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Dear Associates and Friends,

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As I begin my 20<sup>th</sup> year as Director of ASK, I present this month's article, "[When the Eons Began](#)." This Doctrinal article explains when "time" began in God's creation and its role within God's salvation process. Dr. Ernest Martin understood that more than one eon could be operating at a time, each counting down to a conclusion usually marked by historical events that may be unrecognized until properly understood in Scripture. There are also important crisis events in history (and in our future) that mark the end of more than one eon.

The end of an eon usually occurs with significant changes taking place, although human society may not recognize that great events in God's plan for all people have occurred. For example, the events surrounding the crucifixion, resurrection, and glorification of Jesus Christ was the crisis event in all human history, yet it went unnoticed by most everyone alive at the time. In the future, the return of Christ to earth will be seen and recognized as significant by everyone alive at that future time, because the effects of His return will be terrifying.

Therefore, it is important to study and understand the Scriptures regarding the uses of the Hebrew words *olam* and *olamim* (singular and plural), as well as the Greek words *eon* and *eons* (also singular and plural) in Scripture. Greek also has an adjective form *aionios* that does not occur in Hebrew.

### **What Business Did Jesus Inherit from Joseph?**

After Jesus began His ministry He preached "**in His own country**" (Mark 6:1). He was not appreciated:

**"Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James, and Joses, and of Juda [Jude], and Simon? and are not his sisters here with us? And they were offended at him."**

• **Mark 6:3**

Joseph, the supposed father of Jesus, is not named in Mark's Gospel at all. The mother and brothers of Jesus are mentioned after He began His ministry (for example, Matthew 12:46; Luke 8:19). Joseph likely died before His ministry began, but Jesus was identified as "**the carpenter's son**" from before:

**"Whence [where] has this man [learned] this wisdom, and these mighty works? Is not this the carpenter's son? is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas [Jude]? And his sisters, are they not all with us? ... And they were offended in him."**

• **Matthew 13:55-57**

Note: "**... are they not all with us?**" Joseph was not with them. Jesus was a carpenter and so was Joseph. As the eldest child in His family Jesus learned the carpenter's trade with His father growing up until He began His ministry. However, as a carpenter Jesus may have been more than a simple craftsman in wood.

In the Old Testament, the Hebrew term for *carpenter* was used to describe a skilled craftsman and even an artist who performed the highest quality design and finishing work in wood. It may have also involved more than making wood products such as wood tools, wood handles for tools, tables, window and door frames and shutters, chairs, benches, reclining couch bases, cabinets, shelves, and wood interiors for wealthy homes, as well as wood design for government and religious buildings.

We are given an idea of the scope of a carpenter's talents in several Old Testament verses: 2 Samuel 5:11; 2 Kings 12:11, 22:6; 1 Chronicles 14:1; 2 Chronicles 24:12; Ezra 3:7; Isaiah 41:7, 44:13; Jeremiah 24:1, 29:2; and Zechariah 1:20. A carpenter was often considered to be highly skilled and experienced tradesman. In those days, a craftsman was a creator, making something useful or beautiful from rough and formless materials.

In several of the verses listed, carpenters were sought out to work at the Temple whether to build it, restore it after desecration, or to rebuild the second Temple. In the Greek Old Testament, the Greek word *τεκτων* is translated as "builder" and other times it is translated as "carpenter." The same Greek word *τεκτων* is used in the New Testament, and it likely means the same range of creative and skilled functions.

My point is this: a builder (or in those days a carpenter) was a person tasked to [1] take the plans of a designer, architect, inventor, or a planner, [2] practice his craft and [3] produce a finished product [4] with the highest quality within his ability. The person who "makes" the finished product is also a "creator." The builder and carpenter must be someone who implements the plans of the creator.

God's Son did this creative work before He was born of Mary. He also performed highly skilled creative work with His earthly father until Joseph's death. Christ died, was resurrected, and has been glorified. Upon His return Christ Jesus will rule Israel and "**inherit the earth**" (Psalm 2:9, 82:8; Revelation 11:13), and He will have full authority to judge all nations (Psalm 22:8, 96:13).

### ***Nehemiah Builds a Library***

In the non-canonical apocryphal historical book of Second Maccabees there is an interesting passage that describes the beginnings of a library building begun and operated by Nehemiah in Jerusalem. It is believed this is the same Nehemiah who was the subject of the biblical Book of Nehemiah that recorded events of a second group of Israelite exiles returning from Babylon. I found this small narrative to be fascinating.

This brief account in Second Maccabees is only in Greek.

**"The same things are reported in the records and in the memoirs of Nehemiah, and also that he founded a library and collected the books about [1] the kings and [2] prophets, and [3] the writings of David, and [4] letters of kings about votive offerings. In the same way Judas also collected all the books that had been lost on account of the war which had come upon us, and they are in our possession. So if you have need of them, send people to get them for you."**

***2 Maccabees 2:13–15, Revised Standard Version***

Votive offerings are religious contribution to gain favor with God, usually used to maintain religious rites and structures. I find it interesting that the author offers to lend books he has in Jerusalem.

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Thank you for your prayers and financial support.

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