountains in the upland regions of what is now Armenia. The Ararat region, including Mount Ararat itself (now 17,000 feet in elevation), abounds in what is known as pillow lava, a dense lava rock formed under great depths of water. The mountain also includes certain sedimentary formations containing marine fossils.

It was apparently on this mountains that the Ark came to rest as the Flood waters began to abate after the 150 days. Other mountains have been suggested, in Iraq, Ceylon, India, and elsewhere; but the weight of evidence still favors Mount Ararat. It is true that the entire region later was known as Ararat (Jeremiah 51:27), which is the Hebrew form equivalent to the Greek Armenia (II Kings 19:37; Isaiah 37:38), and Scripture says only that the Ark landed somewhere in the mountains of Ararat. However, it is the highest mountain in the region by far (8:5), and such a description could apply only to the mountain presently known as Mount Ararat.

It is significant that the Ark is said to have “rested,” as though it has been laboring for five months in accomplishing its work of saving its occupants from sin and judgment. This is the second mention of “rest” in Scripture, the first being when God rested after His work of creation (Gen. 2:2, 3; actually these are two different, though synonymous, Hebrew words). If the Ark is a true type of Christ...this is most appropriate. As God “finished” His work of creation and as the Ark “finished” its mission, so Christ “finished” (John 19:30) His work of salvation [HM: 208-209].

8:5 - THE WATERS DECREASED. *“The water decreased steadily until the tenth month; in the tenth month, on the first day of the month, the tops of the mountains became visible.”* The Lord began the process of removing the Flood waters on the 17th day of the 7th month and on the 1st day of the 10th month, the peak of the mountains of Ararat became visible. If I were an unbeliever I would have a lot of questions about this - and every time I “stumped” a Christian I would be tempted to gloat over it. I will never forget the first time an amateur geologist confidently assured me that many geologists believe there was only a local flood. It was obvious that he felt he had inside information. I also recall sitting in the sauna at a health club in Jackson, Mississippi talking with a man I had recently met. The subject of evolution came up, and a biology student at a Christian college in the area cut in, Evolution has been proved!!!”

I replied, “If there is one thing evolution has never been it’s proved. That’s the reason they still call it a theory.” But he had been taught evolution in a Christian college by professors who had been brain washed when they were students. It would be interesting to know how many of his professors had believed in special creation until they went to college.

God’s people must never compromise on origins. Genesis is an absolutely essential book, and our knowledge of its message is necessary for a world-view consistent with Scripture and traditional Christianity. As I pointed out in Vol. I, if you do not have Genesis 1 you do not need John 1; if you

do not have Genesis 3 you do not need John 3. Genesis is the foundational book; all else is built on that foundation, from origins, to redemption, to family, to ethics, Genesis is the foundation. Ken Ham, who heads up an organization called *Answers In Geneses*, continually makes this point. I spent most of an hour discussing this before hearing him address a pastors conference at the Louisiana Baptist Convention a number of years ago. He made this point convincingly at that meeting, just as he has every time I have heard him in television or on video tape. Ham, a former high school biology teacher from Australia, began his work in America with the *Institute for Creation Research* before beginning the *Answers in Genesis* organization. A non-scientist may have trouble with some of the more technical material from either organization, but there are many books and tapes the average person can understand. I strongly recommend this material to parents with school-age children and young people.

I do not have a problem with the Flood for the same reason I have no problem with Creation. I spell my God with a capital “G.” If he could not do what He claims to have done, why should I call him God? The watch argument is still convincing in the study of origins. If you found a watch on the side of the road and had never seen one before, you would not have to observe it too long before you would conclude that somewhere there must be a watch maker. When you really study the universe you must see that there is a design behind it. If there is a design, there must be a Designer.

Now concerning the water that “decreased steadily.” Where did it come from, and where did it go? We have answered the first part of the question: it came from heavy rainfall, from the eruption of subterranean springs and caverns, and from the “waters above the firmament” (the vapor canopy surrounding the earth. Where did the water go? None of it returned to a vapor canopy in the atmosphere. The underground springs could accommodate a lot of it, but much of that space had to have been filled with sedimentary deposits filled with decaying plants and animals (the source of coal and fossil fuels). Evaporation would have accounted for only a small percentage of the water. However, as mountains pushed up from the earth’s surface, and as great oceanic basins were formed the water filled the creeks, rivers, lakes, and oceans.

8:6 - AT THE END OF FORTY DAYS. *“Then it came about at the end of forty days, that Noah opened the window of the ark which he had made.”* From the time the Flood waters began to decrease until the mountain peaks of Ararat appeared there was a time span of about six weeks (43 days); from the time the mountain peaks appeared until Noah opened the window of the ark there were “about” forty days. The number “forty” figures prominently in biblical history. Just to name a few,

Moses was with the Lord on Mt. Sinai for 40 days.
It rained forty days after the Lord closed the ark.
The Children of Israel wandered in the wilderness 40 years.
They lived on manna 40 years.
Moses was on the mountain 40 days and 40 nights.
Moses’ life was divided into three 40 divisions.
Nineveh had 40 days to repent.

Jesus fasted 40 days and 40 nights.

8:7 - A RAVEN. *“And he sent out a raven, and it flew here and there until the water was dried up from the earth.”* Noah, quite naturally, was anxious to discover enough dry land so that he and his family could release the animals and then leave the ark to begin a new post-Flood civilization. The raven was the ideal bird to sent out because it was a scavenger, and it would have no trouble finding food and “no qualms about perching on any slimy surface, so it apparently did not return to the ark” [RSB].

8:8 - HE SENT OUT A DOVE. *“Then he sent out a dove from him, to see if the water was abated from the face of the land.”* After the raven did not return, Noah sent out a dove, which would not light in, or on slime or filth as would the raven.

8:9 - NO RESTING PLACE. *“But the dove found no resting place for the sole of her foot, so she returned to him into the ark, for the water was on the surface of all the earth. Then he put out his hand and took her, and brought her into the ark to himself.”* Finding no clean, dry place to land, it returned to the ark. The water had not abated to the point that the earth was ready to provide a living for the animals. Noah and his family might have survived, but they had to provide for the animals.

8:10 - ANOTHER SEVEN DAYS. *“So he waited yet another seven days; and again he sent out the dove from the ark.”* Aware that the time was drawing near, Noah waited another seven days and sent out the dove again.

8:11 - A FRESHLY PICKED OLIVE LEAF. *“The dove came to him toward evening, and behold, in her beak was a freshly picked olive leaf. So Noah knew that the water was abated from the earth.”* The dove Noah had released (vs. 10) returned with a freshly sprouted olive leaf, a sure sign that land in that area had dried out to the point that plants soon be able to provide food for the animals when they were released.

8:12 - ANOTHER SEVEN DAYS. *“Then he waited yet another seven days, and sent out the dove; but she did not return to him again.”* Noah and his family were faithful in the discharge of their duties. They might well have released the animals when the dove first returned with the olive leaf, but they waited another seven days. They obviously had enough food to feed the animals, so there was no reason to take a risk. After another seven days, when the dove was sent out it did not return.

During the winter months my wife and I feed birds from several different feeders. Becky enjoys watching them from the kitchen window. We feed them until late spring, when suddenly most of them disappear. We know they are finding berries and other food in the woods near by. The Lord had so created the dove that it instinctively knew to stayed where there was food.

8:13 - IT CAME ABOUT. *“Now it came about in the six hundred and first year, in the first month, on the first of the month, the water was dried up from the earth. Then Noah removed the covering of the ark, and looked, and behold, the surface of the ground was dried up.”* Once again

we have precise dating of events concerning the Flood. This is history, for one thing. It is also a family matter for another. It is natural for family members to keep up with important dates. My wife has kept a daily journal for twenty to twenty-five years. She can very quickly check to see where we were and what we were doing on any given way during that time.

THE WATER WAS DRIED UP. The earth would never be the same again. There were great mountain ranges that had formerly been beneath the sea. There were oceanic basins that must have been much greater than before to contain all the water. But the “dry ground” was dry once again. It could now sustain life, both human and animal.

REMOVED THE COVERING. Here we have some new information. The covering of the ark was removable. It is possible that it has been put on in sections, and that key sections could be removed so that he could survey the surrounding territory. Many of the birds may have been released from where this covering was removed.

8:14 - THE EARTH WAS DRY. *“In the second month, on the twenty-seventh day of the month, the earth was dry.”* The Scripture continues to provide dates for us. Noah and his family were in the ark 377 days (one year and two weeks).

8:15 - GOD SPOKE TO NOAH. *“Then God spoke to Noah, saying.”* As God had spoken to Noah when he commanded him to build the ark, and again when he told him to enter the ark, He now speaks to him to tell him to leave the ark. It was time for a new beginning and the Lord had some instructions for him.

8:16 - GO OUT. *“Go out of the ark, you and your wife and your sons and your sons' wives with you.”* Eight people had entered the ark before God sealed it. Eight people came out of the ark 377 days later. The Lord had preserved everyone who entered the ark, just as He promises to keep everyone who is in Christ Jesus.

8:17 - BRING OUT. *“Bring out with you every living thing of all flesh that is with you, birds and animals and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth, that they may breed abundantly on the earth, and be fruitful and multiply on the earth.”* The earth, “radically affected by the Flood, confronted Noah with a more hostile environment. Longevity was decreased, habitable land areas reduced, oceans made more extensive, the crust of the earth made unstable and subject to seismic activity, and the land laid barren” [RSB].

The serious student of the Genesis will recognize the value the Lord places on plants, animals, and the environment. At the same time, there is a marked distinction between human beings, created in the image of God, and lower animal life. Christians should be good environmentalists, but there is a radical environmental movement in America and the world today that values animals, plants, and streams above man. Al Gore's *Earth in the Balance* makes the point. This, however, is not scriptural.

EVERY CREEPING THING. Everything that went on the ark came off the ark, preserved by God Himself, and cared for through the husbandry of Noah and his family. Some may ask about animals that are now extinct. There might well have been sea dwelling creatures that were destroyed during the Flood, as well as land dwelling animals that became extinct in more hostile environments in the first centuries after the Flood. Some where along the line dinosaurs became extinct, though some creation scientists believe some survived much longer than evolutionists would have us believe.

Several generations later Job describes the behemoth and the leviathan, often identified as the hippopotamus and the crocodile, though the description fits the dinosaur much better. What else has a tail like the cedars of Lebanon?

BREED ABUNDANTLY. The animals would breed abundantly on the earth, “be fruitful and multiply on the earth.” The Lord expected the animals that left the ark to repopulate the earth with their offspring.

8:18 - SO NOAH WENT OUT. “*So Noah went out, and his sons and his wife and his sons' wives with him.*” The repetition continues in the account of the Flood, but in Scripture repetition serves a purpose. The account of the Flood would be recorded, probably by Shem, Ham, and Japheth, but for the most part the story would be handed down orally from generation to generation. Following the confusion of languages at the Tower of Babel, people groups migrated in all directions, taking with them Flood stories as well as the moral standards taught first by Noah to his three sons.

Any time you hear someone say Moses copied the Law from the Code of Hammurabi, you can ask them about the source of the Code of Hammurabi. Each generation taught the next generation the standards God set down for His people, laws handed down from God to Noah. These ethical standards would naturally be reflected in the Code of Hammurabi. In other words, the Code of Hammurabi drew on God’s law (before the formal giving of the Law at Sinai) rather than the other way around. Liberal theologians love to point to miracle stories in paganism and claim that Christianity borrowed from the pagans. Why can they not see that in many cases what you are seeing is a corruption of the Gospel, of biblical truth?

8:19 - EVERY BEAST. “*Every beast, every creeping thing, and every bird, everything that moves on the earth, went out by their families from the ark.*” When people handed down the story of the Flood from generation, repetition would aid in remembering the details.

C. The Events Following the Flood, 8:20-9:29

8:20 - THEN NOAH BUILT AN ALTAR. “*Then Noah built an altar to the LORD, and took of every clean animal and of every clean bird and offered burnt offerings on the altar.*” Here is a key to the character and devotion of the greatest characters of the Old Testament. Later, when Abraham traveled toward the Land of Promise, we read that wherever he stopped he build an altar and called on the name of the Lord. In Genesis 12:7-8, we read:

The LORD appeared to Abram and said, "To your descendants I will give this land." So he built an altar there to the LORD who had appeared to him. Then he proceeded from there to the mountain on the east of Bethel, and pitched his tent, with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east; and there he built an altar to the LORD and called upon the name of the LORD.

When Abraham arrived in the Land of Promise and discovered there was a famine in the land, instead of building an altar and calling on the Lord he fled to Egypt where he got into a mess of trouble, from which the Lord delivered him. Then he returned to the place of the altar.

If you have a Bible program on your computer, go to the search program and type in the words, "built and altar," and you will find the term used eighteen times. You will find Isaac, Jacob, Moses and others building an altar and calling on the name of the Lord. I either heard a preacher say (maybe I read it somewhere) that the difference between Abraham and Lot was that when Lot pitched his tent; when Abraham pitched he built an altar and called on the name of the Lord. That sounds good, but that is eisegesis (a personal interpretation, using one's own opinions) rather than exegesis (a critical interpretation of the text). In the former, one reads his own thoughts into the text; in the latter, he takes out from the text what was placed there for his information or guidance.

What that means is that we know Abraham built an altar at some places where he stopped - we do not know that he built an altar every time he stopped. We are certainly justified in assuming that Abraham also pitched his tent wherever he stopped for a night. What we do not know is whether or not Lot built an altar and called on the name of the Lord. Nor, do we know that Lot was not a participant in the worship of Yahweh when Abraham built an altar and called on the name of the Lord. Heaven gets more exciting all the time, just thinking about all the questions we will have answered.

CLEAN ANIMALS. The offering of "clean" animals and birds was a requirement of the Mosaic Law, which would be written hundreds of years later. The need for sacrificial worship, however, was provided for in 7:2, 3, where provision were made, but no instructions were given.

8:21 - THE LORD. *"The LORD smelled the soothing aroma; and the LORD said to Himself, 'I will never again curse the ground on account of man, for the intent of man's heart is evil from his youth; and I will never again destroy every living thing, as I have done.'"* The Lord is the object of worship. He alone is worthy of our praise and adoration: "Worthy are You, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and because of Your will they existed, and were created" (Rev. 4:11). Throughout eternity there is one refrain all believers will sing: "HOLY, HOLY, HOLY IS THE LORD GOD, THE ALMIGHTY, WHO WAS AND WHO IS AND WHO IS TO COME" (Rev. 4:8b).

SOOTHING AROMA. It would be so easy to miss the significance of this expression: "The LORD smelled the soothing aroma." But it would be our loss if we skipped over it. This is the first of 42 references to a "soothing aroma," and almost all of them relate to an offering to the Lord. In

Exodus 29:18, we read, “You shall offer up in smoke the whole ram on the altar; it is a burnt offering to the LORD: **it is a soothing aroma, an offering by fire to the LORD**” (emphasis added). In Ezekiel the Lord charges His people with offering up “a soothing aroma” to idols. That was a primary reason for the judgment to which they were being subjected at the time.

True worship, whether expressed in the smoke and aroma sent up from an altar in the Old Testament, or prayer lifted to the Father, through the Son, in the power of the Holy Spirit today, is “a soothing aroma” to God. Furthermore, any worship that is not pure and holy rises toward Heaven as a stench in the nostrils of God. If there is any doubt, read Amos 5:21-24, where God says:

I hate, I reject your festivals, Nor do I delight in your solemn assemblies. Even though you offer up to Me burnt offerings and your grain offerings, I will not accept them; And I will not even look at the peace offerings of your fatlings. Take away from Me the noise of your songs; I will not even listen to the sound of your harps. But let justice roll down like waters And righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.

The KJV renders verse 21, “I hate, I despise your feast days, and **I will not smell in your solemn assemblies**” (emphasis added). Two kinds of worship are a stench in the nostrils of God: worship of false Gods, and false worship of the true God. And there is plenty of both in the world today. Islam claims almost one billion slaves to a false god, all the while insisting that Allah is the only god. Sadly, the media in America is giving them a free pass. They, of course, are friendly to any religion that excused them from a commitment to Jesus Christ. If the world truly is at enmity with Christ - and the Bible says it is - look to the media to see that claim verified. Ever so cleverly, they avoid a direct attack on Jesus Christ while chiseling away at the foundations of the Gospel, or grafting in Islam, Judaism, Sikhism.

NEVER AGAIN. God was pleased with Noah’s offering. In response, he declared, “I will never again curse the ground on account of man, for the intent of man's heart is evil from his youth; and I will never again destroy every living thing, as I have done.” We have God’s world on that! Man will never destroy himself, either with weapons of mass destruction or by driving an automobile with a gasoline engine. The Lord will never destroy the world again in order to make a fresh start according to the present order of things on earth. That does not mean that the sin problem had been eliminated, however.

The evil of human hearts (6:5) continued after the flood. In His grace God decided to bear with human evil rather than destroy all life. Human evil is thus an ongoing part of life in God's creation until Christ comes again. Such evil does not threaten the natural order. God maintains control of His creation and promises the regular coming and going of the seasons of the year. God did not promise we would never have natural disasters. He did assert His control of nature [DSB].

There is a day coming, when the world will be destroyed: “But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up” (2 Peter 3:10).

God made a covenant with Noah on that day that He is still honoring today. The Noahic Covenant is still in effect today, and everyone on earth is a beneficiary of that covenant. That covenant is a covenant of grace.

8:22 - WHILE THE EARTH REMAINS. *“While the earth remains, Seedtime and harvest, And cold and heat, And summer and winter, And day and night Shall not cease.”* Until the final judgment the earth would operate under certain laws. “God gave providential assurance that nature would be predictable and dependable” [BSB].

God promised those who survived the flood that the forces of nature would act with predictable harmony. People would, therefore, be able to plan for the future with assurance that sowing and reaping would still be a reality. The constant factors of creation remain in God's hand as a way of offering hope to His people [DSB].

The notes in the DSB state that, “History gains stability and continuity through God's promises not through human accomplishments” [DSB].

9:1 - GOD BLESSED NOAH. *“And God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth.”* God is the source of all our blessings, and only He can bless fully and absolutely. Blessing Noah was more than an expression of congratulations; it is a pronouncement that Noah would continue to be the recipient of God's blessings.

BE FRUITFUL AND MULTIPLY. Like Adam, Noah received a mandate from God to multiply and fill the earth (cf. 1:28). “A part of being in God's image is responsibility. That responsibility focuses upon the fact that only God can give life. It also involves humanity's responsible use of procreating powers. Beyond this, human responsibility includes the proper exercise of control over all the rest of the world and its creatures. For a treatment of the relationship between life and blood” [DSB].

9:2 - THE FEAR OF YOU. *“The fear of you and the terror of you will be on every beast of the earth and on every bird of the sky; with everything that creeps on the ground, and all the fish of the sea, into your hand they are given.”* The idea here is not one of dread, but of panic. Any deer hunter can tell you of this panic. A squirrel hunter stands very quietly behind a tree, listen to a number of squirrels eating acorns (dropping the shells to the ground), some running limbs, jumping from limb to limb or tree to tree. He steps on a twig and it “snaps.” Within seconds there is no noise and no movement. They panic. We see this fear of man throughout the animal kingdom.

Almost all non-domesticated animals in the world, with a few notable exception like the polar bear and the great white shark, have a natural, instinctive fear of man. This instinctive fear was given them at the end of the Flood when God made this covenant with Noah. Based on this verse we may assume that there was no such fear of man before the Flood, which is one explanation for the ease with which the animals were brought onto the ark.

9:3 - FOOD FOR YOU. *“Every moving thing that is alive shall be food for you; I give all to you, as I gave the green plant.”* The Lord approved an animal diet for man from this time forward. However, there would be restrictions placed on that diet in the Mosaic Law (Animal flesh could not be eaten with blood (cf. Lev. 17:10). Here, the Lord extended the categories of food which man might eat to “every moving thing.” He had already designated “the green herb” for food (1:30).

Many creation scientists are convinced that before the Fall all animals were herbivorous (they ate plants), rather than carnivorous (eating animal flesh). The Bible teaches that death came into the world as a result of sin. If animals had died before the Fall you would have been death before sin. This also means that animals could not have existed for millions of years before Adam and Eve. Of course, evolutionists can point out that the teeth of certain flesh eating animals were designed for eating flesh. Those animals were certainly equipped for eating flesh, but that does not mean that they could not have survived on a vegetable diet up until the time of the Fall. That does not mean that they did not eat flesh up until the time of the Flood.

In one of the first chapel services upon returning to seminary after a summer break, the president of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, Dr. H. Leo Eddleman, shared with students and faculty members a few of the highlights of a trip around the world he had just completed. It during that message that he made the statement, “Most of the problems in the world are caused by bad theology” (He may have said “all the problems of the world”). To illustrate his point he mentioned areas where people were starving while cattle grazed nearby. They could not eat those animals because they might be their great grandpa (my term, not his). There are places where people are in danger of freezing each winter, even though there is an abundance of coal in the area. But their ancestors were buried in the area and they could not dig for it.

The militant anti-hunter activists have no base in Scripture for their position. Many hunters are avid environmentalists. Organizations such as Ducks Unlimited are committed to the protection of wetlands, marshlands, and flyways to preserve the sport for future generations. Even though there have always been poachers, most deer hunters want to see the wildlife commission in their state enforce laws that will protect the deer population. They also know that some of the herds must be thinned out on a regular basis to avoid an over population.

My brother Mike stopped by a supermarket to pick up something to take with him to his deer camp and was in the check-out line. The checker looked up at him and asked if he was going deer hunting. He was wearing the garb of most deer hunters in the area. He told her that he was, and since she seemed friendly enough he asked, “Does your husband hunt?”

“No,” she responded. “I think they ought to give the deer a gun so they can defend themselves!”

Mike said, “Don’t you know they would still die because they are dumb animals. If they had guns they wouldn’t know what to do with them because they are dumb animals. I suppose you give the roaches at your house little aerosol cans of spray so they can defend themselves?” There was no

response. Who was more logical, the checker or the hunter? Better yet, which was more scriptural? That is what is important. Mike and his family eat a lot of venison. Now we know that venison is lower in cholesterol than beef.

Christians should be the most committed environmentalists in the world. They have a much greater foundation than New Age environmentalists. New Age monism holds that all is one and one is all. If you kill a deer you have killed something of yourself (and something of god), because you are that deer and you and that deer are god. Christians must get their ecology where they get their ethics, from the Word of God.

9:4 - YOU SHALL NOT. *“Only you shall not eat flesh with its life, that is, its blood.”* The Noahic Covenant contained both privileges and prohibitions. This restriction would be amplified in the Levitical Law. Even after Jesus lifted food restrictions in Mark 7, there were still some guidelines. The early Jewish believers might eat formerly forbidden meat, but they could not eat it with “its blood” in it because to do so would be eating “flesh with its life.” The life is in the blood.

The Disciples Study Bible contains the note: “Ethical limits can be defined through contracts. God made covenants or contracts with His people outlining the limits of life acceptable to God. Because God is good, we know the limits He establishes are good for us. We must honor life in all His creatures” [DSB].

Following the Jerusalem Conference of A. D. 51, James, the half-brother of our Lord, an obvious leader in the Jerusalem church, wrote what I call the opinion of the conference. They had no authority over other Gentile churches founded by Paul and Barnabas, and therefore could not hand down laws or make demands, they could offer suggestions and make requests. Let me stress this to be sure we do not misunderstand what happened: the Jerusalem Conference was not about Apostolic Authority, though there is no denying that the apostles, by nature of their office, were given authority that all people did not have. Pastoral authority is also scriptural, but if a church does not recognize it the pastor who asserts it may soon be looking for another church.

