

Dr. Ernest Martin's Home Study Course: Lesson 3

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

HOME STUDY LESSON 3: THE IMPORTANCE OF GEOGRAPHY IN THE BIBLE

Be aware of the geography

We need to look at each event in terms of where and when it occurred. It is essential that geographical as well as chronological facts are considered in order to arrive at a proper understanding of the scriptures.

We can get a much better idea of the meaning of some scriptures by having a reasonable knowledge of the location of the events we are studying. So it pays to have as clear an idea as possible of the location of the action, the **where?**

So during study, be aware of any words which define the 'where': like the names of villages, towns, cities, and countries, rivers, mountains, seas, etc. It often helps to consult a map which shows the topography of the time.

Most Bibles have such maps of time periods, also Bible dictionaries and commentaries can help in getting the 'feel' of the 'where' the action the passage describes was taking place, and where future prophesied events will actually occur.

For instance, knowing exactly where and when the crucifixion took place, and where and when the resurrection of Christ took place; and when and where Christ left from; and when and where He will return to, will give us more clarity on the geography and chronology, and more insight into the scriptural record.

All the prophecies of the events of the Bible fit together perfectly. Doctrines including salvation become so much clearer and make more sense than ever before when we consider the 'when' and the 'where'.

The first proof of where the crucifixion took place is revealed by the record that there were two witnesses of the tearing of the temple curtain from the top to the bottom. The curtain was 80 feet high and 25 feet wide and very

thick, and it hung up from a stone lintel 30 tons in weight.

So the curtain was eight storeys high and very thickly woven, about four inches thick, and it tore in half at the exact time of Christ's death. Since the Bible states that this occurrence was visible to at least two witnesses standing where Christ was crucified, the tree of crucifixion or cross had to be in line of sight of the Temple curtain. This was impossible from anywhere except the summit of the Mount of Olives to the East of the Temple.

From the West of the temple it would have been impossible. The cross had to be to the East of the temple for there to be a direct line of sight from the crucifixion site to the Temple. The Bible says that the Centurion who was standing by the tree saw the tearing of the Temple curtain happen.

Matthew 27:50 Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost. 51 And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent; 52 And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, 53 And came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many. 54 Now when the Centurion, and they that were with him, watching Jesus, saw the earthquake, and those things that were done, they feared greatly, saying, Truly this was the Son of God.

Christ was buried only 180 yards away from the site of the cross. The timing or chronology was also crucial. Christ was our Passover, and died to deliver us from the bondage and slavery of sin.

In the Temple area there were two other altars of incense outside the holy place. Another outside was the altar of the Red Heifer which was East of the temple, without, or outside the camp about two thirds of a mile away at Bethphage which was a place of assembly. There was a square wall 2000 cubits or about 3000 feet away from the temple.

The site of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and the garden tomb where most religious people believe it all happened are to the West of the Temple, but it is just not possible for that area to be correct because it could not be seen from the tree of crucifixion.

Hebrews 13:10 We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle. 11 For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned without the

camp. 12 Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered **without the gate**.

Christ was killed outside the gate, outside the camp. He was forced to carry the patubulum or board plank cross piece. Christ could see and look at His Father's house as he suffered and died.

God's name is YHWH. The tetragrammaton YHWH was not allowed to be uttered by anyone in Israel, and not even the Priests. It was only allowed to be spoken by a the High Priest and then only in the Holy of Holies once a year. It all centres on the day of Atonement, Yom Kippur, which atonement Christ was going to perform for us.

Because of Christ's sacrifice, and the tearing open of the curtain of the Temple, God was announcing that He was to become available to the whole world of His children who were to be allowed to say His name all the time.

Hebrews 13:13 Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach. 14 For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come. 15 By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to His name.

Part of our work as Christians now is to publicly proclaim and praise God's name continually. We who have the Holy Spirit are in type and in Spirit currently in the Holy of Holies with Christ in the 'Heavenlies'.

Without the understanding of the geography and the chronology of the events of the crucifixion, proper clarity is not possible. Humankind wants to put God's headquarters church on earth but it is in Heaven.

Matthew 16:13 When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am? 14 And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets. 15 Christ said to Peter, but whom say ye that I am? 16 And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.

Caesarea Phillippi was named after the Caesar. The disciples and the people were not really sure about who Christ was.

