

## 16-30

16-The Bible has several names for Satan and one of them really shouldn't be there. We have no problem with him being called a Serpent or a Dragon or a Lion or a Prince of Darkness. But the one that really doesn't belong is the reference in Isaiah 24, the name "Lucifer." That one was an insertion into the Text by the King James translators. It was a Latin word, never Hebrew and if you're going to be honest you have to admit that it doesn't belong in the Old Testament. It doesn't bother me and I don't feel it's sinister, but it is true.

17-Some people believe that dinosaurs actually are spoken of in the Bible. They wonder if the Hebrew word "Leviathan" (which is mentioned in Job 3, 41, Psalm 74 & 104 and Isaiah 27.) Some think it means crocodile or a whale type critter, but some speculate that this is the Bible's way of acknowledging the presence of dinosaurs.

18-The Biblical Jewish calendar sometimes has 13 months in a year. It's a "leap-month" that comes around 7 times in 19 years and, like February 29, it serves the purpose of keeping things like *Pesach*/Passover or Atonement/*Yom Kippur* from shifting away from their normal slot in the seasons (*Pesach*/Passover in the Spring and Atonement/*Yom Kippur* in the Fall in the Northern Hemisphere.) The month is called "V'Adar" and it sort of means "Adar the 2nd". "V" is Hebrew for "and." You have "Adar" and then randomly you get "Adar" "and Adar."

19-God did not designate the cities of refuge. Oh, He told them He wanted them to establish these sites, but God did not tell them the specific locations. It was one of those items where God, randomly, just said, "This is the end product... now you go and figure it out, do the best you can do." God seems to want us to use our heads and participate with Him.

20-God seemed to be concerned about His people becoming too comfortable, even in the nasty Sinai region. That's the purpose a wandering camp. Apparently God knows that we tend to settle in because comfort and control can be such high values to us. And, we tend to do that even when the "known" that is such a priority to us isn't really what's best. So, He randomly, and without explanation, would uproot His people. He didn't want them to settle in prematurely. Discomfort can help us keep our pilgrim mentality until we finally actually get to "Canaan."

21-Another area where God was a lot less specific than you might expect was in the creation of the temple Menorah (the seven-branch candlestick." God commanded that they get "so much gold and then make a candlestick with seven branches and I'm not going to tell you how tall, how wide, how to decorate... you have fun creating it!" Again, God seems to like our partnership with Him. Pretty amazing.

22-Even within the city of refuge you had to go for refuge if you killed someone by accident. Really! You probably know that the cities of refuge would be the location where you would run for protection from the "kindred avengers" if you killed someone by accident. But, even if you were in a city of refuge you were required to move to a different neighborhood if you needed protection... unless you were a Levite. In that case you had to leave that city of refuge and go to one of the other five for your protection. That's pretty quaint.

23-Caleb was actually more the "born leader" than Joshua. When the two faithful spies came back with "a good report" on God's ability to lead them successfully into the land the other ten cowardly spies and the nation started whining about the giants. It's a little-known fact that the Bible is clear that it was Caleb and not Moses or Joshua who first stood up and challenged the whole mob. Really, it wasn't, initially, Joshua. He stood up to agree with Caleb. That opens the door to all kinds of consideration as to why the Lord chose Joshua to be the "heir-apparent" and not Caleb.

24-The first man called "the Lion of God" in the Bible wasn't Jesus. It was a much lesser known character, but an important one. His name was "Othniel" and you find his story in Judges chapter 1. He is the one who courageously stood up to take up the challenge of his courageous uncle Caleb. He stepped up to conquer what Caleb was too old to conquer and he became the heir of the gutsy old leader. It's a great story.

25-God is even gracious in how He slaps our wrists. Even when He disciplines His children He does it with the least amount of pain possible. One of the best stories to teach this is in II Chronicles where a man named Hanani tells the king to grow up... but it's important to know who Hanani was. He was the son of the prophet who had been the mentor of that same king about 26 years earlier. All Hanani was doing was echoing the counsel of his trusted old father... Who would have a better chance at a positive reception than the son of your mentor? God's so good.

26-God uniquely gifted two men to create implements for the Sanctuary in the wilderness, but their children who inherited the skills may have actually turned those gifts to the service of pagan gods. Bezaleel was given unique gifts for working in hard materials and Aholiab was specially talented in the creation of soft materials for the Sanctuary. If you do some tracking through the generations it's a reasonable speculation that their children eventually turned the family trades to the creation of implements for pagan worship. It's a sad story, but a lesson waiting to be learned by all of us.

27-Paul crossed paths with one of the worst "traitors" in Jewish history. In Acts 24 Paul crosses paths with Drusilla. She was of Jewish royalty, first engaged to a man and then she dumped him to marry a pagan leader. After only one year she dumped him to run off with a Roman street-fighter named Felix. From slavery Felix "rose to the top" by graft and corruption and violence. She heard Paul's counsel regarding judgment to come and chose to ignore it. Within weeks her husband was recalled to Rome in shame where he committed suicide. She later died (with her son) in the eruption of Vesuvius at Pompeii. "What shall it profit a young Jewish princess if she gains the world and lose her own soul?"

28-The first "Christian missionary" was a person with a severe mental challenge. Matthew 8, Mark 5 and Luke 8 tell you that the first person recorded to have moved off to influence the culture for Jesus is listed as originally being demon possessed. How curious is that?

29-The fact that Matthew 8, Mark 5 and Luke 8 don't agree with each other (whether there was one demoniac or two in the story) is, in a strange way, a way to actually trust the Bible is telling the truth. Matthew was there, Mark and Luke report the story second hand. The fact that there are some discrepancies in the Text actually help to affirm what we are told in II Peter 1 and II Corinthians 4... God wanted to use flawed humans to be part of the process of getting His Word out. If the Bible was absolutely without any flaw or challenge at all I'd not be able to believe that humans had any part in it. Isn't that cool? God risked "perfection" because He preferred participation!

30-Isaiah may be the most contradictory book in the Bible. On the one hand it is filled with images of God that are just totally astounding. You have chapter after chapter of portrayals of the One who establishes and sustains the ultimate "Peaceable Kingdom" that we so long to capture. On the other hand, you have the horrible realities of chapter 53 and 54 where it describes that the Son of this God gets abused... and it almost verbalizes that the Father is the one who does the abuse. Don't believe it? Look at 53:4 and 53:10. How challenging is that?