

Word in Life Ministries

Biblical, Historical, and Philosophical Studies Institute

His Story Through the Ages: **BC Seminar**

Session One

I. Pre-History (Beginning – 1500 BC)

A. Genesis 1-11

1. Old Earth/Young Earth

a. Old Earth Theories

(1) Gap Theory

(a) Gen. 1:2: “was” = “became” (**הָיָה** - *hāyâ*).

(b) Explanation of the disappearance of the dinosaurs.

(c) The fall of Satan ((Luke 10:18; Is. 14:12-15; Ezek. 28:11-19)).

(2) Day/Age Theory

(a) The days represent periods of time (II Peter 3:8).

[1] Those who argue against the “day/age” theory maintain that “day” is always regarded as a 24 hour time period when a number precedes it.

[2] However, in II Peter 3:8 the numeral “one” is appended to “day” twice, and it is quite obvious that Peter is not limiting a “day” to a 24 hour time period.

(b) The sun and moon were not created until the fourth day.

(c) In Genesis 2:4, we read: “This is the account of the heavens and the earth when they were created, in the day that the LORD God made earth and heaven.” Here in this verse, the word “day” is undoubtedly referring to the whole of the creation process in which God created the universe, and based on Genesis 1 alone, we know that this was not a “one day” event.

- (d) References to “on that day/in that day” with regards to periods of God’s judgment or restoration are clearly not being limited to a 24 hour time period (e.g., Isaiah 11:10-11).

b. Young Earth

- (1) In Genesis 1, “evening and morning” are mentioned before each day: “And there was evening and there was morning, one day” (Genesis 1:5, 8, 13, 19, 23, 31).
- (2) Exodus 20:11 states, “For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day; therefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day and made it holy.” This is clearly viewing the days of the week as synonymous with the six days of creation as presented in Genesis 1.
- (3) Once again we are presented with the argument that when numbers are appended to the word “day” or “days,” then that is always referring to a 24 hour time period (e.g., Genesis 7:4; Exodus 12:15; 24:18).

2. The Fall of Man

In Genesis 1, we have seen the biblical account of the history of the beginnings of both the universe (Genesis 1:1-19) and all of life on earth as we know it (Genesis 1:20-31). Next, in Genesis 2, we are presented with a recapitulated, narrative account of the creation of man, plant, and animal life on earth, but there is an additional aspect to this creation account in Genesis 2, different from Genesis 1, and that is the introduction of the two trees: “the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil” (Genesis 2:9). It was this latter tree, “the tree of the knowledge of good and evil,” that became the focal point of the fall of man, and the question naturally arises, if everything that God created was good (see Genesis 1:31), where then did the idea and concept of “evil” come from, and when did it enter the scene? The answer is, we are not told directly, so we must, therefore, begin to look beyond these first two chapters to find the answer. This in turn necessitates a broader grasp of Scripture in order to find a legitimate and logically substantiated answer, and that leads

us to us to implementing critical thinking skills. There are in particular four biblical passages that address this issue:

- a. Luke 10:17-20 – This passage in the New Testament sets the tone for understanding the entrance of “evil” into the world from a biblical perspective, “I was watching Satan fall from heaven like lightning” (Luke 10:18). Thus, for some reason, Satan ‘fell’ from heaven, and Jesus “was watching” as this happened. This very statement in and of itself contains important theological implications (e.g., the biblical doctrines of the Trinity, the Pre-existent nature of Christ, and the Pre-fall position of Satan in heaven to name three). However, for our purposes, we want to focus on why he fell and the consequence of that “fall from heaven.”
- b. Revelation 12:1-9 – This passage presents a cosmic battle, and it is clearly between the forces of Satan and the forces of God. There are four things that stand out in this particular passage:
 - (1) In 12:4, reference is made to Satan sweeping “away a third of the stars of heaven” and throwing them to the earth.” The book of *I Enoch* is quoted in Jude 14-15, and from the end of the 2nd century BC up through the third century AD, *Enoch* was considered authoritative and inspired by many, including a number of the early church fathers (e.g., Jude in the 1st century AD; *Epistle of Barnabas* and Athanagoras in the 2nd century AD; Clement of Alexandria, Irenaeus, and Tertulian in the 3rd century AD. By the beginning of the 4th century AD, however, its influence began to wane, and ultimately by the 5th century AD, Augustine and others repudiated much of its theological and eschatological teachings, resulting in its disuse and influence until the late 19th century AD when an Ethiopic version was discovered (Charles, Robert Henry, *Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament* [Bellingham, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 2004], 2:163-165). The point to be made about this is that even though it is a pseudepigraphal writing (i.e., a writing whose author is not Enoch, but someone who appended Enoch’s name to the book for validity), it is useful in analyzing passages in the Bible that are apocalyptic in nature, and in God’s sovereign plan, there were apparent truths contained in

portions of Enoch from which God led Jude to quote as inspired truth for His inspired Word. Therefore, *I Enoch* 6-11 deals with the coming to earth of Satan and his fallen angels, and in *I Enoch* 18:14, 21:3-6, 86:1-3, and 88:3, the “stars” mentioned appear to be these fallen and rebellious angels. This in turn would seem to correspond with Isaiah 24:21-22, where in the context of the passage, it may be assumed that the “host of heaven” is also referring to the rebellious angels. Thus, it would appear from a comparative analysis of the above stated information that the “stars” referred to here in Revelation 12:4 are those angels who sided with Satan.

- (2) In 12:7-9, we clearly see there that “the dragon and his angels waged war” against “Michael and his angels” (Revelation 12:7). Thus, it would appear rather conclusively that the “stars” in 12:4 are the rebellious angels who joined Satan. In addition, 12:9 states categorically that “Satan . . . was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.” Throughout the literature of late Jewish and early Christian writing, we see similar illusions to this very incident. However, it is in the inspired Word of God that we see the consummative truth of this event. In *II Enoch* 29:4-5, we read the following concerning Satan being cast out of heaven:

And one from out the order of angels, having turned away with the order that was under him, conceived an impossible thought, to place his throne higher than the clouds above the earth, that he might become equal in rank to my power. And I threw him out from the height with his angels, and he was flying in the air continuously above the bottomless. (Charles, Robert Henry, *Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament* [Bellingham, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 2004], 2:446)

In the context of the above passage, this took place on the 2nd day of creation (29:1-3), and although we do not have any biblical witness to corroborate such a timeline, we can say that this certainly corresponds to Isaiah 14:12-15 and Ezekiel 28:11-19 with regard to the casting forth of Satan from heaven. Thus, Revelation 12:7-9 may be viewed as an insertion in this portion of Revelation to

describe the reason for the hatred of the child of the woman by Satan, versus a chronological sequence of events. That is, 12:7-9 is an account of the fall of Satan from heaven predicated upon his rebellion against God with his rebellious angels.

Therefore, based on all that we have examined, it would appear that at some point after the sixth day of creation, Satan's rebellion occurred, and the consequence of that rebellion was that "evil" entered the creative sphere of God's work. Thus, the entrance onto the creative scene of "the tree of the knowledge of good and evil," and the subsequent temptation of Eve by the "serpent," gives us the biblical explanation and picture of evil's entrance into mankind's nature and his subsequent and perpetual fall.

- a. Man's choice to disobey God (Genesis 3:1-7).
- b. Man's curse as a result of his disobedience (Genesis 3:8-21).
- c. Man's dismissal from the Garden (Genesis 3:22-24).

3. The Lineage of Cain and Seth (Genesis 4-5)

There are several important issues in these two chapters that are worthy of our attention and have a direct impact on us today:

- a. Genesis 4:1-8 – This portion of Scripture is concerned with the competition between Cain and Abel, and the ultimate murder of Abel by Cain. However, there is one verse in this passage that has special interest for us, and that is 4:7: "If you do well, will not *your countenance* be lifted up? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door; and its desire is for you, but you must master it." The problem with this verse cannot be detected in the English rendering, but it is seen in the Hebrew text:

- (1) The phrase, "be lifted up," comes from the Hebrew verb **שָׁאַל** (*sé'ēt*), and this is an infinitive construct from the root verb **שָׁאַל** (*nāsâ*), which means "to lift up, carry away, pardon." Thus, "pardon" or "forgiveness" may legitimately be used as the translation. The reading, therefore, would be, "Is there not forgiveness if you do well?" However, the problem arises with the remainder of the verse: "but if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door . . ." The trouble with this translation is the last phrase, "sin is crouching at the door."