The Jerusalem Conference was called to deal with the issue of whether or not Gentiles could be saved by grace, through faith, without having to become proselytes to Judaism (accept circumcision). Peter helped win the victory with his testimony, and then turned around and compromised the victory in Antioch of Syria where he was eating with Gentiles until he saw some Jews come in from Jerusalem, and he got up and separated himself from the Gentiles in a very obvious manner. Paul tells us that he confronted him to his faith. Both Peter and Paul had Apostolic Authority, but Peter was a Palestinian Jew and Paul was a Hellenistic Jew - who just happened to have been an extremely narrow minded, bigoted Pharisee before his conversion. As strict as he had been in his practice of Judaism, he has grown up outside Palestine and had been in contact with Gentiles throughout his early life. When Peter saw a Gentile in Galilee they were either visitors to the land (traders) or they were Roman soldiers and officials. He had never socialized with them.

Other than their great theological victory of the pure Gospel over the spurious gospel of the Judaizers, which was significant, one thing we learn is that the church in Jerusalem had no authority

over other churches; influence, yes; control, no. The scriptural basis for the autonomy of the local church is established in the New Testament, as witnessed here. The principle of cooperation between churches in mission endeavors is also established in the New Testament and in Acts, as illustrated by the Offering for the suffering saints in Jerusalem (see Paul's letters to the Corinthians).

James wrote for the leaders of the Conference, "...we write to them that they abstain from things contaminated by idols and from fornication and from what is strangled and from blood" (Acts 15:20). Abstinence from these three things would not save a lost person, but it would enable them to have fellowship with Jewish believers. For more on the Jerusalem Conference, see Acts 15 and Galatians 2.

9:5 - SURELY I WILL REQUIRE. "Surely I will require your lifeblood; from every beast I will require it. And from every man, from every man's brother I will require the life of man." Homicide (which in a sense is always fratricide, v. 5) demands a punishment that matches the crime. The justification for capital punishment, here established, is "the nobility of human life, which is made in the image of God. Thus murder shows contempt for God as well as for one's fellow man. See Rom. 13:4, where government is given the power of life or death" [RSB].

The supreme value of a human life, according to divine evaluation, appears at this point. Every individual is precious; he is the "image" of God. The "lifeblood" is indicative of the lifestream, and God is the divine Controller of that life [BSB].

9:6 - WHOEVER SHEDS BLOOD. "*Whoever sheds man's blood, By man his blood shall be shed, For in the image of God He made man.*" This is the basis for capital punishment. Pay attention to Whom it is Who is speaking, what He says, and to whom He says it. The authority for the death sentence is God Himself, and His command is handed down in His Holy Word. This is not something over which any Christian should gloat, but it is something we should support. It would be very naive of us to assume that civilization has finally advanced to the state that we no longer need capital punishment. Nor, it is a valid argument that because certain other nations have abolished the death penalty we should too. We must not base our laws on what others are doing, they may be wrong. I would offer the practice of euthanasia in the Netherlands, or legalized hallucinogenic drugs as examples.

Opponents of capital punishment tell us that capital punishment is not a deterrent to murder. My response is that the purpose is, first and foremost, to punish the one who murders another human being, one who ends a life created by God. Secondly, it is a serious deterrent to the murderer himself. No one who has ever been executed has ever committed another murder.

I once heard the testimony of a man, Jack Brown, who had served many years for armed robbery, during the time when the death penalty had been set aside. He had offended a man in prison and the man threatened to kill him. He did not take him seriously until another prisoner warned him that the man was dangerous. Jack assured the man who had warned him that this man surely could not have been serious. Would he kill someone over some slight affront? The new friend said, "Jack, that man is serving two life sentences for murder now. Killing you and getting another life sentence is

not going to bother him.” Later, the man stabbed Jack in an attempt to murder him, and Jack almost died.

When I was a student at Mississippi College I visited the Hinds County Jail in Jackson, Mississippi every Thursday afternoon for two or three years. I had the opportunity to lead two murderers and one rapist to receive Jesus Christ as Savior (I mentioned them earlier), and I can tell you right now that I was happy when they received a life sentence rather than a death sentence. However, if they had been sentenced to death, I would have supported the law. I spoke with two of those men at the Mississippi State Penitentiary at Parchman after they were sentenced, and even after all these years I am convinced that they were born-again believers.

I preached at Parchman every Sunday morning at 8:00 o’clock before going to my student pastorate at Dockery Baptist Church, Cleveland, Mississippi. I often visited with the chaplain before going to one of the camps to speak. In time, he told me that when I arrived, if he was not there I could go to any camp I chose and tell them he sent me. On one occasion, the chaplain, who was an older man, told me he wished I could help him baptize some men and I told him I would be glad to help if I had some more clothes with me. He went home and got a pair of pants and a shirt and I changed and helped him baptize a large number of prisoners (actually, I helped him on two such occasions). We baptized a large number of prisoners, including a few women, and a lot of men, both black and white. Local churches had agreed to receive into their membership prisoners who were baptized following their profession of faith in Jesus Christ.

One Sunday, I asked the chaplain, Roscoe Hicks, who was originally from my hometown of Sledge, Mississippi, to preach at our church. Chaplain Hicks told the story of William Wetzel, a man who had been executed a short time before. I discovered that people in the area were well aware of that execution. Wetzel, the chaplain told us, was serving a life sentence for murder when he became angry with another prisoner and killed him. This time he received the death sentence. Wetzel, the chaplain said, had the highest IQ of any person who had “ever set his foot on the grounds at Parchman.” The death sentence finally got the attention of the professed atheist and he asked to see the chaplain. In a short time he was saved and began a program of Bible study that amazed everyone who knew him. The chaplain and others tried to get his sentence commuted to life so that he could live there and work other prisoners. The governor did not act on the petition and William Wetzel was taken to the gas chamber.

I discovered that one of our church members who worked at Parchman witnessed the execution along with the chaplain and a number of other people. The church member told me that he had witnessed a number of executions, “But, I’ll never witness another one!” He was emphatic. The chaplain told me that for the first time, the executioner had tears in his eyes. Many others were heart broken when William Wetzel was not permitted to live and serve other prisoners. They seemed more disturbed by the lack of an opportunity to serve than his death. However, both the chaplain and I supported the death penalty, and I still do. I support it because of the supreme value God places on the life that is created in His image.

Sadly, when the death penalty is carried out in America today the television networks often seem to be scrambling to see which one can gain the most points in the latest ratings. They interview everyone from the family of victims, to investigators, to attorneys, to the one who is to be executed if they receive permission. It is disturbing when the family of victims, and others celebrate the execution. It is something that must be done, but God forbid that we should find pleasure in the death of another person.

Amnesty International is one of a number of organizations that is lobbying hard for the abolition of the death penalty. Frequently, people who have been infected with that philosophy proclaim, "I don't believe in killing," or they will say, "The Bible says 'Thou shalt not kill.'" Well, what does the Bible have to say on the subject? Because of the value God places on human life, one of the Ten Commandments is, "Thou shalt not kill." Is it not interesting that the ACLU does not even want that posted in public schools? In reality, the commandment is "Thou shalt do not murder." The One Who said to individuals, "Thou shalt do no murder," also commands that the organized government execute the individual who violates that law.

9:7 - BE FRUITFUL AND MULTIPLY. *"As for you, be fruitful and multiply; Populate the earth abundantly and multiply in it."* As for Noah, God commanded him to "be fruitful and multiply." He and his descendants were to populate the earth. Environmentalists today believe Mother Earth's greatest enemy is man. The solution? Decrease the population. How? It does not matter to them, just do it! Eliminate any life but their own seems to be the idea. Abortion of millions of human beings, euthanasia, whatever it takes. It would be interesting to know how many of those who wept for the victims of the September 9, 2001 attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon had invested time, effort, talent, money, and all other resources at their disposal in the fight to kill unborn babies, including a procedure in which the baby is almost totally delivered before it is brutally murdered.

These butchers have their accomplices in the media, in congress, and they had strong support from the Clinton White House. They wept for thousands but had no tears for millions. The Twentieth Century was the most bloody in the history of the world, thanks to two world wars, and to the Nazis who killed fifteen million people, and the Communists who killed well over one hundred million people. The slaughter of Christians, Jews, and others by Muslims (and the slaughter of Muslims by Muslims) added to the number.

Communist China has the most aggressive, murderous laws in the history of the world to control the population growth in that country. Each family is allowed one child, and since a male child is desired by parents to care for them in their old age, girl babies are callously aborted by many. There are serious repercussions for a second pregnancy that is not terminated by abortion.

It must have been near the end of October, 2001, when the Fox News Network played a clip from an interview or speech by Patricia Ireland, head of the National Organization for Women (NOW - Rush Limbaugh calls it NAG). American forces were carrying out daily attacks on the Taliban in Afghanistan at the time. This militant feminist was shouting about not hearing anything from any one about the war on terrorism but statements by a bunch of white men. She demanded to know when

they would start talking about funding abortions for the young women we are sending overseas. Maybe she wanted to be the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff

Abortion has created some problems in America - beyond her national guilt before the Creator of life. As America becomes more and more dependant upon high tech jobs, we are discovering a vacuum in the work force. All those millions of babies that were aborted are not there to take over the jobs. The more intelligent people, in many cases were the ones having the abortions, and the less qualified (again, in many but not all cases) were the ones that grew up without having either the education or the talent for these high tech jobs. The reason there is not a job shortage is that those jobs have been filled in many cases by immigrants, who have come to America in large numbers. Many have become American citizens, others make no effort to become citizens, but send money to family members back home. These people have come by the millions, and very few of them are evangelical Christians. There are six million Muslims in America and now some are beginning to wonder how many of the would be willing to fight for America.

Abortions have created a vacuum that is being filled with people who are not committed first to America, and certainly not to the America the Founding Fathers envisioned. If we have faith in God we can leave the population problem up to Him. In His own time He will bring human history to a close. We will not destroy the planet, either by will or accident.

There is another vacuum that had been created by millions of abortions in America. There are millions of babies who never had an opportunity to grow up to love their parents, and care for them in their old age. A social security card is a poor substitute for a loving family.

9:8 - THEN GOD SPOKE TO NOAH. “*Then God spoke to Noah and to his sons with him, saying...*” On the surface, it might seem incredible that the Creator would bother to communicate with a creature, especially after the Fall. Such is the thought of the deist, who believes there is a God, but that after he brought things into existence, He removed himself for the affairs of men. To them, He does not involve Himself in human events. Some of the American Founders were deist, but it would be a mistake to call the majority of them deists. George Washington, for example, has been called a deist by those who apparently have never read many of his statements. For anyone in doubt, I would recommend the book, *All Cloudless Glory*, by Harrison Clark. I love that title, and borrowed it to apply it to Jesus Christ in a recent commentary in *The Bible Notebook* series.

Here, God spoke to Noah. It is amazing how many people speak of communication with God, especially those who are speaking of extra-biblical communications or revelations. In the Old Testament, God, on many occasions, spoke with individuals. In various ways He manifested Himself to human beings (called an epiphany). Still, the Bible tells us that the God did not speak audibly very often to man, as we see in the case of Samuel. In the New Testament, Jesus Christ walked with human beings and spoke regularly with them, as John writes: “And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth” (John 1:14).

Cod communicates with people today primarily through His inspired Word and the ministry of the Holy Spirit. We need to be very careful in accepting testimonies about extra-biblical revelations today. However, in the Old Testament, God spoke audibly to Adam and Eve, to Noah, Abraham, Moses, Samuel, and others. He communicated with others through visions and dreams, always according to His sovereign purpose..

God spoke to whom He chose, when He chose, where He chose. There was nothing man did to merit a visit or message from God. There is no explanation of why He spoke with one and did not speak to another, or why He spoke to someone in one age, and not in another; no explanation, that is, except for His Sovereign purpose or will.

God expresses His relationship to people in terms of the covenant, a solemn personal promise or agreement. God initiates the covenant and chooses to be gracious to His chosen ones. The covenant is the outward expression of the inward disposition of the heart of God. Through the covenant announced here, God showed that He is personally interested in all mankind to come and that He has a benevolent disposition towards all.

This divine promise or covenant guarantees the continuity of human life and of creation. God has committed Himself to a stable world in which He is working to establish His kingdom. Humans can plan for the future, assured life will continue on earth until Christ comes [DSB].

God speaks and expresses His will and purpose for mankind. He also makes some specific promises in these verses (9:8-17) and He keeps His promises. The notes in the Disciples Study Bible relates this to the church.

What God promised to do for Noah, He did. God bases His work with His people on His own grace, not on any goodness which the people might possess or perform. A covenant establishes a relationship. In ancient times covenants were prevalent among many peoples. A covenant could be established among equal partners or, more often, between superior and inferior parties. Victorious kings established covenants with defeated kings. The covenants between such parties defined the relationship to be maintained and the requirements to be placed on each party.

Remarkably God's covenant with Noah required no stipulations. God freely enters into relationship with His people. He wishes to know His own and to be known by them. This first explicit biblical covenant revealed God to be a covenant-making God seeking to bless all people. Thus it prepared the way for all other covenants. The Lord is involved intimately with the whole earth. He created the world, sent the waters of the flood, and made a covenant with the earth and all its inhabitants. God blesses His people with promises which are sure and unwavering. The people were afraid of every rain cloud, but the Lord gave a sign of His constant care and vigilance. This

everlasting covenant remains in effect. God continues to guard His creation. The rainbow is a sign of God's unfailing care. The promise does not prohibit God from finally judging His universe [DSB].

9:9 - I... WILL ESTABLISH MY COVENANT. *“Now behold, I Myself do establish My covenant with you, and with your descendants after you.”* “I Myself” is emphatic. Yahweh God has the sovereign right to initiate a covenant with man who was created in His image. Man can enter covenants, write contracts, and make promise, but there are many factors that can effect the fulfillment of man’s covenants. The sovereign Lord can enter any covenant He chooses to enter, and then He is able to fulfill it, regardless of circumstances, regardless, of obstacles, and regardless of time factor. At no time did any covenant God made with any individual or any nation depend upon their power or even their faithfulness. The same applies to the new covenant in Jesus Christ. Paul wrote the statement, “And he will stand, for the Lord is able to make him stand” (Rom. 14:4b). God demands faithfulness, but His ultimate will and purpose will not be thwarted by man’s unfaithfulness.

“I Myself do establish” is a reminder that This is a covenant that is being established at this point. While it may have been related to the covenant of Genesis 3, this is a specific covenant made with Noah and his descendants.

9:10 - EVERY LIVING CREATURE. *“And with every living creature that is with you, the birds, the cattle, and every beast of the earth with you; of all that comes out of the ark, even every beast of the earth.”* The Noahic covenant included both man and animals, all that had been on the ark. It is certainly understandable that He would protect all the had saved by means of the ark.

9:11 - I ESTABLISH MY COVENANT. *“I establish My covenant with you; and all flesh shall never again be cut off by the water of the flood, neither shall there again be a flood to destroy the earth.”* The repetition is for emphasis, and possibly to help those who heard the Scripture read retain what they heard. From the words, “I establish My covenant,” we might infer the message that God is **the One Who acts** in establishing the covenant, and it is **His covenant**.

NEVER AGAIN. The world would never be destroyed by water again. While the topography of the earth is radically different today, and a flood that would cover Mt. Everest, if God elected to flood the earth with water, would be no challenge for Him. However, we have His word that the world would never again be destroyed by water. The next time it will be fire.

9:12 - THIS IS THE SIGN. *“God said, ‘This is the sign of the covenant which I am making between Me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all successive generations.’”* God not only made a covenant with Noah and with “every living creature,” He also gave them a sign that would stand as long as the world stands as a testimony to His promise.

9:13 - MY BOW. *“I set My bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a sign of a covenant between Me and the earth.”* Millions of children in Sunday School and Vacation Bible School learn about Noah and the Flood, the animals, and the rainbow. It is unfortunate that many parents do not follow up on

this information while they have their interest. What child, having heard the story of the rainbow, has not thought about God's promise upon seeing a rainbow following a rain.

This common phenomenon of the rainbow became a pledge of peace; "its appearance when showers began to fall would be welcomed with the liveliest feelings of joy. The bow, same word as the weapon that shoots arrows, symbolized the end of God's warfare against earth. For rain and lightning are referred to in Hebrew as God's arrows (Deut. 31:28; Psa. 18:14; Hab. 3:11). God's bow was now turned the other way, perhaps showing the end of such hostilities" [NCWB].

9:14 - THE BOW WILL BE SEEN. *"It shall come about, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the bow will be seen in the cloud."* The detail given here is amazing. We have the covenant, the sign of the covenant, and the circumstance under which the rainbow would be seen. The sign that the earth would never again be destroyed by water is seen in the water of a cloud. It can also be seen in the spray from a garden hose when the light is right.

9:15 - I WILL REMEMBER. *"And I will remember My covenant, which is between Me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and never again shall the water become a flood to destroy all flesh."* The rainbow would serve as a reminder both to God and to man that He would never destroy the earth by water again. While it would not be possible for God not to remember His covenant, the rainbow would serve as a reminder to the people that He would see this sign and remember His covenant.

9:16 - EVERLASTING COVENANT. *"When the bow is in the cloud, then I will look upon it, to remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth."* There is more repetition than new information here. This is an important covenant, and there could be no doubt that people for centuries to come would be asking for details.

The Southern Baptist Convention adopted a Baptist Faith and Message Statement in 1925, and then a revised BFM statement in 1963. My very good friend, Luther B. Hall, served on the committee that drew up the 1963 statement. When it became apparent that some people were making statements like, "If these words mean thus and so, then I can agree with it," many were convinced that it was necessary to strengthen the BFM statement. The primary problem areas have been the Scripture and the family. A revised BFM statement was adopted later, and the 2000 annual convention, Southern Baptist messengers approved a new statement. Some people had a way of seeing what they wanted to see in the statement. Resolutions, like constitutions, are written and rewritten. Perhaps that is the reason for so much repetition here.

9:17 - GOD SAID TO NOAH. *"And God said to Noah, "This is the sign of the covenant which I have established between Me and all flesh that is on the earth."* The passage on the Noahic covenant closes as it begins (God spoke to Noah, vs. 8). The rainbow was given as "the sign of the covenant." As seen earlier, God said, "I have established" the covenant, and the covenant was established "between Me and all flesh that is on the earth."

The Sons of Noah

9:18 - THE SONS OF NOAH. *“Now the sons of Noah who came out of the ark were Shem and Ham and Japheth; and Ham was the father of Canaan.”* We have met Shem, Ham, and Japheth, the sons of Noah before the Flood. The only new information here is that Ham was the father of Canaan. The human race today is descended from these three sons of Noah. This verse anticipates chapters 10 and 11, which show that God’s command (9:1, 7) was fulfilled in spite of human sin (11:4).

9:19 - FROM THESE. *“These three were the sons of Noah, and from these the whole earth was populated.”* All people on the earth are descended from one of the three sons of Noah. Paul, in his famous sermon on Mars Hill, proclaimed, “And He made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined their appointed times and the boundaries of their habitation” (Acts 17:26).

9:20 - NOAH BEGAN FARMING. *“Then Noah began farming and planted a vineyard.”* What else was there to do? There was no industry, no existing flocks of domestic animals, and no government to take care of him. So, he began where he was with what he had. Farming is really the oldest profession of mankind, farming and herding animals. Adam was a farmer, as was Able. What else was there for Noah and his sons to do at the time? There was not enough livestock for them to be a herdsman, and there were not enough animals for them to trap animals. There were no demands for an ark builder. They needed produce, so he began farming. Grape vines would have budded out soon after the waters abated from the higher land, leaving dry ground which was ready to begin producing plants again. Noah took cuttings and “planted” his a vineyard.

9:21 - HE DRANK OF THE WINE. *“He drank of the wine and became drunk, and uncovered himself inside his tent.”* Noah had harvested grapes from his a new vineyard. From the grapes he made wine and “drank wine and became drunk.” Obviously, Noah over indulged, but at his advanced age we should not make too much of this, other than the fact that he drank too much wine and became intoxicated. It may never have happened before, and it may have never happened afterward. We are not told in this verse that Noah sinned in becoming drunk, but the Lord certainly did not approve of his behavior. That of course made it sin (missing the mark), but there is no indication that the man who walked before the Lord in righteousness had deliberately rebelled against the Lord. He may not have intended to over indulge, but most people who get drunk do not start out to get drunk. They argue, “No one ever got drunk on one drink.” Or, “I know my limit.” There are always those who boast, “I can hold my liquor.”

Let me stress here that this text passes no judgment on Noah for this act. Later in the law, to look at one’s nakedness was indicative of a sexual encounter (Lev. 20:17). Drunkenness is often thought of as an aphrodisiac (Gen. 19:32-36), but too much can have the opposite effect. The same can be said of “recreational” drugs. At first, inhibitions are lowered or removed, and then after continued indulgence many reach the point that they can no longer function and they lose interest in sex, food, and everything else. There is no basis here for the speculation that “Perhaps the aging patriarch, wishing to add to his family, had become drunk and was engaged sexually with his wife

when Ham indiscreetly watched his father” [NCWB].

There are two lessons we should learn from this account of something very ugly in the life of a righteous man. First, Noah might have been a righteous man, the one God used to begin anew in nurturing a people for His Name, but he was also a fallen man. Noah sinned as do all men and women, even the most “religious.” Secondly, the Bible does not whitewash the record of people like Noah, Abraham, Moses, Samson, David, or Peter. “**All have sinned** (past tense) and **come short** (present tense) of the glory of God” (Rom. 3:23). The Bible is the most unbiased book that has ever been written on any subject that deals with ethics and human nature.

Noah drank wine. Does that not justify the drinking of alcoholic beverages today? The people of new Testament times commonly drank wine, mixed with water (three parts water, one part wine). Drinking of unmixed wine was condemned, as was drinking of beverages with a higher alcohol content. As a matter of fact, drinking of wine that had not been diluted with water (1-1; 1-2; or 1-3) was even frowned upon in the Greek society

There is one thing for sure: if you do not take the first drink you are not going to get drunk. We live in a day in which people are tempted with the most sophisticated ads to drink alcoholic beverages. College students and young men and women going into the military are often the most susceptibility to these ads. Binge drinking has become popular in many college fraternities. In binge drinking students drink to get drunk and pass out. There have been some deaths as a result.

Little do those young people realize what they are risking when they begin drinking. They identify with the movie star or the athlete in the magazine or on television, not the gutter bum. They cannot imagine themselves as an alcoholic. One lady once told me she had taken her first drink when she was eighteen and she was a alcoholic from that day on. Someone else assured me that she may well have been an alcoholic at eighteen, but she had taken her first drink at a much earlier age.

UNCOVERED HIMSELF. In his drunken condition, Noah uncovered himself. We must remember that he was in his own tent. In this passage, he is neither condemned for drinking nor for uncovering himself at this time, unless it is by implication. The Lord may well have dealt with him about it later. I am not trying to whitewash what Noah did. He was guilty of sin, though in this enlightened age many would excuse him: “*He made an error in judgment. We all make errors in judgment.*” Most of these errors in judgment can more honestly be listed under the category of sin.

I would agree with Wiersbe that, “It was a seasoned saint, over 600 years old, and not a young prodigal, that fell into this sin and shame.” But I question his assertion that “the Hebrew text suggests that Noah deliberately uncovered himself in a shameful manner; intemperance and impurity often go together.” That is a matter of opinion, and while opinions matter, it is still a matter of opinion. We must be careful not to read between the lines here. Sin is real, and Noah is not here exonerated.

Some excuse Noah by suggesting that the new atmospheric conditions of the earth

since the flood would lead to the fermentation of wine, and that Noah did not fully know what he was doing. But the Bible does not excuse the sins of the saints. This is the third failure on the part of man. He had disobeyed in Eden, resulting in his expulsion; he had corrupted the earth, resulting in the flood; and now he had become a shameful drunk! To make matters worse, Ham did not respect his father; instead, he “told with delight” what Noah [WW].

