

Principles for Interpreting Human History from the Biblical Perspective as Developed from the Early Chapters of Genesis

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What Is History?

MODERN MAN'S enlightened thinking has failed to provide the answers to life's great questions: Who are we? Where did we come from? Why are we here? Where are we going? While man has wrestled unsuccessfully with these questions for centuries, the Biblical study of history actually answers them. Sadly, due to the pagan influence of Secular Humanism, history is no longer seen as a witness to Truth but instead has been trivialized into meaningless lists of dates and names without inherent, consistent meaning or purpose. Nothing could be farther from the Truth. A correct understanding of human history inevitably leads to correct Biblical answers to life's questions.

Christians operating on the authority of Scripture need to know that the Bible provides specific guidelines that reveal the dynamic impact and import of historical events and allow them to interpret past events and anticipate future ones. After all, "History is *His Story*,"¹ a chronicling of events leading up to and away from the central figure in human history, the Lord Jesus Christ, in preparation for the culmination of God's grand plan for mankind in Christ's eternal reign. "The 'past' is what happened; 'history' is our engagement with the past."²

WORLDVIEW'S ROLE IN INTERPRETING HISTORY

Because the historian cannot "attain objective meaning without the use of some worldview by which he understands the facts,"³ complete objectivity is impossible when examining the past. Every analysis of history is influenced by the worldview of the author. Worldview is the criterion by which every person examines Satan's world system, interprets reality, and answers life's questions. Every worldview is impacted by cultural and religious environments. The worldview of a Hindu is superficially different from that of a Muslim, atheist, or humanist, and all are in direct opposition to the Christian worldview. Even in Christianity, worldviews differ. The Christian who diligently studies the Bible as literal, historical literature views life through different eyes than the Christian who allegorizes the Bible or picks and chooses the parts he wishes to believe.

The answer to the question of God's existence is pivotal in determining worldview. "At the heart of each worldview is the question of whether God is or is not."⁴ For those who deny the existence of an eternal, infinite Creator, and they hold the majority opinion, absolute truth does not exist. For them, the Bible is as meaningless as history. Our present culture has adopted this worldview and, therefore, continually denies the existence of absolute, objective truth. "Truth, declares a growing collective consciousness, is relative: what is true, right, or beautiful for one person isn't necessarily true, right, or beautiful for another. *Relativism* says that truth isn't fixed by outside reality, but is decided by a group or individual for themselves. Truth isn't discovered, but manufactured. Truth is ever-changing not only in insignificant matters of taste or fashion, but in crucial matters of spirituality, morality, and reality itself."⁵ Without belief in the existence of God, every man-originated "truth" becomes a matter of personal opinion, with each person's opinion as valid and meaningful as all others. Under this subjective worldview, man's existence is a cosmic accident occurring in a vacuum without a Creator; therefore, no absolute meaning can be assigned to any event from creation to the present, and no understanding of the future is possible. Thus, worldview determines the happiness or discontent of its adherents, based solely on their God-orientation.

Not knowing that something exists does not imply that it does not exist, merely that its existence is unknown. For example, in Europe, centuries passed without knowledge of the existence of North and South America. Only sheer incredulity could argue that such ignorance constituted a lack of existence. Similarly, a lack of knowledge concerning God's existence cannot imply He does not exist. If God doesn't exist, an opinion of sheer incredulity, nothing in life matters. However, if God exists, which He absolutely has forever, nothing matters except to know Him and live according to His standard and plan as presented only in His infallible Word.

Why would man choose to deny the existence of God? Scripture proclaims that every person knows that God exists but that man in rebellion against Him is uncomfortable with His existence. Sadly, most people choose to suppress their innate knowledge of their

¹Lewis Sperry Chafer, *Systematic Theology*, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications) 55.

²Ronal A. Wells, *History Through the Eyes of Faith* (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1989) 28.

³Norman L. Geisler, *Christian Apologetics* (Peabody, MA: Prince Press, 2002) 298.

⁴Brannon Howse, *One Nation Under Man: The Worldview War Between Christians and the Secular Left* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 2005) 13.

⁵Dennis McCallum, ed., *The Death of Truth* (Minneapolis: Bethany House Publishers, 1996) 31.

Creator. *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. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse.* (Romans 1:18-20)

THE EXISTENCE OF GOD

Regardless of its cultural and religious trappings, man's worldview stems from one of two presuppositions: God exists; God does not exist. Neutrality in the area of God's existence is not possible. Everyone must make this pivotal decision. "If he refuses to presuppose the truth of Christ, he invariably ends up presupposing the outlook of the world instead."⁶ In other words, either the Bible controls man's thinking about the world, or the world controls his thinking about the Bible.

Because God declares that every person knows He exists, the unbeliever must choose to reject that knowledge before he can choose to subject himself to a man-made authority. This rejection of God's existence requires much greater faith than acceptance of it because such faith goes against the visual evidence of a Creator that assails the senses every time nature is perceived.

Secular Humanism, the most prominent worldview in our culture today as well as throughout history, declares, "We *believe* that traditional dogmatic or authoritarian religions that place revelation, God, ritual, or creed above human needs and experience do a disservice to the human species. Any account of nature should pass the tests of scientific evidence, *in our judgment*, the dogmas and myths of traditional religions do not do so." (emphasis mine)⁷ The object of a humanist's faith is his opinion, based on faith in his own ability to correctly evaluate reality independently from the One who created it.

Conveniently for him, when he chooses to believe that God does not exist, he also chooses to divorce himself from responsibility to God's governing power. His motivation in rejecting divine authority is the autonomous desire to make himself responsible solely to his personally formulated, subjective rules, all of which he chooses because they enhance his worldly, sensual pleasures and lusts. Ultimately, he rejects the Creator's objective rules because they demand humble, rigorous, self-denying, difficult obedience. He craves a world in which his carefully selected idol(s) are totally compatible with his personal desires and sin weaknesses.

An idol is a God-substitute created by a person who has rejected sovereign God as Creator. He craves an authority he can control, unlike God who demands obedience and personal responsibility. While the anti-God worldview has trained man to think of idols as visible objects such as Buddha, in fact Satan actively promotes invisible idols, such as wealth, health, power, popularity, sex outside of marriage, relaxation, sports, TV, fame—both in the veneration of human ability and good works and of evil and degeneracy—and other mind-absorbing interests.

When a believer looks away from Christ to others, including idols such as personal advancement and recognition in church, he turns to creation for meaning and purpose. Rejection of the Creator always leads to the embracing of idols, which in turn leads to the downfall of the individual, whether believer or unbeliever. The idolatry of many leads to God's destruction of the nation.

KNOWING GOD

In contrast to the opinion-based worldview, the worldview that acclaims God's existence demands a second question: Can mortal man come to know the omniscient, omnipotent, eternal God who created everything? Those who answer no to this question face the same predicament as those answering no to the question of the existence of God. They have no absolute Truth from which to view reality, and opinion again becomes the fluctuating sand on which they base their subjective "truths."

Since God exists, we can safely assume that He wants us to know Him. In order to answer man's questions related to his creation and existence, He must reveal Himself to man. Because He is omnipotent, He reveals Himself in a perfect manner, first through creation and after belief in Christ as Savior through His Word, the sixty-six books of the Bible. Because God is absolute Truth, His revelation of Himself is absolutely true. Because He is loving and just, this revelation of Himself is capable of being understood by His creatures as long as they follow His plan as revealed only in His Word. No one can live as God demands without full knowledge of the resources and power God gives him through God the Holy Spirit and Scripture.

WORLDVIEW AND HISTORY

This worldview controversy between God-oriented and manmade rules extends to the study of human history because worldview impacts historical interpretation. As said before, all history is editorialized because a person's worldview dictates his interpretation of historical facts. The sheer number of historical events demands editorial choice in the inclusion of some and exclusion of others, "usually on the bases of the availability of data and the special interests and concerns of the historian."⁸ Therefore, a believer's

⁶Greg L. Bahnsen, *Always Ready: Directions for Defending the Faith*, 5th ed., ed. Robert Booth (Nacogdoches, TX: Covenant Media Press, 2002) 13.

⁷Paul Kurtz, ed., *Humanist Manifestos I and II* (Buffalo, NY: Prometheus Books, 1973) 15-16.

⁸Eugene H. Merrill, *Kingdom of Priests: A History of Old Testament Israel*, 6th ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2003) 17.

objective study of history must begin with accurate knowledge of the worldview prejudices of the one presenting the historical information.

This principle of the editorializing of all history should encourage every believer who seeks to operate on a Biblical worldview because history in the Bible has been editorialized by the source of all Truth, God the Holy Spirit. God Himself brought together in the Bible everything a believer needs to know for full understanding of the past, present, and future. *All Scripture is inspired by God and is profitable for teaching, for re-proof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.* (2 Timothy 3:16-17)

THE IMPORTANCE OF STUDYING HISTORY

Understanding history is critically important for the Bible-believing Christian because the foundation of his thinking, the Bible, is written within an historical context, and every decision he makes is influenced by his own history or that of his nation or cultural milieu. Of equal importance, the fundamental command for the Church Age believer is to submit *every* thought to the authority of Christ. *We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ and we are ready to punish all disobedience, whenever your obedience is complete.* (2 Corinthians 10:5-6) God commands the believer to grow by means of the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ so that he can think Biblically about every area of his life. For the believer to fulfill this divine command, he must submit his thoughts on history to the authority of Christ and His Word. Ignorance of history from the divine perspective means ignorance of the magnitude of God's grace in the outworking of His plan for both individuals and nations.

If the Bible is true, and it is because God is Truth, then the believer is obligated to determine the validity of his thoughts and decisions on every subject by examining them in light of Biblical teaching, in other words by using a Bible-first epistemology. Epistemology is "the study of how we know things, a search to answer the questions 'Is our knowledge reliable?' and 'How can we be sure?'"⁹ A Bible-first epistemology means "the Bible deals with every area of life indirectly through the grid or framework that is taken directly from the Bible."¹⁰ In this sense, the believer in Christ, who was once in the world, must completely renovate his thinking, removing human viewpoint thoughts and filling the ensuing vacuum in the thinking of his soul with the thinking of Christ as found only in His Word. This rehabilitation of the soul centers on a correct epistemology. The Apostle Paul commanded the Christians in Rome, *And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.* (Romans 12:2) The Christian attempting to think Biblically about history must live in obedience exclusively to the epistemic authority of Scripture because a "biblical theory of knowledge proclaims the absolute requirement of God's revealed truth as the tacit foundation of understanding and knowledge."¹¹

Christianity is grounded in historical reality. "The historical Bible (the written Word) and Jesus Christ (the living Word) are the two cornerstones of the Christian worldview."¹² "The Bible, unlike other religious literature of the world, is not centered in a series of moral, spiritual, and liturgical teachings, but in the story of a people who lived at a certain time and place...Biblical faith is the knowledge of life's meaning in the light of what God did in a particular history. Thus the Bible cannot be understood unless the history it relates is taken seriously."¹³ The theology defined in the text of Scripture is surrounded and grounded by historical events. If the historicity of these events is false, then the theology related to them is equally suspect.

Christianity is "a historical religion in the sense that the actual occurrence of certain events, like the crucifixion and the resurrection, is a necessary condition for its truth."¹⁴ In fact, "all of world history revolves around or centers on the work of Christ in history."¹⁵ The foundation of the Biblical worldview is the historical fact that the Creator entered creation to redeem it from sin; therefore, a correct interpretation of the events surrounding the cross is essential to an accurate understanding of the divine purpose for all events in human history. Any trivializing or ignorance of this central event undermines correct understanding of the events before and after it. Consequently, "to shatter Christian doctrine and the Christian worldview, one would need only to shatter its historical underpinnings."¹⁶

The Bible clearly teaches God's providential role in the affairs of human history. "Providence is a word that signifies the Bible

⁹McCallum 281.

¹⁰Robert Dean, Jr. and Thomas Ice, *What the Bible Teaches about Spiritual Warfare*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2000) 23.

¹¹Bahnsen 37.

¹²David A. Noebel, *Thinking Like a Christian: Understanding and Living a Biblical Worldview* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 2002) 146.

¹³Randall Price, *The Stones Cry Out: What Archaeology Reveals About the Truth of the Bible* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 1997) 109.

¹⁴Ronald H. Nash, *Christian Faith and Historical Understanding* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1984) 12.

¹⁵Michael J. McHugh and John Southworth, *Story of the Middle Ages* (Arlington Heights, IL: Christian Liberty Press, 2005) v.

¹⁶Noebel 147.

doctrine of the overruling power of God that governs in the affairs of men.”¹⁷ The events that lead to the completion of human history in accordance with the divine purpose are controlled by the Creator Himself. “There are no accidents in history, and all events are meaningful as part of his plan of the ages to sum up all things in Christ.”¹⁸ Therefore, the Christian who seeks to submit all thoughts to the authority of Christ must be a student of history and Biblical historiography.

Much that passes for history today is nothing more than a chronological ordering of events because a secular worldview that denies God’s existence also denies God’s providential role in history. Through this denial, the non-Biblical philosophy of history negates all possibilities of finding purpose and meaning in the history of man’s existence.

The battle raging over the meaning and importance of history is a cultural battle of opposing worldviews. “The cultural conflict that currently engulfs America and the West is designed to dethrone and replace the Biblical worldview with the ideas of fallible human beings.”¹⁹ As a result, human history has become a propaganda tool to manipulate society into a specific pagan worldview. Although many worldviews compete against the Biblical worldview, “Secular Humanism is the dominant worldview in our secular colleges and universities;”²⁰ therefore, this anti-God philosophy of life shapes the thinking of most people, including most Christians.

SECULAR HUMANISM AND HISTORY

Every worldview is founded on one of two presuppositional understandings of origins: God is the Creator of all things and eternal, or matter is self-existing and eternal. Since scientists in laboratories cannot observe or repeat the events that led to the origin of the world and mankind, acceptance of either origin position is based on faith. Thus, the Darwinian theory of origins is as much a faith-based system as is Biblical Christianity. The Evolutionist walks by faith and not by sight, just as does the Biblical Christian;²¹ however, the object of their faith, God or man, the Creator or the creature, is fundamentally and critically different.

“For the Humanist, the basic ingredients of both written and unwritten history are materialism, spontaneous generation, evolution, and an optimistic expectation of a future paradise on earth created by rational, scientific mankind.”²² The validity of the evolutionary theory of the origin of life is essential to the Secular Humanist’s worldview because this anthropocentric worldview dominates its philosophy of every aspect of life, including history. Because evolution as the origin of everything cannot be proven either through science or observation, this worldview faces a major hurdle from the beginning.

What are the historical events of creation according to the Secular Humanist who declares that God does not exist? Because he rejects the supernatural aspect inherent in divine creation, he is left to conclude that all creation is the product of materialistic forces and that these forces are apparent in the continual movement to a more orderly society as reflected in the events of human history. “Step by step up the ages man has marched toward a higher civilization. This is the way the world has grown into its present shape; and we are still only in the beginning of our long march. Man is not yet really civilized. It is only the dawn.”²³ To the Secular Humanist, history is a chronicling of man’s emergence from the primordial ooze into scientific genius and utopia on earth.

Even though the Secular Humanist adheres to the grisly natural selection process, he has a surprisingly optimistic outlook for the conclusion of human history. In fact, the Humanist Manifesto II declares, “(W)hat more daring a goal for humankind than for each person to become, in ideal as well as practice, a citizen of a world community. It is a classical vision; we can now give it new vitality. Humanism thus interpreted is a moral force that has time on its side. We believe that humankind has the potential intelligence, good will, and cooperative skill to implement this commitment in the decades ahead.”²⁴ This optimism is grounded in the twin beliefs that everything in existence came from nothing and that the universe is controlled by chance. The Humanist Manifesto implies that man is progressing toward increased organization and a perfect world; however, every new opinion in the Secular Humanist theology is riddled with inconsistencies and problems that, when they become too apparent to be retained, require changed opinions that inevitably have their own problems. Thus, the humanist’s secular worldview is ever changing and never based on reality because its foundation ignores and denigrates the absolute, enduring Truth of God’s Word.

Even some Secular Humanists recognize that their worldview cannot guarantee an upward progression. As one humanist leader admitted, “Many Humanists worship the myth of Progress, and judge all programmes by whether they contribute to a progressive view of history. Humanists surely ought to work for progressive improvement without personally believing that progress exists in

¹⁷Mark A. Beliles and Stephen K. McDowell, *America’s Providential History*, 2nd ed. (Charlottesville, VA: Providence Press, 1991) viii.

