

CHAPTER FIVE

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1 A PARADOX

In these first few chapters we have learned a little of what God is like. As we progress we will learn more, but we need to stop and compare a couple of God's characteristics with man's new predicament.

It is helpful to understand that just as God established physical laws to govern the universe, so there are spiritual laws that govern the relationship between God and man. And just as a knowledge of physics and chemistry helps us make sense of the world around us, so knowing these spiritual laws helps us make sense of life and death. These spiritual laws are not difficult to understand. First, let's look at man's situation.

MAN'S PROBLEM

Centuries ago in the Middle East, when one incurred a debt, an official certificate was drafted so that the parties involved would not forget the amount payable. Those who were unable to pay their debts were considered criminals under the full penalty of the law. In the same way, the Scripture teaches that on the moral ledger, our sin incurs a debt. There's a price to be paid. We are faced with...

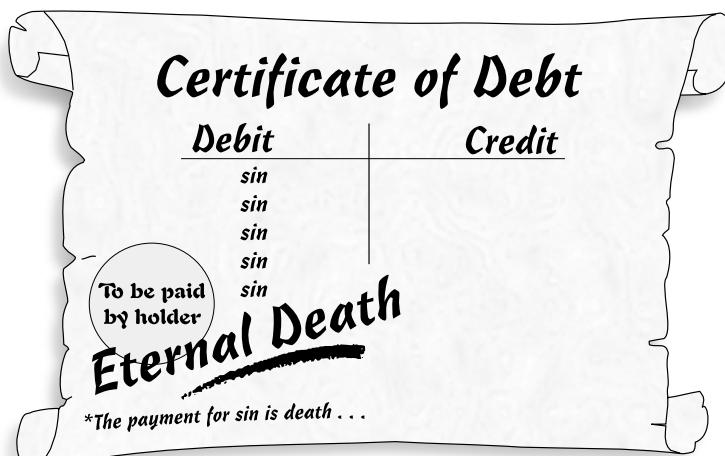
...the law of sin and death.

Romans 8:2

That law says:

The soul who sins shall die.

Ezekiel 18:20 NKJV



The question then remains: Are we able to pay that debt? The answer is a qualified *yes*. However, since death exists for eternity, it's hard to call it *paid*—for the transaction is never completed. To pay it, we must bear the full consequences of death in all its meaning. Frankly, most thinking people find themselves very reluctant to pay. The problem is this—we *must* pay. It's *our* debt. Mankind is in a dilemma.

TWO FACETS

This dilemma has two facets, like opposite sides of the same coin.

- ❖ **We have something we don't want**—a sin problem. Because of our sin, we experience guilt, shame, pain, separation from God, and eventually the Second Death.
- ❖ **We need something we don't have**—perfection. We need a level of goodness that makes us acceptable in God's presence.

So the question is twofold: **How can we get rid of our sin? And, how can we gain a righteousness *equal* to God's righteousness, so that we can be accepted in his presence?**

Here is another way of putting it. Mankind, by creation, was designed to live in God's presence. But when man disobeyed God, his whole being changed. He lost that sinless nature which made him acceptable to God. *So, how can man gain back that perfection which allows him to live with God?*

We will be keeping these questions in mind as we progress through the Scripture.

God's SITUATION

To understand God's situation, we need to look at two different attributes that are part of his character.

1. Perfectly Just

We have seen that the Lord is a perfect God, entirely without sin. To be sinless also means that God is honest and fair—just.

*He is the Rock, his works are perfect, and all his ways are just.
A faithful God who does no wrong, upright and just is he.*

Deuteronomy 32:4

We would say that God is a good judge because he does not treat one person one way, and another person another way.

God enforces his rules equally and fairly. Here on earth a person may hide a crime, lie about it, bribe the judge, or just simply not get caught. But with God, no perpetrator will get away with his sin. No one will escape God's justice.

For God will bring every deed into judgment, including every hidden thing, whether it is good or evil. Ecclesiastes 12:14

Honesty and fairness are fundamental to God's perfect nature.

Righteousness and justice are the foundation of Your throne.

Psalm 89:14 NASB

Because God is perfect, we can count on him being absolutely fair. We like that. But here's the bad news. Perfect justice demands that sin be punished with a penalty equal to the offense. It's indicative of just how seriously God views sin by the penalty assigned to it. As we have seen, the Scripture says that our sin-debt can only be paid with our death—in all its meaning.

This is not good news. Fortunately, the other aspect of God's character comes into the picture.

2. Perfectly Loving

God is not only perfectly just, but he is also completely loving. By his very nature, God loves.

- ❖ God revealed a type of love when he created the world—a care and concern.
- ❖ But then God unveiled a deeper love—an undeserved love. This love is often referred to using the words *grace, mercy, kindness* and *compassion*. As sinners, we don't deserve God's kindness, yet God loves us with a perfect love in spite of our sin. Because God is perfect, no one could be better than he at demonstrating grace and mercy.

PARADOX

Now we find a paradox. To be completely *just*, God must enforce our payment of the sin-debt—we must die. But because God is *loving*, he has no desire to destroy us. Both qualities of his character are equal. God is not more *loving* than he is *just*. So how can God maintain *justice* and still be *loving*?

To begin with, God judges all sin, either here on the earth or after physical death. He is 100% consistent on that score.

*Like water spilled on the ground, which cannot be recovered,
so we must die.*

2 Samuel 14:14

But then the other attribute of God's nature comes into play.
Because God is by nature loving...