9:22 - HAM SAW. *“Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brothers outside.”* Early in the Creation story we find Cain killing Abel. Early in the new period we find Ham sinning in a shameful manner. The word rendered “saw” is literally, to gaze with satisfaction. Ham may well have entered the tent of his father to check on him and found him uncovered, without having done anything wrong. If he had covered his father there is not reason to believe he would have been guilty of any sin for having seen “the nakedness of his father.” But this is not what Ham did. He was amused. Rather than covering his father and not mentioning it to anyone else, he told his brothers. What Ham did showed disrespect for his father.

There is no indication of sexual impropriety on Ham’s part. His sin was in looking with delight upon his father’s sin and in dishonoring his father by looking upon his shame and flippantly telling his brothers (perhaps in a critical manner, but possibly with amusement). He found the situation entertaining. The ancient world and the Bible required children to honor their parents (Ex. 20:12; 21:15, 17; Deut. 21:18-21). We live in a day in which many seem to think nothing is sacred, and no one is exempt from common jokes. This was obviously no joking matter. This passage implies that a value is to be placed on modesty and privacy as well as honor for one’s parents.

9:23 - BUT SHEM AND JAPHETH. *“But Shem and Japheth took a garment and laid it upon both their shoulders and walked backward and covered the nakedness of their father; and their faces were turned away, so that they did not see their father's nakedness.”* Shem and Japheth, showing great respect for their father, held up a garment, probably a robe, and walked into the tent backward and covered their father. What a contrast between the attitude of Ham and that of his brothers.

9:24 - NOAH AWOKE. *“When Noah awoke from his wine, he knew what his youngest son had done to him.”* We are not told how Noah knew what Ham, his youngest son had done, but it is possible that when he saw that he awoke and found that he had been covered by a garment that was not his own, he began asking questions. Possible Shem and Japheth told him what Ham had done.

9:25 - CURSED BE CANAAN. *“So he said, “Cursed be Canaan; A servant of servants He shall be to his brothers.”* It is interesting that the curse was not pronounced directly on Ham, the offender, but on Canaan, his son. The BKC offers the following comments:

Because of this incident **Noah** prophesied about his sons’ descendants. He began with the direct words, **Cursed be Canaan!** However, Noah was not punishing Ham’s son for something *Ham* did. Instead, Noah’s words referred to the nation of Canaanites that would come from Ham through Canaan. Ham’s act of hubris could not be left

without repercussions. A humiliation in like measure was needed, according to the principle of retributive justice. Ham had made an irreparable breach in his *father's* family; thus a curse would be put on his *son's* family. It has been suggested that Ham may have attempted to seize leadership over his brothers for the sake of his own line. This would be similar to other ancient traditions about a son replacing his father. But if he did his attempt failed, and his line through Canaan was placed not in leadership over other clansmen, but under them (v. 25) [BKC].

Some speculate that “It is probable that there is a long interval included between the incident and this curse, like that of Jacob on his sons. It was not uttered till near the close of Noah’s life; this presumption is strengthened by the mention of his death immediately after” [NCWB].

Whether Canaan was personally involved with his father Ham’s sin we are not told. It has been suggested that he might have seen Noah’s condition first and then told his father, but there is no way we can discern that from the text. But Ham is punished for his dishonor to his father “by having a son who would bring dishonor to him. The curse is not on the Hamites, but on the Canaanites, the inhabitants of Palestine who were first subjected by Joshua and later by Solomon (cf. 1 Kings 9:20-21). The Canaanites long ago became extinct; the curse, therefore, cannot be applied to anyone today” [RSB].

Ham’s unfaithfulness in his covenant relationship with his father was punished by God’s releasing or giving up (cf. Rom. 1:24ff.) his son Canaan to his own sinful tendencies. Noah could probably see already in Canaan the same ungodly attitudes that had surfaced in Ham. Prior to the conquest of the Promised Land, Israel learned from this account that the perverseness of their enemies the Canaanites, under the judgment of God, could be traced to their ancestor Ham [RSB].

What we do know is that Noah learned what Ham had done and pronounced his shocking curse. This is the third curse in Genesis. See 3:14-19 and 4:11.

The fact that he curses Canaan, Ham’s youngest son (10:6), suggests that the boy was involved in the sin along with his father and that God would punish the sins of both the father and the son. Canaan and his descendants (nations named in 10:15-20) were to be the lowest of servants to their brethren. It is easy to see that they were ultimately made slaves by the Jews and Gentiles. Of course, the Shemites (Semites) were the Jews. Their tribes are listed in 10:21-32, and 11:10-26 traces the line to Abraham. The descendants of Japheth are the Gentiles (10:1-5). The enslavement of Canaan’s descendants is mentioned in Gen. 15:13-21 with 10:15-20. We are not told how the various racial distinctions appeared, but Acts 17:26 teaches that God made all men of “one blood”[WW].

A SERVANT. This passage states that Canaan would be a servant to his brothers. “Contrary to some misinterpretations of the past, the reader should note that neither Ham nor Canaan and the

Canaanites were black. This passage cannot be used as a basis for the reprehensible attitudes and actions of racism” [BSB]. This verse cannot be quoted to justify slavery, bigotry, or any other such attitudes today. Thomas Sowell, an outstanding economist who has researched and written some outstanding books on race and culture, points out that every ethnic group has supplied its share of slaves - and slave owners. There is no race or culture that is totally without blame. However, the point here is that Canaan was condemned to pay the price for Ham’s sin, and Ham would pay the price of knowing what his sin had done to his progeny.

9:26 - BLESSED BE THE LORD. *“He also said, "Blessed be the LORD, The God of Shem; And let Canaan be his servant.”* Noah had walked before the Lord in righteousness too long not to know that God is holy and just in all his judgments. He uses the name Yahweh here. Yahweh will be Shem’s God and Shem’s blessing, and Canaan would serve Shem. The lineage of Shem, from which Abraham would come would be particularly blessed by Yahweh. The Semitic people are descended from Shem.

9:27 - JAPHETH. *“May God enlarge Japheth, And let him dwell in the tents of Shem; And let Canaan be his servant.”* The descendants of Japheth (the name means “enlargement”) would spread throughout the world and they would prosper.

DWELL IN THE TENTS OF SHEM. This means that spiritual blessings will come to the descendants of Japheth through the God of the Shem (Semites). Paul wrote in Romans that salvation is of the Jews, and that Gentiles are grafted into that tree (Rom. 11:17). Canaan would be the servant of Shem.

To summarize the verses on the sin and the curse. One writer makes the point that “Noah’s oracle predicted that the Canaanites would be in servitude to the Shemites and Japhethites (vv. 26-27).”

But this was because the Canaanites lived degrading lives like Ham, not because of what Ham did. The point is that nationally, at least, drunken debauchery enslaves a people. This is why, in God’s program to bless Israel, the Canaanites were condemned. They were to be judged by God through the Conquest because their activities were in the same pattern and mold as their ancestor Ham. The enslavement of Canaanites is seen in many situations in the history of the Old Testament. Such a case turned up fairly soon; the Canaanites were defeated and enslaved by eastern kings (chap. 14).

Another example was the Gibeonites who later under Joshua became wood choppers and water carriers for Israel’s tabernacle (Josh. 9:27). If the subjugation of Canaan to Japheth’s line is to be carried to the extreme, as (the Hebrew word used for slave (Gen. 9:26-27) sometimes implies, then it would go no further than the Battle of Carthage (146 B.C.) where the Phoenicians (who were Canaanites) were finally defeated. But Noah’s words seem to be more of a general than a specific prophecy, that the line of **Shem** will be blessed and the line of Ham in **Canaan** will be cursed.

This blessing-cursing motif is crucial in Genesis. The Canaanites would have to be dispossessed from their place by Israel under Joshua in order for blessing to come on Shem (v. 26) and for the Japhethites to dwell **in the tents of Shem** (v. 27). This meant that the Japhethites would live with the Shemites on friendly terms, not that the Japhethites would dispossess the Shemites. So verses 24-29 actually set the foundation for Israel's foreign policy in the land (Deut. 20:16-18) [BKC].

One writer points out that throughout history, descendants of Shem have often been involved spiritual matters; the descendants of Japheth with intellectual matters; the descendants of Ham with service matters. It is his contention that the three areas would compliment each other, in that all mankind would benefit from the contributions of each line. For example, the descendants of Shem would benefit both from the inventions and innovations of the descendants of Japheth and from the service oriented industry of the descendants. If this writer is right, it would only be in a very broad and general sense, but it is worth further study.

9:28 - THREE HUNDRED YEARS. "Noah lived three hundred and fifty years after the flood." Noah would see many descendants before his death. He likely saw the early development of the curse of Canaan, as well as the blessing of Shem before his death. Noah lived to see the earth green and fruitful once again, though it would never be the same as it was before the Flood. Physically, many parts of the earth may well be more beautiful than before the Flood, but there are also barren places, deserts, and wildernesses today.

To illustrate how a principle might apply in a general sense, yet break down when applied too strictly, let us say that there are people who need computers to accomplish their work. There are people who have the genius to invent computers. There are others who do not use them in their work, they do not invent them and they do not experiment with new programs; yet they assemble them, maintain them, and repair them. It would be a mistake, however, to categorize these three groups too closely. I use a computer for research, writing, and communication, but without the help of my son John I would not get very far. He is an attorney who uses a computer in his work, but he can also build, maintain, and repair a computer.

We should be careful to evaluate our motivation today before applying this curse to an individual, a nation, a race, or ethnic group. I would again recommend Thomas Sowell's books on race, culture, migration, and conquest. Sowell is a black man by birth and a conservative by choice. He is also a brilliant author, whose research may be of value in understanding the different roles various groups have made and the contributions of each to all mankind.

9:29 - THE DAYS OF NOAH. "*So all the days of Noah were nine hundred and fifty years, and he died.*" Noah lived six hundred years before the Flood, and three hundred, fifty years after the Flood. No one, other than his wife and his sons and their wives, has ever seen so many changes in this world.

Throughout the history of mankind there have been pivotal characters whom God has used to accomplish His purpose. Adam, of course was the first. For an exercise of the mind, or for serious

research, consider the following names and identify them with the work God assigned them, or the particular role they played in His plan for mankind.

1. Noah.
2. Abraham
3. Jacob
4. Moses
5. Joshua
6. Samuel
7. David
8. Peter
9. Paul
10. John

V. THE DESCENDANTS OF NOAH, AND THE TOWER OF BABEL, 10:1-11:26.

A. The Sons of Japheth, 10:1-5

10:1 - SHEM, HAM, AND JAPHETH. *“Now these are the records of the generations of*

Shem, Ham, and Japheth, the sons of Noah; and sons were born to them after the flood.” All the people of the world are descended from Noah through one of his three sons (cf. Acts 17:26). This chapter is called the “Table of Nations.”

The descendants of Japheth (vv. 2-4) and Ham (vv. 6-8) appear before Shem's family (vv. 21-29), according to the writer's method and purpose of presenting the chosen descendant last. Thus, the history of Cain and his descendants comes before that of Seth; the history of Ishmael and Esau precedes that of Isaac and Jacob. Genesis increasingly appears as the carefully planned work of one author [BSB].

After the Flood, as the people increased, they scattered in all directions through the world (cf. 11:8):

- (1) the Japhethites (vv. 2-5) went to Europe and to the northern areas of Asia;
- (2) the Hamites (vv. 6-20) into Egypt, Ethiopia, Arabia, Asia Minor, and Canaan;
- (3) the children of Shem and of Eber (vv. 21-31) went into Elam (western Mesopotamia), Assyria, Arabia, and other lands of the Middle East.

Many names mentioned in ch. 10 are identifiable with nations of ancient times, some of which have continued down to the present. Of special significance is “Eber” (v. 25), because his name was the origin of the term “Hebrew” (14:13; Ex. 5:1-3) [BSB].

This is the first occurrence of this formula. The historian has not arranged this catalogue according to seniority of birth; for the account begins with the descendants of Japheth, and the line of Ham is given before that of Shem, though he is expressly said to be the youngest or younger son of Noah, and Shem was the elder brother of Japheth (10:21.) The peculiar arrangement of the sons here is for literary reasons. The family of Shem (10:21-31) is placed last so as to be juxtaposed with the expanded lineage of Shem, which follows in 11:10-26. **generations**—The narrative presents the settlement of nations existing in the time of Moses, though perhaps only the principal ones; for though the list comprises the sons of Shem, Ham, and Japheth, all their descendants are not enumerated. Those descendants, with one or two exceptions, are described by names indicative of tribes and nations and ending in the Hebrew “im,” or the English “ite” [NCWB]

History involves nations not just individuals. The table of nations uses genealogical forms to describe the rise of international powers and rivals. Nations are not eternal realities but historical developments rising out of God's call to individuals to be fruitful. The table of nations witnesses to God's universal interest. No matter how narrow the biblical story may appear as it focuses on the one family of Abraham, its universal context provides theological interpretation for the narrow focus [DSB].

The table of nations gives us a survey of the descendants of Noah's three sons. God had told them to "fill the earth" (9:1). But later their descendants' moving out and filling the earth (11:1-9) was divine judgment on a rebellious people. This table appears to represent the known tribes of the earth. Seventy descendants of Noah's sons are listed, including 14 from Japheth, 30 from Ham, and 26 from Shem. And these are cleverly arranged into patterns.

The table of nations is a "horizontal" genealogy rather than a "vertical" one (those in chaps. 5 and 11 are vertical). Its purpose is not primarily to trace ancestry; instead it shows political, geographical, and ethnic affiliations among tribes for various reasons, most notable being holy war. Tribes shown to be "kin" would be in league together. Thus this table aligns the predominant tribes in and around the land promised to Israel. These names include founders of tribes, clans, cities, and territories. The table shows which peoples in the ancient world shared in the blessing and cursing motif. The table also stresses how they spread out and replenished the earth, though not in obedience. They all came from one, Noah, and were therefore one people; but some were closely related and others were distant. The table also shows the plight of the human race, scattered across the face of the earth and living according to their own cultural and linguistic affiliations. Wars and conflicts inevitably result from this arrangement [BKC].

10:2 - THE SONS OF JAPHETH. *"The sons of Japheth were Gomer and Magog and Madai and Javan and Tubal and Meshech and Tiras."* The descendants of Japheth were given first. These were northern people, the most remote from the people from which Israel would spring as well as from the Promised Land. These northern tribes did not figure predominantly in Israel's history, but occur frequently in prophetic writings (Ezek. 27; 37-39). The descendants of Japheth settled in an area that stretched across Eurasia from the Black Sea and Caspian Sea to Spain. "Japheth is supposed to be the same with the Japetus of the Greeks, from whom, in an extremely remote antiquity, that people were supposed to have derived their origin" [CLARKE].

GOMER. The descendants of Gomer may have settled in what is today eastern Turkey. They are supposed by some to have peopled Galatia (thought by some to be of the same stock as the Scythians). Josephus, who says that the Galatians were "anciently named Gomerites. From him the Cimmerians or Cimbrians are supposed to have derived their origin. Some think the Phrygians sprang from this person, and some of our principal commentators are of the same opinion" [CLARKE].

MAGOG. Magog is supposed by many to be the father of the Scythians and Tartars. "In great Tartary many names are still found which bear such a striking resemblance to the Gog and Magog of the Scriptures, as to leave little doubt of their identity" [CLARKE]. Magog was the land of Gog, between Armenia and Cappadocia (Ezek. 38:2; 39:6). "The name represented Scythian hordes southwest of the Black Sea" [BKC].

MADAI. One commentary states that Madai represented the Medes east of Assyria and southwest of the Caspian Sea [BKC]. Clarke, however, notes that "Joseph Mede" believed that Madai was

rather the founder of a people in Macedonia called Maedi, “and that Macedonia was formerly called Emathia, a name formed from Ei, an island, and Madai, because he and his descendants inhabited the maritime coast on the borders of the Ionian Sea. On this subject nothing certain can be advanced” [CLARKE].

JAVAN. It is almost universally agreed that the descendants of Javan gave birth to the Ionians of Asia Minor. However, the name “Ionians” may also have been given to the Macedonians, Achaians, and others.

TUBAL. Some believe Tubal was the father of the Iberians, and that a part of Spain was peopled by him and his descendants; and that Meshech, who is generally in Scripture joined with him, was the founder of the Cappadocians, from whom proceeded the Muscovites.

TIRAS. From this person, according to general consent, the Thracians derived their origin.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary provides us with a brief summary of the individuals mentioned and nations identified with them.

Javan was the general word for the Hellenic race, the Ionians of western Asia Minor. **Tubal** and **Meshech** were northern military states. They might have been located in Pontus and the Armenian mountains. **Tiras** may refer to the seafaring Pelasgians of the Aegean coasts.

From these seven, seven more were derived. Three northern tribes came from **Gomer: Ashkenaz** (related to the Scythians), **Riphath, and Togarmah** (distant northern tribes). **The sons of Javan**, two geographical names and two tribal names, were all kin to the Greeks. **Elishah** was Alashiyah or Cyprus. **Tarshish** was a distant coast in Asia Minor. **The Kittim** also dwelt on Cyprus. The “Dodanim” (NIV marg.) may have lived in Dodona, Greece (unless “Dodanim” is a textual variant for **Rodanim** [Rhodes]; cf. 1 Chron. 1:7) [BKC].

10:3 - SONS OF GOMER. “*The sons of Gomer were Ashkenaz and Riphath and Togarmah.*” Ashkenaz may have given his name to Sacagena, “a very excellent province of Armenia. Pliny mentions a people called Ascanitici, who dwelt about the Tanais and the Palus Maeotis; and some suppose that from Ashkenaz the Euxine Sea derived its name, but others suppose that from him the Germans derived their origin” [CLARKE]. Riphath (or Diphath) was probably the founder of the Paphlagonians, which were anciently called Riphataei. Togarmah’s descendants were the Sauromates, or inhabitants of Turcomania [CLARKE].

10:4 - THE SONS OF JAVAN. “*The sons of Javan were Elishah and Tarshish, Kittim and Dodanim.*” The descendants of Javan settled over a large part of Greece.

ELISHAH. This family probably settled at Elis, in Peloponnesus.

TARSHISH. Tarshish is a familiar name to Bible students, but there is no consensus among scholars. The Holman Bible Dictionary informs us that the “Personal and place name of uncertain derivation, either meaning, ‘yellow jasper,’ as in the Hebrew of Exodus 28:20; Ezekiel 28:13, or else derived from an Akkadian term meaning, ‘smelting plant” [HBD]. Holman also notes that he was the “Son of Javan (Gen. 10:4; 1 Chron. 1:7) and ancestor of an Aegean people” [HBD]. The debate comes in trying to determine whether the descendants of Tarshish settled Spain or Cilicia.

Geographic designation, most likely of Tartessus at the southern tip of Spain but possibly of Tarsus in Cilicia. **Jonah sailed for Tarshish, the far limit of the western world from the Mediterranean port of Joppa** in his futile attempt to escape God's call (Jonah 1:3). Tarshish traded in precious metals with Tyre, another Mediterranean port (Isa. 23:1; Jer. 10:9; Ezek. 27:12).

References to Tarshish in 1 Kings and 2 Chronicles suggest **a non-geographic meaning**. Solomon's (1 Kings 10:22; 2 Chron. 9:21) and Jehoshaphat's (1 Kings 22:48; 2 Chron. 20:36) fleets were based at Ezion-Geber on the Red Sea. Solomon's cargo suggests east African trading partners. Thus "ships of Tarshish" may designate seagoing vessels like those of Tarshish or else ships bearing metal cargo like those of Tarshish (compare Isa. 2:16 where ships of Tarshish parallels beautiful crafts) [HBD, emphasis added].

I personally prefer Spain to Cilicia, though Tarsus, the home of the Apostle Paul in Cilicia may have some support. The evidence of Scripture seems to support that. The name may have had “a non-geographical meaning” to some people at some time, but the son of Javan was the father of a distinct group of people who settled in a certain place.

KITTIM. The name “Kittim” may have been the name of a people rather than of an individual: some think Kittim refers to Cyprus: others, the Romans; and still others, the Macedonians. The Holman Bible Dictionary states that Kittim was the “tribal name for the island of Cyprus, sometimes spelled Chittim.”

This name was derived from Kition, a city-state on the southeastern side of the island. Long associated with maritime lore, the island was ruled first by Greece, then the Assyrians, and finally, Rome. Genesis 10:4 traces the people's roots to Noah's son Japheth. Jeremiah and Ezekiel both mention it in their prophecies (Jer. 2:10; Ezek. 27:6; compare Isa. 23:1,12).

Kittim is used in intertestamental writings as denoting all of the land west of Cyprus. 1 Maccabees credits it as being the land of Alexander the Great (1:1; 8:5). The writer of Daniel understood it to be a part of the Roman Empire (11:30) used to threaten Antiochus Epiphanes. The Dead Sea Scrolls contain several references to Kittim, the most notable being the defeat of her people (Romans) at the hands of God's people

[HBD].

DODANIM (or Rodanim). Though there is no common agreement, some believe the descendants of Dodanim settled at Dodona in Epirus; others at the isle of Rhodes; others, at the Rhone, in France, the ancient name of which was Rhodanus, from the Scripture Rodanim. Turning again to the Holman Bible Dictionary we find the following article:

Great grandson of Noah and son of Javan in the table of nations (Gen. 10:4). **In 1 Chronicles 1:7 the name is Rodanim.** Early copyists made the easy confusion between Hebrew "r" and "d." **If Rodanim is correct, the reference may be to inhabitants of Rhodes.** If Dodanim is original, the identification of the people is not simple. It could refer to a land of Danuna known from the Amarna letters. This was apparently north of Tyre. A people with a similar name were among the Sea People who fought with Rameses III. Homer says Danaeans besieged Troy. Sargon II describes Yadanana who lived on Cyprus. Despite specific information, they were apparently from the Greek area and may have been Greek-speaking.

10:5 - THE COASTLANDS. *“From these the coastlands of the nations were separated into their lands, every one according to his language, according to their families, into their nations.”* Since the coastlands are not identified by name, we would probably be safe in assuming that this denotes those countries to which the ancients traveled by sea, such as Spain, Gaul, Italy, Greece, and Asia Minor. The ancient Phoenicians sailed the Mediterranean Sea, the Aghan Sea, and the Adriatic Sea for centuries, planting its religion and culture throughout that part of the world.

What we have before us is a crash course in rise or development of numerous nations, tribes, and even civilizations of antiquity. The scriptural account offers a wealth of information about these ancient individuals and the nations that descended from them. Here is the truth behind the dispersion of those ancients throughout the world. The occasion was the confusing of tongues, and the resulting dispersion from Babel.

B. The Sons of Ham, 10:6-20

10:6 - SONS OF HAM. *“The sons of Ham were Cush and Mizraim and Put and Canaan.”* These verses detail Ham’s descendants, “who went to Africa and later spread W along the Mediterranean coast of N Africa” [RSB].

CUSH. The descendants of Cush probably peopled the area near the Red Sea in Lower Egypt. Some think the Ethiopians descended from him.

MIZRAIM. The family of Mizraim were almost certainly the people who settled most of what is today Egypt; and both in the East and in the West, Egypt is called Mezer and Mezraim.

PHUT. This family first peopled an Egyptian area or district, bordering on Libya.

CANAAN. The Canaanites moved to and populated the land known as the Land of Canaan, which is also called by the name of the Promised Land. To be more specific:

The territory between the Mediterranean Sea and the Jordan River reaching from the brook of Egypt to the area around Ugarit in Syria or to the Euphrates. This represents descriptions in Near Eastern documents and in the Old Testament. Apparently, Canaan meant different things at different times. Numbers 13:29 limits Canaanites to those who "dwell by the sea and by the coast of Jordan [HBD].

10:7 -THE SONS OF CUSH. *"The sons of Cush were Seba and Havilah and Sabtah and Raamah and Sabteca; and the sons of Raamah were Sheba and Dedan."* Here we are introduced to a number of sons of Cush. Following the confusion of languages at the Tower of Babel, the descendants of these sons of Cush will, like many other people groups, begin to scatter out over the earth.