¹⁸Garry J. Moes, *Streams of Civilization*, vol. 2 5th ed. (Arlington Heights, IL: Christian Liberty Press, 2003) vi.

¹⁹David A. Noebel, *The Battle for Truth* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 2001) viii.

²⁰Noebel, *Battle* 6.

²¹Bill Perkins, ed. *Transcripts from Steeling the Mind of America Conference* (Green Forest, AR: New Leaf Press, 1995) 211.

²²David A. Noebel, *Understanding the Times*, 3rd ed. (Manitou Springs, CO: Summit Press, 1992) 722.

²³Noebel, *Understanding* 724.

²⁴Kurtz 23.

the womb of nature or that there is an inevitable march of human history.”²⁵ Nevertheless, this view of inevitable upward historical progress continues as a main component of the modern Secular Humanist’s worldview.

If man is consistently moving forward toward some ultimate utopia with no supernatural force to assist him, then what causes this irresistible movement? The Humanist’s theology began with belief that “(H)istory is a record of man’s development as conditioned by his social environment,”²⁶ a conclusion consistent with his presuppositional starting point that God does not exist. Humanist leaders quickly realized that man can not maintain the goal of upward progress using only this conclusion, so they began encouraging enlightened man to assist in changing the world for the better. “While there is much that we do not know, humans are responsible for what we are or will become. No deity will save us; we must save ourselves.”²⁷ The Secular Humanist firmly believes that any individual can change history for the better and that the changes of many can cause noticeable improvement in the world. This anthropocentric wishful thinking is their pitiful attempt to bring about their own salvation apart from the only Savior.

The Secular Humanist’s assertion that man can save himself presents problems because at the same time, he has been forced to conclude through history that the Biblical Christian worldview can bring valuable changes, too, not through man but through the work of the God/man Jesus Christ. Every civilized, technologically advanced nation in modern history has had its basis in the Judeo-Christian thought system and ethic. Ironically, as Humanist thought has corrupted this Biblical foundation, these nations have self-destructed. Humanist indoctrination through public schools and even many churches is hastening this disintegration in the United States. In order to bolster his godless theology, the Humanist must destroy the credibility of the Christian position regarding man’s salvific inabilities; therefore, he avers that man’s ideologies and not individual men themselves shape history and that ideologies evolve, making newer ideologies better than others.²⁸ Christianity’s position that God is the only Creator and Savior is an old theory and thereby removed as a valid ideology able to effect valuable change in modern human history. After all, “Humanists believe Humanism is the dominant ideology—which allows them to claim that man’s ideologies influence history while they restrict Christianity and other worldviews from positively affecting the present or the future.”²⁹ Consequently, they believe that those adhering to Secular Humanism hold the only worldview that can propel mankind to the perfect utopian society. This historical outlook is suspect in view of the subjective element of the Humanist theories and the inconsistencies of the evolutionary origin position on which Secular Humanism was erected. “Humanism definitely places the destiny of man within the very broad limits of this natural world. It submits that men can find plenty of scope and meaning in their lives through...helping to evolve a new species surpassing Man.”³⁰ What will that new species be? According to Humanist Victor J. Stenger, “Given our own severely limited physical bodies, we can never hope to live longer than a century or to explore much beyond the confines of earth. Imagine, however, being part of a collective consciousness of all humankind and computerkind, with mental powers and sensory inputs infinitely superior to the ones we now possess....With our infinitely expanded mental capacity, we would be able to think thoughts, to enjoy pleasures of beauty and intellect, beyond our wildest dreams and fantasies.”³¹ This proposition that man will eventually attain a super-intellect capable of sensory overload is the best man can offer from a worldview that denies the existence of the Creator. Scripture calls this arrogant manifestation of anthropocentric idolatry stupidity. *All mankind is stupid, devoid of knowledge. Every goldsmith is put to shame by his idols, for his molten images are deceitful, and there is no breath in them.* (Jeremiah 51:17) The Apostle Paul declared, *Professing to be wise, they became fools and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures.* (Romans 1:22-23) Man without God cannot plumb the depths of divine creative power because he has deluded himself into believing he actually has the power to effect worthy, lasting changes in his sin-dominated life and in the sin-riddled world.

In contrast to Secular Humanism, the Biblical worldview is founded on the first statement in the first book of the Bible, the Book of Genesis. *In the beginning, God created the Heavens and the earth.* (Genesis 1:1) From the beginning, God the Creator has been the sole author of history and sole possessor of the ability to control that history to bring it to His purposed climax.³² Again, we see that the differences between these two competing worldviews revolve around their answers to the question of God’s existence and creative power.

²⁵Noebel, Understanding 729.

²⁶Noebel, Battle 302.

²⁷Kurtz 16.

²⁸Noebel, Battle 303.

²⁹Noebel, Understanding 732.

³⁰Corliss Lamont, The Philosophy of Humanism (New York: Frederick Ungar, 1982) 282.

³¹Victor J. Stenger, Not by Design (Buffalo, NY: Prometheus Books, 1988) 186.

³²Noebel, Understanding 765.

LINEAR VERSUS CIRCULAR WORLDVIEWS

The Biblical worldview provides the perspective that human history is moving toward a predetermined goal. This philosophy that history had a beginning and is moving toward a specific end is known as the linear conception of history. “Christians believe that human history had a specific beginning (creation) and is being directed by God toward a specific end (judgment), and that historic events follow a nonrepetitive course toward that end.”³³ This linear view of history in which event follows event to a preordained conclusion is unique to the Biblical historical viewpoint and began with the nation Israel. Moses penned the Torah so that the citizens of the young nation Israel would understand their origin, explaining that the God of Israel began the historical process that led to that moment in history when they would claim the Promised Land as their divinely ordained residence. Moses included in the Torah a history of the nation Israel’s call into existence, their enslavement by the Egyptians, redemption by God, and preparation for moving into the Promised Land. On a small scale, Israel’s history illustrates the entire historical process. Man was created by God, proceeded to enslave himself to sin, and was redeemed by the Creator through whom all things will be consummated. “This belief in a climatic conclusion causes the Christian to adopt a linear conception of history.”³⁴

Purely pagan philosophies hold to a cyclical view of human history in which all events are determined by chance. This cyclical interpretation has dominated all worldviews antithetical to Biblical Truth. For example, “The pagan Greeks believed that history was a repetitive cycle of events, which led to the conclusion that it is an irrational riddle.”³⁵ The Greek historian Thucydides proposed that under certain pressures man acts a certain way and will act that way again if similar events occur. He thought that those recognizing these behaviors would be able to foresee future events; however, he did acknowledge that the unknowable factor was blind chance.³⁶ Although certain cyclical events do occur in the course of history, they “are only part of a movement toward an end, a movement that is linear!”³⁷ Ironically, because a linear view of history originated with God, Secular Humanism’s optimistic linear view of upward, always improving evolution would not exist apart from the impact of the Biblical Christianity it seeks to deny.

The Foundations of Human History

In essence, the Bible is an historical book. “For the Christian, the Bible is a record of concrete historical fact containing true stories about real events and real people.”³⁸ However, like any historian, God the Holy Spirit was selective in the events He chose to use to present the Biblical view of history. This selectivity, which encompasses human history from beginning to end, results in many historical gaps that the Bible does not attempt to fill.³⁹ Even so, Scripture clearly reveals that the complete purpose of all human history is doxological, to glorify the Creator. In fact, God leaves believers on earth rather than immediately taking them to heaven so that they have the opportunity to live their spiritual lives in His prescribed manner, which inevitably results in fulfillment of His doxological purpose for them. God’s involvement in the events of human history brings glory to Himself through Jesus Christ whose salvific work on the cross ensured that human history will culminate as God the Father planned, with Christ’s righteous rule and reign for all eternity. *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.* (Revelation 4:11)

The Biblical understanding and interpretation of history begins with the realization that God created the universe for His own sovereign purpose. According to the infallible Bible, God began the historical process at creation and controls the outcome of the entire plan for His creatures. Not only does the Bible identify the Creator of the historical process, but it also provides the model for interpreting history. “The overarching assumption for the Christian historian is a belief in the sovereignty of God in all human affairs and the decreed outworking of His purposes.”⁴⁰

THE EXISTENCE OF THE TRIUNE GOD

“The Bible’s philosophy of history begins with the eternal, personal God who exists as three distinct Persons: Father, Son and Spirit.”⁴¹ The eternal existence of the Triune God who made all things provides the ultimate expression of reality and the basis for an accurate understanding of human history. “Without the Trinity, Christianity would not have the answers that modern man

³³Noebel, Battle 327.

³⁴Noebel, Battle 328.

³⁵Moes v.

³⁶Joint Association of Classical Teachers, The World of Athens: An Introduction to Classical Athenian Culture, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989) 299.

³⁷Ron Merryman, “Toward a Biblical Philosophy of History: Seeing History as God Sees it,” Musing with Merryman: Along the Rabbit Trails vol. IV, no. 4 (July 2005) 1.

³⁸Noebel, Understanding 766.

³⁹John D. Hannah, Our Legacy: The History of Christian Doctrine (Colorado Springs: Navpress, 2001) 30.

⁴⁰Hannah, 30.

⁴¹Ronald E. Showers, What on Earth is God Doing? (Neptune, NJ: Loizeaux Brothers, 1973) 11.

needs.”⁴² Historical meaning flows directly from recognition of the eternal existence of the Creator and His plan for human history.

Since the Biblical understanding of history is built on the truth that God exists, anyone who denies His existence is unable to understand history. In fact, the Secular Humanist resents Christianity’s insistence that God is personally involved in the affairs of human history. Nevertheless, “the Christian view of history is not merely a belief in the direction of history by divine providence; it is a belief in the intervention by God in the life of mankind by direct action at certain definite points in time and place.”⁴³

Clearly, the Secular Humanist and Biblical philosophies of history are diametrically opposed. The reason for this opposition is the presuppositional starting point regarding the existence of God. Because the Secular Humanist presumes that unidentified eternal matter is the origin of all creation, he views history as man’s progression from survival of the fittest to the ultimate evolution of a new species that surpasses man in all ways. Thus, man becomes his own savior and Jesus Christ, the only Savior, becomes superfluous. Because the Biblical Christian grounds his thinking on the Truth that God is the source of all creation, he rejoices in God’s providential control of history in moving events to His sovereign conclusion of Jesus Christ as the Savior of mankind and Victor over sin, death, Satan, and the world.

BEHIND ALL HISTORY: THE SPIRITUAL CONFLICT

The doxological purpose for human history and the existence of a triune God are only part of the foundation for understanding history that God provides through Scripture. A complete understanding rests on recognition of the spiritual battle that began before the beginning of human history. Though this battle is not revealed fully in the Book of Genesis, the book of beginnings, other parts of Scripture indicate that before the creation of man, the highest angel, Lucifer, rebelled against the Creator.⁴⁴ Lucifer, who was renamed Satan after his fall, is the most powerful, beautiful, and intelligent being ever created by God. The classic account of Satan before his fall is found in Ezekiel: *Son of man, take up a lamentation over the king of Tyre and say to him, “Thus says the Lord God, ‘You had the seal of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. You were in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone was your covering: the ruby, the topaz and the diamond; the beryl, the onyx and the jasper; the lapis lazuli, the turquoise and the emerald; and the gold, the workmanship of your settings and sockets, was in you. On the day that you were created they were prepared. You were the anointed cherub who covers and I placed you there. You were on the holy mountain of God; you walked in the midst of the stones of fire. You were blameless in your ways from the day you were created until unrighteousness was found in you.’”* (Ezekiel 28:12-15)

According to Biblical theologian Arno C. Gaebelien and others, the description of the King of Tyre in this passage doesn’t accurately describe any historical king of Tyre but does fit the angelic being known as Satan. As the anointed cherub, Satan held the highest position in the ruling government of God.⁴⁵ His prestigious dwelling place was the garden of God, and his elaborate garment was encrusted with precious ornaments and jewels, which correspond to nine of the twelve stones in the breastplate of the high priest of Israel.⁴⁶ “Whenever these jewels are mentioned together in Scripture, they have something to do with the very presence of God.”⁴⁷ These stones combined with the name “anointed cherub” set Satan apart from the other angelic creatures and indicate he “was the ruler of the angels and led them in their worship and praise of God.”⁴⁸

Lucifer rebelled against his Creator at some point before the creation of man when he determined in his thinking to usurp the ruling authority of God. “*But you [Lucifer] said in your heart, ‘I will ascend to heaven. I will raise my throne above the stars of God, and I will sit on the mount of assembly in the recesses of the north. I will ascend above the heights of the clouds. I will make myself like the Most High.’”* Isaiah 14:13-14 In choosing to rebel against God, Lucifer arrogantly concluded that he could exist without obedience to or dependence on his Creator. By placing himself in the role of God’s adversary, Satan also placed himself under divine judgment for his arrogant thoughts.⁴⁹ In order to prevent that judgment, after his fall but before the creation of man, the creature Satan persuaded one-third of all angels to revere and follow him rather than the God who created them. “Satan organized his angels in several ranks, so that they could carry on the work of his kingdom efficiently.”⁵⁰ That work includes persuading man to join in their rebellion against God, using the same principles that formulate Secular Humanism as a prime mechanism. In Lucifer’s arrogant rebellion against his Creator, he became a fallen creature and the arch-enemy of God, thereby setting the stage for the on-

⁴²Francis A. Schaeffer, *Genesis in space and time* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 1972) 18.

⁴³C. T. McIntire, ed., *God, History, and Historians: Modern Christian Views of History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977) 31.

⁴⁴Roger T. Forster and V. Paul Marston, *God’s Strategy in Human History* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 1974) 45.

⁴⁵Arno C. Gaebelien, *The Prophet Ezekiel: An Exposition*, 2nd ed. rev. (Neptune, NJ: Loizeaux Brothers, 1972) 185.

⁴⁶Charles Feinberg, *The Prophecy of Ezekiel: The Glory of the Lord* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1984) 162.

⁴⁷Dean and Ice 44.

⁴⁸Dean and Ice 44.

⁴⁹Joseph C. Dillow, *The Reign of the Servant Kings: A study of Eternal Security and the Final Significance of Man*, 2nd ed. (Hayesville, NC: Schoettle Publishing Co., 1993) 1.

⁵⁰Showers 13.

going spiritual battle for the souls of mankind that will continue until the completion of human history and his total destruction.

Scripture is silent on the amount of time that elapsed between the rebellion of Satan and his angels and God's creation of man and human history. "God's message to humanity tells us only such facts about Satan as are relevant to our own history, and with this we must be content."⁵¹ Regardless, at some later time, the move of Satan's original rebellion was countered by another of God's creative acts. On the sixth day of creation, He created man as the means of determining the outcome of the satanic rebellion.

In the wake of Satan's rebellion, man arrived on earth ushering in human history. Scant information is given in Scripture about the reason for man's creation, but we can reasonably deduce from it that man is at the center of resolving this satanic rebellion. Psalm 8:3-8 gives a taste of man's responsibility in this invisible but decisive conflict. *When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have ordained, what is man that You take thought of him, and the son of man that You care for him? Yet You have made him a little lower than God, and You crown him with glory and majesty! You make him to rule over the works of Your hands; You have put all things under his feet, all sheep and oxen, and also the beasts of the field, the birds of the heavens and the fish of the sea, whatever passes through the paths of the seas.* (Psalm 8:3-8)

God gave man the responsibility of ruling creation. He took the glory and honor that belonged to the anointed cherub Lucifer and granted it to a lesser creature, man. In this way, He used a lesser creation who chose to live life in humble servitude to and absolute dependence on Him to demonstrate the foolish arrogance of trying to make life work apart from obeying Him. God uses human history to show He is the ruling authority in the universe and all rebellion against Him will be judged. By choosing to live in dependence on God, man, the lower creature, shows everything that the greatest creature Satan lost through craving and pursuing arrogant autonomy. In the future, God will give his glory to those "followers of Jesus Christ who exemplified humble obedience and dependence on God during the Incarnation."⁵² Thus, human history is the physical manifestation of the spiritual battle that involves moves and countermoves between God and Satan but without either manipulating mankind's decisions. "God and Satan do intervene directly in history, but more frequently they carry out their purposes through intermediate agents. They both prompt and use the actions of humans, nations, and angels for their own purposes."⁵³ In eternity past, God designed a plan compatible with His character that will win ultimate victory by proving beyond doubt the creature's responsibility to obey the Creator. This victory will culminate in the eternal reign of the Messiah, which will bring glory to God for all eternity. This doxological purpose of the divine plan is seen on many different levels in the lives of individuals and the course of nations. The Book of Genesis introduces many principles necessary to guide the believer in recognizing God's glorification in the outworking of human history.