*...he devises ways so that a banished person may not
remain estranged from him.*

2 Samuel 14:14

Although God allows our physical bodies to die, he lovingly provides a way whereby we can escape the eternal aspects of the death penalty. At the same time, God makes it possible for us to live in his presence again. So how does God judge sin and rescue us at the same time? How does God punish sin without punishing us? We will study that in the following chapters.

PRIDE

One last thing before we move on. The Scripture says that pride is what caused Satan to rebel. We often look at pride as being a good thing, but the Bible says pride is what keeps us from coming to God for help. We are often too proud to humble ourselves and say that we need the Lord.

God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.

1 Peter 5:5

2 ATONEMENT

After eating the fruit, the first thing that Adam and Eve did was to clothe themselves in fig leaves. In spite of having these clothes, Adam told God that he felt naked—exposed. There is a reason for this. The Scripture tells us that...

...The LORD does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.

1 Samuel 16:7

God was looking right through their feeble attempts to clothe themselves. He could see their hearts.

The Scripture tells us that God rejected Adam and Eve's attempts at self-improvement. The fig leaves covered their nakedness, but their hearts were full of sin. He wanted to teach them that man could do nothing, outwardly or inwardly, to remove the sin problem. So, he refused to accept their *fig leaf* clothes.

A COVERING

Only God could supply them with clothing that was acceptable to him. God took animals, killed them and ...

The LORD God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them.

Genesis 3:21

This was a graphic illustration of the fact that *sin brings death*. Adam and Eve had never seen death before. If they watched, it must have been a jarring experience—to see the blood spilled on the ground, the gasping for life, the shine pass from the animal's eye, comprehending the finality. Whatever the case, God made the awful reality of death understandable to them immediately. Animals died in order that they might be clothed.

BANISHED

Although man had sinned, he still lived in the garden and had access to the tree of life. Eating of this tree would mean that man would live forever. So God removed man from the garden.

*And the LORD God said, "The man has now become like one of *us, knowing good and evil. He must not be allowed to reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat, and live forever."*

So the LORD God banished him from the Garden of Eden to work the ground from which he had been taken.

After he drove the man out, he placed on the east side of the Garden of Eden cherubim and a flaming sword flashing back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life.

Genesis 3:22-24

*Notice the word *us*. Since the Bible clearly states that there is only one God, it is logical to ask ourselves—who is God talking to when he says, "...man has become like one of **us**?" That question will be answered as we progress through the Scriptures.

This was an act of mercy. God did not want men to live forever entrapped as sinners. Can you imagine what the world would be like if all the evil men and women down through the ages were still alive today? By putting man outside of the garden, God allowed the consequences of sin to take its eventual toll, namely physical death. But God was thinking beyond the

grave. He was thinking of his plan to deliver man from the Second Death, a way to escape the Lake of Fire.

CAIN AND ABEL (see time line, pages 170-171)

Adam lay with his wife Eve, and she became pregnant and gave birth to Cain. She said, "With the help of the LORD I have brought forth a man." Later she gave birth to his brother Abel.

Genesis 4:1,2

Both Cain and Abel were born outside of the garden. Because they had been conceived as a result of Adam's union with Eve, they had Adam's sin condition, and were separated from God. For God to be *just*, he must enforce his law. Cain and Abel also had to die for their sin. But God loved them, so in his mercy he provided a way for them to escape judgment. That way had two dimensions:

Inward—A Faith in God

Cain and Abel were simply to trust God and believe that what the Lord said was true. For example, God had promised Adam and Eve that THE DELIVERER would crush Satan's head and save them from sin's consequences. *Was that possible? Was it true? Did God really mean it?* Cain and Abel individually had to decide for themselves whether or not to believe God.

Outward—A Visual Aid

God also wanted to show them *what it would take* to remove sin. It involved a rather vivid visual aid.

A thorough study¹ of Scripture leads us to the understanding that God apparently and specifically told Cain and Abel to take an animal, kill it and let its blood run out on an *altar. Why was this? What conceivable reason would God have for such an explicit instruction? The Scripture says...

*Altars were stone or earthen platforms upon which sacrifices were made.

...without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.

Hebrews 9:22

God was saying that man's sin-debt could only be paid, or forgiven, if there was death. But why the blood?

For the life of a creature is in the blood, and I have given it to you to make atonement for yourselves on the altar; it is the blood that makes atonement for one's life. *Leviticus 17:11*

This concept of a blood sacrifice has two aspects:

- ❖ **Substitution:** Normally, man would die for his own sin, but now, based on certain future events, God was saying that he would accept an innocent animal's death in man's place—as a substitute. It was a life for a life, the innocent dying in place of the guilty. The sacrifice pictured *the law of sin and death* being obeyed and justice being fulfilled. But could not a sacrifice be killed without the shedding of blood, perhaps by drowning?
- ❖ **Atonement:** God said that the blood would make *atonement* for sin. The word *atonement* means *covering*. The shed blood would *cover* man's sin, therefore when God looked at man, he would no longer see the sin. Man would be viewed as *righteous* and therefore acceptable by God. The relationship would be restored. Man would still die physically, but the eternal consequences would no longer apply (i.e. separation from God forever in the Lake of Fire).

Through faith in God, as illustrated by the substitutionary death and the atoning blood on the altar, man would find forgiveness for sin and a new relationship with God.