SEBA. Seba was the founder of the Sabaeans. The HBD has the following to say about the descendants of Seba:

A group of people thought to be akin to the Israelites through either Ham (Gen. 10:6-7) or Shem (Gen. 10:28). They settled southwest Arabia (modern Yemen) and became prosperous traders. One of the major caravan routes was in their control. They dealt mainly in rich spices, gold, and precious stones. The Sabaeans also were agrarian, developing elaborate irrigation devices to make their region more fertile.

The queen of Saba (Sheba) traveled to Jerusalem (about 1,500 miles) during Solomon's reign to strike trade agreements with the thriving Israelites (1 Kings 10:1-10). The Sabaeans are credited with domesticating the camel so that such journeys could be made [HBD].

HAVILAH. Supposed by some to mean the inhabitants of the country included within that branch of the river Pison which ran out of the Euphrates into the bay of Persia, and bounded Arabia Felix on the east.

SABTAH. It is assumed by some that this family was the first to people an isle or peninsula called Saphta, in the Persian Gulf. Holman offers two possibilities, noting that Sabtah was the son of Cush and "apparently the ancestor of citizens of Sabota, capital of Hadramaut about 270 miles north of Aden. Others identify it with an Ethiopian ruler about 700 B.C. Josephus identified it with Astaboras,

modern Abare” [HBD].

RAAMAH. (Or Ragmah, the word is pronounced both ways). Ptolemy mentions a city called Regma near the Persian Gulf; it probably received its name from the person in the text.

SABTECA. “From the river called Samidochus, in Caramanla; Bochart conjectures that the person in the text fixed his residence in that part’ [CLARKE].

SHEBA. The personal name means “completeness” or “fullness.” Some believe Sheba established his residence beyond the Euphrates, in the general area of Eden, others connect the descendants of Sheba with the Sabeans, mentioned above in connection with Seba..

DEDAN. This family is thought to have peopled a part of Arabia, on the confines of Idumea, the modern day Arabs were descended from a number of ancient descendants of Noah..

10:8 - NIMROD. *“Now Cush became the father of Nimrod; he became a mighty one on the earth.”* Nimrod, a descendant of Ham through Cush, is named as the founder of the first Mesopotamian “kingdom,” and the civilization that became known as Assyria and Babylonia.

Although God had ordained government to restrain evil, Nimrod prostituted the concept and established a "kingdom." The term "kingdom" occurs here for the first time in the Bible, suggesting the beginning of those world systems characterized by idolatry and opposition to the Lord (cf. 11:1-9; Rev. 17:1-18), which will be overthrown at the return of Christ (cf. Dan. 2:44; 7:13). Nimrod is reminiscent of the wicked warriors at the time of the Flood (6:4). Israel would experience during its history the oppression of these warlike nations to the east; they were characterized by empire building, like that of their father, Nimrod [BSB].

The identify of Nimrod has been the subject of much discussion over the years. “The question revolves around whether Nimrod is understood as a god or a historical figure. Among the chief candidates are (1) Marduk, the patron deity of Babylon, (2) Ninurta, the Babylonian god of war and the hunt, and (3) the divine-human hero Gilgamesh of Erech” [NAC: 449]. Among those who see Nimrod as a god, Ninurta has the most support. However, based on the biblical record, there is no doubt that he was altogether human.

10:9 - A MIGHTY HUNTER. *“He was a mighty hunter before the LORD; therefore it is said, “Like Nimrod a mighty hunter before the LORD.”* Many die-hard hunters would give an arm and a leg to be known as “a mighty hunter.” There was a time when I loved hunting and fishing above all other hobbies. They are really great sports, and as such offer participants many opportunities to enjoy fellowship with other hunters and their families, develop character, and become conservationists. On the other hand, most hunters know a few who rank with the most arrogant, obnoxious, selfish, and lawless people they have ever met.

Nimrod was a mighty hunter, but many Bible scholars are convinced that if this referred only

to his being a hunter of game it would probably not be worth mentioning here. They may be right in claiming that this means that he was a hunter of men, an aggressive tyrant who hunted down human beings for sport.

Careful attention should be given this character, even at the risk of some repetition. When we continue our studies in the Old and New Testaments we can hardly miss the significance of a tribe, a nation, or an evil empire under the domination of Satan, that either asserts its evil against God and His people, either to prevent God from accomplishing His purpose or to simply wage a war of extermination against them. We can trace this kind of organized rebellion against God back to Nimrod.

A careless reading of the text would have us believe that Nimrod surpassed all other sportsmen/hunters to the extent that he attracted God's attention. There is much more to it than that. Here is a man who brutally hunts down other men, and possibly women and children, for the sport (the "rush"), and profit, and he is doing it brazenly under the full attention of God.

America was shocked by the evil attacks of radical Muslim extremists on September 11, 2001. I was in Glorieta, New Mexico where I was participating in a meeting of the board of trustees for LifeWay Christian Resources. As soon as I heard of this attack, I said, "bin Laden." My friend said, "That's who they suspect." In the following grief-filled days President George W. Bush addressed the nation. I am amazed that some people in the media expressed regret that President Clinton was not still president so that this event could have defined his presidency and established his legacy. One such member of the electronic media is a network anchor who from his lofty tower looks down on the president, congress and other politicians, and for that matter, on all the nation, reported the news, and sometimes managing the news to serve his own purpose or that of the network. This is the anchor who showed his shock and disappointment with 1994 election results in which Republicans, led by Newt Gingrich, won a lot of seats than the anchor had anticipated. He explained it by saying that the nation had pitched a temper tantrum.

Within hours of the attack, this network anchor joined others in attacking President Bush for not flying to Washington and, in a sense, taking center stage. He implied cowardice when the Secret Service moved him around from Barksdale Air Force Base in Bozier City, LA, to SAC Command Headquarters (Offit Air Force Base) in Nebraska while they were waiting to see if the attacks would be continued. The anchor, who wanted to see the president out in public speaking to the American people, explained that some presidents do this well and some do it poorly. It was this network that sent out orders prohibiting any display of the American flag, even the wearing of lapel pins with the American flag on it, lest they offend someone.

The major networks, immediately after the initial new coverage, began a defense of Islam, which they continually insisted was a peaceful religion. If Muslims had owned some of the networks they could not have received better publicity. This was reported as the work of the mad man, Osama bin Laden, not Islam or Muslims. But Rush Limbaugh began immediately stressing that this could not have been the work of one man, even a man with three hundred million dollars. He insisted that Iraq

and Saddam Hussein and others were behind it. Before long, many were proclaiming, “Rush is right.”

My purpose is not to give a history of the War on Terrorism, but to point out two different kinds of evil men, one who as the head of a nation leads a war against God, plotting and carrying out attacks against Jews and Christians. The other, from his hiding place in caves in Afghanistan, masterminds a campaign of mayhem and murder against Christians and Jews. He wants to force a war to end all wars with Muslims nations rising up against the West. Both are evil men who are not just trying to prevent God from accomplishing His purpose in the world, they seek the extermination of Israel and the eradication of Christianity.

The question we might consider is, Where did all of this evil get started? There was evil in the world from the time of the Fall, but the kind of organized evil we have seen in the attacks on America can be traced back to Nimrod. There is one major difference. Nimrod did not hide in underground bunkers in Iraq or caves in Afghanistan. He was more like a Ghengis Khan who was at the head of the pack as he hunted down men for sport, established cities, and consolidated the areas he conquered.

Nimrod is called a mighty hunter before the Lord; and from Genesis 10:10, we learn that he founded a kingdom which included the cities Babel, Erech, Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar. He was a very bad man, whose name comes from a word meaning, “he rebelled.” Additional information confirms the character and influence of Nimrod:

Targum, on 1 Chronicles 1:10, says: Nimrod began to be a mighty man in sin, a murderer of innocent men, and a rebel before the Lord. The Jerusalem Targum says: “He was mighty in hunting (or in prey) and in sin before God, for he was a hunter of the children of men in their languages; and he said unto them, Depart from the religion of Shem, and cleave to the institutes of Nimrod.” The Targum of Jonathan ben Uzziel says: “From the foundation of the world none was ever found like Nimrod, powerful in hunting, and in rebellions against the Lord.” The Syriac calls him a warlike giant. The word *ܛܫܝܕ* **TSAYID**, which we render hunter, signifies prey; and is applied in the Scriptures to the hunting of men by persecution, oppression, and tyranny. Hence it is likely that Nimrod, having acquired power, used it in tyranny and oppression; and by rapine and violence founded that domination which was the first distinguished by the name of a kingdom on the face of the earth. How many kingdoms have been founded in the same way, in various ages and nations from that time to the present! From the Nimrods of the earth, God deliver the world!

Mr. Bryant, in his *Mythology*, considers Nimrod as the principal instrument of the idolatry that afterwards prevailed in the family of Cush, and treats him as an arch rebel and apostate. Mr. Richardson, who was the determined foe of Mr. Bryant’s whole system, asks, *Dissertation*, p. 405, “Where is the authority for these aspersions? They are nowhere to be discovered in the originals, in the versions, nor in the paraphrases of the sacred writings.” If they are not to be found either in versions or paraphrases of the sacred writings, the above quotations are all false [BARNES].

I

BEFORE THE LORD. This comment is the reason many people believe that the meaning is that Nimrod has such utter disregard for God that he hunted men for sport, knowing that he was under the eye of God. He committed horribly violent acts in the presence of God, not caring that He was watching.

10:10 - THE BEGINNING OF HIS KINGDOM. *“The beginning of his kingdom was Babel and Erech and Accad and Calneh, in the land of Shinar.”* Following the personal description of Nimrod as a mighty warrior, we are now given the extent of his kingdom (10-12). “There appear to be two stages, first the cities ‘in Shinar’ (v. 10) and the founding of the Assyrian sites (vv. 11-12)” [NAC: 450].

BABEL. Babel, a Hebrew word meaning confusion, is derived from a root which means “to mix.” It was the name given to the city which “the disobedient descendants of Noah built so they would not be scattered over all the earth (Gen. 11:4,9). Babel is also the Hebrew word for Babylon.” [HBD]. The name signifies confusion and “it seems to have been a very proper name for the commencement of a kingdom that appears to have been founded in apostasy from God, and to have been supported by tyranny, rapine, and oppression” [BKC].

IN THE LAND OF SHINAR. This is the same Shinar as mentioned Genesis 11:2. It appears that, as Babylon was built on the river Euphrates, and the tower of Babel was in the land of Shinar, consequently Shinar itself must have been in the southern part of Mesopotamia.

10:11 - ASSYRIA. *“From that land he went forth into Assyria, and built Nineveh and Rehoboth-Ir and Calah.”* The scope of Nimrod’s conquests is amazing, especially when we consider the times in which he lived. “Nimrod’s activities centered first in Shinar (Babylonia) and included building the tower of Babel, described in 11:1-9; then he went to Assyria (cf. Mic. 5:6)” [RSB]. Nimrod, went out from Shinar into Assyria and built Nineveh (hence Assyria is called the land of Nimrod, Micah 5:6).

Thus did this mighty hunter extend his dominions in every possible way. The city of Nineveh, the capital of Assyria, is supposed to have had its name from Ninus, the son of Nimrod; but probably Ninus and Nimrod are the same person. This city, which made so conspicuous a figure in the history of the world, is now called Mossul; it is an inconsiderable place, built out of the ruins of the ancient Nineveh [CLARKE].

In a real sense, Nimrod was a precursor to the Mongol Hordes that charged across that part of the world killing and pillaging a few thousands of years later.

Nimrod and Cain were remembered for building cities (see, 4:17). The people of Babel were remembered for building towers (11:4ff). Noah and Abraham were remembered for building altars and calling on the name of the Lord.

REHOBOTH-IR AND CALAH. Nothing certain is known concerning the location or history of these places, but conjecture seems endless, and it has been indulged in by those seeking information about various places.

10:12 - RESEN. “*And Resen between Nineveh and Calah; that is the great city.*” That it received attention here is indicative of the fact that it was a great city. The Bible gives the general location. Calah is “well known to us as modern Nimrud, located about twenty miles south of Nineveh. All we know about Resen is that it was located “between Nineveh and Calah” NAC: 451].

10:13 - LUDIM. “*Mizraim became the father of Ludim and Anamim and Lehabim and Naphtuhim*” This is the second occurrence of the Hebrew *yald* (became the father of, begat in KJV), used here to introduce the offspring of Misraim. This is probably a reference to the inhabitants of Egypt. The name “Ludim” is apparently the name of a people. “This tier of names consisting of seven offspring if “Philistines” is parenthetical, parallels the tier of Cush’s sons (v. 7)” [NAC: 452]. The plural is used in the Hebrew denoting people groups (families, clans, tribes).

ANAMIM. There is no definite information about the Amanites, though various suggestions are made in commentaries. These people may have inhabited the district about the temple of Jupiter Ammon.

LEHABIM. Their descendants, the Libyans, resided in the western part of Egypt.

NAPHTUHIM. Identity unknown. Conjectures have not fixed a place for these people. They may, however, have been related to the Lehabites

10:14 -THE PHILISTINES. “*And Pathrusim and Casluhim (from which came the Philistines) and Caphtorim.*” The Philistines were among the rival groups the Israelites encountered as they settled the land of Canaan. References to the Philistines appear in the Old Testament as well as other ancient Near Eastern writings. Philistine refers to a group of people who occupied and gave their name to the southwest part of Palestine.

The origin and background of the Philistines had not been completely clarified. Ancient Egyptian records include the "prst" as part of a larger movement of people known as the Sea Peoples, who invaded Egypt about 1188 B.C. by land and by sea, battling the forces of Ramses III, who, according to Egyptian records, defeated them. The Sea Peoples, a massive group that originated in the Aegean area, included the Tjeker, the Skekelesh, the Denyen, the Sherden, and the Weshwesh as well as the "prst" or Pelesti, the biblical Philistines. As they moved eastward from the Aegean region, the Sea Peoples made war with people in their path including the Hittites in Anatolia and the inhabitants at sites in North Syria such as those at the site of Ugarit. According to biblical references, the homeland of the Philistines was Caphtor (Amos 9:7; Jer. 47:4) [HBD].

The Philistines were the bitter enemies of the Israelites for centuries. In the days of the United Kingdom the Philistines were concentrated in five cities or city-states, each with its own king. At the time of the Conquest when the Lord would have given them the victory, the people became involved with their own plans and did not drive out the pagans from the land. Consequently, numerous small

nations were constant treats to Israel.

While it is hard for most Americans to imagine anything more evil than the terrorists' attacks of September 11, 2001, Israel lived in constant danger from numerous enemies who, without a doubt, would have used any weapon they possessed against, not only Israel, but other enemies as well. The pronouncement of judgment on the nations through the prophet Amos is illustrative. We glean more about the Philistines from Scripture than any other source. They were almost constant oppressors of the Israelites.

CASLUHIM. Most authorities place the descendants of Casluhim in Egypt.

CAPHTORIM. This family helped people Cyprus.

10:15 - SIDON. *“Canaan became the father of Sidon, his firstborn, and Heth.”* Verses 15-19 trace the descendants of Canaan's descendants are traced (vv. 15-18) and even the boundaries of the Promised Land are given (v. 19). “The writer was apparently using an ancient table to clarify which of Noah's descendants would experience blessing and which ones would experience cursing. Most of the ‘*yalid*’ (“he begot”) sections pertain to the Canaanites or the Hamites, the tribes close to Israel. To see which neighbors would face blessing and which ones cursing, Israel need only consult this table” [BKC]. Sidon probably built the city that bore his name, which would have made him the father of the Sidonians.

HETH. Heth was the father of the Hittites, whose history and location have been the subject of much debate. The Hittites were apparently settled over a large area, which testifies

10:16 - JEBUSITES. *“And the Jebusite and the Amorite and the Girgashite.”* The Jebusites were living in Jerusalem when Israel conquered Canaan. The Amorites and Girgashites are also known to through the Bible as being the ancient inhabitants of Canaan. They were expelled by the children of Israel during the Conquest. The Israelites were under a specific mandate from God to drive all pagans out of the land. Their failure to drive all of them out resulted in pockets of pagans remaining in the land. In time miscegenation (interbreeding) between the children of Israel and these pagans introduced idolatry to Israel. Idolatry was the key sin of to which they reverted from generation to generation until the Northern Kingdom (Israel) was defeated during the Syro-Ephraimatic Crisis of 734 B. C. and finally destroyed in 722 B.C. by Sargon II of Assyria; and the Southern Kingdom (Judah) was taken into captivity for seventy years by the Babylonians.

There were three invasions by Babylon, each of which times captives were taken to Babylon, the first in 606 B.C when Daniel and Shadrach, Meshack, and Obednego were taken away. The Babylonians returned in 597 B. C. to put down a revolt and again they took captives back to Babylon. Finally, in 586 B. C., they broke through the walls of Jerusalem and looted and then destroyed the temple. They were permitted to return to rebuild the temple in 536 B. C. When they returned, they returned without idolatry. They were often unfaithful in other ways, but the sin of idolatry, for all practical purposes, was eradicated.

10:17 - HIVITE. *“And the Hivite and the Arkite and the Sinite.”* The record of the “ites”

continues with the mention of yet three more tribes, the most familiar to Bible students being the Hivites. The name that occurs twenty-five times in the Bible though not in texts outside the Bible. “Hivites are found in Gibeon (Josh 9:7; 11:19), Shechem (Gen. 34:2), below Hermon in the land of Mizpah (Josh. 11:3), and in the Lebanon mountains (Judg. 3:3). Most frequently the name appears in the list of nations God would drive out of the land during the Israelite conquest (for example, Deut. 7:1)” [HBD].

10:18 - FAMILIES OF CANAAN. *“And the Arvadite and the Zemarite and the Hamathite; and afterward the families of the Canaanite were spread abroad.”* The various families and clans divided, and they repeatedly sub-divided until there were many separate people groups spread throughout the “known world” of the day, with some settling in Egypt, others in Mesopotamia, others in Asia Minor, and still more throughout the Middle East.

10:19 - THE TERRITORY. *“The territory of the Canaanite extended from Sidon as you go toward Gerar, as far as Gaza; as you go toward Sodom and Gomorrah and Admah and Zeboiim, as far as Lasha.”* Not only do we have preserved for us the names of many ancient people groups, in many cases the have them located.

This is a good place to stop and emphasize something that is absolutely essential to a right understanding of Bible lands and Bible people. This is history; not myth, not legend, and not a fairy tale. When one compares pagan religions to God’s revelation of His redemptive provisions for all who trust in Him, the lines of distinction are clearly drawn. Tales of ancient Greek and Roman gods are as bazaar and incredible as the gods of ancient Assyria or Babylon. And it is the same today. There is a great distinction between the nature of the God of the Bible and the gods of the world, just as there is a clear distinction between the character of God and that of the pagan gods, all of which were the inventions of man. Contrary to what many professing Christians believe, idolatry is not the product of ignorant people, but of sinful people. Idolatry is not so much a matter of ignorance as it is iniquity (see Romans 1).

10:20 - THE SONS OF HAM. *“These are the sons of Ham, according to their families, according to their languages, by their lands, by their nations.”* Moses is the human author of the Pentateuch (Torah), the inspired author, but human non the less. The Holy Spirit was the divine Author. There is little doubt that all these people groups were well known in the days of Moses,

and for a long time after; but at this distance, when it is considered that the political state of the world has been undergoing almost incessant revolutions through all the intermediate portions of time, the impossibility of fixing their residences or marking their descendants must be evident, as both the names of the people and the places of their residences have been changed beyond the possibility of being recognized [CLARKE].

The Sons of Shem, 10:21-32.

10:21 -SHEM. *“Also to Shem, the father of all the children of Eber, and the older brother of Japheth, children were born.”* This passage describes the descendants of Shem, who occupied the area north of the Persian Gulf. The dividing in the days of Peleg (v. 25) apparently refers to the scattering of 11:9. Shem, the older brother of Japheth and the oldest son of Noah, is also identified as “the “father of all the children of Eber” - which makes him the father of all the Hebrew people, as well as others Semitic people.

EBER. The Hebrews probably derived their name from Eber (or Heber), son of Shem; though some believe the name originates with Abraham. Those who hold this view point the journey of Abraham after he was called out by the Lord and told to go to the Promised Land. As they traveled they crossed the river Euphrates (*abar*) on their way to Canaan, and some people have suggested that Abram adopted the name for the Chosen People. The former identity (Eber) is more likely, however.

10:22 - ELAM. *“The sons of Shem were Elam and Asshur and Arpachshad and Lud and Aram.”* Elam gave his name to the region that carried his name. The region of Elam is on the western edge of ancient Persia, modern Iran. “The Zagros Mountains lie east and north while the Persian Gulf is to the south and the Tigris River is on the west. The ancient capital of the area is Susa. The region has been inhabited since before 3000 B.C., but only a few of the periods are of importance for biblical history” [HBD].

ASSHUR. The descendants of Assur filled a very large territory, expanding eventually to become a mighty empire called Assyria. The Assyrians play a very prominent role in biblical history. God would eventually use Assyria to destroy the Northern Kingdom; and through they He poured out His wrath upon the Judah. He broke the power of Assyria and raised up Babylon to take Judah into captivity for seventy years.

ARPACHSHAD. This was the third son of Shem, son of Noah, and ancestor of the Hebrew people (Gen. 10:22) . He was the grandfather of Eber. In the New Testament the name Arphaxad appears in Luke's genealogy of Jesus (Luke 3:36). “Luke seems to identify Arphaxad as the great-grandfather, rather than the grandfather, of Eber. This suggests the possibility that the genealogy in Genesis 10 was not intended to be exhaustively complete” [HBD].

LUD. Lud was the founder of the Lydians. In Asia Minor; or of the Ludim, who dwelt at the confluence of the Euphrates and Tigris, according to Arias Montanus .[CLARKE]. The Lydians are identified with Egypt, Tyre, and other places suggests that from time to time the soldiers from Lydia. Who were known for their marksmanship with the bow, served as mercenaries in the service of other countries.

ARAM. Aram was the father of the Arameans, the bitter enemies of the children of Israel for centuries. Eventually, they would be known as the Syrians. Damascus, which plays a major role in

Bible history, was often a serious threat the children of God. Since the end of World War II the Syrians have been aligned with other Muslim nations which have sought the destruction of Israel.

10:23 - UZ. *“The sons of Aram were Uz and Hul and Gether and Mash.”* Uz is believed to have founded Damascus. His descendants of Uz populated an area that ran from Damascus to the south

He is believed to have founded Damascus.

HUL. His name means “ring.” His descendants became a tribe of Arameans (Syrians).

GETHER. He is assumed “by Calmet to have been the founder of the Itureans, who dwelt beyond the Jordan, having Arabia Desert on the east, and the Jordan on the west” [CLARKE].

MASH. The family of Mash inhabited mount Masius in Mesopotamia, and from whom the river Mazeca, which has its source in that mountain, takes its name.

10:24 - SHELAH. “*Arpachshad became the father of Shelah; and Shelah became the father of Eber.*” Shelah is believed to have been the head the people of Susiana.

EBER. See Genesis 10:21 in the Scripture, and the notes on that verse in this study. Eber is usually identified as the man who gave the Hebrews their name.

10:25 -PELEG. “*Two sons were born to Eber; the name of the one was Peleg, for in his days the earth was divided; and his brother's name was Joktan.*” Peleg’s name means “to divide,” and that has given rise to a lot of speculation (see 11:10-16). It is doubtful that his name had anything to do with continental shifts - with reference to the Flood. How would they have known about anything like that? “The division may refer to laying out of irrigation canals, or more likely to the division of the world into various language groups that took place at Babel (11:1-9)” [NCWB].

