



Associates for Scriptural Knowledge • P.O. Box 25000, Portland, OR 97298-0990, USA

© ASK, February 2015 • Telephone: 503 292 4352

WebPage on the Internet: <http://www.askelm.com> • E-Mail address: askoffice@askelm.com

Dear Associates and Friends,

February 2015

There are two Doctrinal articles this month. Both are from audio presentations by Dr. Ernest L. Martin. I decided to take a break (and give you a break) from the history articles on Israel and Judah.¹

Both articles deal with the way biblical characters thought differently than we do today. We strive to improve our situation, personally and corporately. Upward mobility, though still difficult, is more possible today than ever in history. The goals and thoughts of mankind during the long span of biblical times was very different than today. Their “worldview” of time and place was bound by their extended family, their group or tribe, and the “people” or *ethnos* from which they descended, usually within a limited geographical range. Everyone else was an outsider and a potential enemy that could ruin, destroy, or kill everything you hold dear.

Biblical characters often go “outside” that limited worldview and act as individuals, thinking thoughts about God and why things happen. God has slowly brought mankind to the point that the blinders of the past have been removed. What blinders do we wear in our era that prevent us from recognizing truth? Only God’s Word can help us.

The Most Useful Invention

The first article is “[Mankind’s Most Useful Invention](#),” in which Dr. Martin examines why useful inventions and practical innovations were not discovered earlier in history. He gives examples of inventions that could have been invented centuries, even thousands of years earlier, yet for some reason God’s providence did not have people think of them until a later time.

One reason labor saving devices and techniques were not used in ancient times was because of the widespread practice of slavery. The abundance of captive subservient manpower channeled Roman inventive genius into the areas of agriculture, architecture, water transport, and military technology, but not into industrial production (other than for weapons). In spite of interest in military innovation, one of the simplest revolutionary military inventions was missed by the Romans, as Dr. Martin relates.

It was cheaper in ancient times to have slaves than machines do mundane and repetitive work. Labor-saving innovations had a hidden danger. The thinking was, slaves need to be kept occupied. Reduced reliance on slaves could cause serious problems controlling the millions of slaves. Put simply, slaves were necessary to the economy of the Roman Empire and most all ancient empires.²

Unknown Parts of the Bible

The second Doctrinal article this month is titled “[Unknown Parts of the Bible](#).” Dr. Martin discusses

¹ I will continue them next month. So far, the first six installments have been well received and several have commented that you are learning many new things about the biblical history of God’s chosen people.

² For example, one quarter to one third of the population of the Roman Empire were slaves. Of free Romans, about 90% were engaged in agricultural activities. John William Humphrey, *Ancient Technology* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing, 2006), p. 132. After their victory in the Jewish war in 70 AD, the Romans enslaved hundreds of thousands of Jews. In fact, work on the Roman Coliseum was done by Jewish slaves: 70,000 cut the stones in quarries, while 20,000 men did the construction. Slaves in ancient times were gained from the same sources as they were gained in ancient Israel: “**The two principal sources of slave supply were poverty in peace and plunder in war.**” Article, “Slave, Slavery,” in *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*.

four significant biblical texts that should receive more attention because they ask profound questions about God and His purposes in the lives we lead in the human condition. He also connects the four texts that ask questions: Can we know God? Can we know why God acts and why He allows good and bad to occur to us? Can we avoid lying? Which Gentile nation will be Israel's greatest enemy? Each of these questions are derived from the four "Unknown Parts of the Bible."

Dr. Martin's examination ranges from the wisdom books to an aspect of the apostle Paul's character to the history and prophecy of Israel's future, along with that of a nation which will be a dangerous adversary to God's people of Israel. Other unknown parts of the Bible can be discovered, as Dr. Martin presents in his books [*The Star that Astonished the World*](#), and the ultimate purposes and the plans of God are shown in [*The Essentials of New Testament Doctrine*](#). Hidden history is revealed in his books [*Secrets of Golgotha*](#), [*The Temples that Jerusalem Forgot*](#) and [*The People that History Forgot*](#). Enjoy Dr. Martin's presentations.

God's Word and Spirit

The Bible seems to be "bottomless" in the amount of knowledge God has provided for mankind. Scholars have only scratched the surface. This month's two articles allow us to examine some small aspects of important issues in our lives and in the lives of every human being.

We have the unique situation of being able to read God's thoughts through written symbols. Amazing, yet it seems ridiculous. How can an "infinite" God interact with His "finite" human creation? Well, He did so through His Son who came in the flesh of mankind (Colossians 1:22; Philippians 2:5-11; 1 Timothy 3:16; Hebrews 2:14, 5:7, 10:20, and other passages). Jesus experienced the worst that the human condition can endure throughout His life, even empathically taking illnesses of people upon Himself (Matthew 8:16-17). Why doesn't He do such things for us today? The answer is, God and Christ do more for us than heal our infirmities and our sicknesses, even though our emotions desire otherwise for ourselves and loved ones.

We are given His written Word for us to know His thoughts and His Holy Spirit to commune with our spirit, as the apostle Paul tells us, "**the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit which is given unto us**" (Romans 5:5). We show that love to others through our love. "**The Spirit itself bears witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God**" (Romans 8:16), sealing us for our redemption (Ephesians 4:30). God will reveal to us through His Word, "**by his Spirit: for the Spirit searches all things, yea, the deep things of God**" (1 Corinthians 2:10). Studying His Word gives all these things through His Spirit.

End-of-Year Receipts

For one last time I will remind you to request a 2014 contribution receipt for the United States tax purposes, if you desire one. Of course, we will send it to you anytime you request it, but this is the last reminder. Thank you all for your continuing financial support of ASK.

Thank You

We all should be extremely grateful to God for the gifts He has given us. Some day we will look back in awe at what was available to us in our day, compared to prior eras. The work of ASK tries to "unpack" and explain the gift which is God's Word, the Holy Scriptures. We do this so you can understand the message God has for you and for all mankind, a message that involves nothing less than the salvation of all. When that process is accomplished, God will be all and in all (1 Corinthians 15:28). We at ASK endeavor to do this, and you should do the same: "**I will praise you, O YHWH, with my whole heart; I will show forth all your marvelous works.**" (Psalm 9:1). Thank you. With your financial contributions, we will continue to show God's "**marvelous works,**" that we so love doing.

May God bless you all in these times of the soon-approaching restitution of all things, so that the truths of God may be known more than ever before.

David W. Sielaff
david@askelm.com