

Ancient History and the Bible

The Greek writer Herodotus was known as the "*Father of History*," and, yet, despite this fact, his writings, which are contemporary with the reliable historical writings of Nehemiah and Malachi, the very LAST of the Old Testament writers, are a mixture of history and "*mythology*."

Homer's writings, which date back to the same time period as the faithful and reliable histories which were recorded by Samuel, also contain a mixture of "*mythology*" as well as history. The line of demarcation between the two being, in fact, quite unclear.

Despite the fact that the writings of other great historians of antiquity, such as Manetho, Berossus, Josephus, and others, all date back to much more recent periods, they, nonetheless, are still a mixture of philosophy, religion and mythology, which are all so interwoven with such *uncertain amounts of history* that it is impossible to discern where history ends and legend begins!

Unlike these ancient writings, however, Biblical histories are myth, and legend, free. The Bible gives detailed and accurate accounts of history, dating as far back as Abraham, and earlier, which is pretty early when one realizes that the time of Abraham was at least one thousand years before than the time of Homer!

In all the world, there is no other book like the Bible because while other so-called ancient history books, which fade into dim tradition and sheer mythology, date back to only a few hundred years before Christ, the Hebrew Scriptures incorporate great sections of reliable, detailed, and accurate history which not only date back to the days before Abraham, but, also date as far back as the time of Creation itself!

In this day of remarkable archaeological discoveries, archaeology [the science which excavates and analyzes ancient human settlements] has, again and again, authenticated Biblical historical accounts, dating as far back as the time of Abraham. As archaeologists have unearthed portions of structures, pieces of pottery, tools, weapons, and other artifacts, as well as actual human remains and, even, actual inscriptions written by ancient men, they have been able to reconstruct the character of ancient civilizations and the events that happened there, and ***wherever archaeological studies have touched on Biblical places and events, these studies have confirmed, and illuminated, the Biblical accounts of history rather than disproved them.*** They have shown that the historical records of the Bible, instead of being legends and myths, are accurate reports of real happenings and, therefore, are absolutely trustworthy.

In fact, archaeological discoveries have shown that every aspect of everyday living [whether it be ***geography, technology, political and military movements, cultures, religious practices, social institutions, languages, customs, etc.***] in the life of Israel, and the other nations of antiquity, were exactly as described in the Bible and, in view of that, it is truly a shame that the remarkable accuracy of these Bible records of antiquity are seldom appreciated as they should be.

One question that sometimes arises is, since the Bible is clear in its teaching that all present day races and nations, tribes and languages, have been derived from Noah's three sons, and three daughter-in-law, how can one account for the development of the distinctive tribes, and

racial characteristics, of the peoples of the world? How did the different races, and nations, originate? The answer to this question can be found in God's Word.

Even though, after the flood, the Lord commanded man to "*multiply and replenish the whole earth [make the whole earth full]*," man rebelled against the Lord's command and insisted on remaining together in one location, in the area of Babel. Finally, united in open rebellion against God, men built a great city and a tower "*whose top may reach into heaven* the Tower of Babel!

Genesis 11:1-9, "*Now the whole world had one language and a common speech. As men moved eastward, they found a plain in Shinar and settled there. They said to each other, 'Come, let's make bricks and bake them thoroughly.' They used brick instead of stone, and tar for mortar. Then they said, 'Come, let us build ourselves a city, with a tower that reaches to the heavens, so that we may make a name for ourselves and not be scattered over the face of the whole earth.' But the LORD came down to see the city and the tower that the men were building. The LORD said, 'If as one people speaking the same language they have begun to do this, then nothing they plan to do will be impossible for them. Come, let us go down and confuse their language so they will not understand each other.' So the LORD scattered them from there over all the earth, and they stopped building the city. That is why it was called Babel - because there the LORD confused the language of the whole world. From there the LORD **scattered them over the face of the whole earth.**"*

This passage reveals a Divine miracle of judgment by God upon mankind for his failure, in his rebellion, to heed God's clear command to him to scatter throughout the whole earth and populate it. And, because man refused to obey God's command to him, God brought the confusion of tongues and upon them all. God, forcing men to scatter around the world as He originally had commanded them to do, with all probably, would have also involved **physiological changes** in man's brain and nervous system as well just man's language.

Beginning with the two verses which precede in the story of the "*Tower of Babel*" [Genesis 10:31-32], let's review this story once again so that we might glean from it all that it teaches:

"These are the sons of Shem by their clans and languages, in their territories and nations. These are the clans of Noah's sons, according to their lines of descent, within their nations. From these the nations spread out over the earth after the flood" [Genesis 10:31-32].

Now, in order to keep the story of how the "**nations**" of the world began, let's repeat, again, Genesis 11:1-9 which state, "*Now the whole world had one language and a common speech. As men moved eastward, they found a plain in Shinar and settled there. They said to each other, 'Come, let's make bricks and bake them thoroughly.' They used brick instead of stone, and tar for mortar. Then they said, 'Come, let us build ourselves a city, with a tower that reaches to the heavens, so that we may make a name for ourselves and not be scattered over the face of the whole earth.' But the LORD came down to see the city and the tower that the men were building. The LORD said, 'If as one people speaking the same language they have begun to do this, then nothing they plan to do will be impossible for them. Come, let us go down and confuse their language so they will not understand each other.' So the LORD scattered them*

from there over all the earth, and they stopped building the city. That is why it was called Babel - because there the LORD confused the language of the whole world. From there the LORD scattered them over the face of the whole earth."