Matthew 16:17 And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona (Bar=Son of, and Jona=Jonah): for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.18 And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter (Petros, a small pebble), and upon this Rock, (Petra, a mountain, meaning Christ the Rock) I (not Peter!) will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

1 Corinthians 10:4 And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ. Christ, the Rock, is today building His Group, His 'Church, His Ecclesia. Ecclesia is a feminine word, and a reminder that it refers to the 'wife' of Christ.

Matthew 16:19 And I will give unto thee (to you Peter) the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou (Peter) shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

This statement that Christ made was addressed to Peter, and by inference, to His disciples. They were in charge of 'binding and loosing' in matters of administration of the new assembly or group of Christians. This was not addressed to the heads of any religious organisations, nor was it intended to be adopted by the Popes of Catholicism for centuries to come.

Then in verse 20 Jesus said, "tell nobody who I am".

Only one prophet in the Old Testament came from Galilee and that was Jonah. Jonah left from Joppa with a ticket to go to Tarshish or Spain, the completely opposite way to that which God had sent him.

During a storm caused by God, Jonah was cast overboard and the storm immediately abated, and he was swallowed by the specially prepared fish, 'died' for three days and three nights as he travelled in the Mediterranean. He was spat out after 1000 miles journey Eastwards on the shore of the Black Sea. The inhabitants there were worshippers of Dagon the fish god, they thought Jonah was a god. He preached to the Gentiles there who immediately repented.

Peter's father was named Jonah and it was in Joppa that Peter was first to preach to the Gentile Cornelius, and he repented. This in a sense is a mirror of what happened to Jonah.

This is another reason why we need to be familiar with the geography of

events.

Joppa was on the coast was at the foot of Mount Hermon which was snowcapped. Caesarea Philippi, named after the Roman Caesar, was southwest of Mount Hermon with a spring that becomes the source of the River Jordan. The pagan gods were carved into the rock of mount Hermon, but due to an earthquake many of them broke up as the rocks fell.

In the area where all the gods were carved in Mount Hermon there were pebbles in the spring water which came out of a huge rock.

When Christ brought them there at the base of Mount Hermon, there is a time coming when all these god's will be totally destroyed.

Verse 21 The source of the river Jordan is important in history it was a strategic place and will continue to be.

Peter did not think Christ was going to die.

Matthew 16:28 Verily I say unto you, There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom.

There are some standing here shall not taste death until they see him 'coming'. This was referring to the vision six days later on the Mount of Transfiguration. It was only at this time Jesus began unfolding what would happen.

Matthew 17:1 And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart, 2 And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light.

This was the Mount of Transfiguration. Christ's face shone like the sun, his raiment glowing white in his Glory

First three Moses and Elijah also appeared. How did the disciples know it was them? The Father gave them that information, and insights at that time. It was all a vision.

Matthew 17:4 Then answered Peter, and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias.

The three tabernacles, or booths related to the periods of the seven days of the Feast of Tabernacles representing the millennium, and the Last Great Day, all symbolic of the Kingdom of God.

Matthew 17:5 While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice (the voice of YHWH – God the Father) out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him. 6 And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their face, and were sore afraid. 7 And Jesus came and touched them, and said, Arise, and be not afraid. 8 And when they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no man, save Jesus only. 9 And as they came down from the mountain, Jesus charged them, saying, Tell the vision to no man, until the Son of man be risen again from the dead.

So the Father comes down to Mount Hermon and speaks to six (the number of man) people, Peter, James, John, Christ, Moses and Elijah making the 7th. Seven is the special number of God.

From this information, and that in Nehemiah, we can actually date the timing of the transfiguration as it was at the time of building booths given in the Old Testament.

Nehemiah 8:13 And on the second day were gathered together the chief of the fathers of all the people, the priests, and the Levites, unto Ezra the scribe, even to understand the words of the law. 14 And they found written in the law which the LORD had commanded by Moses, that the children of Israel should dwell in booths in the feast of the seventh month: 15 And that they should publish and proclaim in all their cities, and in Jerusalem, saying, Go forth unto the mount, and fetch olive branches, and pine branches, and myrtle branches, and palm branches, and branches of thick trees, to make booths, as it is written. 16 So the people went forth, and brought them, and made themselves booths, every one upon the roof of his house, and in their courts, and in the courts of the house of God, and in the street of the water gate, and in the street of the gate of Ephraim. 17 And all the congregation of them that were come again out of the captivity made booths, and sat under the booths: for since the days of Jeshua the son of Nun unto that day had not the children of Israel done so. And there was very great gladness. 18 Also day by day, from the first day unto the last day, he read in the book of the law of God. And they kept the feast seven days; and on the eighth day was a solemn assembly, according unto the manner.