- (2) In Hebrew, unlike with English, you have masculine and feminine nouns, as well as masculine and feminine verb forms except for the 1st common singular (“I”) and plural (“we”) for the perfect and imperfect forms of the verb respectively. Thus, whatever gender a noun may be (i.e., masculine or feminine), then the verb used with it must be the corresponding gender. In the phrase above, the problem we have is that the word “sin” is a feminine noun, and the verb “crouching” is a masculine participle, which, according to Hebrew syntax, cannot be connected. In addition, in the phrase, “and its desire is for you,” the “its” is masculine, which would literally read, “and the desire of him is for you.” That being the case, the “its” cannot be referring to “sin” since “sin” is a feminine noun. It has to be referring to a masculine noun, but which one? The word “door” is a masculine noun, but that doesn’t appear to make any sense, “the door’s desire is for you.” There is one other possibility, and that is with the Hebrew masculine participle, “crouching.”
- (3) The word for “crouching” in Hebrew is רֹבֶשׂ (*rōbēš*), and it comes from the Hebrew verb רָבַשׂ (*rābaš*), which means “to lie down, or to crouch.” However, this word also has an Akkadian look-a-like and sound-a-like, *rābišu*, and this is a masculine noun in Akkadian, “denoting various officials and also demons, especially those that guard entrances to buildings. Here then sin is personified as a demon crouching like a wild beast on Cain’s doorstep” (Wenham, G. J., *Vol. 1: Word Biblical Commentary : Genesis 1-15* [Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002], 106). If indeed this is the correct word to be used, it would appear to make extremely good sense, and it fits in contextually with the grammar, as well as with the overall message. Another slight change might also seem appropriate, which would include the following translation: “Is there not forgiveness of sin if you cause to behave well, but if you do not cause to behave well, the demon is at the door, and his desire is for you, but you will exercise dominion over him.”

- (4) If indeed this is the correct rendering of this passage, and it fits syntactically in a correct grammatical setting as compared to the Hebrew of the Massoretic Text, then we have a promise of God to Cain, even in the midst of his great sin of murder, both of grace, as well as of judgment. The phrase, “if you cause to do well,” is not an endorsement of ‘good words’, but rather it categorically refers to Hebrews 11:6: “And without faith it is impossible to please *Him*, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and *that* He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.” Thus, the change would be to place the word “sin” after the infinitive construct, “forgiveness,” and thereby reading, “forgiveness/pardon of sin” (or literally, “to forgive/pardon sin”). By doing this, the grammatical problem would be solved as far as the feminine noun “sin” being connected with the masculine participle “crouching,” and secondly, the message is very clear and consistent with the overall biblical truth of the spiritual warfare we face with the forces of darkness (Ephesians 6:10-20).
- b. Genesis 4:25-26 – This passage is about Seth being born to Adam and Eve after the death of Abel, and about Enosh being born to Seth:

And Adam had relations with his wife again; and she gave birth to a son, and named him Seth, for, *she said*, "God has appointed me another offspring in place of Abel; for Cain killed him."²⁶ And to Seth, to him also a son was born; and he called his name Enosh. Then *men* began to call upon the name of the LORD.

However, in the Aramaic Targums, we find a completely different translation for verse 26: “And as for Seth, to him also a son was born, and he called his name Enosh. Then in his days the sons of man were lax in praying in the name of the Lord.” This is from the Targum Onkelos, which contains the entire Pentateuch, and Onkelos is considered in Jewish tradition as the man who made this translation. However, in another version of the TO, we read the same translation as the Hebrew, but a different verb form is used: “the sons of man began to pray in the name of the Lord” (Aberbach, Moses, & Grossfeld, Bernard, *Targum Onkelos to Genesis* [Jersey City: KTAV Publishing House, 1995], 47). Then again, in a Hebrew,

Midrashic commentary on this same passage, the following translation is suggested: “then in his days the sons of man profaned themselves in praying (*viz.* to idols) in the name of the Lord”. The question before us, therefore, is why do we have this divergence between the Hebrew and the Aramaic?

- (1) The reason for the Aramaic Targums is that during the Babylonian Captivity (605-538 BC), Aramaic, the language of Babylon, was assimilated by the Jews, and it ultimately became their common language. Nevertheless, Hebrew remained the liturgical language of worship and Bible study. However, as time went by, the need arose for the Hebrew to be translated into the more common language of Aramaic for the masses, and thus, the Aramaic Targums came into existence.
- (2) The word Targum actually means “translation” from one language to another. Thus, Aramaic Targums simply means the Aramaic Translation of the original Hebrew. At any rate, “A major reason for the origin of the Targum must have been the fact that increasingly in the postexilic period Aramaic replaced Hebrew as the vernacular of the Jews of Palestine” (Freedman, D. N., *The Anchor Bible Dictionary* [New York: Doubleday, 1996], 6:329).
- (3) In addition, as time went by, the Rabbis began to see that the Aramaic could have a dual function, that is, it could be used not only as a translation, but also as a commentary on the Scripture itself. Thus, what began to develop was “a comprehensive interpretation on the original Hebrew” (*Ibid.*). However, there were strict guidelines for use of the Targum:

The Rabbis were concerned that Targum should be clearly distinguished from Scripture: the same person could not publicly read the Hebrew and recite the Targum. Targum belonged to the oral Torah, and the translator had to recite it orally in public, while the reader had to read (and be manifestly seen to read) the Hebrew from the scroll. At the same time it is a fundamental rabbinic principle that the Targum is not a freestanding translation, to be used on its own; it should always be heard and studied in conjunction with the original Hebrew. Even when Targum was studied in the privacy of one’s home, the suggested rule was that the *pārāšâ* (*exact statement*) should be read twice in the Hebrew and once in the Targum (*b. Ber.* 8a). (*Ibid.*, 6:330)

- (4) Having now received this brief overview of the Aramaic Targums, and seeing how they were used with the Jews (they are equivalent to our paraphrase English versions, which, in many cases, are interpolations, not word for word translations), we are now ready to examine not only the Hebrew translation, but also the two Aramaic translations of Genesis 4:26.
- (a) As we read above, the Aramaic Targums were considered secondary to the Hebrew text as far as authority was concerned, but they were used as a type of ‘interpolation’ in order to give commentary on the biblical text.
 - (b) As we now begin employ our critical thinking skills, we discover that one of the keys to properly interpreting this passage hinges on the Hebrew verb **הַחֲלָל** (*hûhal*) in Genesis 4:26, which means, “to pollute, defile, profane, & begin,” and it comes from the root verb **חֲלָל** (*hâlal*). Thus, the Hebrew translator of the MT chose the meaning “to begin,” and the Midrashic translator, or translators, chose the meaning of “to profane” from the same Hebrew verb **חֲלָל** (*hâlal*).
 - (c) However, the TO, which may be considered to be the ‘official Targum’ of Genesis, went with two different verbs: the one version chose the Aramaic verb **חִוֵּל** (*hûl*) as the root verb, which means “to be lax, or weak,” and the other version went with the verb **שְׁרֵי** (*šerêy*), which means “to begin,” in line with the Hebrew verb **חֲלָל** (*hâlal*), which is also translated, “to begin.”
 - (d) We now have three different interpretations of this one verb, and thus, the passage hinges on how we translate the Hebrew verb, **חֲלָל** (*hâlal*), or the Aramaic verb, **חִוֵּל** (*hûl*).
- [1] In the Hebrew text, the form is **הַחֲלָל** (*hûhal*), and this is a singular, not a plural form of the verb, and thus, the correct translation is, “he

began,” referring to Enosh. In addition, this is a Hophal verb form, which is the causative passive, with the following translation, “then he was caused to begin to call on the name of the Lord.”