ATONEMENT—A COVERING FOR SIN

The word *atonement* carries with it the idea of the *just, holy, righteous* side of God's nature being satisfied. God's law required death as the penalty for sin. When God saw the death of the innocent sacrifice, he was satisfied that the demands of his law had been carried out.

Sacrificing an animal on an altar did not take away the sin. Man was still sinful. The sacrifice only pictured what was necessary for sin to be forgiven—death and shedding of blood. The blood provided an *atonement* or *covering* for sin. In effect, the same way that God covered Adam and Eve's nakedness with acceptable clothing, so man's sin was covered by the blood and man found acceptance with God. It would be right to say that the Lord temporarily overlooked man's sin as if it had been obliterated.

With God's instructions clear in our minds, we'll now return to the story of Cain and Abel and see what happens.

TWO SACRIFICES

Now Abel kept flocks, and Cain worked the soil. In the course of time Cain brought some of the fruits of the soil as an offering to the LORD. But Abel brought fat portions from some of the firstborn of his flock.

Genesis 4:2-4

Cain and Abel both brought sacrifices to the Lord. This is what God had told them to do. God wanted them to show by their actions that they were putting confidence in His Word as being true. But there was a problem. Though they were both bringing sacrifices, there was a disparity.

Abel brought an animal which could be killed and its blood shed. That was good—it was what God had said to do. But Cain brought garden produce. Vegetables do not shed blood. Cain was offering a sacrifice, but it was the wrong one.¹ He had come up with his own version of the *fig leaves*.

REJECTION

The LORD looked with favor on Abel and his offering, but on Cain and his offering he did not look with favor. Genesis 4:4,5



God rejected Cain's sacrifice. Cain erred in two ways.

First, his actions revealed that he really didn't trust God.

Secondly, Cain failed by doing things his own way. But God doesn't accept personal ideas on how to get right with him. Man may have the best intentions in the world, but sincerity is not enough—it does not bridge the gap.

We often look at independent thinking as a good thing, and there is some merit to that thought. However, we need to be careful. An independent spirit can also be very self-centered. When the *I'll do my own thing* mentality spills over into relationships—as to who's right and who's wrong, who gets and who doesn't, or even how we run entire countries—it can get very ugly.

Cain was *doing his own thing*. He joined Adam and Eve in ignoring God's instructions. He felt he knew better than God what was right.

ACCEPTANCE

On the other hand, Abel offered the kind of sacrifice that God had commanded—an innocent animal that would die and shed blood. Abel deserved to die for his own sin, but God in his mercy allowed the animal to die in his place as a substitute. As Abel placed his sacrifice before the Lord, he was trusting God to keep his word—to send a DELIVERER—to somehow save him from sin's awful penalty. It is doubtful if Abel knew how THE DELIVERER would accomplish his role, but it is clear that Abel was trusting God with the solution to sin.

... by faith Abel offered God a better sacrifice than Cain did.

By faith he was commended as a righteous man, when God spoke well of his offerings ...

Hebrews 11:4

As Abel in faith approached God, his sacrifice provided an atonement-covering for sin. When God looked at Abel, he did not see his sin. In a sense, God overlooked it. In God's eyes, Abel was righteous or perfect, and could now be accepted in His presence.

God's GENTLENESS

As for Cain, he wasn't happy with God.

... Cain was very angry, and his face was downcast.

Then the LORD said to Cain, "Why are you angry? Why is your face downcast? If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must master it."

Genesis 4:5-7

God gently tried to show Cain that he was headed for trouble, that his sin nature would destroy him. He pointed out to Cain that he too would be accepted if he came the same way Abel had come. There is no record of Cain replying. He was sulking.

QUESTIONS, QUESTIONS

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.

Then the LORD said to Cain, "Where is your brother Abel?"

Genesis 4:8,9

Just like God quizzed Adam and Eve, now we see the Lord asking Cain questions. God didn't need to ask Cain what had happened. God knows everything; he knew exactly what had taken place. He was giving Cain a chance to come clean. But just like Adam and Eve, Cain's words revealed his heart:

Cain: *"I don't know," he replied. "Am I my brother's keeper?"*

God: *"What have you done? Listen! Your brother's blood cries out to me from the ground."*

Genesis 4:9,10

Sin cannot be hid. Cain had murdered his brother and then tried to wrangle his way out of a confession. God put his finger on Cain—You did it! There is no record of Cain ever expressing remorse for his actions. God could have destroyed him, but in his mercy, He moved him to another region. The human race had gotten off to a scandalous start.

SETH (SEE TIME LINE, PAGES 170-171)

Adam lay with his wife again, and she gave birth to a son and named him Seth, saying, "God has granted me another child in place of Abel, since Cain killed him."

Seth also had a son, and he named him Enosh. At that time men began to call on the name of the LORD.

Genesis 4:25,26

Though Seth was born with a *sin nature*, he trusted God just like Abel. It was through Seth and his descendants that God would send THE SAVIOR. God was keeping his promise.

DEATH

Well, it's time to leave Adam. The Scripture says he had a large family and lived to be extremely old. Some scholars have proposed that a greenhouse effect in the original creation could have shielded man from harmful cosmic rays allowing for the incredible life spans recorded in early history. Others have noted that the accumulation of degenerative mutations would have been in its infancy, allowing for longer life spans. Though there may be merit in these theories, increasingly, scientists believe that the length of one's life is the result of a genetically determined limit. Originally, that genetic limit could have been set much higher. We will see later what may have caused the change. Whatever the reason, the Bible says that God's word finally came true for Adam.