Many years had passed since the children of Israel had kept the Feast of Tabernacles. It was legal according to the Law, that the building of the booths could commence on the 1st of Tishri after the date of trumpets. This was the start and end of the legal year when Kings were crowned and official annual events took place. It was also everyone's birthday when everyone's age advanced one year.

This was the date that King's began To reign, and everyone had a birthday and advanced one year. Verse five the father god YHWH comes to mount Herman and speaks to the six people. So there were six people plus the father making seven. The father then said this is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased.

Jesus said: Tell no man of this vision. What was the significance of the Mount Hermon area? In the book of Enoch quoted by Jude, which was about the tradition of the Jews concerning the rebellion of angels before the flood who inhabited people, demon possession which caused people to marry and have children, some of whom became giants.

So when it speaks about 'marrying and giving in marriage' just before the flood, the people had become so wicked under the influence of the erring spirits, that God decided to destroy all flesh from off the earth with the exception of eight people.

2 Peter 2:1 But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.

Churchianity does not believe that this has anything to do with them and their activities, but the whole of 2 Peter 2 is also written as a warning for our time.

2 Peter 2:2 And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. 3 And through covetousness (it is your money they are after) shall they with feigned words (tithing is against the law!) make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not. 4 For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment; 5And spared not the

old world, but saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly;

In coming to understand the Bible always stay within the scriptures. It is one thing to use the quote from Enoch recorded in Jude, but we need to be cautious about using external writings unless they are aligned with what the Scriptures say. The Bible is the only standard we can utterly rely upon provided we have proper translations of the original texts.

The River Jordan has the symbolism of salvation in it.

Matthew 3:13 Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him.

Christ was baptised by John the Baptist in the Jordan which contained some fish and the water is clear and symbolises cleansing. When Christ was baptised in the Jordan, in type so was every Christian who has repented, or will repent, the first step towards Salvation.

Colossians 2:10 And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power: 11 In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: 12 Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead. 13 And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses;

Christ's whole life was for us, and whatever He did, He did for us, and we were 'with Him' in everything He did. When He was circumcised, we were; baptised, we were; killed, we were; rose from the dead, we were!

There are some interesting facets of geography concerning the River Jordan. The River Jordan has its source in the region of Mount Hermon and finishes in the Dead Sea which is the location of the Lake of Fire, and this is a major key to understanding. From Mount Herman to Galilee is about 20 miles, and then on another 60 miles to the Dead Sea. The Sea of Galilee is 260 feet deep and contains an abundance of fish. By contrast the Dead Sea is so salty it cannot contain any fish.

When it reaches the dead Sea the symbolism is of purging through fire. In

the time of Strabo it was said that the fire of Sodom and Gomorrah was still burning in the dead sea. It is interesting to note that the English word Petroleum, is made up of Petra and Oleum and actually means 'rock oil'.

In the first century the dead sea gave off sulfur, asphalt, soot, smoke, gases and pitch intermittently. Volley in 1787 reports fiery activity in the dead sea that nothing in the last 200 years

Gehenna and the fire that burned outside Jerusalem was used by the inhabitants to dispose of all the rubbish. It was in a valley, an abyss, which flows down around Jerusalem from the West to the East, and thence eventually to the Dead Sea. At the times of reconciliation of the Dead Sea will become fresh water and fish will live in it.

Another example of there being so much more within the scriptures than we sometimes realise is the story of when Christ came to the disciples and found that they had toiled all night and caught no fish at all. He told them to put the net on the other side of the boat and they drew it up with 153 fish in it, straining it almost to breaking point. This event occurred after Christ's resurrection.

As we know each letter of the Hebrew alphabet has a numeric value. If you take the phrase Bene Elohim which means Children of God and add up the numeric value of the letters in Hebrew it comes to 153. The word of God, our Elder Brother is truly amazing.