- [2] The Hebrew verb **חַלֵּל** (*ḥālal*) is what is called a “double ayin” verb, which simply means that its middle and final letters are the same.
- [3] The Aramaic verb **חוֹלֵל** (*ḥūl*) is what is called a “ayin waw” verb, which means that its middle letter is a **ו**, which in English is pronounced “waw.”
- [4] What is interesting is that in the Aramaic text, the form of **חוֹלֵל** (*ḥūl*) used is **חוֹלוֹן** (*ḥūlūn*), a 3rd masculine plural, translated as, “they became lax,” and it is also the exact same form for “they began,” or “they profaned” from **חַלֵּל** (*ḥālal*), **חוֹלוֹן** (*ḥūlūn*).
- [5] In Hebrew, the “double ayin” and the “ayin waw” verbs have the exact same form for the Hophal Perfect, 3rd masculine singular form.
- [6] Thus, the Hebrew verbs **חַלֵּל** (*ḥālal*) and **חוֹלֵל** (*ḥūl*) have the exact same form for the 3rd masculine singular, perfect form, **הִזְחַלֵּל** (*hīzālal*).
 - [a] We have already seen that the Hebrew verb **חַלֵּל** (*ḥālal*) means “to pollute, defile, profane, & begin,” and Hebrew verb **חוֹלֵל** (*ḥūl*) means “to whirl, to writhe, to dance.”
 - [b] The Aramaic verb **חַלֵּל** (*ḥālal*) means “to desecrate, profane, & degrade,” and the Aramaic verb **חוֹלֵל** (*ḥūl*) means “to be smooth, lax, & liberal (i.e., to overlook and give allowance to people).”
 - [c] Consequently, my suggestion is the following: I propose that the Aramaic translator who used the verb “profaned” was considering the Hebrew verb **הִזְחַלֵּל** (*hīzālal*) to come from the Hebrew root **חַלֵּל** (*ḥālal*), and thus, he

translated that word with the Aramaic verb חָלַל (*ḥālal*), which means “to desecrate, profane, & degrade.” On the other hand, the Aramaic translator who used the verb “to be lax,” understood the Hebrew verb חָלַל (*ḥūḥal*) to come from the Hebrew root חָלֵל (*ḥūl*), which means “to whirl, writhe, & dance,” and he in turn translated that word with the Aramaic verb חָוֵל (*ḥūl*), meaning “to be smooth, lax, & liberal (i.e., to overlook and give allowance to people).” The idea of “dancing,” associated with the Hebrew verb חָלַל (*ḥūl*), implies a sense of frivolity and unawareness of one’s surroundings and possible dangers (Judges 21:19-24), and thus, the idea of “being lax” in praying as the one Aramaic translator understood it.

- (5) The reason we have gone into this portion of Scripture in a somewhat in depth manner is because some evangelical teachers and writers have ‘jumped’ on the Aramaic translation of “the sons of man were lax in praying in the name of the Lord” without knowing or understanding what is behind this translation. Now as you look at these three alternatives: “then he was caused to begin to call upon the name of the Lord” (MT); “then the sons of man profaned themselves in praying (to idols) in the name of the Lord” (TO); “then the sons of man were lax in praying in the name of the Lord” (TO).
 - (a) One of two things happened in Genesis 4:26: either there was the beginning of the first biblically recorded revival, or there was the beginning of a great falling away from the Lord by mankind.
 - (b) As we apply our critical thinking skills, we need to read chapter 5 of Genesis to get an approximation of what happened to the subsequent generations of men immediately after Enosh’s birth.
 - [1] What we discover is that from the birth of Enosh up to the time that God took Enoch (Genesis 5:23-24), 752 years passed.

- [2] It would appear that during Enoch's life, if there was such a great falling away at the time of Enosh's birth, why was that not mentioned with regard to Enoch and the closeness he had with God?
- [3] It would appear to me that what contributed to Enoch's close walk with God was the fact that there had been a major turning to God, and the fruit of that revival lasted for many generations.
- [4] However, I also believe that from the time of Enoch's departure up to the birth and life of Noah, a turn away from God began to occur, which in turn led to the flood (Genesis 6:1-12).

4. The Flood (Genesis 6-8)

- a. Man's depravity (6:5; 8:21)
 - (1) In Genesis 6:5, the word for "intent" is *rc,yE'* (*yēt[□]er*), and it also means "form," which would be similar to the 'forms' used to provide the outer boundary and enclose the cement being poured for a patio.
 - (2) Thus, before your or my 'thoughts' are even recognizable to us as 'thoughts', their very inception is evil.
- b. Ps. 14:1-3
 - (1) The Hebrew word for "no" in verses 1 & 3 is **ןִאֵן** ('ēyn), and it is the most emphatic negative particle in the Hebrew language-it literally means, "non-existence."
 - (2) Thus, the "fool" says, "God doesn't exist," and God in turn says, "there doesn't even exist one person who does good."
- c. Is. 64:6
 - (1) The words translated "filthy garment" in Hebrew are literally meaning, "used menstrual cloth" (**בְּגַד עַדְיָה** - *beqed `iddîm*).
 - (2) In addition, the last two phrases in that verse clearly indicate that man is ruled and dominated by his sin nature.
- d. Jer. 17:9
 - (1) The "heart," or soul and mind of man, is more deceitful than anything else.
 - (2) It is also "desperately sick," and no one is fully able to comprehend its corruption except God!
 - (a) The word translated "desperately sick" in Hebrew is, **שָׁנָא** ('anas), and it can also be translated, "to be weak."

(b) In addition, from this same form (i.e., שֹׁנֶשׁ) comes one of the names for man, שֹׁנֶשׁ ('ēnōš).

- [1] The basic idea of this form of the verb from which '*enosh*' derives is that of "being friendly," or "to be inclined."
- [2] However, the idea of "being sick or weak" is still inherent in this form, and this is also the basic form for the name of Seth's son, "Enosh" (Gen. 4:26).
 - [a] Thus, his name may very well be indicative of the fact that as men began to see and recognize their sickness and sin, they "began to call upon the name of the Lord."
 - [b] In addition, it may also be that the idea of "being inclined" is equally indicative of men "inclining toward the Lord as a result of seeing and recognizing their sin."

5. The spread of civilization (9-11)

- a. Lex talionis (9:5-6)
- b. The curse of Ham
- c. The dispersal of the peoples (11:1-9)
 - (1) From the tower of Babel the languages were confused
 - (2) Nimrod is credited with being the builder of Babylon (10:10), and thus, he was more than likely the instigator in building the "tower of Babel."
- d. The division of the nations (10:1-32; 11:10-32)

B. Ancient Sumeria

- 1. Creation – The Sumerians envisioned creation in many ways similar to that of biblical creation. However, similar does not mean the same, and it is the differences that are important.
 - a. For the Sumerians, the major components of the universe were heaven and earth, with the term *an-ki* being used to describe the heaven-earth combination (Samuel Noah Kramer, *The Sumerians: Their History, Culture, and Character* [Chicago: the University of Chicago Press, 1963] 112-113). This in turn corresponds to the biblical statement of God creating the "heavens and the earth" in Genesis 1:1: "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth" (the words for "heavens" and "earth" are שָׁמַיִם [shāmayim] and אֶرֶς [eres] respectively).

- b. Secondly, the Sumerians understood there to be a substance between the heaven and the earth, and they called this substance, *lil* (*Ibid.*). For them this word apparently referred to wind, air, breath and spirit. This corresponds to the “expanse” described in Genesis 1:6-8:

Then God said, “Let there be an expanse in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters.” And God made the expanse, and separated the waters which were below the expanse from the waters which were above the expanse; and it was so. And God called the expanse heaven. And there was evening and there was morning, a second day.

The word in Hebrew for “expanse” is רָקִיעַ (*rāqî'a'*), and in both the Sumerian and biblical cosmogenies, this “expanse” would be the atmosphere.

