

# The Horites/Hivites

1. The Horites of Mount Seir, are mentioned in Gen. 14:6, during the great war of the kings which took place in Abraham's day. Genesis does not take us any further back, so we do not know whether Seir is a Horite (named after one of his ancestors) or whether the Horites are descended from Seir (I would opt for the former).
2. As has been discussed, the Horites and the Hivites are probably the same people. Zibeon in Gen. 36:2 is called a Hivite, and Zibeon in Gen. 36:20 is called a Horite. Certainly these could be different Zibeon's, but context seems to indicate that we are talking about one and the same person (cp v. 2 with v. 24). The LXX records Horite instead of Hivite in Gen. 34:2 and Joshua 9:7.
3. Hittite is a more general term and Horite (Hivite) is a more specific branch of the Hittites.
4. ZPEB suggests that their progenitor was Hori, the son of Lotan, who was the son of Seir (I Chron. 1:38–39). This line of Seir just begins with a group that lives in northern Edom, which takes its name from Seir. This would make Seir a Hittite, who moved to northern Edom (prior to Esau moving there). From Seir came a branch of his line, the Horites, who occupied the land of Seir.
5. Esau originally married two Hittite women, Judith and Basemath, which choice gave his family grief (Gen. 26:34). Esau, in his travels, picked up a wife from the Horites,<sup>1</sup> and twice moved his families out to Seir, a mountain range in the land of the Horites. As in-laws, Esau learned a bit about her heritage, which is shared here. Again, this information likely came from Esau who either told it to one of Jacob's sons (likely Joseph, his favorite nephew) or he recorded it and left a copy of these records with Jacob's family. In any case, the original information would have come from Esau, the expert in this field.
6. Inter-marriage and living in the same area ultimately did not draw Esau and the Horites closer together. There was apparently very little if any inter-marriage after Esau and eventually Esau's descendants (the Edomites) overran and forced the Horites out of Seir (Deut. 2:12, 22).
7. The displaced Horites (Hivites) who survived this devastation, made a pact with Joshua, under false pretenses (claiming to come from a far away land, wearing battered clothing and carrying beat-up supplies (Josh. 9).
8. Because Joshua made a pact before God with these people, even though he was deceived, Israel was honor-bound to keep that pact (Joshua 2:16–20).
9. These people were not looking for peace with the Jews; they just did not want to face a pre-emptive strike. The Horites, in conjunctions with the Amorites, Hittites, the Perizzites, and the Jebusites, then attacked Israel, but God delivered them into the hands of the Israelites under Joshua's leadership (Joshua 11).
10. The Hivites, along with other groups, were left in the land to test Israel (Judges 3:1–8).
11. As predicted by Joshua (Joshua 9:22–23), these peoples became slaves to Israel (I Kings 9:20–21 II Chron. 8:6–8).
12. There are arguments pro and con concerning identifying the Hurrians with the Horites. Horite could have been the Semitic rendering of the name, just as those mentioned in Gen. 36:20–21 could have had their names Hebrewized (as these names are not, strictly speaking, Hurrian names).
13. The Hurrians (which, again, may or may not have been the Horites) were a group of peoples forgotten about for thousands of years. It was not until this past century when we realized that such a people existed. They lived in the northern portion of Mesopotamia, in Syria and in Palestine just prior to 2000 BC. We also find evidence of them living in Lower (Northern) Egypt. However, there are no records indicating that they lived in Moab. We have *recently* (meaning during the past 200 years) discovered thousands of tablets upon which are inscribed their business records and documents and all other manner of information. The evidence that there was Hurrian influence in Palestine is the fact that some names found in the Bible are quite likely Hurrian names. The El Amarna tablets indicate that there was a Jebusite ruler in Jerusalem who was a servant of Hepa, which is likely a shortened form of Hapat or Hebat, who is the most prominent goddess of the Hurrian pantheon. A Jebusite successor to this servant of Hepa was Araunah (or Ornan) (II Sam. 24:18 I Chron. 21:18) are taken from the original Hebrew consonants 'rwnh, 'wrnh, or 'rnn is a Hurrian title found in an Hurrian-Akkadian dictionary tablet and it means *lord* or *king*. It is often that the Bible records the title rather than the name of foreign kings and rulers. Part of our problem in connecting the two groups is that we still have not cracked the Hurrian language, which seems to be related only the Uartian, the language found on inscriptions made by the kings of Urartu near Lake Van from the 900-600 BC era.

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<sup>1</sup> She is called a *Hivite*, but that is probably a slight corruption of the text.