10:26 - JOKTAN. “*Joktan became the father of Almodad and Sheleph and Hazarmaveth and Jerah.*” “The thirteen tribes of the Joctanites or primitive Arabs are enumerated here in Gen. 10:26-29” [BARNES]. According to Clarke, Joktan had thirteen sons who had their dwelling “from Mesha unto Sephar, a mount of the east, which places Calmet supposes to be mount Masius, on the west in Mesopotamia, and the mountains of the Saphirs on the east in Armenia, or of the Tapyrs farther on in Media.”

In confirmation that all men have been derived from one family, let it be observed that there are many customs and usages, both sacred and civil, which have prevailed in all parts of the world; and that these could owe their origin to nothing but a general institution, which could never have existed, had not mankind been originally of the same blood, and instructed in the same common notions before they were dispersed. Among these usages may be reckoned,

- 1.The numbering by tens.
- 2.Their computing time by a cycle of seven days.
- 3.Their setting apart the seventh day for religious purposes.
- 4.Their use of sacrifices, propitiatory and eucharistical.
- 5.The consecration of temples and altars.
- 6.The institution of sanctuaries or places of refuge, and their privileges.
- 7.Their giving a tenth part of the produce of their fields, etc., for the use of the altar.

8. The custom of worshipping the Deity bare-footed.
9. Abstinence of the men from all sensual gratifications previously to their offering sacrifice.
10. The order of priesthood and its support.
11. The notion of legal pollutions, defilements, etc.
12. The universal tradition of a general deluge.
13. The universal opinion that the rainbow was a Divine sign, or portent, etc., [CLARKE].

The sovereignty, grace, and wisdom God are revealed as the earth is repopulated following the Flood. He used three families to re-fill the earth following an awesome display of Divine justice in the destruction of the world by the flood, while themselves were preserved in the ark.

By this very means the true religion was propagated over the earth; for the sons of Noah would certainly teach their children, not only the precepts delivered to their father by God himself, but also how in his justice he had brought the flood on the world of the ungodly, and by his merciful providence preserved them from the general ruin. It is on this ground alone that we can account for the uniformity and universality of the above traditions, and for the grand outlines of religious truth which are found in every quarter of the world. God has so done his marvelous works that they may be had in everlasting remembrance [CLARKE].

ALMODAD. His descendants are settled the area referred to Yemen. Barnes notes that, “The first syllable may be the Arabic article. Mudad is the name of one celebrated in Arab story as the stepfather of Ishmael and chief of the Jurhum tribe of Joctanites. Thought to have belonged to the interior of Arabia Felix” [BARNES].

SHELEPH. His family may have been a small early Arab tribe associated with the interior of the Arab nations. It is not reasonable to think we would be able to identify all the Arab tribes. For one thing, they do not have records like we have preserved in the Bible. For another, for most of their history large numbers of Beduin Arabs have been illiterate. That does not mean that all the Arab people have been backward. During the Middle Ages there were many advances in civilization among the Arab people that reached Christian nations many years later. The late Louis L’Amour dealt with the in the novel, the *Walking Drum*. L’Amour was a talented writer and a gifted story teller. The *Walking Drum*, *Sitka* (dealing with Alaska and Russia), *The Last of the Breed* (about the Soviet Union), and numerous stories about south sea islands prove that he was far more than a writer of Western fiction. However, he seems overly generous toward the scientific discoveries of te Muslim people and he took a rather negative view of Middle Age Europe.

HAZARMAVETH. This man’s descendants gave their name to “a district on the Indian Ocean, abounding in spices, now called Hadramaut. This tribe is the Chatramitae of Greek writers” [BARNES].

JERAH. The personal name means, “moon” or “month.” The moon was the chief god in South Arabia. “Since the surrounding names in the list represent Arabian tribes, this probably indicates the relationship of Semitic tribes in Arabia to the Hebrews” [HBD]. The tribe of Jerah occupied a district

where are the coast and mountain of the moon, near Hadramaut.

10:27 - HADORAM. “*And Hadoram and Uzal and Diklah.*” This tribe is “preserved in the tribe ...placed by Pliny (vi. 28) between the Homerites and the Sachalites on the south coast of Arabia” [BARNES].

UZAL. Uzal “perhaps gave the ancient name of Azal to Sana, the capital of Yemen, a place still celebrated for the manufacture of beautiful stuffs” [BARNES].

DICLAH. This family may have settled in the palm-bearing region of the Minaei in Hejaz.

10:28 - OBAL. “*And Obal and Abimael and Sheba.*” There is no other known reference Obal on record, but the name means “stout,” and he was the ancestor of one of the Arab tribes. Abimael is equally as obscure. His tribe probably settled some place in Arabia, but that does not tell us very much.

SHEBA. This is the progenitor of “the Sabaei in Arabia Felix, celebrated for spices, gold, and precious stones, and noted for the prosperity arising from traffic in these commodities. A queen of Sheba visited Solomon. The dominant family among the Sabaeans was that of Himjar, from whom the Himjarites (Homeritae) of a later period descended” [BARNES].

10:29 - OPHIR. “*And Ophir and Havilah and Jobab; all these were the sons of Joktan.*” Barnes provides us with the following information on Ophir:

Ophir gave name to a country celebrated for gold, precious stones, and almug wood, which seems to have lain on the south side of Arabia, where these products may be found. What kind of tree the almug is has not been clearly ascertained. Some suppose it to be the sandal wood which grows in Persia and India; others, a species of pine. If this wood was not native, it may have been imported from more distant countries to Ophir, which was evidently a great emporium. Others, however, have supposed Ophir to be in India, or Eastern Africa. The chief argument for a more distant locality arises from the supposed three years’ voyage to it from Ezion-geber, and the products obtained in the country so reached. But the three years’ voyage 1 Kings 10:22; 2 Chr. 9:21 seems to be in reality to Tarshish, a very different region [BARNES].

HAVILAH. Barnes says that Havilah is the founder of a Joctanite tribe of Arabs, and therefore his territory must be sought somewhere in the extensive country which was occupied by these wandering tribes. “A trace of the name is probably preserved in Khawlan, a district lying in the northwest of Yemen, between Sana and Mecca, though the tribe may have originally settled or extended further north” [BARNES].

JOBAB. His descendants have been identified with the Arabic word (*yobab*), for a desert.

10:30 -THEIR SETTLEMENT. “*Now their settlement extended from Mesha as you go toward*

Sephar, the hill country of the east.” This covers much of the world that has been inhabited by the various Arab tribes and nations for many centuries.

10:31 - ACCORDING TO. *“These are the sons of Shem, according to their families, according to their languages, by their lands, according to their nations.”* This record is absolutely amazing. Here we have the most reliable (and only infallible) record of these people dating back to the first generations following the Flood, “according to: families, languages, nations, and “by their land.” Genesis 10:31 contains the “usual closing formula for the pedigree of the Shemite tribes; and Gen. 10:32 contains the corresponding form for the whole table of nations” [BARNES].

From a review of these lands it is evident that Shem occupied a much smaller extent of territory than either of his brothers. The mountains beyond the Tigris, the Persian Gulf, the Red Sea, the Levant, the Archipelago, and the Black Sea, bound the countries that were in part peopled by Shem. Arabia, Syria, and Assyria contained the great bulk of the Shemites, intermingled with some of the Hamites. The Kushites, Kenaanites, and Philistines trench upon their ground. The rest of the Hamites peopled Africa, and such countries as were supplied from it. The Japhethites spread over all the rest of the world [BARNES].

10:32 -THE FAMILIES OF THE SONS OF NOAH. *“These are the families of the sons of Noah, according to their genealogies, by their nations; and out of these the nations were separated on the earth after the flood.”* This concludes the Table of Nations. “This division was made in the most orderly manner; and the inspired historian evidently intimates that the sons of Noah were ranged according to their nations, and every nation ranked by its families, so that every nation had its assigned territory, and in every nation the tribes, and in every tribe the families, were located by themselves. This parallels the situation with the Israelite tribes in Canaan (Josh. 13–21)” [NCWB}. Barnes summarizes the table of nations:

In this table there are 70 names, exclusive of Nimrod, of heads of families, tribes, or nations descended from the 3 sons of Noah—14 from Japheth, 30 from Ham, and 26 from Shem. Among the heads of tribes descended from Japheth are 7 grandsons. Among those from Ham are 23 grandsons and 3 great-grandsons. Among those of Shem are 5 grandsons, one great-grandson, 2 of the fourth generation, and 13 of the fifth. Whence, it appears that the subdivisions are traced further in Ham and much further in Shem than in Japheth, and that they are pursued only in those lines which are of importance for the coming events in the history of Shem.

It is to be observed, also, that, though the different races are distinguished by the diversity of tongues, yet the different languages are much less numerous than the tribes. The eleven tribes of Kenaanites, and the thirteen tribes of Joctanites, making allowance for some tribal peculiarities, most probably spoke at first only two dialects of one family of languages, which we have designated the Hebrew, itself a branch of, if not identical with, what is commonly called the Shemitic. Hence, some Hamites spoke the language of Shem. A similar community of language may have occurred in some other instances of diversity of descent [BARNES].

D. The Tower of Babel, 11:1-9

What we see in chapters 10-11 is a crash course in the history of ancient civilizations. Any such history will begin with Nimrod, a grandson of Ham through Cush, whose name means “rebel.” He was a mighty tyrant who apparently hunted down men for sport, even in the sight of God. He may have been the first dictator in the history of the world. “Nimrod” is a name still given hunters today, and one manufacturer of campers uses that name. However, In the original Nimrod’s case, the word “hunter” does not refer to the hunting of animals, but rather to the hunting of men; he hunted men for sport, for the sheer joy of shedding blood.

Nimrod was the founder of the Babylonian empire and the impetus and genius behind the construction of the tower of Babel. “History informs us that Nimrod and his wife devised a new religion built around “the mother and child.” For details, read Alexander Hislop’s book *The Two Babylons* (London: S.W. Partridge, 1956). “Babylon” in the Bible symbolizes rebellion against God and confusion in religion. We see Babylon opposing the people of God throughout the Bible, culminating in the “Great Babylon” of Rev. 17-18” [WW].

Following the Flood God had commanded men to replenish the earth (9:1, 7, 9), but they decided to settle down on the plain of Shinar where Babylon was located (10:8-10). This was deliberate rebellion against God’s Word. Warren Wiersbe shares these salient remarks:

They journeyed “from the east” which suggests that they were turning their backs on the light. They decided to unite and build both a city and a tower. Their purposes were to (1) maintain unity in opposition to God, and (2) make a name for themselves. This entire operation is a foregleam of the final opposition of man (and Satan) against Christ, centered in the Babylon of Rev. 17-18. Men will unite then in a world church and world political organization; they will be led by the Antichrist, the last world dictator; and their plans will be frustrated. It is interesting to note that today the world is rapidly moving toward the “one world” concept, thanks to the United Nations and other international alliances

God knew the designs of the rebels and judged them. The Godhead held another conference (see 1:26 and 3:22) and decided to confound the languages of the workers, thus making it impossible for them to work together. This was really an act of mercy as well as judgment, for had they persisted in their plan, a more terrible judgment would have followed. The name “Babel” comes from a Hebrew word which means “gate of God.” It sounds like the word *balal* which means “confusion.” The description of God’s action here explains the origin of the languages of mankind. It has often been pointed out that Pentecost was a reversal of Babel—there was true spiritual unity among God’s people; they spoke with other tongues but were understood; and their work glorified God, not men [WW].

11:1- THE SAME LANGUAGE. “*Now the whole earth used the same language and the same words.*” Whatever this one language was at the time, it must have been the language of Eden and the language of the Ark. Immediately after the Flood, “the whole earth” was speaking only one language.

“This description reflects the unity of the human family which descended from Noah’s sons. It also anticipates the expanding sin of the human race” (11:6) [BSB]. As the population of the earth began to grow again following the Flood, they not only refused to spread out over the earth, they persisted in rebellion against God. They not only spoke the same language, they had the same vocabulary (“the same words”). “The unbridgeable gap between animal sounds and human language, as well as the statement of this verse that originally all men spoke the same language, are inexplicable by the theory of evolution” [RSB].

In Genesis 10:5, 20, and 31, mention is made of various languages. Clearly the “Table of the Nations” is interested in the regions settled by Noah’s offspring and they are organized by language groups. Up to now we have no information about how this development occurred. This then is the purpose of the Babel story. The descendants of Noah, united by the strong bond of a common language, had not separated, and despite the divine command to replenish the earth, were unwilling to separate. The more pious would of course obey the divine will, but at least one group (10:10) was determined to please themselves [NCWB].

God was not caught by surprise by the escalation of sin in the world once again. Just as the Flood was not a knee-jerk reaction, His response to the sins of these people would not be a simple reaction. His action was deliberate and decisive. God’s creative powers were not put to rest after the first seven days of world history. He continued to use His powers even in responding to human sin to accomplish His ultimate creative purposes.

He did not intend for a major part of the world to remain uninhabited. Human pride and arrogance produced the Tower of Babel. God responded in limited judgment. He scattered the human population throughout the earth and brought about the diversity of human languages. This miraculous judgment created a new human situation demanding a new stage in God's missionary work to redeem all people [DSB].

11:2 - SHINAR. “*It came about as they journeyed east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar and settled there.*” The fertile valley watered by the Euphrates and Tigris (the location of ancient Babylonia) was chosen as the center of their union and the seat of their power. The Bible Knowledge Commentary offers a summary of this verses:

No doubt Shinar (v. 2) refers to the area of Babylon, because the passage culminates (v. 9) in a name play: **Babel** (*baôbÔel*) sounds similar to the verb **confused** (*baôlal*). Written Babylonian accounts of the building of the city of Babylon refer to its construction in heaven by the gods as a celestial city, as an expression of pride (*Enuma Elish* VI, lines 55-64). These accounts say it was made by the same process of brick-making described in verse 3, with every brick inscribed with the name of the Babylonian god Marduk. Also the ziggurat, the step-like tower believed to have been first erected in Babylon, was said to have its top in the heavens (cf. v. 4). This artificial mountain became the center of worship in the city, a miniature temple being at the top of the tower. The Babylonians took great pride in their building; they boasted of their city as not only impregnable, but also as the heavenly city, **BABILI** (“the gate of God”). The account

in Genesis views this city as the predominant force in the world, the epitome of ungodly powers, in a word, the “anti-kingdom.” Thus the record in verses 1-9 is polemical in that it shows God’s absolute power in His swift judgment. What the people considered their greatest strength—unity—He swiftly destroyed by confusing **their language** (v. 7; cf. v. 9) [BKC].

11:3 - BRICKS. *“They said to one another, ‘Come, let us make bricks and burn them thoroughly.’ And they used brick for stone, and they used tar for mortar.”* Brick was the primary material used for building. Some of these were sun-dried, others were baked in the kiln.

TAR. The word is variously translated slime or bitumen. It was “a mineral pitch, which, when hardened, forms a strong cement, commonly used in Assyria to this day, and forming the mortar found on the burnt-brick remains of antiquity. In the Gilgamesh Epic, the city wall of Uruk is said to contain burnt bricks, and bitumen is found as one of the types of mortar used in building. Ziggurats, pyramid-like temple structures, are associated by some with the tower built by these people in 11:4” [NCWB].

11:4 - A TOWER. *“They said, ‘Come, let us build for ourselves a city, and a tower whose top will reach into heaven, and let us make for ourselves a name, otherwise we will be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth.”* Archaeologists have found evidence of many towers (ziggurats) in the area. This may have been the first one - if so, the people who were left there did not learn a lesson from it. However, they may have gotten the idea of this tower from other ziggurats in the area.

HEAVEN. Did they mean that they thought they could build a tower that would reach into the true abode of God, or was this, as some have suggested, simply a common figurative expression for great height (Deut. 1:28; 9:1-6)? Because of God’s response we have to assume that these people actually thought they could build a tower into Heaven. What did they think they would do once they got there? Perhaps they thought they could take over there. The spiritual force behind this effort was the very one who had rebelled against God and been thrown out of Heaven. We should pause to think of the scope of Satan’s rebellion. He did not simply become disobedient, He directed a coup that was designed to take over Heaven from God. He wanted God’s throne.

A NAME. These people may well have been the first to have sought to make a name for themselves, but they most certainly were not the last. For most of Bill Clinton’s second term as president many people were convinced that he was doing everything he could to establish a legacy for himself. Some in the media expressed regret that Clinton had not been president September 11, 2001, when the terrorists struck in New York and Washington so that he would have had an opportunity for greatness. That attitude shows the people are still motivated by the same pride and arrogance that was behind the Tower of Babel. “Wishing to make a name for themselves rather than for God may have been offensive to the Lord; more seriously, God had commanded them to populate all the earth (9:1) and the designs of this project were to centralize” [NCWB].

The intention of the city and the tower was to achieve greatness (a "name"), and to strengthen the people's resolve to remain together, rather than to spread throughout

the world (9:1). This becomes the pattern of the Gentile nations. The name "Babylon" became almost synonymous with pride and power (Rev. 18:1, 9, 10, 21). The tower was a pagan temple designed to extend above all else as a symbol of the religion of the people. Mesopotamian culture is known for its step-towers, known as ziggurats, which (unlike the Egyptian pyramids) were used as temples [BSB].

SCATTERED. It has been suggested that these people built a tower, not only to make a name for themselves, but also in order to prevent people from scattering through the earth, in direct defiance of God's command (9:1). The difference between this tower and the ziggurats is that while they were built for the purpose of worshiping a deity, this one served these people as a rallying point and symbol of their power and ingenuity. God created humans to have fellowship with Him and enjoy the privileges of serving their Creator. Instead, these people chose to serve their own pride and egotism. "Rather than trusting God to protect them and preserve their community, they took matters in their own hands. Rebellion against God on the individual or community level is sin. We are called to trust the Creator, not to usurp His place" [DSB].

11:5 - THE LORD CAME DOWN. "*The LORD came down to see the city and the tower which the sons of men had built.*" "But the Lord came down" is sarcasm; the point is that "the most magnificent efforts of men were still puny in God's eyes" [BSB]. Just as God came down to the Garden of Eden and called Adam's name after the Fall, He came down to see what they were doing. He did not literally have to come down to see it, but the sarcasm is an appropriate response to their arrogance.

11:6 - THE LORD SAID. "*The LORD said, "Behold, they are one people, and they all have the same language. And this is what they began to do, and now nothing which they purpose to do will be impossible for them."*" The Lord said, "they were one people, and they all have the same language." This is His assessment of the situation. In the first place, they were united in what they did and they could all communicate in order to draw up plans and implement them. In His assessment there is a solution, which we will soon see.

NOTHING IMPOSSIBLE. In this passage we see God's estimate of human potentiality. "Cooperative efforts which are unified and unrestricted can have almost unlimited results. The attainments of the age of Babel bear testimony of a highly advanced technology. Such attainments in contemporary times can just as certainly be used in an attempt to thwart God's purposes for His human creatures. The common linguistic heritage of humanity serves as an additional evidence for the interrelatedness of all people" [DSB].

Is this an apparent admission that the design was plausible, and would have been executed but for the divine interposition? Or is it a comment on the haughty attitude of these people? Is there a note of irony and even sarcasm in these words? Obviously, whether man believes it or not, he has limitations. It sounds positive and highly motivational to say that "whatever man can conceive, man can achieve," but there are things beyond his reach. It is obvious from the story of the Rich Man and

Lazarus that there gulfs fixed which no one can cross.

Their desire to enhance their unity and strength had potential for the greatest evil, according to the Lord's evaluation: If... they have begun to do this, "then nothing they plan to do will be impossible for them." Thus what they would not do in obedience (scatter over the earth, v. 4), God did for them in judgment (v. 8).

11:7 - CONFUSE THEIR LANGUAGE. *"Come, let Us go down and there confuse their language, so that they will not understand one another's speech."* Literally, "their lip." The confusion of languages was a failure in communication, resulting in a difference in dialect which was intelligible only to those of the same tribe.

Thus easily their purpose was defeated by God and they were compelled to the dispersion they had combined to prevent. A similar Sumerian version of the confusion of tongues was discovered in the late 1960s. This story, despite numerous differences between it and the biblical account (e.g., no building project), attests to a time when all mankind spoke a single language; but that was all changed by a divine act. By this miracle of tongues men were dispersed and gradually fell from true religion. By a second miracle of tongues (Acts 2:1-43), barriers were broken down—that all men might be brought back to the family of God [NCWB].

By confusing language, God established the parent languages of the earth from which other languages and dialects developed (today, a total of more than 3,000). The result of this confusion was the scattering of mankind.

This is one of those references where you know when you look to the commentaries you know you are going to find some something. They may not all agree but they all deal with these verses. Some philosophize, some moralize, and others sermonize, and some are highly technical while others are relatively simple. The following paragraphs from (*Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament*) are rather lengthy, but they illustrate the more technical side of the speculation about the confusion of tongues:

Here is announced the means by which the defiant spirit of concentration is to be defeated. **From this and the previous verse we learn that the lip, and not the stock of words, is the part of language which is to be affected**, and hence, perceive the propriety of distinguishing these two in the introductory statement. **To confound, is to introduce several kinds, where before there was only one**; and so in the present case **to introduce several varieties of form**, whereas language was before of one form. Hence, it appears that the **one primitive tongue was made manifold by diversifying the law of structure**, without interfering with the material of which it was composed. The bases or roots of words are furnished by instinctive and evanescent analogies between sounds and things, on which the etymological law then plays its part, and so vocables come into existence.

It is evident that **some roots may become obsolete and so die out, while others**, according to the exigencies of communication and the abilities of the speaker, **may be called into existence in great abundance**.

The sacred writer does not care to distinguish the ordinary from the extraordinary in the procedure of Divine Providence, inasmuch as he **ascribes all events to the one creating, superintending, and administering power of God**. Yet there is something beyond nature here. We can understand and observe the introduction of new words into the vocabulary of man as often as the necessity of designating a new object or process calls the naming faculty into exercise. But the new word, whether a root or not, if engrafted into the language, invariably obeys the formative law of the speech into which it is admitted. **A nation adds new words to its vocabulary, but does not of itself, without external influence**, alter the principle on which they are formed. Here, then, the divine interference was necessary, if the uniform was ever to become multiform. And accordingly this is the very point in which the historian marks the interposition of the Almighty [BARNES, emphasis added for future work by this writer].

Philologists have distinguished three or four great types or families of languages. Many languages and dialects can trace their roots back to these four language groups (as one would expect, there will be no common agreement on many of the tribes and languages..

1. There is the Semitic family. It is reasonable to assume that most Semites spoke some dialect of this well-defined language. This includes Aram (the Syrians), Arpakshad, (the Hebrews and Arabs), and Asshur (the Assyrians), many others. Hebrew is the language of the Old Testament.

2. There is no consensus on the second family of languages, but it probably was the language of the descendants of Japheth, including the many of the people groups of India, and Europe. This language (and the dialects derived from it) was spoken by people groups from India through Europe, and includes Americans of European descent. It includes Greek, the tongue of the New Testament.

3. A third family of languages is related to the descendants of Ham, including the Babylonians, Egyptians, and other African languages. Some of the people who are from one of the three families

4. A fourth language group includes the unclassified languages (including Oriental languages) have relations more or less intimate with one or other of these three more definite families. The speech of a strong and numerous race may have gradually overcome and finally replaced that of a weak one; and in doing so may adopt many of its words, but by no means its form. “Nor are we to imagine that the variant principles of formation went into practical development all at once, but only that they started a process which, in combination with other operative causes, issued in all the diversities of speech which are now exhibited in the human race” [BARNES].

11:8 - THE LORD SCATTERED. *“So the LORD scattered them abroad from there over the face of the whole earth; and they stopped building the city.”* It is important to keep our eyes focused

on the Lord in any study of Scripture. If we want to know what God was doing, how He was acting, and what He was thinking, our only source is the Word of God. It is for that reason that we must never compromise on the integrity and authority of Scripture. We must at all times be ready to give a defense of the Word of God without politicizing the debate to such a degree that we lose sight of the God of the Word.