- c. However, there is also a major difference, and that is seen in the Sumerian view of the “waters.” They saw the “waters” or sea as the agent of creation in and of itself, and they never broached the question as to what preceded the sea—it was viewed as the initiator of life and creation in and of itself.
 - (1) Thus, we see here in this perspective a combined animistic and pantheistic view of creation; i.e., they viewed the water itself as having some spiritual quality of life in and of itself, and that the self-existing forces of the universe are themselves God.
 - (2) This is of course quite distinct from the biblical view, and it is here that we see the cunning and artful deception of Satan in misrepresenting who God is in ancient Sumerian literature.
 - (3) The other very significant thing about this view is that it is in direct correlation with the Darwinian evolutionary theory which teaches that “organic . . . evolution occurred in primordial waters, when cells were formed by living organisms surrounding organic compounds” (*Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 15th ed., s.v. “evolution”).
 - (4) The Sumerian cosmogony is also an expression of what modern day evolutionists call “uniformitarianism.” This theory asserts that matter has always existed, without postulating just how, and that the “present natural laws and

processes suffice to explain the origin and development of all things" (Henry Morris, *Scientific Creationism*, 2nd ed. [El Cajon, CA: Master Books, 1985], 92). That is, life simply began, on its own, unassisted, out of the primordial waters that were the source of life itself.

- (5) Thus, the view of Darwinian uniformitarianism is identical to that of the ancient Sumerians.
 - (6) What is also interesting is that many scientists today, who are not professing believers, are coming to see major discrepancies with uniformitarianism, and they are trying to come up with a "catastrophic" model of creation (creationists affirm catastrophism which scientifically and biblically describes God as creating the world *ex nihilo*) that somehow allows for a created "event," but without supporting biblical creationism and a divine, creative act (interestingly, it cannot be done and therein is their frustration).
 - (7) Thus, we can clearly see from the above material that evolution at its roots is not science, but rather a religiously held belief that attempts to deny the existence of God and man's accountability to Him! Satan's lie and misrepresentation of creation with the Sumerians is carried all the way down to Charles Darwin et al, whereby man is ultimately deified and God is made no greater than a "superhuman man."
 - (8) In addition, the very foundation of Marxism/Leninism is the uniformitarian doctrine of Darwinian evolution-it is called Dialectical Materialism, and its roots can be traced to the same thought processes of the ancient Sumerians-thus, the incredibly creative and misdirected lie of Satan has as its aim the debunking of God as the ultimate creator, and the exaltation of man to become a god himself (Gen. 3:5 – see handout from *Understanding the Times*).
- d. The next aspect of the Sumerian cosmogony that really begins to separate from the biblical cosmogony is the belief that a pantheon of demigods – human in form, but immortal and superhuman in power – is managing the universe according to fixed laws and a coordinated agenda (Kramer, 113-115).

- (1) It is at this point that we can clearly see the consistency of the Satanic deception in that this is what the serpent confronted Eve with in Genesis 3:4-5:

And the serpent said to the woman, “You surely shall not die! For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”

- (2) The word in Hebrew consistently translated “God” in English is אֱלֹהִים ('*Elōhîm*), and it is a plural term. The singular form that is also used is אֵל ('*El*).
(3) However, in Genesis 1-3, the form consistently used is the plural form, and this clearly is referring to the Trinity as is seen in Gen. 1:26: “Let Us make man in our image . . .”

2. Animism and Polytheism

- a. Everything was guided by anthropomorphic but superhuman beings (from atmospheric forces as the wind and storms, to rivers and mountains, to a field and a farm, to a pickax and a plow).
- b. These gods were divided in rank;
 - (1) There was the council of the seven gods (*dingirs*) who decree the fates of life and the world (*Ibid.*).
 - (2) Next were the fifty gods who were the great gods (*Ibid.*).
- c. These gods were in turn divided into the creative and non-creative gods.
 - (1) The creative gods were four—the god of the heaven, An; the god of the air, Enlil; the god of the water, Enki; and the mother goddess of the earth, Ninhursag (*Ibid.*, 118).
 - (2) These gods in turn created every other deity according to the plans and determination of the creative gods.
 - (3) Enlil came to be seen as the creator god of that part of the universe that caused things to grow—he is credited with bringing into existence the day, as well as the seeds and plants of the earth.
 - (4) That which is most similar to the biblical account of creation is that he, as well as the other creative gods, did this through the spoken word—i.e., the gods would

lay their plans, utter the word and pronounce the name, and that which they pronounced would come to be.

- (5) The other fascinating similarity is the introduction into Sumerian theology of *me* (*Ibid.*, 115-116). *Me* was viewed as a set of laws and principles that kept the created universe and cosmos running smoothly and in a coordinated fashion according to the plans of each creating deity. However, there wasn't just one *me*, but rather there were a hundred or more *me*'s that governed individual elements in creation. This is directly opposed to the biblical truth that Christ is not only the Creator of all things, but He also holds "all things together" (*Col. 1:16-17*).
- (6) The last element that we will look at with reference to the Sumerian gods is the great contrast between them and the God of the Bible. All of the Sumerian gods were totally anthropomorphic, including the four creative gods. That is, they were viewed as human in their shape, their thoughts and their actions. Thus, they plan, carry out their plans, eat, drink, marry, have sex and produce children, and they have and succumb to the very same lusts, weaknesses and struggles that we have and succumb to—the difference is their power as superhuman beings (*Ibid.*, 117).
- (7) Thus, here too we see the Satanic deception that began in the Garden actually being incorporated into a belief system—i.e., superhuman beings who are considered to be "gods," which was the very same temptation Satan confronted Eve with in the Garden (*Gen. 3:1-5*).
- (a) The word for God in Hebrew is אֱלֹהִים ('*Elōhîm*), and it is plural in form; i.e., it literally means, "gods."
- (b) However, the plural form is used with a single verb, indicating that the plurality of "God" is viewed as one.
- [1] In Genesis 1:26, we read where God (אֱלֹהִים-'*Elōhîm*) says, "Let us . . .," thus referring to the Godhead – the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
- [2] This is also seen in Gen. 11:7 where the LORD

(i.e., יהוה-YHWH) says, “Let us . . .,” thus once again implying the Godhead.

- (c) Consequently, I believe Satan could have very well been referring to the “superhuman beings” the Sumerians worshipped when he told Eve she would be “like gods, knowing good and evil.”

C. Ancient Babylon

1. The Babylonians also had a pantheon of gods, and they too had the same cosmic gods as the Sumerians, with *Ea* being the name of *Enki*.
2. Here too in the Babylonian view of creation do we find a very similar concept of what is called scientifically, “uniformitarianism.” That is, the view that creation happened of its own accord, and then it continued to recreate itself. With the Babylonians and Sumerians, the gods had some part, but self-creation also was inherent in the actual creation itself:

After Anu [had created heaven],
Heaven had created [the earth],
The earth had created the rivers,
The rivers had created the canals,
The canals had created the marsh,
(And) the marsh had created the worm. (Richard J Clifford, *Creation Accounts in the Ancient Near East and in the Bible* [Washington, D.C.: The Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1994], 55)

3. Thus, it can clearly be seen that even though there is a view with the Babylonians that the gods participated in creation, there is the overarching view that the creation itself continued its own creation. In the Babylonian cosmogony, therefore, “World origins, it holds, are essentially accidental: gods were born out of a mingling of the primeval waters and they engendered other gods” (Thorkild Jacobsen, *The Treasures of Darkness* [New Haven, CN: Yale University Press, 1976; 3rd printing, 1979], 191):

When heaven above was not (yet even) mentioned,
firm-set earth below called by no name;
(when) but primeval Apsu (i.e., powers of the
fresh, underground waters), their begetter,

and the matrix, Tiamut (i.e., powers of the salt waters of the sea) – she who gave birth to them all – were mingling their waters in one; when no bog had formed, (and) no island could be found; when no god whosoever had appeared, had been named by name, had been determined as to (his) lot; then were gods formed within them. (*Ibid.*, 168)

4. Through the influence of Hammurabi (king 1792-1750 B.C.) and his dynasty, *Marduk* became the chief god of the Babylonians. *Marduk* conquered *Tiamut*, the goddess of the primeval chaos, and ultimately brings about the creation of man. After man's creation, the gods are now given administrative positions, and the “seven gods” of decrees are installed in their permanent position whereby *Marduk* is installed as permanent king, and his permanent place of residence, Babylon, is established (*Ibid.*, 172-183).
5. *Marduk* was eventually called “Bel,” or Lord. The name “Baal,” or “lord,” in the Old Testament is also associated with Caananite deities. It is very possible, therefore, that *Marduk* worship in ancient Babylon influenced to some degree the “Baal” worship in ancient Palestine.
6. Hammurabi established a law code that is the oldest, extant law code we have, predating the Ten Commandments by 300-500 years, depending on when one dates the Exodus.
 - a. However, the law code of Hammurabi does not predate God's law, but merely puts in written form that which was already understood by ancient man within his heart to be the basis for an organized society.
 - (1) The very first law given to man was that given to Noah after the flood: “Whoever sheds man's blood, by man his blood shall be shed, for in the image of God He made man” (Gen. 9:6).
 - (2) In the Hebrew, the literal reading is: “... by the man his blood shall be shed, ...” Thus, even at that time, God was setting forth not only the law for capital punishment, but He also was establishing an organized system of justice!

