

Dr. Ernest Martin's Home Study Course: Lesson 9

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These notes, composed from 2013 on, are based on taped Home Study Course made between 1977-98 by Dr. Ernest L. Martin, Ph.D. Former Head of Theology for the Worldwide Church of God; he resigned in January 1974 because of his unresolved doctrinal issues with the administration. Sadly Dr. Martin died in January 2002, a great loss to the world and to those who seek Biblical truth.

HOME BIBLE STUDY LESSON 9 ESSENTIALS OF O.T. HISTORY

The Bible is **the** standard to enable a proper understanding of Old Testament History. The Holy Scriptures give information about Palestine, Egypt, and other areas prior to the 6th Century which is not available anywhere else because of the almost total destruction of all available historical records by Nebuchadnezzar when he came to power. Historians find it very difficult to piece together details of the centuries between the flood and the 6th Century B.C.

The Bible does not give many details, but what it does say about people and events of history are extremely important keys to the proper understanding of secular history. Not the other way around.

The Bible is a book about God's plan of redemption for His human children, it is not a complete history, but what it does include gives us glimpses of the past which would be impossible otherwise to understand. What it does do is to give us God's story, 'HisStory' so to speak, His way of looking at things, written in His 'language' and style which obscures the meaning from humans unless they have help from the Holy Spirit .

The 6th Century B.C., is pivotal as it was the start of the Babylonish type of world government which will remain in power, although hidden in our era, until Christ's second coming, when global powers will be beaten into powder and blown away, and the Kingdom of God will be established.

Daniel 2:38 And **wheresoever the children of men dwell**, the beasts of the field and the fowls of the heaven hath he given into thine hand, and hath made thee ruler over them all. Thou art this head of gold.

Wheresoever men dwell, world, global, total government. The government of Babylon will be established and control the activities of the whole world overtly for a while, then hidden and operating behind the scenes until the second coming of Christ.

Daniel 2:39 And after thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee, and another third kingdom of brass, which shall bear rule over all the earth. 40 And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron: forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all things: and as iron that breaketh all these, shall it break in pieces and bruise....44 And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a Kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever.

The Babylonish system certainly exists worldwide today unrealised behind public view, and is under the control of unseen powers both human and spiritual.

In the time of Solomon his fabulous riches, power and control were worldwide. He sent ships around the world on voyages lasting three years gathering gold, wealth, fauna and flora for his estates. The amount of gold in the Temple that Solomon built was beyond our imagination now.

Solomon wrote 5000 books, and many songs and poems. We only have one song in the Bible, the Song of Solomon. Only one book and some proverbs, and it is to be wondered what happened to the other 4999. In the book of Ecclesiastes Solomon wrote:

Ecclesiastes 12:12 And further, by these, my son, be admonished: of making many books there is no end; and much study is a weariness of the flesh.

Kings and Queens came from all over the world to see the seven wonders of the world in Solomon's kingdom.

2 Chronicles 9:1 And when the queen of Sheba heard of the fame of Solomon, she came to prove Solomon with hard questions at Jerusalem, with a very great company, and camels that bare spices, and gold in abundance, and precious stones: and when she was come to Solomon, she communed with him of all that was in her heart. 2 And Solomon told her all her questions: and there was nothing hid from Solomon which he told her not. 3 And when the queen of Sheba had seen the wisdom of Solomon, and the house that he had built, 4 And the meat of his table, and the sitting of his servants, and the attendance of his ministers, and their apparel; his cupbearers also, and their apparel; and his ascent by which he went up into the house of the Lord; there was no more spirit in her. 5 And she said to the king, It was a true report which I heard in mine own land of thine acts, and of thy wisdom: 6 Howbeit I believed not their words, until I came, and mine eyes had seen it: and, behold, the one half of the

greatness of thy wisdom was not told me: for thou exceedest the fame that I heard. 7 Happy are thy men, and happy are these thy servants, which stand continually before thee, and hear thy wisdom. 8 Blessed be the Lord thy God, which delighted in thee to set thee on his throne, to be king for the Lord thy God: because thy God loved Israel, to establish them for ever, therefore made he thee king over them, to do judgment and justice. 9 And she gave the king an hundred and twenty talents of gold, and of spices great abundance, and precious stones: neither was there any such spice as the queen of Sheba gave king Solomon. 10 And the servants also of Hiram, and the servants of Solomon, which brought gold from Ophir, brought algum trees and precious stones.