In any study the Old Testament I have always stressed the importance of paying special attention to the particular word used for God and relate it to the context. Often, in Genesis, the foundation Book upon which all the rest of the Bible is built, we see Yahweh God acting or speaking - for God to act is for God to speak and for God to speak is for God to act. If the word Elohim had been used here we would be left with the impression that God simply displayed His power once again. But the word here is Yahweh. It was a mighty manifestation of his power and His omniscience (He knew exactly what to do and did it). But in this passage what we see is that, even in judgment, Yahweh is acting not only from a position of power, but also from a mind and heart of mercy and love.

The people God created were in rebellion against Him - again. He had promised that there would be no more floods like the great Flood. He chose rather to act in a way that not only demonstrated that He always knows exactly what to do, but also in a way that accomplished His purpose, and answered their rebellious spirit.

What they considered their greatest fear—scattering (v. 4)—came naturally on them (**the LORD scattered them . . . over all the earth**, v. 8; cf. v. 9). What they desired most—to make a name for themselves (v. 4)—ironically came to pass, for they became known as “Babel.” Then **they stopped building the city** and were scattered abroad [BKC].

THEY STOPPED BUILDING THE CITY. As soon as their speech was confounded, work ceased. The city was the least of their concerns. Suddenly, it appears, people could no longer communicate with most of the people with whom they had been working. Possibly, they turned here and there, speaking to people to see if anyone understood them - and to discover people who could understand them. When they found people with whom they could communicate, they must have pulled aside with them, both to communicate with them and avoid the noise (babel) going on around them. There would be no translators, no language classes, and no sign language to enable them to continue. Unity of counsel and command in their project is impossible.

Confusion reigned. There is nothing more confusing than being in a position in which one only hears a language he cannot understand - and not knowing if “they might be talking about me!” Soon after the Terrorists attacks on New York and the Pentagon I was in a health club, and the whole time I worked out on a machine for my cardio-vascular exercise, I had to listen to two people, a man and a woman, whom I assumed were from the Middle East. They were some distance apart so they were speaking over the noise of the machines. I assume they were speaking Arabic. When I spoke to the later I discovered that the man could speak English well, but I was not sure about the woman. In their conversation, I could only understand one word - “America..”

Was this significant or not? A few days later I heard about the two Saudi Arabian students in a California university library who were celebrating the mass murder of civilians at the World Trade Center. We know that because there was another student in the library from the Middle East who understood them. Interestingly enough, this student told them they should be ashamed of what they were saying. Because of the debate that followed, the student who stood up for America was sanctioned, but not those who were celebrating the death of thousands of Americans.

Misunderstanding and distrust would naturally follow the confusion of tongues, as misunderstanding produces mistrust. Those who spoke the same language pulled together, and then they withdrew as a new people group. For the first few days there must have been mass confusion, and a scramble to find people with whom individuals could communicate. Even loners will want to be with people with whom they can communicate at times. We can only imagine what happened in the first hours (or even the first few days) after the confusion of languages, but we can be sure that certain things must have happened over the following weeks, months, and years. Once again, Barnes has some interesting thoughts on the subject:

Diversity of interest grows up, and separation ensues. Those who have a common speech retreat from the center of union to a sequestered spot, where they may form a separate community among themselves. The lack of pasture for their flocks and provision for themselves leads to a progressive migration. Thus, the divine purpose, that they should be fruitful and multiply and replenish the land Gen. 9:1 is fulfilled. The dispersion of mankind at the same time put an end to the ambitious projects of the few. "They left off to build the city." It is probable that the people began to see through the plausible veil which the leaders had cast over their selfish ends. The city would henceforth be abandoned to the immediate party of Nimrod. This would interrupt for a time the building of the city. Its dwellings would probably be even too numerous for its remaining inhabitants. The city received the name of Babel (confusion), from the remarkable event which had interrupted its progress for a time.

This passage, then, explains the table of nations, in which they are said to be distinguished, not merely by birth and land, but "every one after his tongue." It is therefore attached to the table as a needful appendix, and thus completes the history of the nations so far as it is carried on by the Bible. At this point the line of history leaves the universal, and by a rapid contraction narrows itself into the individual, in the person of him who is to be ultimately the parent of a chosen seed, in which the knowledge of God and of his truth is to be preserved, amidst the degeneracy of the nations into the ignorance and error which are the natural offspring of sin.

Here, accordingly, ends the appendix to the second Bible, or the second volume of the revelation of God to man. As the first may have been due to Adam, the second may be ascribed in point of matter to Noah, with Shem as his continuator. The two joined together belong not to a special people, but to the universal race. If they had ever appeared in a written form before Moses, they might have descended to the

Gentiles as well as to the Israelites. But the lack of interest in holy things would account for their disappearance among the former. The speakers of the primitive language, however, would alone retain the knowledge of such a book if extant. Some of its contents might be preserved in the memory, and handed down to the posterity of the founders of the primeval nations. Accordingly we find more or less distinct traces of the true God, the creation, the fall and the deluge, in the traditions of all nations that have an ancient history.

The new developments of sin during this period are chiefly three—drunkenness, dishonoring of a parent, and the ambitious attempt to be independent of God’s power, and to thwart his purpose of peopling the land. These forms of human selfishness still linger about the primary commands of the two tables. Insubordination to the supreme authority of God is accompanied with disrespect to parental authority. Drunkenness itself is an abuse of the free grant of the fruit of the trees original made to man. These manifestations of sin do not advance to the grosser or more subtle depths of iniquity afterward explicitly forbidden in the ten commandments. They indicate a people still comparatively unsophisticated in their habits [BARNES, emphasis added for further editing at a later date].

11:9 - BABEL. *“Therefore its name was called Babel, because there the LORD confused the language of the whole earth; and from there the LORD scattered them abroad over the face of the whole earth.”* The word “Babel” is a transliteration of an Akkadian word which the Babylonians understood to mean “gate of the god.” “The biblical writer makes a play on the Hebrew word ‘confuse,’ indicating that unified ‘Babel’ disintegrated into confusion. Divine reaction to the pride and ambition of the people caused the confusion of language and the scattering of the people [BSB].

Biblical history is the narrative of God's acts. The secular historian would describe political events, personalities, and strategies to explain international communication problems and power blocks. The Bible sees God's purposes and actions behind all major epochs of history. This God-centered interpretation comes from personal spiritual experience and faith. Such an interpretation does not meet the secular historian's criteria of concrete, empirical evidence. It does provide an inspired view of history with continuity and unity based on a grand view of divine sovereignty and human freedom. Behind human, empirical historical causes stands the divine Causer.[DSB]

The “undoing of Babel” was cleverly explained by Zephaniah, whose terms certainly retraced this event, “anticipating the great unification in the millennial kingdom, when everyone will speak one pure language and worship in God’s holy mountain, being gathered from the nations into which they have been dispersed (Zeph. 3:9-11)” [BARNES].

For then I will give to the peoples purified lips, That all of them may call on the name of the LORD, To serve Him shoulder to shoulder. From beyond the rivers of Ethiopia My worshipers, My dispersed ones, Will bring My offerings. In that day you will feel no shame Because of all your deeds By which you have rebelled against Me;

For then I will remove from your midst Your proud, exulting ones, And you will never again be haughty On My holy mountain (Zeph. 3:9-11).

It seems appropriate at this point to consider some questions - and some of the answers - that have arisen from this event. As long as there are people in the world who are different from other people, there will be a response to that difference. For one reason or another, possibly to soothe their conscience (or in some cases as demonstration that they had none), there have always been people who have claimed that certain other people are of less value than they. Slave owners may use this argument to try to justify their owning slaves. They may have used this excuse two hundred years ago. They may use it today. But in the biblical times slavery was so common that most people may have not considered it an evil. To many, the only moral issue was the treatment of them.

Questions arise. Did God not place a curse on Ham that sentenced his descendants to be slaves to those of Shem and Japheth? Does this justify slavery? Can a Christian slave owner justify the ownership of another human being by claiming that God intended for the children of Ham to serve him? Can the Muslim in Egypt or Sudan justify killing people who become Christians and then enslaving their children or selling them into slavery to other people? Why is it that to many people the ownership of a black person by a white person particularly offensive and immoral, but show almost no compassion for a black child who is sold into slavery to another black person, or even someone in the Far East, where there are countless numbers of children in slavery?

Thomas Sowell has written a lot of heavyweight books, *Race and Culture*, and others on Culture and Conquest. This brilliant economist, who is black, stresses that all races have furnished their share of slaves and slave owners. I strongly recommend Sowell's work

Once when I was talking with a very close friend the subject of slavery came up. He surprised me by saying, "Don't tell me I don't understand anything about slavery. I grew up in a sharecropper's home, and that was the next thing to slavery!" It reminded me of the time a man came to see my father. I can still picture Slim, "Six feet-four in my bare feet," he would say. That should have assured him a college scholarship as a center on some basketball team at the time, if he had finished high school. But that is not why I remember him. I can picture a husband and father standing there asking my father if he had a house and some land he could work on shares.

He had worked for a man whose wealth was legend. People loved to tell stories about the man who from the time he opened a small store began saving quarters. When he had enough he invested it in a small farm, which he worked himself. He would eat plums of a tree on the place rather than spend money for lunch. Eventually, he became one of the biggest farm owners in the Mississippi Delta. He owned his own cotton gin, and the people who worked on his place had to do double duty, picking their own cotton and working in the gin. This often meant that the sharecropper's family had to pick the cotton while the father worked in the gin. He would help his family as much as possible, but this usually meant that his children would miss the first six weeks of school. Nothing was "cool" in those days, but if there had been it would have been "cool" to stay out of school until the middle of October or the first of November. But it was not so cool when a

landowner forced this situation.

I believe my father would have preferred bankruptcy to my missing school to work on the farm, and we were buying our land. I thought the children of local sharecroppers had it made because every Saturday afternoon - while I was working in the field, clearing a new ground, or doing some other job that was just as hot and possible even dirtier - I would watch the sharecroppers and renters passing by on their way to town. They did their shopping, enjoyed the social life my friend Harold Dorman described in a country song entitled, "*Mississippi Cotton Picking Delta Town*," made famous by country music legend Charlie Pride, who was also from Sledge. When I first heard the words, "Sittin' on the depot porch, looking at the folks, looking back at us, not much to do in a Mississippi Cotton Pickin' delta town," I recalled the talk at school about what everyone was doing in town the previous Saturday afternoon or "Sair'dy night." I was never permitted to hang out in town on a Saturday night, or a Saturday afternoon for that matter. My parents didn't have to worry too much about peer pressure when you didn't see any peers. But Harold Dorman knew: "One dusty street to walk up an' down, lickin' on a dust covered ice cream cone, not much to do in a Mississippi cotton pickin' delta town." I could picture it but I never lived it. It sounded great to me when I heard people at church on Sunday morning talking about the movie, the girls who were in town, or the fight they witnessed.

There were many farmers who treated renters and sharecroppers with the same respect they received from my parents. Slim was visiting my father to ask for a place to stay. He had received his pay for the week at the gin and when he checked his money and discovered that he was fifty cents short, he went back in to see the boss. The owner acknowledged the mistake and then looked at Slim and asked, "Son, what you want me to do about it?" Slim said, "Well, I want my money." The landowner said, "Son, I 'spect you better move!" It was Fall, and there would be almost nothing he could do to earn any money before Spring, and then he would farm the land allotted him for months before he could pick his cotton and hope to clear enough to buy staple goods to last him through the following winter. Then, he would borrow "a furnish" from the landowner to cover his expenses until he picked his cotton and sold it. Then he would sell his cotton and "settle with the landowner. If there was a good crop, children got new shoes and some clothes. On a bad year, the sharecropper might have to borrow money from the landowner to "make it through the winter."

It was merciless to tell a man he had to move his family, which might include several children - "the rich get richer, and the poor get children," was the adage." My father provided a place for Slim and his family to live and somehow we helped them "make it through the winter." Slim and his family seemed to do about as well at the time as we did; they did not have a land note at the end of the year, so there were years when they cleared about as much as we did - but I would never have changed places with them.

Before too long the family was not only living with more dignity, they were in church. When my sister Linda was saved during a revival at the church I served as a student pastor when I was at Mississippi College, I asked the evangelist, Billy Pierce, to take her into a classroom and talk with her to see if he thought she understood what she was doing. He came out and said, "She knows exactly what she is doing. She just wanted me to tell her what to say to a little girl on your place so she could

be saved.” The little girl was Slim’s daughter.

What about the Aborigines on Australia? Did not early settlers consider them to be sub-human - people who had not moved up the evolutionary ladder quite as far as other people? We could ask that of various people at various times. It is easier to discriminate against others when one thinks of them as inferior. Five hundred years ago in England a surf who offended a nobleman could be killed and nothing would be done about it. In the old West there were people who did not think of killing an Indian as murder.

Moving on to another subject, different but related, why do we have white people, black people, red people, yellow people, brown people? The answer goes back to the confusion of tongues at the Tower of Babel. At the time when each language group withdrew to be with “their own kind,” they probably looked very much alike, with natural variations. Each group migrated in the direction that served its purpose, seeking land to farm, grass for livestock, and distance from other who were “not their kind.” By “not their kind” at this point may have only meant that they could not communicate with them because of the confusion of languages they all looked pretty much alike..

Here is the important thing to remember: each group which migrated to separate places - throughout the region, and then throughout the world - took with them their own gene pool and for centuries they would marry within that gene pool, producing dominant features within that group. Thus, those in one area would be light skinned; those in other areas would take on characteristics within that group; some would become black; others yellow; and still others, red. When early Europeans first traveled to the Far East they discovered Oriental people groups, all with certain common features, but with natural variations within each group and variations from one group to another. Many of these groups lived in areas where it was cold for many months of the year, forcing them to stay indoors most of the time. This would determine certain health characteristics. For example, it is now believed that Neanderthal Man was a fully human who lived in the far north where he spend much of his time in caves in an effort to escape the hostile forces of nature during the winter. He was out of the sun for months at the time. He may have had rickets, which would have accounted for his posture.

Environment would have made a contribution to the differences in people living in different areas. In harsh climates, the “strong shall survive” or “survival of the fittest” principle may have been a contributing factor. For further study I would recommend books on the subject written by Scientists with a foundation in the Word of God, such as creation scientists. I would also encourage the reader to read books by Thomas Sowell on *Race and Culture*. Sowell says that if you want a piano built, get someone from Germany to build it. If you want a bridge built, get someone from Great Britain to build it. He reveals that people from certain groups (Italians, Germans, English) will maintain their natural instincts for generations after migrating to another country or continent. For example, during World War II Japanese in America were strongly pro-American, but Japanese in Brazil were just as strongly pro-Japan. Why? Sowell explains that the ancestors of these two different groups of Japanese people could never get along when they all lived in Japan.

What should the Christian attitude be toward those who are different in appearance from us?

When Paul stood in the midst of the Areopagus, to address the “Men of Athens,” declared:

I observe that you are very religious in all respects. For while I was passing through and examining the objects of your worship, I also found an altar with this inscription, 'TO AN UNKNOWN GOD.' Therefore what you worship in ignorance, this I proclaim to you. The God who made the world and all things in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands; nor is He served by human hands, as though He needed anything, since He Himself gives to all people life and breath and all things; and **He made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth**, having determined their appointed times and the boundaries of their habitation, that they would seek God, if perhaps they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us; for in Him we live and move and exist (Acts 17 22:-28a, emphasis added).

E. The Descendants of Shem, 11:10-26

The main contribution of this passage is the linking of Abram with the line from Shem. In “the records of the generations of Shem” we find the ancestry of Israel. Interestingly, archeological material shows that many of these names are preserved in place names around Haran.

This “selective list of 10 generations is recorded for the purpose of tracing the ancestry of Abraham” [RSB]. Unlike the genealogy in chapter 5, the list in here makes no attempt to record the total number of years of each person, it does not try to reconcile any overlapping of life spans, and it does not close each section with the words “and he died.” Genesis 5:1-6:8 stresses death before the Flood; 11:10-26 stresses life and expansion even though longevity was declining. The genealogy of chapter 11 is somewhat different from the earlier genealogy. This is because verses 10-26 trace the lineage of Abram, who was to be blessed by God, back to Shem, the son of Noah who was also blessed by God (9:26).

The student of Scripture, and of biblical history in particular, are keenly aware of the fact that genealogies of Shem and Terah link the history of God's chosen people to universal history.

By nature people of God have no claim to superiority over other people. God's sovereign choice led to biblical history focusing on one people. Uniquely, Israel's history does not center on an eternal people in a land given from creation centering on a temple built at the beginning of time. God began His special history of election and salvation with a shepherd family on the move rather than with a kingly or priestly family settled in an institution [DSB].

11:10 - SHEM. *“These are the records of the generations of Shem. Shem was one hundred years old, and became the father of Arpachshad two years after the flood.”* Moses is the one who was

inspired to write the Book of Genesis, thus eliminating any chance of error. However there has been a lot of speculation about “the records.” Were these written accounts preserved by chosen descendants of Noah, or does this denote oral traditions handed down from generation to generation?

We have seen the family tree of Shem in 10:21-32, but here the writer repeats the line as a transitional statement to show how Abraham fits into the plan. He traces the line to Terah, the father of Abraham (11:26). The call of Abraham was both an expression of the sovereignty of God and the grace of God. God chose Abraham according to His grace. According to His sovereign will, He bypassed Ham and Japheth and chose Shem. Of Shem’s five sons (10:22), God chose Arphaxad (11:10). And of Terah’s three sons (11:26), He chose Abraham. This is the true beginning of the Hebrew nation. Wiersbe gives us an overview of the section:

Genesis 12:1 indicates that the Lord had said (past tense) to Abraham, “Get out.” But 11:31-32 states that Abraham did not fully obey. Instead of leaving his father behind, he took him along (NKJV); and the pilgrimage was delayed at Haran, where Terah died. Often our half-way obedience becomes costly, both in time and treasure. Abraham lost the time he could have spent walking with God, and he lost his father too. Abraham took Lot with him on the next stage of the journey, but Lot also had to be taken away from Abraham (13:5-14).

Hebrews 11:8-19 is a summary of the faith of Abraham. Someone has said that Abraham believed God when he did not know where (Heb. 11:8), when he did not know how (11:11), and when he did not know why (11:17-19).

We must emphasize again that God did not call Abraham because of his own merits. He had none. He was a citizen of an idolatrous city, Ur of the Chaldees. Had not God revealed Himself to him, he would have died an unbeliever. From a human point of view, God’s choice of Abraham and Sarah—who had no children—was a foolish one. But ultimately it brought great glory to God and great blessing to the world [WW].

For further study, consider the following notes from the Bible Knowledge Commentary:

This genealogical record traces the line from Noah’s son Shem to **Abram**. Earlier Moses had traced the families of the earth that came from Noah’s three sons (chap. 10), explaining how they came to be scattered around the earth (11:1-9). Here he directed attention again to the Shemites. The genealogy of **Shem** is a “vertical” genealogy designed to show legitimate ancestry. This type was often used in the ancient world to establish the authenticity of a king or a dynasty. The list in verses 10-26 shows the straight line of Shem, who was blessed, to Abram, thus authenticating God’s handing down the blessing to Abram.

Some have argued that the names in the genealogical lists in chapters 5 and 11 are contrived, with the names selected (from among others not listed) to show symmetry (e.g., each list ends with reference to three sons, 5:32; 11:26), but this view cannot be substantiated by consistent exegesis. To show “gaps” in the genealogy, one must posit ellipses: “X lived so many years and begot [the line that culminated in] Y.” Such

ellipses are hard to prove. Moreover, gaps are not possible in two places in the list (Shem was the son of Noah, and Abram was the son of Terah). Thus verses 10-26 seem to present a tight chronology [BKC].

The genealogies of the Bible affirm that the process of life is both ongoing and natural. Generation follows generation. God planned it that way and used the process to produce Abram, whom God would use to fulfill His saving purposes.

11:11 - ARPACHSHAD. *“And Shem lived five hundred years after he became the father of Arpachshad, and he had other sons and daughters.”* In the previous record we saw that some link the family of Arpachshad to Armenia, and others to the land what would one day be occupied by the Assyrians. We also see here the life span is beginning to shorten after the Flood even though it was longer than it is today. Without the water canopy over the earth to filter out the ultraviolet rays of the sun, the earth offered a less hospitable environment for man.

11:12 - THIRTY-FIVE YEARS. *“Arpachshad lived thirty-five years, and became the father of Shelah.”* There is no theological issue in the age of Arpachshad when Shelah was born. What is interesting is a comparison of the relative ages of men before and after the Flood at which the their first son was born. Noah is a good example.

11:13 - SONS AND DAUGHTERS. *“And Arpachshad lived four hundred and three years after he became the father of Shelah, and he had other sons and daughters.”* While Arpachshad lived a long time, it was less than half that of some of the antediluvian patriarchs. One can only speculate as to whether or not any of those men living before the Flood had “sons and daughters” before the ones recorded in the genealogy. It is surprising that this man was thirty-five years old when his first son was born. Did he have any earlier sons or daughters? The purpose of Scripture is served by the names given.

11:14 -EBER. *“Shelah lived thirty years, and became the father of Eber.”* Eber is most likely the one who gave the Hebrew people their name. As we have seen in the earlier genealogy, some believe the name should be traced back to the crossing of the Euphrates on Abram’s journey to the Promised Land.

11:15 - SHELAH LIVED. *“And Shelah lived four hundred and three years after he became the father of Eber, and he had other sons and daughters.”* We are not given the number of children for Shelah, but apparently he had other sons and daughters over a long period of time. Mankind was obeying the command to fill the earth, whether they were conscious of that or not.

11:16 - PELEG. *“Eber lived thirty-four years, and became the father of Peleg.”* As we have already seen in the previous chapter, Peleg, whose name means “to divide,” was linked to the time of the confusion of tongues at the Tower of Babel.

11:17 - EBER LIVED... *“And Eber lived four hundred and thirty years after he became the*

father of Peleg, and he had other sons and daughters.” Though the life span was long compared to modern times, it was considerably less following the flood than in the days of Noah and his forefathers, the antediluvian patriarchs. As noted earlier, the vapor canopy around (above) the earth might have protected people from the harmful effects of ultraviolet from the sun, thus allowing a more friendly and healthy atmosphere for people like Seth, Methuselah, and Noah. But that was only one factor. Another, and certainly as great if not greater factor, was the gene pool. There must have been very few genetic defects during the first several generations of man on the earth. There was simply no DNA problems being handed down from generation to generation.

Though Eber lived to reach an incredibly old age, when we read later that man was allowed three score and ten years. By the time Moses wrote the Book of the Law, several hundred years later, there had been many changes. Continuous marriage within a family could produce genetic defects. Even though Abraham had married his own half-sister, the Mosaic Law was very specific in its prohibition of such unions.

11:18 - REU. *“Peleg lived thirty years, and became the father of Reu.”* The most important thing to remember about Reu is that he was a part of the unbroken line that linked the Messianic prophecies of the Old Testament, the first of which was given in Genesis 3, to the Messiah. There is a consistent revelation of God’s redemptive love, and a progressive revelation of His Messianic Covenant throughout the Old Testament. Reu is important because it was through him of all the sons of Peleg that God was working out His plan, and maintaining His Covenant.

11:19 - PELEG LIVED... *“And Peleg lived two hundred and nine years after he became the father of Reu, and he had other sons and daughters.”* For his entire life of 239 years Peleg had the companionship of what may well have been a healthy and vigorous father - who lived another 225 years after Peleg died. During these first centuries following the Flood the post-diluvian patriarchs were again populating the earth.

11:20 - SERUG. *Reu lived thirty-two years, and became the father of Serug.”* The purpose in these genealogical records is to show the line through which the promise of the Seed was sustained and nourished.