After Seth was born, Adam lived 800 years and had other sons and daughters. Altogether, Adam lived 930 years, and then he died.

Genesis 5:4,5

WHO DID SETH AND CAIN MARRY?

The Bible says Adam and Eve had other sons and daughters. It is implied that at this point in history, brothers and sisters would have married each other. Because there had not been enough time for a significant number of mutant genes to arise in the genetic pool shared by the children, no harmful effects would have resulted from this kind of intermarriage. Later in the history of the Bible, we see this type of marriage forbidden.

WHAT HAPPENED TO ABEL WHEN HE DIED?

Though the Scripture does not explicitly mention where Abel's spirit went when he was murdered, we know from other Scriptures that those who died went to a place called *Paradise*, a place God prepared for believing men and women. Some scholars would differentiate between Paradise and Heaven during this time in history, but all agree that they are now merged.

The Scripture does not tell us a lot about Heaven, possibly because it's difficult to get our fog-bound mortal brains to comprehend it. One Prophet who was given a peek at the place was left wanting for concrete words—he resorted to word pictures to get his point across. When you look at the world God created in six days, it's rather staggering to think about what he could do with eons of tinkering. The Scripture does say that Heaven is a real place, with real people living there. It will be like Eden, only incomparably better.

Man's sin nature will be gone.

Nothing impure will ever enter it, nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful, but only those whose names are written ... in the book of life.

Revelation 21:27

Man will have a righteousness that is completely acceptable to God. In thinking of seeing the Lord, the Prophet David wrote ...

... in righteousness I will see your face ... I will be satisfied with seeing your likeness.

Psa 17:15

Man's unique relationship with God will be restored.

Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God.

Revelation 21:3

Everything about life will be perfect.

[God] will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away. He who was seated on the throne said, "I am making everything new!"

Revelation 21:4,5

There will be no funerals or fractured relationships, no graves or broken-hearted good-byes, no hospitals or homelessness, no crippled bodies or ailing health, no crutches or canes.

Instead, Heaven will be a place of endless joy and pleasure.

... you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand.

Psalm 16:11

Our bodies will not be limited by time or space. It seems we will be able to move about instantly. Evidently we will also be able to recognize people we have known or heard about here on earth.

At least part of Heaven will be occupied by a large city. It has been calculated that if only 25% of the city was used, 20 billion people could be accommodated spaciously. This city is called the New Jerusalem.

And he ... showed me the holy city, Jerusalem, ... having the glory of God. Her brilliance was like a very costly stone, as a stone of crystal-clear jasper. It had a great and high wall, with twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels...

Revelation 21:10-12 NASB

And in the daytime (for there shall be no night there) its gates shall never be closed ...

Revelation 22:25 NASB

And the street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass.

Revelation 21:21 NASB

Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal flowing from the throne of God ...

Revelation 22:1

This will be a city like none we have ever known—no pollution, no rust, no decay, no thieves, no crime—perfect in every detail. All residents of Heaven will live there for eternity.

They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light. And they will reign for ever and ever.

Revelation 22:5

... I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.

Psalm 23:6

Perhaps we can end this section with the following verse which, though not limited to heavenly realms, certainly carries the idea of what God has in store.

"No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him."

1 Corinthians 2:9

3 THE PROPHET ENOCH

The Scripture has little to say about the immediate generations following the birth of Seth. One fellow that is mentioned briefly is *Enoch*. Enoch was a godly man who believed that only the Lord could save him from the consequences of sin. About all that is recorded of him is that ...

Enoch walked with God; and he was not, for God took him. Genesis 5:24 NASB

The Bible does say that Enoch was such a man of faith that God took him directly into Heaven without dying. We find that happening only one other place in the Scriptures. Later on we will learn more about faith and why it is a key ingredient to acceptance by God.

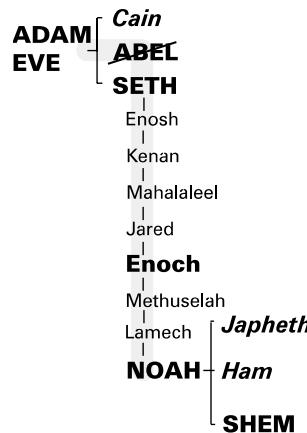
By faith Enoch was taken up so that he would not see death; and he was not found because God took him up; for he obtained the witness that before his being taken up he was pleasing to God. And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.

Hebrews 11:5,6 NASB

That last sentence sums it up candidly. To come to God you must believe that he exists, and that he will make clear the way to friendship with him.

4 THE PROPHET NOAH

Many people view the Word of God as a constant sequence of stunning miracles. Actually, miracles were very much the exception. Centuries would pass before anything earthshaking would happen. At this point in our story, the Scripture records that no less than ten generations passed before the next big event unfolded in world history. Each one of those generations represents a long life span during which time the population of the world increased dramatically.



Hundreds and hundreds of years passed, but God did not forget His commitment to send THE PROMISED DELIVERER. Each generation had those who believed God. Though the population of the world was increasing by leaps and bounds, the number who trusted God did not increase at the same rate. The Bible records that all but a few turned their backs on him.

VIOLENCE

Mankind had not only rejected God but was intent on following Satan with all the gusto man could muster. The Scripture says:

The LORD saw how great man's wickedness on the earth had become, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time.

Now the earth was corrupt in God's sight and was full of violence. God saw how corrupt the earth had become, for all the people on earth had corrupted their ways.