The Queen of Sheba gave Solomon 120 talents of gold, or \$72,000,000 worth of gold at \$400.00 per ounce, to add to his already massive wealth.

Psalm 72:10 The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents: the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts. 11 Yea, all kings shall fall down before him: all nations shall serve him.

Solomon's power was worldwide. Yet, secular historians find it impossible to believe the extent of Solomon's wealth, and have great difficulty in finding any reference to his time. So many scholars even question whether he ever existed. Why might that be? Such wealth would definitely be the prime target of those who came after his time.

The wonders of Solomon's kingdom were plundered to the point where no evidence of them exists in our era. Even Josephus, the Jewish historian writing in the 1st Century B.C., could only find two brief references to Solomon in that he exchanged riddles with King Hiram who was able to better Solomon in solving them.

So were it not for the Biblical record, we would know virtually nothing at all about the life and times of Solomon. In the 6th Century, Nebuchadnezzar destroyed all the historical records and libraries in order to sever the links of past times for all the peoples under his control.

One day, as knowledge is increased, the Bible record will be vindicated and verified as an accurate record of events of history. The Biblical record may be sparse, but without it we would have no knowledge of significant sections of history. Because the Bible was written under the inspiration of Christ Jesus, it cannot be anything but a true record.

John 17:17 Sanctify them through thy truth: thy Word is truth.

For our studies, the pre-flood era is not that important to us now historically speaking, although very interesting and we can learn a lot from the

snippets about that time in the Bible, we need a broad brush picture of history after the flood.

There are seven periods of Biblical history that do help to give us an overview:

One: The post flood era from Noah, including the record of the list of the nations extant at the time when Moses wrote about them in Genesis 10.

Two: The Patriarch period of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob

Three: The 215 years when Joseph and Israel were in Egypt during a period of great wealth and the glory of a very sophisticated civilisation and a population explosion until the Exodus. There was also the establishment of other nations at that time.

Four: Then the 480 year period of the dark ages after the Exodus in 1490 B.C., because the Children of Israel had lost all their expertise and any real idea of civilisation during the forty years wandering in the Sinai desert, followed by the period of the Judges and then the Kings.

Five: Then David and Solomon's time of great wealth around 1000 B.C., magnificent landscaping, buildings, artefacts all of which were stripped away after his death to leave virtually no trace.

Six: Then the 6th Century B.C., when all available records were destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar when he came to power.

Seven: Then the time of Ezra and the canonisation of the 22 books of the Old Testament in 457 B.C.. when he wrote the books of I & II Chronicles (which were originally one book), Ezra, and Nehemiah and included edits and spelling changes to bring the books up to date. Ezra wrote in Hebrew and Aramaic and was skilled in both languages.

We need to go to secular historical records to gain an understanding of the period between the Canonisation by Ezra in 457 B.C., and the New Testament era beginning with John the Baptist in 4 B.C.

It is also enlightening to make study of secular history between 100 A.D., and 2000 A.D., of relevant events concerning the development of Christianity as it evolved into the Christianity extant in our era

Important Principle and Key to understanding Bible history

Here is a very important key to the understanding of the Biblical records.

We must know when and where the books were written, and realise that they would not be using the names and places that were extant at the time of the period they were writing about.

Those who wrote the books, wrote them with the background of the time they lived. So when Moses wrote about pre-flood times, and in describing the location of the Garden of Eden for instance, he was using terms that would be understood by his readers in the 15th Century B.C.

Genesis 2:8 And the Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed. 9 And out of the ground made the Lord God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil.

Moses was in Palestine when he was writing this, and when it says 'eastward' in Eden, it is referring to an area Eastward of Palestine.

Genesis 2:10 And a river went out of Eden to water the garden; and from thence it was parted, and became into four heads. 11 The name of the first is Pison: that is it which compasseth the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold;

So there was a single river which divided into four rivers. The first one Pison is not one that can be identified with certainty in our era.

Genesis 2:12 And the gold of that land is good: there is bdellium and the onyx stone. 13 And the name of the second river is Gihon: the same is it that compasseth the whole land of Ethiopia.

When it says 'Ethiopia' (Cush) it is not talking about the 'Ethiopia' in Africa or in India. There were two areas of Cush, the other area was to the East and the North in what is now called Iran.

Genesis 2:14 And the name of the third river is Hiddekel: that is it which goeth toward the east of Assyria. And the fourth river is Euphrates. Assyria was named after Ashur a descendant of Shem.