It is in this passage that "nations" are mentioned for the first time in Scripture and it seems clear how these nations originated. Not only does the passage tell us that "*the Lord confused their language,*" but, also that "*the Lord scattered them over the face of the whole earth.*" Let's take a look at all that was involved when the Lord "scattered" man over the face of all the earth.

At the time of creation, God said, in Genesis 1:9, "*Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together unto one place,* [The New American Bible states, "*into a single basin,*"] *and let the dry land appear.*" This means that the earth was *one body of land*, and the sea was one body of water, which means that, apparently, when God first created the earth it was not *divided* into different islands and continents, but, rather, was one giant continent . . . "*one body of land.*"

Interestingly, Revelation 21:1 teaches that, after the curse is lifted, there again will be "no more sea," that is, the earth will again become just *one body of land* as it previously was.

Also interestingly, both Genesis 10:25 and 1 Chronicles 1:19, teach that, "in the day of Peleg was the earth divided." [one translation says "*the earth was separated*"] One cannot be absolutely positive, but it does seem that, during *Peleg's day*, the earth was divided into islands and continents, the earth was "*divided*," "*separated*," and Peleg lived during the time of the building of the tower of Babel and the confusion of tongues!

All of this is interesting since the theory of continental split, or *drift*" [sometimes referred to as "*global tectonics*"] is, today, almost universally accepted in scientific circles, in contrast to when, only a few years earlier, it was almost universally ridiculed in these same scientific circles. Because the correspondence between the western coastline of Africa and the eastern coastline of South America was known to most early explorers in the 16th and 17th centuries, in 1658, Francois Placet advanced the idea that the old, and new, worlds had become separated while, in 1800 Alexander von Humboldt, a pioneer explorer of Mexico and the United States, suggested that the Atlantic was essentially a huge canyon whose sides had been separated. More recently [1908], Frank B. Taylor and Howard B. Baker advanced the theory of continental separation in order to explain and correlate mountain range formation, and, in 1915, Alfred Wagener, a meteorologist, was a pioneer of the theory of the continental split, using it to explain ancient climates.

In the 1950's, there came, along with the rapid development of the investigation of paleomagnetism [residual magnetism of rocks], a wide acceptance of the drift theory: British geologist, S. Keith Runcorn, found that he could explain his observations of the paleomagnetism in rocks of Europe and North America only in terms of continental movement. Application of paleomagnetic studies to the rocks of the ocean floor in the 1960's, by Frederick J. Vine, finally led to a complete swing of scientific opinion toward the acceptance of the theory of the separation of the continents.

Because results of testing, and analyses, of the sea floor in various parts of the world, by the sea-going drill-ship, Glomar Challenger, have shown that the ocean floors are much younger than the continents, which indicates that there has been recent movement in the ocean floors, these results have not only done much to confirm the theory that we stated above, but they have also served to astonish the scientific world as well.

Following is an article which appeared in the New York Times on February 1, 1957, entitled "***A Huge Crack in the Floor of the Oceans Is Traced by Geologists.***" It shows a picture of an atlas of the world with heavy lines in the ocean floors between the continents, where 45,000 miles of a continuous trench was found, stating that the continents were one "*one large piece of land, but had been pulled apart at some point in past ages,*"

After reading the above verses and this newspaper article, I would also like to tell you of a diagram that shows us how scientists believe the continents of the world were, originally, all just one body of land that pulled apart at some ancient period in the past history of mankind.

This diagram entitled, "***Catapulting Continents,***" showing four various diagrams of how it is now believed that the continents were at one time just one body of land, and pulled apart sometime in the past ages of the earth's existence.

This diagram was released by the Associated Press in 1955 and it states, "*Two thousand scientists from twenty-four countries, who worked on a six-year project, have now ended their first phase of exploring what is under the Indian Ocean.*

"Scars, or a huge crack, on the ocean floor, show that the whole Indian subcontinent has pushed 3,700 miles toward the North pole."

Looking at the map, which shows the east coast of South America and the west coast of Africa, one can see that they nestle right into each other. They were part of one land mass at one time, but, now, Europe and North America have moved apart.

Ancient rock structures of the African and South American shoreline are similar and had once been one continent, rocks dredged up from the ocean far south of India's coast line show that the same magnetic qualities as rocks found on the Indian mainland."

As one can see, it is now believed that North America, South America, Europe and Africa were one immense land mass aeons ago, but, then, the land mass cracked and pulled apart, forming the Atlantic Ocean basin, which means that the crack in the ocean's basin was caused by this pulling apart of the earth's crust. And, as God's Word reveals to us, all of this seems to have taken place during the time period of the Tower of Babel when God, **literally**, "*scattered them [man] over the face of the whole earth*", causing the land to "**divide**", pull apart, into continents and islands!

Taking these fact into consideration, [the facts that, during the time of the Tower of Babel, God not only confused man's language, but, also, caused him to suffer different *physiological* changes in his brain and nervous system [and even appearance] as well, and the fact that God scattered men around the world on different continents and islands], would certainly answer the question of how, and why, since all mankind descended from the same parents, physical appearances, among these nations and races, are, in fact, so different.