There is much yet to be discovered in terms of artifacts in the Holy Land. Perhaps one day soon there will be a great revival of archeological research. Jeremiah was told to bury the Ark of the covenant in Jericho East of Jordan. If they were to discover where the Cherubim were hidden by Jeremiah, this would constitute one of the greatest finds of all time. Perhaps that might occur at the time when the new Temple is being built in Jerusalem in the time of the end.

Geographical doctrinal note

Dr. Martin mentions in his lectures that a great deal of misunderstanding for many thousands of people has arisen because some denominations are teaching that the 'Lost Tribes of Israel' migrated to Europe, and thence to Britain, and subsequently to America. So they conclude that Britain is

Ephraim, the United States is Manasseh, and that many of the countries of Europe are currently occupied by other of the Ten Tribes, like France being Reuben etc.

This misapplication of the Scriptures has been further compounded by ministers teaching that the 'end time' prophesied events that apply to the Jews and the Ten tribes therefore will directly affect specifically Britain, America and Europe. This simply is not true and is a total distortion of what the Bible really teaches.

Dr. Martin confesses that he, himself, was taken in by these false teachings for many years until he came to appreciate the truth concerning the geography of the events preceding Christ's return. Dr. Martin points out, that even if these teachings concerning the peoples of G.B., U.S.A., and Europe do have any truth in them at all, the actual truth of the Bible concerning land and geography would override any such man-made ideas.

The principles that makes a nonsense of those notions are clear. Firstly:

[Acts 17:26](#) And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation;

God decided where His people would reside on Earth. When God gave land, and dominion over land to certain peoples, it was the LAND that God was gifting to them as an inheritance and referring to, not the people.

Certain people were given tracts of LAND for an inheritance and their use, but that land had, and still has, a specific geographical location. The fact that peoples given those lands subsequently migrated to other parts of the world does not mean that the land they now live on was given to them by God, or is the subject of end time prophecies.

If anyone inherits a property in a certain country, and decides to migrate to another country, provided they do not sell the property, then the title remains theirs. Their title to that parcel of land does not transfer to the country they migrate to!

The Land of Promise given to Israel was the Holy Land, Palestine, and its boundaries are clearly defined geographically by Christ Jesus in the Bible. Jerusalem is the 'centre' of that land, and the events of the future 'end time'

are focussed on that city, and upon the Middle East.

Further confusion is caused by suggesting that the book of Daniel says there will arise Ten Nations at the end time, and that they will arise in Europe. They further add to the confusion by saying that 'Babylon' is actually Rome. When the Bible says Babylon, it means the Babylon of the Middle East, not Rome in Italy.

These ten nations that WILL arise are listed in Psalm 83. These nations were in place located in the Middle East at the time the Psalm was written. They will be in place again In the Middle East where they were geographically located originally at the time when the end time prophecies regarding them begin to occur.

Psalm 83:1 Keep not thou silence, O God: hold not thy peace, and be not still, O God. 2 For, lo, thine enemies make a tumult: and they that hate thee have lifted up the head. 3 They have taken crafty counsel against thy people, and consulted against thy hidden ones. 4 They have said, Come, and let us cut them off from being a nation; that the name of Israel may be no more in remembrance. 5 For they have consulted together with one consent: they are confederate against thee:

This is clearly talking about the nations surrounding Israel who want to 'wipe Israel off the map'. Leaders of some Middle East countries have already made declarations according to news releases in the 21st century that this is what they want to do to Israel.

Here are the ten nations that will 'surround' Israel at the end time with the intention of destroying Israel.

Psalm 83:6 The tabernacles of (1) Edom, and the (2) Ishmaelites; of (3) Moab, and the (4) Hagarenes; 7 (5) Gebal, and (6) Ammon, and (7) Amalek; the (8) Philistines with the inhabitants of (9) Tyre; 8 (10) Assur also is joined with them: they have holpen the children of Lot. Selah.

The threat to erase Israel from being a nation will not come from Israel! The European Union, or a 'Ten Nation' group have no intention of attempting to erase Israel from the map. However, Israel's hostile neighbours do espouse such a cause as was prophesied. The turmoil and unrest in the Middle East continues to ferment, and many countries are getting more unstable year by year, and their hatred of Israel is increasing.