

# Job's reflections, part II

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2. What images did Job employ to drive home the finality of death? (v. 11-12)

Having lost his children in a sudden and shocking manner, Job was confronted with the fact that he would never see them again on this earth. The finality of death is painfully apparent to him. God has set limits on man's lifespan (v. 5), and although a felled tree may seem to spring to life again, a man does not reappear once he is gone (vs. 7-10).

The images from the natural world give Job's argument poetic power. In the Near East, it is not unusual for a body of water or a river to go dry. What once was a lively source of refreshment is suddenly barren and empty. In the same way, someone can be lively and full of energy one day and suddenly be still and lifeless as death claims him.

When we sleep, we lie down, but we get up. This is not the case with death. We can imagine Job's sadness as he noted that as long as the earth lasts, no one who has died will ever rise again. (We know that God later worked resurrection miracles, and Jesus would rise from the grave, but Job correctly observed the normal course of this world of someone living in this world.)

3. How can we account for the complexity of Job's thoughts concerning life and death?

Grief, especially the grief that Job went through, has a way of leading to complex and conflicting thoughts. Job seemed to desire death and protection at the same time. He felt that God was angry at him; but he also wanted his deliverance as well.

When it comes to life, we love it, but we hate to suffer. This is part of the reason why Job had complex thoughts concerning life. In his finitude, a person may believe in God but have no clue as to what God is doing in his life.

Job was obviously a very perplexed man, but he showed his heart by continuing to call out to God, and he understood that God was his only source of hope.

When God puts people through tough times, He is the only one who can bring them out. God has a purpose for everything that happens in a Christian's life, and He should be trusted until the end. It is only natural to express grief during troubled times, but as we see later in this lesson, these thoughts of grief should not go against God.

4. What might Job have been thinking about the possibility of resurrection from death?

Job's situation had led him to think about the ultimate issues of life and death. He was thinking out loud about the possibility of resurrection. Job knew that man did not normally return to life, so if he died, he wanted the assurance that there would be a "set time" (Job 14:13) when he would be restored and experience his "change" (v. 14).

In keeping with this interpretation of these verses, Elmer Smick pointed out that the word translated "change" (or renewal) is the same as that used in verse 7 in reference to the tree sprouting to new life (Gaebelein, ed., The Expositor's Bible Commentary, Zondervan). So Job may have been thinking about life after death.

There is a desire in man to live forever. Each person, however, will experience death at one time or another. Christians have the hope of life after death (or living with the Creator Himself). Those who do not have Christ as his or her Lord and Savior will suffer eternity without God and burn in hell. Thankfully, those who are saved will have their bodies resurrected at the rapture (1 Th. 4:16-17).

# Latest effort to reconstruct Jesus

Continued from page 5B

suspicion, and his theories dispute what they report.

His assumptions are clear: "Women do not get pregnant without a male—ever. So Jesus had a human father; whether we can identify him or not Dead bodies don't rise—not if one is clinically dead—as Jesus surely was."

He figures, people stole Jesus' corpse from the tomb, most likely Jesus' mother Mary and sister Salome. Tabor assumed there's a "family tomb" containing Jesus' bones somewhere around Jerusalem but—like Baigent and his secrets—tried to track down evidence without success.

Since Tabor deems the virgin birth impossible, he thinks Mary was engaged to Joseph but became "a teenager pregnant out of wedlock with an illegitimate child" by some unknown other man.

From that unpromising start, Tabor contends, Jesus' nuclear family and disciples followed him as a messiah

and the "legitimate King of Israel" who unfortunately was executed as a political threat. The alleged "Jesus dynasty" was perpetuated by Jesus' half brothers, who he thinks were actually four of the 12 apostles.

(Here Tabor follows the Protestant view that Jesus had real brothers and sisters; Roman Catholicism and Eastern Orthodox believe Mary remained a virgin.)

The New Testament identifies Jesus' brother James as a "pillar" of early Christianity who led the Holy Land churches while Peter and Paul took the message elsewhere. Tabor thinks James and the "royal family" didn't worship Jesus as God but that Christians who did eventually took command.

Baigent, whose past writings fed into "The Da Vinci Code" attempt to debunk the Bible and early Christianity, is far less likely to affect serious thinking than is Tabor.

"Jesus Papers" recycles the shopworn "swoon theory," which has Jesus faking his death on the cross, thus eliminating the Easter miracle of resurrection from the grave. Instead, Jesus conspires with Pilate to survive death by crucifixion and becomes a mystery guru in Egypt, living with the Mrs., Mary Magdalene.

There's "incontrovertible evidence" Jesus was alive a decade after the crucifixion, Baigent writes, though it turns out proof is lacking.

Baigent switched signals entirely on NBC, saying "we

do not even know really that he (Jesus) existed" because outside the New Testament he's only mentioned by Tacitus. Result: Non-crucifixion and non-resurrection of a non-person.

Actually, Jesus was mentioned early on by four Jewish or pagan writers and in Christian works outside the Bible. For that matter, why exclude the New Testament evidence if other ancient texts are used?

Tabor would laugh off Baigent's "swoon theory" about crucifixion fraud, of course.

Now comes the fun as scholars pick apart the plausibility of both men's speculations.

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April, 2006 Newsletter - Part IV

My old school teacher from back in the 50's taught the Bible class in school. They won't allow teaching the Bible in the schools now. My old school teacher back then taught: "The Bible speaks of a greater punishment in hell for a liar than a murderer." Was my old Bible teacher teaching the truth? I'll leave the answer with you. If you don't agree with my old school teacher, write me this next week and tell me why. I'll read what you say and I won't get mad with you about it. But when a person can just straight-face lie, or go along with a lie like all my three cousins did in this case, that is a good sign of God rebroaching sinners. I do not know altogether what my Lord meant when He said: "Woe unto doctors and lawyers". (Lk. 11:46,52) My family members, I would not be in your place for ten thousand worlds of gold and silver. You only see the present. When you are brought in at the Great White Throne Judgment, you'll be brought in with your head down and regret for all eternity the life you lived on this earth. And I'll have to witness against you there on that day. I thought along these lines as I sat there and wept in my heart in the courtroom. And on the other hand, I rejoiced in Christ and in God electing me in Christ before the foundation of the world. On the eighth of March (2006), my late secretary's husband accompanied me some 200 miles from here to visit a piece of property my late wife and I had bought in 1984. The man, Charlie Rodwell, who lived in Virginia years ago, had blocked our right-of-way road to keep us from entering the property. When we arrived over there shortly before noon, we left the car outside the gates at the entrance and proceeded to walk down the road. I quickly saw a woman way back coming out of Charlie Rodwell's house, but could not recognize whom it was. As we proceeded in, she walked toward us. When she got close to us, she questioned why we were there and whom we were with. I kindly answered her and told her: "I own the property back there". Immediately, she let out a cussing at me and said she was going to call the police. My friend and I just kept walking and ignored her. I wish I could just get you to see that you need to keep your mouth shut when before the enemy as much as possible.

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