THE BIBLICAL PHILOSOPHY OF HISTORY AS TAUGHT BY PAUL

The Biblical philosophy of history is encapsulated in Paul's message to the Athenians during his second missionary journey. As Paul presented the Gospel and Biblical historiography in his sermon to the Athenians, he demonstrated that "(Q)uestions about origins affect our understanding of both God's world and God's Word."⁵⁴ In the Areopagus, the gathering place of the ancient Greek philosophers, Paul gave the good news of Christ's salvation plan. He built his argument for the Gospel on the eternal existence of the Triune Creator. The Epicureans and Stoics also meeting there were intrigued by his reasoning. These worldly philosophers wanted to know more about the new God whom Paul extolled. Was He worthy of inclusion in their pantheon of gods? Paul told them that his God wasn't a new god at all. He pointed to an already existing Greek monument dedicated to the Unknown God and used it as a catalyst to explain that the God of creation as revealed in Scripture was that God. From this creation starting point, Paul succinctly explained the purpose of human history, the central Person in history, and the eventual culmination of history in the judgment of mankind.⁵⁵ *So Paul stood in the midst of the Areopagus and said, "Men of Athens, 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."* (Acts 17:22-25)

In recent years, much has been made from this passage in the area of Creation Evangelism, and rightly so. "Paul began a great sermon as an apologetic (defense) to explain the Christian message from the foundation and upwards."⁵⁶ In order to change the minds of these early Secular Humanists about Christ's salvation gift, Paul had to first change their thinking from denial of the

⁵¹Forster and Marston 45.

⁵²Dillow 3-4.

⁵³Showers 9-10.

⁵⁴Henry Morris III, *After Eden* (Green Forest, AR: Master Books, 2003) 33.

⁵⁵Mal Couch, *A Bible Handbook to the Acts of the Apostles* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, (1999) 338-39.

⁵⁶Ken Hamm, *Why Won't They Listen?*, 2nd ed. (Green Forest, AR: Master Books, 2003) 54.

Creator's existence to acceptance of it; therefore, he grounded the Gospel message in the historical reality of creation. Every unbeliever is in denial of God's existence and will never accept the message of the Gospel of Christ until he submits to the reality of God as Creator.

Christians today overlook the importance of Paul's Biblical philosophy of history as the focus of the Gospel presentation. Paul endorsed the basic tenet of Christianity that there is "a God who is distinct from and independent of the natural world."⁵⁷ He unmistakably presented a distinction between the Creator and the creature, a distinction between superior and inferior that must be understood before the Gospel can be believed. The Creator and the cross are forever intertwined. If the historicity of the creation account is false, the Gospel built on that historical event is false also. If Christ did not create everything exactly as He says in His Word, then He did not pay the sin penalty for everyone either. If the creature is as great as the Creator as the Secular Humanist believes, salvation from sin is unnecessary. Therefore, an understanding of the Creator/creature distinction is the foundation for all Scriptural principles from salvation to the Biblical philosophy of history.

Paul continued his Gospel presentation to the Greek philosophers saying, "*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.*" (Acts 17:26-27) Paul explained that not only did God create all things but that all nations also exist from His omnipotent hand. God alone determines the geographical boundaries of the various people groups. He alone controls the rise and fall of all nations for the purposes of moving man to seek after Him and moving history to the end He has preordained. Paul's understanding of human history matched Peter's understanding that God does not wish "for any to perish but for all to come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:9b); therefore, God is intimately involved in the events of human history. The Old Testament recorded many past divine insertions in human history, all of which pointed to the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ because without the historical resurrection of Jesus Christ, the Biblical worldview would not exist nor would a Biblical philosophy of history.⁵⁸ God gives every Christian the responsibility "to confront the unbelieving world with a biblical interpretation of history"⁵⁹ that focuses on the only Creator and Savior.

Paul concluded his Gospel presentation to the Athenians with a declaration about the culmination of human history. "*Therefore, having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all people everywhere should repent because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man [Jesus Christ] whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead.*" (Acts 17:30-31) With great economy, Paul provided the Biblical philosophy of history, grounding it in the historical events of creation and the resurrection. He delineated the beginning and end of the historical process, emphasizing that God controls them. "Through the resurrection, God reveals His plan for mankind by conquering sin and guaranteeing a triumphant end to human history."⁶⁰ No other philosophy of history provides a guarantee of a victorious culmination because no other philosophy of history has the Creator in control of events to bring about His desired end.

Genesis as the Foundation for Interpreting History

In order to understand the basic historical principles found in the Book of Genesis, clarification on the proper way to read the book is necessary. Too many modern-day scholars embrace an allegorical reading of Genesis that results in theologies that are decidedly anti-Biblical, even blasphemous. An allegorical interpretation destroys the historicity of the Genesis events, thus weakening or even demolishing the divine theologies based on them, including salvation.

The foundation of Biblical historiography is that God has communicated to man for the purpose of being understood; therefore, a normal reading of the text of Scripture is simply "letting God use His own inspired words to communicate His own inspired meaning."⁶¹ "(I)f one takes God at His Word, accepting [that] the meaning of words and sentences are determined by grammar and context, *one reads* (not interpreting) God's Word literally."⁶² Reading the text of Scripture literally means reading it like any other body of literature. When Biblical poetry uses metaphors, a literal interpretation views those metaphors as designed to most effectively communicate a specific point. Likewise, no metaphorical meaning is attached to any text unless specified to be such in the context of that Scripture.

The Secular Humanist operating on an evolutionary position considers the fundamental, Bible-believing Christian who interprets

⁵⁷Gordon H. Clark, *A Christian Philosophy of Education*, 2nd rev. ed. (Jefferson, MD: The Trinity Foundation, 1988) 23.

⁵⁸Noebel, *Thinking* 146.

⁵⁹Moes v.

⁶⁰Noebel, *Thinking* 151.

⁶¹Morris III 26.

⁶²Morris III 25.

Scripture literally to be irrational. “(P)erhaps the best example of group irrationality is Christian fundamentalism....The most visible conflict between fundamentalism and science is caused by fundamentalist’ literal interpretation of Genesis.”⁶³ The main area of difference between this pagan worldview and the Biblical worldview is in the area of epistemological authority. The Secular Humanist places his epistemic authority in fallible man while the Bible-believing Christian places his in the infallible, inerrant Word of God, which declares itself to be the thinking of Christ. *For who has known the mind of the Lord, that he will instruct Him? But we have the mind of Christ.* (1 Corinthians 2:16).

THE BOOK OF GENESIS IN HISTORICAL INTERPRETATION

While many Bible scholars recognize the importance of the first eleven chapters of Genesis in the areas of science, economics, and philosophy, few have attempted to examine the fundamental principles of Biblical historiography from these foundational chapters. A Bible-first epistemology demands that the principles for understanding history be derived from the text of Scripture, beginning with the first events recorded by God in His Word. “The Book of Genesis gives vital information concerning the origin of all things—and therefore the meaning of all things—which would otherwise be forever inaccessible to man.”⁶⁴ Without an accurate understanding of origins, an accurate understanding of Scripture and of human history is impossible.

Although many principles for interpreting history are derived from the entire Bible, the foundational principles are presented in the early chapters of Genesis. Paul recognized the importance of understanding Genesis in order to understand the rest of Scripture; therefore, when he gave his message to the Athenians, he grounded it in the historicity of the Genesis account while at the same time presenting an encapsulated Biblical philosophy of history through his explanation of the Biblical positions on origins and early history. Genesis is primarily a historical book providing eyewitness accounts of pivotal events from creation to the death of Joseph. The text is not a chronicling of events but a historical sketch of the origin of Israel, the nation set apart unto God. Genesis, then, along with the rest of the Bible, is a unique history presenting the divine viewpoint of reality. “It presents a theological view of history, interpreting with a divine cause as well as a human one.”⁶⁵

With his understanding of the importance of history, Moses wrote a statement in Deuteronomy that refocused Israel’s attention on the historical past and God’s involvement in it. *Remember the days of old, consider the years of all generations. Ask your father, and he will inform you, your elders, and they will tell you. When the Most High gave the nations their inheritance, when He separated the sons of man, He set boundaries of the peoples according to the number of the sons of Israel.* (Deuteronomy 32:7-8) Moses wrote this historical reminder to provide the young nation Israel with an accurate record of their origins. He exhorted them to remember history and God’s involvement in the events of the past to achieve His purpose for Israel. “As the wilderness generation is about to enter the Promised Land, Moses is reminding them that their God is the God of the historical process.”⁶⁶ The entire Torah provides a detailed historical account of the early life of Israel and God’s involvement in those events of history as He called them out as a new race of people separate from all other nations and peoples.

SEVEN PRINCIPLES FOR INTERPRETING HISTORY

ONE: ORIGINS

Israel’s history, as well as the history of all divisions of people, is grounded in the creation origin position of Genesis. Both Moses’ references in his communication of the history of Israel and Paul’s references in his presentation of the Gospel to the Greeks indicate that an individual’s origin position plays a determinative role in forming his belief system in all areas from the social and governmental constructs to science and theology.

Because human history and origins are inevitably and inseparably interconnected, whenever man seeks to attach meaning to history, he must study origins.⁶⁷ The first verse of the Bible is the foundation on which the rest of the Bible depends. Finding meaning in human history demands starting with the Biblical starting point. *In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth* (Genesis 1:1). This verse provides the first principle in developing a Biblical framework for interpreting human history, acceptance of the Biblical view of origins.

The Bible specifically and frequently states that God is the sovereign Creator of the universe, which includes human history, and that He is personally involved in the historical process. This position allows no neutrality; one worldview begins with God and the

⁶³Henry M. Morris, *The Long War Against God* (Green Forest, AR: Master Books, 2003) 118.

⁶⁴Henry M. Morris, *The Genesis Record* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1976) 17.

⁶⁵Allen P. Ross, *Creation and Blessing: A Guide to the Study and Exposition of Genesis* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2002) 58.

⁶⁶Merryman 1.

⁶⁷Charlie Clough, unpublished Framework notes page 1.

other does not. To take every thought captive to the obedience of Christ and live as a Biblical Christian requires presupposing the Truth of God's Word on every subject including origins. Therefore, operating on the Creator/creature distinction means God's "word must be the standard by which we judge all things and the starting point of our thinking."⁶⁸

PAUL'S CONFRONTATION OVER ORIGINS

Believer's throughout history have had to deal with the competing origin position of the pagan culture in which they live. The Apostle Paul dealt with it while preaching the Gospel in Lystra. *At Lystra a man was sitting who had no strength in his feet, lame from his mother's womb, who had never walked. This man was listening to Paul as he spoke, who when he had fixed his gaze on him and had seen that he had faith to be made well, said with a loud voice, "Stand upright on your feet." And he leaped up and began to walk. When the crowds saw what Paul had done, they raised their voice, saying in the Lycaonian language, "The gods have become like men and have come down to us." And they began calling Barnabas, Zeus, and Paul, Hermes, because he was the chief speaker.* (Acts 14:8-12) These unbelievers, who operated on an origin position that denied God as Creator, used their pagan framework to reinterpret Paul's message. Their origin belief dictated their presuppositional thought system, which led them to interpret all events falsely, even Paul's clear presentation of the Gospel. For the Gospel to make sense to them, Paul had to move their thinking out of that pagan grid and into the Biblical origin position. *But when the apostles Barnabas and Paul heard of it, they tore their robes and rushed out into the crowd, crying out and saying, "Men, why are you doing these things? We are also men of the same nature as you, and preach the gospel to you that you should turn from these vain things to a living God, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and all that is in them."* (Acts 14:14-15) Paul exhorted these hearers to change their origin position by reminding them that he and Barnabas had not created anything any more than had their false gods. He pushed the discussion all the way back to the beginning of human history so his hearers could interpret the Gospel message correctly.

MOSES AND ORIGINS

When Moses wrote the first words of the Book of Genesis, he had the same objective as Paul. The Israelites to whom he wrote had been enslaved in Egypt for four hundred years and were familiar with the Egyptian pantheon of gods. They were preparing to move into the Land that God had given them, a land currently inhabited by people groups that, like Egypt, worshipped the creature rather than the Creator. Thus, Moses grounded his writings in the accurate theological starting point, God as the originator of all creation. Understanding this starting point allowed the Israelites to realize that everything the pagans worshipped had been created by the God of Israel. "Consequently, their gods should pose no real threat to Israel, for the creation must be subject to the Creator."⁶⁹

Israel's understanding of both the true and false origin positions gave them the comfort and confidence necessary to face the challenges of defeating the inhabitants of the Land of Promise, some of whom were far more technologically advanced than they. These pagans would be fighting with manmade weapons admired by all warriors who had rejected God. In order to win, the Israelites had to believe that God, the Creator of all, would secure victory against the seemingly invincible forces of the pagan world.

COMPETING ORIGIN MYTHS

Far too many people consider the historical account of creation in the Book of Genesis to be mythological, i.e., on par with other ancient origin myths. However, a comparison of ancient pagan origin literature to the Biblical narrative reveals stark contrasts. As noted by Victor Hamilton, "It is in the comparison of literature of identical general theme that the distinctiveness of biblical faith and message appears."⁷⁰ Although the common belief is that many different origin stories exist, in reality, only two do. The Biblical narrative, which has remained the same throughout history, begins with eternal God creating all things while all pagan origin theories, which deny an eternal Creator, begin with eternal matter in a watery chaos or other primordial form⁷¹ and include false gods.

One of the most commonly known origin myths is the Mesopotamian *Enuma elish*. This epic is important in understanding the Genesis narrative because Abraham, the primogenitor of all Jews including Christ, was called out of Ur of the Chaldeans in Mesopotamia, grew up hearing it, and may even have believed it for a time. A basic understanding of this myth provides greater insight into Abraham's move from Ur to the Land God showed him. Not only was this a geographical change for Abraham but a theological one as well. Victor Hamilton summarized the basic storyline of this myth in his book Handbook on the Pentateuch. "Before the creation of anything there were two divine beings, Apsu, the male divine personification of fresh waters, and Tiamat,

⁶⁸Bahnsen 25.

⁶⁹Ross 102.

⁷⁰Victor P. Hamilton, Handbook on the Pentateuch (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1982) 35.

⁷¹Henry M. Morris, Biblical Creationism (Green Forest, AR: Master Books, 2003) 17.

the female divine personification of marine waters. Through their mingling (or mating) a second generation is produced, Lahmu and Lahamu, both perhaps to be associated with the silt produced by these waters. Then comes a third generation, Anshar and Kishar, the horizon. And from them comes Anu the god of heaven, and from him Ea (Enki). The senior deity Apsu is, however, unable to sleep because these younger deities are making too much noise. Over the protests of his wife Tiamat, but at the prompting of Mummu his servant, Apsu plans to remedy the problem by killing these boisterous gods. But before he can implement his plan Ea places a magic spell on Apsu, and then kills him. Aroused and indignant over her husband's unfortunate end and spurred on by some sympathetic supporters, Tiamat vows to carry out Apsu's plan of theocide. She takes as her second husband Kingu. At this point the major character of the story, Marduk the son of Ea, emerges. He is charged with the responsibility of leading and defending those earmarked for execution by Tiamat, a challenge he accepts with the qualification that, if successful the gods will make him their head. After being suckled by goddesses he is ready for battle (theomachy). Marduk swiftly eliminates Tiamat, and captures Kingu and the rest of the entourage. Marduk then splits Tiamat in two, making heaven from one half of her cadaver, and from the other half the earth. The imprisoned gods he subsequently charges with the responsibility of building him a permanent home, Babylon. Further reflection and an outburst of protest by the employed gods leads Marduk to relieve the gods of this manual work by a second creation, the creation of man. He does this by having Kingu killed and using his blood to create man. The story concludes with a royal banquet at which Marduk formally receives permanent kingship, and finally the listing of his fifty names, each of which extols Marduk.⁷²

All pagan creation mythologies follow the same basic pattern and tell stories similar to the *Enuma elish*, albeit with different names for the gods and goddesses. Through sexual misconduct, the gods created man for the purpose of relieving themselves of work. This sexual wrongdoing with man indicates the man-made aspect of the myths. Another recurrent theme is that man cannot help his evil because the gods made him that way, a litany of victimization determinism that continues to dominate the thinking of rebellious modern man. These ancient mythologies attempt to answer the ultimate questions about reality while at the same time seeking insulation from the Creator. Biblical reality radically differs from the prevailing view of modern man just as it did in the ancient world⁷³ because man continues this dedication to finding the meaning of life apart from its Creator. Throughout history, man's view of reality hasn't changed, only the nomenclature he uses to define it. The mystical thinking of the ancient world shaped the thinking of the Greeks who considered Paul and Barnabas to be minor deities little different from those they already worshipped. Mysticism continues to taint modern man's worldview, causing similar difficulties in understanding the Gospel.