- (3) From this foundation, therefore, all of the other laws of civilized society came forth (both Sumerian and Babylonian) before the giving of the Decalogue.
- b. Even though this written law code predates the Decalogue, there are distinct differences from the Decalogue:
 - (1) The self-exaltation of Hammurabi and his worship of many gods in the prologue (James B. Pritchard, ed., *Ancient Near Eastern Texts*, 3rd ed. [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969; 3rd printing, 1974], 164-165), versus no self-exaltation of Moses, and reference to the Lord, alone.
 - (2) Law # 181 provides for the payment of inheritance to a daughter who has been dedicated as a temple prostitute.
 - (a) The first thing to see is the sexual perversion substantiated by this law.
 - (b) This is in stark contrast to the Decalogue in Lev. 19:29 which forbids such a thing.
 - (3) Overall, the laws are set forth in a way to provide for an orderly society for their culture in that day.
 - (4) The epilogue is even more self-exalting of Hammurabi, which is total contrast to the Decalogue

D. Ancient Egypt

1. In ancient Egypt, the Pharaoh was ascribed divinity in a variety of ways: he was called god, the image of god, son of god, and like a god (Byron E. Shafer, ed., *Religion in Ancient Egypt* [Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991], 59).
2. Whereas the actions of Egyptian gods were humanized like that of the Babylonians and Sumerians, they remained divine. The pharaoh, on the other hand, appeared to possess aspects of the human at times, and at other times aspects of the divine (Ibid., 62).
3. The king had to earn his immortality, as well as having to maintain *ma`at*, or order, which was confirmed on the Pharaoh at his coronation (Ibid., 63; *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 15th ed., s.v. “Ma`at”).
 - a. Upon his coronation, he moved from being a mere mortal to being one with the creator gods, and thus, inherited the responsibility of maintaining *ma`at*, just as the creator gods brought order out of chaos (Shafer, 70).

- b. In the Egyptian cosmogony, there were five creator gods who were preeminent in their various accounts of creation.
- c. However, before creation could occur, there were three essential powers that had to be present: *Hu* - divine utterance; *Heka* – magnetic or divine energy; *Sia* – divine knowledge (*Ibid.*, 33).
 - (1) Thus, here too we see a counterpart to the Trinity as presented in Genesis with regard to creation.
 - (2) And here too, as in Sumeria and Babylon, the corruption is also present:
 - (a) The Pharaoh himself becomes semi-divine and is worshipped as a god himself, possessing these three powers.
 - (b) The Pharaoh was so identified with the gods, that it appears he was either viewed as identified with a god, the incarnation of a god, or the manifestation of a god.
 - (c) The Pharaoh was so integral to the divine order of *ma`at*, that without him, the universe would end (*Ibid.*, 65-67).
 - (d) There were numerous deities, and there were statues made in their images to which people offered worship and paid homage to, including statues of Pharaoh who they also worshipped.
 - (e) Salvation for the Egyptians, as with every other religious movement, apart from biblical truth, is a thing of works (E.A Wallis Budge, *The Book of the Dead*, [New York: Gramercy Books, 1960], 130).
 - (3) In Scripture, however, we see just the very opposite with regards to the Godhead, worship and salvation:
 - (a) Gen. 1:1 – God and God alone created the heavens and the earth, not a pantheon of “gods.”
 - (b) Gen. 1:26 – We see the Trinity presented here, as persons, not merely “powers.”
 - (c) Gen. 15:6 – The salvation of Abraham is by faith, not works (Heb. 11)
 - (d) Ex. 1-14 – God opposed, not supported the religious system of Egypt.
 - (e) Ex. 20:1-6 – God opposes the use of idols or images made to represent Him.

- (f) Dt. 6:4 – God is One, not many gods, and that oneness within the Trinity is not three different gods, but One God in three distinct personalities.
- (g) Dt. 32:48-52; II Sam. 12:1-15 – The leaders and kings of Israel were real men, just like the Pharaohs, and they sinned and failed, just like the Pharaohs, and their relationship with God was based on grace through faith, unlike the Pharaohs (Heb. 11).

E. Ancient England

1. Stonehenge is thought to have been built between 3000 – 1500 BC. It was most likely built as a center of worship of some type.
2. Just who built it and how it was used is still unclear, but some today believe that it may have been erected for astronomical purposes such as predicting “lunar and solar eclipses,” but others see all of this a mere speculation and assert that no one knows just who built it or why (“**Stonehenge.**” *Encyclopædia Britannica. Ultimate Reference Suite*. Chicago: Encyclopædia Britannica, 2008).

Session Two

II. 1500 – 1000 BC

A. Ancient India

1. The Vedic religion takes root in India from Iran. The foundation of this religion is its scriptures known as the Vedas.
2. Inherent in this religion was an involved sacrificial system of edible items in a sacred fire.
3. There were domestic sacrifices done by private individuals in their home, sometimes with a priest, and there were public sacrifices which required many priests, and were usually on behalf of kings or wealthy men. The latter included a “horse sacrifice” at times, which was associated with the soma drink.
4. Vedism saw the universe being in constant danger of destruction through chaos. Thus, man was integrally involved in maintaining the order through offering sacrifices to the gods, including the soma drink (*Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 15th ed, s.v., “Vedism” & “Vedic sacrifice”).
 - a. The soma drink produced a hallucinogenic effect.
 - b. It was first offered to the gods, then the remainder was consumed by the priest first, and then the sacrificer.
 - c. The soma drink was the personification of the deity, Soma, who was the master of plants, the healer of disease and the bestower of riches.
 - d. Its origin was said to be in heaven from whence it was brought to earth by an eagle (*Ibid.*, s.v., “soma”).
5. As time went by, ritual became increasingly important as the focus and means by which order was maintained, and thus, the role of the priest became central and dominant.
6. Human sacrifice may have been a part of this as well, based on the dismembering of Purusa, a giant in their teaching, from whose four limbs sprang the four major castes – Brahmans (priests or teachers); Kshatriyas (rulers); Vaisyas (traders); Sudras (Non-Aryan serfs) (*Ibid.*, “Vedism” & “Vedic sacrifice”).

B. Ancient Egypt

1. Amenhotep IV destroys the old gods and sets up Aton, the sun god, as the only god (ca. 1385 BC).
2. Thus, monotheism for a very brief time is established in Egypt, and this could very well be as a result of the influence of Israel,

and possibly even a personal contact with Moses if the Exodus occurred in this time frame.

3. However, Tutankhamen, his successor, reinstates the former gods and gives the priests their power back.

C. Ancient Israel

1. It is during this time (i.e., 1500 – 1000 BC) that the Exodus occurs – either around 1400 BC or 1250 BC.
2. If it was the former date, then it is quite possible that Moses and Amehhotep IV knew each other and had some interaction.
3. If it was later, it simply has been the influence of Israel as a whole on the life of Amenhotep IV.
4. This is also the period of the Judges in Israel.

Session Three

III. 1000 – 500 BC

A. Greece

1. Greek paganism reaches its zenith during this time frame
2. The story of the Titans emerges out of this period.
 - (a) There were 12 original Titans, children of heaven (Uranus) and earth (Gaea), six boys and six girls.
 - (b) A rebellion ensued against Uranus fomented by his wife, and Cronus, one of the sons, became ruler in place of his father, Uranus.
 - (c) However, Zeus, Cronus' son, rebelled against his father, but most of the Titans sided with Cronus.
 - (d) A ten year civil war followed, after which Zeus emerged as the victor and imprisoned the remaining Titans beneath Tartarus (*Ibid.*, “Titan”).
3. Once again, we see a possible illusion to the Twelve Tribes of Israel, but in stark contrast to the tribes and their rebellion against the holiness of God, the Greek 12 were fighting among themselves as to who would be the ultimate ruler among themselves.

