

Time

Let's say that one day you decide to read the entire Bible cover to cover. That's a large task! Even if you read three chapters a day it's still going to take an entire year to read through all 66 books. The Scriptures are quite lengthy and contain a *lot* of information. They're not something you can plow through over the course of a long weekend.

At first things will probably go fairly well. Genesis and the first half of Exodus are easy to read. Things will get a bit harder in the second half of Exodus when Moses begins talking about the details that surround the construction of the tabernacle. After that the reader is faced with the daunting task of reading Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy – three books that are difficult to get through, let alone understand. However, if you persist things will get better: after Deuteronomy is Joshua, which is a fascinating account of Israel's invasion of Canaan. This is followed by a lot of other historical books that are easy to understand.

Eventually, however, you'll come to 1 Chronicles and will find page after page of genealogies. You'll encounter verses like these:

1 Chronicles 1:11: “And Mizraim begat Ludim, and Anamim, and Lehabim, and Naphtuhim, 12 And Pathrusim, and Casluhim, (of whom came the Philistines,) and Caphthorim.”

I suspect there are quite a few people who encounter these lists of names and skip over them. No matter how firm their intention might be to read every verse in the Bible, it's tempting to make an exception when it comes to the first few chapters of 1 Chronicles. After all, it's a struggle to even *pronounce* these names (who names their child Naphtuhim?), and to be quite honest there aren't many people who care that Mizraim has six

sons. So these verses get skipped in the belief that this list of names is fairly useless. It might have been useful back in the day, but are there really any deep spiritual truths buried in the fact that Mizraim had a son named Ludim?

For that matter why is this information in the Bible at all? I've never met anyone who was passionately concerned about Mizraim and his offspring, and I've never heard a sermon about him either. Over the course of my life I've heard thousands of sermons and I believe I can safely say that not a single one ever focused on the fact that Mizraim had a son named Pathrusim. I have a feeling that everyone who is reading this document can say the same thing. People just don't care about Mizraim or many of the other people in this list.

But we *should* care because there actually is an important truth buried in these chapters. There's something vital about all of this which *can* change the way we live, if we take the time to stop and see it.

You see, the reason no one cares about Mizraim and his six sons is because he died thousands of years ago. Mizraim is mentioned four times in the Bible (Genesis 10:6 and 10:13, and 1 Chronicles 1:8 and 1:11), and each of the four times is in a genealogical record. If it weren't for those verses he would have been forgotten about entirely.

To be more blunt about it, these verses are *all that's left of his life*. All of his possessions were destroyed long ago. If he had a house it's certainly no longer standing. All of the people who once knew him are long dead. Anything that he ever accomplished in life has been forgotten. In fact, if the Bible hadn't recorded his name then none of us would know he even existed¹. His life would have been entirely forgotten about.

It's possible that Mizraim was a wealthy man. He could have been a powerful individual who controlled vast tracts of land. He may have had farms, cattle, and the best things that life

1 It's quite possible that some obscure historical record also mentions him, but how many people do you think are aware of that beside scholars who work in that field?

had to offer – but today all of that's gone. Time has destroyed everything he ever had and everything he ever did. These four brief mentions in the Bible are all that's left of him – and even that doesn't do Mizraim any good because people skip over his name as a bothersome annoyance!

The truth is that all of the people in these lists were once alive. Mizraim was a human being who was born, who lived his life, and who died. He had hopes, dreams, a family, and children. He had problems, triumphs, and losses. As the son of Ham he was the grandson of Noah, and it's quite possible he was prominent in his day.

But today none of that matters. Everything that he ever had has been lost. The passage of time has destroyed it all.

We don't like to think about it, but one day that will be true for us as well. Many people spend their whole lives trying to get all the stuff they can lay their hands on: cars, houses, money, power, fame, you name it. They think the rich have it made and covet their success. They devote their waking hours to the pursuit of *things*. If their neighbor has nicer things then they try to get them too. On and on they go until they die.

But they *will* die – everyone does. Then time will destroy everything they ever possessed and will erase their name from history. After enough time has passed everything they've ever owned will be gone and everything they've ever done will be forgotten. There are a few people whose names linger on long after they die, but for the vast majority of the human race that doesn't happen. If they're extremely lucky they will eventually become like Mizraim and live on as a name in a genealogy list. If they're unlucky then even that will be lost, and from the point of view of those who are still alive it will be as if they had never existed at all.

But there's another side to all of this. This Mizraim who we read about in 1 Chronicles 1:11 may be dead, but he's *not* gone. The truth is that *everyone lives forever*. The question is

where they spend eternity.

You see, if Mizraim was saved by faith then he's been in Heaven for a long time now. He's with his Savior and the rest of God's family, living in paradise and enjoying a life that the apostle Paul said was far better than the one we have now (Philippians 1:23). He hasn't gone off into oblivion. Instead Mizraim has been living in a place where there's no sin, disease, or death. He's been enjoying an existence that make the wealthiest people today look like paupers.

However, if Mizraim did *not* follow God then he's spent thousands of years being tormented in a place of fire and brimstone, where there's no rest or relief from his agony. The only thing he has to look forward to in the endless ages of eternity are even greater agonies and pains. At this very moment Mizraim longs for just a single drop of water, but even that is forever beyond his reach (Luke 16:24).

There is only one thing that matters to Mizraim now, and that's *the relationship he had with God while he was still alive*. The same is true for every one of us. If the Lord doesn't return in our lifetime then one day we'll die and the world will eventually forget about us. But when that day comes *all* of us will still be alive somewhere! That “somewhere” is entirely determined by *what we did with Jesus*. All those who repent of their sins and believe in Jesus will be given forgiveness and everlasting life² (Mark 1:15, Romans 10:9). However, all those who rebel against God and reject His forgiveness will be faced with His wrath, which will be poured out upon them for all of eternity (Matthew 25:46). That decision will matter for all of eternity.

Many people spend a lot of time chasing things that don't matter. They spend their entire lives trying to get wealth, power, and fame – but that's a meaningless pursuit. Even the richest and most famous person will still die, and when that day comes he'll find out that he can't take his riches with him. What *will* matter in

2 For more information on how to be saved, see:
<http://stories.cyragon.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/Romans-Road.pdf>

that day is his relationship with God – and that's the one thing people tend to neglect. They passionately seek things they can't keep and neglect things that will matter *forever*.

If we have repented of our sins and believed in Jesus then we'll still be around throughout all the ages of eternity. The world may one day forget about us, just as it's forgotten about Mizraim, but when it does we'll be in paradise enjoying blessings that are far greater than the riches of this world. (Plus we have a resurrection to look forward to!) When we're judged we'll learn that the hours we spent pursuing our own fame and fortune were a waste of time. However, the effort we put toward building God's kingdom will be richly rewarded (Revelation 22:12) and never forgotten (Malachi 3:16). One day we'll die and lose everything we have in this life – but if we've taken our resources and invested them in God's kingdom we'll find a rich inheritance waiting for us (Matthew 6:20).

All of us are faced with the same choice: what are we going to do about Jesus? Are we going to ignore Him or worship Him? Are we going to seek His forgiveness or claim that we don't need to be forgiven? Are we going to make Jesus our Lord or reject Him and follow our own desires?

The difference between these choices is the difference between an eternity of joy and an eternity of fiery torment. Things that seem so urgent in this life won't seem important at all when we're standing before God. There are many things in this world we can spend time on, but when we reach the end of our life there will be just one thing that really mattered. What did we do with Jesus?