Genesis 6:5,11,12

If you consider some of the nations of the world whose nightly news fills our TV screens with accounts of anarchy, war, violence and rape, then you have an idea of what it must have been like. The Scripture says that man's thoughts were consumed with evil continually. Perversion and chaos reigned. The world had become a deadly place in which to live.²

In addition, the society of that day was focused on living for self.² Man had scorned God's plan and developed a philosophy of life that excluded any desire to seek after him. Though righteousness was far from man's mind, sin was a different matter.

For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles.

Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another. They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator—who is forever praised. Amen.

Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural ones. In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed indecent acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their perversion.

Furthermore, since they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, he gave them over to a depraved mind, to do what ought not to be done.

They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice. They are gossips, slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents; they are senseless, faithless, heartless, ruthless. Although they know God's righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them.³

Romans 1:21-32

The Scripture says that at this time in history, man had sold his soul to sin. But as we have seen before, sin has its consequences. It always does. Just as defying the law of gravity results in bruises and broken bones, so ignoring God's word has ramifications. God could not condone the sin. The Bible says God was grieved by it all.

So the LORD said, "I will wipe mankind, whom I have created, from the face of the earth..."

Genesis 6:7

Man may have had a philosophy of life that excluded God, but God still held man accountable for his behavior.

NOAH (see time line, pages 170-171)

But one man and his family were different. The Scripture says that...

Noah found favor in the eyes of the LORD... Noah was a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time, and he walked with God.

Genesis 6:8-10

Though Noah was a good-living man, the Word of God makes it plain that he still was a sinner. According to the law of sin and death, Noah had to die for that sin. But the Bible

also indicates that Noah brought an animal sacrifice to God, evidence that he recognized the need to have an innocent substitute pay that death penalty for him. Noah believed that the Lord would somehow save him from sin's consequences. The Scripture says that because Noah trusted God, the Lord looked upon him as being righteous. Noah had a right relationship with the Lord, indicated by the words, "...he walked with God."

So God said to Noah, "I am going to put an end to all people, for the earth is filled with violence because of them. I am surely going to destroy both them and the earth. So make yourself an ark of cypress wood; make rooms in it and coat it with pitch inside and out."

Genesis 6:13,14

THE WAY OF ESCAPE

God told Noah to build an ark—a boat. This was no rowboat. It was a large ship, similar to modern ocean-going freighters. It had several decks, a built-in ventilation system and a door—only one door. The vessel was built of wood covered with a coat of tree pitch, a common means in past centuries of sealing a ship.⁴ The Ark remained the largest vessel ever built until its size and ratio were almost duplicated in 1844 by the ship Great Britain. The dimensions of the Ark are still considered ideal for a large stable boat. It was not built for speed, only to preserve life. God told Noah:

"I am going to bring floodwaters on the earth to destroy all life under the heavens, every creature that has the breath of life in it. Everything on earth will perish.

*But I will establish my *covenant with you, and you will enter the ark—you and your sons and your wife and your sons' wives with you.*

**an agreement, promise or contract.*

You are to bring into the ark two of all living creatures, male and female, to keep them alive with you. Two of every kind of bird, of every kind of animal and of every kind of creature that moves along the ground will come to you to be kept alive. You are to take every kind of food that is to be eaten and store it away as food for you and for them."

Noah did everything just as God commanded him.

Genesis 6:17-22

OBEDIENCE

Because Noah believed God, he obeyed him. That still didn't make God's directions any easier to follow. Noah had never built a boat before, certainly not one this size.

God had said it would be 120 years before the Flood would take place.⁵ During this time Noah not only oversaw the construction of the boat, but he also warned all who would listen that judgment was coming.⁶

The Scripture tells us that before the Flood people lived to be hundreds of years old. Various theories have been suggested as to why this was so, but no reason is given in the Bible. It is simply stated as fact. Considering the long time people lived, 120 years for building the ark was well within the usual life span. After the Flood, life spans shortened considerably so that a man of 90 was regarded as old.

Many excellent books have been written on the Flood regarding the impact it had on the world climate and geography. These books are reasoned theories based on the biblical account and scientific observations. With such detailed sources available, I have not attempted to duplicate them. However, in the next few pages, I will briefly refer to some of these theories, with the hope that they will help the understanding without getting bogged down.

The LORD then said to Noah, "Go into the ark, you and your whole family, because I have found you righteous in this generation."

And Noah did all that the LORD commanded him. ... On that very day Noah and his sons, Shem, Ham and Japheth, together with his wife and the wives of his three sons, entered the ark.

They had with them every wild animal according to its kind, all livestock according to their kinds, every creature that moves along the ground according to its kind and every bird according to its kind, everything with wings. Pairs of all creatures that have the breath of life in them came to Noah and entered the ark. The animals going in were male and female of every living thing, as God had commanded Noah. Then the LORD shut him in.

Genesis 7:1,5,13-16

ONE DOOR

The ark took seven days to load. With a few exceptions, Noah only took one pair of each kind on board. Even allowing for extinct kinds, the ship had adequate room to house them all, with the animals occupying only an estimated 60% of the vessel.⁷ The remaining space probably carried feed. Taking the young of animals may have been another space saver. To save on food, some may have hibernated. Of course, God was quite able to sustain them in any way he chose.

After the loading was completed, God shut them in. When judgment came and the waters began to rise, no amount of banging on the ark could move Noah to open the hatch. Nor did Noah and his family need fear that the door might be torn open in the pounding deluge. They were perfectly safe because God had shut the door—the one and only door to safety. He had shut in those who believed and shut out the rebellious.