B. India

1. A pantheistic religion develops in India.
2. It is centered around Brahminism and Atmanism

3. Brahminism

- a. Brahma is considered to be the one supreme, all pervading Spirit; the impersonal Absolute, beyond attributes, which is the origin and support of the visible universe.
- b. The word *Brahman* comes to mean the source of power, and thus the impersonal, supreme, eternal principle behind the origin of the universe and the gods.
- c. In Hinduism, this Absolute is the essence, the Self (atman), of all beings.
- d. Atman and Brahman are one, and the knowledge of Brahman is the supreme goal of human life as it confers liberation from the ongoing cycle of suffering and rebirth (John Bowker, ed., *The Oxford Dictionary of World Religions* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997], 163).

4. Atmanism

- a. For Hindus and Sikhs, the real or true self, which underlies and is present in human appearance is Atman.
- b. Atman came to be seen as present in all forms of life and is identical with Brahman.
- c. Atman becomes the observer of the self-independence with its entanglements in the world and binds the self to countless rebirths.
- d. Atman attains its final release when it realizes that it is what it has always been, Brahman (*Ibid.*, 106).

C. Israel

1. Samaria falls to the Assyrians in 722 BC to Shalmaneser V.
2. However, he dies that very year before the city was finally secured for Assyria.
3. Sargon II comes to power, and in the following year, 721 BC, he deports over 27,000 people to various Assyrian locations, and replaced them with other people groups from other areas—thus began the “Samaritans,” people of mixed Jewish and Gentile heritage.
4. Judah falls to Nebuchadnezzar in 587 BC, and thus began the Babylonian captivity.
5. In 538 BC, Cyrus allows the Jews to go back to Jerusalem, and they begin work on rebuilding the Temple.
6. However, they met opposition, and the work stopped, but it picked up again in the second year of Darius I (520 BC), and it was

completed in 516 BC under the ministries of Haggai and Zechariah, and Zerubbabel, governor of Judah.

D. Persia

1. Zoroaster is born in ca. 628 BC and dies ca. 551 BC.
2. Zoroaster claimed to have personally been commissioned by God in a vision to preach the truth.
3. His message was that there are two opposing forces, the one for life, and the other for non-life.
4. The choices one makes will determine one's fate.
5. There is a Good Spirit, Mazda, and an Evil Spirit, Mainyu.
6. Depending on one's choices between these two will determine one's eternal fate.
 - a. Those whose good deeds, thoughts and words predominate their choices, they will cross over into paradise.
 - b. Those whose actions are predominately wicked, they will be cast into torment and woe (*Ibid.*, 1069).

E. China

1. Confucius is born in 552 BC in the state of Lu and died in 479.
2. Confucius focused on moderating our emotions in an effort to reach psychic harmony.
3. Although Confucius believed in a deity, he might be considered a precursor to the Deists; i.e., he emphasized man's mental capability that was open to the transcendent.
4. His central doctrine, therefore, was *jen*, which was goodness, benevolence, humanity, and human-heartedness, and this in turn would make the "perfect human being" (*Ibid.*, 233).

F. India

1. Buddha was born ca. 563 or ca. 483 BC on the borders of present India and Nepal.
2. Nirvana is the perfect state of Enlightenment that we are all progressing toward.
3. This may of necessity come about through many rebirths as we come to realize this state of Nirvana or Enlightenment.
4. The process by which comes into this Nirvana and is freed from the cycle of rebirths is the eightfold path: seeing things rightly, right thinking, right speech, right action, right living, right effort in all areas of being, right mindfulness, and right meditation.
5. Buddha in his lifetime was accorded worship, being given the name, Blessed One, and his own wife fell at his feet and worshipped him.

6. In addition, he did not believe that there was anything eternal, including God, but everything is relative and interdependent (*Encyclopaedia Britannica*, s.v., 15th ed., “The Buddha and Buddhism”)
7. Consequently, there are many gods in Buddhism which is part of the total process in one coming into Nirvana (Bowker, 172).

Session Four

IV. 500 – 0 BC

A. Israel

1. Under the leadership of Ezra, the Law is reestablished as an active part of the lives of the Jews living in Jerusalem and Judah (458 BC).
2. Nehemiah is made governor of Judah (445 BC-433 BC), and under his leadership, the walls of Jerusalem are rebuilt (from Aug. 11, 445BC-Oct. 2, 445 BC – 52 days [Neh. 6:16]).
3. The Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament is completed ca. 225 BC.
4. Antiochus Epiphanes
 - a. He came to the Seleucid throne in 175 BC.
 - b. In 169 BC he entered the Holy of Holies in Jerusalem and carried off some of the holy vessels.
 - c. On Dec. 25, 167 BC, he brought a cessation of sacrifices in the Temple; tore down the old altar; forbade the worship of Yahweh, as well as circumcision; rebuilt a new altar to Zeus; initiated prostitution in the temple, and sacrifices were to be made at the feet of an idol created in the image of Antiochus.
 - d. This in turn set off the Maccabean revolt against Antiochus, and in Dec., 164 BC, Jerusalem was recaptured and the Temple cleansed, almost three years to the day – thus, Hanukkah!
 - e. Qumran Community
 - a. A desert community of Jewish believers who were looking for the coming of the Messiah, as well as wanting to separate from what they saw as an ungodly and compromised worship of Yahweh.
 - b. It is thought by some that John the Baptist might have had some contact with them.

B. Greece

1. Socrates (470-399 BC)
 - a. Socrates did not leave any writings of his own; thus, all we have is that which others have written about him.
 - b. The one thing we do have from Socrates via Plato is the Socratic method of dialog-i.e., an approach toward a conceited expert whereby he is disarmed through questioning and repudiated.
2. Plato (428-347 BC)
 - a. Plato believed in an immortality of the soul that was subject to reincarnation.
 - b. The reason for this is because he felt that we are born into this world with a “dim recollection” of the ideas of beauty, justice, etc. from another world of existence-i.e., the reincarnation of the soul.
 - c. Those who live virtuous lives will be rewarded.
 - d. Plato also believed that it was possible to build a utopian society on this planet. His plan was quite authoritarian and not very democratic-it was the rule by the elite (Ted Honderich, ed., *The Oxford Companion to Philosophy* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995], 684-685)!
3. Aristotle (384-322 BC)
 - a. With regards to ethics, Aristotle believed that well being consisted of three things: intellectual contemplation, virtuous actions, and virtuous character.
 - b. Virtuous action may be defined as: what the person with practical wisdom would choose, and the practically wise are those who can deliberate successfully toward well being.
 - c. With regards to his ontology, he believed in the teleological argument.
 - (1) The nature of a species is determined by its successful operation.
 - (2) The organization of an entity to achieve its goals is what makes the species what it is.
 - (3) Man’s end is to live a life of rational activity, and the rest of his life is designed to achieve this end.
 - d. Concerning universals:
 - (1) Universals do not exist by themselves, but they are expressed rather in particular things.

(2) However, only universals are definable and the objects of scientific study.