THE ORIGIN POSITION OF ASSYRIA AND ITS EFFECT ON HISTORY

No historical examination of a nation or civilization is complete without an examination and understanding of its origin position. In fact, a correct understanding of its origin position aids in predicting its views on law, government, economics, science, and social structure. For example, an understanding of the Assyrian origin position explains their conquest and captivity policies, which God used to judge the Northern Kingdom of Israel and at the same time spread His Truth to the world through His dispersed people. "God raised up Assyria to be His instrument for chastening His apostate people."⁷⁴

The Rabshakeh, an Assyrian leader, revealed the religious position of the Assyrians in his words at the fuller's field in Jerusalem. "*Has any one of the gods of the nations delivered his land from the hand of the king of Assyria? Where are the gods of Hamath and Arpad? Where are the gods of Sepharvaim, Hena and Ivvah? Have they delivered Samaria from my hand? Who among all the gods of the lands have delivered their land from my hand, that the Lord should deliver Jerusalem from my hand?*" (2 Kings 18:33-35) The Rabshakeh's words revealed a polytheistic theology based on the Assyrian understanding of the origin of all things. Their concept of conquest was built on their belief that stronger gods conquered weaker ones. This worldview made them confident that their gods, who had brought them many victories and no defeats, must be the strongest gods because no other gods had been able to defeat them. If this pagan presupposition were true, then the Rabshakeh's argument against the Israelites made perfect sense. Assyria would inevitably defeat Israel. However, in his comparison of *YAHWEH*, the God of Israel, to his Assyrian gods, he ignored his innate knowledge of the God of Israel as the Creator of everything. All pagan gods are equally worthless because they are figments of their followers' imaginations and lusts. They aren't even creations of God, much less equal or greater than He.

As did all other people groups surrounding them, the Assyrians held to the philosophy of continuity of being built on their pagan origin view. Their mythology taught that the chaotic conditions that characterized the lives of their gods brought order to the universe. This illogical thought system continues in the modern Darwinian Theory proposition that all things gradually and inevitably change from chaos/disorder into unity/order. Unlike the ancient Egyptians who viewed cosmic order as an innate part of

⁷²Hamilton 37-38.

⁷³Ross 52.

⁷⁴Showers 43.

creation, the Assyrians viewed order as a perfection to be gained through the planned chaos of war with the victor providing the desired order. They believed that their king, using the state and its army, was a co-worker with the gods in bringing order.⁷⁵

The Assyrian's policy toward their captives also mirrored their origin position. They deported all those captured in battle to other areas of the empire, moving new captives from their own countries to other recently conquered territories. This redistribution of cultures established a chaos designed to suppress rebellion and conspiracy and thereby create order out of the inevitable chaos of war.⁷⁶ A chaotic origin position and planned chaos were the foundations of the social order in the Assyrian Empire.⁷⁷ The Assyrians were eventually able to destroy the Northern Kingdom only because God permitted it in order to judge His recalcitrant people.

The Assyrian's battle strategy also revealed their origin position, one they could not follow consistently. The Assyrian army's objective was to be on the offensive at all times. This attack mentality led to the development of siege craft for overthrowing walled cities. In the open battlefield, the infantry, slingers, and archers took the center position while the chariot cavalry assembled on the flanks. They began their assault with long range arrows set aflame to inflict quick casualties and instill terror in the enemy. Afterward, the chariots attempted to create a breach in the enemy's battle line. If successful, the infantry filled the breach and attempted to divide and surround the enemy.⁷⁸

The Assyrians used these orderly battle tactics to create chaos among the enemy so that they could restore order for their own benefit through the captive system they then employed. Ironically, their well-planned and well-implemented battle strategy reflected a Biblical origin position of an orderly Creator, rather than the chaotic origin position they espoused. In order to make life work in the reality created by God, these pagans were forced to borrow from the Biblical worldview.

ACCURATE HISTORY THROUGH UNDERSTANDING ORIGINS

The Biblical origin position is that eternal God created an orderly universe from nothing, the creature brought disorder through sin, and God is restoring order to this chaos with an organized plan. An examination of human history from this origin position reveals God's plan as it unfolds in the space-time continuum. The historian using the origin principle of the Biblical framework for interpreting human history can anticipate the philosophies and actions of those operating on the pagan origin position because little more than vocabulary and cultural mores have changed through the centuries.

Interpreting human history from the Biblical perspective aids in understanding the zeal of those who seek to destroy Christianity. Every culture that operates on the pagan origin position hates those who hold to the creation origin position because they expose the pagan's ignorance, arrogance, and foolishness. These cultures follow the pattern of the fallen angel Satan, who "desires to undermine God's expressed account of creation. By denying creation it is easier to deny God's plan of salvation and then the truth of all God's Word."⁷⁹ The attempt to deny the Creator is the foundation of the desire to make life work apart from Him, without accountability to Him, and with no need for Christ to save them.

Rejection of God's truth always leads to acceptance of the lie and idolatrous degeneration after which God begins to remove the restraints that protect that nation. Rejection of God's authority directly correlates with religious and social degradation and sexual perversion.⁸⁰ "This descent into degeneracy, both ancient and modern, is caused first of all by a rejection of God as Creator and Sovereign, equating ultimate reality and responsibility with the natural world."⁸¹ When man rejects God, he seeks to fill the void in his soul with something from within the created order, thereby breeding more arrogant self-absorption, which increases social and sexual perversions and creates more chaos in the society. Unless many people in the society repent, that is change their thinking about Christ as Savior and begin using His Word as the blueprint for living their lives, the chaos grows, fragmenting society and causing loss of stability and prosperity. Abandonment of the Creator/creature distinction produces gradual destruction of that culture as they escalate their determination to remove all personal responsibility to the Creator.

PRINCIPLES FOR INTERPRETING HISTORY TWO: WILLFUL DECEPTION AND PERVERSION OF TRUTH

The second principle used to interpret history from the divine perspective is that Satan practices willful deception and

⁷⁵Rousas John Rushdoony, *A Christian Survey of World History* (Vallecito, CA: Ross House Books, 1999) 20.

⁷⁶Mary Stanton and Albert Hyma, *Streams of Civilization*, vol. 1, (Arlington Heights, IL: Christian Liberty Press, 2000) 97.

⁷⁷Rushdoony 20.

⁷⁸Howard F. Vos, *Nelson's New Illustrated Bible Manners and Customs* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1999) 264.

⁷⁹Petersen 13.

⁸⁰Robert Dean, Jr., "Paganism and Homosexuality: Cultural Self-Destruction, Genesis 19:1-14" Sermon delivered on August 16, 2005, at West Houston Bible Church.

⁸¹Morris, *Genesis Record* 348.

perversion of the Truth against all mankind. This principle is first seen in Genesis chapter three with the fall of man and is closely connected to the importance of origins. (Genesis 3:1-6) Revelation 12:9 later identified the serpent as the fallen angel, Satan. "It is most likely that the chief angel, Lucifer, in some way took over this serpent (*nachash*) for purposes of disguise."⁸² Hence, Satan was the one who first perverted the Truth into a lie for the purpose of deceiving man, and he is the one who continues to twist the Truth for his own evil purposes. His influence on and temptation of man is part of his continuing battle to win the angelic conflict and escape God's punishment for his rebellion.

Satan challenged the veracity of God's Word in order to implant doubt in the mind of the first woman, *Ishah*, Eve. He learned from the woman's slightly inaccurate response to his initial question that she had already begun reevaluating divine reality from her own thinking instead of remaining focused exclusively on God's Truth. She not only misquoted God's Word, but she also seems to have added her own misperception to God's statement about the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. God's command had not forbidden touching the tree. Eve chose to pervert this Truth as the text does not declare that God's command included not touching the tree. Even though the woman sinned first, God didn't hold her responsible for the fall of the human race. Satan deceived her into sinning; however, Adam willfully disobeyed; therefore, he was the first to sin with full knowledge that he was disobeying God. Four thousand years later, Paul further explained this distinction. *For since by a man [Adam] came death, by a man [Jesus Christ] also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive.* (1 Corinthians 15:21-22) The woman Eve lacked Biblical discernment and, therefore, was easily deceived; however, the man Adam rebelled against God by knowingly choosing to determine reality apart from the divine Word. Scripture states, *And it was not Adam who was deceived, but the woman being deceived fell into transgression.* (1 Timothy 2:14) Because Adam willfully chose to be deceived and pervert the Truth on the basis of his own autonomy, he was solely responsible for sin's entrance into human history.

ORIGINAL TRUTH

This pattern of willful deception and perversion of the Truth continues to be a trend throughout human history as illustrated through an examination of different cultures. All people originally had the Truth because the progenitor of all people is Noah, but over time they chose to change it. Secular Humanist historians ignore the fact that some facet of society in every epoch has been aware of God and His attributes. This awareness of God as Creator flourished for centuries even among people groups with no exposure to the Scriptures.⁸³ For example, in Southeast Asia, the Karen people have hymns in their oral traditions about the eternal Creator, Y'wa, that predate all contact with missionaries: "Who created the world in the beginning? Y'wa created the world in the beginning! Y'wa appointed everything. Y'wa is unsearchable!...The omnipotent is Y'wa; him have we not believed. Y'wa created man anciently; He has a perfect knowledge of all things! Y'wa created men at the beginning...He appointed the 'fruit for trial.' He gave detailed orders. Mu-kaw-lee deceived two persons. He caused them to eat the fruit of the tree of trial. They obeyed not; they believed not Y'wa...When they ate the fruit of trial, They became subject to sickness, aging, and death."⁸⁴ Similarly, the sixth century Chinese Taoist Lao-tzu wrote, "Before time and throughout time, there has been a self-existing being, eternal, infinite, complete, omnipresent...Outside this being, before the beginning, there was nothing."⁸⁵

In his book Unlocking the Mysteries of Creation, Dennis Petersen noted a startling connection between the Biblical origin position of the Book of Genesis and the Chinese language. The Bible declares that all languages, including Chinese, originated in basic form at the tower of Babel. The Chinese have a pictograph language in which words are symbolized by "idea-graphs." The pictograph for "tower" is a combination of pictographs symbolizing "mankind being of one speech (language) united, despite the fact they were under the curse and all would die like grass, undertook their clay brick project."⁸⁶ Interestingly, "the Chinese themselves built no towers or pagodas until the Buddhist era. This amplifies their long respect for the reality of the event at Babel as the source of their word for tower."⁸⁷

Petersen found the Genesis connection in other Chinese pictograph words, including those for boat and forbid. The word for boat was created from a combination of three symbols, one for vessel, another for eight, and the final for people, clearly a reference to the eight souls delivered by means of Noah's vessel. Additionally, the pictograph for forbid combines two words, one for two trees and one for God's command, an apparent reference to God's commands concerning the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good

⁸²Morris III 127.

⁸³Bill Cooper, After the Flood, (West Sussex, England: New Wine Press, 1995) 15.

⁸⁴Don Richardson, Eternity in Their Hearts, rev. ed. (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1986) 77-78.

⁸⁵Cooper 16.

⁸⁶Dennis R. Petersen, Unlocking the Mysteries of Creation (Green Forest, AR: Master Books, 2002) 208.

⁸⁷Petersen 208.

and evil.⁸⁸ The testimony of God's historical record is preserved in the Chinese language that predates the Hebrew writings of Moses by at least seven hundred years!⁸⁹ While awareness of God as Creator has existed in China since soon after the flood, Satan has consistently perverted the Truth of creation to the point that only small pockets of accurate Biblical understanding have remained in that country throughout the centuries.

ANCIENT MERCENARIES AS PURVEYORS OF TRUTH

Another example of the pervasive nature of Truth and its inevitable perversion concerns a group of Greek mercenaries in Nebuchadnezzar's army during the siege of Jerusalem.⁹⁰ These soldiers were the best in the world, and many Asian monarchs employed their services as well as those of less important civil servants and spies. These men spent at least some of their time discussing philosophy and theology with Jewish captives, maybe even Daniel, or with those who had come into contact with the Jewish Biblical worldview during and after the invasion of Jerusalem.

Historical accounts indicate that some took this Biblical worldview back to their Greek homeland. The Greek Thales of Miletus, who is often credited as the first materialist philosopher among the Greeks, proposed that of existing things, God is the oldest because He is ungenerated and that the world is beautiful because He created it. Thales seems to have held to a creationist position in a culture that believed a totally opposite cosmology. Thales' pupil Anaximander offered the first challenge to the creationist position in the materialist school of thought. He developed a complete theory, similar to Darwinian evolution, that claimed that man was originally born from animals. Thus, Thales, who in all probability was impacted by Greek mercenaries returning home after contact with Jews, seems to have taught a creationist position that was rejected by his student Anaximander. As has been true from the beginning of history, Satan perverts and distorts the Truth as he tries to reach his objective, equality with God and salvation from his judgment in the Lake of Fire.

THE ORIGIN OF PAGAN MYTHS

Knowledge of the true God was profoundly known in the ancient world. The question arises: which came first, the Biblical creation position or that of evolution? Because the Bible, the authoritative Word of God, declares the divine creation position to be the original understanding of the origin of everything, all pagan origin positions must be perversions of divine Truth for the purpose of willfully deceiving mankind. "In other words, underlying paganism are buried truths of origins that testify to original revelation passed down through Noah."⁹¹

While all pagan representations of creation, including the aforementioned Mesopotamian *Enuma elish* myth, are filled with distorted references to the actual event, every flood myth agrees with the Biblical flood account in so many areas that the pagan accounts have to be distortions of the accurate Biblical account, changed in detail to support each specific pagan worldview. In his book The Genesis Flood, Dr. Henry Morris noted eleven similarities as found in Merrill Unger's book, Archaeology and the Old Testament: (1) the Deluge was divinely planned; (2) the catastrophe was revealed in advance to the hero; (3) the judgment of the Deluge was connected to the rebellion of man; (4) the deliverance of the hero and his family was foretold; (5) the hero of the Deluge was divinely instructed to build a large boat for the purpose of preserving life; (6) the physical causes of the Flood were explained; (7) the duration of the Flood was specified; (8) the name of the resting place of the boat was revealed; (9) birds were sent forth at intervals to determine the level of the water; (10) acts of worship by the hero after deliverance were described; and (11) special blessings were bestowed on the hero after the disaster.⁹² Although all pagan accounts contain many similarities to the original Biblical events, the differences among them make it impossible to believe that the Book of Genesis depended on them for its information. Instead, the variations among the myths signify they all derived from a single body of knowledge that was preserved and then distorted by early people groups after the flood.⁹³

SPREADING THE TRUTH OVER THE WORLD

Operating on the premise that the origin and flood myths of every civilization are perversions of the Truth recorded in the Book of Genesis, we must then consider the means by which this misinformation became so widely circulated. The answer lies in Noah's sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth, who took the Truth with them as they established new civilizations. For example, "Descendants of Ham included the Egyptians, and Sumerians, who founded the first two great empires of antiquity, as well as other great nations

⁸⁸Petersen 209.

⁸⁹Petersen 209.

⁹⁰Cooper 21-22.

⁹¹Charlie Clough, Biblical Framework, MP3 Audio recording lesson 14.

⁹²Morris, Genesis Record 38.

⁹³Cooper 17.

such as the Phoenicians, Hittites, and Canaanites.”⁹⁴ Noah’s sons with their personal knowledge of the worldwide flood were the ones who colonized the planet after the flood and preserved a correct understanding of it. Distortions occurred and increased as man moved farther from God spiritually.