God is gracious. He had given mankind 120 years to turn from their sinful ways and take advantage of his mercy. Now their time was up. Judgment came, just as God had said it would. Man sometimes threatens and never delivers, but God always keeps His Word.

In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, on the seventeenth day of the second month—on that day all the springs of the great deep burst forth, and the floodgates of the heavens were opened. And rain fell on the earth forty days and forty nights.

Genesis 7:11,12

THE SPRINGS AND FLOODGATES

Cartoons have been drawn of an old man on a little houseboat surrounded by animals, all getting soaked to the skin by a rain squall. Those efforts to illustrate the story are in error. You would have been crazy, and dead, to have remained outside in the storm that burst upon the earth.

First of all, the earth ruptured, releasing massive amounts of underground water. The Scripture talks about *the springs of the great deep bursting forth*. It has been theorized that water under extreme pressure was spewed high into the sky. Then it, along with other water in the atmosphere, came down as

the *floodgates of heaven were opened*. Such a rupturing of the planet's crust had to have included enormous volcanic activity. It is possible that at this time the whole process known as *continental drift* occurred. Using super-computers, one of the world's leading researchers in plate tectonics has modeled in 3D the whole process of continental drift occurring in a few months.⁸ As fissures tore open the crust of the earth, huge slabs of the surface were thrust deep into the earth's interior, as the ocean basin and continental land were recycled.

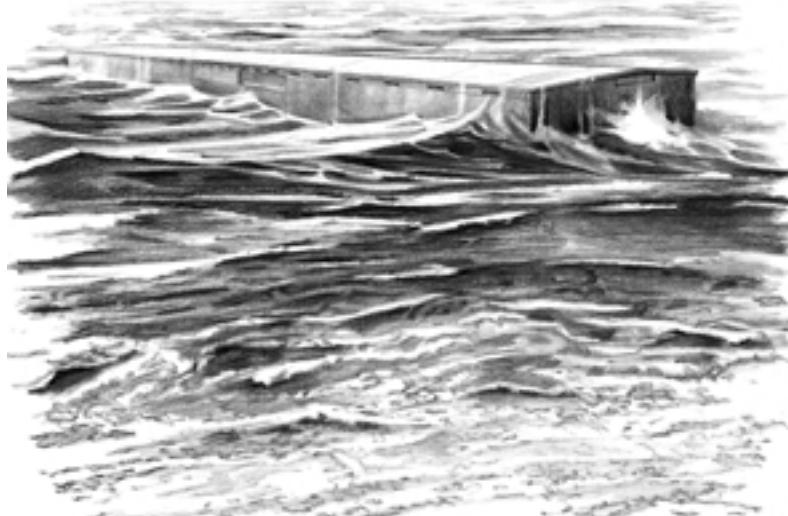
The Hebrew word to describe this event means a *catastrophic deluge*. In the Scripture, that word is solely used to describe this Flood. No other inundation ever came close to equaling this one. Though many of the things that happened in the cataclysm can be explained by natural science, we must remember that an all-powerful God could create the Flood circumstances and the attending catastrophic results without any limitation.

The rain lasted for 40 days, but it seems from the text that water continued to flow out of the underground *fountains* for 150 days.

For forty days the flood kept coming on the earth, and as the waters increased they lifted the ark high above the earth. The waters rose and increased greatly on the earth, and the ark floated on the surface of the water. They rose greatly on the earth, and all the high mountains under the entire heavens were covered.

Genesis 7:17-19

Everything on dry land that had the breath of life in its nostrils died. Every living thing on the face of the earth was



wiped out; men and animals and the creatures that move along the ground and the birds of the air were wiped from the earth. Only Noah was left, and those with him in the ark.

Genesis 7:22,23

But God remembered Noah and all the wild animals and the livestock that were with him in the ark, and he sent a wind over the earth, and the waters receded. Now the springs of the deep and the floodgates of the heavens had been closed, and the rain had stopped falling from the sky. The water receded steadily from the earth.

Genesis 8:1-3

It is believed that prior to the Flood, the mountains were not as high as they are today. Today, if you were able to take the surface of the globe and smooth it out, the water would cover the earth to a depth of approximately two miles (3 km). The Scripture says that after the Flood, the mountains we see today *rose up* and the *valleys sank down*, presumably forming the ocean basins.

The waters were standing above the mountains. At Your rebuke they fled... 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.

Psalms 104:6-9 NASB

A DIFFERENT PLANET

Noah and his family were in the boat for 371 days before God opened the door and let them out. Long before that day, the waters had receded, and the ark had lodged in a mountainous region. When they left the ark, the ground was not only dry but producing again. It was a very different planet from before. It was the earth on which we now live.

Then God said to Noah, "Come out of the ark, you and your wife and your sons and their wives. Bring out every kind of living creature that is with you—the birds, the animals, and all the creatures that move along the ground—so they can multiply on the earth and be fruitful and increase in number upon it."

So Noah came out, together with his sons and his wife and his sons' wives.

Then Noah built an altar to the LORD and, taking some of all the clean animals and clean birds, he sacrificed burnt offerings on it.

Genesis 8:15-18,20,21

A PROMISE

The first thing Noah did after leaving the ark was to build an altar and offer an innocent animal as a blood sacrifice to God. The sacrifice did not remove the sin, but it did picture what was necessary to pay the penalty—blood shed in death. It was evidence that Noah had confidence in God, believing that the Lord would keep his word, and somehow save him and his family from the consequences of sin. God was pleased.