11:21 - AND REU LIVED. *“And Reu lived two hundred and seven years after he became the father of Serug, and he had other sons and daughters.”* Some one was keeping the records. In the first place, it is very probable that everyone in the lineage of the Seed knew all the individuals and ages from memory. Let’s face it, they didn’t have a lot of telephone numbers, addresses, a driver’s license, automobile license and social security numbers to remember. These people, far from being ignorant cave men, were probably intellectually superior to the average person today. We have a lot of people taking remedial classes in college who think those ancient patriarchs were not far removed from Barney Rubble.

11:22 - NAHOR. *“Serug lived thirty years, and became the father of Nahor.”* There must have been many times when Satan thought he had won the battle against God and the promised Seed, only

to discover that God had never lost track of what W. A. Criswell has called the scarlet thread that runs through the Old Testament. The Lord would enter a covenant relationship with Israel at Sinai, at which time His Chosen People really became His People. From Sinai on, that covenant with Israel involved Israel, but there was never a moment when the outcome of that covenant was dependant upon either the physical strength, the intellectual prowess, or moral superiority of Israel. The history of the Old Covenant was what we might think of as a spiral of history moving from Genesis 3 to Matthew 1. Dr. Robert Witty, founder and first president of Luther Rice Seminary, stressed that Christians should not think history in terms of cycles. Discussing the return of Christ, Dr. Witty stressed that while people talk about history repeating itself, or the cycle of history, what we see is a spiral of history. While there seems to be a cycle, there is in reality a spiral with a beginning point and an ending point.

Because God honored His covenant with Israel and maintained it even through the darkest days, we can be sure He will honor and maintain the New Covenant, a covenant written in the blood of Calvary. I have a covenant relationship with God that I could never keep. I do not worship a God I can hold in my hand, I worship a God Who holds me in the hollow of His hand. He has promised to maintain that covenant and I believe Him because of Who He is, and because of what He has done. He is the eternal One, the great I AM. What He has done in the past was to make a covenant and maintain it when the party with whom the covenant was made was both undeserving and unfaithful. But I am both undeserving and unfaithful: I have sinned (past tense), and I come (present tense) short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23).

Behold, days are coming," declares the LORD, "when I will make **a new covenant** with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah (Jer. 31:31).

And in the same way He took the cup after they had eaten, saying, "This cup which is poured out for you is **the new covenant in My blood** (Luke 22:20).

Not that we are adequate in ourselves to consider anything as coming from ourselves, but our adequacy is from God, who also made us adequate as servants of **a new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit**; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life (2 Cor. 3:5-6).

For finding fault with them, He says, "BEHOLD, DAYS ARE COMING, SAYS THE LORD, WHEN I WILL EFFECT **A NEW COVENANT** WITH THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL AND WITH THE HOUSE OF JUDAH; NOT LIKE THE COVENANT WHICH I MADE WITH THEIR FATHERS ON THE DAY WHEN I TOOK THEM BY THE HAND TO LEAD THEM OUT OF THE LAND OF EGYPT; FOR **THEY DID NOT CONTINUE IN MY COVENANT**, AND I DID NOT CARE FOR THEM, SAYS THE LORD. FOR THIS IS THE COVENANT THAT I WILL MAKE WITH THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL AFTER THOSE DAYS, SAYS THE LORD: I WILL PUT MY LAWS INTO THEIR MINDS, AND I WILL WRITE THEM ON THEIR HEARTS. AND I WILL BE THEIR GOD, AND THEY SHALL BE MY PEOPLE (Heb. 8:8-10).

When He said, "**A new covenant**," He has made the first obsolete. But whatever is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to disappear (Heb. 8:13).

Because of what Yahweh God did in making a covenant with Israel, and because He was able to maintain that covenant; and because of what Jesus Christ did at Calvary, I have complete confidence in His ability (and will) to main the new covenant, a covenant in which I am included by the grace of God.

And I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. I and the Father are one (John 10:28-30).

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time (1 Peter 1:3-5).

"...For I know whom I have believed and I am convinced that He is able to guard what I have entrusted to Him until that day" (2 Tim. 1:12b).

Nahor is a name that Bible students will recognize as the grandfather of Abraham. We know he is in the direct line from Shem to Abraham, the covenant line, the line of the Seed. It is a wonder that Satan did not become discouraged thousands of years ago!

11:23 -SONS AND DAUGHTERS. *"And Serug lived two hundred years after he became the father of Nahor, and he had other sons and daughters."* There is no doubt that Serug loved those sons and daughters as much as he loved Nahor, but the one who kept the genealogical records was concerned here only with the Seed line.

11:24 - TERAH. *"Nahor lived twenty-nine years, and became the father of Terah."* Not only have we come to the father of Abraham, we also have a location, Ur of the Chaldees. The Holman Bible Dictionary carries the following account:

Personal name perhaps meaning, "ibex." The father of Abraham, Nahor, and Haran (Gen. 11:26). Along with a migration of people from Ur of the Chaldees, Terah moved his family, following the Euphrates River to Haran (11:31). He intended to continue from Haran into Canaan, but died in Mesopotamia at the age of 205 (11:32). A debate has centered on Terah's religious practices, for Joshua 24:2 apparently points to his family when it claims records that the father worshiped gods other than Yahweh [HBD].

11:25 - NAHOR LIVED. *“And Nahor lived one hundred and nineteen years after he became the father of Terah, and he had other sons and daughters.”* Nahor lived to the age of 148, during which time he had other children - but the Seed line is maintained through Terah..

10:26 -ABRAM. *“Terah lived seventy years, and became the father of Abram, Nahor and Haran.”* From Shem, the son of Noah chosen by the Lord as the one through whom He would continue his Messianic Covenant, to Abram whose name would be changed to Abraham and the one with whom the great Abrahamic covenant was made. Nahor was 99 years old when Abraham was born, and Abraham was 49 when Nahor died.

VI. ABRAHAM IS CALLED, 11:27- 12:20

A The Family of Abram, 11:27-32

11:27 - ABRAM. *“Now these are the records of the generations of Terah. Terah became the father of Abram, Nahor and Haran; and Haran became the father of Lot.”* We are following the lineage of the SEED, from Seth to Terah, to Abram. Of Terah’s three sons God chose Abram to fulfill his promise to Eve. Abram whose name means “exalted father,” was the progenitor of God’s chosen people. Later (17:5) his name was changed to Abraham, which means “father of a great number” (or father of a multitude). “He was born in 2165 B.C. Though we are told little about Terah (Abraham's father), Josh. 24:2 states that he worshiped heathen gods” [RSB].

11:28 - HARAN. *“Haran died in the presence of his father Terah in the land of his birth, in Ur of the Chaldeans.”* Haran, the father of Lot, died in Ur of the Chaldeans before Abram was called to go to a Promised Land. Ur of the Chaldeans was a “wealthy, populous, and sophisticated pagan center of southern Mesopotamia (220 mi. SE of Baghdad). Its most prosperous and literate era was during the time of Abraham. A great ziggurat was built there, and Abraham must have seen it” [RSB]. The NCWB informs us that the modern name for Ur is Orfa. It was

a well-known Sumerian city located at the very southern part of Mesopotamia that had a high and flourishing culture between 2600 and 2000 B.C. and continued to be important after the Amorite invasion of the area (c. 2004 B.C.) and down to the Neo-Babylonian or Chaldean period. Terah and his family were equally infected with that idolatry as the rest of the inhabitants (Josh. 24:15). This is evident in the name Terah, derived from the Semitic word for moon. And the moon deity, Sin or Nanna, was the patron god of Ur, as it was in Haran, the city to which the family moved [NCWB].

11:29 - SARAI. *“Abram and Nahor took wives for themselves. The name of Abram's wife was Sarai; and the name of Nahor's wife was Milcah, the daughter of Haran, the father of Milcah and Iscah.”* Haran died in Ur, Abram and Nahor married; Abram to his half sister Sarai, and Nahor to his niece, the daughter of Haran. Such unions were not condemned this early in human history. That would come later.

11:30 - SARAI WAS BARREN. *“Sarai was barren; she had no child.”* To have not male child at this time in history was a serious matter. A woman looked to her father for identity, protection, and security in her youth; to her husband in her adult life; and, if her husband preceded her in death, to her son in her old age. Without a son she was at the mercy of some family member, who may or may not assume that responsibility.

The fact that Sarai was barren was beyond human correction, especially at that time. It was not, however, beyond the reach of God. That which is impossible with man is possible with God.

11:31 - THE WENT OUT TOGETHER FROM UR. *“Terah took Abram his son, and Lot the son of Haran, his grandson, and Sarai his daughter-in-law, his son Abram's wife; and they went out together from Ur of the Chaldeans in order to enter the land of Canaan; and they went as far as Haran, and settled there.”* God called Abraham while he was in Ur (Acts 7:2-3), yet it was Terah who led his family out of Ur and started them on their journey. The logical explanation is that Abram told his father of God's call, and Terah as head of the family had the option of letting Abram go on his own, or going with him. As the Patriarch of the family, He would be the leader as they set out on their journey. Only two routes to Canaan were available: “one across the Arabian desert (impossible for transporting large herds), and the other along the Euphrates to Haran, in Syria, then down to Canaan, a 1,500 (mile) journey” [RSB].

SARAI HIS DAUGHTER IN LAW. Sarai was Terah's daughter, probably by a second wife. The NCWB states that Sarai was the granddaughter of Terah and that Abram married his niece rather than his half-sister [NCWB], but we learn in the next chapter that Sarai was his half-sister..

AND THEY CAME UNTO HARAN. The text does not state the reason for they “settled” at Haran for some period of time. Haran is “situated in Northern Mesopotamia, an important crossroads (which is what Haran means) between Mesopotamia and Anatolia to the north or Palestine in the south” [NCWB].

11:32 - THE DAYS OF TERAH. *“The days of Terah were two hundred and five years; and Terah died in Haran.”* The life span of these post-diluvian patriarchs, though much shorter than their antediluvian ancestors, was still twice as long as it is today. In this verse we may find a clue as to why they settled in Haran for some period of time. It may well have concerned Terah's health.

B. A Famine in the Land of Promise, 12:1-20

Kiel and Delitzsch observe that the life of Abraham, from his call to his death, consists of four stages, the commencement of each of which is marked by a divine revelation of sufficient importance to constitute a distinct epoch.

The **first** stage (Gen 12-14) commences with his call and removal to Canaan.

The **second** (Gen 15-16), with the promise of a lineal heir and the conclusion of a covenant;

The **third** (Gen 17-21), with the establishment of the covenant, accompanied by a change in his name, and the appointment of the covenant sign of circumcision.

The **fourth** (Gen 22-25:11), with the temptation of Abraham to attest and perfect his life of faith. All the revelations made to him proceed from Jehovah; and the name Jehovah is employed throughout the whole life of the father of the faithful, Elohim being used only where Jehovah, from its meaning, would be either entirely inapplicable, or at any rate less appropriate [K&D, emphasis added].

12:1 - THE LORD SAID TO ABRAM. *“Now the LORD said to Abram, “Go forth from your country, And from your relatives And from your father’s house, To the land which I will show you.”*

At His own initiative, according to His own purpose, by His own sovereignty, Yahweh God called Abram and commanded him to leave his country, separating himself from his relatives and from his father’s house. The Nelson Study Bible Notes makes the point that:

The name Yahweh, translated as LORD, is not explained until Ex. 3:14, 15. But the readers of Genesis needed to know that the one who spoke to Abram is the same Yahweh who later would form the nation of Israel and who had created all things (Gen. 2:4). To a world that believed in many gods, the name of the true and living God was significant [NSB].

The words which the LORD spoke to Abram constituted his call. His message contained a command and a promise. Abram was to leave all-his country, his kindred (see Gen 43:7), and his father’s house-and to follow the Lord into the land which He would show him.

Thus he was to trust entirely to the guidance of God, and to follow wherever He might lead him. But as he went in consequence of this divine summons into the land of Canaan (v. 5), we must assume that God gave him at the very first a distinct intimation, if not of the land itself, at least of the direction he was to take. That Canaan was to be his destination, was no doubt made known as a matter of certainty in the revelation which he received after his arrival there (v. 7).—For thus renouncing and denying all natural ties, the Lord gave him the inconceivably great promise, “I will make of thee a great nation; and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing” [K&D].

In a world that had been polluted by sin just as it had been in the days before the Flood, God called out a man through whom He would accomplish great things, just as He had done with Noah. There have been a few really great people who have played pivotal roles in human history. We meet

three of them in The first twelve chapters of Genesis, Adam, Noah, and Abraham. There were other great people, Eve, Seth, Enoch, but those who played the really pivotal roles are the three mentioned above. There would be many great people in the future - Isaac, Jacob, Aaron, Joshua, Samson, Gideon, Deborah, Samson, Samuel. However, there were a very few really pivotal characters - notably, Moses, and David, and Elijah. So, we have Adam, the first man; Noah, the father of all mankind since the Flood; Abraham, the father of righteousness, who was also the father of many nations, and a key individual in the unveiling of God's Messianic Covenant; Moses, the Law given; and David, a major role player in the establishment of the Kingdom of Israel and in God's progressive revelation of His Messianic Covenant; and Elijah, who stood as the representative prophet. Who appeared with Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration? Moses, representing the Law. And Elijah, representing the prophets. Each Sabbath in the Synagogue, a passage was read from the Law, and a passage from the prophets. Jesus fulfilled both the Law and the Messianic prophecies of the Old Testament.

In case after case we find the Scripture stating, "The Lord Said." Here, as in many other places, that introduces a special message from the Lord in which an individual is commanded to do something specific, and vital to the Lord's redemptive purpose. On other occasions, we may note that it is not enough to say that God says something because it is true. It is more accurate to say that it is true because God says it. When God speaks, divine truth is established. In this case, God speaks to Abram and sets in motion one of the most remarkable his redemptive plan for mankind.

TO THE LAND. Abram was commanded to leave his country and his family, but his leaving the old is not the principle thing. The key is that God was sending him a "Land of Promise."

Abram (whose name is changed to "Abraham" in 17:5), the son of Terah (11:26) and a descendant of Shem (cf. 1 Chr 1:24-27), was a native of Ur (11:28, 31), which was probably located near the Persian Gulf. After receiving God's call (vv. 1-3), Abraham entered the Promised Land (vv. 4-6), undergirded by his faith in the covenant promise of God (cf. Heb 11:8). He was described as the "friend" of God (2 Chr 20:7), a man of faith and prayer (15:6; 18:23-33), determined to be obedient to the Lord, whatever the cost (22:1-18; Heb 11:8-10). The Abrahamic covenant includes three commitments by YAHWEH. First, Abram personally would receive abundant blessings, including wealth, fame, and influence, and would be a source of blessing for others (v. 2). In fact, the verb in the final phrase of v. 2 is grammatically an imperative. Abram is instructed to be a blessing. Thus, his call was from the outset a missionary mandate encompassing all people. Second, Abram would be protected by God. Third, Abram's blessing would extend to his descendants (v. 7; lit. "seed"), who would be an instrument of spiritual blessing to all the families of the earth (v. 3). This "Seed" is Jesus Christ who provides salvation for all peoples (Gal 3:16). A major characteristic of the covenant is that it is unconditional. Generations of Abram's descendants from time to time would default and fail, but ultimately YAHWEH was committed to achieving these goals [BSB].

12:2 - I WILL MAKE YOU. *“And I will make you a great nation, And I will bless you, And make your name great; And so you shall be a blessing.”* Abram was not a self-made man; he was a God-made man. The modern preacher of the Gospel would do well to remember that his call is of God, and his opportunities are from God. Paul stresses in his first epistle to the Corinthians that when we are saved we are given one or more spiritual gifts to enable us to serve the Lord. No man should take personal credit for what the Lord calls and equips him to do.

A GREAT NATION. Many nations can name Abraham as father, but there is only one nation that qualifies as the “great nation” God has in mind in the Abrahamic Covenant. That nation is Israel. The “I will make” part of the covenant applies again here. There have been many nations throughout the long history of Israel that would have appeared a better choice. Yet, God chose Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, whose name was changed to Israel. Egypt was a powerful nation, Israel a slave nation. But God, according to His sovereign will, chose Israel to make a great nation. One sign of the greatness of Israel is in the greatness of some of its leaders: Abraham, Moses, Joshua, Samuel, David, Isaiah, Jeremiah, to name but a few.

I WILL BLESS YOU. When God exercises His sovereign will in choosing to bless an individual or a nation, there will be no denying His blessing. The blessings God poured out on Abraham and his descendants, though innumerable, are worth enumerating. He was blessed with a wife, a son, great wealth, and a great nation.

MAKE YOU A GREAT NAME. He is not told this at this point, but the name the Lord will make great is not the name by which he was known at the time. Abram means “exalted father;” but the name by which he would be known throughout the ages would be Abraham, “father of a multitude.” Abraham is the father of the faithful, the father of righteousness, the father of many nations. He is also listed in the genealogy of Christ in Matthew, chapter one. Even after four thousand years, the name Abraham is recognized, and respected by millions of people.

YOU SHALL BE A BLESSING. This is the final provision in the Abrahamic Covenant given in this verse. Last, but not least. This is the Messianic part of the covenant. There is no doubt that Abraham was a blessing to many people of his day, but the blessing here will come through the Seed of the woman (Eve). The scarlet thread that runs through the old Testament runs through Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Judah. We will pick it up again in the Davidic Covenant.

12:3 - I WILL BLESS. *“And I will bless those who bless you, And the one who curses you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed.”* This part of the covenant applied not only to Abraham, but also to his descendants. A brief survey of the history of Israel in the Old Testament will verify this. K & D make the point that “the four members of this promise are not to be divided into two parallel members..., but are to be regarded as an ascending climax, expressing four elements of the salvation promised to Abram, the last of which is still further expanded in v. 3” [K & D] .

The Lord promised to bless those who bless Israel. Here is an example. When Columbus

sailed through the Straits of Gibraltar on his way to discover the new world, there was another ship sailing through the Straits of Gibraltar. This ship was filled with Jews who had been dispossessed of their property and forced to leave Spain. They needed a place to go, so they sailed south along the coast of Africa. Columbus discovered America, some say by accident, but I prefer to believe that the hand of God was involved in providing a place for Christians to worship in freedom - and a place for persecuted Jews to find peace and freedom. America has defended Israel and America has been blessed.

I WILL CURSE. The Lord promised to curse those who cursed Abraham and his descendants.

It appears significant...that the plural is used in relation to the blessing, and the singular only in relation to the cursing; grace expects that there will be many to bless, and that only an individual here and there will render not blessing for blessing, but curse for curse. The blessing, as the more minute definition of the expression “be a blessing” in v. 3 clearly shows, was henceforth to keep pace as it were with Abram himself, so that (1) the blessing and cursing of men were to depend entirely upon their attitude towards him, and (2) all the families of the earth were to be blessed in him “judicial cursing on the part of God.” [K&D].

We can look at the history of Israel as recorded in the Old Testament to see the proof. There were the Amalakites, the Amonites, the Moabites, the Canaanites, the Philistines, the Phoenicians, the Syrians, the Assyrians, and the Babylonians. Fast forwarding, we find the Nazis, the Soviet Union, and various countries in the Middle East. The militant Muslims behind the attack on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, sought to enlist all Muslim nations in a holy war against America, both because of her support for Israel and because of her identification as a Christian nation. K & D summarizes verse 3:

In v. 3 b, Abram, the one, is made a blessing for all....Abram was not merely to become a mediator, but the source of blessing for all. The expression “all the families of the ground” points to the division of the one family into many (Gen 10:5,20,31), and the word....word “to curse” refers to the curse pronounced upon the ground (Gen 3:17). The blessing of Abraham was once more to unite the divided families, and change the curse, pronounced upon the ground on account of sin, into a blessing for the whole human race. This concluding word comprehends all nations and times, and condenses, as Baumgarten has said, the whole fulness of the divine counsel for the salvation of men into the call of Abram. All further promises, therefore, not only to the patriarchs, but also to Israel, were merely expansions and closer definitions of the salvation held out to the whole human race in the first promise. Even the assurance, which Abram received after his entrance into Canaan (v. 6), was implicitly contained [K & D].

This promise was renewed to Abram on several occasions. First, after his separation from Lot (Gen 13:14-16), on which occasion, however, the “blessing” was not mentioned. Secondly, in Gen 18:18 somewhat more casually, as a reason for the confidential manner in which Jehovah explained to him the secret of His government. Third, at the two principal turning points of his life, where the

whole promise “was confirmed with the greatest solemnity, viz., in Gen 17 at the commencement of the establishment of the covenant made with him, where ‘I will make of thee a great nation’ was heightened into ‘I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee,’ and his being a blessing was more fully defined as the establishment of a covenant, inasmuch as Jehovah would be God to him and to his posterity (vv. 3ff.), and in Gen 22 after the attestation of his faith and obedience, even to the sacrifice of his only son, where the innumerable increase of his seed and the blessing to pass from him to all nations were guaranteed by an oath” [K & D]. The same promise was afterwards renewed to Isaac, with a distinct allusion to the oath (Gen 26:3-4), and again to Jacob, both on his flight from Canaan for fear of Esau (Gen 28:13-14), and on his return (Gen 35:11-12).

12:4 - ABRAM WENT FORTH. *“So Abram went forth as the LORD had spoken to him; and Lot went with him. Now Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran.”* Abram demonstrated his faith in the Lord by “departing from Haran” as the Lord had instructed him. This is one of the reasons that Abraham is remembered two thousand years later (in the New Testament) for his faith.

There is an ancient Jewish tradition that claims that Abram’s father made and sold idols, and young Abram, at age twelve, helped his father. One day, according to this tradition, Abram was keeping the shop by himself when a customer came in to buy an idol. The young lad asked, “How is it that you, a sixty year old man, came in here to buy a god that we made Yesterday?” According to this tradition, there was another day when Abram took a large stick and started breaking many of the idols. His father entered the shop and ordered him to stop. Abram replied, “If they be gods, let them defend themselves.”

12:5 - ABRAHAM TOOK SARAI. *“Abram took Sarai his wife and Lot his nephew, and all their possessions which they had accumulated, and the persons which they had acquired in Haran, and they set out for the land of Canaan; thus they came to the land of Canaan.”* Sarai means “contentious,” but she is in for a name change as well as Abraham. Sarah means “princess.”

LOT. We are introduced here to Lot, the son of Abram’s brother Haran, who died before Terah. Lot was a mature man with a family and servants of his own. He traveled with his uncle in a large caravan to the Land of Promise. Later, their servants would have a conflict which would lead Abram to give Lot his choice of the land where he would settle, and Lot chose the most fertile land and migrated to the area of Sodom and Gomorrah, those famous - or infamous - cities God destroyed because of their rebellion, expressed especially in the sin of homosexuality, a blatant perversion of God’s purpose for human reproduction.

It has been said that while Abram was building altars and calling on the name of the Lord, Lot was just pitching his tent. It is amazing what people deduce from Scripture. I cannot prove that this was not the case, but they cannot prove that it was. We must understand that it was Abram who was called, and Abram to whom God spoke. It must also be assumed that Abram’s tent was also pitched when they stopped for the night. Lot may well have worshiped with Abram. If we have a thought we wish to communicate in a sermon or a lesson, we may look for a peg on which to hang our thought and make a point. In which case we should stress that this is an assumption and not preach it as

though we have just been granted a special extra-biblical revelation.

12:6 - SHECHEM. *“Abram passed through the land as far as the site of Shechem, to the oak of Moreh. Now the Canaanite was then in the land.”* Literally, it is the tree of Moreh. It was located between Mount. Ebal and Mount Gerizim near present day Nablus. We are not told how long the journey took, but they had been traveling for a long time since they set out from Haran. Now they have arrived in the Land of Promise. Shechem would play an important role in the history of the Chosen People for centuries to come, just as would the oak of Moreh would be a special place to Abram.