Noah’s sons seem to have explored much of the earth after the flood. Evidence of the broad range of their exploration is found in the ancient maps of Antarctica, which contain details of its coastline and rivers that since soon after the flood have remained completely covered in ice. These ice-covered river basins as seen today only through sonic reflection devices match the contours of those ancient maps.⁹⁵ Noah’s sons themselves may have mapped this area before the Ice Age, which occurred within years of the Deluge. Additionally, the advanced technology that enabled Noah to build the magnificent ark would have been passed down through Shem, Ham and Japheth, thus allowing their descendents to make such maps if they did not make them themselves. Either theories is tenable when considered in light of the Biblical origin position.

Secular humanist historians must reject such claims because they do not fit their Darwinian origin position, which declares that ancient man came from nothing and only through evolution can have advanced to the point of having the technology of modern man. To recognize Noah’s sophisticated architectural and building skills or his sons’ map-making expertise is to bring into question the entire pagan evolutionary framework, forcing them to acknowledge that man through sin is corrupting the world, not bettering it. Such is their spiritual blindness that they consistently reject divine reality and cling to their patently false worldview.

The historian seeking to understand human history from the Biblical framework applies the Truth that all civilizations after the flood began with Noah’s three sons, who possessed personal knowledge of the Creator and passed that knowledge down to their progeny, probably through oral tradition. Therefore, no Christian historian should be surprised to find origin myths that bear striking similarities to the Truth of Scripture spread throughout all pagan people groups on earth even today.

SUPPRESSING THE TRUTH IN UNRIGHTEOUSNESS

Why does anyone choose to pervert the Truth in order to willfully deceive himself and others? Under the inspiration of God the Holy Spirit, the Apostle Paul declared that every man has inherent knowledge of the existence of God because through the created order, the Creator makes His presence impossible to ignore. God designed man in such a way that he cannot overlook the handiwork of the Creator in his natural surroundings. Any person who never chooses to bow in humble obedience before Christ as Savior operates in his unrighteousness to suppress the Truth and eventually destroys his capacity to know God. *For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures.* (Romans 1:21-23) Man’s desire to live independently of and free from responsibility to the Creator results in the foolishness and illogicality of idolatry. He rejects the Creator and worships the creation. His refusal to acknowledge the truth of God’s existence results in perversion of the truth for the purpose of practicing willful deception.

WILLFUL PERVERSION OF THE TRUTH IN HISTORY

Jeroboam, the first king of the Northern Kingdom of Israel after King Solomon’s death, provides a Biblical example of the willful perversion of the Truth in order to deceive. (1 Kings 12:25-33) God’s revealed will for Israel was that the people worship Him in Jerusalem three times a year at which times the Levite priests and scribes would teach the significance of the sacrifices. Jeroboam feared that the priests would use these times with the Jews of his kingdom to refer to Rehoboam, king of the Southern Kingdom who reigned in Jerusalem, as the legitimate king.⁹⁶ Jeroboam also feared that the unity of his kingdom would unravel if his people traveled to Jerusalem in the Southern Kingdom as often as God commanded. In his mind, the successful continuation of his reign was inseparably bound with perverting the Truth so his people would stay in his land and away from Jerusalem.

Ironically, God had earlier promised Jeroboam that if he obeyed the divine mandates, God would give him an eternal kingdom as He had David. Arrogant Jeroboam decided to trust his own plans and power instead. (1 Kings 11:29-38) “Choosing to trust himself and operating against God’s revealed will, Jeroboam willfully perverts the historical truth to establish different worship centers, a false priesthood and feast calendar. Like modern politicians, Jeroboam practiced historical revisionism for propaganda to promote his own agenda. This willful deception on his part was achieved by perverting the already established truth of Israel’s history. Thus, Jeroboam, ‘by a clever mixture of popular pagan idolatry with the name of Jehovah, brought forth a compromise religion far more

⁹⁴Morris, Genesis Record 240.

⁹⁵Petersen 210-11.

⁹⁶John J. Davis and John C. Whitcomb, Israel from Conquest to Exile (Winona Lake, IN: BMH Books, 2004) 359.

dangerous for the nation than out-and-out paganism could ever be.”⁹⁷

Jehoboam’s distortion of the Truth for personal gain and power had dire consequences for God’s people. They quickly adopted his expedient plans, pleased to worship God in a less intrusive way. Later rulers of the Northern Kingdom similarly perverted the Truth until wickedness controlled the land and God’s righteousness demanded that the kingdom be destroyed. Then, God judged them, using Assyria, the nation He had made powerful for this very purpose. A Christian historian applying God’s guidelines for interpreting history would not only understand the reasons behind these evil Jewish Kings’ perversions of the Truth but also the inevitable end of the Northern Kingdom in destruction.

PRINCIPLES FOR INTERPRETING HISTORY

THREE: GOD’S INTERVENTION IN HISTORY

The third principle from the Book of Genesis that applies to the Biblical Framework for interpreting human history is that God personally intervenes in the affairs of human history in order to insure that His purpose is fulfilled.⁹⁸ Hence, “God works through history in accordance with his own plan and his own agenda.”⁹⁹ Operating on the Biblical origin position and refusing to pervert the Truth logically leads to acceptance of the fact that God intervenes in history. The Secular Humanist must reject this observable phenomena because his presuppositional starting point will not allow it; therefore, he believes that since God doesn’t exist, history is a series of coincidences involving luck.

As noted earlier, human history is played out in the move, counter-move strategy between God and Satan, one that includes their intervention in human history. In Satan’s rebellion, he established an evil kingdom of darkness to try to overthrow God’s kingdom of light. God countered Satan’s rebellion against Him through His first intervention in human history, the creation of man to resolve the angelic conflict. Because Satan is a creature and not the Creator, he must depend on legions of fallen angels, unbelievers, and carnal believers to carry out history in a way that forwards his plans and culminates in victory over God.

Unlike creature Satan who only knows that which he sees and hears, Creator God in His omniscience knows the end from the beginning and has had His perfect plan for human history in place since before Satan’s creation. Unlike creature Satan who can be in only one place at a time, Creator God in His omnipresence is in all places at once, able to forward His plan not only for every nation but also for every individual simultaneously. Unlike creature Satan whose power is greater than man’s but far from all-encompassing, Creator God’s omnipotence is the power behind His plan, allowing Him to intervene in history to accomplish His righteous purpose.

GOD’S FIRST INTERVENTION

The first eleven chapters of Genesis recount many historical events that show God personally intervening in the events of mankind to ensure the fulfillment of His plan. The first occurred immediately after the creation of man when Satan sought to recruit this new creature man to join him in rebellion against God. The events of Genesis chapter three record the satanic move to corrupt man as well as God’s counter-move in promising salvation. “*And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, and you shall bruise him on the heel.*” (Genesis 3:15) “This great promise in Genesis 3:15 has long been known as the *Protevangelium* (the “first gospel”), promising the ultimate coming and victory of the Redeemer.”¹⁰⁰ God’s counter-move to Satan’s move to permanently negate any relationship between God and man provided salvation for the human race through the propitiatory work of Christ on the cross, a profound example of God intervening in the affairs of human history in an eternally salvific way.

SATAN’S COUNTERMOVES

In his move to thwart God’s promise of the Savior, “Satan’s strategy would be the preventing of the Redeemer’s coming and work.”¹⁰¹ Therefore, Satan designed and implemented a plan to corrupt the entire human race through demonic infiltration. If the promised seed didn’t remain unadulterated mankind, Satan must have reasoned, God couldn’t provide the promised salvation for mankind. Thus, began the fascinating segment of history that culminated in the worldwide flood of Noah.

Henry Morris’ study of the Bible led him to determine that a demonic habitation of human bodies took place on a global scale

⁹⁷Davis and Whitcomb 359.

⁹⁸Showers 17.

⁹⁹Larkin Spivey, *Miracles of the American Revolution* (Fairfax, VA: Allegiance Press, 2004) 20.

¹⁰⁰Morris, *Genesis Record* 120.

¹⁰¹Showers 21.

during the time before the flood in an attempt to prevent the true humanity of Christ.¹⁰² Because Satan understood that the seed of the woman must be pure humanity to serve His appointed purpose of saving mankind, he sent fallen angels to earth to marry human females and produce an impure form of humanity incapable of interceding between God and man as the Savior must do. His diabolical plan was tremendously successful but not completely. One man and seven members of his family believed in the promise of the Messiah; therefore, God delivered Noah and these family members from the flood judgment. The flood was God's intervention into the affairs of human history to ensure that His plan for the Savior continued to move forward. "Thus, God counteracted Satan's move to pervert the whole human race so thoroughly that the Redeemer could not come through it."¹⁰³

After the flood, Satan again attacked the divine plan by attempting to keep man from obeying God's command to Noah's family to *be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth* (Genesis 9:1). God commanded man to spread over the planet rather than congregating in one area; however, Satan saw both the difficulty in attempting to spread apostasy through a scattered people and the speed with which apostasy would spread with all people in close proximity. Therefore, Satan motivated the Tower of Babel project in defiance of the commands of the Creator. "God counteracted this move toward apostasy by causing the people to speak different languages...For the first time in human history more than one language was in existence."¹⁰⁴ Genesis chapter eleven records this divine intervention in the affairs of human history. (Genesis 11:1-9)

GOD'S INTERVENTION FOR JOSHUA

One of many examples outside the Book of Genesis of God's intervention in the affairs of human history is a supernatural event in the Book of Joshua. (Joshua 10:9-14) The Gibeonites were part of the cursed people that the Lord forbid the Jews to bind with them in a covenant. Knowing that Joshua would never help them if he knew their true origin, the Gibeonite leaders disguised themselves as foreigners. Because Joshua failed to consult God first, the Gibeonites tricked him into a treaty in which he unwittingly agreed to defy God's command to destroy them. As would be expected, Joshua's rash decision made apart from the divine viewpoint resulted in problems for Israel just as God had warned. Although Joshua knew the Gibeonites had deceived him, when they sought his military assistance, he accepted personal responsibility for his bad decision and honored his word to defend them, leaving the consequences up to the Lord. He marched his Israelite troops twenty-five miles to Gilgal. They arrived weary and ill-prepared to fight. God assisted Israel by sending an enemy-specific hailstorm, one of many instances of His using weather to change the course of history; however, the end of the day had brought no victory for Israel. Realizing that a night's rest would benefit the Amorites, Joshua entreated the Lord to lengthen the day. Although the cause of this miracle has not been determined, one Truth is certain: God intervened in human history on behalf of Israel in a way possible only to the Creator.¹⁰⁵ For the only time recorded in human history, He stopped the sun's rotation, thereby giving victory to His chosen ones.

Human history records that God's countermoves always supersede and defeat Satan's moves. The end of human history will see Satan's ultimate defeat and permanent incarceration in the Lake of Fire forever. Creator God determined this end from the beginning. Human history is the record of His omniscient management of circumstances to fulfill His plan completely.

PRINCIPLES FOR INTERPRETING HISTORY FOUR: THE FULFILLMENT OF NOAH'S ORACLE

When studying the Book of Genesis, another principle for understanding human history from the divine perspective leaps from the pages, the fascinating prophecy uttered by Noah in Genesis chapter nine that provides a rough outline of all the people groups that will emerge over the course of human history. Noah's prophecy had an interesting origin. Genesis records that after the flood Noah was a grower of grapes and became drunk on the wine he made from them. While in a sinful drunken stupor, he lay naked in his tent, and his son Ham viewed his nakedness with satisfaction. What appears on the surface to be a minor family event actually caused major repercussions that will continue throughout human history.¹⁰⁶ *When Noah awoke from his wine, he knew what his youngest son had done to him. So he said, "Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants he shall be to his brothers." He also said, "Blessed be the Lord, the God of Shem; and let Canaan be his servant. May God enlarge Japheth, and let him dwell in the tents of Shem; and let Canaan be his servant."* (Genesis 9:24-27) Ham's disrespect for his father's authority resulted in Noah's prophetic

¹⁰²Morris, *Genesis Record* 169.

¹⁰³Showers 25.

¹⁰⁴Showers 27.

¹⁰⁵Davis and Whitcomb 63-66.

¹⁰⁶Ross 210.

statement about all people groups because all mankind descended from one of his three sons.¹⁰⁷

This encapsulated announcement of the future of all nations was tied to Noah's insights concerning the unique characteristics of his sons, which God the Holy Spirit used as the basis for this divinely inspired outline of human history. "Knowing them, and their children, he could foresee the future course their descendants would necessarily tend to follow, because of their respective genetic inheritances, as well as from the teachings and examples set by their fathers."¹⁰⁸ Noah's prophetic utterance followed the blessing and cursing motif previously established in the Book of Genesis. Just as God cursed Cain's descendants and blessed Seth's so He cursed Ham's son Canaan but blessed the descendants of Shem and Japheth.

NOAH'S PRONOUNCEMENTS

In his pronouncements, Noah dealt first with his youngest son Ham by announcing a curse on his youngest son Canaan. Because Moses recalled this event to the Israelites as they prepared to enter the Land of Canaan to conquer it under God's command, the curse on Canaan would have had significant value as both motivation and comfort. The Noahic curse on Canaan dovetailed with the blessing given to Shem that later involved the blessing given to the Semite Abraham from whom the Israelites descended. "The point of the story in context, then, is God's preparation for the giving of the land to Abram, the heir of Shem's blessing. This point would then typify the preparation of the land for Israel's inheritance. For Israel to receive the blessing of the promise of the fathers, the curse on the Canaanites had to be exacted."¹⁰⁹

Next, Noah pronounced spiritual blessing on his son Shem, thereby narrowing the promise first given in Genesis 3:15 that the Messiah would come from the seed of the woman. That promise, which God gave to the entire human race, was limited in Noah's prophecy to include only descendants of Shem. Although fulfilled through the Semitic people, this prophecy involved blessing for the entire human race. The Semitic people were merely the channel through which all mankind would have the salvific blessing of the woman's seed, Jesus Christ.¹¹⁰

Noah's next blessing was for his son Japheth and related to the intellectual capacity and curiosity of his descendants. Even today, the Japhetic people groups lead in bringing about technological developments as they seek to explore and conquer the earth. Furthermore, Japheth's close fellowship with his brother Shem allowed him to share in his spiritual blessings of inheritance. Both Shem and Japheth, who had shown respect for their father, would unite in worship of their father's God. However, the Hamites, in general, would worship gods created from their autonomous rebellion against the God of Noah.¹¹¹

THE TABLE OF NATIONS

Connected to Noah's Oracle is the Table of Nations document recorded in Genesis chapter ten. "The Table of Nations embraces a sweeping panorama of history that is not only truly vast in its content but unique."¹¹² "Even higher critics have often admitted that the tenth chapter of Genesis is a remarkably accurate historical document. There is no comparable catalog of ancient nations available from any other source. It is unparalleled in its antiquity and comprehensiveness."¹¹³

The structure of the Table of Nations is different from the list in Genesis nine in that it names Noah's sons in reverse order and places the Tower of Babel event between the two lists of Shem's descendants, the second of which ends with Abraham, the primogenitor of God's chosen people. Author Moses shifted the narrative order to emphasize to the Israelites entering the Promised Land the beginning of their nation, particularly the unique role that Shem's descendants played in their history.

"Noah's oracle [is] a foundation for the table and the account of the dispersion at Babel [is] the explanation for the division."¹¹⁴ The Babel dispersion producing the Table of Nations was the result of God's judgment on mankind in confusing the languages. This structural consistency throughout the Torah provides evidence that the author of the Torah was one person, namely Moses, a claim disputed by Secular Humanists who postulate as many as four different authors in their attempt to undermine the divine origin of all Scripture.

Most of the names in the Table of Nations refer to specific, individual ancestors of Noah's three sons; however, those with the plural ending of -im and -ites represent tribes. The seventy nations listed in the Table of Nations seem to correspond to the seventy Israelite families listed in Deuteronomy 32:8. "This pattern of seventy nations was designed by God to anticipate the pattern of

¹⁰⁷Morris, Genesis Record 235.

¹⁰⁸Morris, Genesis Record 236.

¹⁰⁹Ross 218.

¹¹⁰Schaeffer 149.

¹¹¹Morris, Genesis Record 243.

¹¹²Cooper 39.

¹¹³Morris, Genesis Record 245.