Then God blessed Noah and his sons, saying to them, “Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the earth. Genesis 9:1

I now establish my covenant with you and with your descendants after you... Never again will all life be cut off by the waters of a flood; never again will there be a flood to destroy the earth.”

WHAT ABOUT DINOSAURS, FOSSILS, COAL, AND OIL?

We do not find the word *dinosaur* in the Bible—the word is recent, invented in 1841 by an English anatomist. However, the early books of the Bible do record references to animals that have no present parallels. Two of the larger animals mentioned have an intriguing resemblance to the fossil record.⁹

From what the Bible says, one can assume that the dinosaurs were created by God and lived with man from the beginning. Dinosaurs appear to have been reptiles, most of which continue to grow throughout their lifetime. If they had the long life spans humans had before the Flood, it could account for the huge size some attained.

*Many people lived over 900 years.

The Bible indicates that two of every kind of land animal was ordered onto the Ark. It makes sense that only the young were taken, not only to conserve space, but also to maximize breeding time in the post-flood years. Since the average size of a dinosaur was that of a small pony, and even the largest dinosaurs at birth were no bigger than a football, calculations show that there was ample room for them on the Ark.

As to what caused their demise, we can only conjecture. In the last few decades, many creatures have become extinct,

And God said, "This is the sign of the covenant I am making between me and you ... I have set my rainbow in the clouds, and it will be the sign of the covenant between me and the earth."

Genesis 9:9,11-13

God promised to never destroy the earth with a flood again. Whenever it rained, the rainbow would be a reminder of that promise. Though thousands of years have passed since the Flood, God has kept His Word.

The sons of Noah who came out of the ark were Shem, Ham and Japheth. These were the three sons of Noah, and from them came the people who were scattered over the earth.

Genesis 9:18,19

Man now had a fresh start.

Altogether, Noah lived 950 years, and then he died.

Genesis 9:29

but even in these recent cases, it's hard to nail down the exact cause. Going back millennia makes it even harder. Since the climate seems to have changed radically after the Flood, it has been theorized that it would have been difficult for such animals to survive.

The conditions created by the deluge answer many questions we see in the natural world. For example, the massive amount of sediment created by the Flood, the extreme weight of the water, the tremendous amount of erosion—all could account for the deposits of coal, oil and fossils we now find. Many of the fossils show overwhelming evidence that they were swiftly and catastrophically buried, frequently in vast fossil graveyards. The very existence of any well-preserved fossil, such as a fish, means it was buried rapidly, with the encasing sediment hardening quickly before scavengers, bacteria and decay destroyed its features.

Many thought-provoking books have been written to discuss the Creation-Flood perspective. They present reasoned and logical explanations for much of what we see. If you have nagging questions, consult the Appendix for a list of resources that give you an analysis of these issues.

5 BABEL

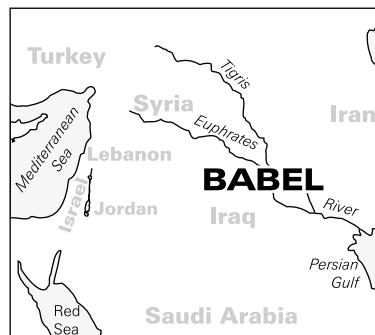
The tenth chapter of the book of Genesis is often called “*The Table of Nations*.” It tells us where the major ethnic groups came from, beginning with Noah’s three sons. The chapter ends with this verse:

These are the clans of Noah’s sons, according to their lines of descent, within their nations. From these the nations spread out over the earth after the flood. Genesis 10:32

Once again, centuries of time passed and the population of the earth increased. Our story now moves on to what historians call the cradle of civilization: ancient Mesopotamia, now modern-day Iraq.

Now the whole world had one language and a common speech. As men moved eastward, they found a plain in Shinar and settled there.

They said to each other, “Come, let’s make bricks and bake them thoroughly.” They used brick instead of stone, and tar for mortar. Then they said, “Come, let us build ourselves a city, with a tower that reaches to the heavens, so that we may make a name for ourselves and not be scattered over the face of the whole earth.” Genesis 11:1-4



MAN’S AGENDA

After the Flood, God had told man to ...

Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the earth.

Genesis 9:1

But now man was not only trying to change the agenda, but also had something to add of his own.

First: Man felt that everyone should stay in one place and build a big city. This was in direct disobedience to God’s instruction. Once again, man felt that he knew *better than God* what was right.

As you can see, man has a problem with obedience. Have you ever wondered why you don't need to teach little children to disobey Mom and Dad? It comes very naturally because defiance is natural to the human heart. Basically, as humans we don't want to be told what to do. We prefer to do our own thing. This was the problem with the people of Babel.

Second: Along with the city, man wanted to build a tower to bring honor to himself. The people were saying, "We want to ...

... make a name for ourselves ...

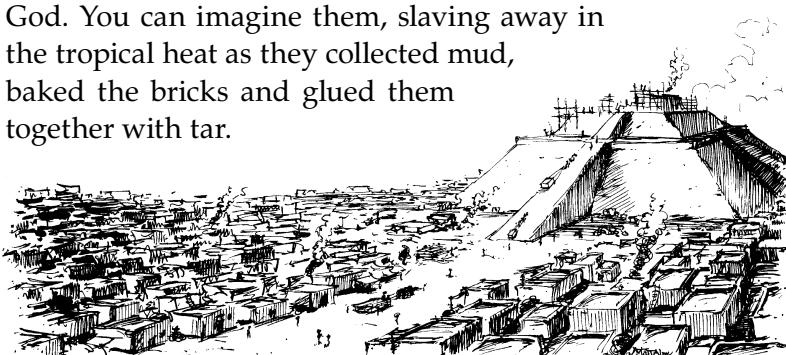
Genesis 11:4

You can't help but hear the evil whisperings of Satan. That had been his ambition too.