Session Five

V. Prophecies Relating to the First Coming of Christ & Our Salvation Through Him

A. Isaiah

1. 7:14 - עֲלֵמָה ('almâ) – Mt. 1:23 (LXX - παρθένος - *parthenos*)
 2. 9:1-2- Light in darkness – Mt. 4:12-16
 3. 9:6-7 (Dan. 7:14, 27) – Lk. 1:32-33
 4. 11:10 – Rom. 15:7-12
 5. 25:6-8 – I Cor. 15:15-54
 6. 28:16 – Rom. 9:33; I Pet. 2:6
 7. 40:1-5 – Mt. 3:3; Mk. 1:3; Lk. 2:4-6
 8. 42:1-4 – Mt. 12:15-21
 9. 53:1-6 – Jn. 12:34-38; Rom. 10:14-17; Acts 26:22-23; I Pet. 2:24-25; Mt. 8:14-17
 - a. “grieves” = infirmities/sufferings
 - b. “sorrows” = diseases/pains, sorrows, wounds
 - c. “we are healed” = to heal/cure
- B. Hos. 1:9-10, 23 – Rom. 9:19-26
- C. Joel 2:28-32 – Acts 2:1-21
- D. Mic. 5:2 – Mt. 2:5-6; Jn. 7:42
- E. Hab. 2:4 – Rom. 1:17
1. Hebrew – Hab. 2:4
 - a. אֶמְנָה - 'emûnâ = firmness, security, fidelity, honesty, conscientiousness, faith
 - b. אַמָּן - 'āman = to make firm, fasten; to be firm, constant, faithful, honest; to believe, trust, stand still
 - c. אַמְּנָן - 'āmmân = workman, artist
 - d. אַמְּנָה - 'āmēn = firm, ture, faithful
 2. Greek – Rom. 1:17 & Hab. 2:4 in LXX
 - a. “out of/from faith into faith”
 - b. “out of/from faith into faith he shall live
 - c. LXX – “out of/by my faith
 - (1) The exact wording in the LXX of Hab. 2:4 is as follows:
“If he should draw back, my soul has no pleasure in him:
but the just shall live by my *faith*.”

- (2) The last clause in Greek is worded as follows: “ο δέ δίκαιος ἐκ πίστεώς μου ζήσεται.”
- (3) Thus, the translators of the LXX understood the phrase in Hebrew, **תָּמִינָה** (’ēmūnâ – “*his faith*”) to be referring to the “faith” that comes from God as a gift to those who trust in Him.
 - (a) In Ephesians 2:8-9, we read: “For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, *it is* the gift of God;⁹ not as a result of works, that no one should boast.”
 - (b) Thus, even the faith that we exercise in God is a work of His Holy Spirit.
 - (c) As Paul writes in Romans 10:8, we are given the gift of faith, but we must exercise it back into trusting God or else we will not have a saving relationship with Him through faith: “But what does it say? "The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart" - - that is, the word of faith which we are preaching.”
- [1] Paul also wrote in Romans 10:17 that, “faith *comes* from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.”
- [2] Thus, as the Holy Spirit convicts and points us to Christ, He also places within us the ability to believe and trust Christ, but that last step of commitment is ours to make, and we can either make it, or we can refuse to do so. We see this in the following two passages: “No one can come to Me, unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up on the last day” (John 6:44); “for ‘Whoever will call upon the name of the LORD will be saved’” (Romans 10:13).

Session Six

VI. The Dead Sea Scrolls

A. The Origin of the Scrolls

1. After the death of Alexander the Great in 323 BC, his empire was ultimately divided up between his generals – Antigonus, Cassander, Lysimachus, Ptolemy, & Seleucus – and Palestine became a battle ground for control between the Ptolemies of Egypt and the Seleucids of Syria. In 175 BC, Antiochus IV came to the Seleucid throne, and called himself Epiphanes, or “manifest one.” His father, Antiochus III had conquered and taken over Palestine through a series of wars from the Ptolemies of Egypt. However, in 170 BC, the Ptolemies once again tried to retake Palestine as their own, but they were defeated by Antiochus IV in a series of battles. In 169 BC, however, while Antiochus IV was occupied in Egypt, a man named Jason, who had been appointed High Priest by Antiochus IV, but was replaced by a man named Menelaus, attempted to recapture Jerusalem and reestablish himself as High Priest. Upon hearing of this turn of events in Jerusalem, Antiochus IV returned to Jerusalem in 167 and devastated the city, setting up in the Temple a statue of Zeus and himself, as well as doing away with circumcision, the reading of the Torah, and Temple sacrifices, which were substituted for sacrifices to his pagan deities. The erection of the pagan deities in the Temple is said to be on December 25, 167 BC. Soon after this, a Jewish priest named Mattathias, of the Hasmonean family, not only refused to do homage to the pagan deities, but when a Jewish apostate priest began to do so in the area where he lived, he killed the Jew and the Syrian army official who had accompanied him. This began the Maccabean revolt, and by December 25, 164 BC, the Temple had been retaken, cleansed, and Jewish worship once again took place. It was during this time also that the Hasmonean family took over and monopolized the High Priesthood leadership of Temple to the extent that it virtually became a hereditary position until 63 BC when Pompey of Rome conquered Judea, and the time of the Herods' rule commenced.
2. During the time from 165 – 63 BC, a gradual, and at times precipitous degeneration occurred within the High Priesthood and Temple worship of Jerusalem. This in turn led to the ultimate establishment of the Essene sect, who in turn it is considered

- inhabited Qumran. When you take even a cursory look at the depraved state that the High Priesthood sank to during this time period, it is easy to understand how and why a sect such as the Essenes would emerge. Their desire was to restore the High Priesthood and Temple worship to a godly focus and ministry, versus the debauchery that had consumed it for over 100 years.
- B. The Scrolls and their relationship to the early church can be seen in their anticipatory expectation of the Messiah, as well as their apocalyptic emphases.

1. One of the characteristics of the Essene community and the literature found at Qumran was its anticipation of the coming Messiah. In fact, there are several sectarian manuscripts that make direct allusion to the coming of the Messiah. One in particular, the *Messianic Apocalypse*, which was written approximately 100-75 years before the birth of Christ, has almost the exact wording that Jesus spoke of Himself in Matthew 11:2-5:

Now when John in prison heard of the works of Christ, he sent *word* by his disciples,³ and said to Him, "Are You the Expected One, or shall we look for someone else?"⁴ And Jesus answered and said to them, "Go and report to John what you hear and see:⁵ (2)the blind receive sight and (3)the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and (5)the dead are raised up, and (6)the poor have the gospel preached to them.

In the *Messianic Apocalypse*, we read the following:

[the hea]vens and the earth will listen to His Messiah, and none therein will stray from the commandments of the holy ones. Seekers of the Lord, strengthen yourselves in His service! All you hopeful in (your) heart, will you not find the Lord in this? For the Lord will consider the pious (hasidim) and call the righteous by name. Over the poor His spirit will hover and will renew the faithful with His power. And He will glorify the pious on the throne of the eternal Kingdom, (1)He who liberates the captives, (2)restores sight to the blind, (3)straightens the b[ent] (Ps. 146:7–8). And f[or] ever I will clea[ve] to the h]opeful and in His mercy ... And the fr[uit ...] will not be delayed for anyone and the Lord will accomplish glorious things which have never been as [He ...] (4)For He will heal the wounded, and (5)revive the dead and (6)bring good news to the poor (Isa. 61:1) (Vermes, Geza: *The Complete Dead Sea Scrolls in English*, Revised and extended 4th ed. [Sheffield : Sheffield Academic Press, 1995], 412-413).

And again, in Luke 4, after Jesus' temptation in the wilderness by Satan, we read of Him going into a synagogue on the Sabbath and reading from Isaiah:

And He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up; and as was His custom, He entered the synagogue on the Sabbath, and stood up to read.¹⁷ And the book of the prophet Isaiah was handed to Him. And He opened the book, and found the place where it was written,¹⁸ "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, Because He anointed (6)Me to preach the gospel to the poor. (1)He has sent Me to proclaim release to the captives, (2)And recovery of sight to the blind, (4)To set free those who are downtrodden,¹⁹ To proclaim the favorable year of the Lord."²⁰ To proclaim the favorable year of the Lord." And He closed the book, and gave it back to the attendant, and sat down; and the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed upon Him.²¹ And He began to say to them, "Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing." (Luke 4:16-21)

Thus, we can clearly see that the Qumran community was 'on track' with regard to its anticipation of the coming Messiah.

2. On the other hand, their apocalyptic ideas are quite similar to every age's apocalyptic perspectives in that they see their time as 'the time of the end!' One of their sectarian manuscripts, *The Book of War*, has just such an emphasis. *The Book of War* comprises ten fragments, which are considered to be the final part of *The War Scroll*. Both of these pieces of writing, *The War Scroll* and *The Book of War*, are dealing with the final battle of the ages in which the forces of the 'Sons of Light', after a forty year battle and aided and empowered by almighty God, defeat the forces of the 'Sons of Darkness', who are referred to as the *Kittim*. The reality is that such a war has not yet occurred, although the '30 Years War' in Europe from 1618-1648 might come close, which was both a religious war (Protestants vs. Catholics), as well as a territorial war for trade, commerce, wealth, and power. However, the point to be made is that up to this point, such a war has not occurred, as is also true for our own biblical, apocalyptic view of the return of Christ. What must be remembered is that the Judea and the Western World of that day was in great turmoil, and the only recourse the Essenes saw for stabilization was the coming of the promised Messiah, as well as the apocalyptic end of the age with the ultimate victory of the 'Sons of Light' over the 'Sons of Darkness'. Jesus the Christ did come, but the apocalypse did not and has not come as yet.