¹¹⁴Ross 230.

seventy sons of the redeeming family of Jacob (Deuteronomy 32:8). Each of these seventy nations carry inherited characteristics from one or more of Noah's three sons. They would do so according to God's purposes for history."¹¹⁵

JAPHETH'S DESCENDENTS

Although Japheth was the second son of Noah, Moses listed his descendants first to place the focus on the Hamites and Semites who play a larger role in Israel's history.

The sons of Japheth were Gomer and Magog and Madai and Javan and Tubal and Meshech and Tiras. The sons of Gomer were Ashkenaz and Riphath and Togarmah. The sons of Javan were Elishah and Tarshish, Kittim and Dodanim. 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. (Genesis 10:2-5)

The nations that came from Japheth are the Indo-European people groups that founded Western Civilization. "In the mythology of the old world, Japheth was regarded as the father of many peoples, particularly the Indo-European nations. The pagan Greeks perpetuated his name as Iapetos, the son of heaven and earth and again the father of many nations."¹¹⁶

Interestingly, as words moved from one language to another after the language confusion at the tower of Babel, they frequently changed. Newly created letters were substituted for the original ones, and vowels, which were not included in the early languages, were added. For example, as the name Japheth moved into other languages, the letter J, which is a Y in Hebrew, changed to an I. With the addition of vowels, his name became Iapetos. The ancient Greeks revered Iapetos as a Titan and the father of all mankind,¹¹⁷ a distortion of the fact that Japheth's descendants founded Greece.

As the primogenitor of Western Civilization, Japheth's descendants are the Indo-Europeans who split into two basic groups, east and west. The Eastern branch was known as the Aryans, who made up the early civilizations of Persia and Northern India. They distorted Noah's name into "Satyaurata," whom they said had three sons named Yapati, Sharma, and Charma. With the understanding that consonants change from one language to the next, the correlation between the Aryan account and the Biblical account is apparent.¹¹⁸ This continuation of the Noah account in pagan literature does not validate the Scriptures because Scripture needs no validation, but this distortion of Truth meets the expectations of the Biblical framework of history.

Japheth's son Gomer was the founder of the Cimmerians, who originally settled along the shores of the Caspian Sea.¹¹⁹ When the name Gomer was translated into other languages, the G sometimes became a C, hence the Cimmerians.¹²⁰ "One branch of the descendants of Gomer eventually moved westward, with the name probably being preserved both in Germany and Cambria (Wales)."¹²¹ Gomer had three sons, Ashkenaz, Riphath, and Togarmah. The Jews identified Ashkenaz with the Germanic races, one reason Germanic Jews were sometimes known as Ashkenazim.¹²² Some historians connect the name Ashkenaz to Scandia and Saxon, postulating that as Germans migrated into northern Europe and the islands on the northern and western shores, they took a corruption of the original name with them.¹²³ The SKN of Ashkenaz became SCN for Scandinavian or Scythian. The Assyrians called them the Sakasane while the Greeks called them Sachsen. This group later moved into Western Germany and were known as the Saxons.¹²⁴ In contrast to relatively extensive knowledge of Ashkenaz's descendants, little is known about Gomer's second son, Riphath. Josephus identified him as the ancestor of the Paphlagonians, and he might also be the primogenitor of the Carpathians. Even the name Europe is a possible corruption of Riphath.¹²⁵ Gomer's third son, Togarmah, was the primogenitor of the Armenians who were conquered by the Assyrians under Sennacherib and resettled in other lands of the Assyrian Empire.¹²⁶

The Bible commonly links Japheth's second son, Magog, with his brothers Meshech and Tubal. (Ezekiel 38:2-3) When Ezekiel linked Magog's brothers together and associated them with Rosh, he designated them as the ancestors of the people groups that comprise modern Russia.¹²⁷ Inscriptions preserved from the reign of Tiglath-pileser I, emperor of Assyria, which included the areas

¹¹⁵Clough, Unpublished notes.

¹¹⁶Cooper 40.

¹¹⁷J.E. Zimmerman, *Dictionary of Classical Mythology* (New York: Harper and Row, 1964) 133.

¹¹⁸Robert Dean, Jr., "The Enlarging of Japheth: Genesis 10:1-5" Sermon delivered May 26, 2004, at Preston City Bible Church in Preston, CT.

¹¹⁹Cooper 199.

¹²⁰Robert Dean Jr., "The Table of Nations; Gen. 10:14" Sermon delivered May 19, 2004, at Preston City Bible Church in Preston, CT.

¹²¹Morris, *Genesis Record* 247.

¹²²Cooper 199.

¹²³Morris, *Genesis Record* 247.

¹²⁴Dean, "The Table of Nations".

¹²⁵Morris, *Genesis Record* 247.

¹²⁶Cooper 200.

¹²⁷Morris, *Genesis Record* 248.

of the former USSR, corrupted the name Tubal into Tabali. The descendants of the Tabali were called Thobelites by Josephus and were later known as the Iberes, who settled the land that is now the state of Georgia of the former Soviet Union. The city of Tobolsk, Siberia, was named after these people groups.¹²⁸ “Meshech clearly is preserved in the name Muskovi (the former name of Russia) and Moscow.”¹²⁹

Japheth’s third son, Madai, was the ancestor of the Medes. These Indo-European speaking Aryans settled in the area of Persia.¹³⁰

Moses singled out Japheth’s fourth son, Javan, in Genesis 10:4-5. Over time as the name was transliterated from one language to the next, the primary consonants of Javan changed from JVN to YVN and then to INN. Javan was the primogenitor of the Ionian Greeks, and his sons were the ancestors of the people groups surrounding Greece and the Aegean islands.¹³¹ Javan’s son, Elishah, was the ancestor of the Hellenes that probably made up the early Minoan civilization. His name was the basis for the Greek paradise, the Elysian Fields, which the Greek poet Homer mentioned in his ancient epic The Iliad.¹³² Javan’s second son, Tarshish, founded the early settlements of North Africa and Spain. This area was later dominated by the Canaanite Phoenicians, who continued the maritime trading of the earlier settlers.¹³³ Javan’s third son, Kittim, was connected to Cyprus through Phoenician records that referred to the island as the KTY.¹³⁴ “It is just possible that the term ‘Ma-Kittim’ (the land of Kittim) may have given rise to the name Macedonia.”¹³⁵ Javan’s fourth son, Dodanim, was connected to the geographical areas of the Dardanelles and the island of Rhodes. Through time, as the primary consonants of DDN changed to RDN, “his name was distorted from Dodanim to Rodanim,”¹³⁶ as found in 1 Chronicles 1:7. Genesis 10:5 summarizes Javan’s people groups as those nations living on the coastlands. Elsewhere in Scripture (Jeremiah 31:10, Ezekiel 26:15, Ezekiel 27:35; Isaiah 11:11 and Zephaniah 2:11), *the coastlands* refer to Gentile nations that lived in the northwest area of western Europe and explored and developed science and philosophy. This understanding of the geographical expansion of the Japhetic people groups accords with Noah’s oracle concerning the enlargement of Japheth and helps the Biblical historian interpret history accurately.

HAM’S DESCENDENTS

While much information is extant about Japheth’s descendants, little by comparison is known about Ham and Shem’s. The sons of Ham are listed in Genesis 10:6-20 with a brief explanation of one particular grandson, Nimrod, and an important focus on the descendants of his youngest son Canaan. The Hamitic races were more devoted to pagan thinking than the descendants of Shem or Japheth. For example, Nimrod, the grandson of Ham through his son Cush, founded Babel as recorded in the historical account of Genesis 10:10. Nimrod is important to any study of human history because Scripture consistently presents his system of pagan thinking as the belief system in conflict with God’s divine authority.¹³⁷

As Noah prophesied, Ham’s descendants traveled first and farthest after the judgment of Babel. Scripture identifies Ham’s four sons through its use of their names in connection with particular geographical areas. Cush founded Ethiopia; Mizarim was the primogenitor of the Egyptians; Put migrated to the area of North Africa known as Libya; and Canaan was the father of the Canaanites.¹³⁸ Ham’s sons are often associated with African or Arabian names and some of the people groups around the Pacific Rim.¹³⁹ Ham’s disrespect for authority as described in Genesis chapter nine is a trait that continues in his descendants. The Hamitic races founded and continue to promote the greatest idolatry in history. In contrast, their proficiency as inventors and innovators was pivotal in allowing Japhetic people groups to establish the civilizations that eventuated in empires when the time arrived for God to enlarge Japheth geographically.¹⁴⁰

SHEM’S DESCENDENTS

Genesis 10:21-32 lists Shem’s five sons and their sons. Elam was the primogenitor of the first inhabitants of the mountainous areas of the Tigris-Euphrates River valley. Asshur’s descendants settled in the area of modern day Iraq while Arphaxad’s were the

¹²⁸Cooper 203.

¹²⁹Morris, Genesis Record 248.

¹³⁰Cooper 201.

¹³¹Dean, “The Table of Nations.”

¹³²Dean, “The Enlarging of Japheth.”

¹³³Dean, “The Enlarging of Japheth.”

¹³⁴Cooper 202.

¹³⁵Morris, Genesis Record 248.

¹³⁶Morris, Genesis Record 248.

¹³⁷Dean, “The Enlarging of Japheth.”

¹³⁸Morris, Genesis Record 250.

¹³⁹Cooper 186-9.

¹⁴⁰Robert Dean, Jr., “The Descendants of Ham: Genesis 10:6-20” Sermon delivered June 2, 2004, at Preston City Bible Church in Preston, CT.

Chaldeans. God continued the account of Shem's descendants through Arphaxad in Genesis chapter eleven, which provides the genealogy of Abram, later called Abraham, the primogenitor of the Jewish race. Lud's descendants are not known with certainty. Aram was the founder of the Arameans who settled in Syria and Mesopotamia. One of Shem's grandsons, Joktan, was the father of the thirteen original Arab tribes.¹⁴¹

THE ROLES OF EACH PEOPLE GROUP

In summary, Shem was the progenitor of the Semitic peoples; and Japheth, of the Indo-European. By deduction, Ham must have fathered all other people groups. History records the accuracy of these divisions in that the physical and linguistic characteristics of each people group fall into this threefold pattern. Japhetic languages are similar to each other as are the Semitic languages. However, the Hamitic languages are extremely diverse and constantly changing from simple to more complex, thereby reflecting the chaotic mindset of those who lack authority orientation.¹⁴²

Likewise, the descendents of Noah's three sons have played different roles throughout human history. The Hamitic people fostered the physical development of mankind by providing the nucleus for every major civilization on every continent and inventing the basic technological instruments used to advance those civilizations. However, after arriving at a particular geographical location, they initiated little expansion or colonization. The Japhetics did that.

The Semitic people fostered mankind's spiritual development. Through Abraham's descendants, all mankind received the special revelation of God, Jesus Christ the living Word and the Bible, His thinking in written form.

The Japhetic people's role was to foster mankind's mental development, including systematic thought. The Japhetics took the rudimentary inventions and innovations of the Hamitic people groups and applied philosophical reasoning to develop science. By utilizing the spiritual insights of Shem's descendents and the physical attainments of Ham's, Japheth's descendents enlarged their influence over all the earth, a consequence to be expected from an understanding of Noah's Oracle. God used Japhetic people groups to largely destroy the Hamitic lineage that rebelled against Him. Interestingly, Israel's great enemy at the time of Moses' writing, the Canaanites, no longer exist.

THE TIMES OF THE GENTILES

An example of the fulfillment of Noah's Oracle is found in Scripture in the Times of the Gentiles, a term used by the Lord to designate the period from the end of Israel as a nation until their return at the Tribulation. (Luke 21:24) The Times of the Gentiles ushered in a new era of human history in which God temporarily set aside the earthly rule of Israel and ordained Gentile, mainly Japhetic, domination through imperialism.¹⁴³ Without grounding in this foundational fact of history, the Biblical historian will unwittingly join Satan in his distortion of the Truth, either believing that Israel represented the church throughout Old Testament history or that the church has completely replaced Israel in God's plan.

Chapter two of Daniel is one of the most fascinating chapters in the Old Testament, if not the entire Bible, in that no other place in Scripture with the exception of Daniel chapter seven gives such a comprehensive overview of human history from that time until the end of time. Nebuchadnezzar's dream as interpreted by God through Daniel precisely outlined the rise and fall of the four major Gentile nations during the Times of the Gentiles, Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome. After Israel was divided into the Northern and Southern Kingdoms, the Babylonian and Persian empires that eventually attacked and conquered them were composed of Hamitic and Semitic people groups. By the time of the Persian conquest of Israel, the time of Hamitic dominance was over. Then, Greek and Roman empires led by people of Indo-European (Japhetic) origin rose against the Jews. The Hamites had established civilizations, and the Japhetic people groups began enlarging them and destroying the Hamites.¹⁴⁴

Every examination of history finds this same pattern as foretold by Noah so many centuries before in his oracle, which provided an encapsulation of human history and a basic framework for knowing God's plan for the nations of the world. The oracle emphasized certain characteristics of Noah's three sons, traits that have predictably unfolded in history in their respective descendants. Thus, all people and nations since the flood fall into one of Noah's three prophetic pronouncements, which culminated when the spiritual blessing of Shem united with the enlargement blessing of Japheth in the first century A.D., giving birth to Christianity and the unveiling of the mystery, the Church Age.

PRINCIPLES FOR INTERPRETING HISTORY

FIVE: THE ROLE OF THE DIVINE INSTITUTIONS

¹⁴¹Cooper 170-4.

¹⁴²Dean, "The Descendants of Ham."

¹⁴³Charlie Clough, Unpublished notes on the book of Daniel.

¹⁴⁴Clough, Unpublished notes on the book of Daniel.

In order to understand human history from the Biblical perspective, the historian must understand the role of the five divine institutions. A divine institution is an absolute social structure established by God for the stability of the entire human race.¹⁴⁵ God designed these divine institutions for believers and unbelievers equally, unlike Christian institutions which He designed for believers only. God initiated three of the five divine institutions, personal responsibility, marriage and family, in His creation of man and woman. In post-fall environment and the aftermath of Noah's flood and the tower of Babel, God established the final two of the five divine institutions, human government and nationalism, to prevent man from destroying the entire human race in his rebellion against the Creator. A nation's adherence to or perversion of the divine institutions provides another criteria for interpreting history from a Biblical perspective; therefore, a correct Biblical study of history demands investigation of a nation's attitude toward them.

DIVINE INSTITUTION ONE: PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY

God established the first divine institution on the sixth day of creation after He created man. *Then the Lord God took man and put him into the Garden of Eden to cultivate it and keep [guard] it. The Lord God commanded the man, saying, "From any tree of the garden you may eat freely; but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die."* (Genesis 2:15-17) God assigned man responsibilities related to work (*cultivate* and *guard*) and obedience to His command to not eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. When man disobeyed these commands, he immediately died spiritually, an unambiguous sign that God holds man responsible for his decisions.

After the fall, man again attempted to shirk his responsibility as seen in the conversations God initiated with the sinful man and woman. *They heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden. Then the Lord God called to the man, and said to him, "Where are you?" He said, "I heard the sound of You in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid myself." And He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?" The man said, "The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me from the tree, and I ate." Then the Lord God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?" And the woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."* (Genesis 3:8-13)

Man in rebellion against God always seeks to ignore his responsibility and assign blame to others, especially with regard to the clear commands of the Creator. The more a nation tries to remove personal responsibility from its citizens, the greater the perversion of this first divine institution and the greater the need for God to judge them. A Christian historian will quickly ascertain that a nation's attitude toward personal responsibility affects its prosperity and longevity. The same is true for individuals.

DIVINE INSTITUTION TWO: MARRIAGE

God also established the divine institution of marriage on the sixth day of creation when He united the man and woman in marriage. (Genesis 2:18-24) "With the words of verse 24 God instituted monogamous marriage. Like all divine institutions, it was established for man's good and cannot be violated with impunity."¹⁴⁶ Any nation that perverts the institution of marriage suffers instability, an inevitable result of rebelling against God's mandated order for civilization. That nation will self-destruct if the perversion goes unchecked. When a Biblical historian recognizes that a nation has begun denigrating marriage and that this perversion has gone unchecked, he knows to expect the beginning of its descent into loss of power if not outright oblivion.