The river Hiddakel was undoubtedly the Tigris, and this is in a way confirmed by the name of the fourth river which was the Euphrates.

So the area of the Garden of Eden was in the geographical region of Mesopotamian the land between the great rivers, where Iran and Iraq are as we know it today.

When Ezra assembled the Canon in 457 B.C., he made many small edits and changes in the books so that the people of his day would be able to understand what and where he was writing about.

Sadly, ignorant people pounce on these apparent 'discrepancies' and use them to ridicule and discredit the Bible.

The account of the flood and the eight people who entered the ark, give us the understanding of where all the people on earth today originated from.

Genesis 9:18 And the sons of Noah, that went forth of the ark, were Shem, and Ham, and Japheth: and Ham is the father of Canaan. 19 These are the three sons of Noah: and of them was the whole earth overspread.

Everyone of the six or seven billion people on earth today is a descendant of these three sons of Noah.

Again let us remind ourselves that these are not the words of a man, they are the inspired Words of our Creator and Messiah, Christ Jesus.

So the list of the nations written by Moses in Genesis 10 are those nations that existed in the time of Moses.

Genesis 9:20 And Noah began to be an husbandman, and he planted a vineyard: 21 And he drank of the wine, and was drunken; and he was uncovered within his tent. 22 And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brethren without. 23 And Shem and Japheth took a garment, and laid it upon both their shoulders, and went backward, and covered the nakedness of their father; and their faces were backward, and they saw not their father's nakedness. 24 And Noah awoke from his wine, and knew what his younger son had done unto him.

And what had his younger son Ham done to his drunken father? He had emasculated him so that Noah would be unable to father any more children. Ham was only interested in furthering his own future, and did not want any more siblings to share his heritage, so he made sure of it.

Genesis 9:25 And he said, Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren. 26 And he said, Blessed be the Lord God of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant.

So Ham's son Canaan was cursed. Canaanites occupied the Palestine area after the flood, and inhabited the Promised Land into which the Israelites finally went after their forty years of wandering in the Sinai desert.

So Canaanites, but not all Ham's descendants, would be servants to Shem's descendants. And so many did so become, even to this day. Other descendants of Ham became peoples of great renown, authority and power. Egyptians and many other powerful nations have mainly descended from Ham.

However it was Noah's son Japheth's descendants that would expand in greater numbers.

Genesis 9:27 God shall enlarge Japheth, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant.

Japheth means 'enlarge'. It is interesting to note that the descendants of Japheth, who are in the main the yellow people with the epicanthic fold on the eyes, comprise the greatest number of the inhabitants of this earth in China, Japan, and Mongolia. These descendants of Japheth can be mostly yellow, but some white or brown as over centuries many have intermarried.

When Japheth began their expansion, they moved Northwards into Europe into Cyprus or Chittim, Italy, and Greece, known as Javan in the Bible. Some even into North America, the American Indians and the Eskimos have similar skull shapes and facial features to the Oriental people. Later they were driven out of Europe and went East and North leaving names of places behind them.

Much like when people establish a business, then sell it to others who like to retain the original name of the founder. The state of Massachusetts was originally populated with American Indians, the Massachusett tribe of Native Americans, meaning "at or about the great hill". Over time, all of whom died out or removed to other areas to the point where today there is not one Indian still living in Massachusetts, but the name of the tribe lives on in the name of the State.

Ezekiel tells in chapter 38 where many of these people were in Ezekiel's time. Some religious denominations think that Gog and Magog, Meshech and Tubal are going to invade Israel in the latter days, but a careful study will reveal that the battle referred to will occur in the Millennial era. It is at a time when the inhabitants of Israel are dwelling safely, and this has yet to happen, and will not happen until after Christ's return.

Ezekiel 38:14 Therefore, son of man, prophesy and say unto Gog, Thus saith the Lord God; In that day when my people of Israel dwelleth safely, shalt thou not know it? 15 And thou shalt come from thy place out of the north parts, thou, and many people with thee, all of them riding upon horses, a great company, and a mighty army: 16 And thou shalt come up against my people of Israel, as a cloud to cover the land; it shall be in the latter days, and I will bring thee against my land, that the heathen may know me, when I shall be sanctified in thee, O Gog, before their eyes.

Since most historical records have been thoroughly and systematically destroyed at various times in the history of the world, it is only by believing the veracity of the Holy Scriptures and accepting the total authority of God's Word can we even begin arrive at a clear perspective and to make any sense of the history of human beings, God's Children.