It's noticeable that God didn't fit into any of the plans. When man is busy trying to be a *somebody*, to make a *name* for himself, then you can be sure pride is involved. God will have to be left out of the picture. It's preposterous to attempt to exalt yourself when you're standing next to a God who is so resplendent, so supreme, so majestic, so powerful. He's going to cause any other name-maker to look ridiculous. As we have seen before, the Scripture says that God is the only one worthy to have His name exalted.

So man's plans did not square with the Lord's instructions at all. Once again, man was functioning independent of the Most High God.

Babel is the first incident of an organized religion recorded in the Bible. Babel is often used in the Scripture as an example of man's religious efforts. The people, in trying to build a tower to the heavens, were devising their own way of reaching God. You can imagine them, slaving away in the tropical heat as they collected mud, baked the bricks and glued them together with tar.



It must have been dreadful toil, all so they could reach the heavens. But it didn't work. There is only one way to God—God's way.

A good definition for the word *religion* is this: **man's efforts to reach God**. Man by nature tends to be very religious. He is constantly searching for or creating new ways to find God. It's a hopeless pursuit. We will see that the Scripture says that mankind is in a spiritual wilderness—he is LOST—and cannot find his way back to God on his own. Man can neither get rid of his sin nor find adequate righteousness to make himself acceptable to the Lord.

In contrast to religion, the Word of God teaches that the only true way to God was provided by the Lord himself when, in his mercy, he reached down to man and provided man with a way to escape the punishment for sin. It is God who rescues us. He's the Savior. The Scripture makes it clear that it is the Lord who ...

... devises ways so that a banished person may not remain estranged from him...

Samuel 14:14

The people of Babel ignored that fact. Of course, none of their impressive construction efforts escaped God's notice. God was fully aware of what was going on.

But the *LORD* came down¹⁰ to see the city and the tower that the men were building. The *LORD* said, "If as one people speaking the same language they have begun to do this, then nothing they plan to do will be impossible for them."

Genesis 11:5,6

God knew what history has proven to be true, that with a common language man's progress in technology is much faster. It seems to be a pattern. The more advanced and comfortable things are, the less man feels he needs God. Though God had given man a free will, he did not want man to live independently of him.

SCATTERED

The story speaks for itself. God took action to confront man's defiance. God said ...

"Come, let **us* go down and confuse their language so they will not understand each other.

So the LORD scattered them from there over all the earth, and they stopped building the city.

Genesis 11:7,8

*Once again, notice the word *us*. The Bible clearly states that there is only *one* God. So, just who is the Lord talking to when he says "*us*?" We will study that later.

The suggested migration of native North and South American tribal people across the Aleutian land bridge has never been well-founded. Though some language associations have been made, linguistically it has been impossible to prove. Why tiny, linguistically-isolated pockets of humanity should end up in such remote locations, from northern Greenland to the depths of the Amazon jungle, is beyond reasonable explanation. The Scripture says God scattered them—and it seems that's just the way it happened. No doubt, he also equipped them with the knowledge of how to live in their new environments.

Whatever the case—whether via a land bridge or literally—when God scattered them, he gave them new languages. He did a thorough job. Anyone who has ever embarked on the formidable task of learning another tongue knows you don't just create a new language on a whim. Some of the languages God created are so complex that it can take trained linguists years to grasp, and even then, they do not completely understand them.

The city the people were building didn't disappear, but it did take on a name. It means *confusion*.

That is why it was called Babel—because there the LORD confused the language of the whole world.

From there the LORD scattered them over the face of the whole earth.

Genesis 11:9

WHERE DID ALL THE RACES ORIGINATE?¹¹

In one sense there is only one race—the human race. The Scripture distinguishes people by national or tribal groupings, not by skin color or by physical appearance. But those differences do exist. How could it have happened?

For the sake of explanation, we will choose skin color, but the same would apply to eye and nose shape, hair texture, stature, etc.

We usually think of skin as having many colors, but actually skin essentially has only one color: melanin. If we have only a little melanin, we are light-skinned; if we produce a large quantity, we are dark-skinned. There are a few other minor factors which contribute to skin color, but they are not unique to any particular race.

It has long been known that if a black person marries a white, the end result is a brown skin color. If two of that offspring marry, their children can either be black, white, or any shade of color in between. Why? Because the parents each possess the range of genes required to give the entire spectrum of color.

Now if you take children that were born with pure black skin (from the above marriage) and they marry other offspring of the same color, and migrate to an area where their children could not marry those of another color, then their offspring would be consistently black. They would no longer have the genes required to produce white skin. Under similar circumstances, this would apply to those with white skin, who would no longer have the genes required to produce black skin. Such diversification in two different color groups, which does not involve any new gene being added to those already created, can happen after only a few generations. Although the above explanation has been much abbreviated, one can see that it is not the problem as it may first appear.

The Scripture says that all the nations of the earth came from Noah, his three sons and their wives, who were presumably brown, as they would have had genes enabling both white and black skin to appear in their descendants.