DIVINE INSTITUTION THREE: FAMILY

The third divine institution, which God also established on the sixth day of creation, is the family. Although not a space-time reality until after the fall, God established the family with His mandate that man be fruitful and multiply. (Genesis 1:27-28) The success of a family is predicated on its fulfillment of the divine institutions of personal responsibility and marriage. In His command to be personally responsible to subdue and rule the earth, God included the command to be fruitful and multiply; therefore, subduing the planet in the Biblical manner is connected to the family as the basic unit of society. When marriage is perverted and dishonored, the family unit erodes, eventuating in the collapse of the society as a whole. To the Biblical historian, widespread perversion and destruction of the family, the basic unit of society, indicates the abnormality of the entire society and foretells its impending judgment unless wholesale repentance occurs.

DIVINE INSTITUTION FOUR: HUMAN GOVERNMENT

God established the fourth divine institution, human government, after the flood. (Genesis 9:5-6) "Human government is a divine institution, instituted by God when Noah came out of the ark, a basic law of which is capital punishment for the murderer duly

¹⁴⁵Charlie Clough, *Biblical Framework*, MP3 Audio recording lesson 11.

¹⁴⁶William MacDonald and Arthur Farstad, *Believer's Bible Commentary: Old and New Testaments* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1997). Gen. 2:24.

convicted of his crime.”¹⁴⁷ God transferred the responsibility of governmental authority to man when He commanded him to rule creation as His representative. According to God’s pronouncement after the flood, the primary responsibility of human government as His ordained civil authority is to express His justice. The Biblical historian knows that when man perverts this responsibility by allowing government to assume responsibilities God has not given it or ignore those responsibilities God mandates, that nation has rebelled against Him and will suffer His judgment for not adhering to the divine institution correctly. Certainly, neglect or abandonment of capital punishment clearly indicates decay within that nation.

DIVINE INSTITUTION FIVE: NATIONALISM

The fourth divine institution of human government was distorted during the tower of Babel event when government encouraged, even mandated, man’s rebellion against the Creator. As a result of this perversion of Truth, God established the final divine institution, nationalism. (Genesis 11:1-9) The tower of Babel event displayed unified mankind’s desire to make life work independently of God. “They deliberately acknowledge their purpose to be contrary to God’s command: ‘Lest we be scattered abroad on the face of the whole earth.’”¹⁴⁸ Their governmental authorities manipulated them in an attempt to build a one world government in direct opposition to God’s expressed desire for national, not universal, sovereignty. God judged this evil in a manner that graphically demonstrated His abhorrence of any abuse of the divine institution of nationalism. By confusing the one language used by mankind up to this point in history, He prevented him from cooperating in forming a one world government, the goal of His adversary, Satan.

God’s intervention in history to confuse the languages created natural barriers between language groups and established national distinctions that made unity with other nations difficult to achieve. Currently, the world again leans toward globalization, abetted in that insidious endeavor by the computer and internet, which are without language barriers. For the first time since the tower of Babel, man has the capability of removing the language barrier in order to fulfill the satanic globalization desire.

After His judgment at Babel, God furthered His divine institution of nationalism by selecting one particular national entity, Israel, to represent Him on the earth. Through His chosen nation, He blesses the earth while continuing to judge those who treat Israel lightly.

SODOM AND GOMORRAH: THE EPITOME OF PERVERSION

The Biblical account of Sodom and Gomorrah dramatizes God’s judgment on those who reject, pervert, or destroy the divine institutions of personal responsibility, marriage, and family. In Romans 1:18, Paul explained that all unbelievers suppress divine truth before rejecting it outright. The Sodomites had rejected reality as defined by God in the divine institutions and then had attempted to establish their own concept of reality contrary to His. This defiance of God’s plan propelled them toward worship of the creature rather than the Creator. Rebellion against God always leads to idolatry. *For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures.* (Romans 1:21-23)

Their foolish thoughts and subsequent depraved actions resulted from their refusal to accept the clear general revelation of God’s existence, which He dramatically reveals through the natural world He created. The primary motivation for rejection of God continues to be the desire to absolve self from personal responsibility to the ultimate Authority, the focus of divine institution number one.

The Apostle Paul described the three levels of judgment God administers on any nation that perverts the divine institutions. *Therefore God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, so that their bodies would be dishonored among them. For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen. 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. 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.* (Romans 1:24-32)

Paul’s words serve as a warning to anyone who chooses to reject God’s authority as did those in Sodom and Gomorrah. A

¹⁴⁷Kenneth S. Wuest, *Wuest’s Word Studies*, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1973) 222.

¹⁴⁸Morris, *Genesis Record* 269.

nation, culture, or individual who embraces these Sin Nature trends is well on the way to divine judgment. By the time God promised Abraham that he would have a son with Sarah, Sodom and Gomorrah's iniquity was complete, and God destroyed them in a way that left no doubt of His displeasure for those who mock the principles He established for civilized conduct.

PRINCIPLES FOR INTERPRETING HISTORY

SIX: GRACE BEFORE JUDGMENT

God perpetrates slow, not immediate, destruction on all societies that reject His authority, the next principle for interpreting history from the Biblical perspective. God's judgment is an application of His justice necessitated by man's violation of His righteous standard; however, He always provides grace before He pours His wrath on those who have rebelled continually against Him. The Hebrew word for grace, *hen*, "describes the compassionate response of a superior to an inferior, suggesting that the kindness is undeserved."¹⁴⁹ Almighty God treats all individuals and nations with grace, even those who are His enemies, even those who reject His Son.

THE FIRST PROMISE OF A SAVIOR

God first demonstrated His principle of a period of grace before the implementation of judgment in the aftermath of the fall of mankind. After confronting the man and woman with their rebellion against Him in disobeying His command, He began pronouncing judgment, beginning with the serpent. The consequences of their sin decisions were so unexpectedly harsh that in the middle of the judgment of the serpent, in accordance with His grace policy, and before pronouncing judgment on the woman and man, God graciously promised to send One to redeem them from their sins. "*And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, and you shall bruise him on the heel.*" (Genesis 3:15) "The great promise in Genesis 3:15 has long been known as the *Protevangelium* (the 'first gospel'), promising the ultimate coming and victory of the Redeemer....The prophecy clearly looks forward to the time when Satan will be completely crushed beneath the feet of the woman's triumphant Seed."¹⁵⁰

God demonstrated His promise of eventual salvation from sin by clothing Adam and Eve in animal skins that hid their nakedness, the outward sign of their inner sinful change, spiritual death. The death of an innocent animal to provide clothing for sinful man foreshadowed the substitutionary death of Christ on the cross to pay the sin penalty for the entire sinful human race. This provision of salvation illustrates the principle of grace before judgment in that God extends grace until the unbeliever dies without having believed in Christ as his Savior. Only then does he face final judgment in the Lake of Fire, a judgment to be pronounced by Jesus Christ at the Great White Throne.

THE FLOOD: GRACE BEFORE JUDGMENT

Another illustration of grace before judgment in the early chapters of Genesis is found in the one hundred and twenty year time lapse between God's announcement of impending judgment and its fulfillment in the flood. (Genesis 6:3) God's justice had reached the saturation point that demanded that His righteous standard be vindicated. Even so, He offered further grace by preserving believer Noah and through him the human race. (Genesis 6:11-18) As with God's judgment at the fall of man in Genesis three, the Ark also pictured salvation. Only those on the Ark were spared the judgment, making it obvious that only those who are in Christ through faith alone in Him alone are spared God's wrath for eternity. Note that God designed the ark with only one entrance and only He closed that door, showing future generations that salvation comes in only one way, through *the door*, Jesus Christ (John 10:7). Man has no part in providing salvation.

SODOM AND GOMORRAH: GRACE BEFORE JUDGMENT

An episode in the life of Abram (later to be called Abraham) also illustrates the principle of grace before judgment. As God had commanded much earlier, Abram finally separated from his nephew Lot, who chose to move to the evil cities on the plain, Sodom and Gomorrah. Later, marauders fell on the cities, taking many people captive. Genesis chapter fourteen gives a detailed account, including precise names and places, indicating that this historical event was, in fact, an international skirmish with major repercussions. The battle would probably have gone unnoticed as have so many other major historical events except for one particular aspect. The nephew of God's chosen one, Abram, was taken captive. (Genesis 14:11-16) When Abram learned his nephew was a prisoner of war, he immediately prepared to rescue him. "Quite probably, the returning armies were relaxing and enjoying the

¹⁴⁹Don Campbell, Wendell Johnston, John Walvoord and John Witmer, *The Theological Wordbook* (Nashville: Word Publishing, 2000) 147.

¹⁵⁰Morris, *Genesis Record* 120.

spoils of war, and the idea of a sudden nighttime attack was absolutely the remotest thought from their minds at this time. Abram suddenly attacked them from different directions at once, and they soon became utterly demoralized.”¹⁵¹

The last part of Genesis 14 records the events of the battle and God’s grace in delaying final judgment on Sodom and Gomorrah. The king of Sodom accompanied Melchizedek, the king of Salem, later to be called Jerusalem, to meet Abram on his return from battle. The king of Sodom was as wicked and depraved as his kingdom. In contrast, Melchizedek, a priest of the Most High God, brought blessing to those around him. Melchizedek blessed Abram, who responded by giving him a tenth of the plunder taken from the defeated enemy. The king of Sodom, who operated on a different, unrighteous standard, *said to Abram, “Give the people to me and take the goods for yourself.” Abram said to the king of Sodom, “I have sworn to the Lord God Most High, possessor of heaven and earth, that I will not take a thread or a sandal thong or anything that is yours, for fear you would say, ‘I have made Abram rich.’ I will take nothing except what the young men have eaten, and the share of the men who went with me, Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre; let them take their share.”* (Genesis 14:21-24) From both Melchizedek and Abram, the king of Sodom received a clear message about the grace policy of the Most High God, Creator of all. “Abram’s response to God’s blessing was to give tithes to God through Melchizedek (14:20). In giving a tithe he acknowledged that all of the spoils of victory actually belonged to God and he was only a steward of them. Moreover, Abram made it clear he did not need a covenant with the king of Sodom for his protection, for God was his protector; and he did not need wealth from the king of Sodom, because God would reward him richly.”¹⁵²

Moses focused this narrative on Abram’s handling of a temptation-riddled situation. Abram trusted God for security and blessing while distancing himself from the world and its empty promises. His humility before God and his testimony with Melchizedek about God gave the king of Sodom a period of grace in which to think about their words and actions, repent his evil ways, and turn to God before receiving judgment. Because Sodom and Gomorrah continued their degradation during this grace period, God destroyed them so completely that no remnant of the cities remains. History records the annihilation of many such pagan nations for the same reason, rejection of God and His plan.

DELAYED JUDGMENT ON THE AMORITES

In Genesis chapter fifteen, God again demonstrated the concept of a grace period in which He suspends judgment to give a nation or individual time to recognize and recover from rebellion against Him. *God said to Abram, “Know for certain that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, where they will be enslaved and oppressed four hundred years. But I will also judge the nation whom they will serve, and afterward they will come out with many possessions. As for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you will be buried at a good old age. Then in the fourth generation they will return here, for the iniquity of the Amorite is not yet complete.”* (Genesis 15:13-16) God delayed the deserved judgment of the Amorites because their iniquity had not reached the divine standard that demands destruction. He gave them a time of grace in which to repent and turn to Him, just as He had delayed the judgment of the flood for one hundred and twenty years so that those on earth could repent.¹⁵³ Many events in human history show God’s grace and patience in giving individuals and nations a grace interlude before His righteousness demands that His justice pour forth His wrath.

PRINCIPLES FOR INTERPRETING HISTORY

SEVEN: COMPLIANCE OR NON-COMPLIANCE TO THE THIRD PARAGRAPH OF THE ABRAHAMIC COVENANT

The final principle for interpreting human history from the Biblical perspective as derived from the early chapters of Genesis is found in the first three verses of chapter twelve in which God announced the basic form of the Abrahamic Covenant. *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; 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; 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.”* (Genesis 12:1-3) “The promises that this glorious God gave to Abram fall into three categories,” blessing related to the land, blessing related to the seed, and blessing for others through Abram’s descendants.¹⁵⁴ Though the Abrahamic Covenant was not fully developed until later in Scripture, this initial description aids the Biblicist in interpreting history because God made unconditional promises to Abraham’s descendents, the Jews, which will stand inviolate forever. He began by promising Abraham that his seed would become a great nation and he himself would be blessed and gain a great repute.

¹⁵¹Morris, *Genesis Record* 317.

¹⁵²J. Dwight Pentecost, *Thy Kingdom Come : Tracing God’s Kingdom Program and Covenant Promises Throughout History* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1995) 55-56.

¹⁵³Morris, *Genesis Record* 328.

¹⁵⁴Pentecost 51.

“God’s design is not merely that Israel should be blessed, but that they should be a blessing to others. It is a part of God’s strategy in the conflict, which is a battle to bless mankind.”¹⁵⁵ Obviously, all the nations of the earth are blessed through the seed of Abraham, Jesus Christ, and His coming to earth to redeem mankind from sin and death. Since the Messiah came through the seed of Abraham, no individual in the world, Jew or Gentile, can have divine blessing or a relationship with God apart from the seed of Abraham. The Lord declared, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.” (John 14:6) Man rejects Christ as Savior at his eternal peril.

God placed a protective clause in His contract to Abraham, binding Himself to bless those who support Abraham’s descendants and curse those who treat his descendants unfairly. “Anyone who disrespects and treats Abram and his faith lightly will thus be removed from the place of blessing. The wording records this threat as a necessary part of the outworking of the promises.”¹⁵⁶

The Assyrians, Babylonians, Syrians, fifteenth century Spanish, eighteenth century French, and twentieth century Germans are just a few nations that have come under the wrath of God’s judgment for their anti-Semitic policies. All are either non-existent or suffer from greatly diminished prosperity, power, and prestige. These judgments happened because “God has bound Himself by unconditional covenants to the Jews and that even though they are currently under His discipline He will punish anyone who mistreats them.”¹⁵⁷ On an individual level, God blesses those believers and unbelievers who treat the descendants of Abraham correctly, but He brings judgment on those who treat them lightly.

PERSIAN RESPECT FOR THE JEWS

A positive outworking of this principle is found in the pro-Semitic policies of the ancient Persian Empire, beginning with Cyrus the Great, who conquered Babylon in 539 B.C., bringing an end to Babylonian control over the land of Israel.¹⁵⁸ “The prophet Isaiah, hundreds of years before, had prophesied that God would be Cyrus’s ally in world conquest.”¹⁵⁹ Isaiah stated that God’s purpose in assisting Cyrus in the future would be to help Israel so that men would know that the God of Israel is the only God. (Isaiah 44:28-45:4) Cyrus’ stunningly rapid rise to power was the work of God on behalf of His chosen nation Israel and for the spiritual edification of the world.¹⁶⁰ By predicting Cyrus’ rise long years before the event, God ensured that the world would know He alone controls history. During his reign, Cyrus gained a reputation as an enlightened ruler, eclectic in his religious viewpoint. Unlike previous conquerors, Cyrus did not attempt to replace the conquered people’s gods with his own. His toleration policy allowed the lands he conquered to continue their religious practices as long as they did not threaten Persian sovereignty. This enlightened policy led him to decree that Jewish exiles in Persia could return to Jerusalem and rebuild their Temple in order to worship Yahweh.¹⁶¹ Cyrus’ leniency was exactly as foretold by God through the prophet Isaiah years before.

Cyrus’ correct treatment of the Jews led to God’s blessing of the Persian Empire. Because his pro-Semitic policy continued in the administrations of his successors, the Jews Mordecai, Esther, and Nehemiah played major roles in their reigns. Although God did not allow the pro-Semitic Persians to succeed in conquering any of Europe, He did prosper the empire with a long rule, due in part to their compliance to the third category of the Abrahamic Covenant.

Any historian attempting to understand human history from the divine perspective must pay close attention to a nation’s attitude toward the third aspect of the Abrahamic Contract. Following this principle, he will quickly ascertain that nations may prosper solely because of their compliance to it while others may fall solely because of their disrespect for Abraham’s descendants. Anti-Semitic policies always reflect rejection of God as Creator and disobedience to His other mandates concerning nations and individuals.

APPLYING THESE PRINCIPLES TO EGYPTIAN HISTORY

The ancient Egyptian Empire, which played a pivotal role in the life of national Israel, provides a perfect historical canvas on which to examine all seven principles for correct Biblical interpretation of history as developed in the early chapters of Genesis. Unlike most history, we know these events are historically accurate because God Himself recorded and preserved them in Scripture. His succinct account of His plans for Egypt and His method of fulfilling them help ready the believer to evaluate all history from the

¹⁵⁵Forster and Marston 52.