12:7 - THE LORD APPEARED TO ABRAM. *“The LORD appeared to Abram and said, “To your descendants I will give this land.”* So he built an altar there to the LORD who had appeared to him.” This was an important time in the implementation of the covenant through which God would accomplish all the promises He had made to Abram when he called him. Here we find the land which was promised, so we have the man, and the land together, and our eyes are on the essential part of the covenant - the SEED - as well as the promised descendants to whom God would give the land. Abram, the man whose faith in the promise of God resulted in the righteousness of God being imputed unto him, accepted the land as though he had come into possession of it at that time, even though it would be five hundred years before the Conquest under Joshua.

12:8 - HE PROCEEDED. *“Then he proceeded from there to the mountain on the east of Bethel, and pitched his tent, with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east; and there he built an altar to the LORD and called upon the name of the LORD.”* The journey was not over. He proceeded to the mountain east of Bethel and there he pitched his tent for the night, or for a brief stay before moving on another location. Bethel was about 20 miles farther south from Shechem.

HE BUILT AN ALTAR. As was his custom, Abram built an altar to Yahweh and called on the name of Yahweh. In spite of the obstacle of the presence of the Canaanites (v. 6), Abram believed God’s promise and built an altar to worship and proclaim his God (v. 8), “as a true descendant of Seth (4:26) and Noah (8:20)” [BSB]. His commitment to the one true God was an example to all his descendants for all time. This was a journey of faith, and a journey of faith requires daily communication with our omniscient, omnipotent, omnipresent Navigator. Our life is a journey of faith.

Someone has said that where ever we pitch our tent, we must build an altar and call on the name of the Lord. That sounds good, but it would be more accurate to say that we must look to the One Who went to the altar for us and made the once-for-all sacrifice for our eternal redemption. The invitation is often given to “come to the altar” to pray for salvation, for revival, for one’s church, or some other reason. We understand what the invitation is, but we should be conscious of the fact that because of what Jesus Christ did for us on the Cross we are invited to come before the throne of grace and present our petitions. Everything that can be done at an altar has been done - once for all time by our eternal High Priest. However, in a symbolic way, we might well remind ourselves that there is a time to pitch our tent, and a time to build an altar and call on the name of the Lord.

We may be in awe of Abraham because the Lord spoke to Him, and never understand the advantages we have over him. Today, while God does not speak audibly to us - unless we believe everything we hear on certain television networks - we do not have to wait for some rare occasion at which time we may be surprised by a message from God. He has given us His infallible, inerrant Word through which He continually speaks, and if God is not speaking to you daily you are not in the Word (Scripture), not seriously at least. In addition to His written Word, God causes the divine Author of the Word to indwell each believer at the time of his/her salvation. If you feel that God is not speaking to you, humble yourself before Him, repent, and prayerfully go to the Word of God, not for a quick fix, but for daily sustenance.

God speaks to us daily through His Word and through the indwelling Spirit. This is why it is so important to embrace a high view of the Word of God. Francis Shaeffer predicted by 1960 that the Scripture would be the next great battlefield of Christianity. History has proved him to have been an astute student of the Word and of Christianity. Sadly, The Scripture has indeed been a battlefield, in which believer has been pitted against believer, often in a bitter struggle over the term “inerrancy.” I have no problem with that term because to me it is not a political issue, but a theological issue. I have often reasoned, “If God could not have given us a perfect Book, why do we call Him God? And, “If He could have given us a perfect Book and would not, what kind of God is He?”

I saw a sign above the choir loft in a large church many years ago that proclaimed, “God said it, I believe it, and that settles it.” It would be more accurate to say that if God says it, it is settled. When God speaks, eternal truth is established. Nothing can be more ludicrous than the insistence that we must somehow choose between God and the Word of God, that to accept the Scripture as inerrant is to somehow worship the Bible rather than God. Liberal politicians of the Bill Clinton type may use such an argument in the political arena when trying to garner support for the latest socialist program, but this is not a valid way for theologians to think or debate. Because I trust God I trust His Word. The only question is, am I going to get in on what God is up to?

12:9 - JOURNEYED ON. “*Abram journeyed on, continuing toward the Negev.*” He is not there yet. Abram is getting a good look at the land God promised to him and his descendants. Since Abram was a wealthy man with servants and livestock, he probably moved slowly from place to place in order to permit his sheep to graze. He sought green grass, and probably avoided heavily populated areas.

12:10 - A FAMINE IN THE LAND. “*Now there was a famine in the land; so Abram went down to Egypt to sojourn there, for the famine was severe in the land.*” A famine was not uncommon in this land, nor was it uncommon in that day. They were living a nomadic life at the time, moving from place to place, allowing the animals to graze, looking for the best and safest routes, avoiding potential enemies. There were no super markets, no freezers, and no government or Salvation Army to rush food to them.

Still, this had to be a shock to Abram. God had called him to leave the land of his fathers and go to a land he had never seen. In faith he set out for this promised land. God had provided for him

all the way. But now he has arrived in the land of Promise and there is a famine in the land. You simply do not expect to find a famine in the Land of Promise.

SO ABRAM WENT DOWN TO EGYPT. Up to this time, when Abram stopped at various places he stopped and built an altar and called on the name of the Lord. Rather than seeking God's solution to this problem he fled to Egypt. It would be easy to second-guess Abram today, but modern people do the same thing all the time. Sadly, many people drift along with their minds on their possessions, homes, cars, or recreation. They may go through the motions of prayer, Bible reading, and worship. They never get serious about the Lord until something happens to leave them feeling desperate. God hears the prayers of desperate, and then they call on the Lord.

There is another element here. The famine did not motivate Abram to build an altar and call on the name of the Lord. He did something totally different, but absolutely consistent with fallen human nature. When he arrived in the Land of Promise and discovered a famine there, he fled to Egypt. People do not expect to find a famine in the Land of Promise - anywhere else, but not in the Land of Promise. It can sometimes be almost more than one can bear. One may expect someone to be unfair in the world, but do not anticipate it in church.

There are always some people who claim they will not go to a certain church because there are hypocrites in the church. They buy gas at the same pumps, patronize the same businesses, go to the same doctors, and attend the same events with hypocrites, but when they see a hypocrite in church they declare they will never go back to that church.

A lost person loses his job and begins looking for another one. A new Christian may have been led to believe that once he accepted Christ as his Savior his troubles would be over. Then he loses his job, a child dies, his wife leaves him, or he discovers that he has cancer. These things are just not supposed to happen now that he is a Christian - famine in his land of promise!

12:11 - NEAR TO EGYPT. *"It came about when he came near to Egypt, that he said to Sarai his wife, "See now, I know that you are a beautiful woman." Fleeing the famine in the Land of Promise, Abram approaches Egypt with his wife Sarai and this servants. As they near the border of Egypt, he has a thought that is very disturbing to him. Sarai, though 65 years of age, is a beautiful woman in the prime of life. The life span of the patriarchs was about twice that of people today. Sarai was 127 years old when she died and Abraham was 175. Considering Sarai's beauty, he said, "I know you are a beautiful woman." Her beauty could create some serious problems in a pagan country known for violence and immorality. The aging process was still much slower than now. They are not too far removed from the Flood at this point.*

Only rarely does the Bible refer to a person's appearance (other examples are Joseph at 39:6 and David at 1 Sam. 16:12). The comment on Sarai's beauty compares to ones on Rebekah (24:16) and Rachel (29:17). Sarai's physical beauty was remarkable given her advanced age—she was ten years younger than Abram, or about 65 (12:4; 17:17) [NSB].

It was common for a king in those days to see a beautiful young woman and tell his officers to

bring her to him. If she was the daughter of a citizen, her father might be given a great amount of wealth for her. If he refused the king's offer, he might be killed and the daughter taken any way. Abram knew all this and feared for his life.

In the first place, when he discovered the famine in the Land of Promise, fear and a lack of faith in God motivated him to flee. How could he doubt that the God who had brought him safely from Ur of the Chaldees to the Promised Land would fail to provide for him? This was a major test and Abram failed it. How could he do such a thing? The same way we do it today, only we are sinning against a far greater light. He had no Bible and he had no examples to follow.

In the second place, Abram feared for his own life. He was placing himself in harm's way by fleeing from the land God had given him instead of trusting God to provide. God does not gloss over the sins of any person, including Abram. The Bible does not whitewash any of its characters, even a Abraham or a David. God is absolute truth and His written Word is absolutely truthful. The only perfect Person in the Bible is God Himself.

Abram had been walking with God all the way from Haran. Then when he arrived in the Land of Promise he discovered that there was a severe famine in the land. Rather than building an altar and calling on the Lord, he fled. If you look at the Book of Jonah you can break Jonah's story down into four parts:

- (1) Jonah running from God.
- (2) Jonah running to God.
- (3) Jonah running with God.
- (4) Jonah running ahead of God.

What is Abram doing? Is he running ahead of God, or just running from God? He is certainly not running with God - that is what he had been doing all the way from Haran. He is not running to God - that will come later.

Why are we so disappointed with Abram? Why do we expect more of him than we do ourselves? Is it that we love to admire the super saint? For a half a century, Christian television programs have been parading super saints before its audiences. Viewers are left in awe of these people who somehow have risen above the humdrum of daily life to a faith the average church goer has never attained. They discuss these individuals in hushed terms. It is a lot easier to admire some super saint whose whole life is laid out before an audience in film clips, than it is to so submit the Lord that they can also live a victorious life. We admire the athlete who has accomplished that of which the average person can only dream. Roger Clemons has just won his sixth Cy Young Award! That is amazing. It is also subject for debate among baseball fans. How many could Sandy Kofax have won if he had been able to continue playing? How many might Gregg Maddox have won if he his team had given him a little more support? Who else can compare with Abraham? Or our favorite super saint from TV land?

12:12 - WHEN THE EGYPTIANS SEE YOU. *“And when the Egyptians see you, they will*

say, *'This is his wife'; and they will kill me, but they will let you live.*" Here we find Abram behaving in a shocking manner. How could he do such a thing? This is the father of the faithful, the father of righteousness. He is not behaving here as a man who has received a personal call from the Lord. In fact, his behavior is despicable. Abram knew how the pagan people of Egypt would react to the beauty of Sarai. When they saw him and his beautiful wife the word would get around. Before long, word would reach Pharaoh and he might well desire Sarai for his wife. If this happened Abram's life was in danger.

12:13 - SAY THAT YOU ARE MY SISTER. *"Please say that you are my sister so that it may go well with me because of you, and that I may live on account of you."* Abram assumed that when the word reached Pharaoh that a man had arrived in Egypt with a beautiful woman he would want to see the woman, and if she pleased him he would take her for his own wife. If he learned that she was married to Abram he might well have him killed and take her for his wife. But if he learned that she was his sister he would "give him the royal treatment." He would be treated with honor and blessed with greater wealth.

Sarai was Abram's half sister (20:12), so in a sense he was concocting a half-truth. However, a half-truth is a whole lie. Before we condemn Abram we should take a close look at how many times we resort to a half-truth when it serves our purpose. Several years ago I preached a revival in a church in north Louisiana. The man who directed the music for the revival was a career military man. He told us about the time he was traveling from one base to another for some reason. On his way he was stopped by a state trooper for speeding. The trooper had a sincere appreciation for our military and talked with him for several minutes before asking the nature of his visit to the other base. He then asked the airman if he could give him any reason for speeding. He went on to tell him that if there was an emergency, any pressing issue he could think of, he would not give him a ticket. The airman said, "No, I wish I could tell you there was something pressing that demanded my attention but I was simply speeding." What an opportunity for a half-truth.

A state trooper told a group of us at church once about stopping a young man who was driving one hundred miles an hour on I-20 through Louisiana. It was early in the morning and he was commuting to school or work. When the officer stopped him the young man began pleading, "Office, I know I was speeding, but I am dying to go to the bathroom. I drive this highway every morning and I have never exceeded this speed limit before. I have to find a bathroom NOW!" The trooper said, "He was so convincing that I let him go with a warning." The next morning he clocked the same guy, doing a hundred miles an hour. You better believe he didn't get away with it again!"

As we have already noted, the identification of Sarai as his "sister" was a half-truth, since she was his half sister (20:12). But the half-truth was a whole lie. It was not only a lie, it was a cowardly, reprehensible lie. It gets worse. Abraham was not only willing to lie to save his life, he was also asking his wife to lie and to permit herself to be taken as a wife or concubine to Pharaoh. A man should be willing to lay down his own life for his wife and children. Never in our wildest imagination should we expect the father of the righteous to commit such a heinous sin. He will sacrifice his wife for his own safety. There is more. He had been called out by God to be the father of a multitude. How is that going to happen if he has sacrificed his wife? He is, with his eyes wide open, defying

Yahweh God.

The Bible portrays Abram's character as it was. He had lied. But God miraculously and graciously protected Abram from disaster (vv. 17-19), and He ultimately brought him back to the Promised Land. **Note that Sarai's submission to Abram, even in his wrongdoing, placed her under the protection of God.** He dealt with Pharaoh, her enemy, and Abram, her husband, who was unfaithful to his responsibility (2:15-17). The fact that **Abram committed this same sin twice** (cf. 20:2) makes it all the more reprehensible [BSB, emphasis added].

There are lessons we can learn from this. First, the Bible does not gloss over anyone's sins. The Scripture is not about building up heroes for us to worship. Second, we should not be surprised at how low fallen man will stoop, and that applies to a believer who is running from God. Third, you can expect Satan to entice you to sin any time you discover a famine in your land of promise. Fourth, you are far more vulnerable to temptation from the world, from the flesh, and from Satan when you are in the process of fleeing to Egypt. Fifth, you may well be surprised by your own thoughts and actions when you are fleeing toward Egypt. Believers will not adopt an ungodly lifestyle, or continually commit horrible sins so as to make them a pattern for life, but when they are in the flesh they may well commit acts of sin that will lead to guilt and misery, if not shame and disgrace. Sixth, in order to get to Egypt in Abram's flight from the Land of Promise he had to pass through the wilderness. The wilderness is no place for the child of God, but many professing Christians spend their life wandering in the wilderness, just as the Children of Israel did when they refused to enter Canaan and possess their possessions.

The seventh lesson we should learn is that when you discover a famine in the land of promise, we should build an altar and call on the name of the Lord, trust Him, and obey Him. Now, before condemning Abraham, confess your own sins. Learn this lesson, not only from this account, but also from time when you have fled to Egypt (unbelief, failure of faith), instead of building an altar and calling on the name of the Lord. One other word is in order - expect a famine, even in your land of promise. It is going to come sooner or later. If you have been delivered from Egypt (bondage, death), live your life in the land of promise (Canaan, where God wants you - walking in the spirit). God did not bring you out of Egypt to have you waste your life in the wilderness (the flesh).

12:14 - THE EGYPTIANS SAW. *"It came about when Abram came into Egypt, the Egyptians saw that the woman was very beautiful."* They reacted just as he has assumed they would. Sarai was not simply beautiful, she was "very beautiful." This was a critical time for Abram. Would it be death, or riches?

12:15 - PRAISED HER TO PHARAOH. *"Pharaoh's officials saw her and praised her to Pharaoh; and the woman was taken into Pharaoh's house."* Intelligence agencies did not suddenly come into existence in the Twentieth Century. Every ancient king had his network of intelligence agents who observed anything, or anyone unusual and reported it to someone in authority, who in turn reported it to the king.

Sarai was taken to Pharaoh's house. Abram, now a coward, a liar, and a rotten husband, let them take his wife without any resistance. You would think a man would die before permitting his wife to be taken by another man. This was a very low time in Abram's life. His sin is not glossed over in this account. We are simply given the truth. We can learn a lot about the effects of sin on any person, including the father of the faithful. We should not be shocked at the sins of fallen man. Only God is absolutely faithful, only He is perfect. While this does not excuse Abram, it may help us to understand the difference between walking in the flesh and walking in the spirit.

12:16 - HE TREATED ABRAM WELL. *“Therefore he treated Abram well for her sake; and gave him sheep and oxen and donkeys and male and female servants and female donkeys and camels.”* Thinking Sarai was Abram's sister, Pharaoh gave him gifts “fit for a king.” Camels were domesticated, but would not be used in caravans until much later.

12:17 - THE LORD STRUCK PHARAOH. *“But the LORD struck Pharaoh and his house with great plagues because of Sarai, Abram's wife.”* This is the first example of the cursing and blessing element of God's promise (12:2,3). We are not told the nature of the plagues that God sent upon Pharaoh, but they were sufficient to protect Sarai, who would play a key role in the Abrahamic Covenant. God did indeed curse those who were a threat to His covenant.

12:18 - PHARAOH CALLED ABRAM. *“Then Pharaoh called Abram and said, ‘What is this you have done to me? Why did you not tell me that she was your wife?’”* We are not told how he found out that Sarai was Abram's wife, but when he did he called Abram in and demanded to know why he had not told him the truth about their relationship.”

12:19 - HERE IS OUR WIFE. *“Why did you say, ‘She is my sister,’ so that I took her for my wife? Now then, here is your wife, take her and go.”* The interesting thing here is that Pharaoh did not have Abram killed and keep Sarai. Of course he might have had both of them slain. But he did neither. Instead, he returned Sarai to Abram and told him to get out of the country. Is it possible that Pharaoh understood that these plagues had been sent upon him by Abram's God? If so, he might have sent them away to ward off further plagues.

12:20 - PHARAOH COMMANDED HIS MEN. *“Pharaoh commanded his men concerning him; and they escorted him away, with his wife and all that belonged to him.”* Pharaoh not only ordered Abram to leave Egypt, he had him escorted to the border. His primary concern was not Abram's safety, but assurance that Abram left the country immediately. The amazing thing, from the world's perspective, is that Abram's life was not forfeited, and his possessions were not confiscated. We can only give God the credit. He was not about to let that happen. God's covenant was maintained, not through the worth of man, but by the grace of God.

How many times have we strayed from the path the Lord has set before us? It may not have been such a radical departure, but any departure from the path of holiness requires repentance and restoration. We repent, God restores. Abram has been escorted to the boundary of Egypt and told to leave, and never return (possibly). Where did he go? This significant. Did he continue running from God, or did he run to God for forgiveness and restoration, and then begin again to run with Him. We

find the answer in the next chapter:

So Abram went up from Egypt to the Negev, he and his wife and all that belonged to him, and Lot with him. Now Abram was very rich in livestock, in silver and in gold. He went on his journeys from the Negev as far as **Bethel**, to the place where his tent had been at the beginning, between Bethel and Ai, **to the place of the altar which he had made there formerly**; and there Abram **called on the name of the LORD** (Gen. 13:1-4, emphasis added).

Abram returned to Bethel, the place of the altar, and there he called on the name of the Lord. He should never have left Bethel in the first place, but God returned him to the place of the altar. After Simon Peter denied Christ, he went out and wept bitterly. He repented and was restored to fellowship and service. John Mark turned back on Paul's first missionary journey and Paul refused to give him a second chance, but when Barnabas stood by him and gave him an opportunity to prove his devotion to the Lord, he proved to be faithful. We can only imagine what Abram had gone through on his way back to the place of the altar.

When you enter what you might have viewed as your land of promise - a new job, a new degree, a new home, a new church - expect a famine in your land of promise. It is going to come sooner or later. Your faith will be tested. When that famine comes, you may either flee to Egypt, or you can build an altar (figuratively) and call on the name of the Lord. Remain faithful to Him, trust Him. He has promised to protect you and to provide for you. Go to His Word for assurance. Pray without ceasing to the God Who is faithful ("I will bless you," Gen.12:2; "I will not fail you," Josh. 1:5).

CONCLUSION

The Book of Genesis is the open door to the Word of God. In the first verse, God introduces Himself to us, without a defense, without proof, without fanfare. He is. He is the uncaused Cause of all there is. He is the source of my life.

In Genesis we have a factual account of Creation, including the creation of human beings in the image of God. In the Book of Beginnings we have a record of the Fall and its consequences, the initial revelation of the Messianic Covenant, the pollution of the world by sin, and the Flood. We Have the account of God's new beginning with Noah, Shem, Ham, and Japheth, and their wives.

It is in Genesis that we read of the call of Abraham and his faith response to Yahweh God. It is also in Genesis that we are introduced to the great Abrahamic Covenant. It is in the first book of the Bible that we first see "the scarlet thread" that runs through out the Old Testament, finding fulfillment in Jesus Christ.

And make no mistake about it, this book is about Christ. We find him in the very first verse,

“In the beginning God created.” In John 1:1-5, learn the role of Jesus Christ was the agent of Creation:

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being. In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men. The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.

Today, we have one, and only one, living eye witness to Creation. That Witness is the Creator Himself. The Book of Genesis is His introduction to the one and only created thing that was created in His image. A serious study of the Book of Genesis is essential to an understanding of the entire Bible. Beginning with this book we will find the progressive revelation of God’s redemptive plan and purpose. The Old Testament progressively pulls back the veil to reveal God’s Messianic Covenant, providing us with vignette after vignette of the Anointed One. Like a scarlet thread running through the pages of the Old Testament, we are able to follow God’s sovereign role in bringing all His promises to fulfillment in Jesus Christ.

Read, no study, the Book of Genesis and then the rest of the Old Testament with one eye on the Scripture before you and the other on the fulfillment of all Scripture in Jesus Christ. As I stated in the beginning of the first volume in this study of the first twelve chapters of Genesis, this is the foundation Book of the Bible. If you do not have Genesis One you do not need John One; if you do not have Genesis Three you do not need John Three, where we read:

For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life (John 3:16).

APPENDIX I

Acts & Facts

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Why Does Nearly Every Culture Have A Tradition of A Global Flood?

by

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"Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?" (I Corinthians 1:20).

One of the strongest evidences for the global flood which annihilated all people on Earth except for

Noah and his family, has been the ubiquitous presence of flood legends in the folklore of people groups from around the world. And the stories are all so similar. Local geography and cultural aspects may be present but they all seem to be telling the same story.

Over the years I have collected more than 200 of these stories, originally reported by various missionaries, anthropologists, and ethnologists. While the differences are not always trivial, the common essence of the stories is instructive as compiled below:

1. Is there a favored family? 88%
2. Were they forewarned? 66%
3. Is flood due to wickedness of man? 66%
4. Is catastrophe only a flood? 95%
5. Was flood global? 95%
6. Is survival due to a boat? 70%
7. Were animals also saved? 67%
8. Did animals play any part? 73%
9. Did survivors land on a mountain? 57%
10. Was the geography local? 82%
11. Were birds sent out? 35%
12. Was the rainbow mentioned? 75%
13. Did survivors offer a sacrifice? 13%
14. Were specifically eight persons saved? 9%
15. Putting them all back together, the story would read something like this:

Once there was a worldwide flood, sent by God to judge the wickedness of man. But there was one righteous family which was forewarned of the coming flood. They built a boat on which they survived the flood along with the animals. As the flood ended, their boat landed on a high mountain from which they descended and repopulated the whole earth.

Of course the story sounds much like the Biblical story of the great flood of Noah's day. The most similar accounts are typically from middle eastern cultures, but surprisingly similar legends are found in South America and the Pacific Islands and elsewhere. None of these stories contains the beauty, clarity, and believable detail given in the Bible, but each is meaningful to their own culture.

Anthropologists will tell you that a myth is often the faded memory of a real event. Details may have been added, lost, or obscured in the telling and retelling, but the kernel of truth remains. When two separate cultures have the same "myth" in their body of folklore, their ancestors must have either experienced the same event, or they both descended from a common ancestral source which itself experienced the event.

The only credible way to understand the widespread, similar flood legends is to recognize that all people living today, even though separated geographically, linguistically, and culturally, have descended from the few real people who survived a real global flood, on a real boat which eventually landed on a real mountain. Their descendants now fill the globe, never to forget the real event.

But, of course, this is not the view of most modern scholars. They prefer to believe that something in our commonly evolved psyche forces each culture to invent the same imaginary flood legend with no basis in real history. Instead of scholarship, this is "willful ignorance" of the fact that "the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished" (II Peter 3:5,6).