Session Seven

VII. The Old Testament Canon

- A. The traditional date of the establishment of the Old Testament Canon is 90 AD at the Council of Jamnia.
 - 1. This Council is considered by many to have in effect closed the OT Canon for most Jews, but “there were Jews living in Ethiopia who either did not hear of it or did not accept the decision of Jamnia. To this day they use a different canon than their Palestinian brethren” (*Encyclopediа Judaica*, Vol 6, p 1147).
 - 2. The Old Testament Canon accepted at Jamnia is in essence what we have in our Bible today.
 - 3. However, there is a history of the development of the OT Canon that is quite intriguing and important, and one very important aspect of that development was the primary use of the LXX by the early church as their source of Scripture.
- B. The use of the LXX by the Apostolic writers and the early church has important significance for us today, and I want to show you three examples.
 - 1. When Paul was writing his epistle to Rome, he shared rather graphically about man’s depraved state in Romans 3:9-18:

What then? Are we better than they? Not at all; for we have already charged that both Jews and Greeks are all under sin;¹⁰ as it is written, "There is none righteous, not even one;¹¹ There is none who understands, There is none who seeks for God;¹² All have turned aside, together they have become useless; There is none who does good, There is not even one."¹³ "Their throat is an open grave, With their tongues they keep deceiving," "The poison of asps is under their lips";¹⁴ "Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness";¹⁵ "Their feet are swift to shed blood,¹⁶ Destruction and misery are in their paths,¹⁷ And the path of peace have they not known."¹⁸ "There is no fear of God before their eyes."

When you read the quote from the Old Testament beginning in verse 10 through verse 18, we find that this is taken from Psalm 14:1-3, but not from the Hebrew, or Masoretic Text, but rather from the LXX text of this same passage. The Hebrew text of Psalm 14:1-3, which is what our Bibles have, is written thus:

The fool has said in his heart, "There is no God." They are corrupt, they have committed abominable deeds; There is no one who does good.² The LORD has looked down from heaven upon the sons of men, To see if there are any who understand, Who seek after God.³ They have all turned aside; together they have become corrupt; There is no one who does good, not even one.

However, when we read from the LXX version of Psalm 14:1-3, we find there the exact passage that Paul quoted in Romans 3:10-18:

The fool has said in his heart, There is no God. They have corrupted *themselves*, and become abominable in their devices; there is none that does goodness, there is not even so much as one.² The Lord looked down from heaven upon the sons of men, to see if there were any that understood, or sought after god.³ They are all gone out of the way, they are together become good for nothing, there is none that does good, no not one. Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness; their feet are swift to shed blood: destruction and misery are in their ways; and the way of peace they have not known: there is no fear of God before their eyes.

Therefore, we see that the LXX was not only considered as Scripture, but it was sovereignly used by God to convey His truth to the world. Interestingly, what we find is that the expansion of verse 3 is a compilation of other OT Scripture combined as a unifying thought. The following is a breakdown of Romans 3:13-18 by matching the statements therein with the OT biblical passages from which they were taken:

- (1) 3:13 = Ps. 5:9: "For there is no truth in their mouth; their heart is vain; their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit."; Psalm 140:3: "They sharpen their tongues as a serpent; Poison of a viper is under their lips."
- (2) 3:14 = Ps. 10:7: "His mouth is full of curses and deceit and oppression; Under his tongue is mischief and wickedness."
- (3) 3:15 = Prov. 1:16: "For their feet run to evil, And they hasten to shed blood."; Is. 59:7-8: "Their feet run to evil, And they hasten to shed innocent blood; Their thoughts are thoughts of iniquity; Devastation and destruction are in their highways.⁸ They do not know the way of peace, And there is no justice in their tracks; They have made their paths crooked; Whoever treads on them does not know peace."
- (4) 3:16-17 = Is. 59:7-8: (Quoted above)

(5) 3:18 = Ps. 36:1: “Transgression speaks to the ungodly within his heart; There is no fear of God before his eyes.

2. The other example of the use and importance of the LXX is found in Matthew 4:15-16 soon after Jesus’ encounter with Satan in the wilderness. The text in Matthew reads:

The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, By the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles--¹⁶ "The people who were sitting in darkness saw a great light, And to those who were sitting in the land and shadow of death, Upon them a light dawned.

This portion of Scripture is taken from Isaiah 9:1-2, and the Hebrew text reads as follows:

But there will be no *more* gloom for her who was in anguish; in earlier times He treated the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali with contempt, but later on He shall make *it* glorious, by the way of the sea, on the other side of Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles.² The people who walk in darkness Will see a great light; Those who live in a dark land, The light will shine on them.

The LXX text of Isaiah 9:1-2, however, reads as follows:

Act quickly, O land of Zabulon, land of Nephthalim, and the rest *inhabiting* the sea-coast, and *the land* beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles.² O people walking in darkness, behold a great light: ye that dwell in the region *and* shadow of death, a light shall shine upon you.

In verse 2 in Isaiah, the Hebrew phrase, “those who live in a dark land, the light will shine upon them,” the words “in a dark land” are written בָּאָרֶץ צְלָמֹות (*bē’ereṣ salmāwet*), “in a land of darkness.” However, in the LXX we read, ἐν χώρᾳ καὶ σκιᾷ θανάτου (*en chōra kai skia thanatou*), which translated means, “in the region and shadow of death,” and this is the exact same reading in the Greek NT, ἐν χώρᾳ καὶ σκιᾷ θανάτου (*en chōra kai skia thanatou*). Thus, what we see is the exact same translation of this phrase, beginning with the LXX and followed by Matthew.

3. The third and final example is that of Habakkuk 2:4 and Romans 1:16-17, which we have already briefly looked at.

- a. Habakkuk 2:4 in the Massoretic, Hebrew text reads: “Behold, as for the proud one, His soul is not right within him; But the righteous will live by his faith.”
 - (1) The word in Hebrew for “by his faith” is בְּאֶמְנָתָו (*be’ēmûnātô*), and the question is, whose faith is being referred to?
 - (2) In addition, the Hebrew word for “faith” is אֶמְנָה (*’ēmûnâ*), and it is also translated as “firmness, steadfastness, fidelity, & faithfulness,” and this term is used in a descriptive way with reference to both God and man (Deuteronomy 32:4 – God; Proverbs 12:22 – Man).
- b. In the LXX, Habakkuk 2:4 reads as follows: “If he should draw back, my soul has no pleasure in him: but the just shall live by my faith.”
 - (1) We find here an incredibly important interpretive statement in the phrase, “by my faith.”
 - (2) Thus, the translators of the LXX understood the phrase, “by his faith,” to be referring to God, versus to man – that is, the ‘faith’ by which one is justified is that which is given as a gift by God to anyone who believes, versus a supposed faith that we can produce ourselves, and in turn, be proud of it (Ephesians 2:8-9).
- c. In Romans 1:16-17, we read: “For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.¹⁷ For in it *the* righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "But the righteous *man* shall live by faith."
 - (1) What we see here is that Paul did not quote from either passage directly, but he gave what would be called his own ‘midrashim’, or what came to be called in the Dead Sea Scrolls ‘pesharim’, and both of these are a form of expositional commentary on Scripture.
 - (2) Thus, what Paul was giving, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, was his commentary from both the Hebrew and LXX text.
 - (3) The phrase, “from faith to faith,” literally means, “out of faith, into faith” – i.e., ‘out of or from the faith’ given by God, and then placing that faith back ‘into Christ’ (Romans 10:17; Hebrews 12:1-2; Acts 3:1-16).

C. Thus, God's sovereign hand was working in and through all the people and means He chose to transmit His inspired, inerrant, and infallible Word for us today.