¹⁵⁶Ross 264.

¹⁵⁷Hal Lindsey, *The Road to Holocaust* (New York: Bantam Books, 1989) 2.

¹⁵⁸Merrill 480.

¹⁵⁹Jerry H. Combee, *World in Christian Perspective*, vol. 1 (Pensacola, FL: A Beka Book Publications, 1979) 135.

¹⁶⁰Combee 135.

¹⁶¹Merrill 480.

divine perspective. The Ice Age, Renaissance, French Revolution, World War II, the Israeli/Palestinian “peace” process, even the rise of Secular Humanism then become recognizable as outworkings of God’s grace plan for mankind.

More information exists regarding Egypt than any other ancient civilization; however, historians who deny the historicity of the Bible have written most of it. Therefore, the believer seeking to understand this portion of Egyptian history accurately, which is possible only through the divine perspective, must first examine the worldview of the human writers and then probe their interpretations of Egyptian history in the light of God’s Word. “The interpretive challenge to a modern Bible-believing Christian is how to bring his thoughts of history under the obedience of Scripture.”¹⁶² The principles for interpreting history derived from the early chapters of Genesis allow him to do so.

1. THE EGYPTIAN ORIGIN POSITION

The believer begins his interpretation of ancient Egyptian history by studying its origin position. Did Egypt recognize God as Creator? He soon discovers that the Egyptians willfully blurred the Creator/creature distinction, resulting in worship of creation through a pantheon of gods and goddesses that eventuated in worship of the pharaoh as an incarnate deity. According to the pagan Pyramid Texts of Egypt, creation occurred without God. “In the beginning, Atum emerged silently from Nun, the dark waters of chaos, on top of the primeval hill. The one who came into being of himself contained the universal life force, and so Atum was able to create life entirely alone.”¹⁶³ “It would not be overstating the case to say that the Egyptian concept of a divine creation of the universe was so strongly held that throughout Egypt it governed every sphere of thought and action, political, educational, philosophical and so on. And it is also noteworthy to consider that there is no record anywhere amongst the vast amount of literature to be recovered from ancient Egypt, that suggests that this view was ever challenged.”¹⁶⁴

Although they worshipped many gods and even man as creator, the Egyptians believed that everything emanated from one nature.¹⁶⁵ This view was nothing more than the continuity of being worldview held by other ancient pagan civilizations such as Assyria and Babylonia. The Egyptians applied the continuity of being origin position in the form of a static social order that they were determined to keep unchanged forever. “The Egyptian belief was that the universe is changeless and that all apparent opposites must, therefore, hold each other in equilibrium. Such a belief has definite consequences in the field of moral philosophy. It puts a premium on whatever exists with a semblance of permanence. It excludes ideals of progress, utopias of any kind, revolutions, and any other radical changes in existing conditions...In this way the belief in a static universe enhances, for instance, the significance of established authority.”¹⁶⁶

The pyramids reflect the Egyptian concept of the perfect harmony and stability of existence while at the same time providing a seemingly permanent and stable resting place for the head of the state, the god pharaoh. The architecture and artwork of Egyptian culture also reflected this static existence concept. Egyptian art followed strict guidelines that reflected the natural cycles built on their continuity of being theory. Although attractive, every piece of artwork was similar in design because their idea of cycles “stressed that the same series of events always occurs in the same order.”¹⁶⁷

Thus, a study of origins reveals that the Egyptians denied God as Creator and worshipped the creature leading to their continuity of being theory, which embodied their rejection of God’s plan for human history.

2. WILLFUL DECEPTION AND PERVERSION OF THE TRUTH

All civilizations after the flood had pre-flood knowledge of God’s Word through Noah and his sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth. They provided their descendents with the truth of the eternal Creator, His creation of all things, the rebellion and fall of man, the need for a blood sacrifice to approach God, and the exact circumstances of the flood. These major Biblical facts were common knowledge before Abraham’s time but were quickly distorted in the mythologies of world civilizations, especially those of Ham and his offspring.¹⁶⁸ Not surprisingly, the principle of willful deception and perversion of the Truth forms the foundation for ancient Egyptian society because Ham was the progenitor of Egypt. Ham’s descendants continued his rebellion against God through their adulterous relationship with idols. “According to Egyptian historians and chronologers, first gods, and then demi-gods, or heroes, governed that country successively, through a period of more than twenty thousand years. This fable requires no remark: we know from the inspired records of truth, that Egypt was first inhabited by the family of Mizraim, the second son of Ham, Gen.x.6, about

¹⁶²Charlie Clough, *Biblical Framework*, MP3 Audio recording lesson 24.

¹⁶³John Fletcher, *The Egyptian Book of Living and Dying* (London: Duncan Baird Publishers, 2002) 10.

¹⁶⁴Cooper 17-18.

¹⁶⁵Rooshdoony 10.

¹⁶⁶Henri Frankfort, *Ancient Egyptian Religions* (New York: Harper and Row, 1961) 64.

¹⁶⁷Combee 59.

¹⁶⁸Richardson 155.

2613 years B.C. Hence it is, that in the Hebrew Scriptures the country is usually styled, 'The land of Mizraim,' Gen. xiii. 10, etc.; and that the Egyptians are always called Mizraim, or Mizraites. In the east, to this day, the country is generally known as the 'Land of Mizr,' which was probably the proper name of the son of Ham; Mizraim being rather the name of the family or people which descended from him; as 'Abel-mizraim,' the mourning of the Mizrites, or Egyptians, Gen.1.11."¹⁶⁹

Because the sons of Mizraim originally received fairly undistorted truth from their father Ham, the Egyptians must have willfully deceived themselves when, over time, they perverted the Truth of the original creation and flood accounts to fit their personal preferences. The Egyptians' deliberate distortion of divine Truth through their system of false gods, including Pharaoh himself as supreme god, is predictable to the Biblical historian who knows of their rejection of the Creator/creature distinction.

3. DIVINE INTERVENTION IN EGYPTIAN HISTORY

God intervened many times in ancient Egyptian history, beginning with Abraham's panicked trip there to escape a famine during which God preserved the promised seed, continuing with the dream that led to the promotion of Joseph to grand vizier of the land, then to His preservation of Moses in the Nile River, and ending dramatically in the ten plagues He sent to secure Israel's freedom, the focus of this study. The pharaoh viewed Moses' plagues on behalf of the God of Israel as attempts to destroy the harmony of the Egyptian universe. This battle, then, was not between Moses and Pharaoh but between two competing worldviews, one sponsored by Creator God and the other by creature Satan. At the end of this battle, God prevailed as always. "In view of the fact that the plagues were well ordered and their sequence demonstrated plan and design, it is obvious that they had specific purposes other than just to deliver the people of Israel."¹⁷⁰ Moses wrote that God intervened in human history with the plagues in part to destroy the Egyptian's pagan worldview. *While the Egyptians were burying all their firstborn whom the Lord had struck down among them, the Lord had also executed judgments on their gods.* (Numbers 33:4) Through the plagues, God totally refuted both the anti-Biblical origin position and pagan thought system of the Egyptian Empire. Each plague specifically attacked a different Egyptian god or goddess. For example, turning the Nile River's water into blood showed the impotence and worthlessness of Khnum, guardian of the Nile, Hapi, spirit of the Nile, and Osiris, the god of the underworld whose bloodstream purportedly was the Nile.¹⁷¹ The other plagues were equally pointed. God orchestrated the events of the Exodus in such a way that they not only serve throughout history as reminders of His special provision and protection of Israel but also as an historical record of His destruction of all man-made systems constructed in opposition to His plan.

4. THE FULFILLMENT OF NOAH'S ORACLE

Ham's descendants established Egypt. An understanding of Ham's evil proclivities as first exposed in Noah's oracle allows the Biblical historian to anticipate that an evil, godless thought system would inevitably have been established in Egypt.

5. EGYPTIAN PERVERSION OF HUMAN GOVERNMENT

Although Egypt adhered, at least in part, to four of the divine institutions, their pre-understanding of existence without the creative power of God Almighty led to a perversion of divine institution number four, human government, thereby weakening their entire society. In the Egyptian mind, man existed for the state with the pharaoh as the divine mediator between heaven and earth. "The Egyptians had no doubt that a god in flesh and blood ruled their society, and that he was even going to rule them in the afterlife."¹⁷² The state, headed by the pharaoh, was the sum of their existence. Each individual lived his life in complete subservience to the state so that he would not disturb the harmony of all existence. "What for us would be slavery to the state meant for them divine order and man's only hope."¹⁷³ Their corruption of God's mandates for government made their downfall inevitable.

The pharaoh was the mediator between the gods and man; therefore, his people believed he was the source of their security and stability. They turned from God's commands for government and looked to man for their security and happiness, just as a believer would expect after studying their history from the divine worldview.

6. GRACE BEFORE JUDGMENT

God was patient during the four hundred years that the Jews sojourned in Egypt and in the days of grace leading to and between the plagues. When Egypt continued to refuse to repent and humbly turn to Him as sovereign Creator, the time for pouring out His wrath had come. He replaced His blessing grace with judgment grace. Unsurprisingly, Egypt remains a weak power even today.

¹⁶⁹Edward Farr, Ancient History: Containing the History of the Egyptians, Assyrians, Chaldeans, Medes, Lydians, Carthaginians, Persians, Macedonians, The Seleucidae in Syrian, and Parthians (Cincinnati: 1856) 87.

¹⁷⁰John J. Davis, Moses and the Gods of Egypt, 2nd ed. (Winona Lake, IN: BMH Books, 2003) 94.

¹⁷¹Lewis Spence, Ancient Egyptian Myths and Legends, (Dover Publications, 1990) 170.

¹⁷²Combee 62.

¹⁷³Rushdoony 11.

7. THE EGYPTIAN POLICY OF BLESSING ISRAEL

Having seen Egypt's perversion of the truth resulting in their anti-Biblical origin position and misrepresentation of the divine institution of human government, we might ask why God allowed them to prosper. A Biblical understanding of history provides the answer. An early pharaoh complied with the third category of the Abrahamic Covenant by being kind to the father of Israel, Abram. When Abram first reached the Promised Land, God commanded him to remain there in the place of blessing; however, when God sent a famine to test his faith, Abram failed by fleeing to Egypt, thereby giving pharaoh an opportunity to treat God's chosen representative correctly. (Genesis 12:10-20) As ruler of all Egypt, the pharaoh could have executed Abram for his deceptive schemes; however, he allowed Abram to not only return to the Promised Land unharmed but also with the possessions he had given him while there. Since God planned to use Egypt as an incubator to increase the numbers of His chosen people while at the same time separating them from the pagan world, He used their kindness to His called out one, Abram, as a reason to bless them and prepare them to fulfill His divine purposes for Israel.

Egypt later displayed correct treatment of Abraham's seed, his great-grandson Joseph. After God gave Joseph the interpretation for the pharaoh's dream, the pharaoh asked him for his solution for the coming famine. Joseph's plan so impressed him that he made Joseph grand vizier of Egypt, second only to him in power. When the famine hit Israel, too, just as God had prophesied, Joseph's brothers came to Egypt seeking food from the grand vizier, who ironically was the brother they had callously sold into slavery years earlier. Joseph eventually brought his entire family to Egypt to live, all with the blessing and help of the pharaoh. (Genesis 45:16-20) The pharaoh's kind treatment of Jacob and his progeny led to God's blessings on Egypt for many generations, a consequence easily understood by the historian who knows the Abrahamic Contract.

7. EGYPT'S VIOLATION OF THE ABRAHAMIC COVENANT

The cursing part of the third category in the Abrahamic Contract also applied to Egypt when they eventually enslaved and abused the Jews. God had prophesied to Abram years before that "*your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, where they will be enslaved and oppressed four hundred years. But I will also judge the nation whom they will serve, and afterward they will come out with many possessions.*" (Genesis 15:13-14) Though the Egyptians had treated the Jews well for years after Joseph's death, God held them responsible for subsequently enacting an anti-Semitic policy. After God provided a four hundred year grace period for them to turn to Him, He brought judgment at the completion of their iniquity, which began with the enslavement and abuse of His chosen people. The Biblical historian knows with certainty that God intervened in human history at this exact time because of His unilateral contract with Abraham. *Now it came about in the course of those many days that the king of Egypt died. And the sons of Israel sighed because of the bondage, and they cried out; and their cry for help because of their bondage rose up to God. So God heard their groaning; and God remembered His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. God saw the sons of Israel and God took notice of them.* (Exodus 2:23-25) God controlled the events in Egypt so that He could redeem Israel at the precisely right time in human history so that He could not only set His nation apart from all other nations but also demonstrate to the unbelieving Egyptian Empire the futility of their rejection of Him. As with Egypt, God's historical trail of blessing those who bless Israel and cursing those who do not can easily be followed in the events of human history.

SUMMARY

Consistently throughout history, *YAHWEH* demonstrates that He is a God of order. His actions are never capricious but always forward His plan and adhere to His gracious character. The believer studying the past can expect the events of history to conform to the righteous standards He established before history began.

The entire Exodus event as well as the subsequent history of Israel reveal God's intervention in the affairs of human history to achieve His desired end. Because the Egyptians' religious system, which was based on their rejection of God as Creator, demanded that they isolate themselves from all foreigners, the Jews living in Egypt were only casually corrupted by their idolatry and false system of thinking. As a Biblical historian would expect, God prepared the perfect culture in which to allow His people to increase in size until they were ready to enter the Promised Land.

CONCLUSION

These seven principles for interpreting human history from the Biblical perspective as introduced in the early chapters of Genesis are not only guidelines for understanding events of the past but also those of the present. Scripture compliments the sons of Issachar as *men who understood the times, with knowledge of what Israel should do.* (1 Chronicles 12:32) Operating on a Biblical philosophy of history, the Christian who takes every thought captive in a Bible-first epistemology can be a modern day "son of

Issachar” and understand the times of the twenty-first century. Through utilization of these seven historical principles, he can also ascertain with uncanny accuracy the future of every culture and nation. Further, because he knows that Western Civilization’s evolutionary origin position perverts the Truth of God’s existence, he understands the underlying causes of the widespread hostility against the Bible and those who proclaim its absolute Truth. Mankind hates those Christians whose lives declare the stupidity of evolution, and they abhor the Bible which announces their impending doom because of their rejection of Christ as Savior.

“Evolution is not merely a biological theory of little significance. It is a world view – the world view diametrically opposing the Christian world view. Therefore, Christians ignore it or compromise with it at great peril!”¹⁷⁴ The Christian who thinks Biblically about history and understands that a person’s origin position determines his worldview vigorously battles against any compromise with the anti-God, evolutionary, humanist worldview that dominates the thinking of mankind today as in every generation.

The Christian grounded in the divine principles of history knows that current events reflect the dynamic, intense spiritual battle raging in the unseen battle between Creator God and fallen creature Satan. He realizes that if Satan “is going to defeat God he must get people to believe in something other than God, and that means he has to explain the origin and the meaning of the world without God.”¹⁷⁵ The tandem of evolution and humanism is one of his most powerful and successful weapons for enslaving man’s mind with his irrational, treacherous, but persuasive dogmas.

Because God commands the believer to take every thought captive in obedience to Christ, He expects him to think Biblically about history so he also thinks accurately about history, including the historical events detailed in His Word. This understanding begins with belief that the eternal Creator began the historical process with creation and continues to be intimately involved in the events of history to bring about His doxological purpose as He moves human history toward a certain divinely announced goal that will extend forever. “The providence of God in the affairs of men, as it is taught in the Bible, provides us with the understanding that all events are under His care and direction.”¹⁷⁶ “This belief about God’s actions in history has vast ramifications for mankind. If the Christian philosophy of history is correct, then not only is the overall story of mankind invested with meaning, but every moment that man lives is charged with purpose.”¹⁷⁷

A Biblical understanding of human history “frees us from the limitations of our own experience; it gives us perspective; it helps us not repeat past errors of others; (and) it stabilizes us in the present.”¹⁷⁸ No Christian can glorify God to the maximum unless he understands history from the divine worldview.

¹⁷⁴Morris, Long War 23.

¹⁷⁵Perkins 205.

¹⁷⁶Moes vi.

¹⁷⁷Noebel, Battle 326.

¹⁷⁸Merryman 3.